



Fatigue is no foe with recovery strategies in place

by Angela Calder, Applied Sports Knowledge

Fatigue is not something that officials should just accept as part and parcel of what they do. It is possible—and necessary—to stay one step ahead and manage fatigue proactively. Staying at your best during extended competition periods will largely depend on your ability to do this. Recognising triggers for fatigue and identifying the best strategies for recovery should be planned and rehearsed carefully beforehand. Some steps you can take to do this include:

Performance planning – *identify and manage your fatigue*

- Identify on a weekly diary sheet all your competition times, including time for any pre-event warm-up, personal training, debriefing sessions or other meeting times.
- Categorise the types of fatigue you will experience from your work and stress, whether it is physical, nutritional, psychological or environmental.
- Manage your sleep carefully—the timing and quality is very important. If you are away from home, take your own pillow.
- Practise beforehand—**how, what** and **when** to use different recovery facilities and strategies, for example, the use of spas and pools, your own psychological recovery needs, etc.
- Employ self monitoring strategies each day, for example, check for hydration, fatigue levels and enjoyment.
- Rehearse your competition plan beforehand.

1. Local environment and competition venues – *Reconnaissance*

- Prepare for fatigue from wind, cold, rain, heat, pollution, noise etc.
- Check the availability of recovery facilities at or near the competition and accommodation venues.
- Note any limitation of access to these facilities such as travel time, other users, etc.

2. Facilities and techniques to minimise physical fatigue: *Practise using these beforehand*

- Showers /spa/plunge pool/sauna/swimming pool/sea/flotation tank.
- Quiet areas with access to VCR/DVD and audio equipment.
- Massage—planning, timing, access, familiarisation of practitioners techniques.
- Time-out or down time from the competition—plan on how to manage this, for example, what is available locally, tourist sites, movie, shopping etc.

3. Nutritional strategies – *Plan the timing and type of fluid and fuel you need*

- Plan your fluid and fuel strategies for your pre-performance, during performance and post performance needs. This includes the types of food, drink, and planned meal and snack times.
- Identify the access to, and the type of fluid and food that will be available.

4. Psychological strategies – *Manage your emotions and learn to switch-off*

- Minimise and manage external pressures and stresses—media, players, coaches, etc.
- Plan and rehearse your strategies for staying in control of your emotions during events.
- Train how to switch-off mentally after competition.
- Identify in advance your coping strategies for dealing with unforeseen stress, for example, personal trauma, injury, disappointment with performances etc.
- Plan how to manage the elements of celebrations including alcohol, media, sponsors, family etc.