

# Support for Steroid Users During Covid-19 Pandemic

Canolfan Gymraeg am Weithredu ar Ddibyniaeth

# WCADA

Welsh Centre for Action on Dependency and Addiction

Inspiring Change  Achieving Potential

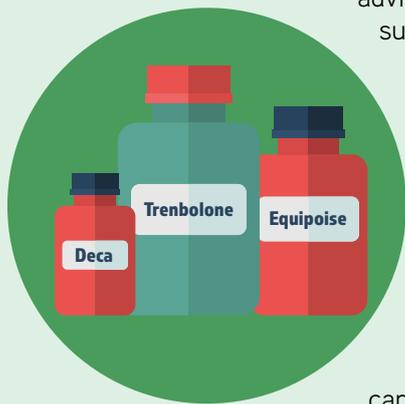


The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on all of our lives. We have been asked to socially isolate, shield those who are considered vulnerable and stay indoors as much as we possibly can. Initially we were told we could only go outside to exercise once a day, however that has now been changed to allow people to exercise more than once a day but still observing social distancing rules and staying local. Gyms, leisure centres and many public spaces remain closed. For some people this has been incredibly frustrating and disruptive to their daily training routine. Many individuals who enjoy exercise have reported these measures having a major impact on their mood. This is increasingly complicated if steroids are used as part of that regular routine.

## Advice for Steroid Users

During recent weeks the availability of steroids may have greatly reduced or become unobtainable. This has increased the price of the steroids and the likelihood that they are fake. It is important to remember that steroids not only affect you physically, but also impact your mental well-being. In collaboration with an experienced steroid user, we have put together a list of tips to inform and support steroid using individuals who are struggling throughout this pandemic.

- **Stock up:** Many users buy their steroids week by week. During this unprecedented time make sure you have enough of the baseline compounds such as testosterone to last 2-3 months.
- **Review your use:** Many steroid users 'stack' multiple steroids together during a cycle to either increase muscle mass and gain weight or alternatively cut weight and attempt to lose fat. In the absence of proper gym environment where ample lifting equipment is available, are you still able to train at the desired intensity and frequency to necessitate the administration of multiple drugs? If not, then the advice would be to drop any supplementary compounds such as Deca (Nandrolone), Trenbolone and Equipoise etc. Continue to use testosterone but in maintenance type dose whereby body mass, hormone function and psychological side effects can be kept to a minimum.



- **Be self aware:** Easier said than done. You have made a choice to take steroids. The lockdown has put you in a strange environment where you have been asked to behave in an unfamiliar way. This can take its toll on you mentally. Unfortunately, a side effect of anabolic steroid use is changes to your mental health. 'Roid rage' is a myth, however due to these changes in your hormone levels some events can cause more of an emotional response, escalating mild annoyance into anger. It is important to ask yourself "Am I responding reasonably?" or "Is this out of character?" There is a possibility that on steroids, you are a more animated version of yourself. Ultimately you are still you. Just remember that and think first.
- **Diet:** Are you still able to train at the desired intensity that your training programme requires without access to gym equipment? If not, then your caloric requirements will no doubt be different. Consuming a surplus of calories when adequate exercise is absent can cause unwanted weight gain and other undesirable side effects that administering steroids alone cannot counteract. If baseline testosterone levels are maintained then body mass and muscle loss will be kept to a minimum. It takes on average 3-4 months for a steroid user to lose most of his/her gains even if he/she were to stop lifting and stop all drug administration. Therefore, it is key to maintain an adequate diet and adjust your training plan according to facilities that are available. Complete cessation with no plan can have a serious effect on your mental health.
- **Be consistent:** Changing things in your cycle during a time of uncertainty is not wise. A change in supplier, brand, lab or compound is not advisable. Hormones play an integral part of our emotions. When you are deliberately altering the balance of your endocrine systems by administering anabolic steroids you are effectively interfering with your body's ability to cope and hindering it from correcting any hormone imbalance. This can have a dramatic effect on a person's ability to control emotions such as anger,

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jealously, compassion and love etc. Be consistent. Keep things simple. Keep things familiar. Do not try anything new that you have not tried before.

- **Training:** Most of you will be faced with gym closures. If you do not have anywhere to train and the home is the only alternative then there are plenty of options. Many a physique has been built with bodyweight exercises alone, you just need patience. If you are able to purchase a set of resistance bands online then that will be a very good start. Resistance bands can be attached to walls, doors, cabinets and even cars, and can provide an all-over body work out. There are plenty of good videos on YouTube which will show you how to make the most of them. If you are unable to get hold of resistance bands then you still have plenty of good options. Press ups, squats, lunges, stomach crunches... all of which can provide as much of a pump than any weight can (if performed at the correct tempo with good form).
- **Sleep:** Sleep is probably the most important element of any training programme. It is one of the most important elements of our daily life. It is also one of the things that is often overlooked and not practiced enough. Our bodies do not grow in the gym. They grow in bed. If you do not sleep, you do not grow. If you do not sleep, you do not heal. Sleep disruption can be a significant factor for good mental health. Loss of even 2 hours sleep can have a dramatic effect on our daily lives and our brains ability to process information and react in situations. Go to bed at a consistent time every night and give you brain and body time to relax.
- **Rest from training:** Whether you are a hardcore competitive trainer lifting heavy 6-7 days a week straight or a general lifter keeping in shape as a hobby etc., use this time to rest. Give your joints an overall body rest every now and again. Longevity is the key. We do not want 30 years of intense physicality and then being unable to move for the next 30 years. Forced rest is not ideal for some but it will pay dividends in the long run.
- **Access your local needle exchange:** Continue to collect sterile equipment, dispose of your returns and access further information at your local needle exchange.

**Disclaimer:** This leaflet provides general information and advice on steroid use during the COVID-19 pandemic. The information is not intended and should not be construed as medical advice, nor is the information a substitute for professional medical expertise or treatment. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something that you have read in this leaflet.

## Support available from WCADA

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to reduce face-to-face contact with members of the public. However, we are still facilitating Needle Exchange and providing telephone support during temporarily reduced opening times:

**Monday - Friday: 10am - 3pm**

You can contact our agencies on the below numbers:

**Swansea WCADA: 01792 472519**

**Neath WCADA: 01639 633630**

**Port Talbot WCADA: 01639 890863**

**Bridgend WCADA: 01656 667717**

If you require support outside of these hours, please contact



**Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline  
DAN 24/7  
Telephone 0808 808 2234 Or  
Text DAN to 81066**

Dan 24/7 is a free and confidential drugs helpline. Calls from public telephone boxes are free of charge: calls from a mobile phone may incur a charge from your network.

Dan 24/7 telephone number will NOT appear on your home itemised bill

## Support from other Organisations



 **0800 132 737**

 **81066**

 **www.callhelpline.org.uk**

**CALL: Mental Health Helpline;** offers emotional support, free self-help leaflets and signposting to local services for people suffering mental distress as well as their family, friends and carers.

**IMAGE AND PERFORMANCE  
ENHANCING DRUGS** IPEDs

 **www.ipedinfo.co.uk**

**IPED info (formally SIEDsInfo.co.uk):** IPED Info is a website that aims to provide reliable and evidence based information and advice to reduce the harms associated with the use of Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs (IPED's).