

Functional Dissection of the Olympic Movements

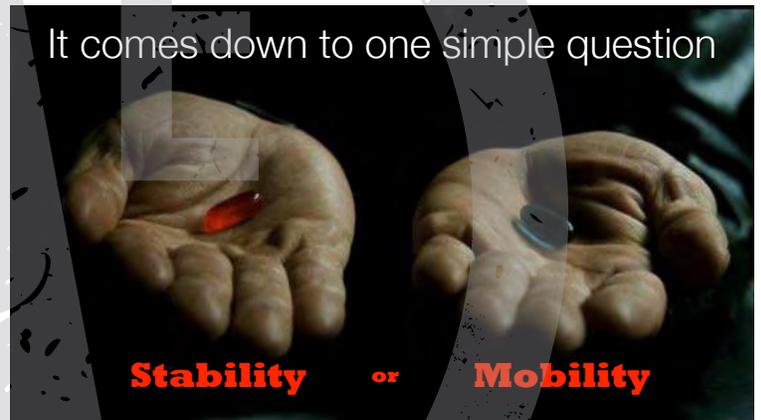
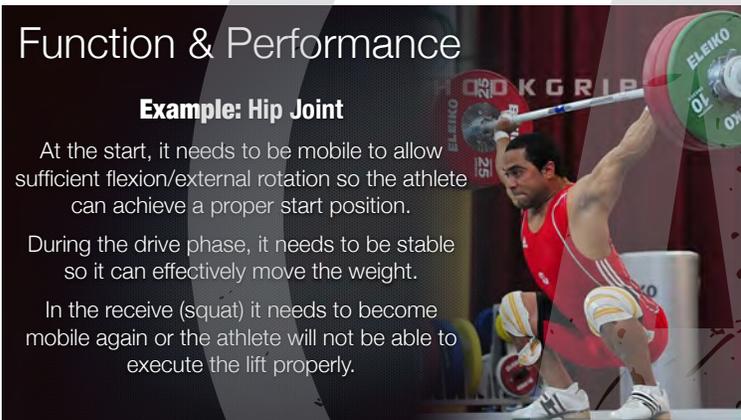
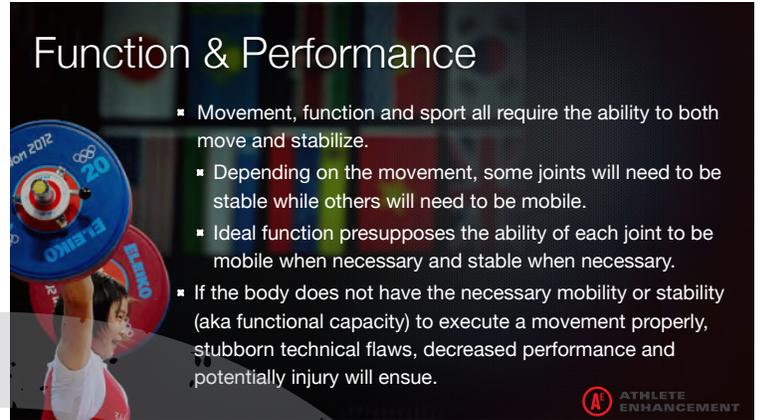
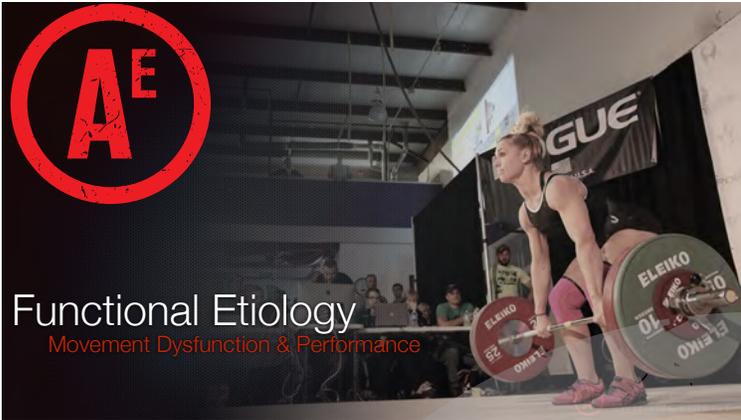


