

# 5 WAYS CBD CAN BENEFIT ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

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As cannabidiol (CBD) popularity as an alternative therapy increases, its ability to bring the body back into balance from the inside out is getting more attention. Athletes are only one particular group of people noting its health benefits and around the world, there is a growing consensus about the benefits of CBD oil for athletes. More and more, professionals and amateurs are turning to CBD for a pre-workout boost and post-workout recovery.

Yes, physical activities promote wellbeing, longevity, and strengthening, but over time, even low impact activities can have a damaging effect on our moving parts. Everything from our bones to muscles, to the internal systems that keep our bodies functioning, is influenced by physical activity. Physical activity is an important stressor for the promotion of health, but a stressor nevertheless.

Can CBD oil help prevent and protect against such activity based damage as a post-workout recovery supplement? What about CBD oil for athlete's or CBD oil for cyclists as a nutritional boost, can this popular cannabinoid offer pre-workout improvements?

**What Is CBD and How Does It Work?**

Cannabidiol, or CBD, is one of the most-abundant cannabinoids present in cannabis plants, second only to tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). All cannabinoids work alongside the body's naturally occurring compounds within an extensive regulatory system known as the endocannabinoid system or ECS.

The ECS comprises many receptors throughout the body. They can be activated either by the body's naturally occurring cannabinoids or by plant-based phytocannabinoids such as CBD and THC. Cannabidiol and THC primarily interact with two receptors: CB1 and CB2. The CB1 receptors are found in the brain and nervous system, while CB2 receptors are found primarily in the immune system.

However, unlike THC, CBD does not bind directly to those receptors. Instead, scientists believe it has an inhibitory effect on them. Through its indirect stimulation, CBD encourages a return towards a perfect internal and external homeostasis.

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### **Can CBD Boost Athletic Performance?**

Truth be told, there is still only preliminary research done on CBD oil for athletes. More broad study is needed and in the field, to determine absolutely if there are benefits for CBD oil for athletes or not. Today, one can only make correlations and assumptions. Despite the lack of robust clinical trials, many athletes have taken matters into their own hands. They are already using it for post-workout recovery and as a pre-workout boost. Here is some of the most recent research on the subject.

## **1. CBD reduces stress hormones released through physical activity.**

The adrenal glands are responsible for hormone production: adrenaline, steroids aldosterone, cortisol and the like. Hormones regulate vital functions, including blood pressure, stress, metabolism and the immune system. When engaging in physical activity, the entire body, including the adrenal system, must work harder than usual. The adrenal system is largely responsible for regulating the body's response to physical stressors, including exercise, through hormone release. During physical activity, the adrenal glands increase the amounts of cortisol released into the bloodstream.[1]

A small study conducted by the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Medical Psychology at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil found that CBD can help curb secretion of cortisol, thereby reducing the total amount of cortisol in the blood. This characteristic could be an exciting avenue of study for further research into CBD oil for athletes. [2]

## **2. CBD has anti-inflammatory properties.**

Inflammation can have a severe impact on one's ability to engage in physical activity. A study by the Laboratory for Integrative Neuroscience at the National Institutes of Health found that CBD has significant anti-inflammatory properties and the ability to suppress inflammatory responses by targeting certain receptors.

The authors state, "We report that [circulatory and spinal] administration of cannabidiol (CBD), a major non-psychoactive component of marijuana, and its modified derivatives, significantly suppress chronic inflammatory and neuropathic pain without causing

apparent analgesic tolerance in rodents.” With more research, CBD oil for athletes might replace the many over-the-counter pain relieving meds typically used today.

In another study on pain, this time for arthritis inflammation, researchers discovered that “topical CBD application has therapeutic potential for relief of arthritis pain-related behaviors and inflammation without evident side-effect.” Although this is obviously a study on arthritis in mice and not athletes, it does suggest CBD could offer anti-inflammatory benefits when applied topically. This is a very interesting avenue for the future of post-workout recovery study, considering topical creams for inflammation are already familiar post-workout treatments. [3][4]

RELATED: [Could CBD Be Inflammation’s Worst Enemy ... Naturally?](#)

### **3. CBD may be a powerful pain reliever.**

Pain and post workout recovery tend to go hand in hand, and if left unattended, lingering pain from the wear and tear of physical activity can get bad enough to prevent any activity at all. Athletes could benefit from having a compound like CBD in their recovery kits, as compared to other pain relievers on the market, it is relatively low-risk and side effect free. [5]

Building off the anti-inflammatory effects of CBD oil, there is also research suggesting it is beneficial for reducing certain types of pain. In both the studies mentioned earlier for inflammation, they reported CBD's ability to reduce chronic and neuropathic pain through CBD treatment.

#### 4. CBD reduces fear memories and anxieties.

There is already a significant body of evidence suggesting CBD's efficacy for anxiety relief, but how could this apply to CBD oil for athletes? Athletes, just like the rest of society, suffer through periods of anxiety, perhaps related to competition, fears around injury recovery, or just the pre-game jitters. There may be a need in sports to explore what CBD's anti-anxiety effects could do for athletes.

The literature today shows how CBD oil can reduce anxiety in patients suffering from social anxiety. Another study found that CBD oil could reduce the intensity of fear memories, a challenging symptom of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Finally, in an often-cited study on CBD oil for performance-based anxiety, CBD oil administration reduced the anxiety of participants before and during a public speech. There is a lot to learn from CBD's ability to reduce anxiety and fear, and many interesting applications for sports and athletics. [6][7][8]

#### 5. CBD and weight management.

There is an animal study from the Polish Academy of Sciences showing a tentative link between CBD, the endocannabinoid system, and weight management. According to their research, which administered CBD to lab rats, they discovered that it could regulate weight gain. They believe it is likely through regulation of the CB2 receptor, but the authors recognize further study is needed to clarify this compelling relationship. Could this be yet another area where athletes could benefit from CBD oil in future?[9]

### **Numerous Benefits: One All-Natural Substance**

As you can see, there is a bright future of research into CBD oil for athletes. Given a few years, a little more study, we could see many more post-workout recovery products touting the benefits of CBD, or pre-workout energy boosts with CBD on the label. From reducing pain and inflammation to helping to return the adrenal glands to homeostasis, there are many avenues of study.