

## How to Know If You Need a Rest Day | Dr. Andy Galpin & Dr. Andrew Huberman

How should people think about systemic damage and recovery Because obviously the nervous system and the way it interacts with the neuromuscular system is the site of all the action here or at least a lot of the action and the nervous system can in fact become fatigued you know that has a great capacity But the whole system that we're talking about can be worked to the extent that even if a muscle group like the biceps or the back is being allowed to rest while you're training legs and other muscle groups that your whole neuromuscular system needs rest How does one determine whether or not your entire body needs complete rest or or low level active rest or exercise of a different kind Yeah Yeah Sure So I want to actually tackle this because we're on the topic of hypertrophy I'm assuming that that's the goal in mind here here I'm asking specifically within the context of hypertrophy I realized that for other training goals the answer to this question could be quite different OK So we actually do this in a couple of different ways Let's start local and work back to systemic right Because um number one what you're really concerned about is at the local muscle level is am I gonna create excessive damage Uh and I don't necessarily mean muscle damage I mean injury right So um the kind of rule of thumb we use is like three out of 10 in terms of soreness if you're more than three out of 10 in terms of soreness um we're gonna start asking questions if you're higher than six out of 10 we're probably not training total subjective measure right And you'll you'll know very quickly right If you're like if you can barely graze your peck with your fingertip and then you're like oh I don't care what you score that we're not training there's just no damage if you're three out of 10 If you're just like oh I'm kind of like a little bit stiff here but once you get warmed up you you start feeling OK you're probably OK to proceed there So that is is uh a very easy way to just think about soreness You're gonna be a little bit tight depending on your training frequency Now zooming out to systemic we use a whole host of things So we actually have AAA whole host of bowel markers We use you can get a lot of these from blood so you can look at things like creatine kinase That's the very common one marker of muscle damage Um We'll actually look at um L DH we'll look at myo globulin Um That's just like if you think about hemoglobin is the um I is the molecule that carries oxygen throughout your blood The myoglobin is the the part of that

that's actually in muscle So when muscle gets broken down that gets leaked out and put in your blood that's one of the markers actually that's gonna be associated with things like rhabdo which is uh like you you're gonna see your urine is purple it's extremely dark because you got so much muscle breakdown that that happens and kidneys gonna have a problem and you put a bunch of stuff in there So we use those bile markers We'll actually also look at um probably a couple of things you're familiar with A LT and A ST Um These are excellent bio markers of muscle breakdown So if we are actually suspecting that this is a chronic problem um we're gonna actually go enemy and pull some blood Um If it's just like I'm super sore today we're gonna use that subjective marker But if we're seeing this as constant like man are we really pushing you way too much Is there some sort of systemic problem Um We're going to blood and we're gonna look at all those different things Now a ST to A LT is is really specific and I don't wanna take us too far off track here but the ratio to those things is actually very important as well So um if you look at the A ST to a LT ratio Typically the number we'll look at is like 1.67 as that ratio is like higher than that you have a pretty high risk of muscle damage But really between you know me and you and a few of these listeners anytime we start seeing a ST out kick a LT we're immediately thinking as in the ratio being higher than one we're immediately thinking like there's something happening muscle damage wise So um that's actually a sneaky good indicator of just total muscle mass Um because the vast majority of that's gonna be in muscle So um those are actually some markers that we like a lot If muscle damage is uh the thing we're concerned with if we are more concerned with things like total training volume systemic overload then we may turn to something more like sleep There's a lot of information we can actually get glain from changes in sleep um behavior and function Um You could also look at things like hr V heart rate variability which is a very classic marker and much more sensitive to changes with training than something like a resting heart rate Um which is which is one thing you can actually do that's totally cost free Just look at your changes uh and any elevation resting heart rate over time especially more than 3 to 5 consecutive days It is an indicator but HIV is much more sensitive to things like training induced overload So that's a a quick version of stuff that we're gonna pay attention to The last one I would add there is simply motivation So if if you're really training hard and you like training hard and you just like cannot force yourself to go anymore that and of itself can be a good indication of it's maybe not the day maybe not the week Um

With all of these things you want to be careful about overreacting to a single day measure. Again we look we need to look at at least a trend of more than three days. Honestly I'm looking at more than five days. Um I'm gonna pull back from that and think about what phase of training we're in. What part of the year we're in typically with our athletes are in season, preseason, postseason, off-season, et cetera, to make our decisions about what we're going to do about it. Are we canning the entire workout? Are we doing a modified, lower version, lower intensity? Um My default generally if hypertrophy is the goal, remember volume is the driver there. So if I can like can we get in, can we go real light. Let's go to six out of 10 RPE so relative perceived exertion. um Maybe we'll reduce the range of motion, maybe we'll make it a little bit easier, maybe go to machines or instead of going a squat we'll just do you know uh leg extensions something like that. But I wanna still get enough volume in there that will keep you on target. And again even going at 50% not not to high repetition you know 50% for a set of 10, 3 sets just get a nice blood flow in there, get it in, get it out, aid in recovery and then move on and come back the next day. That's probably what I would do rather than canning the entire session.