

Athletes are ditching ibuprofen for CBD

By Graham Averill, Outside

Andrew Talansky is almost always sore. The 29-year-old spent seven years as a professional cyclist racing for Slipstream Sports. He recently switched to triathlon and now spends hours training both on and off the bike. “I’m using muscles I haven’t used in years,” Talansky says. “My body is constantly inflamed.” Many athletes in his situation rely on common pain relief like ibuprofen, but when Talansky strained a hip flexor last fall, he reached for a bottle of cannabidiol (CBD), an extract from the cannabis plant, instead.

“I took it for a couple of weeks, and there was a noticeable difference immediately,” Talansky says. “And it wasn’t just that my hip was feeling better. I was less anxious, and I was sleeping better.”

Marijuana has long been considered an alternative pain medication, with THC, the principle psychoactive compound in the plant, getting most of the attention. CBD is another active component and could offer some of the same medical benefits (anti-inflammatory, anti-anxiety, analgesic), but without the side effect of getting high.

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