

The ADE for Athlete Self-Report

Athletic Disordered Eating

The ADE Scale is a clinical tool used to assess changes in disordered eating and body image concerns in athletic population groups - including current and former athletes.



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Athletic Disordered Eating

Sport and movement have the capacity to improve body image and our food relationships. However, current and former athletes are said to have eating disorders in 3x the numbers compared to the general population. Not only does **early detection of disordered eating prevent eating disorders, but it also improves performance and overall wellbeing.**



What is disordered eating?

Our relationship with food occurs along a continuum. On one side we have intuitive eating and body appreciation. This is when we feel good about what our bodies can do, and we have a great ability to eat flexibly, enjoy foods and listen to our body's needs. A positive relationship with food and your body is key to enjoying your sport for the long haul and performing at your best. On the other side of the continuum, we have eating disorders which are really challenging mental illnesses' that are never your fault, but you wouldn't wish them on your worst enemy. Before an eating disorder develops, disordered eating describes the thoughts and actions that snowball into an eating disorder. Understanding our food relationship and challenging it to be better is an amazing tool to develop performance and wellbeing. Never be afraid to ask for help if something doesn't feel right with your food or body relationship.

The Continuum of **Disordered Eating** and **Body Image Concern**

Helpful behaviours
and thoughts

Unhelpful behaviours
and thoughts

Intuitive Eating and
Body Appreciation

Disordered
Eating

Eating
Disorders

Athletic Disordered Eating

The ADE Scale

Complete the following items in response to how you are feeling and behaving in your current state by ticking the boxes next to the item.

There is no wrong answer. Being honest with your response can help acknowledge when you need help and when things are tougher than they need to be.

- 1- I find spontaneous eating decisions challenging
- 2- I think about the calories/kilojoules I am burning when I train or exercise
- 3- I avoid social situations if there will be foods I don't feel comfortable eating
- 4- I overeat when I am allowed to eat freely i.e. off-season or a buffet
- 5- To change my body I cut back on foods or ingredients
- 6- I look to control my food when I want more out of my body
- 7- I carefully plan and think about what I eat
- 8- I am dissatisfied with my body shape or size
- 9- My performance or mood is influenced by how I feel about my body
- 10- I fear fat gain or muscle loss
- 11- I compare my body to other athletes or my former self
- 12- I feel bad when an athlete has a better looking body than mine
- 13- I will do extra exercise to influence my body weight or shape
- 14- I am motivated to train harder to influence my body shape or weight
- 15- Once I start eating I find it hard to stop
- 16- There are certain foods I can't control myself around
- 17- If I haven't exercised that day I will limit my food

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
0	1	2	3	4

Interpreting the Result

This result is best interpreted and supported by an eating disorder-trained health professional. It is always recommended that you seek support from a health professional when interpreting the result.

If this brings up anything at all, don't hesitate to talk about it with a trusted adult or reach out to a health professional trained in eating disorders.

When eating disorders and disordered eating are concerned, there is no such thing as not being "sick enough" to receive the help that you need. Everyone is worthy of support no matter how big or small the problem.

Estimate what your most common response was between 0 and 4.

NEVER = 0
RARELY = 1
SOMETIMES = 2
OFTEN = 3
ALWAYS = 4

A score of 2 or above generally recommends that you seek help and start exploring your relationship with food.

Helpful behaviours
and thoughts

Unhelpful behaviours
and thoughts

SEEKING HELP AND MORE INFORMATION

Association for Size Diversity and Health (USA)
Australia and New Zealand Academy of Eating Disorders (AUS, NZ)
Beating Eating Disorders (UK)
Butterfly Foundation (AUS)
Connect.ed: Australian Eating Disorder Providers (AUS)
Eating Disorders Victoria (AUS)
Inside Out Institute (AUS)
McCallum Place, Victory Program (USA)
National Eating Disorder Association (USA)
National Eating Disorders Collaboration (AUS)

This scale was developed and validated as per the following reference:

Buckley, G. L., Lassemillante, A.-C. M., Cooke, M. B., & Belski, R. (2024). The Development and Validation of a Disordered Eating Screening Tool for Current and Former Athletes: The Athletic Disordered Eating (ADE) Screening Tool. *Nutrients*, 16(16), 2758. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nut16162758>