

Time alcohol consumption to not impact workouts

By Amanda MacMillan, Outside

You don't have to give up drinking in moderation before a big race. That said, if you choose to drink, do so in amounts and at times that least impact your performance.

For athletes who enjoy alcohol in moderation, it's hard to say how much of a difference, if any, they'll notice by giving it up entirely.

That's because not much has been studied on the long-term effects of moderate drinking versus teetotaling on performance.

"This is a very difficult and specific question," says Matthew Barnes, a professor of sport and medicine, and a prominent researcher on alcohol and exercise at New Zealand's Massey University. "Most alcohol research, including my own, has looked at acute responses to alcohol, either before or after exercise."

In other words, we know that drinking in the hours prior to a workout is a bad idea—reduced coordination, for instance, can increase your injury risk. And we know that drinking immediately following a workout impairs recovery by interfering with muscles' repair process. But in general, says Barnes, the effects of alcohol in moderation — defined as one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men — are less clear.

Read the whole story