



## **Recovery After Practice and Competition**

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Giving your body the tools you need to recover both physically and mentally after practice and competition is important to make sure you can be prepared for the next workout. During a workout, a lot of changes happen in the body. Your body produces lactic acid and other metabolic byproducts, it will develop microtears in the muscles that were worked which can lead to soreness, and you will use up a lot of fluid and fuel.

A lot of research has been done that shows that active recovery, using low-intensity aerobic exercise, can help clear post-exercise lactic acid buildup more quickly than passive recovery (like massage or rest). This is important because high lactic acid can cause muscle fatigue and we know that lower lactic acid levels are a sign of readiness for your next workout. Spending 10-15 minutes after your workout doing some light aerobics like walking, yoga, foam rolling, or dynamic stretching helps reduce lactate levels and improve muscle recovery. There is some evidence that whole-body cold immersion and vasopneumatic compression devices (like Normatec) can also help reduce lactate levels more quickly than rest alone.

During a workout, hydrate regularly so that you never become dehydrated. Within 15-30 minutes after a workout, you should be sure to restore your body's hydration and fuel. This is best accomplished by consuming food with both carbohydrates and protein. Check out this [Snack Recommendations](#) sheet for some ideas. The carbohydrates can help to replenish your body's glycogen stores (which are used for energy) and the protein helps to rebuild muscle that developed microtears during exercise. Bring a snack with you to practice so that you can eat as soon as you're done with practice.

Sleep is probably the most overlooked recovery "tool". Getting the recommended number hours of sleep per night for your age is crucial to giving your body what it needs to recover. Research tells us that athletes who don't sleep enough hours or have a poor quality of sleep are more likely to have poor performance, slower recovery, and a higher risk of injury. It's important to go to bed every night at a consistent time that allows you to get 8-10 hours of sleep to build good sleep hygiene. Screens should be turned off at least 1 hour before you need to be asleep.

As an athlete it's important to give your body all the right support it needs to recover from practices and competition. Keeping your body healthy helps to keep you in the gym enjoying this wonderful sport!