

How To Recover from Exercises that Make You Sore and/or Stiff!

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Many people ask "why am I so sore and stiff after some of my exercises?"

The soreness or stiffness we feel after performing an exercise we are not used to doing; or from pushing our muscles to their limit is called DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness). People usually feel a decreased range of motion in their joints, as well as pain and discomfort with DOMS. The soreness and discomfort usually is delayed and peaks 24 to 48 hrs after the exercise. The discomfort will begin to decrease and subside completely in about 7 to 14 days.

How can I get back to functioning status or lessen the discomfort before it starts?

There are many techniques that will help someone get rid of the discomfort associated with DOMS. These techniques are inter-individual and vary, meaning what works for one person might not work for someone else, so try each one and figure out what works best for your body.

- **Stretching** after the exercise and/or while you have any discomfort allows the muscles to get the range of motion back as well as helps to break apart the damaged muscle faster, aiding in the repair process.
- **Massage/Foam Rolling** is much like stretching in that it makes the joints, as well as muscles more pliable and flexible. It also removes any waste products from the muscle while supplying them with the nutrients that they need to recover and repair themselves.
- **Ibuprofen** will decrease the swelling and help ease the discomfort.
- **Hot Tub/Sauna** will help loosen up the muscle and increase blood circulation; increasing nutrient supplies and taking away the toxins.
- **Use those same muscles**, yeah that's right, using the same muscles and doing light exercises will get the muscles moving and more pliable as well as circulated that healing blood. It will also cause you to stretch and contact the muscle in some of the same movements, which caused the discomfort, allowing for faster results.
- **Water** is utilized by the body for almost all of its actions and processes. More specifically the muscles use it for burning energy as well as during muscle contraction and structure. Drinking plenty of water during the discomfort stage should help in the muscle repair process.
- **Ice packs** help decrease the swelling of the affected area, while heat packs help increase circulation of the muscle and make it more moveable.

The discomforts of DOMS can be discouraging, making you want to quit doing that exercise, but DON'T. The benefits of getting these discomforts out weigh the negative aspects because it means that the muscles are being repaired and built up, creating that toned and defined body most of us are seeking. Using one or more of these techniques could help your body get back to normal quicker, allowing you to be stronger and more comfortable in your next workout or daily activities.

