All of these factors have the potential to affect an athlete’s eating behaviour and can act as a trigger for disordered eating, or may make an existing condition worse. Even the most resilient athlete will face challenges and have potential triggers that may cause disordered eating. No athlete is immune to disordered eating and all athletes should be monitored and supported during this time.

Maintaining physical and mental health now will better equip athletes to regain and build performance when usual training and competition is able to resume. If you notice your athlete/s are:

- Changes in training regime, schedule and location
- Return to training and competition through sport re-boot in varying capacities
- Job and income insecurity (both personally and within their family unit)
- Social isolation
- Fear, stress, anxiety and grief over the worldwide pandemic
- Changes in body image and/or body composition
- Cancellation and postponement of upcoming competitions, including benchmark events
- Food insecurity or concerns about food scarcity
- Changes in housing situations (for example, moving back in with family due to lost income)
- Illness — personally or in family, friends, team mates
- Internal and/or external pressure to maintain ‘usual’ athlete body composition
- Frequent self-weighing (initiated by either the athlete themselves or coaches/support staff)

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Maintaining physical and mental health now will better equip athletes to regain and build performance when usual training and competition is able to resume. If you notice your athlete/s are:
Following the four tips below will help you work with your athletes to minimise/reduce the impact of the current environment on their eating behaviour, with the optimal goal to maintain your athletes physical and mental health during these trying times:

1. **RECOGNISE:** Whether your athlete is struggling.
2. **REACH OUT:** Talk with your athlete about how they are coping. Ask if they are ok and start a deeper conversation (remembering your professional boundaries).
3. **REFER:** To an appropriate professional in your team, or encourage your athlete to see their GP.
4. **REMAIN SUPPORTIVE:** Continue to check in and offer support (up to but not crossing your professional boundary).

Athletes with a known eating disorder need extra care and support during these times. Discuss any concerns about these athletes with your team Doctor, Psychologist or Sports Dietitian. Athletes currently receiving treatment for an eating disorder can and should continue to access treatment providers through telehealth.

Athletes who have recovered from an eating disorder, are suspected to have an eating disorder or who have disordered eating are also vulnerable at this time.

**Note:** It is also important you look after yourself. You can’t look after your athletes if you aren’t looking after yourself. Understand that these unprecedented times are affecting all of us, and that your own body and body image may also go through changes at this time. Keep focused on maintaining mental and physical health, reach out for support from your own healthcare team. If you need to find a healthcare provider for yourself, go to your GP and ask for a referral, or try one of the organisations in the column on the right.

Further information:
- Sports Dietitians Australia directory
- Butterfly Foundation National Helpline
  Call: 1800 33 4673
  8am-midnight, 7 days a week
- National Eating Disorders Collaboration service locator
- InsideOut Institute service locator
- Australia and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders directory

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