Gold Medal Bodies

Recovery Guide

GMB Recovery Guide

Ryan C. Hurst, CST Faculty Coach
Jarlo L. Ilano, MPT, CST Head Coach
Andy Fossett, CST Instructor

The information in this book is presented in good faith, but no warranty is given, nor results guaranteed. Since we have no control over physical conditions surrounding the application of information in this book the author and publisher disclaim any liability for untoward results including (but not limited) any injuries or damages arising out of any person's attempt to rely upon any information herein contained. The exercises described in this book are for information purposes, and may be too strenuous or even dangerous for some people. The reader should consult a physician before starting this or any other exercise program.

When purchasing products from Gold Medal Bodies / Super 301, the purchaser understands the risk associated with using this type of product, and the purchaser understands the risk associated with following instructions from related products, and agrees not to hold Super 301, its agents and/or representatives responsible for injuries or damages resulting from use without proper supervision.

This course and its authors accept no responsibility for any liability, injuries or damages arising out of any person's attempt to rely upon any information contained herein. Consult your doctor before beginning training. Be sure to follow all safety and installation instructions included with your equipment carefully. The authors and publisher of this course are not responsible for problems related to the equipment you use to perform these exercises.

Please be sure to thoroughly read the instructions for all exercises in this course, paying particular attention to all cautions and warnings shown to ensure safety.

If you experience acute injury or persistent, chronic pains, consult a licensed health practitioner. Nothing in this document can be considered a substitute for qualified medical advice.

Contents

Introduction

It's a common oversight; when we think about getting stronger, the first thing that comes to mind for most of us is working out. After all, those muscles aren't going to grow from positive thinking alone.

Yet, the workout is only the first part of the process of causing muscle growth: the stimulus. It's after the workout that the real work begins, and your body goes about repairing itself. This process is called "recovery," which is a word you're probably familiar with…

We all know what recovery is, but most athletes don't know very much about choosing and implementing the proper recovery methods to ensure optimal strength gains. In fact, if you ask most fitness-type people about recovery, you'll probably just hear some vague talk of sports drinks and taking a day off from time to time.

That may be fine for the elliptical machine, but it's not going to cut it on a GMB program.

We feel that recovery is one of the most overlooked and most important pieces of the training puzzle - especially for those looking to gain muscle. Luckily, Circular Strength Training (CST) includes protocols for managing training intensity and helping the body recover with specific post-workout compensation.

We've also done our own research and experimentation to find a variety of recovery practices that can help speed progress on our programs.

Though it would be ridiculous to attempt to incorporate all of the practices included in this guide into your routine (especially for every workout), you most definitely

should employ a few regularly. And that way, you'll always have a few additional techniques you can try for those times when you really push your limits.

If you neglect your recovery, you're not only slowing your progress and improvements, you're significantly increasing your risk of injury from overtraining and fatigue. You're no good to anybody laid up in bed because of training injuries, so you owe it to yourself to make recovery a priority.

Besides, hurting yourself is really the opposite of the health and strength message that GMB is all about. Since we want you to get the most out of your workouts - and be prepared for your responsibilities in life - we urge you to read this guide and put some of these methods to use in your routine.

Chapter One: Recovery Basics

If you've ever taken a health class in school or watched the Discovery Channel, you probably know that muscles grow when we break them down during training and then allow our bodies to rebuild them stronger. Though that's a very simple explanation of the process, it's really about as deep as we need to go to get the point across.

Training breaks your body down - recovery builds it back up.

However, very little in life is entirely that cut-and-dry. Though there's a certain logic to the idea of training and recovery working at odds, they aren't totally separate things. They're more like the sides of a coin, and your body simply will not allow you to neglect their balance for very long.

You may have had an experience of pushing yourself for an extended period. Perhaps you were working on a project that took up a lot of time, and you didn't eat or sleep well for a few days, or even weeks. Maybe you noticed that you got tired more easily, or even caught colds frequently. That's one of your body's ways of letting you know that you need to spend more time on recovery.

Other clues are persistent pains in the muscles or joints, excessive stress, headaches, and decreased performance in sport activities.

When you notice acute affects like those, you probably need a break, but even before we begin to feel any real *symptoms*, we might not be getting adequate recovery. On the other hand, it's also possible to remain essentially recovered without having to take a lot of time off training.

