

Myths and Tips for Exercising your Recovery

by Batista Gremaud

In the first part of this article, which was published in the July/August issue of Step 12 Magazine, we discussed the importance of exercise in recovery for general well being, but also for mental health, as studies show that exercise generates the formation of new neurons in the brain. We also started to examine some of the myths and facts about popular exercise modalities such as yoga and aerobic activities and their impact on mental and physical health.

In continuing with the topic, here are some myths and tips about additional popular beliefs that concern exercise.



Cross Training Myth: Cross training compounds results and saves time. These modalities include cross fit, interval training, Mudd warrior, PX90, Spartan races, insanity routines and most of what personal trainers do in the gyms; they are labeled as high-impact and through good advertising, have gained popularity in recent years. High-impact activities put stress on your joints, are extremely hard on the body and have an average proven injury rate of 75%; they are unsustainable. If you are looking for stress relief and good “brain health”, consider the fact that those activities increase cortisol (stress hormone) and inflammation in the body while weakening your immune system. Unless you are a pro athlete training for specific reasons, or your job requires it, avoid those types of training modalities.

Swimming Myth: Swimming will get you toned and in shape. Swimming offers general health benefits no doubt. However, you could develop an unbalanced body and acquire strong arms and shoulders, while your torso area and legs are not getting defined. Professional or Olympic swimmers swim thousands of laps weekly and complement their training with weights. You could also begin to appear pudgier, because the body stores fat in order to keep itself warm in the water. Also some studies show that swimming in cold water stimulates the appetite and creates a desire to eat more, resulting in an increase caloric intake, thus weight gain.

Walking Myth: Walking gets you in shape: Walking is better than being a couch potato. It can be a valuable stress relief activity and like anything that gets you moving, offers health benefits for the body, mind and spirit. You won't get fit, you won't prevent saggy arms or dimpled thighs. Walking does not sculpt, tone or have the capacity to rebuild lean muscle mass, which we naturally lose an average of 10% per decade as of age 30, by the way. It is the least effective of activities, if your goal is to get fit. (Unless under the care of a medical doctor, of course).

Alternative Tip: Incorporating strength training into your weekly fitness routine is a healthier and more efficient alternative.

Strength Training may feel like the new kid on the block, but strength training is not so new. Ancient Egyptian and Greek societies used weight training to gain strength and measure power. Weight lifting can also be traced to India in the 11th century, where people lifted stone dumbbells to help overcome the challenges of daily life.

Some of the scientifically proven general benefits of strength training include:

- Boosts metabolism
- Regulates hormonal imbalances
- Builds bone density mass (prevents or reverse osteoporosis)
- Reduces risk of diabetes, heart disease, arthritis
- Improves cholesterol, blood pressure, glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity
- Reduces the appearance of cellulite
- Fights against depression and stabilizes mood behavior

And yes, strength training has superior abilities to produce those wonderful neurochemicals that makes us feel good and have the capability to assist us in being more in control of our lives.

Strength training with the right sequence of exercises prescribed by an expert, which provide the proper ergonomic adjustments that make the equipment found in a gym fit your body like a comfortable pair of shoes, produces immediate benefits of quieting the mind and makes you feel terrific. It also gives you more time to do the things you love, delivering optimum physical and mental results for serene, long lasting sobriety.

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