

Bicycling Blogger

Because You Can Ride Faster

Big Week Recovery

Getting faster on the bike is always about proper recovery from your hard workouts. Having completed a big volume week like we did in Penticton (at least 2x the hours most people ride weekly), you need to really back off on both volume and intensity during the following week.

Cut Your Volume

The simplest approach is to cut your riding volume in the following week to about 1/3 to 1/4 of the big week riding volume. So, from riding 20hrs, you'd drop down to 5-7hrs of riding, and I'd suggest keeping it all at your basic Endurance riding exertion.

Power Down For Sleep

Then, of course, pay attention to quality sleep. Throughout your season you need to be keeping up with good sleep hygiene. If you haven't developed a decent nighttime routine, now is the time to do so. Here is a good 1-hour power down outline to begin following, broken down into 3 x 20minute blocks (yeah, kinda like an interval session, but this one is pretty laid back):

1. Spend 20 minutes doing simple chores that need to be done for the next day. This will relieve some mental stress. Do things like making tomorrow's lunch, packing your briefcase or book bag, making sure the dishes are put away. It's not the time to do vacuuming, or any other heavy cleaning chores.
2. Spend the next 20 minutes taking care of your personal hygiene, things like washing up (a quick shower or bath or hot tub soak), flossing (you do floss, don't you???) and brushing your teeth.
3. Spend the last 20 minutes reading or meditating.

If you only have about 30 minutes for all of this, then split the routine into 10 minute chunks.

No More Ice For Injuries

Finally, take care of your little aches and pains. Visit your massage therapist and identify any muscles that seem to have been particularly over-worked. If something needs a little more care, the latest research points to R.C.E - not R.I.C.E. If you're not familiar with the acronym, it goes as follows:

- R = Rest - avoid using the affected muscle, tendon or joint
- C = Compression - wrap the affected area in a compression bandage
- E = Elevation - elevate the affected area

Compression and elevation are used to encourage any swelling to dissipate. Rest, of course, prevents further aggravation until the area has fully recovered. Ice (the "I" in R.I.C.E) is no longer suggested. The cold interferes with an immuno-factor that your body tries to send to the area for healing inflammation. Even Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), like ASA or ibuprofen, interfere with your body's

immune response to inflammation. They should only be used if the pain is so bad, you can't otherwise function or get any useful rest. I learned about dropping the "I" from the doctor that first coined the term - Gabe Mirkin. You can read more about it here: <http://www.drmirkin.com/public/ezone111410.html>

MuscleCare Product Review



I was given a sample of MuscleCare to review during our Penticton camp. If you do need a little extra spot-relief from muscle pains, MuscleCare can help. The idea is similar to other muscle ache products, but this one provided a cooling-effect, not a heating effect like the others. I really can't say whether or not it speeds healing your hurts, but it did provide me some relief. I used it on the back of my neck and my lower-back after a long day in the saddle. It seemed to help get my mind off the aches, allowing me to concentrate on other things. I'm not sure if this is because of its slight topical pain-killing properties, or simply the cold sensation it provided to the area.

In any case, I really liked the roll-on applicator that my sample came in (it's also available in a maximum strength ointment). Using the roll-on provided a mini-massage of the area, and I didn't get the product all over my hands in the process. It was non-greasy, and dried up quite quickly after application. Knowing now to stay away from ice and NSAIDs, I'll reach for MuscleCare first, next time I've got any persistent aches.

If you're interested, check out their website www.MuscleCare.net, or pick some up at your local drug store. I appreciate that it's a stand-out Canadian product in a sea of multi-national commercial formulas.

Note: No financial considerations have been given or offered for this product review.
Posted by Kevin Rokosh at [12:00](#)