

# RED-S: Understanding the Impact on Athletes

## What is Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S)?

Put simply, RED-S is about energy imbalance. Expenditure of energy (i.e., exercise/movement) requires sufficient input (food/drink) to work effectively. The imbalance occurs when the expenditure of energy outpaces the input, causing a state of energy deficiency.

With insufficient energy intake, the body begins to prioritise functions for survival. The other functions, such as the production of hormones, bone health and the immune system begin to be lowered in priority of resource allocation.

RED-S can affect all members of the athletic population irrespective of age. Symptoms vary between individual, making the diagnosis of RED-S more difficult. Classical symptoms include fatigue, recurrent injuries, prolonged recovery time, irregular menstrual cycles in female athletes, decreased performance, and psychological distress or depression.

The key to optimising energy performance is ensuring adequate rest breaks and sufficient nutritional intake between bouts of exercise. This is referred to as 'integrated periodisation' and is not just about eating enough, but allowing time for the body to recover to meet the energy demands of the sport.

To keep reading, head on over to Carlingford Active Health's website for the full blog: <http://www.carlingfordactivehealth.com.au/news/red-s-understanding-the-impact-on-athletes/>

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