



FEMALE ATHLETE HEALTH SERIES

YOUR HEALTH
YOUR POWERPLAY



FEMALE ATHLETE HEALTH & PERFORMANCE SERIES

Whether you're aiming to be a WHITE FERN or just love a game of Smash Yard Cricket with your mates, this series is for you.

We want every wāhine cricketer to feel confident, supported and empowered to play the game they love, and feel their best doing it.

NZC has teamed up with The Healthy Athlete Project and drawn upon existing cricket research, to create this series designed specifically for female athletes. Across a short video series and supporting resources, we break down the everyday habits and key knowledge that help you perform well and stay well.

The female athlete health series aims to help you own your athlete health journey.

If this video series raises specific questions about your health and well-being, please see a:

- GP
- Physio
- Sport Physician
- Nutritionist
- Dietician
- Psychologist
- Counsellor

This series will explore:

- **FEMALE ATHLETE HEALTH**
Daily Athlete Habits
- **PREPARATION**
The Power of the Warm-up
- **NUTRITION**
Building your innings
Meeting energy demands
- **THE FEMALE ATHLETE**
The menstrual cycle and health
- **EMPOWER**
Building your support team

DAILY ATHLETE HABITS

Female athlete health and performance is the outcome of your daily athlete habits.

Athlete habits include training, nutrition and recovery practices. Learning to develop and execute these good habits early on will set you up for a great future.



**“THE SECRET OF YOUR
SUCCESS IS FOUND IN YOUR
DAILY ROUTINE”**

TRAINING

Training needs variety

- Type of activity you do
- The intensity of training(s)
- The frequency of training(s)

Mixing up the type, intensity, and frequency of your sessions helps you:

- Build different physical qualities
- Reduce the risk of overuse injuries
- Stay mentally fresh and engaged

NUTRITION

Nutrition underpins health, performance and recovery

Nail the basics:

- Three balanced meals a day
- Additional snacks for trainings
- Regular hydration throughout the day

Meeting energy needs through optimal nutrition enables you to stay healthy for all aspects of life, not just for cricket.

Remember: Plan, prepare and execute

RECOVERY

Recovery is how we see the benefits of training. This includes:

- Sleep
- Downtime away from sport
- Nutrition
- Recovery strategies
- Other interests and hobbies

Key habits to build:

- At least one rest day per week
- Extra recovery days when training load increases
- Make space for downtime away from cricket, your mind and body both need breaks

PREPARATION: THE POWER OF THE WARM-UP

NZC have developed a community resource for coaches and players:

[NZC Community Warm-up Programme](#)



DYNAMIC WARM-UP & INJURY PREVENTION

A dynamic warm-up is one part of an injury prevention programme alongside your strength and conditioning, bowling workloads, sleep and nutrition and mental well-being.

A good warm-up can help reduce injury risk by improving joint mobility, increasing blood flow to muscles, aiding limb coordination and enhancing mental preparation. It's about preparing your body and mind for optimal performance.

Cricket is a dynamic game, and with the demands of batting, bowling and fielding, injuries can happen, especially during growth and development. Common cricket injuries include hamstring, groin and abdominal strains, ankle sprains, knee pain and low back injuries.



YOUNG WOMEN CAN BE MORE AT RISK THAN YOUNG MEN DUE TO:

- Changes in movement and mechanics during puberty
- Reduced exposure to strength work than their male peers
- Less time at the crease in their earlier years
- They can also be at higher risk of bone injury due to the role of female sex hormones in bone health

NUTRITION: BUILD YOUR INNINGS

Nutrition is vitally important for health and performance on and off the field.

With long periods out at the crease or in the field, young cricketers may unintentionally under-fuel for what they need.

Don't be fooled - cricket requires more fuel than you might think.

Staying fuelled means staying sharp!



KEEP IT SIMPLE

- Eat regularly
- Do the basics well
- 3 main meals and 2 snacks
- Extra food for training/games
- Make meals up from all food groups
- Remember your carbohydrates
- Carry a drink bottle and hydrate



TOP TIPS

- Encourage your team to hydrate and eat something during small breaks
- Be proactive and use the downtime to eat and drink more.
- Pack extra food and snacks for a long day

NUTRITION: MEETING ENERGY DEMANDS

Young females need a lot more energy than you think!

You need energy for:

- Our main body functions, including the brain, heart, and lungs
- Supporting sleep
- Growth and development
- Building strong musculoskeletal and reproductive systems
- Maintain healthy social connections
- Academic study and part-time work

OPTIMAL FUELLING = PLANNING AND PREPARATION

PLAN

Plan your week and the sessions you have

PREPARE

Prepare by communicating your food needs

EXECUTE

Execute by preparing meals and snacks

Many young females fail to meet their energy needs – often unintentionally. This is common and is called Low Energy Availability.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF LOW ENERGY AVAILABILITY

- Fatigue or poor recovery
- Low mood/motivation
- Recurrent injury/illness
- Poor concentration
- Changes to the menstrual cycle
- Changes in gut health/appetite
- Poor performance

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your:
GP, Registered Nutritionist or Dietician

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE & HEALTH

Females grow, develop and move through puberty differently than males. It can make your time in sport and life challenging – but it is temporary.

Females make unique hormones during the menstrual cycle, which are important for brain, bones, muscles and heart function.

It's like a monthly report card and is an indicator of how your body is responding to the stress put on it. It can reflect the balance of your training, nutrition and recovery (our athlete habits).

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your: GP, Registered Nutritionist or Dietician.

MONITOR, TRACK, NOTICE

Monitor and track what is normal for you and notice any new changes in:



SYMPTOMS



LENGTH OF YOUR CYCLE



BLOOD FLOW



DURATION OF BLEEDING



PAIN



MAJOR MOOD CHANGES

BUILDING YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

This female athlete health series aims to help you own your athlete journey. Not every day in sport and life will be a good day, and that's ok.

A fun and supportive environment is key to enjoying cricket and developing as a player both on and off the field.

Build your support team with people you trust and talk to. Your team is there to help you when times are tough and celebrate you in the good times.

If you are concerned about your health or well-being, please speak to your GP, school counsellor, psychologist or support team for advice.



WHĀNAU COACH TEACHERS FRIENDS TEAM MATES

Get your support team to help you develop your daily athlete habits to optimise your health and performance.

Remember, your health is your power play!

KEY MESSAGES FOR OPTIMAL FEMALE ATHLETE HEALTH

For more information check out [Sport New Zealand's Balanced Female Health resources](#)



MENTAL WELLBEING

It is okay to have bad days in sport. If negative thoughts persist talk to someone. Find and develop your support network of those you can trust.



SOCIAL WELLBEING

Wanting to train, having fun with teammates and enjoying your sport are signs of a healthy environment. If the fun stops, find a support person to listen to your concerns.

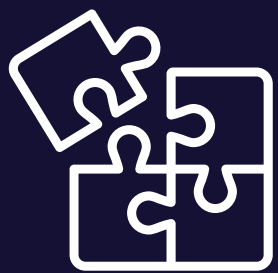
WHERE TO GET HELP



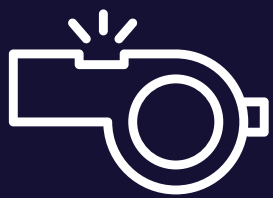
**GP
PHYSIO
SPORT PHYSICIAN**



**NUTRITIONIST
DIETICIAN**



**PSYCHOLOGIST
COUNSELLOR**



**COACH
MA MANAGER
TRUSTED ADULT**