



Recovery With Olympian Melanie Roach

Olympic weightlifter Olympian Melanie Roach explains how she regains her energy and strength post-workout.

Sarah Gearhart

Sure, you go hard in the weight room, but what about when you step outside? Do you feel energized? Or do you constantly feel fatigued? You can't expect results from your body without attending to the recovery process. Proper recovery is an essential element of any training plan.

Olympic weightlifter Melanie Roach explains how she regains her energy and strength post-workout so she can go hard the next day and achieve her goals in competition.



Roach operates on an eight- to 12-week training cycle that transitions from higher weight volume and decreased intensity to higher intensity and decreased volume. "That's when you're trying to get closer and closer to a personal record," she says.

Competitions consist of one maximum lift performed three times, the goal being to hit a personal record. To prep for a PR, Roach spends up to two and half hours a day—sometimes twice a day—Cleaning and Snatching, which understandably leaves her body spent.

Roach isn't afraid to aggressively showcase her power during workouts. At 5'1" and 117 pounds of pure muscle, the former gymnast can hoist 113 kilos [250 pounds]. But she's equally fierce with her recovery process, providing her body with some serious TLC. After an ice bath to flush her system, she downs a low-calorie protein source. Twice weekly massages and visits to the chiropractor add to the routine, along with a systematic nutrition plan. Roach says, "You usually hear about protein, and I do think protein's critical; but I was very adamant about getting in extra calories through fruits and vegetables," adding that her intake consists of a combo of whole foods and juices.

Roach's daily menu ensures that she never goes hungry:

Breakfast: Protein shake made with two scoops of protein powder, orange juice, 1 banana, frozen fruit [e.g., raspberries and blueberries]

Post-workout snack: Jerky

Lunch: Quesadilla with chicken, onions and cheese

Snack: Apple and cheese

Pre-workout: Oatmeal with peanut butter and honey; Powerbar

Post-workout snack: Jerky

Dinner: Protein source, vegetables and rice

Before bed: Juiced vegetables [carrot, celery stick, beet, orange, lemon and wheat grass]

Roach asserts that her diet is free of junk food, soda and refined sugar; but one sugar she does consume is ribose. She believes that [Bioenergy's Ribose](#) is especially beneficial in aiding recovery. She mixes five grams of the powdered supplement with water and downs it before, during and after training. Roach claims that since adding the supplement to her diet, her recovery has become practically painless. "Once I was introduced to Ribose, my recovery improved so much," she says. "I [wasn't] as sore as I usually [was]."

Roach's "magic" recovery results from ribose's natural effect. Your body produces small amounts of ribose but uses it differently from other sugars. Instead of burning it as fuel, your body uses ribose to stimulate energy production, which perhaps explains Roach's smoother recovery process. Research suggests that when the body's tissues are stressed during intense activity, ribose boosts energy recovery and offsets muscle soreness. When energy stores are depleted, ribose synthesis in the body is delayed, so supplementation can aid recovery by reducing fatigue and helping to restore energy pools.

Roach also credits Ribose for eliminating crashes during competition. She says, "In competition, you have a 20- to 30-minute break between [lifts]. I would sit there, and all the adrenaline would go away, and I would have this incredible crash; I was exhausted. When I tried ribose, it was amazing how that crash never occurred again."

The results are evident. Roach won the bronze medal at the 2007 Pan Am Games and placed sixth at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. She also holds long-standing American records for totals in the Clean & Jerk and Snatch.