

Getting the most from Your Workouts

By Len Lopez, DC, CCN, CSCS

When it comes to adding lean muscle tissue, most people only focus on the workout and overlook the recovery process. The workout is only part of the equation, because this is when we tear the muscle down. The rebuild process occurs when we release growth hormones (GH), testosterone, insulin growth factor (IGF-1) and DHEA. Unfortunately, stress can interfere with this process and hinder our results.

Our rebuild hormones can be reduced by stress. Excess production of our stress hormones, cortisol and adrenaline, from our adrenal glands, will interfere with the production and release of our rebuild hormones. This is why it is important to know where your stress is coming from. Most people know that stress comes from everyday worry, anxiety, finances, relationships, and family. Unfortunately, there are other types of stress that are easily overlooked.

We are going to explore these other areas of stress. Because a common concern from athletes and people who are training and not seeing results are fatigue, inability to lose weight or adding muscle tone, poor performance, lack of endurance, insomnia, cravings, etc. Assuming their diet and workout is correct, it leads me to only one conclusion. It's hormones, because hormones regulate our body. If they're out of balance, they can interfere with the release of our repair and rebuild hormones, as well as, the hormones that regulate our metabolism, sleep, mood, etc.

Types of stress...

First, working out is a form of stress and triggers our adrenals to produce more adrenaline and cortisol. This is normal. However, the sooner we begin to lower our stress hormones after a workout, the sooner we start the rebuilding process. Keep in mind, our body is designed to handle stress. But constant stress can overwork our adrenal glands, which can eventually deplete them. This is known as adrenal fatigue and exhaustion, which is becoming a growing problem.

Additional types of Stress...

One type of stress that is easily over-looked is caused by inflammation, due to our diet. Yes, exercise triggers inflammation, which is why we don't want to add more inflammation as a result of our diet. If you struggle with bloating, indigestion, gas, heartburn and other irritable bowel problems, you are irritating and inflaming your tummy. This additional inflammation triggers your adrenal glands to produce additional cortisol. This is normal, but is another tax on your adrenal glands.

FYI...If you struggle with digestive problems, add a digestive enzyme with hydrochloric acid to help break-down the additional protein.

Blood sugar imbalances are another commonly overlooked stress. When your blood sugar drops by either skipping meals or eating the wrong foods, your adrenal glands will have to produce more adrenaline and cortisol to raise your blood sugar. This is normal, but is additional work for the adrenals!

FYI...Symptoms associated with blood sugar imbalances:

- Cravings
- Lightheadedness
- Midmorning & afternoon slumps
- Irritability if meals or missed
- Inability to focus & concentrate
- Difficulty staying asleep

Stabilizing your blood sugar is critical in helping you stay in your 'fat-burning' zone.

The point we need to remember is stress is cumulative. Every time we needlessly (inflamed stomach, blood sugar imbalance) call upon our adrenal glands to produce more cortisol and adrenaline, we add to our total burden of stress. This overtaxes our adrenals and causes a decreased production of those important growth hormones.

Putting it ALL together...

The key to getting the most out of your workout is to ensure you are producing as much testosterone, GH, IGF-1 and DHEA as possible. If stress is an issue, we need to reduce it and support your adrenal glands. This is why replenishing the adrenal glands with specific vitamins, minerals, and adaptogenic herbs such as; rhodiola, ashwagandha, cordyceps, and ginseng is important in helping restore and rebalance your adrenals. Stress depletes the body of important nutrients that needs to be replaced, otherwise imbalances occur which interferes with normal function of hormones and neurotransmitters (brain messengers) that regulate our body.

I helped develop a nutritional formula called, Adrenal Fuel that replenishes over-worked adrenals, and balances our stress hormones. It is a 'Stress Recovery' formula that will help you get the most out of your workouts and improve recovery. It's formulated without stimulants, which are the last things you want if you are struggling with stress and physical/mental burnout.

FYI... Prolonged, constant stress can also take you to a point where your adrenals can't produce enough of your stress hormones, which can also cause problems with your training and health.

So, if you're training hard or have hit a plateau, examine the stress in your life. Don't overlook the fact that some of your stress could be coming from inflammation, due to a diet that irritates your digestive system or throws your blood sugar out of balance and interferes with your metabolism. Use our 'online Stress' test and 'Test Your Metabolism' to make sure you are burning fats for energy instead of carbohydrates and muscle (proteins) at www.DrLenLopez.com and start nourishing your body with Adrenal Fuel.



Len Lopez, DC, CCN, CSCS is a nutrition and fitness expert and author of "[To Burn or Not to Burn, Fat is the Question](#)," and the host of "[Actions Steps for Health](#)." His approach to health and fitness is to always get the most out of your TEE-time (Time, Energy and Effort) by dieting and exercising smart. www.DrLenLopez.com Blog: [Health Tips with Dr. Len](#)



<http://www.aiasportsperformance.org>

April 9, 2009