You see, recovery isn't just something that you do when you're finished working out. Recovery actually begins *before* you train.

With proper preparation and correct training, it's possible to manage the intensity of your workouts and mitigate many of the negative effects of hard physical work.

Chapter Two: Preparation

Warming Up

One of the hallmarks of intelligent training is a proper warmup routine. Our joints and muscles move much more smoothly when they are loosened up and primed for exercise. Optimally, you should have a warmup specific to the main exercises in your workout session, rather than a random "stretch whatever feels tight" routine.

A proper set of warmup exercises is specific to the movements you will be performing in your training. The various ranges of motion, along with what part of the body will bear the most strain in the activity, should be taken into consideration. This type of specificity is not only the most beneficial, it is also very efficient. You won't be wasting time on warmup activities that don't match what you will be doing in your workout.

For example, the warmup in Parallettes One emphasizes the shoulder girdle, elbows, wrists, and spine, since parallette work is essentially an upper body training regimen. It is essential that your upper body joints are well prepared for the training.

There are a lot of theories on the purpose of a warmup routine and what it should include, but our recommendations are tuned for adults training in GMB programs.

Vibration

Vibration drills literally shake the tension out of your muscles. Since muscle tension can impede freedom of motion, we want to begin our workouts by "loosening" those muscles so our bodies can move to their full potential ROM (range of motion).

Shaking vigorously also elevates the heart rate and stimulates the central nervous system - both help prime the body for exercise.

There are a variety of vibration exercises and drills that can be used for various purposes before, during, and after training sessions. For a full discussion of the different types of vibration and their purposes, check out **RESET: Rapid Energy Sports Enhancement Technique** from Coach Sonnon and RMAX International.

For our purposes, the only a few drills are necessary. We've included a full video tutorial called **BasicVibration** with this manual, so be sure to look it over and apply the techniques to your workouts.

Joint Preparation

If you've studied CST, then you certainly know about **Intu-Flow**. It's a joint-mobility and movement reeducation program that forms the base of all Circular Strength Training.

The benefits of doing these exercises in general are numerous, but as part of a warm-up, we use them to proactively acclimate the nervous system to movement at the extreme ranges of motion and lubricate the joints to reduce the likelihood of injury.

All GMB programs include an abbreviated joint mobility routine as part of their warm-up sections. Those routines are perfectly adequate and tailored specifically to the movements you'll perform during the workouts. However, if you wish to learn more about Intu-Flow and go deeper into this kind of exercise, we recommend buying the DVD course, or at least checking out the first level which is available for free on YouTube.

Chapter Three: Managing Intensity

After proper preparation, the real "work" begins. In order to increase our ability to recovery fully, there are a few things we can do during our sessions.

Measuring Intensity

In GMB training, we want to be aware of every aspect of our training and use this mindfulness to direct our work in the best way possible. We should evaluate our performance in every session and use these evaluations to analyze what should happen at the next session.

Our evaluation tools are; Rating of Perceived Technique (**RPT**) Rating of Perceived Exertion (**RPE**), and Rating of Perceived Discomfort (**RPD**). The ratings are made on a scale of 1–10, 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest on the scale.

- **Rate of Perceived Technique**: RPT is our self evaluation of the level of proficiency we have in the particular exercise. Before we attempt to add repetitions or sets to the exercise, we want to make sure our RPT is at least an 8.
- **Rate of Perceived Effort**: RPE is how much we judge our level of effort is in the given exercise. We should only add work when our RPE is at a 6 or below. If it is higher than a 6, then you are at the right level of intensity and don't need to add more.
- **Rate of Perceived Discomfort**: RPD relates to the level of pain we have during an exercise. Now, this

should be distinct from the unease we feel when we expend effort and our muscles are burning. Instead, RPD should refer to any pain that seems unreasonable for the exercise. This should always be at a level less than 3. If it creeps higher than 3, then the exercise needs to be modified or scaled further back.

You should get in the habit of recording these three variables for each workout. We feel so strongly about this that we've included a space for them in the program charts for each of our programs.

Once you get used to measuring the intensity of your training, you can begin to manage it.

Periodization

Generally, *periodization* refers to the practice of fluctuating certain training variables to achieve a desired result. There are a few very common methods of periodization that manipulate the load and volume of training or the type of exercise performed.

