

Cannabis Myths and Truths

Myth

Truth

“Everybody does it.”



Most student-athletes do not use cannabis. According to a 2023 NCAA survey of student-athletes, 26% of respondents reported using cannabis within the last year and only 13% reported inhaling or ingesting cannabis within the last 30 days.¹ Reported reasons for use: 53% for relaxation, 38% to help with sleep, 37% to cope with stress, anxiety or depression, and 17% for medical use (e.g., alleviate physical pain).

“Cannabis helps me sleep.”



Cannabis use may help with sleep initiation (falling asleep) but can have a negative impact on overall sleep quality (restorative sleep and sleep cycles). Inadequate sleep is linked with increased injury risk.

“Cannabis helps treat my anxiety.”



For individuals with depression or anxiety disorders, concurrent use of cannabis is linked with greater disorder severity and poorer response to both behavioral and pharmaceutical treatment.

“Cannabis isn’t addictive.”



Any use of cannabis introduces a risk of addiction, withdrawal and relapse. Cannabis Use Disorder (marijuana addiction) occurs when someone continues to use cannabis despite experiencing clinically significant impairment. There is no universally safe level of cannabis use. Risk factors include earlier age of use onset, increased frequency of use and increased product potency (THC content).

“Cannabis helps me focus and perform at a higher level.”



Cannabis is not a performance-enhancing substance. Studies of cannabis use have demonstrated effects that include sedation, disorientation, impaired judgment, lack of concentration and slowed fine motor skills – all of which can contribute to delayed decision-making, impaired learning and memory and attention deficits.²

Science is inconclusive regarding the effectiveness of cannabis for pain management.

If you feel that cannabis use is interfering with your daily functioning, talk to a trusted administrator, counselor or licensed mental health professional about resources available on your campus.

¹ NCAA Research. (2024, January). *Current findings on student-athlete substance use*. NCAA.org. https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/research/wellness/Jan2024RES_HW-SubstanceUseRelease.pdf.

² CDC. (2020, June 15). *Cannabis and work: Implications, impairment, and the need for further research*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2020/06/15/cannabis-and-work/>.

Scan or [click](#) to visit the Doping and Substance Misuse landing page.

