

COACHING TEEN GIRLS WHAT HELPS THE MOST A QUICK GUIDE FOR COACHES

Teen girls thrive in sport when they feel understood, supported, and confident. Here's how we can uplift their mana and strengthen hauora without needing to be an expert in everything.

COACH TIP



Teenage girls can be playing multiple sports at the same time which can be a lot. Consider the loading of other disciplines and make sure she's getting rest, fun, and variety.



Understand Her Journey

- **Kōhine (teenage girls) grow and change at different rates, that's normal.** Encourage them to focus on their own path and progress, rather than comparing with others.
- **Puberty can affect energy, coordination, and confidence, which can impact performance.** Create a safe, caring environment where girls feel supported and encouraged, regardless of any setbacks.

Fuel Her Body and Mind

- **Kōhine are at higher risk of not eating enough to fuel their sport.** Encourage them to eat enough, especially on training days. Check to see if they have eaten before training and if not, allow time for this and turn it into an opportunity for whanaungatanga (connection).
- **Be aware of the signs of Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) and Low Energy Availability (LEA).** If you suspect an athlete may be affected, approach the situation with care and guide both the athlete and her parents/whānau toward the right help. (check the 'toolkit' for more info)

2

Celebrate Her Strengths

- **A good sports bra = comfort, protection and confidence.** Have a chat with parents or a group conversation with athletes highlighting the importance of proper support.
- **Body changes during adolescence are normal and healthy.** Use supportive, affirming language to create a body-confident environment where every athlete feels proud of her body and what it can do.
- **It is normal & healthy for kōhine to experience an increase in body fat during puberty.** Help girls focus on their strengths and different ways they're improving. Eg; on their technical skills, or position as young leaders.
- **Confidence is often a barrier for girls.** Celebrate effort, progress, and teamwork instead of outcomes or appearance.
- **Make sure uniforms and sportswear are comfortable,** inclusive, and suitable for growing bodies.

3

4

Notice When She Needs Help

- **The menstrual cycle is an important health indicator.** If an athlete mentions changes or a missing period, support her to speak with parents/whānau, a trusted adult or health professional.
- **If you notice signs of low energy, mood changes, withdrawal, or increased stress or anxiety, it could be a sign of a deeper issue affecting her wellbeing.** Check in with her, listen without judgment, involve parents/whānau and, if concerns persist guide her toward appropriate mental health or medical support.



Balance Her Training

- **Teenage girls can be playing multiple sports at the same time which can be a lot.** Consider the loading of other disciplines and make sure she's getting rest, fun, and variety.
- **Growth spurts and playing multiple sports can leave teenage girls more susceptible to injury.** Incorporating proper warm-ups and strength or resistance training into your sessions is important for reducing this risk and supporting long-term development.
- **Did you know? there are age-appropriate guidelines for training loads, recovery time, and annual breaks from organised sport?** Use this knowledge to guide your planning, help prevent burnout and support long term development and wellbeing.

5

6

✨ *Whakauru Mai, Whakamanahia* **Connect & Empower**

Create an environment that's fun, socially connected, and values learning and teamwork.

When girls feel a sense of whanaungatanga (connection), they're more likely to enjoy sport and stay in it for life.

- **Involve athletes in decision making** so they feel connected to why they are there and what will help them achieve their goals.
- **If your team has a strong Māori presence, consider integrating taonga tākaro (traditional Māori games) into sessions or holding a wānanga with a focus on something like maramataka (lunar calendar) to explore rhythms of rest and performance.**
- Get to know where your athletes come from, their whakapapa, their whenua, and what matters to them. This builds trust and enhances cultural identity.



COACH TIP

It's important your team/athletes understand how the menstrual cycle affects health and performance in sport. Create a safe, supportive environment where this topic can be discussed openly and respectfully. If you're not comfortable leading the conversation yourself, consider inviting a trusted female parent or mentor to speak with your athletes. Make sure period products are available and let girls know where to find them

Visit the coach's toolkit via the QR code for further learning & information

