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Muscle soreness after first workout

Maybe you spent too much time at the gym last night, ran too many miles or were stuck in a meeting for hours. Whatever the cause, you may find that your muscles are sore and stiff when you get up the next morning. While this is a natural outcome of strenuous activity or tension, it can be annoying and quite painful. You'll want to find a quick, effective remedy right away to reduce the pain and speed up the recovery process. Fortunately, you can relieve this pain yourself naturally and effectively in as little as one day! 1. Hydrate Sore muscles need a lot of water to rejuvenate and recover from strenuous exercise. Always try to drink plenty of water before, during and after any physical activity that might cause sore muscles. Avoid caffeinated drinks and alcohol when your muscles are sore. Even if an iced latte sounds especially appealing after a long run in the sun, both caffeine and alcohol have dehydrating effects. This will lead to loss of fluids, making it even more difficult for your muscles to recover. 14 Must-Try Recovery Tools for When You're Crazy Sore After a WorkoutWe've all been there: You've crushed a tough workout only to be rewarded with stiff, aching muscles the morning after. Turns out that uncomfortable feeling, otherwise known as delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS), is actually a pretty normal side effect of the muscle rebuilding process.Exercise-induced muscle damage in humans. Clarkson PM, Hubal MJ. American journal of physical medicine & rehabilitation / Association of Academic Physiatrists, 2002, Nov.;81(11 Suppl):0894-9115.What You Need to KnowDespite the prevalence of DOMS, the exact mechanisms that cause it are not totally understood.Exercise-induced muscle damage in humans. Clarkson PM, Hubal MJ. American journal of physical medicine & rehabilitation / Association of Academic Physiatrists, 2002, Nov.;81(11 Suppl):0894-9115. Currently, most think it's a result of microscopic tears in the muscle and surrounding connective tissue as a result of eccentric exercise.Delayed-onset muscular soreness and plasma CPK and LDH activities after downhill running. Schwane JA, Johnson SR, Vandenakker CB. Medicine and science in sports and exercise, 1983, Jun.;15(1):0195-9131. The eccentric phase of a movement occurs when a muscle is lengthening (sometimes referred to as doing "negatives"). Classic examples would be lowering a dumbbell back to its starting position during bicep curls or running downhill. One thing DOMS doesn't involve? The build-up of lactic acid, which is actually a common myth. (Lactic acid is gone from your muscles within about an hour after your workout.) And DOMS isn't just about soreness. Symptoms can include weakness, stiffness, and sensitivity to touch. The discomfort usually starts to appear within 12 to 24 hours after exercise, peaks after 24 to 72 hours, and should disappear within three to five days.But here's the good news. Because the body builds tolerance and adapts pretty rapidly, DOMS should become less frequent as you continue exercising at the same intensity.The mode of myofibril remodelling in human skeletal muscle affected by DOMS induced by eccentric contractions. Yu JG, Fürst DO, Thornell LE. Histochemistry and cell biology, 2003, Apr.;119(5):0948-6143. Plus, just one soreness-inducing session reduces the chance of the same workout making you sore again for weeks or even months.Your Action PlanTo date, science has yet to find a definitive way to alleviate DOMS every time it occurs. Letting your muscles rest seems to be the best (albeit obvious) option. Using recovery modalities between training sessions in elite athletes: does it help? Barnett A. Sports medicine (Auckland, N.Z.), 2007, Jan.;36(9):0112-1642. However, there may be a few steps you can take to be kind to your body along the way. Tart cherry juice, ginger, and turmeric are all natural anti-inflammatories that may help minimize the pain. And in smaller studies, both watermelon juice (yum!)Watermelon juice: potential functional drink for sore muscle relief in athletes. Tarazona-Diaz MP, Alacid F, Carrasco M. Journal of agricultural and food chemistry. 2013, Jul.;61(31):1520-5118, and the topical application of arnicaThe effects of topical Arnica on performance, pain and muscle damage after intense eccentric exercise. Pumpa KL, Fallon KE, Bensoussan A. European journal of sport science, 2013, Aug.;14(3):1536-7290, have also provided relief.Other studies have shown that, at least in trained athletes, cold water baths or alternating hot-and-cold water baths may have a positive effect on recovery time.Sprint cycling performance is maintained with short-term contrast water immersion. Crampton D, Donne B, Egaña M. Medicine and science in sports and exercise, 2012, Mar.;43(11):1530-0315.Short term effects of various water immersions on recovery from exhaustive intermittent exercise. Pourmot H, Bieuzen F, Duffield R. European journal of applied physiology, 