

Sputtering performance?

Over-training and lack of recovery may be the reason

Most runners don't have a problem pushing themselves, but when they are focused on building endurance, speed and distance, it's easy to forget the importance of recovery.

Did you know the time period when you are not running is when your muscles rebuild and become stronger? Recovery is vital whether you want to run the race of your life or just reach the starting line injury free. If your recovery is inadequate, you may be over-training and find your performance decreases rather than improves.

In order to gain the full benefit from training runs, recovery needs to be a part of any training plan and built in whether you are a beginner, an elite athlete or just run for fun.

Of course, the amount of time you need depends on how long you have been running, your intensity level, age, other physical activities you engage in and what else is going on in your life.

Some runners may feel that if they take a day off and do not exercise at all, they are slacking or losing valuable training time. In reality, you are doing your body a favor and giving it time to heal. It is a good idea to have at least one day a week to give your body total rest.

You can use this time for something you enjoy. Catch a movie, go to dinner, hang out with your



Runner's Rap

by Ronda Jameel

friends, curl up with a good book or do absolutely nothing.

On the other hand, recovery doesn't just refer to complete rest and doing absolutely nothing. It can also mean varying your workout intensity, duration, type and distance.

If you make every run a high-intensity workout, long distance, or add more hill repeats and speed work and skip your rest days, you may find that your pace is slower, you are more fatigued or sluggish and may experience some aches and pains that just don't go away.

Don't wait for these symptoms to appear.

Be proactive and give your body adequate rest. Without rest, you break down more than you build up.

It is a good idea to vary your workouts to maximize recovery. As stated before, don't make every workout intense. It's good to have a couple of intense days which may include long runs, speed workouts, hill repeats or even a combination.

Your other days should be nice and easy, shorter distance, a slower speed, varied terrain, cross training or complete rest.

In addition, don't make every long run a fast-paced run, either.

Run some at race pace and others a minute or two under race pace. And remember, have at least one day of total rest per week.

Another form of recovery is refueling or eating. Who doesn't love to eat? Many runners' motto is, "I run so I can eat."

It's important to fuel your body with nutritious foods such as whole grains, fruits, veggies, dairy and lean proteins.

It is equally important to refuel within about 30 minutes after your workouts.

Many professionals recommend consuming approximately 50 grams of carbohydrates and 10 to 15 grams of protein post-workout. An energy bar and sports drink or yogurt and granola will do just fine.

Ahwatukee Foothills resident Ronda Jameel is a certified running coach and owner of Run2Dend. Check out training programs for upcoming races at www.run2dend.com. Questions about running can be emailed to questions@run2dend.com.