

Training while asleep

Professor of Experimental Medicine Michel Jouvet hypothesised

"that one of the roles of paradoxical sleep was to train the neural networks which are related to instinctive behavior",

"that during paradoxical sleep these neural networks are activated independently of the muscles which are linked to the nerve cells and inhibited by the brain stem",

and that "because of the decisive importance of the instincts to the survival of the species, the neural networks linked to instincts are checked every night".

Sleep is not only important to recovery and hormone balance but also to the nervous system. Basically what I am saying is the more sleep you get the more you dream and the better you will become with your motor skills. When you sleep you dream and when you dream you reinforce procedural memory. This strengthens your neural networks helping make technique instinctive (among other things but we are focusing on training).

There are two main types of memory: Procedural and Declarative. Procedural memory is information about how to proceed when doing something and declarative memory contains what we know. Procedural memory stores information such as how to drive a car, play football or play an instrument. This type of memory is long-lasting. The memories are actions, habits or skills which are learned by repetition and which can be changed by many repetitions, by training. Declarative memory is long-term memory and it contains all you have experienced or learned, all the information gained by you from childhood onwards.

REM sleep is particularly important for procedural types of learning in which humans acquire motor and perceptual skills. A good example of this is babies, their first few months of life are busy acquiring new motor and perceptual skills, during their abundant amount of REM sleep. What this boils down to is dreaming about your WOD's and lifts will help burn the movements into memory and you don't dream unless you are asleep. So getting lots of sleep not only benefits recovery and hormone balance but also technique and overall performance.