

# Oxygen Therapy Helps Professional and Amateur Athletes Stay in the Game

People of all ages are becoming more involved in a diverse range of athletic activities, from scuba diving to mountain climbing. A natural result of this has been a significant increase in the number of reported sports-related injuries.

The most difficult part of having a sports-related injury isn't the pain or the treatment. The factor most frustrating to athletes is the time they lose from participating in their favorite activity. Often, athletes re-injure themselves or make their conditions worse by attempting to return to full activity before their bodies have healed completely.

A sports injury can be especially devastating for a professional athlete. Professional athletes sidelined because of injury can lose their standing in national rankings or their place on a team, and they risk their careers when they attempt to return to play before sufficient healing has taken place. Because professional athletes have so much at stake, many have turned to mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy to speed recovery when they suffer an injury.

## How Mild Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Helps Injuries Heal Quickly

Mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy helps athletes at all skill levels heal quickly and get back to their favorite pursuit. Many sports injuries involve strains and sprains, which naturally cause swelling and edema (accumulation of excess fluid in connective tissue).

These natural reactions to injury compress blood vessels and restrict the vital flow of oxygen-carrying plasma and red blood cells to the injury site. Cells and tissues surrounding the injury site become starved for oxygen, which impedes healing. In extreme cases, cell and tissue death can occur. Mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy saturates the blood plasma and hemoglobin with oxygen. The red blood cells become more malleable as well, increasing their ability to penetrate restricted blood vessels. Life-giving oxygen is thus able to reach the injury site so that cells can heal and the immune system can fully defend the body against harmful agents. Healing time is reduced significantly, and athletes get back into play faster.

## Oxygen Therapy and NFL Sports Injuries

To enhance on-field performance and decrease injury recovery times, several notable stars of the National Football League have purchased portable hyperbaric chambers for their homes. Some players have a second chamber that they take on the road so that there is no interruption in their oxygen therapy regimen.

FOXSports.com<sup>1</sup> reported that football superstar Terrell Owens used hyperbaric oxygen therapy to hasten his recovery from an ankle injury so that he could play in the 2005 Super Bowl.

In an article in the *Cincinnati Inquirer*<sup>2</sup>, Cincinnati Bengals defensive tackle Bryan Robinson says mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy was the catalyst in getting a

nagging ankle injury to heal.

In a recent issue of the *Dallas Cowboys Official Weekly*<sup>3</sup>, linebacker Kevin Burnett credits mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy for helping him get back onto the playing field quickly after surgery to repair cartilage damage in his knee.

## **How Oxygen Therapy Increases Endurance and Relieves Fatigue**

Oxygen is essential to athletic endeavors of any sort because it facilitates the production of glycogen, one of the main sources of muscle energy. In a process called glycolysis, a glucose (sugar) molecule is broken into two pyruvic acid molecules. A pyruvic acid molecule enters the muscle cell, where it combines with oxygen to produce adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the source of muscle energy. When insufficient oxygen is present to create ATP, the pyruvic acid becomes lactic acid. This lactic acid naturally diffuses to the bloodstream, where it is carried away. However, during intense exercise, the lactic acid cannot be removed quickly enough, and it collects in the muscle cells, causing fatigue.

Mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy provides greatly increased oxygen saturation throughout the body, allowing the body to get the oxygen it needs to create ATP for energy and flush out the lactic acid that causes muscle fatigue. The elevated oxygen levels help athletes increase performance and recover more quickly after a workout. In addition, increased oxygen delivery to the brain facilitates brain function and enhances an athlete's ability to make the split-second decisions that can make a difference in the outcome of the game.

## **Experience the Benefits of Mild Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy**

Athletes of any age or ability can benefit from mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy. We encourage you to visit a New Leaf Hyperbarics Clinic and experience the rejuvenating and healing effects of this remarkable therapy. Our state-of-the-art hyperbaric chambers are roomy and comfortable. You can read, take a nap, or watch a video on a portable DVD player during your treatment. Treat yourself and those aching muscles to the abundance of vital oxygen our hyperbaric chambers provide.

If you have suffered an injury that is keeping you from your favorite sport, mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy can help your body heal more quickly and thoroughly so that you can get back in the game. Contact us today to schedule an appointment for the treatment deemed essential by so many of today's professional athletes.

1. FOXSports.com, "Owens could be ready to play Super Bowl," January 7, 2005.
2. *Cincinnati Inquirer*, "Come on in, the oxygen is fine!" August 10, 2005.
3. *Dallas Cowboys Weekly*, "Breath of fresh air," September 9, 2006.

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