

# Prepare For Your Big Shot

*By Scott Quill*

Before the 2008 UEFA European Football Championship began, Scott Piri's goal was to help players on the Turkey National Soccer Team improve their overall performance, including strength, stability, balance, power and endurance. He also aimed to make them more resilient to injury through intense and innovative training sessions.

But now, in the midst of a grueling tournament, skipping a workout is not only OK, it's preferred. "The focus is on regeneration and nutrition," says Piri, who is also a performance specialist for Athletes' Performance. "If you try to work too hard, you won't be close to 100 percent for the next game. We want to make sure the guys recover."

The Turkey National Team has played four games in less than two weeks. They've come from behind twice in dramatic fashion—they scored three goals in the last 15 minutes to defeat the Czech Republic. And they've achieved it all despite a hectic travel schedule.

But you know how it is. Maybe not in the world championships or sports at all, but you've been in that moment, perhaps somewhere between juggling late nights at the office and coaching your kids' team, or where a newborn and a new job converge. You know, that point at which you have to perform at your all-time highest level despite having little or no time to lift weights and run, never mind time to stretch and eat right.

But when life is most demanding is also when you need to help your body recover the most. Recovery has been a secret weapon in the line of defense against fatigue for the team. Unfortunately, says Piri, most people will skip "active recovery," or regeneration work, when they don't have time to train. Instead, you should focus on it more.

Use these recovery tips to avoid fatigue and come up big when it matters most:

## 1. Take a Cool Dip

If you're an athlete, a simple way to speed recovery is to treat it as part of practice or games. Think of it this way: Your session isn't over until you've done something to help your body recover. Hop in the cold tub (water cooled to about 50 degrees Fahrenheit) for 5 to 10 minutes. Then down a protein shake.

## 2. Skip Strength Training

Just because you can't commit to an hour, or even 20 minutes, in the gym doesn't mean you should skip your training session entirely. "The true challenge is that there's only so much time in the day to train," Piri says. But

lifting weights and running aren't the only ways to maintain your fitness. A better approach, in fact, is to take a few minutes to squeeze in movement prep and a prehab series. Then, when you're back on a regular schedule, you can attack the weights, because you'll have maintained strength and stability through your pillar (hips, torso and shoulders).

### 3. Get a Massage

"We use the foam roll, massage stick, and AIS stretch rope with the players," says Piri. These training tools will help you recover faster as well.