

# Game Day Tactics



**THE DAY BEFORE** - Ensure the day before a big game or tournament you eat well.

- Around 65% of your food should be carbs - 'carbs loading'.
- Stick with foods you know and like, don't experiment the day before, the last thing you need is a sore stomach on game day!
- Stay hydrated, if you're well hydrated your urine should be light yellow and avoid alcohol.
- You should aim for at least 8 hours sleep and start the day with a breakfast you are familiar with.
- Get yourself into a routine as early as possible which will prepare the mind and body for game day.

## Game day....

**Warming up** is essential before taking part in any form of sport or exercise. It is a preparatory phase which will prepare the body for the rigours of the game. It should take the form of a series of specially designed preparatory exercises, which will be specific to the actions and movement which will take place during the game. It will prepare your tendons, ligaments and muscles and is paramount in reducing the risk of injury, and should never be neglected.

- Start at a low level of intensity and build slowly before increasing the intensity to the desired level.
- You should raise your heart level to such as you would reach during the game. It also gives you chance to get your 'game face' on and will focus the mind as well as the body.
- You should never static stretch during the warm up, only active dynamic stretching should take place.

**Cooling down** is a period at the end of a game. It should involve a short period of low-impact exercise which gradually returns the body to its 'resting state'. Cooling down will reduce the risk of muscular soreness, and aid recovery as gentle activity helps to get rid of any metabolic waste products which may have accumulated during the game.

The benefits of an active recovery are believed to be related to the muscles continuing to receive a more extensive supply of oxygenated blood, which will also assist with the removal of metabolic waste products. After a game your muscles will be warm, therefore static stretching should take place, stretching out muscle fibres and returning them to their resting state.

**Eating well after a game** is essential, to replenish lost energy stores so that you can recover quickly to be ready to play again. You should be aiming to eat within 20 minutes of the game ending. This is when your glycogen stores are depleted and you need to replace glucose lost from your muscles as soon as possible.

You should aim to be eating either milkshakes, protein bars/shakes, protein based sandwich or dried fruit or nuts during the day.

**Drink** - You must ensure you hydrate correctly as mentioned earlier. You need to take in fluid before, during and after games.

All of the above should become routine to you as soon as possible. You may have to fine tune in a few areas, but you can experiment and see what works for you. It will give you the mental and physical edge you will need to perform to the best of your ability.

Preparation and recovery is vital if you want to be successful at your local league, at NTS and at the World Cup in June!

Yours in Sport

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