



## Officials make time to be at their best

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Officials are like athletes in that they have to perform at their best in every event. Staying focused, making correct decisions, managing equipment and personnel, are essential roles. To perform these tasks consistently and reliably officials must be fresh and well organised. This is especially so for officials who have demanding physical roles such as football referees and hockey umpires, and for officials who need to make precise decisions about high-speed movements over a day or more, such as judges in artistic or combat sports.

Monitoring fatigue and stress levels and learning how to minimise their effects is something that both athletes and officials have in common. Doing this will help officials to be reliable and consistent in their performances and hopefully lead to more enjoyment of their officiating roles.

Here are some simple suggestions to achieve this:

**Daily:** Listen to your body to find out how tired or stressed you are.

- Keep a simple checklist or diary to register your responses for:
  - Quality of sleep—a good sleep is invaluable.
  - Energy levels—start the day with plenty of energy.
  - Personal stress, for example, lifestyle issues. Plan how to manage these.
  - Enjoyment for your officiating role—enjoyment and satisfaction are important monitors of your stress levels.
  - Any illness or injury concerns—manage these and note any patterns.
- Eat a balanced diet and plan appropriate meals and post event snacks. Stay hydrated and make sure that you have fluid and fuel for the whole day.
- Shower before bed and stretch after the shower—start to relax physically.
- Practise a relaxation technique before bed, for example, visualise a happy place, listen to relaxing music, or do some light reading. Switch off from the day's events

**Weekly:** Spend 5-10 minutes planning ahead for the week.

- Use a weekly planning template or electronic diary to identify and prioritise any weekly commitments for work, study, and officiating.
- Make sure you include family time, and relaxation time for yourself.
- Try to spend at least one day away from your sport to maintain a balanced life.

**Annually:** review, revisit and re-focus.

- Review your last year's performances and adaptation to stress.
- Identify any changes and how and when to make these.
- Have an annual medical check-up that includes vision testing, and muscular-skeletal screening—prevention is better than cure.
- Reset your goals for the year.