

Rest and Recovery

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Rest and recovery after exercise is an important part of training for both recreational and professional athletes. The body requires time to recover from exercise to build back strength and reduce the risk of injury. Allowing time for proper rest and recovery is a big part of how athletes continue playing the sports that they love for many years. Rest and recovery entails a few key steps to doing it successfully. The first step to rest and recovery actually begins prior to the exercise with fueling your body with nutritious foods. The final three steps come into play after the exercise. See below:

Steps for Rest and Recovery:

1. Fuel your body with nutritious foods – eating a well balanced meal prior to the exercise is important. Your body uses food as fuel for energy. This meal can be eaten 3-4 hours before the exercise. You can also include a small snack 1 hour before the exercise.
2. Refuel with nutritious foods after exercise – have a well balanced snack within an hour of finishing an exercise routine and eat a well balanced meal around 1 hour following the exercise routine. Exercise depletes your body of energy. Food will refuel your system.
3. Hydrate – Drink fluids before, during, and after a workout. Water is best in most cases and with prolonged exercise routines fluids with added electrolytes may be necessary.
4. Sleep – Try to get 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.

Another important aspect of rest and recovery is listening to your body. If and when you feel pain, other than soreness, during exercise you should stop what you are doing immediately and rest. Continuing to exercise through pain can lead to an injury. Proper rest and recovery will help keep you participating in sports for as long as you like.

If you are beginning a new sport or exercise routine, listening to your body is critical. When muscles are used in new ways, you may need to start off slowly and build your endurance over time. Pushing your body too quickly can also lead to injury. Choose a sport or exercise that you enjoy, start slow and make rest and recovery part of your routine!