

## OVERTRAINED?

Overtraining. What is it? Overtraining seems to be a catch phrase of late and training volume is greatly misunderstood. I hear many athletes say after a bad day of training that they think they maybe overtrained. The fact is that being overtrained is difficult to do. It is very difficult to overtrain. Yet it is very easy to be under recovered. Ok I have you confused. Let me start at the top. Recovery is the most important factor to an athlete. Regardless of sport, gender or level of athletic experience. Sports place tremendous stress on the central nervous system as well as muscle and mind. You must have the ability to properly recover from a workout in all aspects or the workout is not productive it is debilitating. Being under recovered is also a major cause of injury. This is where to many coaches and athletes seem to not fully understand that it is optimal training not always maximal training that yields the best results. Optimal training is defined as getting maximal productivity for a particular training or practice session that will not cause under recovery or as people like to say overtraining. To train optimality will depend on many factors, but none greater then recovery ability. Your recovery ability will in turn will dictate how much training volume and frequency you can handle. In other words how quick can you be back on the field or the track or in the gym and be ready to go at 100% again. Which for a coach is a top priority. Recovery ability. Why is it some top athletes can train much harder and more frequently then other athletes? The answer is simple they can recover faster. Why they can recover faster has to do with many factors. A few of which I will touch on here.

Here is an example. If you trained with a novice athlete who is training for the very first time, and lets just say you are an athlete that has been training for many years. You both do the same drills and you both train for 1.5 hours. You go home and the next day you feel fine. The novice can not even walk. The following day you are ready to go again and the novice has gotten even worse. You will be able to get in another productive training session. The novice will be doing all he can do to just walk. You both did the same training. Did the newbie overtrain? He got through the workout the same as you but he could not recover the same as you. How come? This is where recovery is so important and this is why I say it is not the training or overtraining that is so difficult to figure out. It is the recovery that is the tricky part. There are many contributing factors that go into recovery. Which determine how hard and how often you can train. I will try and outline a few of these factors.

First and foremost at the top of the list is **Sleep**. This may also be the most neglected factor especially, high school and college athletes. Most of them just do not get enough sleep. Many people say it is rest you need. While rest will help. Sleep is what you need. Try training your butt off and not sleeping good for a day or two I guarantee it will greatly effect your performance. That is why sleep is at the top of the list for recovery. If you want

to train or play hard and become your best you'd better get 8 plus hours of sleep at night. You must get plenty of sleep every night. Not just on weekends. Every night. You can not play catch up with your sleep.

Second is **Nutrition and SUPPLEMENTS**. You must eat right and get the proper nutrients and fluids. If you want to train hard you must eat properly for sure but you must also supplement correctly. Most athletes can not maximize their potential if they do not supplement their diet. Today there are many supplements available to athletes. Many have confusing or similar sounding names that may mislead the buyer. Many have colorful packaging and marketing schemes. At times it almost seems that each month another new best supplement is available. I do not advocate trying every new supplement that comes onto the market. They are expensive and as many of you are saying to yourselves right now, most of them are worthless and I agree.

What I do recommend is finding a few proven good supplements and use them to aid the all important recovery ability. Most athletes know and agree protein is important. I recommend protein to almost all athletes as a great way to build muscle and help you recover. Another supplement I like is creatine. Not the old sugar filled creatine that left you bloated and needed to be phase loaded. I was not and am not a fan of those at all. What I am recommending is a new form of creatine called Con-Crete. It is by far the most aggressive and fast acting form of creatine available on the market today. After reading the product information I admit I was skeptical as I find many top athletes and coaches to be. I thought it was another same ol in a new package. I could not have been more wrong. After using it myself and having many of my athletes use it. I quickly became aware of the benefits it possessed. The benefits were instant and allowed stronger workouts and aided much quicker recovery. Every coach is aware of the need to get the best products to their athletes. This is one you need to get to them. This is a great supplement and one I feel necessary. Yet I feel eating right is first before supplements. Supplements enhance not replace a proper diet. I mean you must monitor what you eat throughout the day and make sure you get enough total balanced calories for what your body needs to repair and grow. When you combine the both productivity will increase.

