

Playometrics, A performance catalyst

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Abstract

Most people don't think about plyometrics when they think about powerful strength but I do lots of to build mine by Allyson felix, an American track and field sprinter. Plyometrics have been used for many decades in the Russian and eastern European training of track and field athletes. Verkhoshanski, a well-known track and field coach in Russia, began the concept that he referred to as shock training or jump training. However, former Purdue University women's track coach Fred Wilt first coined the actual term plyometrics in 1975. The word plyometrics is actually a derivation from the Greek words plythein or plyo, which means to increase and metric, which means to measure. Consequently, the purpose of plyometrics may be thought of as "to increase the measurement." There are as many strength and conditioning programs as there are individual clinicians developing the programs. Rehabilitation programs have dramatically changed over the past several years. Regardless of the purpose of the program, whether it is used in the terminal phases of rehabilitation, for strength and conditioning, or for performance enhancement, plyometric exercise should play an integral part of the program. Sports physical therapists strive to prevent injuries, rehabilitate injuries in a timely manner in order to rapidly return athletes back to activity, improve the strength and conditioning of athletes, and facilitate the specificity of sports performance. Typically the measurement is sports performance outcomes demonstrated in testing or competition such as throwing, serving velocity, jump height or sprint speed. Why should plyometric exercises even be used for rehabilitation or performance enhancement in sports? Plyometric training utilizes the stretch-shortening cycle (SSC) by using a lengthening movement (eccentric) which is quickly followed by a shortening movement (concentric). There is no consensus in the published literature on the specific criteria, parameters, guidelines, specific exercises, or principles of progression that should be used during plyometric training. Most of the recommendations are empirically based upon Level 5 evidence with minimal scientific research supporting any of the recommendations.

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