

RECOVERY POST TRAINING / PLAYING

Building recovery time into any training program is important because this is the time that the body adapts to the stress of exercise and the real training effect takes place. Recovery also allows the body to replenish energy stores and repair damaged tissues.

Recovery Protocols

Cold baths

- 10-14 degrees approx
- 8-10 minutes up to waist

Active recovery pool

- 10-20 minutes – involving slow movements, including stretching

Active recovery bike

- 10-20 minutes low to moderate intensity followed by a stretching program

Contrast showering

- 30 secs cold, 30 seconds hot shower
- 3 reps of each
- Legs most important
- ALWAYS FINISH WITH COLD
- Immediately after training session – self directed

Massage

- Self Massage – Trigger Ball, Foam Roller (information below)
- Stretching
- Therapist

Ice (for injuries)

- 20 minutes every 1 hour for first 48 hours applied to injury.

Alcohol Consumption

- Alcohol severely reduces the bodies ability to recover from heavy training/games and injuries and as such should be avoided by all injured players. Alcohol greater than 4% in concentration impairs early glycogen storage (the replenishment of energy stores post exercise), it also impairs protein synthesis (use of protein to build muscle) and interrupts your sleep.

Benefits of Ice Baths / Cold Plunge in Recovery

As part of your recovery following games and particularly hard training sessions you can incorporate the use of ice baths/pool. Below is some information on the benefits as well as how to use some other modalities for recovery;

- The increase in pressure from the water leads blood to shift away from the lower limbs and back towards the heart. This process all means that there will be more blood flow to your muscles as there is now decreased vascular resistance without the associated increase in heart rate.
- Using hot and cold contrast provides an increase in blood flow to the working muscles and accelerates the removal of lactic acid. The accelerated metabolic activity leads to faster clearance of waste products produced by working muscles, reflecting the increase in muscle blood flow caused by the water pressure.
- Hot and cold contrast provides nervous system stimulation because the central nervous system has to receive two different types of information; the rapid change in stimulus will help increase arousal.
- Light exercise (eg pool work) following anaerobic exercise aids long term recovery of force as it will increase the rate of lactic acid removal and restoration of the electrical signals into the muscle.
- When used correctly, hydrotherapies should leave the athlete feeling relaxed but mentally alert.

The Importance of Sleep

Plenty of sleep is paramount. A good nights sleep will allow your body to recover, keep you mentally alert, help you retain new skills and prevent you from fatiguing too early. This should be quality sleep of between 8-10 hours, so get to bed at your normal time, don't stay up late and then sleep in (every hours sleep before midnight is worth two after). Sleep is greatly underappreciated as a mode of recovery from high intensity activity.

Basic Self Massage Techniques for Trigger Points

What is a Trigger Point?

Muscle knots or "trigger points" are small parts of super-contracted muscle fibres that cause aching and stiffness. They can affect performance of the whole muscle, spread pain to adjacent areas, and even cause other trigger points. The good news is that most trigger points are self treatable. A massage from a qualified Sports and Remedial Therapist is essential now and then but it can be extremely beneficial and cost effective to learn to treat yourself as a day to day maintenance. Most trigger point pain can be relieved with a small amount of self massage with your own thumbs or by using some cheap tools, almost any physical intervention can relieve a trigger point.

Basic Self Massage Instructions;

For an easy case, literally just a few minutes of gentle rubbing can be enough. For more difficult cases, a day or two of applying small but frequent doses of rubbing will usually relieve the trigger point or tight area.

What do I use to rub with?

Rub the trigger point with your finger tips, thumbs, fist, elbow....whatever feels the easiest and most comfortable to you. Simple tools are really handy for spots that are harder to reach. A tennis, cricket or golf ball will do the trick or for a generally tight muscle a foam roller or even a well pumped up footy will do the job.

Rub in what way?

You can either press on the trigger point and hold for 1-2mins or apply small kneading strokes in a circular motion or back and forth.

It's not essential but if you happen to know the direction of the muscle fibres then stroke parallel to the them as you are trying to elongate them.

How hard do I rub?

The intensity of the treatment should be strong enough to have an effect but bearable to live with, aim for between a 6-8 on a pain scale of 1-10, start off gentle and slowly build up the pressure. It should be what you would describe as a "good pain". You should also be able to relax the your body while you apply the pressure.

Sports Remedial Massage

We have access to a great remedial massage therapist with an extensive background in working with elite athletes, including the Brisbane Lions and Queensland Firebirds. He is based at the physiotherapist clinic used by Lifetime Tennis at Spring Hill.

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