2010, Dec.;111(7):1439-6327. Before you start filling your tub with ice, though, note that these studies didn't examine pain relief, only performance recovery. And believe it or not, the jury is out on whether over-the-counter pain relievers (like acetaminophen) and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) provide much help. Though acetaminophen appears to be effective at reducing pain—thereby allowing athletes to push harder and improve performance—it may not be effective at relieving the pain associated with DOMS.The influence of acetaminophen on repeated sprint cycling performance. Foster J, Taylor L, Chrismas BC. European journal of applied physiology, 2014, Aug.;114(1):1439-6327. And though one study claims that NSAIDs (drugs like ibuprofen and aspirin) may have a positive effect depending on dosage and the time of administration, more recent studies have found that the over-the-counter form is ineffective.Managing delayed-onset muscle soreness: lack of effect of selected oral systemic analgesics. Barlas P, Craig JA, Robinson J. Archives of physical medicine and rehabilitation, 2000, Aug.;81(7):0003-9993.Delayed onset muscle soreness : treatment strategies and performance factors. Cheung K, Hume P, Maxwell L. Sports medicine (Auckland, N.Z.), 2003, Jun.;33(2):0112-1642.One last thing to consider? Recent studies have shown that chronic use of NSAIDs may actually inhibit muscle growth, though they may be OK to use occasionally.Does an NSAID a day keep satellite cells at bay? Mackey AL. Journal of applied physiology (Bethesda, Md. : 1985), 2013, May.;115(6):1522-1601.To sum up, There's not a great OTC solution for the muscle aches you get the next morning. Passive stretching and other homeopathic approaches have also been unsuccessful at alleviating DOMS symptoms.The effect of passive stretching on delayed onset muscle soreness, and other detrimental effects following eccentric exercise. Lund H, Vestergaard-Poulsen P, Kanstrup IL. Scandinavian journal of medicine & science in sports, 1998, Nov.;8(4):0905-7188. Delayed onset muscle soreness : treatment strategies and performance factors. Cheung K, Hume P, Maxwell L. Sports medicine (Auckland, N.Z.), 2003, Jun.;33(2):0112-1642.No Pain, No Gain?Soreness is a natural effect of exercise and a sign muscles are benefiting from all that hard work. Most people will experience muscle aches at some point, especially if they're new to working out or starting a new training program (sorry!). In order to improve, overloading your muscles is required, but there's also a law of diminishing returns in fitness. That's the tipping point where you won't get any more out of your workout and might do more harm than good. So if you're in pain during exercise or if your pain lasts longer than a few days, it's probably time to see a doc. Otherwise, train hard, rest up, and enjoy the benefits of a stronger, healthier body.Originally published in June 2011. Updated July 2015. Chugging water is great—but your body needs a little more than that sometimes. There's nothing like the feeling you get after smashing a sweat-dripping, intense workout. Whether you're the kind of person who loves to crush treadmill sprints or you prefer to hit the yoga mat for a vinyasa flow, there's a special rush you get when you're filled with endorphins. The not so desirable part? That post-fitness soreness. Stressing your muscles—regardless of your go-to exercise method—creates microscopic tears in them (don't freak out, it's OK!). These tears make you sore at first, but then ultimately help make you stronger by increasing muscle mass, according to the American Council on Exercise (ACE). The good news? You can get a leg up on that I can't move my arms feeling with the right nutrition. That's right: Certain foods boasting specific nutrient profiles can help you recover smarter, and even lessen next-day soreness. "Aim to get in your post-workout meal sooner rather than later, preferably within three hours of training," suggests Dr. Ryan M. Greene, DO, MS, and medical director at Monarch Athletic Club in West Hollywood. "You're aiming for a 2:1 carbohydrate to protein ratio, since protein is best absorbed with a carbohydrate co-transporter." So now that we've got the basics down, it's time to dive into the specifics. Here, experts suggest eats that are great for post-workout recovery—so you can give your muscles a fighting chance during your next workout. RELATED: What to Eat After a Workout taro isolated on white background Think of taro as sweet potato's purple cousin, says Peter Abarcar Jr., Executive Chef at the Westin Hapuna Beach, who incorporates responsibly sourced, organic items into the brand's Eat Well menu. "Taro is a great source of carbohydrates as well as fiber," he adds. "It's perfect to pair with a protein of your choice to really get in an ideal post-workout meal." Cynthia Sass, RD, contributing nutrition editor at Health agrees, adding that the purpose of a good recovery meal is to "provide raw materials to heal from the wear-and-tear