

Sports Specific Training

What is Sport specific training and why should I do it?

It has long been known that strengthening exercises have to be specific to a task or functional activity to have a maximum carry-over (Matthews & Fox 1976).

- *Are you training for strength, power, endurance, agility or power endurance?*
- *What does your sport or activity consist of?*

If you do not know the answers to these questions you may well not be making the most of your gym/training time?

Many people are given or are doing the same exercises in their routine, which tend to involve Olympic lifts, bench press, planks/core exercises, but are these exercises beneficial exercises for every sport? Should a Rugby players workout be the same as a Golfers?

The obvious answer is no, but it may depend on their training experience and which phase of their periodized program they are in.

So what can I do about it?

One of the main systems that we are attempting to train correctly is the neuromuscular system, which is basically the link between the brain (nervous system) and our muscular system. This involves your muscle fibres, golgi and ligament tendon organs which all provide sensory information back and forwards. If we individualize muscles in our training program then the body finds it extremely difficult to put these together into effective movement patterns for sport. Therefore, we need to **train movements, not individual muscles** to make the most of our training (Bompa 2005).

The best way to work on these areas is to look at the transformational zones of the specific action or sport. Simply put, this is the area in a movement pattern where an athlete is attempting to load their system to explode into action e.g. when a right handed tennis player is serving the body is rotated to the right and the right arm is extended and abducted to create a loading of the system. From this position the player is attempting to create as much power (explode) as possible in a forward direction, they are relying on their neuromuscular system to control and guide the movement.

Your explode is only as good as your load! So train the movements not muscles.

References

- Bompa,T & Carrera M 2005. Periodization Training for Sport. Human Kinetics
- Matthews,D & Fox,E 1976. The Physiological Basis of Physical Education and Athletics. Philadelphia
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