University of Nebraska ~ November 8-9, 2014

Presented by: Dr. Richard Ulm



**ATHLETE
ENHANCEMENT**



Sources of Movement Dysfunction

- **Intense Training or over training (temporary tight muscles):** athlete's muscular system has not retained its elasticity following a heavy training session and/or the athlete is getting overtrained.
- **Pain/Pathology:** Nociception experienced during the movement drives the brain into a protective movement pattern, which does not allow for proper motion. (i.e. torn rotator cuff, back spasm from disc herniation)
- **Lack of Movement / Lifestyle Choices:** Soft tissue adapts to its longest functional length. If joints and muscles are not brought through a full ROM, these tissues will become functionally short and result in movement dysfunction.
- **Structural/neurological abnormality:** The skeletal, muscular or neurological system has developed pathologically, inhibiting ideal, "normal" movement. (i.e. femoral retroversion, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, cerebral palsy).



Sources of Movement Dysfunction *Strain*

Athletes consistently push themselves beyond their limits. This is the process of improving and developing, but involves pushing beyond their ability to maintain good movement strategies and good positions.

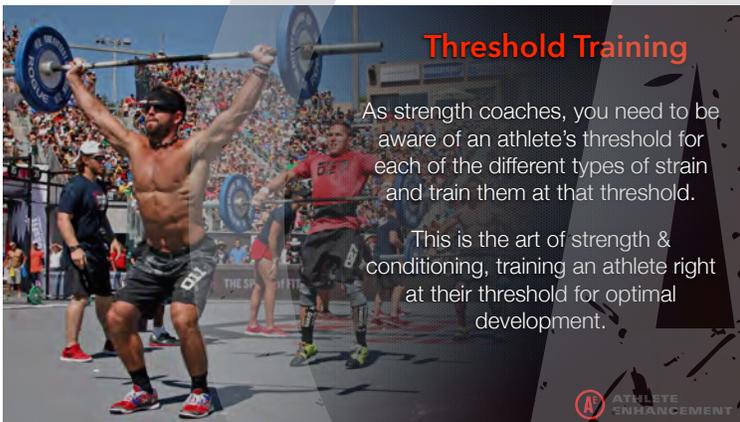
- **Load strain:** The force maximum required for the movement is greater than the athlete can tolerate. (i.e. 1RM testing, or lifting to complete failure)
- **Speed strain:** The angular joint velocity or muscle contraction speed is greater than the nervous system can handle. (i.e. box-jumps, Olympic lifts)
- **Fatigue strain:** Athlete is in a state of either respiratory fatigue where they cannot stabilize and respire properly or in a state of muscular fatigue where the lactate concentration inhibits muscular contraction. (i.e. final 100M of an Ironman, CrossFit workouts)
- **Psychological strain:** High pressure situations which do not allow the athlete to relax, often resulting from over-thinking the movements. (i.e. Olympic games, post-season competitions)



Threshold Training

As strength coaches, you need to be aware of an athlete's threshold for each of the different types of strain and train them at that threshold.

This is the art of strength & conditioning, training an athlete right at their threshold for optimal development.



Movement Dysfunction: Underlying Cause

Poor Subcortical Stabilizing Strategy

(The brain does not stabilize the body correctly for locomotion)

Movement requires both mobility and stability; however, in locomotion, stabilization precedes movement.

Any breakdown in stability precludes proper motion from occurring.



Poor Subcortical Stabilizing Strategy

(The brain does not stabilize the body correctly for locomotion)

- Intentional movement involves both conscious and subconscious efforts.
- Enabling a conscious task to be accomplished is a myriad of neurological processes run by a combination of spinal reflexes and subcortical activity.
- The cerebral cortex focuses on the task, deciding what it wants to do.
- The subcortex has the monstrous task of making the movements smooth and precise, maintaining global posture, controlling muscle tone, and prioritizing incoming sensory information, so that the given task can be accomplished.

Functional Continuum



Decreased Performance or Pain

Movement Dysfunction

Tight Muscles (Hypomobility)

Instability (Hypermobility)

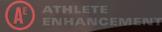
Subcortical Stabilizing Strategy Dysfunction (SSSD)

Locomotion (Ideal Movement Strategy)

- The body has evolved to move and stabilize a certain way.
- This “movement strategy” is efficient, joint-protective and ideal for both sports and life.
- It utilizes synergy and coactivation of all the muscles around a joint resulting in optimal joint loading for force production.

The question is...

From where does this movement strategy come?



