

Alcohol and Performance

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Negative Effects on performance:

- Increased dehydration - means reduced stamina
- Decreased power output - means slower acceleration off the mark
- Slower decision making - means reduced reaction times due to slower processing and responding to stimuli
- Depressed immune system - means reducing the body's chances to respond to increased training stresses, more susceptible to illness
- Disturbed sleep patterns - reduces the body's chances to regenerate physically and psychologically
- Slower recovery time - means it takes longer to get back into full-on training
- Low value carbohydrates – the carbohydrates in alcohol do little to recharge the muscles fuel stores

Negative Effects on Injury Repair

- Increased vasodilation - means bruises and soft tissue injuries are slower to repair

Making the best choices

We belong to a society that includes alcoholic consumption as a part of accepted social activity. Athletes face choices about managing alcohol consumption so that it does not interfere with their ability to perform optimally, whether this in a training session or during competition.

For those athletes who choose not to drink alcohol the management issue is easy. However for those who choose to imbibe, managing the process responsibly is very important. Overleaf are some recommendations to help athletes act responsibly if they choose to drink alcohol.

Alcohol and Choices

Recommendations for athletes

These recommendations are based on experiences with national, state and professional squads and teams:

- The TEAM as a whole should decide what the best strategies it will adopt are and **all team members should subscribe to the Team's view.**
- Tournaments and competitions require athletes to perform consistently at a high level either several times a day or everyday for a week or more. During these high stress situations it is best to **restrict alcohol intake.** Many teams adopt an **alcohol free period** for the whole of the tournament.
- Training Camps are a rehearsal for competition and tournament situations, so **Training Camps should also be alcohol free.**
- During your training season you have a choice whether to drink or not. **If you decide to drink then plan when and how you will do this.** The following are some simple strategies to consider:

Simple Strategies to Use

- Make sure you are well fed and hydrated before you start drinking. Do not consume alcohol because you are thirsty.
- Agree to a limit before you start. e.g. 2 schooners of beer or 2 nips of spirits or 2 glasses of wine. Remember the ***Don't Drink and Drive Ads on TV.*** Use these as a guideline.
- For every alcoholic drink you need to match it with a large non-alcoholic drink such as water, soft drink or cordial etc.
- Keep hydrating after you finish consuming alcohol.
- *Court sessions* after a game can be managed by using small (nip) glasses, or non-alcoholic drinks; limiting the number of toasts; intersperse alcoholic drinks with a sports drink or some food, etc Plan the activity well beforehand so that players can enjoy themselves without imbibing excessively.
- For minimal impact on performance avoid drinking two days before a game, the day of the game, and one day afterwards.