



Top Tips For

#Active Ostomates

# PLAYING FOOTBALL WHEN YOU HAVE A STOMA

by Nav

## Ease back into it

When you've started to get more active after having surgery you will know when the time is right to try competitive sports. Don't rush in with a slide tackle! Ease yourself back in. Kick a ball about in the back garden or the park. How does the motion of kicking a ball about feel? Try a few passes with someone, short passes, longer passes, or against a wall. As with any injury or illness don't go straight into a match situation.

## Support and protection

Always support and protect your stoma. When I started back with exercise I wore a support around my middle area from my first day back in the gym. I still wear a support most of the time when exercising and it is almost a year since I had my stoma. This support can be a support belt, support vest, support pants. A belt can be restrictive to wear so wear whatever is most comfortable for you. You can also get a protective cup to go over your stoma to protect it from knocks from players and the ball.

## Fresh / empty bag

Sounds obvious, I always empty before I step on the pitch. Then for the next couple hours I feel comfortable that I shouldn't be carrying any extra weight or feel uncomfortable.

## Training

Start off with simple training drills like passing and dribbling. Get to know the ball again. Then when you feel like you are ready longer passes and crosses. With shooting I started off with placing shots and didn't blast shots. The force of passes and shots definitely made a difference to how comfortable I felt. Sit out for parts of training if you aren't ready for certain drills.

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## Do not overdo it

When you think you are ready for training tell your teammates about your stoma as you'll need to take it easy on the physical contact side to start. I started off making sure I was doing activities that did not involve tackling; on me or me on other people. It can be frustrating easing back in but it will be worth it in the long run. Using those muscles again after a long time out and being physical can cause injury if you do not take care. You will know when your body is ready to move onto more competitive and physical drills and then eventually into a match situation.

## Hydrate

As with all sports stayed hydrated. I have found since having a stoma I am drinking more water and electrolyte drinks.

When you decide you are ready for football be kind to yourself. Listen to your body, work out what feels comfortable and what doesn't. You may have to adapt certain things whilst getting back to full fitness. Don't be frustrated that you feel you aren't as fast or strong. You'll get there with patience, and a good attitude whilst working to get back on the field.

For more info on getting active with Colostomy UK visit [ColostomyUK.org](http://ColostomyUK.org) or call 0118 939 1537