Ontogenesis

Defined: The development of an individual organism from its earliest stage to maturity.

- Unlike other mammals, humans are born with incomplete neuromuscular systems and must go through a maturation process where these systems must develop before optimal function can be achieved.
- During ontogenesis the child’s muscular, skeletal and nervous systems develop. Through this process, the child acquires fundamental movements (i.e. turning, crawling, swallowing) that will become the functional building blocks of more complex movements such as throwing a baseball.
- It is during this process that the child “activates” or learns the ideal stabilizing strategy, which is initiated and driven by maturation of the central nervous system.
- Any breakdown in this process results in stubborn, sometimes fixed movement pathologies (i.e. winging scapulae or hyper-pronated feet).



3 Month

5 Month

6.5 Month



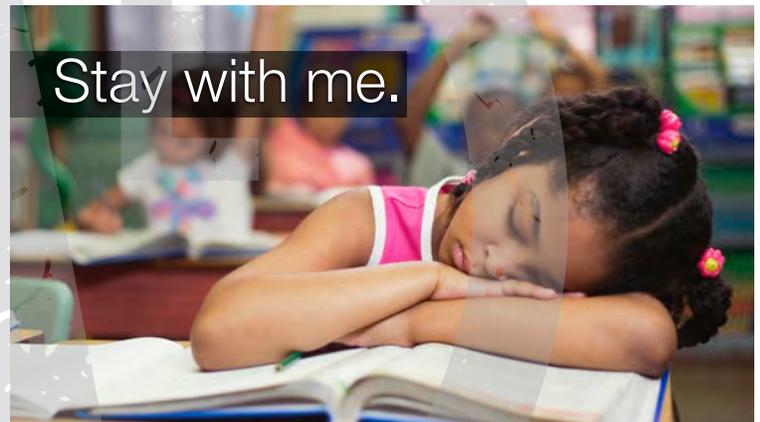
9 Month



10 Month



Stay with me.



Origin of the Ideal Movement Strategy

- As the CNS develops, under normal conditions, the child learns to stabilize and move with an ideal movement strategy.
- Early in the process (newborn stage), movement and posture are controlled exclusively by the spinal cord and brainstem.
 - During the newborn stage of development, only a small portion of muscles are active. These muscles are known as the **tonic system**.
- As this process continues, higher centers of the central nervous system activate and begin to control purposeful movement.
 - During this time, the rest of the muscles of the body (i.e. gluteus maximus, deep neck flexors, etc.) known as the **phasic system**, activate and begin participating in stabilization and locomotion.
- The ideal movement strategy involves higher centers of the brain, but is built upon proper function of the lower, more primordial levels of the nervous system.



Tonic Muscles

Pronator Teres
Subscapularis
Pectoralis Major
Pectoralis Minor
Latissimus Dorsi
Upper Trapezius
Levator Scapulae
Wrist Flexors
Neck Extensors
Iliopsoas
Hip Adductors
Hamstrings

Phasic Muscles

Opponens Pollicis
Wrist Extensors
Teres Minor
Infraspinatus
Serratus Anterior
Lower Trapezius
Transverse Abdominis
Oblique Internus
Oblique Externus
Hip Abductors
Gastrocnemius
Longus Colli





So what is the ideal movement strategy?

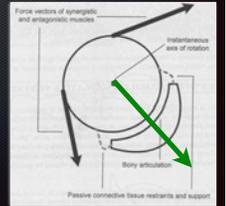
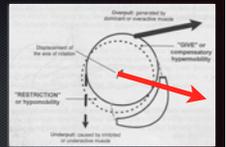
Joint Centration

Defined: Centration is the position in which the maximum available osseous surface contact is utilized for stability.

Proper joint centration results in...

- Efficient joint force loading (axial instead of shear forces).
- Minimizing internal forces required to execute a movement, massively decreasing joint loads.
- Decreased risk of injury and an increase in performance.

Promotes synergy and coactivation of ALL the muscles around a joint.



Ideal Movement Strategy

The Ideal movement strategy preserves/maintains joint centration of all joints throughout all movements.

This is a massively complex neurological undertaking, which is why it is primarily controlled by the subcortex.

The ideal movement strategy starts with and is built upon proper stabilization of the spine and pelvis



Chemistry Review:

Boyle's Law
(Ideal Gas Law)

$$PV = nRT$$

Pressure and volume are inversely related

It is because of this law that respiration, stabilization and movement are possible.



