



Q: I need some **advice on recovery**. I did the Saturn Du and got second by 20 seconds or so. Not a bad result considering the following:

I am really sore today. I did body-marking at Saturn and didn't realize it until before the race but I had done the equivalent of 100+ squats. My quads were screaming and haven't calmed down yet (they are better, but not great). It was really cold that morning. It killed me in the race. I just pushed through it -- which was a shame -- because I was feeling great the day before and that morning! I've been doing ice, stretching and Aleve.

Any further advice on recovery? I can't believe I was so in-attentive to the results of all that squatting. I should have sat on a bucket or something.....J.L.

A: J.L., Congrats on your 2nd place finish, which is amazing considering you did your leg lift session prior to the race.

Here are some of our thoughts on post race / workout recovery. Some of these apply to immediately after the race and some are for the several days that follow:

1. Proper warm down - Immediately following the race allow your heart rate to gradually lower back to normal ranges. This can be done with an easy jog/walk or easy spin on a bike. This allows for quicker clearing of pooled lactic acid which is probably at its highest levels at the finish line. The increased circulation will also help to clear waste products from damaged cells.
2. Get some protein - Consuming protein after a race will aid in the process of repairing damaged muscle tissue. Getting 18 - 20grams of lean protein every 3-4 hours after a break through workout or race should be sufficient.
3. Get a massage - A post race massage will aid in recovery of sore muscles by helping to remove waste products. You can also continue the massage process for the next several days by using "hand rollers" or just a good old rolling pin will work just as well.
4. Contrast baths - This process of alternating heat and then cold causes muscles to expand and contract allowing the clearing of waste products, improves circulation and speeds the repair process to damaged cells. It works best if you can completely submerge the muscle group (legs, calf, etc..) in cold water for about 5-10 minutes then alternate hot (not too hot) water for 5-10 minutes. The ideal situation is to run cold water in one bath and have the hot water in a separate bathroom.
5. Active recovery - An easy aerobic spin the next day following an intense race can also help in the recovery process. Stiff, sore muscles are gently and slowly warmed up to allow for increased blood flow and improved circulation. These rides are best done on a trainer or on a relatively flat course and should be short in duration (less than 1 hour). Stretching after you have warmed up will also improve flexibility. After a very significant event (Marathon, 1/2 to full Ironman) it is advisable to keep the activity very easy for around 7 days following the event to allow for complete recovery.
6. Epsom salt bath - adding Epsom Salt (Magnesium Sulphate) to a hot bath will aid in the removal of waste through the pores and improve overall circulation.
7. Elevate your legs - after some intense leg oriented sessions, elevate your legs at a 90 degree angle. This will allow the lower lymph system to drain some of built up metabolic waste. It will also improve circulation to muscle tissue that will aid in the recovery process.

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