

Movement vs Exercise

One of the simplest ways to recover faster is to simply move. The body is designed to move and while it is doing so the circulation and lymphatic system work much more efficiently allowing vital nutrients to our muscles and carrying away toxins.

In a similar vein, the biggest cause of injury is leaving the body inactive for too long. Unfortunately our sedentary lifestyles and habit of sitting in front of a computer for 8 hours followed by sitting in front of a TV for 3 hours, 5 days a week, mean that this is something we do very little of.

The body is actually very good at preventing injury from happening given the right tools...one of the principle tools in this is to keep it moving...not running marathons all day, but just moving around...doing stuff.

This doesn't have to be particularly exerting, just walking around is one of the best exercises for this that there is. Basically anything that moves the muscles and forces the body to do some dynamic action.

Movement is actually one of the most powerful tools we have in our anti inflammatory arsenal. Circulation and the lymphatic system are 2 crucial processes in reducing inflammation. Blood circulation to get essential nutrients to the muscle for repairs purposed and lymph circulation to get rid of all the toxins and by products of the repair process.

As our ancestors were moving around a lot this made a lot of sense however fast forward to today when many of us spend our lives sat in front of a computer barely moving and this circulation and the healing effects it provides grind to a halt.

That said this is actually harder for a lot of people to do that I ever imagined. Obviously if you've got an office job you are expected to be at your desk for 8 hours a day. And going for a 30 min walk 3 times a day just isn't tolerated.

Some of the solutions clients of mine have found is switching to a standing desk, this encourages movement as you can only stand in place for so long and a lot of them actually find it increases creative thought and that they actually work much better when standing...convincing your boss of this is occasionally more tricky but is definitely worth a shot.

I know people who have just stacked a few boxes on top their desk (me as I right this for example) and shifted their keyboard and monitor around a bit to achieve the same effect.

When I talk about movement, in my head I distinguish this as separate and distinct from exercise. Movement is something you could pretty much do for ever (or at least a damn long time) think walking, easy cycling, light yoga, etc. This isn't designed to be taxing on the body (in fact low level movement has been shown to have a stimulatory effect on the immune system) but just enough to move your joints around and get the circulation moving.

A lot of clients say to me, *"I don't need to really do this I go to the gym for an hour every day,"* but herein lies the problem. Exercising hard after sitting around for 8 hours a day is very likely to cause you injury, it's that constant movement that we're talking about that keeps the muscles loose and ready for sudden bursts of energy if needed. When we force the issue we are actually more likely to cause injury.

So the answer is to do a LOT of low level movement and then once you are ready add in some short bursts of high intensity exercise.