

Why You Need Rest and Recovery After Exercise

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Benefits of rest
- When to rest
- How to rest when you love to exercise
- 10 signs to rest
- What to eat on rest days

WHAT IS SHORT-TERM RECOVERY?

- It occurs in the hours following intense exercise.
- It could be cooling down or stretching.
- It could be fueling your body with the right foods and drinks.

BENEFITS OF REST

Do you exercise until your body is completely gassed or you are completely exhausted? Do you train 7 days a week? Do all of your exercise regimens contain plyometric or high intensity training? If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then I am here to tell you to stop! Exercising until fatigue or exhaustion is okay, but not 7 days a week without proper rest and recovery. Rest days are critical for athletes and non athletes. Getting the proper rest has both physiological and psychological benefits.

Key components of a rest day (s):

1. Promoting muscle recovery– When you exercise, your body depletes its energy stores causing muscle tissue to break down. When you give proper muscle recovery time, the body replenishes energy stores and repairs damaged tissue. Not allowing enough time will lead to injuries, pain in the joints, and constant soreness.
2. Preventing overtraining– I am a perfect example of overtraining, and hence, I have been injured for the last year. Overtraining can once again lead to muscle tearing, glycogen stores, an increase in body fat, dehydration, an inability to relax, poor sleep, and constant fatigue. How do you know if you are over training? It is simple—you plateau or possibly decline; you are no longer able to train at the level you usually do; you are continuously injured, or have stiff-heavy muscles.
3. Allowing relaxation– Taking a rest day gives not only your body rest, but also your mind. Use an “off” day to spend more time doing things you love to do such as reading, cooking, shopping, gathering with family and friends, etc.

WHEN TO REST?

The quantity of rest days will vary depending on what type and intensity of exercise you perform weekly. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, everyone should rest at least 1 day a week. If you lift heavy weights, train high intensity, or perform constant plyometric exercises, then rest at least 2 days a week.

One of these rest days should be passive recovery, which means absolutely no form of exercising. During this rest day you will place minimal stress on the body. Catch up on reading, lying in the sun (Vitamin D), or sleep. Sleep is important when you train hard. One or two nights of poor sleep can decrease your performance during exercise.

The other, active recovery, can include gentle yoga, foam rolling, cryotherapy, massages, light walk, etc. Whatever you choose to do on your rest days should NOT elevate your heart rate. Active recovery helps repair muscles, tendons, and ligaments. Take a cold shower or an ice bath. Active recovery also improves blood circulation that helps with waste products that build up as a result of exercising. Remember, our bodies are extremely complex.



MSC offers many different styles of Yoga throughout the week

MSC also offers foam roll and relaxation on Friday mornings at 8:35am



10 COMMON SIGNS YOU NEED TO REST

1. Constant Fatigue
2. Decrease in your performance
3. Constant aches and pains
4. No longer enjoying your workout regimen
5. Feeling moody and agitated
6. Loss of appetite
7. Having a hard time sleeping (falling asleep and staying asleep)
8. No longer reaching your goals (plateau)
9. Injury after injury
10. Dehydration



WHAT TO EAT ON A REST DAY?

All meals and snacks should be balanced with protein, carbohydrates, and fats! Memorize the above sentence!

Focus on:

1. Calories—consume the same amount on rest days. **CONTINUE TO FUEL YOUR BODY!**
2. Water
3. Carbohydrates consisting of complex carbs to restore your glycogen levels which will help keep your muscles strong
4. Protein-Protein-Protein
5. Healthy fats
6. Fruits and veggies