



THE REHAB ROOM

Recovery

Recovery is an often overlooked yet highly important part of your training. By implementing recovery you can reduce your cumulative fatigue and risk of injury. This will lead to better performance.

What is recovery?

Recovery allows for restoration of physiological and psychological body systems so a person can participate again at a similar level.

A lot of current practice is anecdotal however studies are increasing.

3-4 recovery sessions/techniques should be used a week ideally within 30-60 minutes of exercise. These may differ depending on type of training/competition undertaken.

Benefits:

- 1) reduce overtraining risks
- 2) increase quality of training and competing.
- 3) reduce injury rates.

Types of recovery:

- *sleep
- *nutrition
- *active recovery and stretching
- *contrast baths
- *ice therapy
- *compression
- *massage
- *psychological relaxation

Sleep is thought to be most effective tool anecdotally. Recovery gained is thought to be via hormonal release. The quality and quantity as well as the consistency is important. (7-8 hours minimum) Broken sleep can cause overtraining which can be relevant in HK with work stress and young kids. Monitoring sleep can be a useful tool and good routines are essential.

Active recovery may enhance next training or performance more than rest alone. It reduces lactate/waste products in muscles (similar to other physical therapies mentioned below). Stretching may reduce DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness) but there is no hard evidence. Keep heart rate <120bpm with active recovery and less than 30mins duration.



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Contrast baths alternating between hot and cold exposure may help to flush out lactate and other waste products. Spa and plunge pools are best. A protocol that can be used is 1 min warm, 1 min cold. Repeat 5-7 times. 38-40 degrees hot, 12-14 degrees cold

For the everyday person a shower with warm and cold is ok (30 sec on/30 sec off) for 5 minutes. Stretching can be performed during this.

Ice baths when used for recovery are very good to reduce core and skin temperature and reduce heart rate post training and competition. This helps to restore homeostasis. They also decrease metabolism, reduce blood flow and therefore inflammation, decrease pain and reduce any muscle spasm. A protocol could be 3-5 x 1 minute bouts at around 12 degrees with depth to about nipple level.

Massage can improve recovery by flushing out waste products and possibly helps reduce DOMS as a result. An effleurage flush technique is good. 30-60 minutes is best preferably within 3 hours of exercise if possible.

Compression can help improve venous return and flush out lactate and other metabolites/waste products. It restricts superficial blood flow and enhances deep blood flow which helps waste clearance for recovery. Socks are an example of this.

Psychological/relaxation techniques are also helpful particularly in HK where stress and work pressure is high and many driven type A personalities are about! There are various techniques such as relaxation techniques including meditation via breathing techniques, progressive muscle relaxation and imagery/visual techniques. Music, socializing and sleep as mentioned are also useful. Recovery is not always physical.

Happy racing!

For any interest in screening, email to david@physio-central.com or for further information go to www.physio-central.com

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