

BEST RECOVERY PRACTICES

RECOVERY FOR FITNESS GAINS

Muscle building doesn't happen in the gym—it happens post-workout, when the muscles are repairing and rebuilding. To maximize muscle gains, recovery is of the utmost importance. Recovery practices include sleep, massage, and active rest.



SLEEP

Poor sleep quality and lack of sleep have been linked to loss of muscle mass. Short sleep durations and sleep interruptions reduce the body's secretion of growth hormone. Aim for 7-8 hours of good quality sleep nightly.

MASSAGE OR SMR

Self-myofascial release is the term for foam rolling tight muscles to increase range of motion and improve tissue recovery. Regular foam rolling or massage therapy improves circulation and blood flow to sore muscles.

ACTIVE REST

Consistent training programs should include Active Rest (AR) weeks, built in every 3-6 weeks. AR is a week of reduced training volume and intensity to allow soft tissues to repair. Aim to work at 70% of your regular training volume.

Sources:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.online/life/health-and-fitness/article-the-next-hot-trend-in-fitness-recovery/index.html>
<https://www.livestrong.com/article/406021-when-do-muscles-grow-after-working-out-with-weights/>



The function of a post-workout meal is to replenish glycogen stores, repair damaged tissues, and restore vitamins and minerals.

REPLENISH GLYCOGEN

Glycogen is a form of carbohydrate that is stored in the muscles. During exercise, the body burns a combination of glycogen and fat, but glycogen depletes faster as fat storages are plentiful in the body. Consumption of starchy vegetables, fruits and whole grains replenish muscle glycogen post-workout.

INCLUDE PROTEIN

Proteins, from both plant and animal sources, feed blood, antibodies, enzymes, hair and muscle tissue, and repair the microscopic muscle tears that occur during exercise. Include protein-rich foods such as legumes, nuts, eggs, chicken or fish in your post-workout meal.

RESTORE MINERALS

Eat a variety of vitamin and mineral-rich vegetables and fruits as potassium is lost through sweat. Aim to include potassium-rich foods like potatoes, tomatoes, leafy greens, beans, and bananas to restore electrolyte balance.

Sources:

<http://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Physical-Activity/Sports-Nutrition-Facts-on-Carbohydrate,-Fat-and-P.aspx>
<https://www.cdc.gov/salt/potassium.htm>

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REST VS. RECOVERY



Rest refers to the break between sets or exercises. Recovery refers to the time off between workouts for muscle repair.

REST

There is a well-defined relationship between the number of reps performed in a weight training set, and the rest time between sets. The rest time should be based on your training goal. The less reps performed to reach fatigue, the greater the rest time between sets.

Determine which range is best for your fitness goal:

STRENGTH

- 2-5 sets of 1-5 reps
- 2-3 minutes rest between sets

MUSCLE MASS

- 3-6 sets of 6-12 reps
- 30-90s rest between sets

MUSCULAR ENDURANCE

- 2-4 sets of 12-20 reps
- 20-30 seconds rest between sets

RECOVERY

After a resistance training session, the muscles that were worked require 48 hours recovery to repair. Schedule a rest day between workout sessions, or split your workouts into upper body, and lower body and core to perform back to back workouts.