



PERFORMANCE VOLLEYBALL CONDITIONING

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO IMPROVING VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS

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Burning Out? How to Overcome Overtraining

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Rob is the founder and President of True Athlete Performance or TrueAP. Rob developed several sports performance training companies and has been training athletes since 1995. TrueAP is a sport-specific training program that will work with over 2,000 athletes per year. Rob has worked with athletes from elite college & professional to high school & youth. Rob has produced several DVDs that focus on speed, efficient first step and overall athlete performance. He has conducted several clinics and workshops around the nation for his peers and coaches in the field of Exercise Science and Sport specific training. Rob has also worked with such professional organizations as: American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA), US Lacrosse, NSCA, NSPA, Total Training Seminars, MACMA, Power Systems, Life Fitness Academy, Athletic Business, Club Industry, DCAC and more. Rob's training philosophy is "Teach don't Train." Proper form and technique are the cornerstones of his TrueAP training program and lectures he conducts. Rob has worked in the field of exercise science since 1990 and will continue to develop programs that help each client to reach his or her maximum potential.

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Today's volleyball athletes continually push their bodies harder and longer in an effort to become better on the court. There becomes a tendency, however, to push themselves even more when performance seems to come up short of expectations. This, of course, may lead to what we all know as "burnout" or, for our purposes, "overtraining."

Coaches, parents and athletes alike, to achieve optimal performance, overlook the basic premise for training. To create an effective program there must be a harmonious relationship between work and rest. Recovery between training days becomes critical in determining whether performance will be improved or remain stagnant and eventually decrease.

Definitions: for the purpose of this article the following definitions will be used:

Overload: a planned, systematic and progressive increase in training with the goal of improving performance.

Overreaching: unplanned, excessive overload with inadequate rest. Poor performance is observed in training and competition. Successful recovery should result from short-term (i.e., a few days up to one or two weeks) interventions.

Overtraining syndrome: untreated overreaching that results in chronic decreases in performance and the ability to train. Other problems may result and may require medical attention.

We know a sufficient amount of overload through training is necessary to lead to physical adaptations ultimately resulting in improved performance. However, inadequate rest between hard training sessions, or during extended periods of increased volume, (time spent training per day, week, or month) will lead some individuals into a state of overtraining.

It has been suggested that just 10 days of increased intensity is sufficient to cause a reduction in performance. Therefore, a properly designed training program providing adequate rest is required in order to prevent overtraining.



Rob Rose



Causes of Overtraining

The most prevalent causes of overtraining in volleyball players include:

1. Inadequate rest or recovery between practice or games. and/or
2. A dramatic increase in either the time spent training (volume) or how hard the athlete trains (intensity).

We should understand, when an athlete trains too hard or too long before a solid foundation is established the body will not be able to recover which may lead to a gradual decrease in performance.

Other conditions that may make an athlete more susceptible to overtraining are:

1. Frequent competitions, especially high intensity quality efforts.
2. Monotonous training. Doing the same thing over and over.
3. Pre-existing medical conditions (i.e. cold or illness).
4. Poor nutrition, a reduced intake of carbohydrates or water.
5. Environmental conditions (i.e. altitude, humidity).
6. Psychological stress at work, school, or home.

Reducing the chance of overtraining, in light of these factors, revolves around a well devised training schedule. The responsibility, therefore, to prevent overtraining rests with the coach and strength and conditioning specialist.

Nonetheless, even the most precise program needs to be continually monitored and adjusted according to the responses of the individual athlete. Since no two athletes will respond similarly to the same program, much of the responsibility is placed on the coach and/ or strength and conditioning specialist, and even parents to know and understand the limitations of each athlete.

Signs of Overtraining

So, what signs can one look for to determine if an athlete is becoming over-trained?

Unfortunately, there is no method that is 100% reliable. However, the following signs may help identify, as early as possible, an athlete in a state of overtraining:

1. Unexpected drop in performance during practice or competition unexplained by illness or injury
2. Mood disturbances
3. General fatigue
4. Significant changes in sleep patterns
5. Loss of appetite
6. Extreme muscular soreness following hard training session
7. Weight loss (with no deliberate attempt)
8. Increase in resting heart rate
9. Lowered physical resistance as indicated by continuous cold, flu, headache, etc.

