

How Kris Gethin Hacks His Body and Mind

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Elite athletes are elite because of how they train and eat, but also because of how they live and prioritize recovery. Here's how a bodybuilder and hybrid athlete plans out his day to recover from brutal workouts and keep coming back for more.

Kris Gethin has never been content to push his body toward just one goal. He's best known as a hard-training bodybuilder, but he's also sought out his limits in competitive motocross racing, an iron-distance triathlon, and even an ultramarathon. "You name it, I'll do it," he says.

But how does he do it all? It starts with dialing in every minute component of his workouts and nutrition—this is the guy who said on the Bodybuilding.com Podcast that he didn't miss a meal for 19 years, after all. But it doesn't end there.

To help recover from everything, while being ready for anything, Kris employs a laundry list of cutting-edge techniques. A few you've definitely heard of. Others, you might not quite be ready for. But if you dare, here's how he hones his body into a performance machine, and you can, too.

Weekly Optimization

Sauna



What the Science Says: Studies have found time to exhaustion among distance runners increased by 32 percent after just 12 half-hour sauna sessions. In that time, the user's blood volume increased dramatically, as well. Other studies have seen sauna users double their growth hormone level with just two sessions a week.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

What the Science Says: This technique has historically been used to boost recovery from illnesses and injuries such as extreme burns and decompression sickness. More recently, it's become a favorite of hard-training elite athletes looking for an edge. Numerous NFL players built entire hyperbaric bedrooms in their houses. Seven-time Mr. Olympia Phil Heath also called his at-home changer his "hidden secret" for dominating the competition.

Ice Baths And Cold Therapy



What the Science Says: The effectiveness of cold exposure for fat loss is well-established, via the mechanism of "brown adipose tissue." This type of body fat not only burns calories, it also helps to regulate blood sugar and can help control inflammation. Some research indicates it can help elevate mood by boosting dopamine levels.

Apollo Neuro Vibration Therapy

What the Science Says: Vibration has been shown to be an effective way to decrease heart rate and other measurements of so-called "sympathetic" or stress responses. And one study of the Apollo Neuro device at the University of Pittsburgh indicated that it had the potential to boost calmness, focus, and cognitive performance.

Red Light Therapy

What the Science Says: So-called "red light therapy" has been around for years, and researched to some degree for the benefits Kris is after. In one study, elite female basketball players saw their sleep quality improve from red light exposure, helping them combat the types of sleep disruption that can accompany intense training. Animal studies have also seen significant increases in testosterone levels from targeted red light therapy.

Earthing/Grounding



What the Science Says: What exactly happens when you "ground" by connecting your skin to bare earth hasn't been fully established yet by limited research, but there are several potential benefits. One study found that it helped decrease exercise-induced muscle soreness among active young men. Others have linked it to improved stress tolerance and pain tolerance, improved sleep quality, and lower nighttime levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Glucose Monitoring

What the Science Says: Limiting blood sugar "spikes," which Kris tracks with a patch and app made by the company NutriSense, has been shown in certain studies to be a way to avoid gaining extra body fat. When one happens, going for a walk has been shown to help bring it down immediately.

Meditation



What the Science Says: Exercise is a well-known way to alleviate symptoms of depression, in addition to its many other benefits. Meditation is also known to be effective for mood enhancement. Perhaps not surprisingly, a recent study found that performing both on a regular basis is a powerful tool for mental health.

EMF-Blocking Phone Case And Clothes

What the Science Says: There's no research definitively proving that radiation emitting from electromagnetic fields (EMF) created by technology is killing us. But the World Health Organization and a number of researchers have expressed concern about the potential carcinogenic (cancer-causing) effects of the constant low-level radiation that accompanies our connected life.

Blue-Light Blocking



What the Science Says: Electronic devices like smartphones emit blue LED light that can disrupt your body's natural production of melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep cycles. Limiting your exposure to this light, like Kris does with specialized glasses has been shown to improve both sleep quality and cognitive abilities.

Make The Time. Feel The Benefits.

If you've ever struggled to keep up with Kris' brutal workouts, even while following his nutritional approach for muscle gain or fat loss, one of these techniques could be the extra "something" you've been wishing for.

But make no mistake: You'll still have to do the work.

"Doctors will not make you healthy. Nutritionists will not make you slim. Trainers will not make you fit. You have to take responsibility with no excuses. You have to make that sacrifice before you witness your success," Kris says.

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