



RETURN TO BASKETBALL

Goal: To be like Mike as quickly and safely as possible.

Process: After years of working in sports medicine, it has become clear to me that basketball players have a genetic defect that does not allow them to properly warm-up. They think the warm-up is tossing in a few lay-ups. Luckily, special drugs used during your surgery have now corrected this defect. One great thing about returning to basketball is the nice smooth surface that basketball is played on. As a result, you can get on the court quickly. You cannot, however, get back to grabbing rebounds with 5 players hanging on you before your knee is ready. Follow the program and remember: you now have the ability to warm-up, stretch, and cool-down like all other athletes.

INJURY = OPPORTUNITY: Coming back from an injury or surgery allows the opportunity for you to emphasize fundamental skills that might need attention (e.g. foul shooting). There is no reason you can't be dribbling a basketball off the side of the couch with your non-dominant hand the day you get back from the hospital (except it may drive your housemates crazy). Set up that nerf basket or just flip over a Tiffany lampshade.

You can perform each Level of the "Return to Basketball" program 3-4 days per week alternating with "soft workouts" on the other days. You probably need to spend 2 weeks to perfect your technique at each Level (though it may seem painfully slow, this is not the time to rush). If you have pain or swelling: RICE, and back down one level until the swelling resolves. "Quick step" run with the ball at first (see chapter 3) before progressing to a jog (see Return to Running earlier in this chapter).

Watch games on TV and at the gym. Imagine yourself physically and mentally reacting to the flow of the game. Watch players moving without the ball. Think like a point guard. Where is the ball going next?

LEVEL A:

PURPOSE	Remembering the smell of the gym. Shooting and ball skills.	
PROTOCOL	Activity	Time
	Warm-up with your new abilities.	
	Skills: Stationary dribbling, eyes closed, change hands.	5 min
	Walk and dribble: Move forward and backward.	10 min
	Repeat 1 time.	15 min
		Total = 30 min

COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing and dribbling can start in the house a few days after surgery. • Once in the gym, stay away from blockheads who do not understand you are recovering from surgery. • Consider using the pool for shot simulation. Find a water hoop. • Cool down, stretch and ice.
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LEVEL B:

PURPOSE	Seeing the whole of the moon. Shooting and passing skills.	
PROTOCOL	Activity	Time
	Warm-up on the bike.	
	Standing lay-ups (both sides!)	5 min
	8' Perimeter field goals.	5 min
	One-step passing.	10 min
	Repeat 1 time.	20 min
		Total = 40 min
COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low intensity jumping in Level B. Use your calves and hips as shock absorbers. • Stationary dribble and shoot, or receive a pass and shoot. • Stationary or one-step when passing but feel some bounce in your knees. • You can show up to practice, but do not shoot with the team or participate in moving drills just yet. • Stretch and ice. 	

LEVEL C:

PURPOSE	Improving shooting and ball skills. Remembering that Bird is the word.	
PROTOCOL	Activity	Time
	Warm-up properly.	
	Moving lay-ups.	5 min
	Medium perimeter field goals.	10 min
	Free Throws.	10 min
	Dribbling drills. Emphasize an athletic position, quick hand work.	15 min
	All team <u>drills</u> (not scrimmages) at med. speed, controlled!	30 min
		Total = 70 min

COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive early and take the time to warm-up. This is key for all athletes but especially those returning from injury. • Medium intensity jumping in Level C. • Ball skills should increase in intensity. • You can move about the court with your teammates, but they should remember you are recovering from knee surgery so wear a red shirt or pinny. • Cool downs are just as important as warm-ups. • The pool is a great place to work out stiffness. • Stretch and ice.
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Return to Competition:

Your return to competition progression should look something like what follows. The important thing is to find someone who will work WITH you, not against you. Plan on at least one week at each of the following Levels combined with skill work (such as in Level C), exercises and aerobic training.

- Level D: 1 on 1: low intensity, minimal contact (15-20 minutes).
- Level E: 2 on 2: medium intensity (20-30 minutes).
- Level F: 3 on 3: Full court: medium to high intensity.
- Level G: Full team (5min IN, 5min OUT).

How quickly you proceed with the above model progression depends on how both your surgeon and your knee feel. You must be able to pull back the intensity and concentrate on your basketball skills. Enter scrimmages with a “red shirt” and don’t make your first game against your team’s arch rival. Your first game experience should be “garbage time” to get your mojo working.