

# EATING DISORDERS & ATHLETES

**Athletics are a great way to build self-esteem, promote physical conditioning, and demonstrate the value of teamwork, but not all athletic stressors are positive.** The pressure to win and an emphasis on body weight and shape can create a toxic combination. Coaches and trainers should be aware of the effects of disordered eating, and encourage healthy and balanced behaviors in their athletes.

## ATHLETES IN AESTHETIC & WEIGHT-CLASS SPORTS AT RISK

Though **most athletes with eating disorders are female, male athletes are also at risk**—especially those competing in sports that tend to emphasize diet, appearance, size, and weight.<sup>2</sup>

In aesthetic sports, such as:



bodybuilding



gymnastics



figure skating

And weight-class sports, such as:



wrestling



rowing



horseracing

It's estimated that disordered eating affects:



62%



33%

## HIGHER RISK OF DEVELOPING AN EATING DISORDER FOR ATHLETES

**College athletes have an elevated risk of developing an eating disorder.** One study found the number of college athletes at-risk for developing AN or BN to be:<sup>4</sup>



35%



10%

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

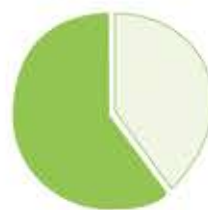
BULIMIA NERVOSA

58%

38%

## INJURIES & MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS AMONG FEMALE ATHLETES

Among **female high school athletes in aesthetic sports**,<sup>3</sup>



**42% OF ATHLETES** reported disordered eating, and they were...

**8X**

**MORE LIKELY TO INCUR INJURY** than athletes who did not report disordered eating.

### A STUDY OF FEMALE DIVISION II ATHLETES FOUND THAT:<sup>6</sup>

- **25% HAD DISORDERED EATING**
- **26% REPORTED MENSTRUAL DYSFUNCTION**
- **10% HAD LOW BONE MINERAL DENSITY**
- **3% HAD ALL THREE SYMPTOMS**

## ATHLETIC TRAINERS NEED SUPPORT, EDUCATION, & PREVENTION RESOURCES

A survey among **college athletic trainers working with female athletes** found that:<sup>5</sup>



91%

reported dealing with an athlete with an eating disorder



93%

felt that increased attention needs to be paid to preventing eating disorders among female athletes



27%

felt confident identifying an athlete with an eating disorder



25%

worked at an institution without a policy on managing eating disorders

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