



# NLJ Fitness & Wellness Consulting

## Call Today 206-852-4768

### Overtraining Symptoms and Tips to Avoid Them

By Nancy Jerominski

More exercise is not better and usually leads to overtraining. Symptoms include fatigue, increased susceptibility to illness and injuries, insomnia, general aches and pains, depression, irritability, and headaches.

Attitude, performance, hypertrophy and strength gains also slide. Overtraining raises cortisol levels, further catabolizing muscle tissue and raising body fat levels. The body may become calorie deficient, adding to muscle tissue breakdown.

Over time decreases in fitness levels occur. Overtraining is common in fitness enthusiasts and athletes, and can lead to compulsive exercising.

To avoid overtraining, progress training levels gradually. If you're stiff and sore the next day, you went too hard too soon. Even in this day and age the prevailing and outspoken "wisdom" is still "No pain, no gain". Pain equals drain not gain!

We're meant to move at moderate levels with short bursts of speed and/or power as needed. We're still the same beings physically as we were 200,000 years ago. Our ancestors most certainly did not jog around gathering food. We sprinted during the hunt and had to do some heavy lifting post hunt to bring the bacon home.

Training too long and hard stimulates the sympathetic nervous (fight or flight) system and is catabolic. This will compromise the body's ability to recover between sessions and fight off infections.

When we train too hard and don't eat enough nutritionally dense food, the adrenals wash every cell in cortisol. That's OK in small doses, but prolonged exercise sessions on top of calorie restrictive diets made up of fake food signals starvation and too much movement.

That's a *crisis*.

Your body has no idea you're trying to be healthy or get "fit" in a 6 week boot camp. The harder you train and more calories you cut, the more stressed the body is, the more it eats itself. The more your hormones are out of whack the more fat storing hormones are released to keep fat on for the body as fuel.

**Eat enough nutritionally dense calories!** This is one of the hardest concepts for women, in particular, to get their minds around. Our bodies require about 60 calories an hour per pound of body weight to function lying still listening to music. We need plenty of high quality protein, fat and carb (not grains) sources so the millions of our body's cells that die every second are rebuilt from good "material".



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**Hydrate with enough pure water!** Gatorade, bottled sports drinks and vitamin waters do **not** replace electrolytes, minerals or vitamins. They hop the body up on sugar, high fructose corn syrup, refined sodium chloride, sucralose, aspartame and synthetic vitamins. Our bodies have no idea what any of that “stuff” is. How well does your car engine run with sugar poured in the tank? A pinch of **unprocessed** Celtic sea salt in that water will supply the body with the trace minerals it needs and allows the water to better permeate the cell walls.

**Get adequate rest between training sessions!** Fatigue and pain (the body’s idiot light) are signals that we need to back off, not tough it out to get stronger. This really archaic thinking simply won’t get anyone to the levels they want to get to.

Low levels of exercise during rest time, known as “active recovery”, can help recover between sessions. Training intensities which don’t require open mouth breathing stimulate the parasympathetic system, which is anabolic (builds up) in nature.

Unless all the aspects of your lifestyle (nutrition, hydration, work/relationship stressors and rest cycles) are optimal 80% of the time, moderate exercise is best for those of us who aren’t professional or elite level competitors.

Most elite competitors are over trained and ill nourished. If that isn’t the case, why do so many die young and compete chronically injured?

Fitness and wellness should be sensible, fun and invigorating, not a test of how far we can go for how long on the least amount of nutritionally dense calories.