

How to Improve Your HRV | Dr. Andy Galpin & Dr. Andrew Huberman

I'm curious as to what happens or what one should do if their hr V is reduced for maybe three or four or more days in a row Absolutely The next question that I'm gonna ask is and am I in that adaptation phase If so I'm gonna still ignore it just like I did if it was a single bad day but I'm gonna start watching it very carefully I may actually now uh introduce some other tests so I may use a performance test Uh We may look at something else maybe ask questions maybe have some communication either with myself or somebody else So I'm gonna start paying more attention but I'm still really not gonna take much action until that crosses more than seven days of consistent problems Um If it does do that or we're in a peaking phase then I'm gonna go to another set of solutions that are truly going to pull me out of the hole rather than just be uh those acute state shifters These are more what I call chronic stage shifters Now some of these are actually very similar to the ones we've used before Uh for example thermal stress So I can promise you if your recovery score is in the tanks and you walk outside and you jump in your 35 degree water and you get back out What's going to happen is your HR V score immediately afterwards I'm I'm talking within seconds is going to be significantly compromised Right In other words think about that Remember a low hr V means high sympathetic I promise you cold water will put you in a high sympathetic drive However and we've tested this pretty extensively um looking at Hr V zero 1530 6090 all the way up to 100 and 80 minutes post And on average you will see your HR V score continue to rise after that And so well you have this immediate sympathetic response you will immediately then respond Uh uh you know about 30 minutes on most people depends on the person though and that score will be improved for several hours afterwards So um heat can kind of have a similar effect Um That actually again is a it's sort of an acute fix but over time as we've described earlier that can also have a little bit of a chronic effect Um we can also then get into areas like sleep And so now we're gonna start playing and exploring why uh are are you sleeping poor as well or was your sleep score fine But your HR V was low that's a little bit of a different answer If your sleep is getting compromised then we're gonna start going into and making sure we're improving our sleep Um in terms of like brain stuff instead of maybe playing a game or having music or some of those other tricks those

aren't gonna really have a chronic effect But you can do things like work on social connection that's actually been shown to improve uh recovery over time You can do things like journaling or meditation and those have an acute effect as well as a chronic effect So again i if you go journal right now you probably feel better but also we know that over time that will gradually improve things So um adaptogen and things like that also can have a chronic effect Uh So can things like electrolytes or food or hydration if those things were were off So we're gonna go to a whole number of areas but those are the primary ones outstanding of all that Of course it may be simply a time to go back and reassess our training program That's truly the case So uh that's where we're at If so we're probably going to either completely remove training um or drop it to like 50% or so uh until we start rebounding back to baseline And that's generally the numbers we use for many people who are not training for a competitive sport and maybe aren't pushing themselves really hard you know maybe uh they they consider themselves somebody who exercises in order to maintain health um anesthetics and um longevity et cetera Uh And they never really finish any workout completely exhausted they're sleeping OK Their appetites Ok Can we assume that they are recovering well Um Or maybe they're not creating enough of a adaptation response like there's no progressive overreaching and so there's really no stimulus for recovery What I'm saying here is on the on the face of it I think is obvious right If you don't train hard there's nothing to recover from What I'm really saying is is the ability to recover itself Something that we need to train In other words can we get better at recovering And the uh analogy here would be something like focus in order to uh perform work of any kind but certainly mental work and physical work we need to be able to focus the ability to focus is the reflection of a bunch of neural circuits and chemicals and hormones et cetera But we know roughly what those are and we know that if you are poor at focusing for every small bit of time that you can focus a little bit longer even if it's a matter of seconds those circuits themselves get better at focusing and so on and so forth So in other words is the recovery system however broad neurotransmitter hormones neural muscular immune based et cetera can that system or set of systems become better Can we get better at recovering Can we meaning can it become faster and uh more effective Um Can we think of the recovery system as kind of a blade that gets sharper by engaging recovery Because if so then there's strong reason for people who are not pushing really hard to push at least a little bit harder than is comfortable for them every once in a while to make sure that that

system doesn't start to slide back Remember physiology is listening to everything you do and it is always responding So the analogy that I will meet your analogy with that I use here is the bowling alley So you've probably been bowling before and you've used the bumper lanes right the bumper lanes I've gone bowling before and I've spent time in the gutter and I've spent time on the pins Um so it's been a while We used to have a bowling alley in the town where I went to and um it was fun We used to slide around on their shoes and like all the kids would hang out there and I feel like do they still have bowling alleys I don't even know It feels like something that may have gone the way of the the mid two thousands I don't care if no one bowls anymore You're not gonna ruin my good analogy What my intent wasn't to ruin your analogy Um ok tell us about bowling All the bowlers are gonna come after me with with um bowling balls or something you're gonna get blasted with all the stats on elevations And so if one were to go bowling and they didn't want to put their ball in the gutter you could put these little bumpers in those lanes All right And these little foam pads that go in the gutter that if your ball is going towards the gutter it hits those and bounces off and goes back in the lane right Ok So in this entire conversation and this is actually true of a lot of the way people approach their fitness and health people are very concerned oftentimes with optimizing meaning I wanna make sure I don't go in the gutter I don't want to hit the walls So therefore I'm gonna try to improve the accuracy in which I throw the ball So I wanna make sure that I'm throwing it down the center of the lane more often And I wanna get my dis my standard deviation tighter and tighter so that I don't get anywhere close to hitting the wall However what they're not realizing is if you do that the body will start shrinking the size of the lane because what it basically says is huh we haven't had a ball touch us in years We don't need to be this wide Let's get smaller and smaller and smaller So it's not that you actually are having a reduced ability to recover but you start becoming incredibly sensitive to that So your two strategies for enhancing recovery are to practice getting closer throwing that ball down the middle line or to widen to widen the alley And that's exactly what you're referring to and you absolutely should do that And so what happens is you don't have to be so precise with what you're doing because your ability to handle so many things is widened So if you're off now by four or five inches to the right no problem because you've just tripled the size of your alley That's exactly what you wanna do So paying attention to two things number one is getting better at accuracy Maybe staying really tight with your progressions um using

nutrition and sleep to optimize your recovery and push your resilience is what we call this In fact there's actually a biological way to measure resilience We we do that in all of our folks Um This is scientifically validated stuff I didn't just make it up You can actually measure resilience and there's more and more coming out on this but that's exactly what that term means So how well can you handle and bang things off the threshold So when you see a reduction in say 10% of your hr V today for you that might make you feel terrible for me I might not feel anything because I'm well adapted to large fluctuations and therefore I'm ok the less and less you do that the more and more responsive you will be to those slight deviations So that is exactly the target And that's kind of what I allude to And I say you got to understand what are we optimizing for We're optimizing for making sure I don't feel any different today and we optimizing and make sure when I do feel different I still am able to perform Um So this is why you want to do things like maybe use some caffeine today and feel great But if I have to use it every day all I'm doing is shrinking my sensitivity there So now if I have to go a day without it I can't train at all right Caffeine is the easy example because people understand how that whole system works but this is really true of everything else So yeah you need to practice this and the way to do that is to give yourself more stress to continue to bring in the stress from nutrition from training from breathwork Um You mentioned earlier about focus the exact same thing right It's not just about getting better right now it's about training a system and you can clearly train that right Um We will often say breathwork is a practice That's exactly what we're talking about right So you're practicing getting better at these things you're practicing returning your focus you're practicing recovering and quite literally physiologically you can upregulate whether we're talking enzymes whether we're talking about regulators these will be upregulated So then that time the next time that insult comes in it's not as big as it's not as damaging So yeah absolutely You can And you should strive for that