When signs of overtraining become evident the athlete must be rested for one or several days. At a minimum the training is to be decreased in intensity and/or duration. Several days of light activities may be a sufficient treatment for overreaching, however, longer durations of rest (i.e., several weeks) are required once an athlete has developed overtraining syndrome. Therefore, the best treatment for overtraining is prevention.

Prevention

As mentioned already, a properly designed training program is an essential component for preventing overtraining. During the more intense periods of the training year, or following hard sessions, adequate rest is crucial. We suggest a minimum of 24 hours of recovery time between hard training days for any one particular type of overload. Coaches may find it difficult to convince their athletes to completely rest for fear of becoming detrained.

1. **Mix:** Easy, moderate, and hard training days to allow the body to rest.
2. **Take away the "Ball":** Just doing drills without the volleyball, will help to keep the workout fresh and add variety that the body requires.
3. **Game Days:** We are talking about games not associated with volleyball. Dodgeball, tag, capture the flag, and other games we played on the playground are an excellent way to keep the workout different.



4. Extended Warm-Up: The preparation/warm-up should be the most important part of any practice. Keep the preparation phase athlete specific, not sport specific. Do movements that cover all planes of movement and the entire body.

a. Check out this article on proper warm-up article: www.trueap.com/flyers/Vball-Tourney-Warm-up-Article.pdf

5. Team Cool-downs: We get that the athletes want to get out and get home after a long practice, BUT, if we can have them spend more time on properly cooling down, they will promote recovery and, yes, prevent overtraining.

a. Check out this manual for Foam Rolling: www.trueap.com/flyers/Foam_Roller_Manual.pdf

Ultimately, education for coaches, strength and conditioning personnel, parents, as well as all athletes, is essential. Professionals in the field need to be observant of the signs mentioned and understand how to take appropriate action to prevent further decrements in performance. Individual athletes should become aware to the responses of their bodies.

Keeping a log may help some to pinpoint trends which may exist in their training schedule that tend to cause a state of fatigue and staleness.

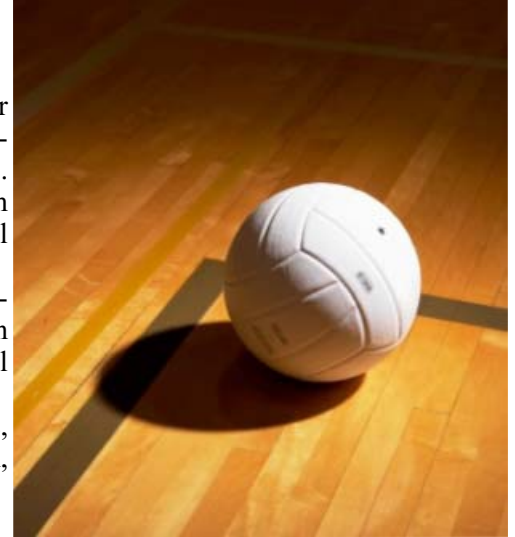
Conclusions

Coaches and strength and conditioning professionals need to be in tune to their athlete's responses to various training stimulus performed. Prolonged periods of high intensity work without proper recovery will, sooner or later, create a decline in performance.

By properly designing a training schedule, overuse may be kept to a minimum and overtraining syndrome will be kept at bay. However, constant monitoring is essential for even the most well devised programs.

Complete rest or reduced intensity and/or volume is required for athletes experiencing a sudden and unexpected drop in performance. Since other stresses, other than the training stimulus, may further compound the overtraining condition, each case will need individual attention.

By increasing our knowledge and understanding of overtraining, coaches, parents, and athletes can become more aware of even the slightest sign of this complex condition, and take the appropriate actions.



For more information on this or any of Rob's TrueAP Blogs, contact Rob at rrose@trueap.com.

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Performance Conditioning Volleyball Net Links: Check out these resources on rest/sleep/nutritional recovery from leading volleyball experts.

1. *Sleep, Recovery, and Performance: The New Frontier in High-Performance Athletics*, MJ Engstrom, Click [HERE](#)

2. *Rest, Sleep and Recovery – Important Elements in the Developmental Process of Top Performers*, Dr. Iradge Ahrabi-Fard, & Dr. Forrest Dolgener, Click [HERE](#)

3. *Recovery Nutrition for Volleyball*, Jenna Waters MS, RD, Click [HERE](#)