

# What to do AFTER Your Big Race

Jason Gootman, MS, CSCS & Will Kirousis, BS, CSCS

Tri-Hard Endurance Sports Coaching

USA Triathlon & USA Cycling Certified Specialists

Certified Strength & Conditioning Coaches

[www.Tri-Hard.com](http://www.Tri-Hard.com)

---

Racing presents a tremendous challenge to you—your body and mind. What you do after your race has a tremendous impact on how well you recover from your race. Here's a sequential list of what to do after your race and why...

1. **Cool down & hydrate.** As your race finishes, do some nice and easy walking around. No need to overdo it with the cool-down. Riding or jogging are not necessary and can add additional fatigue. While walking around, find some water or sports drink and begin the hydration process. Easy walking and hydrating are the first priority after your race. This helps you to replenish the water your lost through sweating during the race. Sports drinks have a slight advantage in this role. Their electrolyte content and optimal carbohydrate content are designed to increase the rate at which water is delivered to your tissues.
2. **Recovery drink.** The next thing to do is to consume a recovery drink. The main purpose of this is to replenish your spent glycogen stores as rapidly and efficiently as possible. The ideal for this situation is an over the counter sports supplement. One example of a product on the market is Endurox R4. These formulas combine carbohydrates and protein in the optimal ratio for glycogen re-synthesis and uptake speeding recovery. Typically 3-8 hundred calories worth is right depending on body size. A good rule of thumb is 1 gram of carbohydrate and 0.3-0.4 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. Other good options include yogurt, Yoo-Hoo, and non-fat chocolate milk—all of which contain good ratios of carbohydrates to protein for recovery. Consuming a recovery drink takes advantage of the very responsive hormonal state you are in after hard efforts and aids in glycogen (muscle and liver sugar) replenishment and protein resynthesis. This practice has also been shown to decrease the circulation of inflammatory, catabolic hormones like cortisol, and increase the function and amount of the anabolic hormones insulin, growth hormone, and insulin like growth factor.
3. **Hydrate some more.** Now you should just hang out, relax, and socialize enjoying the post-race activities. But while doing so, it is a good idea to keep a water bottle with water or sports drink near by to continue to replenish lost fluids.

4. Good mixed meal. Once you feel ready, it is time to get a solid meal of real food. This can be food provided by the race or that you have brought on your own. Try to eat a good mixed meal that supplies carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Aim for great food you habitually eat like fruits and veggies, meats, nuts, seeds, and truly whole grains.
5. Relax. The rest of the day should be spent relaxing after the race or back home. Put your feet up and allow yourself to be lazy for a while. Stay off your feet when you can. This allows you to conserve energy and allows your body to recover.
6. Recovery techniques. You may want to employ certain specific recovery techniques at this point. This can include activities such as: gentle massage, deep breathing, and other relaxation exercises. These can all aid in the recovery process.
7. Sleep. The night after your race, be sure to get to bed nice and early to allow for a great night sleep.
8. Rest/easy day(s). In the days following your race, you should employ several rest days and/or easy training days. This is the final step in allowing your body to complete the recovery process.

*To learn more about Jason, Will, and Tri-Hard Endurance Sports Coaching, visit [www.Tri-Hard.com](http://www.Tri-Hard.com).*