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LIVING BUGS FOR ATHLETES IN ACTION

For many athletes fatigue, particularly associated with recurrent infections and a decline in performance, are synonymous with hard training. There might be a good explanation for all this, as well as a possible prevention.

High intensity exercise is associated with changes in many scientific measures of the immune function. Stress experienced by the body of "over trained" athletes can cause the suppression of the immune system which may lead to the reactivation of Epstein Barr Virus (EBV) infections. EBV is a recognized cause of fatigue and occurs in 70%- 90% of the population. This reactivation of the EBV infection may lead to inflammation. Due to inflammation the well trained athlete will battle with recurrent sore throats and upper respiratory tract infections, which will impair performance. A study of elite swimmers over a 30 day period of intense training showed that two thirds had symptoms of a viral infection or sore-throats.

So, should performance driven athletes who work really hard accept that fatigue is inevitable? No, the 'silver bullet' in this case seems to be probiotics. Probiotics are "live" bacteria which, when consumed in sufficient numbers on a regular basis have numerous health benefits, specifically in strengthening the immune system. *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, the good bacteria often used in probiotic supplements have been shown to activate an immune response to antigens and have also been known for their protection in mucosal infections commonly found in fatigued athletes.

A study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine investigated the effect of a selected strain of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, namely LAFTI®L10 on fatigued athletes. This group were well trained athletes complaining of fatigue, recurrent sore throats and impaired performance. The fatigued athletes were compared to healthy athletes who did not experience any of these symptoms. Both the healthy and fatigued athletes took LAFTI®L10 for four weeks.

After a month of daily administration, LAFTI®L10 had a restorative effect amongst the fatigued athletes. The immune performance parameter in the fatigued athletes improved by 311%. This means that after only a month's supply of LAFTI®L10 the fatigued athletes had a similar level of resistance to infections as the healthy athletes. There is more good news - even the immune performance of healthy athletes improved after taking the LAFTI®L10 probiotic.

Reaping the benefits of hard work on the sports field without hurdles such as frequent infections and fatigue does not have to be a bitter pill to swallow. All you need to swallow is a daily dose of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* LAFTI®L10 probiotic.

Issued by:
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References:

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