



SURFING RECOVERY

"The most effective recovery methods for surfers are the cheapest and easiest. In fact the most influential factors are **SLEEP, NUTRITION** and **HYDRATION**."

There is no better feeling than waxing up your board feeling fresh, energised and ready for a full day of offshore winds and pumping conditions...

The nature of surfing however doesn't always let us feel this way before every surf. Swell windows can often last up to a week and the struggle becomes real when trying to back up consecutive days of surfing. Accumulative fatigue is especially evident during long surf trips. It's super common to see surfers shredding on days 1-2, getting on the Bintang's, smashing pizzas for dinner, getting little sleep and as a result, feeling burned out and under-performing for the rest of the trip.

In times like this, recovery is key. Recovering properly will ensure you have the energy to catch more waves, perform better and run circles around your mates when they start to get fatigued. Adopting the following positive recovery strategies will help you to replenish energy stores, refresh the mind and increase your overall surfing performance.

Despite the countless amounts of fancy and expensive recovery methods seen in the media (compression suits, supplements, massage etc.), the research consistently shows that the most effective methods are the cheapest and easiest. In fact the most influential factors are **SLEEP, NUTRITION** and **HYDRATION**. This article will explain the importance of each strategy and provide practical tips you can start using to get the most out of your surfing!

SLEEP

Getting enough quality sleep is the most important factor in good recovery. During a good night's sleep, our bodies are able to repair damaged muscle tissue, replenish energy stores, increase attention, alertness and focus the next day and reduce overall injury risk [1]. A review article has shown that poor quality sleep is linked to a reduction in overnight muscle repair, inadequate refuelling, reduced cognitive function and an increase in mental fatigue [2].

Tips to improving sleep quality

- Get 8-10 hours every night
- Establish a consistent sleep schedule
- Create a dark, quiet and cool environment
- Limit distractions by muting all notifications
- Avoid screen time 2 hours prior to bed

The research provides conclusive evidence that sleep has a significant impact on overall daily function and performance. The remaining strategies will positively effect recovery, however sleep should always be the number 1 priority. This is especially important for surfers as our body clocks are wired a little different to the average Joe. An early morning surf should mean an even earlier time to bed!

NUTRITION

Today's society is full of fancy diets, supplements and miracle pills; however the majority lack any evidence to support their claims. To save your money and recover like a pro, follow these simple, effective and evidence based guidelines! During a surf, your body uses up your available energy sources, receives muscle damage and loses a large amount of water and electrolytes through sweat. Your diet can help combat these by following the **3 R's Refuel, Repair** and **Rehydrate**

Refuel refers to replenishing the energy stores we used throughout the day whilst **Repair** refers to promoting muscle growth and recovery. To optimise both of these processes, it's important to consume foods that contain sufficient amounts of protein and carbohydrates. The protein component promotes muscle growth (repair), whilst the carbohydrates replenish energy stores (refuel). It's generally accepted that these foods should be consumed as soon as possible after surfing. The body is most effective at refuelling and repairing up to 60 minutes post exercise [4], however the food consumed 12-24 hours after will still aid recovery.

Performance Tip

Consume mainly low GI carbs and snack on protein rich foods throughout the day. Crackers with tuna or cheese, chicken/salad sandwich (multigrain bread), yogurt with muesli, nuts, seeds and fruit. This will provide your body with a longer lasting energy source. and will assist in overall muscle development [6]

On your commute home from the beach, try one of these quality snack options to kick start the recovery process; flavoured milk, yogurt, bananas, nuts or a protein smoothie. Aim for 20g of protein per snack (SDA; 2020). To maximise overnight recovery, consuming a protein drink prior to bed may help. Research has shown that protein consumption immediately prior to sleep stimulates higher amounts of muscle repair and improves whole-body protein balance during the overnight recovery process [5].

HYDRATION

Re-hydrate refers to the replacement of the water you lose through sweat during your surf. Significant water loss can occur even in cold conditions and is highly individualised according to body size, fitness level and genetics [7].

Performance Tip

If you enjoy consuming sports drinks, make sure you also consume the same volume of water. Most sports drinks contain a high amount of sodium (salt) which is designed to promote the uptake of water. Therefore alternating sips of sports drink and water will assist in re-hydration.

The recovery process relies on hydration due to its role in maintaining blood volume, regulating body temperature and assisting in the repair of muscle damage [8]. Dehydration has been shown to decrease performance by impairing cognitive function, weakening muscle contraction whilst also increasing resting HR and perception of effort [9]. We often don't think about sweat loss because we fail to notice the sweating while in the water. To stay hydrated, the research recommends consuming 150% of the fluids you lose after exercise [10]. To make it simple, start by taking a water bottle with you on your next surf and leave it in the car or on the beach. Try to finish the whole bottle by consuming water before and after your surf.

COLD WATER IMMERSION

CWI is another popular recovery strategy used among surfers. Research has shown that cold exposure can assist in reducing muscle soreness, slowing inflammation and minimising muscle damage [11]. Therefore, this could be beneficial if your goal is to back up consecutive surfs and optimise next day performance. Using this method has also shown to reduce strength, power and hypertrophy adaptations over time [12]. Therefore if you are recovering from a gym or training session where the goal is to promote adaptations, frequently using this strategy would not be recommended.

SUMMARY

The research clearly shows that the most effective recovery strategies for surfers are indeed, the most basic. Start by making **sleep** a priority then ensure you are **re-fuelling, repairing** and **re-hydrating!** Nailing these basics will give you the best chance of jumping in the water tomorrow feeling fresh, energised and ready to shred!

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