

The collegiate hockey season already has begun, and the high school and prep season is right around the corner. With any luck, you will escape the unavoidable collisions, slap shots and unrelenting schedule without any significant setbacks. More likely than not, however, bruises will be plentiful and pains will be chronic.



JOE CALIGIURI

As a hockey athlete competing at a high level, nothing is more important than taking care of your body on and off the ice. I offer you the staples of self-care that will benefit your orthopedic integrity over the course of the winter battles.

1. MENTAL ACUITY: Just like your hamstrings, quadriceps and biceps, your brain has responsibilities. Unlike the previously mentioned, it is not a muscle. In fact, your brain is far more complex than a muscle, and unlike the action potential of your glutes, your brain has limitless potential. As the season progresses and your brain becomes overwhelmed with the counter-coupe rattling against your skull wall, your ability to foresee, remember and physically act will become foggy, slower and sometimes downright pathetic. To stay alert, make it a routine to drink green tea each morning while doing the daily crossword puzzle. Grab USA Today or local paper and try to solve it as a team. Community thinking promotes deeper thought and intellect, which will help to train your brain to be strong and dynamic.

2. ANTI-INFLAMMATORY SUPPLEMENTS: Your body is about to enter a state of inflammation that cannot be prevented, only mitigated. Sometimes the goal of a workout is to inflame muscle tissue so that it will grow back bigger. Other times the goal of recovery is to

5 STAPLES OF SELF-CARE

■ Tart cherry juice, compression boots and toasted rice? Your body will thank you.

flush your muscles and clear your lymphatic system of inflammation and its byproducts. Whichever the case, intense exercise as well as injuries of all variations will produce inflammation that can be significantly reduced by Montmorency tart cherry juice. These cherries are different than other cherries because of their high levels of anthocyanins that are responsible for their deep red coloring and inflammation-fighting properties. Plan on drinking 8 ounces of this potent cherry juice after each practice or game and you will significantly reduce pains and increase your rate of recovery.

3. ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY: Two major consequences exist when you lose energy levels during competition. Most notably, you get injured. Secondly, you lose games. If you want to remain at the top of your potential for extended periods of time, you will need to feed your brain, your organs and your muscles with fast-digesting supplements to complement your pregame nutrition. One solution: Add "performance rice crispies" to your diet. Toasted rice cereal does not contain any wheat, soy, milk or nuts. It's also fat and cholesterol free. GU energy gels are comprised of 80 percent maltodextrin and 20 percent fructose.

Performance rice crispies

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 toasted marshmallow energy gels
- 2 cups toasted rice cereal
- 1¼ tsp coconut oil

DIRECTIONS: Heat coconut oil and gels in microwave on high for 30 seconds. Mix in cereal and stir until every piece is covered. Grease pan. Put cereal mix in pan and press down, place in fridge and try to wait 30 minutes for optimal texture.

These two compounds are the fastest-digesting carbohydrates readily available. By consuming 1-2 performance rice crispies treats between periods, you will be provided with a healthy snack that will prevent muscle wasting, energy depletion and gastrointestinal distress.

4. LACTIC ACID AND FLUID RETENTION REDUCTION:

During extreme exercise, your body uses oxygen to break down carbohydrates into glucose to use for energy. When you burn carbs, your body creates lactate as one byproduct and hydrogen as the other. When you produce lactate and hydrogen at a faster rate than you flush it, the Ph levels in your blood will lower, yielding a higher acidic value. This is the pain you feel. There are two ways to remove the negative byproducts from your system. One way is to actively flush it out by doing 20 minutes of a low- to moderate-intensity bike flush. The other way that is rapidly gaining traction among elite and amateur athletes is to passively pump it out with Normatech compression boots. These compression boots follow a sequential pumping mechanism to create a return flow of negative metabolites back toward the heart. Each cycle takes about 180 seconds and can be repeated for up to 60 minutes. Many athletes have described the post-treatment feeling as "walking on air" or "feeling light as a feather." Units are readily available in



several CrossFit and sports performance facilities free of charge to members or can be used on a pay-per-use basis. Otherwise, consider them a worthwhile investment to the tune of \$1,395. These are something you are going to want to try.

5. LIMITING TIME MISSED: I don't imagine you spend much time in the jungle. But even on TV, can you picture that amazing footage of a tiger limping its way through the tall grass? When we injure a joint or tear tissue, our body sends tremendous amounts of blood to the area to prevent us from moving or injuring ourselves further. When an animal is injured, it lies down. We are expected to do the same. The problem with laying dormant is that the healing process takes so long. To enhance recovery by decreasing swelling and promoting the transport of nutrient-rich, healing blood, find yourself a GameReady and use it immediately. GameReady units are continuous cold-compression systems that are the most beneficial inflammation-reduction options on the market.

If you are serious about limiting time spent on the injured list, find that cold red box, immediately. GameReadys can be rented for at-home use in three-week increments for \$350 or found in many physical therapy clinics to be used during treatment.

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