

Post-Game Recovery

All too often, I see players finish a 90 minute game, walk over to the bench, take off their cleats and leave the field. This is the absolute worst thing that they can do for recovery. Sometimes players will stretch as a team before leaving the field. Although this is better, it is still not optimal for proper recovery.

After shaking hands at the end of the game the players should line up on the touchline and reverse the warm-up. Start with the more difficult exercises and progress to the easiest. For example: (all x 30 yds)

1. Skip for height
2. Skip for distance
3. Sprint forward
4. Sprint backward
5. High knee run
6. Butt kick run
7. Side shuffle fast
8. Side shuffle slow
9. Jog forward
10. Jog backward
11. Walking lunges
12. Side walking lunges
13. Walk forward
14. Walk backward
15. Static Stretching (Total body flexibility x 10 minutes)

This should be followed by consuming 16-24 ounces of a sports drink to replace lost electrolytes and replenish muscle glycogen stores. The post game meal should consist of approximately 60% complex carbohydrates. This can be multi-grain breads, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, etc.. The athletes should also take in 20% of the meal in the form of protein. This can be any lean meats such as boneless, skinless chicken breasts, lean pork chops, fish, steak or egg whites. This will help to repair damaged muscle tissue. The remainder of the meal will consist of fat. (20%)

The next morning the athletes should go through the warm-up described in article # 3 followed by an extended period of static stretching. This will help to decrease muscle soreness, aiding the athletes recovery. When these procedures are followed your soccer players will be sure to bounce back within the optimal period of time. Best of luck!

Yours in Soccer,

Aaron P. Marston

Editor

Finesoccerfitness.com