

How to Avoid Injury and Promote Recovery

As the title states this article will be discussing ways to avoid injury and to promote recovery before, during and after training. Some are the things I do myself and some are other methods.

Lets look at them (these are not done in any particular order);

Ice baths/Ice packs/Cold Showers/The Sea: After a heavy weights session, strenuous activity which you know DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness) will occur. It is best to get a cold shower, go into the sea or an ice bath or ice the worked muscle. This cold treatment what it does causes the muscles blood vessels to contract flushing the waste products out and pumping blood back in with nutrients to start the recovery process. By doing cold treatments after training your recovery time will speed up (i have found this) as the muscle with your post workout meal and cool down routine is but back into its ore exercise state very quickly, so the recovery process can start. Here is ulster rugby team using there hydro pool

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PbBbTlpwDA>

Not everyone will have a hydro pool so use your bath fill with ice/get a cold shower/ go to the sea/ ice pack the worked out area this will get the same effect.

Compression clothing: Is designed to either keep u warm or cool. Since its a tight fit material it helps remove sweat or retain heat. It also helps to keep muscles aligned correctly to avoid injury. I use compression clothing when doing leg sessions as I want to keep warm during a workout which involves a large group of muscles.

Sports massage: I get one of these every 4/5 weeks to just loosen my body up from all the training. Sports massage reduces inflammation and swelling of a muscle. It is best used after training or the day before a competition so you get a good nights sleep as you are feeling relaxed.

Active recovery: After your training session you should gradually bring down your heart rate/ventilation rates by doing some form of light continuous (low intensity work) e.g. 5 mins on the exercise bike. This could also be an active recovery session such as doing a low intensity workout (30 mins on the exercise bike). Active recovery could also be called a de load week.

Warm up: Extremely important as it raises heart rate, breathing rate, increases body temperature, starts sweat response, heat production, warms muscles up, increases range of motion, flexibility increased, synovial fluid production at the joint increased, alertness increased. The list goes on...

It seems stupid not doing a warm up when about to do training or an event as you will most likely get injured and be out for a long time.

Cool down: As important as the warm up is. A cool down is needed to bring the body back to its pre exercise state. Same as active recovery a lower intensity of continuous activity to remove lactic acid and increase EPOC (Excess Post Oxygen Consumption). During the cool down is when you can do your stretching so you can increase your ROM (Range of Motion) as the muscles are warm from the training.

Stretching: Should be done primarily after training when you are warm to increase flexibility but can

be done before in the warm up and during to keep yourself loose and relaxed. There are many types of stretching, Static, Dynamic, Ballistic, PNF (Proprioception Neuromuscular Facilitation) etc each with their own purpose for specific sports. Dynamic and PNF the best.

Foam rolling: This could come under a form of stretching but I think it deserves its own sub title. If you don't have a foam roller/rumble roller then get one. The term used with foam rolling is self-myofascial release. This simply means it helps remove knots and tight spots with the muscle tissue. I find doing this for 10-15 mins really helps out my workouts before, between sets and after my workout. It does hurt a bit the first few times but you get used to it.

Pre/Post workout food: without good nutrition our body will not recover from the training we put ourselves through. Protein before and after workouts, a multivitamin (use it as an insurance policy), cod liver oil for joints, zinc for your immune system and creatine to replenish phosphocreatine stores. Be hydrated all the time, being dehydrated can make your performance suffer. Fuel your workouts by eating carbohydrates for high intensity workouts and to refuel after training to replace glycogen stores which have been used.

Form/ Technique: Learn the correct form for the movement and once learned move up the weight and try different varieties of it. Without good form you will increase the chances of getting an injury. Now if you were to round your back during a 3RM front squat don't panic, that's okay as you aren't always going for a 3RM front squat. Now if you rounded your back everytime you front squatted then you are begging to get an injury.

When I said do different varieties of the movement this builds up different skills and strengthens different planes of motion. It strengthens different grip positions/feet positions which I turn when going back to the original movement you will find it easier. That's my opinion, I do front squats, box squats and Bulgarian split squats to improve my back squats.

Supports: This maybe a more personal point, I have been watching a lot of Olympic weightlifting videos and powerlifting videos. What I am seeing in common is they either wear knee sleeves, bandages on their shins or knees, wraps or a combo of some of them.

I am trying out them at the minute to see what's the fuss is about, personally knee sleeves don't do a thing, I like the bandages (medical ones) just wrap the top of my shins as during heavy cleans my knees take a battering. Either hitting the bar off them lol or me catching the weight causing me to bounce in the squat position.

I do recommend a good weightlifting belt to protect your lower back when lifting max weights but use it sparingly. Try and use it little as possible so your core doesn't rely on it so you develop a very strong mid section. In my sport I need it but if I was telling someone to squat/deadlift I wouldn't let them use it unless it's a max effort 1 rep.

Wrist straps very good for taking off the pressure from the wrists especially when overhead pressing and doing cleans.

Here is Dimitri Klokov a Russian weightlifter he uses two back supports, wrist straps and bandages for his knees when he is training. In his other videos he shows the camera his two belts, which are Velcro based. He wears them under his tops.

<http://youtu.be/v9N9q3-qynl>

I hope you liked this, just my opinion on how to reduce your chance of getting injured as it is soul destroying getting injured. I've broken my leg, dislocated my shoulder twice, broke my forearm in 2 places and displaced a growth plate in my wrist. All good now.

Chalk: get chalk it's cheap and it will prevent a torn callus. A torn callus is not a pleasant thing. Chalk is used by weightlifters, powerlifters, gymnasts and throwers as it gives them so much grip.