

## Recovery, Recovery, Recovery!

There is, perhaps, no more important issue in the field of athletic training and performance than the topic of Recovery.

The athlete who is able to most completely recover from training sessions, as well as racing/performance events, is the athlete who will go the fastest/farthest. And while some of the ability to recover is based upon genetic predisposition, there is quite a lot that an athlete can do to maximize that genetic predisposition.

Certainly the moderation of the inflammatory response is crucial. If the athlete is able to minimize the inflammation created by the training, or performance, event then they will be able to recover faster.

As a team doctor of chiropractic for the Garmin/Chipotle Pro-cycling team it is my responsibility to look into the various ways and means for helping my athletes recover faster. This includes dietary changes, nutritional supplementation and other means to reduce inflammation and recover faster.

We have been using The Zone products for 2 years now. Every rider at last year's Tour de France was taking The Zone Omega-3 products (whether it be the Eicopro or the Omega RX). After the Giro d'Italia (Tour of Italy, a 3 week stage race similar to the Tour de France) we drew blood samples from the riders and looked at their inflammatory markers. This included their Arachidonic Acid (AA) and Eicosapentanoic Acid (EPA) levels, as well as the ratios of those Fatty Acids. Also we looked at their levels of Gamma Linolenic Acid (GLA) and Dihommo-Gamma Linolenic Acid (DGLA).

After looking at these blood profiles we were able to determine how to "fine tune" each riders intake of Omega-3. Also using these blood results we were able to make dietary recommendations to each individual rider. The over-all result was to help each individual rider develop a better biochemistry for dealing with the inflammation that was created in their bodies during the Giro d'Italia, help them recover from that race, get ready/train for the Tour de France and then maintain that anti-inflammatory ability during the 3 weeks of the Tour de France.

Also, we made dietary changes to all the riders. Inflammatory foods were removed from their diets for the weeks leading up to the Tour as well as during the race itself. These foods included wheat products (yes, the traditional cycling staple of pasta was eliminated from their diets!). This also included the other traditional sources of processed wheat products found in dry breakfast cereals, bread (yes, baguettes were removed too!) and some of the "bars" that the athletes would usually eat on the bike during the race itself. Also, we removed red meat and replaced it with fish whenever we could. We replaced the wheat with rice (usually basmati) that our chef made for them in as many creative ways as he could! For on the bike our staff physiologist created a recipe of steamed rice (white rice for the high glycemic properties that they need while on the bikes racing, this being the only time that we wanted a higher glycemic food for the athletes),

scrambled eggs and prosciutto. They were mixed together, cut into cubes/squares, mixed with tamari sauce and wrapped in tin-foil so that the riders could open them easily and eat them as needed. This was all done to maintain a high quality food source for the riders. Yes, a lot of work! But well worth the effort.

This year as we prepare for the upcoming racing season we have already done the first blood work on our riders. We will be taking blood a few times during the season to track how the athletes' bodies are responding to the inflammation caused by training and racing. And using the data from the blood work, as well as weekly status reports, we will be making adjustments to their intake of Omega-3's as well as making any further dietary recommendations/changes.

The blood work that I wrote about is done thru ND labs which, if you are interested in having this blood profile performed on yourself, is available thru your Zone doctor. I highly recommend this for everyone even if they're not a Tour de France athlete!

And regarding the dietary changes that we made for our riders I feel that these simple changes are useful for any of us. As any of you who have read Dr. Sear's work on "Silent Inflammation" we all need to pay attention to our body's ability to handle inflammation. We create inflammation in our bodies every day just by performing our activities of daily living. And since many of us live high-stress lives it's even more important to take to heart the dietary recommendations that Dr. Sears makes.

I can't say enough how wonderful the folks at The Zone have been with our team. They have been incredibly available for questions and answers regarding the technology and techniques they have created to help athletes go faster and farther. As a doctor of 25 years I can truly say that they are on the leading edge of diet and supplement research to help people (not just world class athletes) live better and healthier. It is my privilege to collaborate with them!

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