The Importance of Rest

A vital part of a good training regimen is knowing how to listen to your body and take time off when needed.

When was the last time you took a day off — I mean a full day — and didn’t feel guilty? We all know rest days are crucial, but how many of us actually understand the importance of listening to our bodies? It may be hard to believe, but sometimes not training can help you feel and perform better.

As a professional athlete, it can be tough to take a break. There are always goals to reach, training techniques to try and competitions to prepare for. But it’s necessary. I learned that the hard way. My senior year of high school, I ran track every day after school and then immediately went to gymnastics for three hours. Halfway through track season, my shins began to hurt. I thought it was shin splints, so I just taped them. After about a month, it hurt to walk. I went to the doctor and found out I had a stress fracture in my shin. I had a stress fracture in my shin! Didn’t feel guilty? We all have those moments.

As a professional athlete, it was the last time I had a stress fracture. I learned that the hard way.

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So, what did I do? I went to the doctor and found out I had a stress fracture in my shin. I had a stress fracture in my shin. I learned that the hard way.

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If you are a recreational athlete, a rest day — or days — could entail reading a book at the beach. You recommend at least one rest day a week. If you have a hard time resting completely, go for a leisurely bike ride. Remember, staying in shape is a lifestyle, and you must be consistent. If that means taking a day or two off a week so you don’t burn out, then that’s what you should do. You may be shocked at how refreshed and energized you feel when you return to the gym.

FIVE BENEFITS OF REST

1. More energy throughout the day. Adequate rest helps you avoid mid-afternoon energy slumps; your workouts will be more efficient and you’ll reach your goals faster.
2. You’ll sleep better. Being overtired and overtraining can prevent you from sleeping well.
3. You’ll be healthier. Getting a good night’s sleep can enhance your immune system and help you avoid getting sick.
4. Boosts brain function. When you’re tired, it’s hard to concentrate, solve problems and be efficient at work or home.
5. You’ll be happier. When you’re exhausted, you’re more likely to be irritable. Don’t be moody; get some rest!

Try This Smoothie Recipe After a Hard Workout to Speed Muscle Recovery

BERRY BLAST

1 Tbsp. honey
1 Tbsp. ground flaxseeds
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 Tbsp. fat-free plain Greek yogurt
1 scoop whey protein (I like chocolate)
1 cup water
1 cup frozen mixed berries
1 cup fat-free plain Greek yogurt
1 cup water
1 Tbsp. ground flaxseeds
1 tsp. honey
Ice

Blend together in the Magic Bullet (this invention was a freakin’ genius) and enjoy!

NUTRITION FACTS:
284 calories, 29 g protein, 35 g carbs, 4 g fat

On March 5 I won my first Figure International title! I became the first competitor to ever hold the Figure Olympia and International titles at the same time. Here are some photos from that weekend:

Meeting Arnold Schwarzenegger and my new bff! I got to meet Rocky — I love Rocky!

With my husband Alan and Arnold Classic winner Kai Greene

Hanging out with some of the girls after the show

Meet my mom and dad

With my husband Alan and Amanda Latona

Camp With the Stars

On Aug. 1 (the Sunday after the NPC USAs in Las Vegas), MUSCLE & FITNESS HERS is offering an amazing opportunity for competitors and aspiring competitors — or those who just want to learn more about health and fitness — to pick the brains of some of the best in the biz at the first-ever MUSCLE & FITNESS HERS Superstar Camp. I’ll be part of a star-studded staff that includes my trainer Kim Oddo, Fitness Olympia winner Adela Garcia, bikini pro Amanda Latona and figure pro Heather Mae French. The panel will also include elite NPC judges and MUSCLE & FITNESS HERS expert staff. The camp will answer all your training, nutrition, modeling, makeup and competition questions. Best of all, it’s free!

WHAT: MUSCLE & FITNESS HERS Superstar Camp

WHEN: Aug. 1, 2010

WHERE: Flamingo Gold’s, Las Vegas

INFO: muscleandfitness.com