Recovery Window Challenge

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In training, one of the most important tasks is to nail your recovery windows and create your training regimen in accordance with that.

If you train after you have recovered properly, you will get to experience imminent increases in strength, explosiveness, and a variety of other physical properties.

And though that may sound simple at first, you have to understand what actually happens inside of the body and then, see how that relates to your recovery periods.

Without further ado, let's dig into the topic and set a challenge for you!

What Happens When We Train?

Training is a very broad term, so let's split it into the two main types of activity we can do as humans - Prolonged, low-intensity activities (cardio) & short-burst, power output activities like weight lifting or bodyweight training.

During cardio activities of moderate-intensity (swimming, jogging, skipping, etc.), we mainly use muscle and liver glycogen, which are simply, the stored form of energy from carbohydrates.

On top of that, we engage the slow-twitch muscle fibers, which are the muscle components that allow us to go through prolonged physical activity.

With this type of activity, there really isn't significant muscle damage, so adaptations occur quickly and you can do cardio activities regularly, or even every day.

On the other hand, however, vigorous, high-intensity training activities like weight lifting and calisthenics, are way more strenuous.

These lead to muscle damage and overall, more fatigue on the muscular and nervous systems.

By nature, high intensity is more strenuous for the body and thus, requires greater recovery periods to rejuvenate the muscle fibers, nervous system, and energy compounds used.

What Adaptations Occur After Training?



After you are done with your training session, recovery processes start taking place, which in turn lead to different end results (adaptations).

In the case of cardio training, the main adaptations occur in the cardiovascular & respiratory systems, allowing your body to become more efficient and have increased endurance.



On the other hand, intense training leads to adaptations on a muscular & nervous system level, leading to increased strength, power output, explosiveness, and visual development

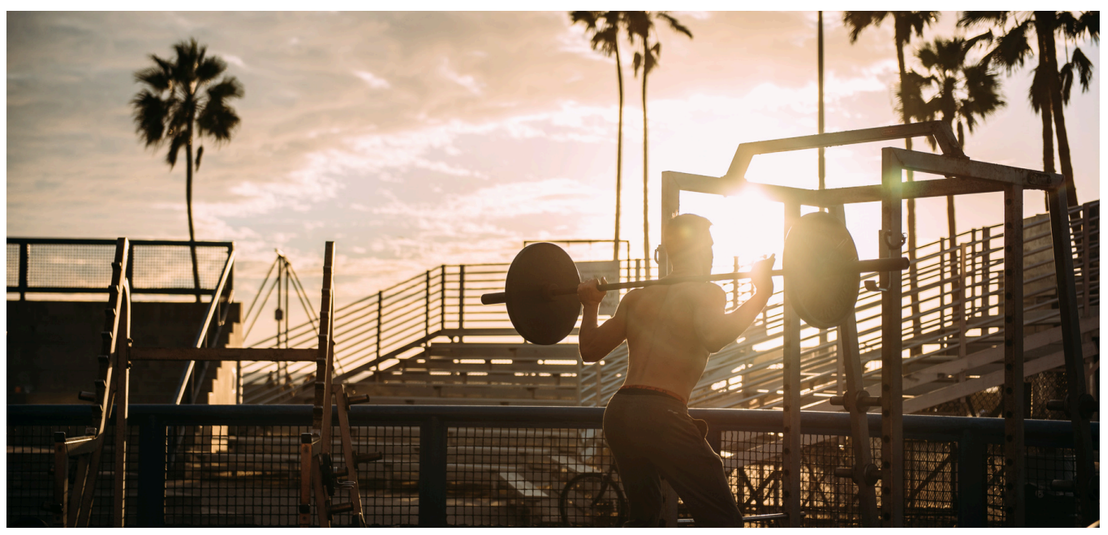
Here's something interesting...

Supercompensation

When it comes to weight training and post-workout recovery, there is a state reached after a certain point, called "super-compensation".

To simplify this sports term, super-compensation basically means that a training load, paired with proper recovery, will not only lead to getting back to base level performance but ALSO an increased capacity and a higher level of performance, than the previous one.

Essentially, the state of super-compensation is reached when the exercised muscle group or function, has a higher capacity and output than it had prior to the training session.





How Long Does Recovery Take?



The main portion of the recovery processes and the state of super-compensation take place during and at about the 72nd-96th hour after a workout

This means that roughly 4 days after an intense training session, you are likely to already have increased levels of strength and other functions.

As mentioned, for low-intensity cardio workouts, this can be 24-48 hours!

At its very essence, this is the body's way of preparing for a greater load in the future.

In being so, this means that super-compensation is not really permanent - If you don't create a new stimulus during that state, your performance will likely get back to baseline or lower, after some time.

The Challenge

Now, the challenge here is to be aware of how your body feels and performs in the days after a workout AND recognizing the state of super-compensation.

Once you develop the distinguished feeling of being properly recovered and workout-ready, you can then proceed to create a new stimulus (training) right around that state.

Ultimately, this will allow you to create a bigger, higher training volume over time and thus, better results and stimulus in the long run.





Nailing The Window Is Not All...

Though you have to hit that recovery window and recognize if your body is recovered, there are way more aspects to recovery than one may think.

Let's see the main ones:

1. Essential nutrients

Your digestive system is the factory where the essential nutrients that your body needs are chemically processed and released into the bloodstream. Essential means that your body needs it but cannot produce it on its own and it must therefore be derived from food.

In terms of recovery of tissues, hormones, and enzymes, there are a couple of essential nutrients - Proteins and fats.
These contain amino acids and fatty acids respectively, which, as we said, are essential for the body's optimal recovery.
To get those, mainly rely on whole food sources, such as meat, fish, dairy, fruits, and vegetables.

Focus on satiating, nutrient-dense foods!

2. Sleep

The modern-day world, full of entertainment and the possibility for an exciting social life, leads to many people being sleep-deprived.

And well, the truth is that the time when our conscious brain is out of service happens to be the same time when the body is at its deepest state of recovery.

Optimize your sleep and you will optimize your recovery!

1. Reduce screen time, especially before bed
2. Set a sleeping schedule
3. Wake up with the sun, sleep with the moon

3. Stress management

One of the biggest enemies of your recovery comes in the form of bodily secreted stress chemicals like cortisol.
As a matter of fact, cortisol is so good at buffering the immune system and growth of the body, that doctors use it during organ transplants, to prevent the body from instantly rejecting the organ.
For this reason, it is important to regulate the levels of cortisol that your glands secrete and thus, maintain a more mindful, calm state that promotes recovery.

Practice meditation, mindfulness, and other mental, stress-management practices.

Final Thoughts

Being fit and healthy is not just about having the right training and nutrition regimens, but also a strict, monitored recovery plan.

Make sure to follow how your body feels and performs and grant it sufficient windows of time between the separate training sessions while nurturing its recovery with good sleep, food and less stress.

So are you ready for the never-ending recovery challenge?

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