In many CST programs, we focus on varying the intensity over the course of the micro-cycle (a period of about four to seven days during which no workouts repeat).

All of this can get very technical, but it's all built into the design of any quality training program. In GMB programs, the intensity is managed through using different workouts on different days, requiring rest/recovery days between workouts, and specifying a system for adding more volume (reps or sets) or increasing sophistication (moving

up to the next level of the program). This system is outlined in each program's manual and makes use of the **RPE, RPT,** and **RPD** self-measurement you'll take during each session.

Pre-Recovery

At the end of each training session, you can begin to "pre-recover" by proactively fighting negative adaptations (i.e. excess tension) to exercise.

Again, this is built into the cool-down routines that are included with each of our programs, but the following are optional.

Vibration

Returning to the vibration drills after training is useful for releasing tension and can help reduce DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness).

Cool-Down Prasara Yoga

Some very low-intensity yoga can also help release muscle tightness before you wake up sore the next day. See the chapter on Compensation for more details about using Prasara Yoga in this way.

Chapter Four: Compensation

We use the term "compensation" to describe the work done to abate the build up of tension from exercise, and also to balance the training effect from the exercise movements with the engaging of equal and opposite stresses.

Prasara Yoga

Well you knew we'd have to throw this in here! Seriously, the benefits of Prasara Yoga practice for recovery between intense training sessions has been proven time and time again for many people over the past few years, and (if we do say so ourselves) the **Prasara Primer** is an excellent introduction.

In general, any light to moderate physical activity helps in recovery due to factors such as increased circulation and joint movement, which serve to flush pain and inflammatory chemicals. What Prasara can do in specific, is to fully work the muscles and joints used in your intensive training sessions. Through a variety of movements and postures, you take your body through the full range of motion (ROM) in various degrees of freedom. So instead of a general exercise such as walking or bicycling, you get the advantage of full ROM in a comparatively shorter span of time.

In addition, if there is a specialized Prasara flow designed to complement your particular training regimen, it will be even more specific to the targeted body parts and movement. Movements and postures designed to work the *Functional Opposite* of your training exercises. This specific,

targeted work will further increase the efficacy and efficiency of your recovery training.

The Basic Three

We've included a video tutorial with this guide to help you get started with the basics of Prasara Yoga. Look for the **YogaBasicThree** video.

We recommend practicing these three yoga poses pretty much every day. They'll help keep your body relaxed and pain free - especially on days that you feel sore after an intense training session.

Targeted stretching

Targeted stretching of a body area can also improve your recovery from strenuous activities. Notice the distinction of "body area" versus a single muscle group. Just as in Prasara, the emphasis of movement patterns and structure versus single muscles should be stressed. So rather than thinking of particular hamstring stretches, we should work on postures that focus on the "back line" of our legs.

This is distinct from Prasara's functional opposite protocol, in that we use targeted stretching to work on lengthening the movement that we worked in the training session. For example, the one functional opposite for a trunk flexion exercise (such as a sit-up), is a back bending exercise (such as the Wheel). In the case of targeted stretching we will actually use the seated forward bend posture to encourage flexibility of the low back,hips, and back of the legs. But rather than it being a forceful

lengthening, such as can happen in a sit-up, it is a controlled relaxation into length.

Targeted stretching is then complementary to certain chosen postures that are in a particular yoga flow, and is an important part of a full recovery routine.

Chapter Five: Nutrition

Nutrition is probably even more hotly debated than various exercise methods and routines. As with any information related to your health, you should be skeptical of any off-the-wall claims you hear being made by people selling anything. That said, the principles of good basic nutrition are fairly well agreed upon.

Though we aren't doctors, we do use the following nutritional guidelines to help keep us fit and healthy year-round. If your personal health situation allows it, experiment with these suggestions and see if they work for you.

Water

Proper hydration is a no brainer for help in recovery. Fully hydrated tissues function better with improved circulation and the proper blood volume flushes through for efficient replacement and nourishment of body cells.

There have been quite a few studies showing an increase in endurance and strength simply from maintaining hydration. The old guideline of "if you are feeling thirsty, you are already dehydrated" holds some truth. You should be drinking well before your training, and should at the least replace the fluids you lost during your exercise session.

Spreading your intake, rather than guzzling it all down at once, is also beneficial, as the body's response to a rapid intake of fluid is to balance it by voiding. The common occurrence of having to use the bathroom more frequently with increased drinking. You can prevent this a bit by drinking your fluids slowly but consistently.

