

## DOMS: Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness

If you are a regular exerciser and on the day after a hard workout, you never feel soreness in your muscles, you are not exercising properly and you will not improve your fitness level as much as you could. Take a tip from competitive athletes who train by taking a hard workout, feeling sore on the next day and then take easy workouts until the soreness goes away in a day or two. The good soreness that makes you stronger is called DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) and is caused by microscopic tears in your muscle fibers. It is not caused by lactic acid buildup. When muscles are damaged, they produce healing prostaglandin that cause muscles to become bigger and stronger than before they were exercised vigorously. Researchers have shown that DOMS heals faster when you do nothing, but if you take off every time your muscles feel sore, you will never become an athlete and you will not reach a high level of fitness. When you exert very slight pressure on your muscles when you have DOMS, you cause muscle fibers to become more fibrous and they will become stronger so they can withstand greater stress during your harder workouts. Never try to put a lot of pressure on your muscles when they feel sore. That will markedly increase your chances of injuring yourself. It is relatively easy to tell the difference between DOMS and an impending injury. DOMS is usually symmetrical, involving muscles equally on both sides of your body. An injury is more likely to cause pain that is only on one side. DOMS does not feel worse as you exercise at light intensity. An injury worsens with continued use of the injured part. Stop exercising when you have an injury. When your muscles feel sore from exercising, take the day off or exercise with very light resistance, such as running or cycling very slowly, or lifting extremely light weights. Try stretching gently to help restore flexibility. Deep massage may help you to heal faster and toughen your muscles. Creams and ice will not help you recover faster, but many aspirin-containing creams and the coldness from ice may help alleviate discomfort.

## About the Author

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