

RECOVERY ROCKET

Andrew May (2010), executive coach and former sports psychologist at the Australian Institute of Sport has taken his insights from the sporting world and applied them to the world of work. He created the idea of an annual recovery plan, to keep people fresh, motivated and energized. The information below is adapted from his article Recovery Rocket.

Recovery Rocket = 1 + 3 + 30 + 300 + 365



One Big Break or Off-Season per Year

The Australian workforce collectively has more than 123 million days of accrued annual leave, roughly \$33 billion worth – and close to 25 per cent of all Australian workers in full time employment have more than 25 days of annual leave accrued.

Holiday time or leisure time is time off work. Stay off the mobile and avoid the temptation to check email. Organise yourself before you leave so that other people can manage while you're off recharging. We know that it's imperative for elite athletes to take regular time out to recover and recharge, so why do we try to play a five-day 'corporate' test match week in, week out? And then play a grand final game on both Saturday and Sunday?

Mini breaks

Plan for a mini-break at least three or four times a year to reboot your system. Here's a list of suggestions to get you thinking about the things you could do to enjoy a well-earned time break. Book a beach house, head for the mountains, tour the wineries, camping, visit friends interstate – just make sure it's got nothing to do with work and you are going to have plenty of time to relax and unwind.

30 Weeks of 100 Recovery Points

David Misson, the former Elite Performance Manager for the Sydney Swans, introduced a program to the team where players accumulate 100 'recovery points' each week, to make sure they're okay for the next big game.

The Corporate Recovery Toolbox is similar. It combines indoor and outdoor activities and your goal is to hit 100 points each week. Here's a table of activities you can follow – or you can add your own.

We recommend that you set aside at least 30 minutes for each of these sessions, which will enable you and your participant to deeply explore their goals, expectations, how they are tracking with their learning and to identify opportunities for applying what they learn on the job. These activities are about taking it easy – there are no points awarded for a punishing 10km run. The idea is to give both your body and your mind a rest. If you're into fitness, these tasks are in addition to keeping fit – try swapping one run for a leisurely walk and give your body a chance to unwind and free your mind to think.

Recovery Activities

Indoor Recovery		Outdoor Recovery	
Massage	50 points	Relaxing swim	25 points
Stretch/Yoga	40	BBQ/ Picnic	25
Meditation	40	Golf	25
Social catch-up	25	Gardening	20
Dancing	25	Easy cycle	20
Volunteer	25	Slow walk	20
Warm bath	15	Sightseeing	20
Relaxing music	15	Festival	20
Reading fiction	15	Fishing	20
Go to a movie	15	Amusement park	15
Watch TV	5	Shopping	15

300 nights of quality recharging sleep

To The plan is to get six nights each week of quality sleep. Reducing your average sleep by just one hour per night over a week-long period will result in a 20% reduction in alertness and ability to perform. You need an adequate amount of time asleep (usually 7 – 8 hours for most people), and that sleep needs to be deep and uninterrupted. Some tips for achieving this are;

- Regular bedtime: Keep regular bedtimes and rising times each day
- Draw the curtains: Darkness helps you go to sleep and to drift back to sleep if you wake up.
- See the day: Natural daylight helps your body make serotonin which at night makes
- Melatonin. Melatonin induces sleep, so getting outdoors promotes better sleep.
- Milk before bed: Milk contains tryptophan which the body also uses to make melatonin.
- Limit electronic devices. New research is finding that the light frequency emitted by screens is very disruptive to sleep.
- Take a bath, use earplugs, ensure your bedroom is a comfortable temperature.

365 days a year – go SLOW

Spend at least 10 to 30 minutes every day taking it easy. Give your conscious mind permission to change gears and engage your subconscious thought patterns. Do what works for you - this is all about stimulating the relaxation response, the exact opposite of the stress response. This is a great circuit breaker before rushing home after a busy day's work. It is easy to walk through the door still thinking about all the hassles of the day. Slowing down before you arrive home is a great way to connect better as a partner, family member, parent and friend.

Go SLOW activities:

- Walking at a gentle pace
- Relaxing bath
- Listening to quiet music
- Relaxing in the outdoors
- Meditation
- Sit in a chair, close your eyes and relax
- Gentle stretching
- Floating in the ocean.

Make a Recovery Plan

Plan a recovery program for the next 12 months. Lock in annual, monthly and weekly activities to get regular recovery points. Setting an annual recovery plan is a proven strategy to help busy people get through the pressure we face these days. We tend to make life harder than it needs to be by burning ourselves out, and constantly being distracted by technology and digital devices. Sticking to an annual recovery plan might just be the missing piece of the puzzle that helps you sustain performance and take control back of your life

Reference:

Adapted from May, A. (2010). Recovery Rocket. Retrieved from: www.andrewmay.com/pdfs/recovery/Recovery-Rocket.pdf