

Recovery

Recovery is one of the basic principles of training. It's during the recovery period or rest period from training that you adapt to the load placed on you during training. It's easy to make the mistake of believing that the harder you work, the better you will get. And yes, hard work is important. But recovery is an essential balance.

The Benefits of Recovery

- Aids the removal of waste products
- Returns the body to near resting levels
- Sets the body up for the next bout of exercise
- Allows the athlete to continue to perform at high levels
- May help reduce the injury rate
- May help reduce muscle soreness

Steps to recovery

Recovery is a process that starts as soon as training/game finishes.

It is particularly vital in a tournament situation.

1. Cool down

- Cool down is compulsory! It should never be left out, no matter what age group.
- Start with a five minute active cool down—a light jog slowing to a walk. If there isn't much time on the court for a cool down, try walking on the spot or along the footpath, keeping moving for five minutes.
- Follow-up with static stretching - hold stretch for 30 seconds each side. Include stretches for calves, quads, hamstrings, hip flexors, butt, arms etc.

2. Hydration

- While doing the aerobic warm down and static stretching you need to be hydrating and eating your post-exercise food [see suggestions below].
- Hydration is important before, during and after any exercise :
- Ensure you start well hydrated – you should have clear or pale urine with a tinge of yellow.
- Two hours before exercise you should consume 500–600 ml [two cups] of fluid [water].
- During warm-up you should consume 250–500 ml [1/2 to one cup] of fluid [water]
- During exercise you need to consume 750-1,000 ml of fluid [water], this is 150-300ml at each break, for every hour of exercise.
- After exercise continue consuming fluids of 1- 2 litres.

3. Nutrition

- It's vital to eat within 30 minutes of finishing exercise, especially if you're competing again that day. This will restore the muscle energy stores to recover them for the next game.
- The post-game snack should include carbohydrates and protein.
- Examples:
 - o Water and a filled roll/creamed rice
 - o A filled roll, a banana and 250ml flavoured milk

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4. Treat injuries immediately

- Rest the injured area to help prevent further injury.
- Ice the effected area. Apply an ice pack/ice wrapped in a damp towel, for 20 minutes. Repeat every two hours for 48-72 hours, depending on severity.
- Compression of the injured area will help to prevent swelling.
- Elevation of the injured area will help prevent increasing swelling.
- Diagnosis. Correct diagnosis is important. Get professional medical help if the pain or swelling or the injury is not improving.
- Avoid HARM for the first two days [Heat, Alcohol, Running, Massage].

5. Rest

- Rest: Sleep is probably the most important recovery strategy. An adult player will need between six to eight hours sleep. A training adolescent experiencing a growth spurt may need up to 10 hours' sleep. However 'over sleeping' is detrimental as it slows the central nervous system.
- Rest days are vital. You should have at least one day a week without training.

6. Other means for helping with recovery

- Doing an aerobic session in the pool rather than on the courts or on the hard ground could be classified as active rest.

- Hot/colds: helpful especially for players within a tournament environment, they seem to recover better and have less muscle soreness.
- Try lying on your back with your legs up against a wall. This helps lymphatic drainage and the removal of waste products.

Remember: while good recovery is a process of all these methods, an active warm down is compulsory. All the other methods mentioned contribute to recovery, but should not stand alone.

Timing is everything with recovery, make sure that as soon as you have finished your game or training that you move straight into your recovery routine.

At times a team or player may find they need to try several different methods or routines before they find the one that works best for them, once you have established a recovery method that works for you or your team, stick with it. This will ensure adequate, best practice recovery post trainings, games and tournaments and is consistently followed as a post-match routine.

Please refer to the NetballSmart Nutrition/Hydration content for more information.

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