

LISTENING TO YOUR BODY

UNIVERSITY RECREATION AND WELLNESS

THE DISCUSSION

What does listening to your body mean?

Muscular Soreness Explained

Identifying Fatigue

Slow Down, Plan Ahead

WHAT DOES "LISTEN TO YOUR BODY MEAN"?

A RELATIVELY FRUSTING EXPRESSION FOR MOST.....

Who has ever had a difficult (or at times lengthy but easy) workout and realized a day or two after, that your body is sore and just out of it. That very same day your trainer, coach, or friend notices and instructs you to "listen to your body..." I mean... "listening to your body" is a difficult expression for most individuals. To be honest, not many enthusiasts like hearing anyone say 'listen to your body.' It does not really explain anything, it's frustrating! What does it all mean?! Simply put, anyone that says that is talking about the level or amount of muscular soreness and fatigue you may be experiencing and you need time to recover. The goal of this article is to go over muscular soreness and fatigue and how both of these topics contribute to the phrase: "listen to your body," and address some simple solutions to recovery.

MEET THOMAS



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MUSCULAR SORENESS

WHAT IS IT? WHAT ARE SOME SOLUTIONS?

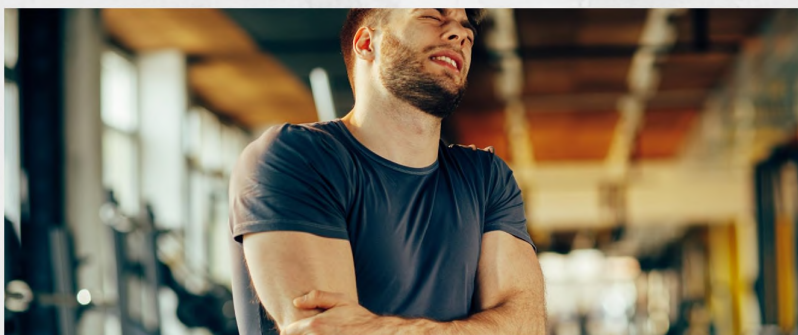
What are some of the first things you think of when you are sore? Personally, cheeseburgers because I earned them. But seriously, healthcare professionals will say some of the following: stretching, long slow aerobic days (LSDs or active rest), foam rolling, ice, heat and of course massage.

But what does soreness mean? There is no great definition for muscle soreness.

However, there are widely accepted explanations such as muscular soreness simply describes muscular pain(3). This pain is usually characterized by dull and/or aching sensations that occur during movement, applying pressure or stretching affected areas.

Why does this happen? Muscular soreness is caused by the stress we apply to muscles when we use them.

The most obvious use of muscles is during exercise, but there are other ways for muscles to be stressed that can cause soreness: injury, poor lifting mechanics, improper stretching, resisting gravity all day (i.e standing, walking)(15).



HOW TO RESOLVE SORNESS

SEVERAL WAYS TO DO THIS...

Usually it takes a combination of methods to resolve the soreness within 1-3 days. There are things like recovery days which are active rest and warming followed by a cooldown post exercise session. Active rest is used to keep moving while assisting in the body's natural recovery process (i.e. increasing blood flow to affected areas and expediting the inflammatory process). Warmups and cool downs allow us to prepare for activity and then return our bodies to a somewhat normal state afterwards to assist in recovery(11).

Some people recommend yoga/stretching (10), foam rolling or a combination of both(4)! All of these methods are acceptable ways to recover faster from muscle soreness. You just have to find one that works for you, so don't be afraid to try new things. Who knows you may be pleasantly surprised and relieved that your soreness resolves more quickly.



FOAM ROLLING AND STRETCHING COMES EASY TO MOST PEOPLE. DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TRY NEW THINGS, YOU MAY BE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED WITH THE RESULTS.



