



REMEDIES

The Pain Stoppers

As a former pro cyclist and current Category 1 racer, I know from sore muscles. To test the latest pain remedies, I kicked up my routine with dozens of intervals and hundreds of push-ups. Below, the not-so-scientific results. —Jan Dille

- 1 THE TABLET** SportLegs (\$27 for a 120-capsule bottle; www.sportlegs.com) is an all-natural magnesium-calcium-vitamin D supplement. **The test:** Ahh! Two pills reduced perceived exertion (rider-speak for pain) on a 30-minute interval workout and on my same- and next-day rides.
- 2 THE CREAM** IB-Relief (\$20 for a two-ounce tube; www.ibrelief.com) is intended as a faster-acting version of “Vitamin I” (ibuprofen) pills. **The test:** It is odorless, rubs in easily, and knocked out tenderness for two hours. But for full-body aches, I’ll opt for the tablets.
- 3 THE BALM** Bodyglide WarmFX Muscle Formula (\$6 for a 0.45-ounce stick; www.bodyglide.com), a favorite of triathletes, uses menthol and methyl salicylate to soothe. **The test:** The roll-on smells like a breath mint, but it made my muscles tingle and feel better for about an hour.
- 4 THE MASSEUSE** TP Massage Ball (\$25; www.tptherapy.com) mimics the pressure of a human hand, speeding muscle recovery by increasing blood flow. **The test:** The TP worked the knots loose, but aches and pains persisted. Squishy tennis ball: 0; human touch: 1.
- 5 THE ELIXIR** CherryPharm (\$20 for an eight-pack; www.cherrypharm.com) harnesses the anti-inflammatory properties of tart cherries as identified by a University of Vermont study. **The test:** The tart juice goes down easy—but soreness was unchanged. Bonus: It doubles as a martini mixer.



Q&A



Ask Dr. Extreme

Sound advice from an expedition M.D.

Do Sherpas on Everest have a higher pain threshold than average? Can I increase mine?

■ Sherpas definitely have an elevated tolerance for cold and fatigue. More than once I’ve plodded through Everest’s [Khumbu] icefall only to be passed by a Sherpa carrying a double load, wearing flip-flops. Sherpas have genetic advantages (such as red cell enzymes to facilitate oxygen uptake) that allow them to perform well under stress. But their superior performance is largely due to a remarkable adaptation we can all develop. Proteins, our body’s building blocks, must maintain their shape to be effective. But when subjected to sudden, extreme stress—cold, hunger, sleep deprivation, even anxiety—they often unravel. If the stress is gradual and repeated, however, we produce something called “chaperone proteins” that bind to and protect normal proteins. In everyday parlance it’s called toughening up, and we can all do it by pushing our limits, braving the elements, and acting just a little more Sherpa-like.

Ken Kamler is the author of Surviving the Extremes.

Professional Mind Control

The mind can be a powerful analgesic. Here’s how four top endurance athletes “think away” pain. —Josh Fulmer

FIND A MANTRA

“Positive mind chatter is key. Before nationals, I read skier Andrea Lawrence’s autobiography *A Practice of Mountains*. Its message—extend yourself—became my mantra.”



Deena Kastor, 34
U.S. record-holding marathoner

JUST WIN

“This is a painful sport. You have to be willing to hurt to achieve your goals. I envision the victory first, then tell myself that if I can just push a little more, I can win.”



George Hincaple, 33
U.S. professional road race champion

TEAM UP

“I remind myself that I have two teammates depending on me. We’re going to get through the pain together, and I have to hold up my end of the team.”



Sari Anderson, 28
World champion adventure racer

DON'T QUIT

“You have two options: surrender to the pain or keep going. No matter what, I’m going to run. Ultra-running is 90-percent mental. The other 10 percent is also mental.”



Ray Zahab, 38
Ran 4,000 miles across the Sahara