

WELLNESS CONNECTION

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INSPIRE TO MOVE - Active Recovery for Better Workouts

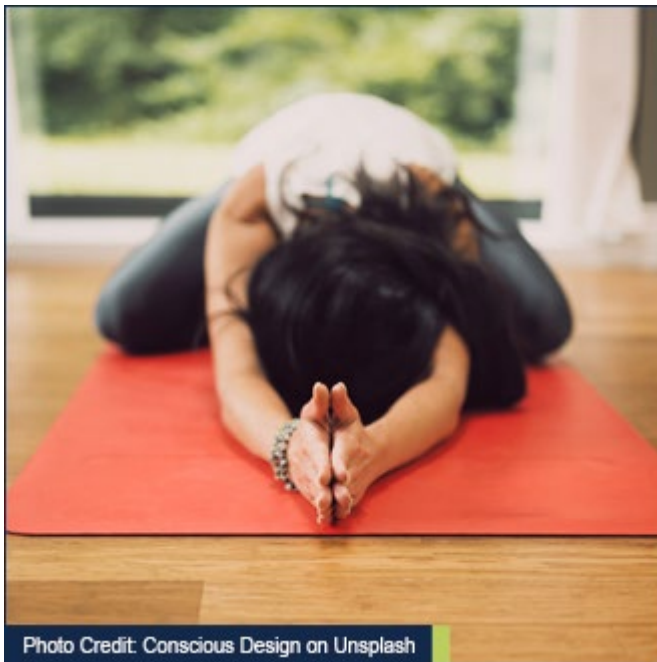


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You may have been logging your steps and activity for UI Stride *Well Traveled* or perhaps have added some new physical activity to your routine to gear up for summer fun. Maybe you are training for a virtual 5K or looking forward to summer water sports. All of this physical activity can leave your body feeling sore and yearning for a day off! Did you know that incorporating **active recovery** into your fitness plan can help restore your body and improve future performance in your chosen activities? [Active recovery](#) plays an important role in keeping you moving and feeling your best as part of a

balanced workout routine.

[Active recovery, when compared to passive recovery](#) or inactivity, can increase blood flow, which improves nutrient delivery to your muscles and removes waste products created during exercise. The result is reduced muscle soreness that is sometimes experienced in the days following a workout. It can also provide a mental break from your regular workout routine and deliver a healthy mood boost. An active recovery routine can include low-intensity cardiovascular exercise, such as walking at a leisurely pace or an easy bike ride, as well as [stretching and mobility](#)

[exercises](#) that focus on moving your joints through their full range of motion. Additionally, you may enjoy [foam rolling](#) or other [self-massage techniques](#) as part of your active recovery plan.

There are several common approaches for adding active recovery to your routine:

- Incorporate sets of active recovery exercises between sets of more strenuous exercises during a circuit training or interval workout. Instead of sitting still for 2-5 minutes between sets, opt for light cardio or simple bodyweight movements before picking up your weights again.
- Immediately following your workout, spend 5-10 minutes gradually reducing your movement intensity to ease your body back into a resting state. After your breathing has calmed and your heart rate has started to slow down, you may also consider adding some [dynamic stretching](#) to further support your recovery.
- Plan an active recovery workout for the day after a strenuous workout. Taking days off from more challenging workouts will help you avoid injury from over-training and allow your body to repair itself. Choose an activity you can participate in while still being able to hold a conversation. This will ensure you are exercising at an intensity level conducive to recovery.

These methods can be mixed and matched to fit your individualized needs and to allow ample opportunity for your body to restore itself. Try adding the practices you like best to your routine and feel the difference in your workouts!

