

Alcohol not a good choice for athletes

By Devon Jackson, Outside

If you exercise, chances are you also drink. I know this because according to a study from Northwestern Medicine, people tend to drink more alcohol on the days they've exercised. Especially beer.

It could be because we reward ourselves with a post-run brewski, or because we've used up all of our willpower on exercise, so we have none left to deny ourselves that drink or two. Whatever the reason, if you're drinking thinking that it'll help you sleep, relax your muscles, numb the pain, or increase blood flow to help you recover faster, as they say in AA, that's just stinkin' thinkin'.

"It's detrimental to drink alcohol after any type of exercise or workout," says Professor Matthew Barnes of New Zealand's Massey University School of Sport and Medicine. "I've never really seen anything that says it's useful as far as recovery."

He's also never seen anything that says alcohol is useful for completion. Barnes' most recent study on the impact of alcohol on sports performance and recovery in men concluded that "the consumption of even low doses of alcohol prior to athletic endeavour should be discouraged due to the ergolytic effects of alcohol on endurance performance." Ergolytic meaning performance impairing. These effects, the study's authors wrote, "are likely to inhibit recovery and adaptation to exercise."

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