

Alcohol and Performance

Scenario

I'm a new member of an established band. After performances, we go out for drinks and a good time. While I enjoy socializing, I wonder if drinking is affecting my ability to perform. Before I started drinking, I didn't notice problems with stamina. Now I get tired more easily and have trouble sleeping. Is this normal, or could alcohol affect my performance?

Nutrition Goals

- Fully rehydrate and refuel post-activity before considering drinking alcohol.
- Maintain social life without compromising practice and performance goals.
- When choosing alcohol, follow the guidelines of moderation: 1-2 drinks per day for men, 1 drink per day for women. One "drink" equals 12 oz of regular beer (150 calories), 5 oz wine (100 calories), or 1.5 oz of 80-proof liquor (100 calories).

Challenges

Alcohol intake:

- Acts as a diuretic by increasing urine volume and interfering with rehydration
- Puts performers at risk for dehydration, heat illness, and muscle cramping
- Suppresses fat use as a fuel during activity
- Interferes with post-activity recovery by delaying carbohydrate repletion and muscle repair
- Increases the risk for nutrient deficiencies by decreasing vitamin and mineral absorption
- Adds calories and acts as an appetite stimulant which can result in increased calories consumed
- Can interfere with sleep patterns by reducing time spent in deep, restful sleep

Written by SCAN registered dietitians (RDs). The key to optimal meal planning for athletes is individualization. For personalized nutrition plans contact a SCAN sports dietitian or Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) by accessing "Find a SCAN Dietitian" at www.scandpg.org | 800.249.2875.



Tips to Take With You

1. Rehydrate and re-fuel post-activity before considering consuming alcohol. Sports drinks promote rehydration. See the SCAN Hydration fact sheet for more information.
2. If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, follow recommended guidelines above.
3. Discuss your performance goals with friends; ask them to support your decision to limit alcohol. Engage in activities that do not include alcohol.

Contact SCAN

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