Recovery for Camogie Players

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What is Fatigue? Fatigue is an important and necessary result of training where we experience a temporary decrease in physical and psychological performance following a training session. If a training session is at a sufficient intensity it pushes our body beyond its normal capacity into an overloaded state. Recovery from this overload in turn results in an increase in fitness or adaptation.

What is Adaptation? Adaptation is our body's ability to increase its capacity for work in response to a training stimulus – as a result we increase our fitness. In order to maximise adaptation from training athletes must recover adequately.

What is Recovery? Recovery is our ability to return to a state where we can function and perform optimally.

Why is Recovery Important An imbalance between training load and recovery can result in an unwanted fatigued state and a reduction in physical and psychological performance. This can manifest in a decrease in an athlete's ability to perform on the pitch or the perception that more effort is required to produce that same performance.

Poor recovery can result in a decrease in neuromuscular function which can lead to an increased risk of injury, if this is prolonged it can result in immune-function suppression which can increase an athlete's susceptibility to illness.

If this imbalance between training load and recovery persists over a long period of time it can result in decrements in physical and psychological performance and can ultimately (in rare cases) result in overtraining syndrome.

Recovery Strategies

Cornerstones of Good Recovery
Refuel + Rehydrate
Sleep
Avoid Alcohol

Refuel – Foods containing protein and carbohydrate should be consumed within 30 minutes following exercise. An athlete's diet should contain enough nutrients in the form of carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals to sustain normal bodily functions and to allow for optimal performance and recovery from training and competition.

Guidelines for athletes:

Protein 1.2-1.7 g/kg body weight per day for strength and endurance athletes.

Carbohydrate: 5-8g per kg bodyweight per day depending on daily energy expenditure.

Fat: While carbohydrate and protein intake should be favoured immediately post-exercise daily fat intake for athletes should be 20-35% of total energy intake and fat intake should not decrease below 20% of total energy intake.

A good example of a post-training recovery snack is Chocolate Milk within 30 minutes of your session. This is hydrating, contains simple carbohydrates and good quality protein which is easily absorbed after training. This should be followed up with a main meal ideally within 2 hours and continued hydration.

Rehydrate – The replacement of fluids and electrolytes lost during exercises is important in the immediate post exercise period. Urine clarity may serve as the most practical method to evaluate hydration status. Drinking alcohol dehydrates you further and can impair muscle recovery and therefore adaptation to training.

Sleep is extremely important for our health and is among the most powerful tools we have for recovery. It is widely advocated as a cornerstone for an athlete's recovery from training.

Checklist for Good Sleep
1. Quiet environment – Consider earplugs if needed.
2. Cool room temperature 18°C.
3. Consistent Routine: Stick to the same time to fall asleep and to wake up.
4. Avoid caffeine for 6hrs pre bed.
5. Avoid using screens before sleeping.
6. Aim for a minimal of 7hrs per night. Some people will benefit from up to 9hrs.
7. Ensure room is completely dark – Consider using an eye mask.

Other Strategies for recovery

Compression garments: Wear for at least 12hours post exercise to reduce the severity of muscle soreness and accelerate the recovery of muscle function following strenuous exercise.

Cold water immersion: During intense periods of competition with games in quick succession or for athletes who play multiple sports, cold water immersion can help with short term recovery. However, this can negatively affect some of the longer-term benefits from training so may only be suitable for occasional use.

- Up to 15 minutes at a temperature of 10-15°C after intense exercise has been shown to be effective.

Active Recovery: Low intensity aerobic exercise can be used following intense exercise to increase blood flow around the body and can help speed up recovery. This is usually completed the day after intense exercise and can be for as little as 20 minutes.

- 20 minutes easy bike riding or water-based activity such as jogging in water or light swimming can be effective

Psychological recovery: Our psychological and physiological systems can influence each other. A holistic view of recovery will consider training, competition load and other life demands including what happens away from training and matches. Highly competitive training and matches as well as other stressful life events can be psychologically fatiguing. It is important that an athlete can switch off and engage in other restful activities.

Sample Post match recovery plan:

1. Rehydrate + Refuel
2. Compression Garments
3. Avoid Alcohol
4. Good sleep
5. Next day active recovery in pool for 20mins