Rest days are essential to your fitness journey. Here's why

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Rest is a fundamental element of a successful fitness journey because it is essential for performance. But it's often overlooked.

Resting doesn't mean leading a completely sedentary lifestyle on off days. This is known as passive recovery, and it's only recommended when dealing with a lot of pain or an injury. Rest is about listening to your body and responding to its needs. On regular rest days, try to focus on active recovery: resting from your regular training, but still remaining active throughout the day.

Why is recovery so important after a workout? Research shows that when engaging in any type of intense exercise, the working muscles start to break down, causing microtears in the muscle fibers. By giving your body a break with an active recovery day, the microtears begin to rebuild, and the feeling of soreness and pain will decrease. If your body doesn't get the break it needs, the microtears won't have the chance to heal, which can result in overtraining and can increase the likelihood of an injury.

Here are some ways to ensure that you are resting and recovering properly:

1. Get sleep. Having good sleeping habits is essential for recovery. While you're on your fitness journey, try to stay rested and sleep seven to eight hours each day.
2. Stretch it out. Use your rest days to stretch, and challenge yourself with dynamic stretches. Remember that stretching can also have a positive effect on your training days.
3. Go for a walk. Use your rest day to recharge. Take a walk outside, maybe with your friends or your dog, or even while listening to your favorite podcast. Walking will help you stay on top of your active recovery—and it can also help you alleviate mental stress.
4. Try something new. Try new activities outside of your regular training sessions, such as yoga or Pilates. You can also use your rest days for new experiences with friends. Hiking, kayaking or

even dancing are just some of the ways you can let your body rest while actively recovering and having fun!

5. Treat yourself to a massage. It can help you relax physically, but it can also serve as mental relaxation time to reset before you go back into your training routine.

6. Above all: Listen to your body!

Making rest a priority during your fitness journey can have a significant effect on your overall experience with exercise. You'll feel better physically and mentally, and it can improve your overall training performance. Resting is the key to staying consistent and enjoying your workouts.

Provided by Florida International University

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