



## NBA Basketball

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### T-Mac is back, pain free so far

By JONATHAN FEIGEN

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SUGAR LAND - Tracy McGrady made his way from his state-of-the-art weight room to his cathedral of a gym, where his new signature basketball shoes had been waiting unattended and unneeded for several months.

He had finished 40 minutes in the weight room. This was the fourth day — with exercises for his shoulder training rotation. But McGrady had been in the weight room for more than a month. This would be differe

Switching from running shoes to high tops didn't make him nervous. He was far more excited, curious an running basketball drills on the court just off his home kitchen.

For the first time since his season ended due to a back injury in March, McGrady was back on the court M and running through curls and step-back jumpers.

After 45 minutes darting around his parquet floor, he was breathing hard but smiling as if he had just dro the Rockets against the Spurs.

"This is a great feeling," McGrady said. "I've been off for three or four months. Just to be back on the cou me any problems on the first day I actually worked out — that gives me confidence to know I'm back."

#### More drills in August

McGrady's started offseason lifting in June and moved to lifting and basketball drills in July.

He will go through lifting, drills and track conditioning beginning in August. He began running on a treadm treatments for the back for months.

Usually after the first day of shooting, McGrady said, the back is sore and stiff. But on Monday, he was pa

"It just feels good," he said. "I can't believe I'm back on the court. Usually when I first get started workin body tries to adjust to the pounding.

"I don't feel anything. The only thing is I was fatigued, so I'm way ahead of schedule. This will probably b

"I'm motivated. I realize you have to fall sometimes. It's how you pick yourself up. I had a down season I back."

To make sure he was motivated, McGrady immersed himself in the playoffs. When that was not enough, I series between the Rockets and Mavericks.

All the while, he was barred from taking the court that just was a few feet from his television.

If that were not enough, he has kept a collection of doubts about him. McGrady once hung a poster of crii All-Star uniform and the autographed uniforms given to him by Shaquille O'Neal and Michael Jordan.

"I was just watching the playoffs and knowing that's where I want to be," McGrady said. "With all the neg me and the team — that I'm finished because everybody thinks my body is going to be a problem — I jus was due to injury.

"To have people writing me off like my career is pretty much over, that motivates me. I'm back, and I'm I

