

## ***Train the brain rather than the brawn***

There are major advantages to be gained from training the brain rather than the brawn. Despite this, training our neuromuscular system is often neglected.

Weight training sessions have changed considerably over the last 15-20 years - in professional football and sport in general. Modern programs bear little resemblance to training sessions back when "bicep curls" and "bench press" formed the basis of workouts.

One of the reasons for this evolution can be found in the importance of training the neuromuscular system, that is, the system in the body which co-ordinates our movement patterns. Training the neuromuscular system is often referred to as "proprioception training". The term proprioception means "a sense of joint position in space". Exercises which train the neuromuscular system can be incorporated into any training program, regardless of the level of competency of a player. After all, it is critical to know where your body parts are in space and not just on the sports field. This spatial awareness is necessary for every single movement we make.

To simplify things, the neuromuscular system can be thought of as the brains while the muscles and related soft tissue are the brawn. Old fashioned weight training focused on the brawn. Modern programs prioritise the brains.

### ***Why is it so?***

The benefits flowing from including proprioception training into your training program are numerous. The most obvious of these relates to injuries. Proprioception reduces the incidence of injury - and can even prevent them from occurring in the first place.

Will proprioception help all athletes? The answer is yes. For example, players who tell you they have "weak ankles" are incorrect. They are simply untrained. Training the coordination of the muscles and ligaments around the ankle joint will help reduce ankle injuries.

A sprained ankle is one of the most common injuries experienced in professional football yet simple training techniques will go a long way to avoiding them. It is rarely a lack of strength, endurance or flexibility that results in these injuries. More often than not, it is a lack of coordination and balance. It should be noted that even strong joints can be injured if the neuromuscular system has not been trained effectively. An example may be a runner who sprains an ankle when running on uneven ground.

Other benefits of proprioception training include improvements in your movement patterns or "efficiency of movement". In other words, the better your balance, the more efficient your movement patterns are. Most sports require good balance so the athlete can change their centre of gravity quickly.

Improvements in strength, power, agility and flexibility will also result.

Proprioception training has been so successful in rehabilitation of ankle and knee injuries over the years that it is now commonly incorporated into mainstream exercise programs to help prevent injuries.

### ***How do you do it?***

Given that the key element of this training is balance, the types of exercises performed are only limited by your imagination. The exercises don't require fancy or expensive pieces of equipment and by using your imagination/inventive characteristics you can include some fun - but effective - activities. Balance beams (low to the ground), wobble/rocker boards and fit balls can all be used to add variety and enjoyment to a proprioception training program.

Australian Financial Planning are dedicated to providing you with information so that you can make the decision that is right for you. We invite you contact us on (03) 9663 3031 or email [samantha@afp.net.au](mailto:samantha@afp.net.au) to make an appointment today.

**Source:**

Asteron – [www.asteronlife.com.au](http://www.asteronlife.com.au)

#### **Disclaimer and General Advice Warning**

This information was prepared by Consultum Financial Advisers Pty Ltd (Consultum), ABN 65 006 373 995, AFSL No 230323. The article contains factual information and general financial product advice only. It has been prepared without taking into account any person's individual investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs. A person should not act on this information without first talking to a financial adviser. This information is given in good faith based on information believed to be accurate and reliable at the time of publication, including the continuance of present laws and Consultum's interpretation of them. Consultum does not undertake to notify recipients of changes in the law or its interpretation.

Lifetime advice

**Consultum**  
Financial Advisers

Consultum gives no warranty of accuracy or reliability, accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions, including by reason of negligence. Consultum, its officers, employees or agents shall not be liable for any loss or damage whether direct, indirect or consequential arising out of, or in connection with, any use of, or reliance on, the information contained in this flyer.

Lifetime advice

  
Consultum  
Financial Advisers