



Mountaineering physiotherapist teaches climbers how to avoid injuries

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A Bristol-based physiotherapist is putting his skills to use in a new role in which he helps climbing instructors to become coaches.

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Physio and mountaineering instructor Danny Brown. Photo: Alex Ekins

With 20 years as a professional climbing instructor under his belt, Danny Brown was recently invited by the Mountain Training Association to teach on its courses. The organisation's qualifications are recognised by the British Mountaineering Council.

Mr Brown told *Frontline* that he is the only physiotherapy-trained mountaineering instructor in the UK. He is also one of only 19 people able to deliver the new Mountain Training Coaching Award Scheme, and helped to design the syllabus.

'I was asked to create a presentation session for the coaches who will be delivering the award,' he said.

'I've written the guidelines on injury avoidance for the foundation course, and I'm looking forward to steering the qualifications to ensure they deliver the best protection to young athletes across the country.'

Climbing specific injuries

Mr Brown, who works for a private practice in Bristol called Physio Impulse, combines his physiotherapy knowledge with a love of climbing by working closely with local climbers and youth teams to promote injury avoidance and rehab.

He has previously compiled safe training and physiological screening protocols for young people training with elite climbing clubs.

'A lot of young climbers damage the growth plates in their fingers, which can lead to deformity and loss of function,' said Mr Brown.

Climbing's finger is also prone to specific injury, like hand's fracture or tendon

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'Climber's finger is also now a recognised injury, like boxer's fracture or tennis elbow. It's an annular pulley tear on the ring finger and an injury that's very specific to climbing. But you won't find it in any normal physiotherapy text book because it's so niche.'

Mr Brown said he has also noticed high rates of chondromalacia patellae in teenage girls who climb, and a high incidence of Sever's disease among climbers in general.

He added: 'I think it's really good that physiotherapy has got in at the ground floor in this scheme, because without the knowledge of the coaches people can't do anything to avoid these injuries.'

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