* OVERTRAINING

- Is a chronic *psychological* and *physiological* condition caused by training loads that are too demanding for an athlete to manage.
- In early stages recognised as ‘staleness’ → overtraining → burnout (physically fatigued and mentally drained).
- First stage is referred to as ‘overreaching’ – this is short term and recovery only takes a couple of days. It is often planned by the coach but must be carefully monitored so it does not progress to overtraining.
- During the overreach period there is a temporary underperformance followed by a period of supercompensation where performance increases following a regeneration period of up to 2 weeks.
- Overtraining may have a recovery time of up to 6 months.
* OVERTRAINING

- Can be concealed and is difficult to establish objectively
- Athletes respond differently to the same training regime – some will show signs of overtraining while others do not
- Personal factors, medical conditions, sleep, drugs, nutrition, environmental stress and general health will all have an impact on training volume
- Training loads must be balanced with sufficient recovery
- Observations of changes in drive and enthusiasm are also important indicators
* PLANNING TO AVOID OVERTRAINING – amount and intensity of training

- When planning the periodisation, volume, intensity and recovery must be established.
- Intensity must be varied from one activity to the next and from one training session to the next.
- For game players, recovery sessions might focus on strategies, skill building, team talks, watching play videos.
- Volume can be varied by manipulating frequency and duration of sessions.
- Optional performance is the product of training balance, periodised recovery, variety and individual differences.
Under-recovery can result from:
- high frequency of competition
- monotonous training
- 3 hours or more training per day
- a 30% increase in training load each week
- more than 2 hard training days in succession
- no unload week after 3 weeks
- no rest days
Possible physiological symptoms of overtraining include:

- excessive sweating, - increased resting heart rate, - insomnia
- higher blood lactate levels, - infections, - decreased appetite
- Menstrual irregularities, - headaches, - thirst, - weight loss,
- Fatiguing early in training, - more frequent colds and sore throats
PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The most important psychological consideration relates to loss of motivation.
- When physical stability is threatened, emotional factors assume greater importance and affect health and well being.
- Other potential stressors include:
  - lifestyle imbalance, - pressure to perform - feeling isolated, - fear of failure, - social problems
- Psychological symptoms of overtraining include:
  - Lack of concentration, - lower self esteem, - boredom, - lethargy,
  - Distractedness, - loss of confidence, - increased anxiety, - anger
Strategies to improve mental well being of athletes suffering overtraining include:

- Reduction or cessation of training
- Active rest
- Use of relaxation techniques
- Change of routine and environment
- Replacing pressure with positive reinforcement

Competitive athletes often under rate the implications of overtraining, believing that working longer, harder and more often is what is needed to perform. They need to be educated as to the problems, causes and symptoms related to overtraining so as to prevent it from occurring.