

# Importance of Recovery

Just as important as your actual exercise routine is your recovery regime. Recovery days is where the magic happens. Where your body repairs from the stresses of exercise and rebuilds muscle tissue. Where you replenish energy stores ready for your next big workout. It helps to improve exercise performance and decrease injuries. Recovery is important, and if you want to be getting the most out of your training, you want to make sure you are recovering properly. There are a number of elements to a good recovery. It is not just about having a rest day from your workouts. It is about sleep, nutrition, hydration, warm ups and cool downs, stretching or foam rolling. Lets break these down...

**Sleep:** Sleep is a vital time in the recovery process. While you sleep, your body is hard at work repairing. Your body produces hormones which help synthesis new muscle tissue and help rebuild so you get stronger. Not getting enough sleep can also affect your ability to train the next day with drops in motivation and decreased balance and postural control. To be firing on all cylinders for your next workout, you need to be getting a good night sleep.

**Nutrition:** Food is your energy source, but it is also part of your recovery. Protein is the building blocks for muscle and is the key nutrient to repair the muscle fibres after a big exercise session. Carbohydrates replenish your energy levels and get you ready for your next big workout. It is good to have a complex carbohydrate and protein mixed meal after a workout to start this recovery process.

**Hydration:** Most people drink plenty of water when they are exercising, but it is what you drink when you are not exercising that really counts. Water is important for a lot of the bodies vital processes. From a recovery point of view, it helps to maintain blood volume, regulate body temperature and allow for muscle contractions. If you do not drink enough water between workouts, your body will struggle with these basic bodily functions and will drastically affect your next workout.

**Warm ups and cool downs:** Warm ups and cool downs are your first point of recovery. Warming up before a workout allows your muscles to ease into the workout, often leading to less muscle soreness the next day. It also allows you to increase mobility in the joints, helping to prevent against injuries. Cooling down has the same affect. It allows the muscles to decrease in intensity as blood is pumped through your system, flushing lactic acid and bringing the heart rate down.

**Stretching/foam rolling:** like your cool downs, stretching or foam rolling increases blood flow to the area which delivers much needed nutrients to the muscles to start the recovery process. It will also help keep muscles supple, avoid muscle stiffness and improve joint mobility, allowing you to be ready to workout quicker.

To get the best results from your exercise regime, it is important to remember your recovery. Warm up and cool down with every session. Eat plenty of nutritious foods including protein and complex carbs post workout. Stay hydrated and always aim for 7-9 hours sleep a night.

Train. Eat. Sleep. Repeat