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7 Ways to Make Your Post-Workout High Last Longer

Milk that "runner's high" for all it's worth with fun strategies that prolong your post-workout endorphins rush



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It's the moment when you feel like you could run a marathon after completing a workout. Whether you just kicked butt in a kickboxing class or released unwanted toxins from hot yoga, that natural post-workout high is something everyone wants to last as long as possible. [Shape Magazine](#) tells us seven ways to make your post-workout high last longer. Check out how easy it is to tack on these steps after your workout.

You hear a lot about a runner's high. But, really, any activity that gets your heart rate up for 30 minutes or more will trigger the release of endorphins (like anandamide) that are similar to THC, the chemical responsible for the high you get from marijuana, according to [research](#) from the University of Arizona in Tucson. Those chemicals are why you feel that buzzy, happy glow after hitting the gym. But, the downside is that the feeling wears off faster than you'd like. Luckily, these tips can help you fight the fade, and make your post-gym high last longer. (And, by the way, [Science Is Trying to Decode the Runner's High](#), so you can maximize your potential.)

Go Hard

Prolonging your natural high starts with getting the biggest boost possible *during* your sweat session—something to remember when you're powering through the last 10 seconds of your next plank. When you're in pain, your body releases natural opiate-like endorphins with the same buzz-inducing (and ache-numbing) properties as their chemical cousins, says [Matt Bellace](#), Ph.D., author of *A Better High*. To get the best, longest-lasting high, then, you've got to get uncomfortable during your workout. Add some sprints into your run, grab a heavier weight than usual, push out an extra set... You'll thank yourself later. ([Punishment Can Be a Key Incentive for Exercise](#).)

Take It Outside

For a more sustained high, Bellace suggests opting for [outdoor workouts](#) like hiking, surfing, or swimming. [Research](#) has shown that fresh air (especially what's around oceans and mountains) contains negative ions, molecules that have an extra mood-boosting effect on the body.

Sweat With a Friend

People who work out with friends tend to enjoy their sweat sesh more and exercise harder, studies show. (Learn six more reasons [Why Having a Fitness Buddy Is the Best Thing Ever.](#)) And that translates into a happier post-workout glow.

Spread the Joy

Savoring these moments of euphoria are as important as experiencing them in the first place: When you fail to focus on good things, the resulting mood boost is weaker and shorter-lived, according to [findings](#) from the Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. The easiest way to hold onto your happiness is by sharing with friends, directly or via social media posts, says Bellace. Doing so encourages you to reflect on and feel gratitude for your blessings, which deepens the pleasure you experience. Plus, when you look back on these posts or texts later, you get to relive the high. ([The Right—and Wrong—Ways to Use Social Media for Weight Loss.](#))

Fuel Up

Eating something tasty releases dopamine in the pleasure center of the brain, says Bellace. And while sugar and caffeine will give you a short-term rush, they can also lead to a crash—especially if you eat them after a workout, when your muscles are screaming for wholesome nutrients. A better bet: [these nutrition expert-approved post-workout foods.](#)

Get Busy

First of all, studies have shown that exercise boosts genital arousal—so you'll already *want* to have sex. Plus, a roll in the hay will flood your body with more feel-good endorphins and hormones, bringing your workout-induced bliss to the next level. Pro tip: You might want to hit the showers first. (See [5 Surprising Reasons to Have Sex Tonight.](#))

Pump Up the Tunes

You might already listen to a [playlist](#) during your workout, but keep the music cranked up after you've cooled down too. Listening to music you like can cause your brain to release dopamine, according to [researchers](#) from McGill University. That explains why your favorite song (hey, "[Uptown Funk](#)"!) can make you feel so happy—even on your hundreth listen—and may mean that if you keep iTunes playing once you leave the gym, you can keep the good feelings going too.