# HOW TO AVOID OVERTRAINING SYNDROME

What is Overtraining?<sup>1</sup> When athletes do not respect the balance between training and recovery, they may push their bodies past their limit. The consequence may be long-term decrements in performance.

## POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS OF OVERTRAINING

- Unexplainable decreases in performance
- Increased rate of injury
- Insomnia/disturbed sleep patterns
- Weight loss
- Weakened Immune system
  - o Athletes are more prone to illnesses, especially upper respiratory infections when there is not a balance between training and recovery
- Decrease in appetite
- Feelings of depression or anxiety
- For women: Irregular menstrual cycles, or amenorrhea

#### **HOW TO TREAT OVERTRAINING**

 Athletes should treat Overtraining Syndrome like an orthopedic injury.

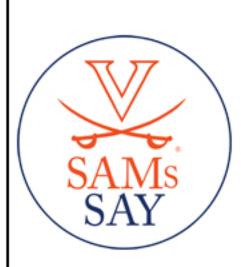
- o It can be debilitating and take a substantial time to recover o Treat with rest or very light exercise
- o Address proper nutrition, sleep, or other overtraining related health issues

o Slowly acclimate to normal training regimen

#### **HOW TO AVOID OVERTRAINING**

• Take a time-out. Get good rest and sleep. Athletes should consider taking one full rest day per week. Stress levels are known to decrease with rest and sleep.

- Eat well: Nutrition is important o Hard-training depletes carbohydrates and may result in dehydration o During hard training periods increase carbohydrate and hydration intake to match training intensity.
- Avoid excessive monotony of exercise Communicate with coaches and athletic trainer about your training plan



Regular alcohol consumption increases risk of illness and injury by depressing immune function and contributing to delayed healing.<sup>2</sup>

#### **IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- Training plans may differ from athlete to athlete
- · Be aware of stressors and adjust training when appropriate
- Allow time for recovery after any injury or illness
- Treat overtraining with rest and light training

### RESOURCES

- Athletic Trainers
- Team Doctors

<sup>1</sup> Meeusen, Romain, et al. "Prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the overtraining syndrome: ECSS position statement 'task force'." European Journal of Sport Science 6.01 (2006): 1-14. <sup>2</sup> Alcohol and athletic performance. NCAA Sports Science Institute, 2013.

Created by Taylor Levine, UVa Rowing 2013 Designed by Sara Neel, UVa 2015