



Train hard! Cool down!

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"... Some recent research has further emphasised the need for a proper cool down after intense exercise."

Japanese researchers looked at the effect of light activity after an intense exercise session on rugby players. While they found it difficult to validate the impact any physical recovery on the players they did find the recovery work acted as a mood booster and left the players with a positive feeling afterwards.

Why would this happen? I think even though the positive benefits reported were mental there is still a physical process going on here. I do believe a proper warm/cool down mentally gives you a chance to "switch" off after an intense engaging workout or session.

Physically the light exercise will enable the waste products produced (during the chemical processes of energy creation) to be removed more effectively and will flood the blood supply (including the brain) with freshly oxygenated blood.

So what's intense exercise? A very broad definition I would use is anything that gets your heart rate over around 140 bpm in a session or activity (eg a run or sports game) or takes you to a feeling of hard exertion say over 7.5/10 if you were to score it subjectively (eg a weight session). If you do either of these invest 5-10 minutes to warm down. I tell my athletes if they do not have time to warm down then they do not have time to "squeeze" in a training session – it's crucial!

So make sure you include around 5 minutes of light activity (under 120 bpm) at the end of a session. This may be a walk or cycle or even a swim.