

REST AND RALLY

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Everyone is looking for that extra something that will help you win more matches and perform consistently well. To do this, a lot of players will spend more time on the practice court, hit more balls, go to the gym, lift weights and run. Maybe you or your team (coach or fitness advisor), think that the harder and longer you workout, the better you will perform.

- BUT more work alone does not result in best performances. Sometimes, it causes a drop in performance (a “slump”), staleness, fatigue and low motivation.
- This can happen when the training load and recovery practices are not balanced.
- This set of symptoms is sometimes called **overtraining syndrome** or **medical (sports) fatigue syndrome**. It is a serious emotional, behavioral and physical condition which is reported to affect many of athletes at some time during their careers.
- Extreme cases may lead to **burnout**, a state of being physically and emotionally exhausted, where the player can no longer compete.



All Tennis & Sports
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A Balancing Act

Fatigue is a normal and expected response to training. It becomes a problem when it is prolonged (more than a few days) which usually indicates there is an imbalance in training load and recovery over time. Tennis loads and stresses three systems:

Physical: training intensity and frequency; matches; gym or other fitness work

Mental: preparation of match strategies; focus, concentration; managing mistakes

Emotional: managing emotions like fear, anger, joy and disappointment

To improve resilience (the ability to bounce back from tough situations) and performance, players need to use skills to manage their stress in all three systems.

When an imbalance exists, the result will be fatigue, performance drop, inability to train as usual, emotional stress, social stress (which affects your relationships with others) and increased risk of illness or injury.

- The **KEY** is to find the **right balance** to maintain good performance. There is no magic recipe.
- Every player is unique. What may be too much stress for one player is an appropriate load for another.
- Similarly, some types of recovery will work well for one player when they won't for another.

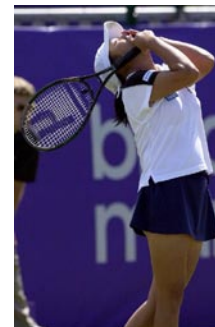
"The body does not get fitter through exercise; it gets fitter through recovering from exercise" Peter Keen, British Olympic Cycling Coach

Help! I'm Always Tired ...

Do these scenarios sound like you?...

- Training really hard, maybe increased what you usually do, yet always losing first round.
- Feel tired even after you have a few complete days off (no tennis, training or travel).
- No motivation for tennis; it's not fun to play anymore, it is an effort.
- Muscles always feel sore and legs heavy, even after you rest and get a massage.
- Sleep problems or often wake up un-refreshed even when you had enough hours of sleep.
- Can't focus or concentrate on court.
- Your periods have changed, are coming late or early or maybe not at all.
- Your weight and/or appetite for food has changed.
- You feel depressed, irritable, angry, hopeless, frustrated, overwhelmed, exhausted...
- You are getting more injuries or illnesses.

Pay attention to changes like these. If your body and mind feel stressed and overly tired, seek help early from the Primary Health Care Providers (PHCPs) or the Director of Athlete Assistance.



PREVENT BURNOUT

Are YOU at Risk?

Players can be at risk of developing these problems for a number of reasons including:

- **Lack of proper recovery** from excessive physical, mental or emotional stress (**main cause**).
- **Monotonous, boring training** load and schedule.
- **Frequent tournaments** with inadequate breaks between.
- **Medical issues**, such as chronic illnesses or viral infections like colds.
- **Inadequate nutrition or hydration**, such as overall low energy intake, insufficient micronutrients like iron or restricting certain food groups.
- **Psychosocial stress** like a death of a loved one, relationship break-up, family conflict or financial pressures.
- **Lack of effective coping strategies** which often have not yet developed in younger players.
- **Externally driven** by others who set the player's goals and control her career.
- **Narrow focus** with lack of interests or friends outside of tennis.
- Responding to a **performance slump** with increased training and less rest which usually leads to worse performance and more fatigue and frustration.



Pay Attention to the Signs...

Every athlete and coach can see when a player does not adapt well to training. Sometimes, this knowledge is a "gut feeling" that something is not right; trust your inner voice.

➔ **Pay attention to performance decreases: they are usually the first signs there is an imbalance.**

These warning signs can be simply and quickly checked for at each training session:

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| • Tiredness | • Heavy or sore legs | • Slumped posture |
| • Frustration | • Slow reactions on court | • Slow or poor decision making |
| • Heavy, slow feet | • Low motivation | • Moody/ emotionally oversensitive |
| • Lack of confidence | • Inadequate nutrition/ hydration | • Inadequate sleep; waking up tired |

Seek help from a PHCP or the Director of Athlete Assistance if you experience these symptoms. They can help you identify what systems are out of balance and provide you with tools to correct that.



Energize and Enjoy Tennis 😊

➔ Restore your equilibrium: balance physical, mental and emotional stress with recovery for all three systems:

Periodize your schedule: Use the "Schedule Zone" in the Player Zone intranet to help you

- Have rest days each week and include regular short breaks through your year

Train Correctly: Ensure your technique is based on proper body mechanics.

- Ask a PHCP for a functional movement evaluation or seek help with a qualified biomechanics expert.
- Avoid heavy training intensity right before matches or during tournaments.

Sleep Well: Get plenty of sleep - 7 to 9 hours is recommended for athletes.

- Good sleep helps with physical, mental and emotional rejuvenation.
- Adolescent athletes, especially during growth spurts may need **10 or more hours** of sleep at night.

Eat Well: A balanced diet with adequate carbohydrate, iron and fluid intake is vital for athletic success.

Time Outs: Schedule a complete break away from tennis a couple of times per year.

- A break from your usual routine and stresses of tennis life is very healthy and rejuvenating.

Active Rest and Recovery is critically important **every day** to help you bounce back after training.

- Massage, stretching, relaxation techniques, hot & cold showers and spas will take care of your body and your mind.

Keep a Training Diary: Monitor your daily training, matches, sleep (how much and the quality), morning heart rate (before you get up), your mood & your motivation.

- You will detect changes and can get medical help earlier with a training diary.
- The PHCPs or Director of Athlete Assistance can instruct you how to use these diaries.

Keep Stimulated: Avoid boredom by varying your training routine. Keep it fun and challenging.

Practice Mind Power: Learn to manage performance worries.

- Anxiousness about past events or future possibilities is a waste of energy. Focus on what you do **now**.
- Learn and use skills such as imagery, relaxation and helpful self-talk to reduce stress and improve performance.
- To help you stay energized, focused and enthusiastic for tennis, read the **Physically Speaking** topics on Recovery, Confidence, Self-Esteem, Sleep, Nutrition and Mind Power.