IDENTIFYING FATIGUE

MENTAL

PHYSICAL

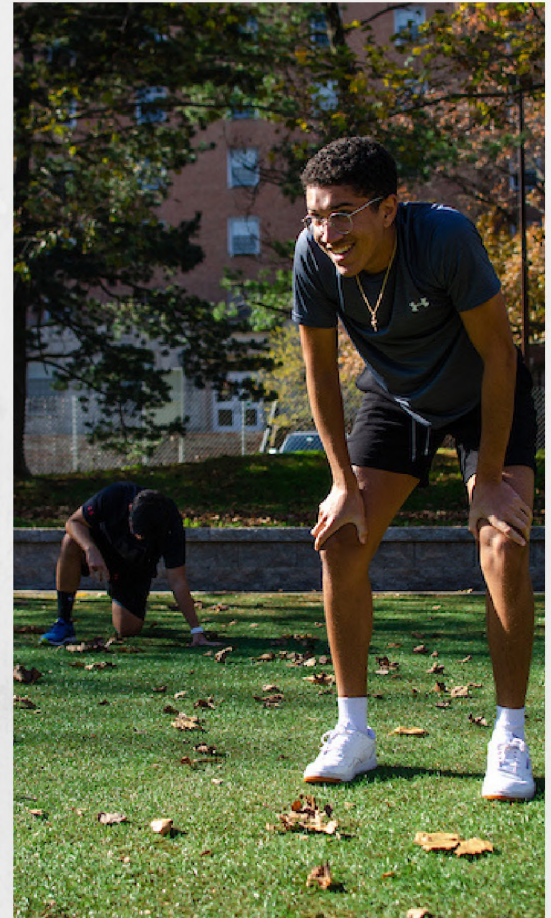
EMOTIONAL

What are some of the first things you think of when you are “out of it” or lacking energy? I will be honest I don't really think much at that point, I am just present. You know what I mean, lights are on but nobody's home. Other thoughts can include pondering what you ate because you had a big meal or thinking man I need to go to bed and it's about 4pm(6). Quite possibly you are beginning to lose focus on simple tasks. You could also be feeling stressed or anxious and even becoming emotional or irritable at unusual times(12). All of these and more are possible when experiencing any level of fatigue.

We all get there at some point during the day or during a workout. You feel tired, weary, worn out and just don't want to do anything except maybe take a nap. It is okay to feel this way, sometimes we are just exhausted and it's our body's way of telling us to take a break, relax and rest because you need it.

Fatigue is caused by a plethora of activities and lifestyle choices. For example, in the college lifestyle, fatigue is public enemy number one (especially around finals) and we can all relate as to why this can happen: poor sleep habits, staying up late to cram, poor eating habits, emotional stress, having about 2 or even 3 jobs, consuming too much caffeine, the list goes on.

How do we begin to address this issue? Simple, take breaks, plan ahead and leave time for yourself mentally and emotionally, and of course get some sleep(1)! There could be a whole different article discussing sleep and rest(8). However, as far as sleeping is concerned for the purposes of this article, most, if not all health and wellness professionals will agree that human beings should be attempting to get 7-8 hours of sleep each night. It is okay if you don't or can't get this amount of sleep, there are other ways to address this. For example, some people can get away with a 20min nap and feel mentally, emotionally and physically charged for another 4-5 hours during the day.



As always if you are in need of further assistance don't hesitate to contact the [UMD RecWell Athletic Trainers](#). [we will always provide any additional help where necessary.](#) There are also additional services on campus. Services such as the [UMD Counseling Center \(301\) 314-7651](#) and [Behavioral Health located at the University Health Center \(301\) 314-8106](#)



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Do not ignore when you feel tired. Its definitely because you're tired!

SLOW DOWN PLAN AHEAD

WHERE TO START..

In conclusion, muscular soreness and fatigue can combine to form the expression “listen to your body.” There are numerous ways to experience both muscular soreness and fatigue. Therefore, it is up to each of us to determine what it means for our individual exercise programs or schedules. There are several acceptable and proven ways to address both of these factors, however you must be willing to slow down and try new things to address and solve the various symptoms of each. Plan ahead, create a schedule for days where you don't do anything except for self care, stretch, massage and have some fun.

Finally, do not hesitate to ask the professionals. The [UMD RecWell Athletic Trainers](#) are here to help each student with their particular situation. We will do our best to provide you with the appropriate referrals, tools, program or advice you need to solve all of your orthopedic concerns and health and wellness needs.



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Taking a few days to a week off is not going to drastically effect any progress you have made.

We'll help you get started

Ask the
professionals
for help

Slow Down
and
Smell the
Roses

Practice
selfcare and
mindfulness

Tryout new
things

Less talking
More DO-ing!
Take a Day Off!

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