

What Is Athletic Retirement:

Athletic Retirement is an inevitable process that marks a change in beliefs about oneself and others, where it requires a corresponding change in behaviors and relationships as you transition out of sport into retirement.

The changes that you will experience during your transition can present significant challenges emotionally and physically as you attempt to adjust to your lifestyle change. It will **take time** to accept and adapt to your retirement.

This leaflet has been designed to guide and support you through your transition into retirement by providing advice on how to reach a more positive outlook on life after athletics.

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Strategies On How You Can Cope With Retirement:

- > **Try to plan for life after retirement**- Gain control by establishing a future and adjust to new routines and opportunities post-retirement by completing a pre-retirement plan.
- > **Create a sport-life balance**- Remain active and seek other opportunities to help you maintain good health and transition better into life after athletics.
- > **Gradual reduction of training**- Athletic retirement is a long process, not a quick event, slowly reducing your participation will help with your transition and mindset.
- > **Confined in your support network**- Family, friends, mentors and peers will help you to **speak out** and acknowledge your thoughts and feelings on life after athletics and how to tackle them.

Try to find out more about looking after your well-being post-retirement and recognise the coping resources available to help reduce the potential long-term impacts and quality of retirement.

Here are a few to get you started:

- > Listen to podcasts sharing experiences of retirement in athletics.
- > Reflection workbooks.
- > Seek professional help through your sport association.

A GUIDE TO RETIREMENT



FOR ATHLETES IN ATHLETICS

Nicole De-Pear

Reasons Why You May Retire:

The process of athletic retirement is complicated and influenced by many factors.

There are two main categories of retirement:

1-**VOLUNTARY**- Is seen as an individual and independent act of free choice. It is predictable where you have complete control of the decision being made. For example, the **desire for you to have more leisure time** or you **no longer wish to compete**. This leads to a higher satisfaction in life and self-efficacy as you take control of your fate, enabling you to be ready, which rewards a positive experience post-retirement.

2-**INVOLUNTARY**- Is seen as an unexpected event that can occur suddenly, where you are not involved and have lack of control over the situation. Involuntary retirement is more difficult to cope with as you do not have the opportunity to choose your own fate. For example, it can include **career ending injuries** or being **deselected from a team**. This can significantly impact your psychological and physiological well-being.

Whether you participate in a Run, Jump or Throw event, every experience is **subjective** and based on **your own personal experiences**, therefore you should reflect and discuss your concerns with your support network system to understand and consider your options.



Potential Challenges You May Experience:

Athletes who retire require more effort to cope with unwanted change, especially if retirement was involuntary.

Some Difficulties Include:

- >Body dissatisfaction.
- >Reduced well-being/health related behaviors.
- >Vulnerable to psychological and emotional difficulties leading to anxiety and depression.
- >May struggle to redefine personal identity and sense a lack of purpose.

It is not uncommon that you may feel a **void** or **uncertainty** post-retirement. It is important that you accept, prepare and engage in your retirement to gain control to find a new confidence in the new life direction.



Remember you do not have to go through your retirement **alone**, discussing your feelings and seek guidance from your support network may offer reassurance and stability that can help direct you onto the right path.

Your Life After Sport:

The positive aspects of retirement can easily be shadowed with negative associations. Keep your **mind open** and explore the beneficial aspects that can impact your life in a positive way.

You May Experience:

- >A reduction in stress and fatigue.
- >Less risk of injury and burnout.
- >More downtime for yourself.
- >Explore new social networks and lifestyle opportunities.
- >Fulfil life pursuits that may have had to subside during your time as an athlete.

These positive aspects can help develop your **self-identity** after athletics. It is imperial that you understand that the skills and strengths developed from athletics can be transferred beyond sport life and into new exciting opportunities after retirement that will help you **grow and develop**.



"I have enjoyed embracing different sides of life and having different opportunities"- Jessica Ennis-Hill; Retired Heptathlon Olympic gold medallist London 2012 and Silver at Rio 2016.