The Forgotten Hero

The diaphragm is perhaps the single most important muscle for stabilization and locomotion.

It is attached to the lower ribs and the spine at the thoraco-lumbar junction, separating the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity.

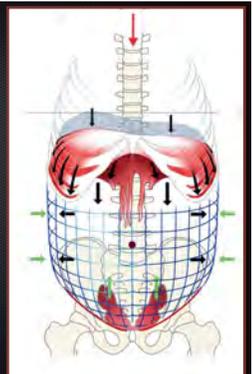
Comprised of a central tendon (non-contractile) and three muscular divisions (two costal and one crural)

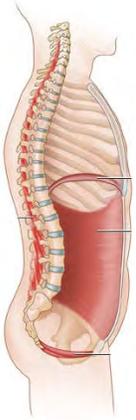


It's all about Intra-abdominal pressure

As the diaphragm contracts and the central tendon descends, **eccentrically** activating the pelvic floor and the abdominal muscles.

These structures work together to regulate the volume within the abdominal cavity, which, in turn, controls the intra-abdominal pressure.





It's all about Intra-abdominal pressure

If no additional stability is needed, the abdominal wall will expand to maintain the volume and therefore the pressure within the abdominal cavity.

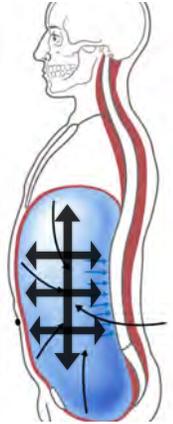
However, if additional stability is required, the abdominal wall will resist expansion against the force of the descending diaphragm, decreasing the volume of the abdominal cavity resulting in an increase in intra-abdominal pressure.



Intra-abdominal Pressure

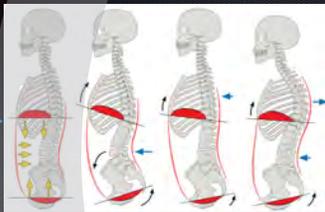
As the intra-abdominal pressure rises, so does the force of the pressure pushing outward in all directions.

This pressure simultaneously pushes posteriorly into the spine (resisting the extension force created by the erector spinae) and creates a traction (decompressive force) massively reducing the intradiscal pressure and the load placed on the spine.



Pressure, Posture & Position

AKA...
"Zone of Apposition"
For the PRI junkies



- Adequate (optimal) generation of intra-abdominal pressure requires the pelvic floor and diaphragm being positioned parallel to each other.
- This dictates "proper" positioning of the spine in all movements, especially loaded movements like such as the Olympic lifts.



Pressure, Posture & Position

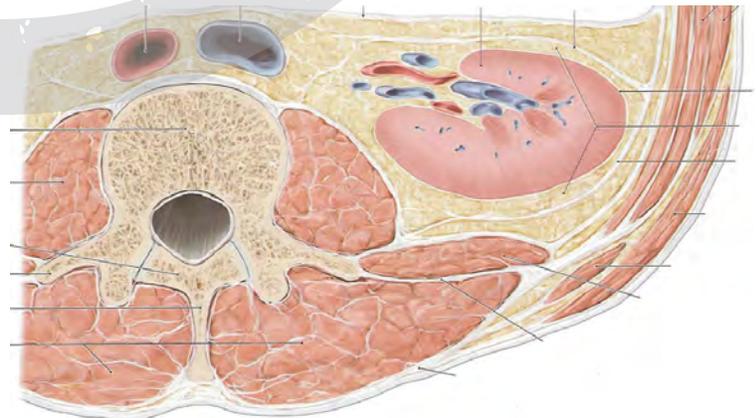


Thoraco-Lumbar Fascia & Spinal Stability

The abdominal wall attaches to the thoraco-lumbar fascia, which itself attaches to the posterior portion of the spine.

Rising pressure within the abdomen increases the tension in the abdominal wall and therefore increases the tension within the thoraco-lumbar fascia.

As IAP rises, the spine is squeezed between the pressure within the abdomen and the tension within the thoraco-lumbar fascia, further increasing the rigidity of the spinal column.





The Fragility of Locomotion

Optimal function of the locomotor system is delicate and difficult to maintain. If proper development does not occur or the athlete is progressed too rapidly through their training progression, they will regress to more primitive stabilizing strategies.