exercise puts on the body, which is ultimately what makes you stronger and more fit." Spinach, as well as other cruciferous vegetables, is jam-packed with nutrients that help stave off inflammation including Vitamins B, C, and A. It also packs 5 grams of protein per cup (yes, please). It's something that you can easily slip it into your post-sweat protein shake without altering the taste at all. A pile of fresh raspberries and blueberries on a white background While all fruits have antioxidants—which help your muscles to repair themselves after a workout—blueberries contain the highest amount. Both of these berries are a great source of carbohydrates as well as sirtuins, says Greene. "Sirtuins modulate various cellular and organismal functions like cellular death, inflammatory pathways in the body, metabolism and longevity and assist significantly with recovery," he adds. Chia seeds boast three grams of complete protein, which means that they have all nine essential amino acids. "Chia seeds also supply key minerals, like iron, calcium, and magnesium, as well as anti-inflammatory fat, which helps support exercise recovery," says Sass. A bit confused about how exactly to use them? Abarcar suggests adding them to Greek yogurt or a smoothie for a bit of crunch. "If you have time in advance, you can also make a chia seed pudding," he says. The best part? "All you need is a little coconut milk and some fresh fruit to top it off with." superfoods-heart-green-tea An October 2018 study published in Physiology and Behavior found that men who supplemented with 500mg of green tea extract reduced markers of muscle damage caused by exercise. "It's a rich source of antioxidants and polyphenols that assist with regulating oxidative damage introduced throughout training as well as every day life," says Greene. Not only are they super portable, but bananas are also loaded with both carbohydrates and potassium, two muscle-friendly post-workout nutrients. "Bananas replenish carbohydrates burned for fuel during exercise, along with potassium, an electrolyte lost in sweat," says Sass. Oatmeal is excellent because it's super easy to make when you're in a pinch (and fast, too). Not to mention, it can also lead to a longer life, according to a 2016 study published in the journal Circulation. Researchers from Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that people who ate 33 grams of whole grains daily—which is what you'll get in a bowl of oatmeal—reduced their risk of premature death by 9 percent compared to those who barely ate whole grains at all. Staying Healthy Many popular workouts that aim to strengthen your arms, legs, and abs give short shrift to many of the muscles that form your body's core (the group of muscles that form the sturdy central link connecting your upper and lower body). Strong core muscles are essential to improving performance in almost any sport — and are the secret to sidestepping debilitating back pain. If you haven't been working your core muscles regularly — or if you challenge yourself with a new set of exercises — expect to feel a little soreness as you get used to your new routine. Extremely sore muscles a day or two after a core workout means you probably overdid it and might need to dial down your workout a bit. Next time, try to finish just one full set of each exercise in the workout. You might also do fewer repetitions (reps) of the exercises you find especially hard. Once you can do reps without much soreness, build strength by adding one more rep of the harder exercises in each session until you're doing the full number of reps comfortably. Then try adding a second set. If your muscles feel really sore within 24 to 48 hours of adding a burst of core work, cut back on the number of reps. For example, say you are doing planks, the modern alternative to pushups. Instead of trying to do four front planks a day, start with one. Stick with that for a few days, then add a second plank. When you're comfortable at that level — that is, not feeling a lot of muscle soreness — add a third plank. And so on. If even one plank knocks you out, cut back on how long you hold it: instead of 30 seconds, try 10 seconds for several days, then try 15 or 20 seconds, and so on. Delayed-onset muscle soreness is a normal response to working your muscles. Usually, it peaks 24 to 48 hours after a workout before gradually easing, then disappearing entirely in another day or so. But if you experience sudden, sharp, or long-lasting pain, check with your doctor. For more on how to safely and effectively strengthen your core, read Core Exercises, a Special Health Report from Harvard Medical School. As a service to our readers, Harvard Health Publishing provides access to our library of archived content. Please note the date of last review or update on all articles. No content on this site, regardless of date, should ever be used as a substitute for direct medical advice from your doctor or other qualified clinician.

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