

# OVERTRAINING



## ■ ■ ■ Description

Overtraining is a common condition but one that is difficult to diagnose or recognize. It is associated with worsening performance, fatigue, altered mood, muscle soreness, and a feeling of being burned out. This condition is also referred to as athlete's maladaptation state and varies in intensity from mild to severe. Some of the symptoms are stress-related and are psychological, psychosomatic, and physiologic in nature. To be complete, an evaluation for overtraining must first exclude a number of common medical conditions that have similar symptoms.

## ■ ■ ■ Common Signs and Symptoms

- Declining performance
- Fatigue
- Tension
- Sleep problems
- Muscle fatigue
- Anger
- Loss of appetite
- Sexual unwillingness
- Menstrual irregularities
- Depression
- Abnormal sense perceptions

## ■ ■ ■ Causes

- High intensity of physical training
- Extreme volume of physical training
- Sleep abnormalities
- Travel
- Use of certain medications
- Alcohol use

## ■ ■ ■ Risk Increases With

- Poor general health
- Inadequate general nutrition
- Mood state
- Type A personality
- Age
- Males
- Menstrual cycle

## ■ ■ ■ Preventive Measures

Periodization of training, with enough recovery time to prevent overtraining, should be successful. *Periodization* is the correct loading of training stimuli, interspersed with adequate recovery periods. This is usually done at the coaching level. A long-term plan with 52 weeks per year divided into phases of training intensity is crucial.

## ■ ■ ■ General Treatment Considerations

The most successful treatment is prevention, as described earlier. Once overtraining has developed, the only successful treatment is to rest for approximately 2 weeks. After this rest period, a light training period is allowed that should include activities and intensities that differ from the original style that resulted in the overtraining syndrome. The progression needs to be gradual and responsive to the patient's symptoms. Before such treatment is initiated, a thorough physician evaluation to rule out other confounding medical conditions is necessary. The possibilities include malnutrition, depression, thyroid disease, and anemia, among others.

Notes:

(Up to 4400 characters only)

Notes and suggestions