

# 06

IF YOU'RE MORE ACCUSTOMED TO A LEISURELY LIFESTYLE, MAYBE YOUR 'REST' TRANSLATES TO JUST 5,000 STEPS A DAY (SCHAAFSMA ET AL., 2015).

## TIP: HOLIDAY IT OFF

When dealing with low back pain or sciatica, it can sometimes feel like you're stuck in a never-ending game of whack-a-mole. The good news is, scientific research has been hard at work, and it suggests that we may have been missing a crucial piece of the puzzle: the healing process.

**Deloading**, a fancy term for temporarily taking it easy, this approach has been used for centuries in sports. But it has been found to be a potential game-changer, when it comes to low back pain.

However, this isn't a universal one-week pass to potato couch life. Rest is a relative term. For an Olympian, 'rest' might still include daily training, albeit at a lower intensity. If you're more accustomed to a leisurely lifestyle, maybe your 'rest' translates to just 5,000 steps a day (Schaafsma et al., 2015).

Here comes the plot twist. After you've given your body its much-needed temporary vacation, it's time for a slow and steady comeback. This part is about as exciting as watching paint dry, but it's crucial. You mustn't rush into your usual routine, like eating a hot pizza straight from the oven. Ouch!

Gradual reloading, like slowly reentering the pool, ensures a perfect balance that wards off reinjury. As its best to progressively load our body overtime, for sudden comebacks can be risky especially after an injury.

A vital takeaway here is that your fitness level isn't determined by how much you can do but how well you can recover and heal. After all, muscles aren't built while you're lifting weights, they're built while you're resting. So, embrace the rest. Love the rest.



## RECENT ACTIVITY LEVELS + CAPACITY TO RECOVERY = PROGRESS

Our fitness levels are limited by our capacity to recover from exercise.



And remember, when it comes to healing, patience isn't just a virtue, it's a necessity. Let your body's natural healing process take its course. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither is a pain-free back.

Professor Stuart McGill, spoke a lot about taking it easy when it comes to activities which aggravate your spine when it is irritable (McGill, 2015). We generally recommend the 50% rule of thumb, where for 1-week you reduce your total physical workload by about 50%, giving your body a well-deserved break. This approach has been used successfully by athletes who often bounce back from a rest stronger and fitter than ever (Cressey, 2008). It's kind of like sending your irritated sciatic nerve on a beach vacation.

And who wouldn't appreciate that?

So, don't let sciatica or low back pain steal your thunder. Armed with deloading and an understanding of the healing process, you can reclaim control. You've got this!

## References

- McGill, S. (2015). Back Mechanic. Waterloo, Canada: Backfitpro, Inc.
- Cressey, E. (2008). The Art of the Deload.
- Schaafsma, F.G., Anema, J.R. and van der Beek, A.J. (2015). Back pain: prevention and management in the workplace. Best Practice & Research Clinical Rheumatology, 29(3), pp.483-94.