Such regression also occurs when execution of a task (i.e. throw a baseball, snatch 90K, squat 500lbs. etc.) requires more force, speed, or endurance than can be generated with the IMS.

In these cases, the body must resort to less efficient, less ideal, more primitive (younger), compensatory movement strategies to complete the task.

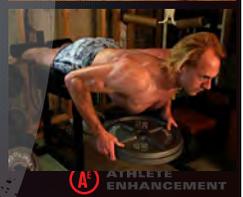
Such strategies are pervasive in sports and are the source of stubborn technical flaws, movement dysfunction, recalcitrant injuries and decreases in performance.



Extension/Compression Stabilizing Strategy

The ideal movement strategy is efficient, but often does not meet the demands of the given task. If the movement continues, it will do so with a less efficient but more effective pattern.

Compensatory movement strategies involve hyper-activation of larger, more powerful, multi-joint muscles.



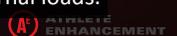
Extension/Compression Stabilizing Strategy

Utilizing compensatory movement strategies enables the task to be executed, but comes with consequences:

- Larger muscles cross multiple joints. Hyperactivity of a muscle to stabilize one joint will, therefore, affect an adjacent, unintended joint's mobility (i.e. pectorals, erector spinae, psoas major).
- Larger muscles have unfavorable motor unit:muscle fiber ratio giving them very poor control over force regulation.



Utilizing the larger, more superficial muscles for stabilization literally crushes the body underneath the massive internal loads.



Extension/Compression Stabilizing Strategy



Whenever the threshold for the ILS is exceeded (speed, force, etc.), the extensor/compression stabilizing strategy will dominate the movement.

We must train our athletes and clients to raise the threshold of the ILS so that efficient, optimal movement will predominate.

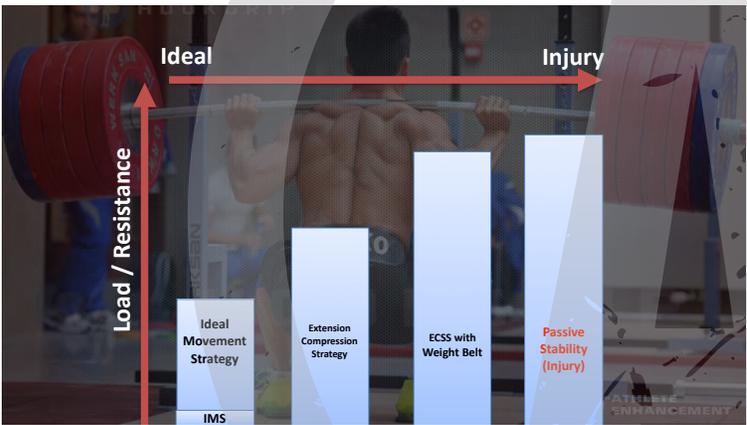
This is joint protective, prevents injury, allows the athlete to sustain higher training loads, decreases functional blocks and improves performance.

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Extension/Compression Stabilizing Strategy




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Load / Resistance

IMS

Ideal

Injury

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Efficiency & Effectiveness

Ideal vs. Compensatory movement strategies

In sports, athletes regularly push themselves beyond their limits. In these cases, utilizing the extension/compression stabilizing strategy is justified; however, they need to be able to turn this pattern off.

In many cases, the IMS threshold is so low that the athlete will be unable to turn it off. These athletes will likely struggle with recurrent, stubborn sports injuries both on and off the field.

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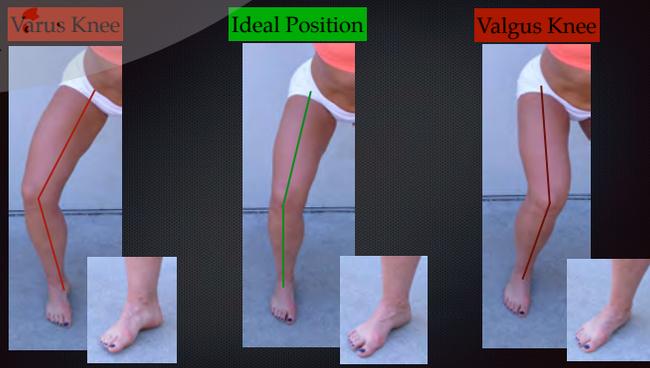
The Posterior Chain is Soooooo 20 years ago

Intentionally loading the posterior chain is to intentionally train the ECSS.