The best times for fluid intake are in the mornings and during the period of two hours after your exercise session.

Food

Everyone eats, and everyone knows that food is important. We all know that we should eat "good" foods and reduce anything that's excessively sugary, fatty, or otherwise junk.

Yet, very few people eat consistently healthy diets.

We're not going to tell you to deprive yourself of anything you enjoy eating. We all have vices, and your humble GMB team has been known to enjoy things like ice cream, beer, and pizza from time to time (and would you still love us if we were perfect? We don't think so.) That's OK, because we keep it sane with good basic habits.

Basics

Essentially, you need to get the right quantity of the right nutrition to restore your body after training. There are about a billion theories on what is healthy and what works.

To be honest, there is probably no one right answer about nutrition that will work for everyone, so be sure experiment.

Our bias for nutritional eating is to eat as much quality food as possible. We're omnivores and recommend eating a variety of foods from a variety of sources.

Natural is best, but what does that even mean anymore? Just try to find foods that look similar to how they appear

in nature, and you're on the right track. Manmade and processed foods are less desirable. Worst of all are the "frankenfoods" that don't follow the laws of nature (if bacteria won't eat a Twinkie, you probably shouldn't either).

We favor a diet based on vegetables, fish, and meats. Things like grains and dairy are probably fine in small quantities, but you'd be better off not to base your diet on them.

For vegetables, seek as many different types as you can find. There are a ton of ways to cook them, and many can also be eaten raw. Fruits are also an OK choice, but they generally have a good deal of sugar, so they may not be the best choice for those looking to lose weight.

If you eat a variety of "real" foods, you almost can't go wrong.

Macronutrient Intake

Macronutrients are protein, fat, and carbohydrate.

Over the years, there has been lot of controversy about which ones are "good" and which ones are "bad." We're not fooled - all three play important roles in different body functions, so if you're considering a diet based on avoiding fats or carbs or protein (and we've seen them all), you might want to think again.

As everyone knows, protein is essential for growing muscle. It's commonly thought of the primary building material for the "repair work" that causes muscle growth. We're very much down with muscle growth, so there probably isn't

too much debate about the need for protein in recovery from GMB workouts.

What a lot of people don't seem to know is that carbohydrates are also necessary for muscle growth. There's no growth without insulin, and insulin release is triggered by carbohydrate consumption. Of course, much has been made of good/bad carbs, and in this case, we agree.

The human digestive system is extremely important, not just in providing nutrition to muscles and the brain, but also in managing our immunities. It's also pretty sensitive. Simply put, it doesn't respond well to high quantities of simple sugars or refined grains. Try to keep your carb sources natural and high in fiber (see below).

Finally, we come to fat, which is starting to see a little more love after getting a bad rap for much of the past fifty years. Fat is absolutely essential to your health - including brain function. Though excess fat can end up causing weight gain (though the mechanisms of fat storage are *not* as simple as eat-fat = get-fat), your body needs it to protect against inflammation (chronic inflammation being a primary cause of such things as heart disease). Since intense exercise can inflame the body's tissues, getting enough fat is essential for athletes.

By now, you've heard of Omega 3 fats (the "good" fats…) and how important they are. They are absolutely important, but by no means should they be the only source of fat in your diet. Animal fats are known to support muscle growth. As always, the rule on fat is to get a variety and watch out for excess.

Fiber

Along with water, fiber plays a significant role in proper *ahem* "elimination". Without going into the (perhaps excessive) practice of a colon cleanse, normal adequate fiber intake assists in the normal bowel regulation in a healthy body. This is especially important in intense training, as constipation and irregularity can interfere with optimal performance. It can also affect the recovery process as more bodily (and mental) energy is diverted to it rather than recovery and building up for the next training session.

Our recommendation is fiber intake from natural sources rather than supplementation, however all diets are not perfect and you may need to supplement.

Supplements

While supplements may be useful for some people at some times, they are not a major part of a healthy diet. They are *supplemental* and serve only to fill any gaps that can't be covered with diet alone.

Though the supplement manufacturers will tell you differently, you probably do not need protein powder. For one thing, most powders are sourced form dairy protein, and excessive dairy consumption can cause allergies and other problems for many. Also, meat is tastier and provides adequate protein. Even if you think you're a "hard-gainer," chances are, a good serving of meat will give you more than enough protein to grow.

