

# How Alcohol Affects Athletes

The American Athletic Institute has conducted studies of alcohol use and athlete performance. *Here are some of the findings:*

## **Training Effect**

- Every time you get drunk, you lose approximately 14 days of training effect. That's right; one night of drinking and two weeks of training effect is erased. You are wasting your time and your career.

## **Training Hormones**

- Alcohol suppresses your training hormones for up to four days. Basically, you are at practice but the hormones you need to get training effect and condition are not. You practice, but no improvement comes.

## **Performance Potential**

- The effect of recent heavy drinking lowers your performance potential by 11.4 percent before you even step out onto the ice or field.

## **Muscles**

- Lactic acid levels, which fatigue your muscles, increases much earlier and primary muscles that you depend on shut down or are slower and weaker

## **Lungs**

- You will not be able to catch your breath during breaks in activity. Your breathing rate will be very high and you will hyperventilate or lose control of your breathing. Your lungs are trying to get oxygen to your working muscles and clear carbon dioxide from your system, but they cannot.

## **Heart**

- Your heart rate will be much higher and over time your cardiac output will decrease. The oxygen rich blood will not reach your working muscles. The lactic acid will build up in the muscles and you will slow down and be weaker.

## **Muscle Fuels**

- Normally we can reload our muscles with fuels (glycogen) in 8-12 hours, but after drinking, it can be 16-24 hours.

## **Recovery**

- Normal recovery from maximal stress is 24 hours, but after drinking, it can be 48-96 hours.

## **Dehydration**

- Alcohol is a diuretic, which means it make you urinate.

### **Muscle Repair**

- When we train, muscle is damaged. We repair it by making protein into new fibers. Drinking slows down this repair process. It is in your speed muscles that this process is most reduced

### **Reflex**

- Alcohol affects reaction time and hand-eye coordination, which are two of the most important functions in most sports.

### **Conclusion:**

*Alcohol is a metabolic poison, clear and simple. It affects the entire body and all body systems, especially those that control high performance. No serious athlete should use alcohol.*