

## **Natural Remedies to Aid in Post-Exercise Recovery**

Rest and recovery are crucial to any workout routine. Regardless of your current fitness level or health goals, allowing your body to recover is vital to any long-term exercise plan. Rest, stretching, rehydration, and good nutrition are all very important components of the recovery process, but did you know there are natural remedies that can help reduce muscle soreness, speed recovery, and boost your fitness gains? We've compiled a list of important natural remedies to optimize your post-exercise recovery.

### **Tart Cherry Juice**

Adding this flavorful juice to your daily routine, as well as drinking it during your workout, has been shown to minimize post-exercise muscle pain. Tart cherries are rich in antioxidants, have anti-inflammatory properties, and pack a robust flavor punch! Try adding 8oz to your daily routine, diluting the juice with water if it tastes too tart. An additional bonus of tart cherry juice is its ability to improve your sleep, as it contains natural melatonin, a hormone that plays an important role in regulating your sleep-wake cycle.

### **Pomegranate Extract**

Pomegranates are wonderful fruits full of color and healthy nutrients. They contain a natural compound called ellagitannin that has been shown to significantly improve the recovery of muscle strength following exercise.

### **Omega -3 Fatty Acids**

Most often found in fish oil, hemp oil and flaxseed oil, omega-3 fatty acids are one of the best all-around nutrients for the body. Omega-3s have been shown to reduce cholesterol and cardiovascular disease, improve arthritis, and aid in exercise recovery. Regular supplementation of omega-3s can lower your resting and exercise heart rate, as well as improve your heart-rate variability. Furthermore, omega-3s have significant anti-inflammatory effects to help minimize post-exercise inflammation.

### **L-Carnitine**

L-carnitine is an essential nutrient for every cell in the body. Its purpose is to transport fatty acids into the mitochondria of our cells, where they get turned into energy. Research has shown that supplementing with L-Carnitine can reduce post-exercise muscle soreness and damage to muscle tissues and improve the recovery of muscle power by optimizing the process of muscle tissue repair and remodeling.<sup>5</sup>

## **Adrenal Gland Support**

Our adrenal glands are responsible for a considerable amount of hormone production in the body. Most notably, they produce cortisol, also known as the “fight or flight” hormone. In a healthy individual, cortisol has a normal fluctuation throughout the day, higher in the morning and afternoon, to get you through the day, and low in the evening, to allow for sleep. Stress, lack of sleep, poor nutrition, and over-training or training at inappropriate hours can disrupt this normal fluctuation and tax the adrenal glands. You can support adrenal gland function and hormone regulation with a good B-vitamin complex, vitamin C, and herbs, such as ashwaganda, astragalus, maca, rhodiola, and many others.

## **Antioxidants**

What is an antioxidant? Good question! Antioxidants come in many forms—vitamins C and E, grape seed extract, lipoic acid, CoQ10—the list goes on and on. You can find antioxidants naturally in fruits and vegetables and concentrated in supplement form. But what they all have in common is that they serve to neutralize potentially dangerous oxidizing agents in the body, known as “free radicals” or “reactive oxygen species.” These oxidizing agents can occur as a result of infection or disease, but mostly they are byproducts of normal metabolism. Since we increase our metabolism when we exercise, we create more oxidizing byproducts and thus require more antioxidants to neutralize them. Antioxidants help minimize the internal damage created after a workout.

Don't let post-workout pain and long recovery times keep you from your exercise routine or fitness goals! There are many natural strategies to reduce post-exercise soreness and expedite recovery, so you can get back on the road or back in the gym—and back to life—quicker and healthier.

Regardless of your exercise routine, it is important that you do NOT over-exert yourself. No amount of supplementation can replace adequate rest, recovery, and rehydration. Before taking supplements for the purpose of improving post-exercise recovery, consult a naturopathic doctor, as they have expertise in nutrient supplementation and will be able to create an individualized plan that is right for you.