



ARNIE BAKER CYCLING

Dealing With Injuries

Ride or Rest?

Your knee aches. Your back is sore. You've got tendonitis in your ankle. Part and parcel, for many of us, of being an athlete. Should you take a few days or weeks off running, walking, riding, or whatever your favorite sport? Is it okay to continue to train or even race?



ALL-
SPORT
HANDOUT

Most of the time, we're talking about pains or problems where there isn't a whole lot to see.

For example, X-rays of that sore knee won't show a break. Examining the knee doesn't show fluid or redness or other problems.

It's all a question of how it feels. You know there is a problem, but often there isn't a whole lot to go on apart from your own perceptions.

How to Decide

These types of problems are challenging for those of us who love to be active and for the physicians and other health care providers who look after us. Usually there are no absolutes, no "right" answers. But here are some guidelines I use in my own practice to help my athletes decide.

- If the problem is not related to specific sport overuse and you are improving, it's probably okay to be active.

For example, I am very concerned about the back pain related to running in a runner.

I am much less concerned about the backache related to lifting too many boxes a week ago in a runner who is already improving.

- If examining the injured area shows something wrong—for example swelling, redness, or other objective signs—rest is almost always wise until the swelling, redness, or other problem returns to normal.
- If the problem is worse after exercise, rest is probably a better idea than exercising.

If exercise-related problems are still present before the next workout begins, rest is usually mandatory. If problems occur halfway through a workout, it's often a good idea to stop exercising.

- Only if a problem occurs near the end of the workout is it sometimes okay to try training again without modifying your workout plans.

Even then, rest, modified rest, or a shortened workout is frequently the best course of action.

- If the exercise won't change overall fitness—the activity will be of low volume or intensity—why not rest?

Over-Exercising

Sometimes we become obsessed with activity and exercise. Some of us will continue to train even when pain, discomfort, or exhaustion is persistent.

Taking some days off will be beneficial in the long run. Rest and days off training are just as important as other aspects of fitness.

Remember: Its not exercise or training that makes us fitter—it is the recovery from that training that results in fitness gains. **AB**



ABC Handout #111

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