Though we do use supplements, our advice here is: don't believe the hype. Eat good food first.

Chapter Six: Sleep

Seriously, you know you need sleep. You know you need more sleep.

Sleep is time for your body to catch up with everything you've asked it to process during your waking activities. A lot of people will probably see this section and skim over it, but it's possibly the most important part of this guide.

Though we all have busy lives with work and family commitments, your humble GMB staff takes sleep very seriously. Do we all get optimal sleep every single night? No. But we try like anything to get as much quality sleep as we can, and this section describes some of the ways we do it.

Remember that fatigue is a signal from our bodies that we need rest. We're conditioned in today's society to see fatigue as an enemy, but it's really an ally in the quest for health. Honor that ally with good sleep habits.

Nightly Sleep

You probably already sleep every night. Unless you're a vampire, in which case, most of this guide doesn't apply to you anyway. For us humans, nightly sleep is the time that our bodies are busy-busy distributing nutrients to repair damaged tissues.

This is when muscle growth happens, so let's be sure to do it right.

Pre-Sleep Routines

Most of us have developed sleep routines over the years that are automatic and almost unconscious. These patterns change over time (you probably didn't check your email *one last time* before bed fifteen years ago), but it's usually so gradual that we don't notice. Many of these routines aren't actually conducive to quality rest.

Since we don't usually fall asleep instantly on contact with our beds (unless we are beyond tired to begin with), the hour or so before bed should be considered part of the sleep routine. To ensure that we can easily enter a restful sleep, it helps to spend that hour calming our bodies and minds.

That means no added stressors. Eating, watching TV, using computers, and getting into arguments with your spouse before bed are sure ways to be overstimulated at just the wrong time. The more info your CNS has to process, the harder it will be for you to stop the internal monologue of thought. The more recent your last meal, the more difficult it will be for your body to rest comfortable and relax.

Some things that may aid in pre-sleep relaxation are quiet time alone, some low-intensity yoga, writing in a journal, or having a relaxed conversation. Find what works for you.

Though hot baths and glasses of wine are often cited as relaxing pre-sleep rituals, they can actually be too stimulating if they are too close to bed. Make sure to allow a half hour or so between either before hitting the hay.

Sleep Environment

In the days before alarm clocks and swing shifts, we did stuff when our environments told us it was safe to do them - usually during the day. As a result, our bodies prefer dark, cool environments for sleep.

Perhaps you think your bedroom is dark enough, but look out for light from alarm clocks, LED power indicators on phone chargers, street lamps through the side of your curtains… There's probably more light than you tend to notice. Just because it's dark*er* doesn't mean it's dark enough.

Try to remove any extra lights from your sleeping area. If you need an alarm clock to wake up, see if you can turn off the display (duct tape works wonders with this). Do you really need your mobile phone charging on your bedside table? Move it into another room.

In our connected society, we have to prioritize our health, because others won't do it for us. Our environments demand constant attention, so create a sleep environment that demands nothing.

Waking Routines

Just as our environment has changed since prehistory, the methods by which most of us wake have undergone some serious changes. Today, most people awake to the sudden intrusion of loud buzzing sounds or music. If you want to wake up feeling rushed and annoyed, this is probably a good tactic, but dreading the morning doesn't help us get to sleep, so let's consider some alternatives.

If you work in the AM, you will probably always want to have an alarm clock to be sure you don't oversleep and give your boss a fit. Yet, wouldn't it be nice if you could train yourself to wake up without all that noise?

Here's the secret to waking up: go to sleep earlier. You probably knew that was coming, and that probably doesn't make you like it any better. Too bad. If you have trouble waking up at the time you need, it's pretty clear signal that you aren't going to sleep soon enough.

Everyone is shouting now "I can't go to sleep sooner! There just isn't enough time!" And to that, we call BS.

If you watch *American Idol*, you can sleep earlier, we promise you won't die. Take a serious look at the way you spend your time in the evenings. How many of your activities are truly necessary *and* healthy? We're willing to bet that you'd have plenty of time to sleep earlier if you cut out some of the crap.

