

Are You Ready to **Ramp Up?**

THE PRE-SEASON READINESS CHECKLIST 

A 10-minute check before you increase training, start a new season, or prepare for competition.

Readiness starts with knowing what your body can handle today and what you plan to ask of it next.

Complete this checklist when you are rested, after a five-minute warm-up, and before a hard training session.

Your results provide a snapshot of your current readiness. Injury diagnosis and sport clearance require an assessment from a qualified healthcare provider.

Start With the Warning Signs

Have you experienced any of these during the past two weeks?

- ☐ New or increasing pain during training, at rest, or during ordinary activities.
- ☐ Swelling that appears after training or remains the following morning.
- ☐ A joint that gives way, locks, or feels unstable.
- ☐ Pain that changes your technique or makes you avoid one side.
- ☐ New numbness, tingling, or unexplained weakness.
- ☐ A previous injury that is becoming more irritated from week to week.
- ☐ Exertional chest pain, fainting, near-fainting, unusual shortness of breath, or unexplained heart palpitations.

One checked box doesn't prove you're injured. It does mean the rest of this checklist should be interpreted carefully.

Pain that changes how you move, swelling, instability, locking, or neurological symptoms should be assessed before you increase training. Exertional chest symptoms, fainting, or unusual shortness of breath require medical evaluation before hard exercise.

Compare Your Current Training With What Comes Next

Write down what you have actually completed during the past two weeks. Then compare it with the first two weeks of your upcoming training block.

TRAINING DEMAND	CURRENT LEVEL	PLANNED LEVEL
Sessions per week		
Total miles, minutes, or working sets		
Hard sessions per week		
Sprint, jump, cut, throw, or heavy-lift exposure		
New surfaces, equipment, or movement demands		

Choose measurements that fit your sport. A runner might track mileage, total minutes, and speed sessions. A strength athlete might track hard working sets and average intensity. A field or court athlete might track practice minutes and exposure to sprinting, jumping, and cutting.

Now check your plan.

- ☐ I can identify the one or two training demands that will increase first.
- ☐ My first week increases one major variable at a time.
- ☐ I have already practiced the fastest, heaviest, or most technical demands of my sport at a scaled level.
- ☐ My hardest sessions are followed by deliberate recovery or lower-load work.
- ☐ If symptoms increase, I know which training variable I will reduce first.
- ☐ I have enough preparation time to build capacity instead of trying to recover several missed weeks at once.

A Simple Way to **Track Training Load**

After each session, rate the overall effort from 0 to 10 and multiply that number by the session length in minutes.

Session effort × minutes = session load

The result doesn't define whether a session is safe. Tracking it consistently helps you see how much your weekly workload is changing.

Check **How You Move**

Choose the checks that match your sport. Focus on pain, control, confidence, and meaningful changes from your usual movement. Small natural differences between sides are common.

Stop if a movement causes sharp pain, instability, dizziness, or symptoms that increase with each repetition.

Squat

Complete five controlled bodyweight squats to your usual training depth.

- ☐ I can reach my familiar depth without pain.
- ☐ I don't shift noticeably toward one side.
- ☐ My feet, knees, and trunk remain controlled.

Single-Leg Step-Down

Stand on the bottom stair and complete five slow step-downs on each side.

- ☐ Both sides feel confident and controlled.
- ☐ My pelvis remains level.
- ☐ My knee and foot remain controlled without a major inward collapse or loss of balance.
- ☐ There is no new or obvious difference between sides.

Single-Leg Calf Raise

Perform controlled calf raises on each side until you first lose your usual height or tempo. Record the number completed with good control.

Left:

Right:

- ☐ Both sides feel similar to my normal capacity.
- ☐ I can maintain heel height without pain or cramping.
- ☐ One side doesn't fatigue substantially earlier than expected.

A universal passing number is less useful than your own baseline, sport, and training history.

Landing and Deceleration

Complete this check only if hopping, jumping, and changing direction are already part of your training.

Perform three small hop-and-stick landings on each side. Field and court athletes can also complete three gradual accelerations followed by a controlled stop.

- ☐ I can land and stop without pain or instability.
- ☐ I feel confident accepting force on both sides.
- ☐ I can control my knee, hip, and trunk without a major loss of balance.
- ☐ I don't avoid one side or land unusually stiffly.

Overhead Movement

Complete five controlled overhead reaches, presses, or sport-specific arm movements with a light or unloaded resistance.

- ☐ I can reach my familiar range without pinching or pain.
- ☐ I don't compensate by excessively arching my back or shrugging one shoulder.
- ☐ Both sides feel stable and coordinated.

Sport-Specific Rehearsal

Choose one movement that your next training block will demand:

- ☐ Easy running followed by two or three gradual strides.
- ☐ Squatting, hinging, or pressing with a light warm-up load.
- ☐ Controlled acceleration, deceleration, and direction changes.
- ☐ Progressive throwing, serving, or swimming repetitions.
- ☐ Another sport-specific movement:

Can you complete it with familiar technique, confidence, and no meaningful increase in symptoms?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ It needs attention
- ☐ No

Check Again the Next Morning

Your response after the session matters as much as how you felt during it.

- ☐ There is no new swelling.
- ☐ Pain and stiffness are back at their usual baseline.
- ☐ Walking, stairs, and ordinary daily movement feel normal.
- ☐ I feel ready for the next planned session.

Decide What Happens Next

You Are Ready to Build

Your warning-sign section is clear, your movement feels familiar, and your training plan has a manageable progression.

Proceed with your planned ramp and repeat this checklist after the first hard week.

Adjust and Recheck

You noticed mild discomfort, a new difference between sides, apprehension, or an unusual next-morning response.

Reduce one training variable and keep the rest of the plan stable. If the same issue returns, begins changing your technique, or becomes more noticeable, schedule an assessment.

Get Assessed Before You Ramp Up

Pain changes how you move, swelling keeps returning, or a joint feels unstable, gives way, or locks. New numbness, tingling or weakness also deserves attention.

Pause the training progression until you understand what's happening.

What a Full Performance Assessment Adds

A self-check can show you where to look. A professional assessment puts those findings in the context of your sport, injury history, and upcoming training demands.

Your assessment at Bax Performance & Rehab may include:

- A review of your training history, previous injuries, and competition timeline.
- Movement analysis based on the demands of your sport.
- Strength, stability, and muscular endurance testing.
- Side-to-side comparisons where they are useful.
- Hop, landing, agility, or deceleration testing when appropriate.
- Running gait or overhead movement assessment when relevant.
- A prioritised plan for what to address before training gets harder.

You will leave knowing what's working, what deserves attention, and what to do next.

Bring this checklist to your performance assessment. We will separate meaningful findings from normal variation and give you clear priorities for the season ahead.

→ **BOOK YOUR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

Bax Performance Rehab | Dr. Robert Bax, DPT, OCS, CSCS | Pleasanton, California

This checklist is for educational purposes. It doesn't diagnose an injury, predict future injury, or replace an individual medical or physical therapy assessment.