

## FITNESS TRAINING AND MENTAL STRENGTH FOR SPORTS PERSONS A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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**Abstract :** Strength training is an essential element of fitness for virtually every sports man and woman. Long gone are the days when coaches believed resistance exercises only added unnecessary bulk to the athlete. The benefits of strength training to athletic performance are enormous and many. Not only is it an integral conditioning component for power athletes such as basket ball and football, performance in the pure endurance events can be improved with a well-structured strength routine. In this paper we analyse the mental strength of sports persons.

**Key words:** Athlete training, Mental element, Fitness, Endurance, Visualisation.

**Introduction :** Sport-specific resistance training requires a more refined approach than simply lifting heavy weights to complete exhaustion. A physiological analysis of any game or event will confirm that most athletes require explosive power, muscular endurance, maximal strength or some combination of all three in order to excel.

### **Elements of a Strength Training Program**

#### **Hypertrophy**

Synonymous with most people's perception of strength training, **hypertrophy** refers to increased muscle bulk and size. This is only one aspect of a sport-specific strength training program and one that should be included for only a select group of athletes. Basketball and Football players require significant bulk to withstand very aggressive body contact. For most athletes however, too much muscle bulk is a hindrance. **Maximal Strength** Maximal strength is the highest level of force an athlete can possibly generate. Its importance will vary between sports but this relates more to the length of the maximal strength training phase than whether it should be included or not.

The greater an athlete's maximal strength to begin with, the more of it can be converted into sport-specific strength endurance or explosive power. Maximal strength training can improve exercise economy and endurance performance. Interestingly, it does not appear to lead to a significant increase in muscle hypertrophy.

**Explosive Power** Rarely is an athlete required to produce a singular maximal effort in their sport. With the exception of **power lifting**, most games and sports require movements that are much more rapid and demand a higher power output than is generated during maximal lifts. An athlete can be exceptionally strong but lack substantial power due to an inability to contract muscle quickly. Power training is used to improve the rate of force production and a range of methods such as plyometrics can be employed to convert maximal strength into explosive power. Explosive power is not always the predominant goal

of the strength training program. Again, the greater amount of starting maximal strength, the more of it can be maintained for a prolonged period.

#### **Periodization**

The concept of periodization is key to sport-specific strength training. Dividing the overall training plan into succinct phases or periods, each with a specific outcome, allows sport-specific strength to peak at the right times, whilst minimizing the risk of over-training. It also allows more specific elements of strength to be built on a solid and more general fitness foundation.

**Assessment of health and fitness** It is possible to do very extensive and detailed assessments of both health and fitness. Whether health and fitness are assessed in advance of physical training will depend on why training is being undertaken and on the person undertaking the training. Clearly, very often physical training is done without any formal medical consultation and with minimal medical history (for example, gym questionnaires, etc.). It is often done purely for insurance purposes. The assessment may need to be detailed where specific activities or training are to be undertaken. Consideration should be given to risk factors for disease and any existing diseases when giving medical advice on fitness.

It is usually appropriate to make an assessment of health and fitness prior to exercise:

- When given as part of even general **health promotion** by the patient's General Physician.
- When given because of specific diseases or disease risk factors.
- For activities which carry specific risks to health or have specific contra-indications.
- When required by insurance companies or other interested third parties (for example, sports clubs, gyms, sporting associations, etc.).

#### **Training Strengthens**

The bodybuilding approach to strength training still predominates. But a more refined approach that incorporates the concept of periodization is much

more effective. The various elements of strength fit together in the overall plan. Resistance training is an integral part of any sports conditioning plan. This complete guide covers the various design elements of a successful, sport-specific strength training regimen. Some athletes will benefit from increased lean weight and muscle mass. However, many bodybuilding routines are too time consuming and fatiguing for sports persons who must reserve their energy for other types of training. Strength training for muscle mass and training for maximum strength is not the same. Most athletes will benefit from a period of maximal strength training before converting it into more sport-specific types of strength. Many athletes require explosive power to be successful in their sport. Once maximal strength has been developed there are several methods to convert it into sport-specific power. Once a firm foundation of strength has been built it should be converted into power or strength endurance or both, depending on the sport.

#### **Mental Element**

"Sport psychology, to put it simply, focuses on the psychological factors associated with physical performance," says Bartholomew. Along with a high level of internal motivation, top athletes must also be able to quell mental and emotional demons like stress, loss of focus and fears of losing. Unlike many of us, they're regularly placed in situations where there's exceptional pressure, intense scrutiny by large numbers of evaluators and a very high incentive for success. The numbers on the scoreboard can take the mind off the moment and introduce fears of defeat.

"Experienced athletes have found ways of coping with all of this fairly well," says Bartholomew. "But even they can lapse into trying to impose conscious control over something that's been practiced enough that it should be automatic. They're not trusting themselves and, worst of all, they've started to focus on the outcome. "For athletes to deliver their best performance, they have to have the necessary physical gifts and aptitude, of course -the mental discipline and emotional steadiness don't mean anything without that. If they're more focused on the implications of their actions or what will happen if they win or lose, though, then their speed or strength won't mean anything. We help athletes do their best by introducing techniques like deep breathing, positive self-talk, visualization and pre-performance routines that can remove distractions and stress and put them mentally where they need to be."

To help infielders silence distracting thoughts and shed tension, sport psychologists who work with basketball and foot ball teams often draw a circle in the dirt and have the infielder do all of his mental prep outside the circle-once the player is inside the circle, thought is to stop and it's time to react. Practiced often, stepping into the circle becomes a solid, effective cue.

Hence to conclude Fitness Training and Mental strength are most essential elements for sports persons along with technical skills of the game. As day by day the sports and games are more professional approach without high fitness the sports persons cannot succeed.

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