We're not suggesting you become a recluse and donate your TV to Burmese refugees or anything. But we *are* recommending that you stop killing time on autopilot. Watch shows you like - that's fine. But don't sit through a show you don't really like to wait for the one you want to see. DVR it and go to bed or do something you'd rather do.

A little bit of time management can go a long way, and if you really value your results, you'll examine your habits and begin letting go of your excuses.

Go to bed earlier, and you'll wake up easier.

If you try sleeping earlier and still can't get enough sleep at night, then you need to start taking regular naps.

Naps

It's not just for babies!

Napping can be a great restorative aid when applied judiciously and appropriately. However, it is not a substitute from the proper amount of regular uninterrupted night sleep. Be sure to maintain a minimum of 7 hours a night, or your recovery (and performance) will be less than optimal.

The best times for a nap occur approximately 6 hours after waking, and after your intense workout session. They should also be relatively brief, from between 20 and 45 minutes in duration. Any shorter and they won't be adequate. Any longer and it may interfere with energy levels (the post nap groggy sensation) and also interfere with your nighttime sleep pattern.

Also, since the entire point of a nap is to get quality rest, try to follow the same guidelines for napping that you would for your nightly sleep. Having too much light or warmth in a room during the day can make it difficult to settle into sleep, so mind your environment and replicate your normal sleeping conditions, if possible.

Building the Napping Habit

Some people have told us that they have a difficult time taking naps. We're just so used to just drinking more coffee and pushing through fatigue that many of us don't even know how to stop.

For those of you who have trouble taking naps, here's a few napping tips from our professionals:

- You might not be able to sleep until you've taught yourself to just stop and rest.
- It helps if you actually have a cool, dark room with a bed in it, but you can get a good enough rest leaning back with something over your eyes.
- Just start by making a habit of resting for 30 minutes after lunch. "Resting" defined as not doing anything (no eating, checking email, or really even thinking much about anything – though daydreaming is OK). You want to let your mind relax as much as your body. It's not easy for most people, but it's a good skill to develop.
- Many people complain that they don't have the time to relax, but given a 30-minute window in which to do so, those who complain most loudly tend to have the hardest time letting go.
- So just cover your eyes (to block light, but also so you're not tempted to do anything) and lay back.
- Set a timer so you don't have to think about time. Shoot for 30 to 45 minutes, but if you're having zero luck, start with 10 and work your way up.
- If you're not sleeping for the entire duration, that's cool. It's not a test, and there are no gold stars or demerits. Just rest as much as you can, and when you get used to creating this time to rest, you'll have and easier and easier time finding sleep.
- The timer prevents oversleep and grogginess. It also prevents having to check a clock if you're unable to sleep. Just let go of your immediate environment and relax until the timer goes off (this may drive you

nuts at first – waiting for that damn timer. This means you are in desperate need of exactly this practice).

- Even five minutes of relaxed sleep during the day is better than nothing (not so much as sleep, but for a quick CNS recharge). Up to thirty minutes of daytime sleep can give you almost the same benefit as an additional two hours of night time sleep (because of the way circadian rhythms and sleep cycles work – it's complicated).
- Just work up to it. Like anything else, it takes practice.

Chapter Seven: Other Methods

This chapter includes a variety of methods that may help you to recover faster after particularly intense training. Some of them may appear to be overkill for regular inclusion in your routine. But we do encourage experimentation, so try a few of them out and maybe make space in your weekly routine for extra recovery using the methods below.

Hydrotherapy

Baths

Baths are great. You can play with bubbles and talk to your rubber ducky and help your body relax and recover at the same time. In Japan, and many other countries, a hot bath is considered almost mandatory before sleep.

Baths can relax your muscles and your mind, and we encourage them - both as a recovery method and as a part of your winding-down routine before bed.

If you're feeling especially sore, try bathing in a bath with epsom salts. The salts are high in magnesium which absorbs into your muscles to help mobilize lactic acid and speed recovery.

Dousing

The use of a quick exposure to cold water, also known as *dousing* has been shown to initiate an immune response. Increased immuno-support can counteract the formation of toxic chemicals from intensive training. Dousing also ap-

pears to help the circulatory response much like moderate aerobic activity.

Alternating cold/warm water may have the same type of benefit as cold water dousing and can be more appealing than standing outside ready to pour a bucket of freezing water on yourself!

A general protocol of alternating cold/warm, is 3 to 5 minutes alternation for 3 to 5 times, ending with cold water.

