



# Post Race Recovery



# Post race Recovery Strategies

## ACTIVE RECOVERY

Keep walking after you finish your race. This low intensity exercise helps to gradually bring your heart rate back down towards resting levels and is one of the first stages of overall recovery. Aim for 5-10 minutes of gentle walking as part of your cool down to help prevent joint stiffness and muscle tightness and aiding the recovery process.

Ensure you change into a warm set of clothes as soon as possible to prevent hypothermia.

## REHYDRATE AND REFUEL

Rehydrate as soon as possible after your race to replace fluids lost during exercise. Water or an electrolyte drink are good options. Eat a high carbohydrate-protein combined snack within 30 minutes after completing your race. The carbohydrates kick start the replacement of muscle energy stores, the protein aids muscle repair. Eat a balanced meal within 2 hours after your race.

## MUSCLE RECOVERY

Some stretching or foam rolling after a run may help to reduce the feeling of muscle soreness. Focus on muscle groups such as quads, calves, hamstrings and gluteals. See attached exercises. If you feel that you haven't adequately recovered with your stretching and foam rolling, your physiotherapist may be able to help you. A massage in the week following your race may reduce the tight or stiff sensation in your muscles. Having a cold bath (ice bath), may also help in easing pain. Allow sufficient time for your body to rest before returning to training. It will take your body longer to recover after hard races or long distance events such as Marathons, Olympic and Ironman Triathlons - Try cross training/low intensity exercise such as walking, swimming, or the cross trainer to aid recovery without subjecting your body to large impact forces.

When present; attend the ISCP marquee past the finish line where Chartered Physiotherapists will be assisting Athletes with their cool down and giving advice regarding injuries. Consult your Chartered Physiotherapist if you have any aches, pain or niggles that do not settle within a few days post race. They can perform an assessment, give you a diagnosis and treat you as required.

## Static Stretches

Static stretching aims to lengthen muscles and help prevent muscle soreness and joint stiffness. Below are examples of important static stretches that can be carried out after your race/training session. Speak to your Chartered Physiotherapist regarding specific back stretches. All static stretches should be held for 30 seconds in order to increase muscle length and decrease muscle tension. Perform 2-3 repeats of each stretch on both sides.



### CALF STRETCH 1

Place your left foot in front of your right, bend left knee, right heel on the ground, lean forwards until you feel a stretch in your right calf muscle.



### CALF STRETCH 2

Place left foot in front of right; bend both knees, heels on the ground. Feel a stretch in your right Achilles tendon and calf muscle.



### QUADRICEPS STRETCH

Hold your left foot in your left hand to stretch the front of your thigh. Keep your left knee close to your right. Extend your left hip slightly and keep your back straight.



### **HAMSTRING STRETCH**

Lie on your back, hug your left knee to your chest, slowly extend your knee until you feel a stretch and hold.



### **HIP FLEXOR STRETCH**

Place your right leg in front of your left, lean forwards bending your right knee until you feel a stretch in the front of your left thigh and hip; Keep tall to avoid extending at the lower back.



### **ADDUCTOR (GROIN) STRETCH**

bend left knee to stretch right inner thigh.

## Foam Rolling

Foam Rolling involves using a small piece of equipment known as a foam roller to massage various lower limb muscles that feel tight/stiff after sport/activity. If used after exercise it can help reduce muscle soreness. Gently roll the full length of the muscle, targeting any areas of stiffness or tightness. Aim for approximately 1 or 2 minutes on each area.



### Gluteal Muscles

Spend 1-2 minutes on each muscle group. See the following examples of foam rolling.



### Calf Muscles



### Quadriceps Muscles

Contact your Chartered Physiotherapist for further information and an individualised plan on minimising the risk of running Injuries or for assessment, treatment & rehabilitation of injuries.

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