



PO Box 98  
Girdwood, AK 99587  
907-783-1245  
[www.AlaskaFit.com](http://www.AlaskaFit.com)  
[info@AlaskaFit.com](mailto:info@AlaskaFit.com)

Spring...A Time for Healing  
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Now that ski season is winding down we have time to reflect on how good or bad we thought the season was. We can begin our plans for spring and summer. And as we engage in this reflection, many of us, myself included, find ourselves recovering from injuries. Injuries among the folks here in Girdwood are becoming as common as Fireweed in July. And they range from numerous reports of knee injuries to broken ankles and injured shoulders. Am I simply more in tune with this because I, too, am recovering from knee surgery? Perhaps. Long before my knee was even a glimmer in some surgeon's eye, I received requests to write something about recovering from injuries. As I currently find myself on the DL (disabled list), I thought this would be as good a time as any to address injuries and what we can do about them.

So, you have suffered a somewhat serious injury—whether it's a knee, an ankle or even a shoulder I believe that the most important lesson for us all is patience. Ahhh, patience. A word that seems to roll off the tongue, but rarely makes it into our consciousness. Most of us injured souls seem to make our way around to patience after working through a few other stages of injury recovery.

Without becoming too psychological, it seems to me that the first stage for us is disbelief. We can't believe this could have happened to us. We are strong, we know how to avoid injuries, we may even go out of our way to take care to avoid having this kind of thing happen, but here we are.

Moving past disbelief, which, of course, has its share of denial thrown in for good measure (as in, "No, I'm not really hurt, I'll just be out for a short while...or the ever-popular, "I'll work through the pain"), we find ourselves easing into acceptance.

Acceptance is that time in which we realize that yes, we are injured and yes, we have to take some time off and address the problem. This is no easy task for those of us who take much pride in all of the physical things of which we are capable. But, eventually, we have no choice...once we accept that we are injured, we begin to take the steps towards fixing what ails us. With this initial move, we take a bigger step towards patience, but aren't quite there.

In our "everything must be done yesterday," world, many of us who suffer an injury apply this mode of thinking to our recovery period, especially if we were fit prior to becoming injured. The most important lesson that I have learned throughout this process is that some things simply cannot be rushed. The human body's recovery system does not necessarily work on the same time schedule as our brain. The absolute best advice that I can offer for injury recovery is to listen to your body. I've suffered my own moments of, "I feel fine, so I'll push it a bit farther," only to end up setting myself back a few days in my recovery as I go from walking well to hobbling a bit because I've overdone it. Does my body know that I plan to run races next month? No! Does it care? No! The repair work cannot be rushed. Think of your body as a work by



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Michelangelo—it may take a long time to complete, but it will be beautiful and you will know when it is finished. Don't risk re-injuring yourself. In this case, acceptance and patience are the only way to go. So, do your rehab, listen to your doctor and physical therapist. Your success in your recovery only enhances their reputation, so they do have your best interests at heart. Just remind yourself that taking it easy in this case is *you* keeping your best interests at heart.

See you out there this spring!