Whirlpool

If you have access to a hot tub or jacuzzi, you might find that it provides many of the benefits of a hot bath (see above) with some of the benefits of massage (see below).

Massage

Massage treatment for recovery is helpful for several reasons including enhanced circulation, passive joint mobility, fascial alignment, and overall tension release (psychological vs. physiological).

A full body massage would be optimal, however we are aware that may not always be feasible due to both time and financial constraints. However, even relatively brief sessions to the largest body areas (back and legs) can be of very good benefit.

Consider the investment of once weekly or twice monthly massage treatment especially during particularly taxing periods of exercise and daily activities.

Meditation/Breath control/Visualization

We have lumped these all into the same category because the effects of each seem to tie into each other very well. The benefits for meditation are well researched in terms of decreasing overall stress response, and in consistent relief of this stress.

The general stress response (fight or flight) occurs in a variety of reactions to daily activities. A hard day at work, an argument with a loved one, concern over finances, and so on are a regular part of our lives. It becomes a problem when the stresses add up to become long lasting rather than a temporary strain.

Meditation can take many forms from sitting to standing to yoga to tai chi, but the primary components appear to be breath control, mental control, and visualization for specific goals.

One simple exercise that we can perform anywhere is called "square" breathing. In this activity, we regulate our breathing and look to equalize all portions of our breath to the same count. For example each of the "four points of breath" (inhale, hold at point of inhale, exhale, hold at point of exhale) could be for a count of four. Inhale for a four count, hold for a four count, exhale for a four count, and hold for a four count, and repeat.

The simple act of controlling our breathing is a stress reliever in itself, and the regulation of oxygen/carbon dioxide intake/output creates a physiological response of relaxation as well.

In this basic exercise we can add on the aspect of visualization. Another simple, yet effective, technique is

to imagine a ball of light traveling with your breath. The light flows in as you inhale, settles in your core as you hold, and releases as you exhale. You may experience a sensation of warmth or heaviness (or lightness) as you continue the exercise.

There are definitely more in-depth approaches for meditation and breath control, but this fundamental outline will get you started with the benefits as related to recovery in your training schedule.

Chapter Eight: Dealing With Injury

First Aid

First Aid for injuries is not covered in this guide. Suffice it to say that appropriate help should be called for injuries beyond those that can be handled reasonably by yourself. That means if you whack a Clubbell on your shin and can see bone sticking out, you'll probably want to call somebody to help you out.

Therapy

Muscle and joint strains and sprains are unfortunately a part of exercise and sport training. Of course these injuries will affect your training since your bodily energies will be more devoted to healing. Please do not attempt to "work through" or around these injuries, instead get the appropriate rehabilitation professional to assist you through recovery. Ignoring the issue will just make the injury last longer than it needs to. Put in the time to take care of yourself and you'll come back stronger when its all done.

Chapter Nine: Benchmarking

Just as in our exercise training, we should use measurements to assess the quality of our recovery strategies. We can use subjective ratings of perceived muscle soreness, energy levels (during workout days and recovery days), and readiness to engage in activities (how "fired up" you are to train).

Objective measurements such as grip strength (using a dynamometer or other such device) are also very helpful, since good recovery will be indicated by a consistent grip strength reading, whereas a decline may suggest overtraining (or under-recovery). Grip strength is a relatively constant strength measurement (unless of course the training goal is improving your grip strength) and a decrease can indicate a failure of the central nervous system to recover from your exercise sessions.

We start with baseline ratings after the first training days in the program and then assess daily to see if they are affected by our recovery methods. This requires good record keeping, but is very much worth the time and effort. By subjecting our recovery strategies to the same scrutiny as our exercise sessions, we will gain insight into our methods and find the best ways to adjust them as needed.

Outroduction

This parallettes training program provides a unique and highly productive method for training equipment that is quite portable and requires a minimum amount of space. We hope you will enjoy the program and also enjoy the great upper body and core strength you'll gain from its implementation.

We are having a great time sharing with you the ways we like to train, and hope you continue to walk with us in this wonderful journey. We want you to finish each training session eager for the next. We want you to train hard and smart, but also have a lot of fun along the way! Most of all we want you to to enjoy the real practical strength to help you in all that you do.

Thank you. We hope to see you soon!

The GMB Team

Ryan, Jarlo, and Andy