

Recovery is critical to health and performance

By **Ashlee Francis**
Correspondent

Recovery is the art of providing the body with what it craves after performance and training to help it come back stronger, leaner and faster.

At one point or another, someone has probably told you to let your body recover, but if you don't know what that looks like, how will you recover smarter and more efficiently? How will you take time after a long bicycle ride or personal training session at the gym to let your body heal and prepare for the next activity? In order to accomplish your optimal performance capabilities, you must learn the steps of recovery. These include: Sleep, nutrition, hydration, rest and active recovery methods, such as contrast therapy.

If you are not getting the proper amount of or quality sleep, then nothing else

matters. Your body will be unable to keep up with the demands you are placing on it during physical activity. This should be your priority, followed closely by adequate water intake and proper nutrition to fuel and rebuild the muscles. When you work out, you take the body into a state of stress. This physical stress breaks down your muscles, which is needed in order to help them grow. However, if you do not allow proper recovery after this stress, your muscles will not repair, thus leading to injury.

To grow stronger both physically and mentally, you must allow yourself to get comfortable being uncomfortable. Fredrick Douglass said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." We live in a culture that promotes ease of living. We are surrounded by heated steering wheels and air-conditioned office buildings,

which seem like wonderful inventions, but have taken away the human need for resilience. Discomfort creates vulnerability and when we are vulnerable, we are given the chance to grow and become durable under new circumstances.

Most people associate the word recovery with sitting on a beach in Hawaii, piña colada in hand, listening to the strumming of a ukulele. Believe it or not, fully submerging your body in Whychus Creek, hands tucked by your sides, listening to the sound of air slowly being inhaled and exhaled through your nose can also be recovery. Contrast therapy is an active recovery method. Laird Hamilton refers to it as Fire and Ice. This involves exposing the body to extreme temperatures, both hot and cold, with the use of a sauna and ice baths.

Ice baths lower the core

temperature of the body, which triggers the body to release dopamine, norepinephrine and testosterone, all hormones which help reduce pain and elevate your mood. The cold temperature decreases inflammation and changes blood flow to help improve muscular and cardiovascular recovery. Full-body submersions increase recovery more efficiently than partial submersion, cryotherapy or icing a specific body part because there is a greater systemic affect and the entire body is influenced, helping with the clearance of metabolic waste and the activation of RNA-binding proteins. In short, cold-water immersion can help you get lean and strengthen your immunity to bacteria and viruses.

There are coaches in Sisters who are certified to lead you through the XPT Fire and Ice therapy, but if you would like to ease into

it on your own, you can start with a cold shower at home. Take your normal shower at home, but end with thirty seconds standing in the coldest water you can tolerate. Gradually increase the amount of time you can stay under the cold water. When the cold water first hits your body, your first instinct will be to take quick, shallow breaths. Prevent this by slowing down your breathing and counting to five as you inhale through the nose. Exhale for a count of five to 10 seconds through the nose. Continue this breathing drill, bringing your focus to the breath and off the cold water.

If you have a history of heart or health issues, ask your doctor beforehand if cold water immersion is something you should try. To get more information on the benefits of contrast therapy, reach out to hello@sweatpnw.com.



Paw Prints

Jodi Schneider McNamee
Columnist

Cancer in dogs

They are among the words you least want to hear: Your dog has cancer.

Recently there have been claims in the media — from veterinarians to lay people — that canine and feline cancer rates are rising, and we are experiencing an "epidemic."

Sisters resident Katie Keranen recently lost her 10-year-old golden retriever, Crash, to cancer.

"Cancer seems too common in dogs, especially golden retrievers," Keranen told *The Nugget*. "My two brothers' dogs died of cancer also, and one of my parents' dogs died of cancer."

Is cancer truly increasing in dogs and cats? No one really knows for sure. Cancer is not a reportable disease in pets, and there are no databases of cancer cases covering large enough populations in enough detail to make reliable statements about overall cancer rates.

Dr. Little Liedbald, a longtime veterinarian at Broken Top Veterinary

Clinic in Sisters, said, "While cancer rates in dogs and people may be similar, there are really no reporting agencies that can or do keep track of all this information. Cancer is a reportable disease in humans, and keeping track of numerous types of cancer is still daunting. In dogs, there are even more variables to keep track of. Age, breed, sex and altered status to name a few. Sometimes when one goes into researching the statistics of cancer in animals there may be factors unaccounted for, and this can lead to unreliable results in reporting cancer rates."

Whether or not cancer is on the rise, one in four dogs may end up with cancer and half of the dogs over 10 years of age die from cancer.

Statistically speaking, cancer is a disease of middle

and old age. Certain cancers are largely preventable with sensible lifestyle choices. Early detection is a critical factor. Cancer is also hereditary, sometimes running in canine families.

Just as with humans, early detection offers by far the most realistic hope for your dog's survival, particularly for those cancers which aggressively metastasize.

"We think the most important factor in caring for pets is to know what is normal for your animal. Knowing what your pet looks like, how they behave, and being familiar with their normal daily routine can all play crucial roles in keeping them healthy," Liedbald said. "If anything seems unusual or different then it is important that your pet

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