



# A guide to better mental health for wheelchair rugby athletes



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## What is mental health?

Mental Health is often confused with mental illness however it relates more to how you cope with difficulties in life, whether you are achieving your goals and how you connect with others.

Maintaining your mental health is just as important as maintaining your physical health.

## Is it okay to not feel okay?

It is normal to feel down or anxious sometimes.

Lots of athletes struggle with their mental health including; Michael Phelps NBA player Larry Sanders and athletics champion Jack Green who says "I know talking about mental health problems is a difficult subject matter to many people, but I hope me being honest about my illness offers others some support and helps people realize they are not alone."



## How do I know if I'm struggling with my mental health?

- Feeling worried and overwhelmed
- Difficulty Sleeping
- Feeling emotionally and physically tired
- Eating too much or too little
- Overthinking
- Worries about underperforming
- Low Mood
- Low Confidence and self esteem

## How can I help myself cope during tough times?

Take some time for yourself by doing some self care activities which aren't related to your sport for example, watching your favourite movie or going for a walk.

Practice mindfulness which will help you to be more in the moment- lots of apps can be useful for this such as Smiling Mind and Silver Cloud .

Positive self talk - take note of how you are talking to yourself and see if you can try and make it more positive.

One way to identify the type of thoughts you have is to try this activity; every time you have a negative thought take a quick note of it. By the end of the day, you will be able to see how negative or positive your thoughts are. Yoga and meditation- There is lots of guided seated yoga on YouTube

## Where can I get support?

### Apps

- Silver Cloud (relaxation, goal setting and anger management)
- Smiling Mind (mindfulness and meditation)

### Websites:

- <https://basem.co.uk/mental-health-resources/>
- <https://www.mindcharity.co.uk/advice-information/how-to-look-after-your-mental-health/>
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-look-after-your-health-and-wellbeing-elite-athlete-rugby>
- <https://www.sportingmindsuk.org/urgent-and-other-support/>
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