



## More is (not) Better! How to Know When You Are Overtrained

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If you haven't heard it said before, most multisport athletes are "type A" personalities. To use a cycling analogy, a "type A" personality is defined as someone who tries to ride in all directions at one time. I stole this from a fortune cookie but it definitely applies.

### Three Signs of Overtraining

There are many signs of overtraining but it can be difficult to correctly interpret these signs. The typical reaction is, "I need to suck it up!" or "I'm just not trying hard enough." The funny thing about overtraining is that you no longer want what your body needs the most. Three very tangible signs of overtraining include:

#### 1. Loss of Appetite

You have just come in from a long or intense workout. You reach for your favorite recovery drink. You take one sip and you don't want any more. Two hours later you still haven't eaten. Your friends or family want to go out for dinner and instead of inhaling everything in sight, you pick at the food on your plate. Not good.

#### 2. Loss of Sleep

Ah, at last...BED! But instead of crashing 30 seconds after your head hits the pillow, you lay there awake. Awake. Awake. So you try deep breathing to calm yourself down and you think if you lay really, really still, you'll fall asleep. You try this for over an hour and you finally fall asleep but it's not a deep sleep and you spend the night tossing and turning. Again, not good.

#### 3. Elevated Resting Heart Rate

A great way to monitor what is going on with your body is to take your resting heart rate first thing in the morning. Once you determine your average resting heart rate, you'll know if you're over trained if your heart rate is 10+ beats (or 10%) above average. A general guide is as follows: 5-10 beats above average = convert any scheduled workout into "base training day". 10+ beats above average = any scheduled workout is cancelled and you get an automatic day off. Period!

There are other signs of overtraining such as weight loss, negative mood, poor performance during workouts, getting sick, or over-obsessing about having to get in all your workouts (more obsessing than usual). The good news is that you can take control of the situation. And type-A personalities are all about control!

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## Three Actions You Can Take

### 1. Healthy Choices

Garbage in, garbage out, right? So eat good foods to support your activities and your body. This doesn't mean you have to sacrifice Cheetos for tofu but make sure you're getting plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. However, I would recommend these foods for AFTER your workouts. Ever try doing run intervals with a gut full of high fiber? Believe me, it gives a whole new meaning to the word "fartlek".

### 2. Rest To Get Fit

Take time to rest and recover. I realize this may seem like crazy talk but listen to your body and stop listening to all the noise in your head to "GO-GO-GO". Fitness gains happen during rest. So instead of beating yourself up for sitting still, just think that your body is actually getting more fit.

### 3. The Other "F" Word

A key element to being active is to have fun and enjoy what you do. Fun in this case can be defined as setting and reaching new goals, meeting and hanging out with like-minded people, figuring out that you CAN take in 5,000 calories in liquid form, or adding "spandex" as a new wardrobe option. Whatever your definition, make sure you're enjoying yourself.

So the next time you're heading out the door for your 10th consecutive day of training, opt instead for heading to the nearest coffee shop, grabbing a paper, kicking back for an hour or two, or even taking the day off. Maybe even invite those friends or loved ones you have been neglecting for the past nine days! And brace yourself for the unthinkable – training smarter instead of training harder.

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