

STRENGTH TRAINING (Latif Thomas)

(Graphics & some minor changes added)

Today I'm going to talk to you about **the importance of strength training**.

For some reason, the majority of programs simply do not consider this important enough to make it a regular part of their preseason and in season training.

The only sport that I see using weight training with any regularity is American football and most of the time they're not doing it right.

It's true.

For some reason, in the US, we have adopted a 'body-builder' mentality when it comes to strength training for sport.

Let me give you another example:

I used to coach at a high school. Whenever I'd be in the weight room with my athletes, I would obviously watch all the athletes lift.

OK, the only other athletes in the weight room besides mine were the football team. Literally no other team in the school used the weight room.

Shameful, but not surprising.

Anyway, it became a running joke with my athletes because whenever we'd be in the weight room, the football players would be doing some crazy stuff!

What do I mean?

I can count the number of times on one hand that I saw a workout that consisted primarily of leg exercises and contained rep schemes that were less than 8-10 reps.

On top of that, coaches didn't instruct anyone on how to do the lifts correctly.

Plus, many of the lifts they did were, well, useless for sports.

So, what are the rules of the weightroom as it relates to athletes?

Rule #1: Learn right Start light

I know that it is very difficult, especially for boys, to go into the weight room and put anything less than 45 pound plates on the bar.

That's why I have a motto that I have to repeat over and over and over again: **No Egos in the Weight Room**

Most athletes technique is so bad in the weight room that they are rarely more than a lapse in focus away from a career ending injury.

I can't stress how important it is, especially with athletes brand new to weight training, that they start with very light weights and master the technique of the lift first.

At the beginning, completely forget about 'heavy' or 'light' and just go for good form.

With your 'veteran' lifters, back them up and re-teach them how to lift with perfect form.

As you'll see in a minute, effective weight training for sports is dependent on an athletes ability to get the most out of the precious few reps they will be doing. So if their form is crap, then that's just what their workouts will be.

In this instance, I apply the 'graduation' game with their weights. I allow them to slowly increase the number of pounds on the bar once they prove to me that they can do it with good form.

I suggest you do the same. Of course, I'm assuming that you have learned how to teach, correct and identify perfect form with the fundamental lifts.

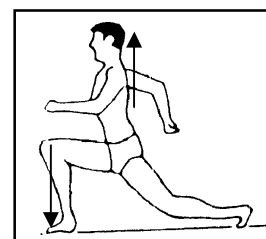
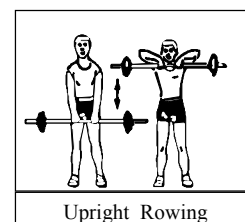
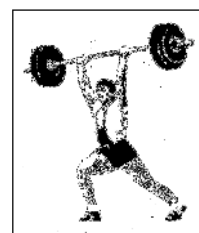
And no, your experience as a high school or college athlete 15+ years ago does not qualify you.

If you'd be 100% comfortable correcting and instructing your athletes in front of me, then you qualify.

Rule #2: Athletes not body builders

With very few exceptions, it isn't going to help an athlete's speed if they are in the weight room doing lifts that are going to add useless bulk to their bodies.

Athletes should only be doing multi-joint movements that address multiple muscle groups at once and can have a positive impact on athletic performance.



For example, there are certain core lifts that we use in all of our strength training programs.

None of them involve machines.

There are supplemental exercises that can be added to these core lifts, step ups for example, but they must follow the multi-joint movement philosophy.

Now, here are some popular weight room exercises that are great for getting athletes to look good at the beach, but have no athletic value:

Bicep curls; Hamstring Curls; Leg Extensions; Chest Flyes; Tricep Extensions; most machine exercises.

On top of that, Smith Machine squats and leg press are what I consider leg exercises for athletes too lazy to do squats and dead lifts and coaches too lazy to teach them.

Rule #3: Stronger = Faster

Seems obvious right?

As you already know, greater speeds are determined, in large part, by an athlete's ability to apply greater amounts of force to the ground with each stride.

It stands to reason that if an athlete wants to move faster, they must increase their physical strength.

At the same time, it is also dependent on increasing physical strength without significant increases in bodyweight.

Otherwise those gains in strength are neutralized by the fact that the athlete now has to carry that extra mass around with her.

The bottom line is this:

If you want your athletes to get faster they must lift in a way that maximizes strength gains without gaining a lot of extra mass.

You should have seen the other coaches when we maxed out in the weight room and I had a 17 year old girl squat a legitimate 225 lbs.

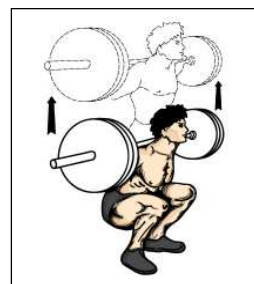
By legit I mean she stayed back on her heels, kept her back flat and squatted BEYOND PARALLEL.

Anything else isn't a squat.

OK the truth is I was pretty surprised too. But that is a true story.

By lifting this way, athletes will recruit and activate more motor units within the muscle with each rep. This develops greater degrees of applicable strength and power, making it much easier for athletes to move and control their bodies while competing.

Weight training isn't as complicated as it is made out to be. Simply follow the same teaching protocols, as far as technique and progressions, that you do for every other speed training skill.



If you want to see exactly how we set up a strength training program, the core lifts that we use and the specific rules we follow for creating huge gains in single rep max lifts in no time, you need to get your own copy of Complete Speed Training now...

A couple of Activities to use within and vary your program

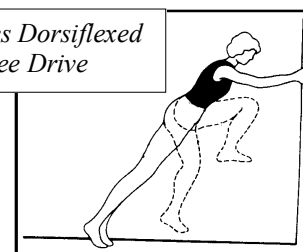
1. 3 & 5 Step Wall Sprint

2-4 x 3-Step

2-4 x 5-Step

1-2 Minute recovery between Wall Sprints

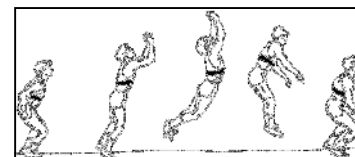
High Knees; Toes Dorsiflexed
Decisive Knee Drive



2. Double Leg Bounds .. stick the landing

Coach commands: 5-6 bounds from bent knee position; explode seeking height, with a double arm swing .. **stick-the-landing**. Wait for next coach command. Focus on: Power — explode high — control (stable landing, knees bent).

4 - 6 x 5 sets of double leg bounds .. *stick-the-landing*



Also: see www.nwaswimaths.com > PROGRAMS > General Programs > NWA—20-30 Min. Circuit