You must get enough protein and enough carbohydrates. You also will need fats. Not trans fat or saturated junk food fats but good fats. Such as nut oils, fish oils, and vegetable oils etc. good fats. You should try and eat and drink several small meals through out the day and into the night. Each with protein, carbs, fats and fluids. The old don't eat before bed absolutely does not apply to an athlete who is training very hard several days a week. This is another aspect of athletes just don't get. You cannot skip breakfast. Have a small lunch comprised mostly of junk food. Have dinner 6 hours later and some more junk food an hour before bed. Then expect to perform your best. Not happening.

You must also drink enough water. The old 8 glasses a day is not for you either drink plenty of liquids all day. Keep drinking we need water to live, train and recover. If you do

not eat and drink correctly you will slow your recovery ability's way down. Your diet is another main factor in how well you recover. Therefore diet and proper supplements like Con-Crete are a must. There are other supplements I also like. Amino Active is another good one. If inflammation is a problem this one will help you tremendously. Not as a cover up but as a actual helper in restoration.

The third factor is called **GPP**. That stands for General Physical Preparedness. Which means how good of shape you're in. Which also determines how often and how hard you can train and how well you will recover. Which will greatly reduce your potential for an injury. The higher your GPP the greater the intensity of the workload you can handle. Back to my first example. If the new guy had the same GPP as you he would have recovered the same as you. Since he had no GPP he couldn't recover. One of the ways to improve your GPP is to do small quick **Restorative workouts**. They are small quick workouts done roughly 12-24 hours after your main workouts. An example would be. If you do hill sprints on Monday along with plyo's and lunges. Tuesday take 10 minutes and do some light easy drills that will work the same muscles in the lower body but not the same exercises. Try something like some dynamic warm up moves followed by a few quick sets of ladder work. Then do some short backward runs. A few sets of weightless unilateral squats. That is a restorative workout. These all should be short quick easy and take only a few minutes to complete. This will help restore your body and raise your GPP.

You should also work to improve your rest time between sets. That will also help raise your GPP. Rest should be 2-3 times as long as your drill no more but definitely not less. Another common training mistake. If it takes you 10 seconds to do a drill. Then take 25 seconds rest. This will assure you are not going to slow or to fast. Learn to pace your progress. Going to fast is just as bad as going to slow. In order to give 100% you must recover 100% between sets. A no huddle works well for some because they have raised their GPP to handle the pace. They have a definite pace they are not just running around like nuts. They are paced and that comes from workout pace. Supersetting drills is not productive if used all the time.

Workouts are most productive when completed in 60-90 minutes and rest between sets is within the ratio prescribed above.

In addition, you should keep your workouts explosive. You want your game explosive, train explosive. Train fast to be fast. Long marathon workouts are far more difficult to recover from as you tax your central nervous far to much and the risk for injury increases as well. You are better of to do 2 ninety minute workouts then one three hour workout.

Get in, work hard, get out and begin your recovery process.

I hope this helps you understand recovery a little better and how important it really is to an athlete.

There are many other factors that go into recovery such as age, stress, work, genetics and real life situations. But the above are some of the main ones. So if you want to improve your game performance. Learn to understand how to recover better. It is one of the most important factors in your game.

Train Harder, Train Smarter!

Coach Scarpulla

#### About Coach Scarpulla

Rick Scarpulla is a highly sought after and hugely successful coach training top athletes on a daily basis for over 15 years. Working with both male and female athletes.

He is currently the Head Strength and Conditioning Coach for Army Powerlifting at West Point developing the strength and conditioning program since 2002

He is a top USTA coach working with top high school and Div.1-A collegiate players at numerous USTA camps around the nation.

He is a top NIKE Football Training Camp Coach traveling the nation working with top athletes and coaches at numerous top Div.1-A schools

He is a certified SPARQ Speed Trainer and certified SPARQ Ratings Coach.

He is currently a top requested coach working numerous collegiate sports camps throughout the east coast

He is the founder and head trainer at Ultimate Advantage Training Facility in N.Y.

He works directly with many top high school, college and pro athletes and programs.

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