

Swim Ireland

Post-COVID Return to Training/Competition Guidance

This document outlines some guidelines for the safe return to training and competition for athletes who test positive for COVID-19. This guidance is based on the current information (February 2022) available to Swim Ireland via the Sport Ireland Institute and Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute.

These guidelines are based on the athlete being asymptomatic or having mild symptoms/illness. If symptoms are more severe, Swim Ireland's recommendation is to seek the advice of a sports physician at that time.

Timescale for a Safe Return

Prior to returning to sport/exercise, it is expected that the athlete should be symptom-free and should have a period of rest to ensure a full resolution of infection. In both jurisdictions athletes must be symptom free for 48 hours before resuming training.

- In Northern Ireland, athletes must return two negative lateral flow tests taken 24 hours apart, with the first of these taken no earlier than day five.
- In the Republic of Ireland athletes need to self isolate for 7 days if they test positive for Covid-19.

Graduated Return to Training & Competition

It is recommended that athletes should increase their training intensity and duration through a gradual process. The current guidance is a minimum 7-day return to a full programme of training with a slow progression in load depending on the following three factors:

- The severity of the symptoms/illness
- How long the athlete has been out of the pool
- How the athlete responds to the training

After this period, the athlete may resume competition if it is deemed appropriate by their coach.

Monitoring

During this graduated return to training, the following variables/information should be monitored daily and used to guide the process:

- Resting heart rate
- Sleep quality and quantity
- Daily wellness – stress, fatigue, muscle soreness
- Readiness to train
- Heart rate response to training
- Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

