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# Amino acids prevent tired muscles

A NEW scientific study has shown that adding small amounts of branched-chain amino acids to the diet can help people avoid muscle soreness and fatigue following exercise.

The study, undertaken by a group of researchers in Japan and published in the *Journal of Nutrition*, shows that people who took a mixture of isoleucine, leucine and

valine (the three branched-chain amino acids) before a work-out had less delayed-onset muscle soreness and less fatigue than those who did not.

Combinations of branched-chain amino acids can play a role in helping the body to handle the stresses and strains of participation in sports. They work synergistically, reducing muscle protein breakdown during

exercise, as well as stimulating muscle protein growth. By using combinations of branched-chain amino acids, recovery times following strenuous exercise can be cut. As the graphs show, amino acids can reduce muscle soreness for four days following exercise.

Amino acids are a familiar feature of sports drinks in Japan. Two of Japan's Olympic athletes who won gold medals in Athens included amino acid supplements in their training regimes.