It hyper-activates the hamstrings and erector spinae, increasing the compressive forces in the spine and reflexively inhibiting the ventral stabilizers via reciprocal inhibition.

It all starts with the foot.

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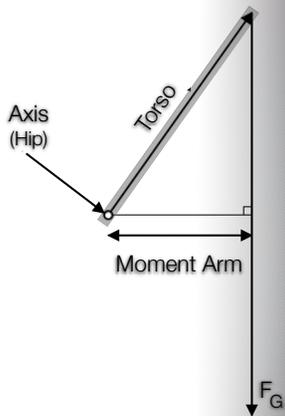


Varus Knee

Ideal Position

Valgus Knee

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Anthropomorphic Considerations

The longer an athlete's torso, the greater the moment arm acting on the spine, increasing the difficulty of the mechanical task of stabilizing it.

Longer torsoed athletes, therefore, will more likely compensate into the extension/compression stabilizing strategy.

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Other Hidden Forces
Inherent Asymmetry

The body is not symmetrical.

- * The liver is on the right side of the body
- * The heart is on the left
- * There are 3 lung lobes on the right while only 2 on the left

This structural asymmetry creates asymmetrical stability.

The right side of the trunk and pelvis tends to be more stable than the left

- Pelvis orients to the right
- Trunk orients to the left
- Right FAJ is more internally rotated
- Left FAJ is more externally rotated
- The left ribs are elevated/externally rotated

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Other Hidden Forces
That which you cannot see, you cannot fix.

Ron Hruska and the Postural Restoration Institute have identified several consistent patterns into which people will collapse.

- Left AIC
- PEC
- Right BC

The body will only succumb to this inherent asymmetry if the locomotor system is functioning sub-optimally.

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Symmetry and Neutrality

The body may be inherently asymmetrical but as therapists, strength coaches, and athletes, we must strive for symmetry.

Symmetry is a prerequisite for optimal performance.

Asymmetry is more detrimental to performance than gross symmetrical functional incompetence.

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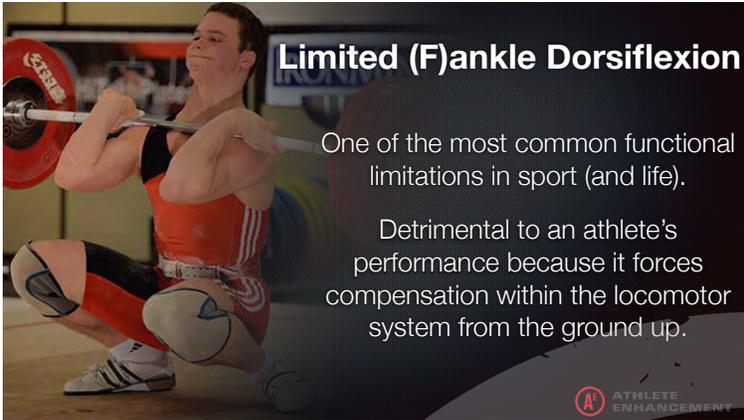
Questions?

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Common Functional Blocks

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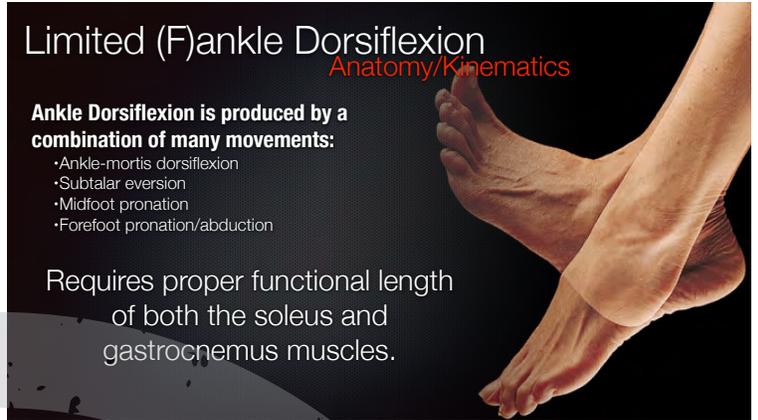


Limited (F)ankle Dorsiflexion

One of the most common functional limitations in sport (and life).

Detrimental to an athlete's performance because it forces compensation within the locomotor system from the ground up.

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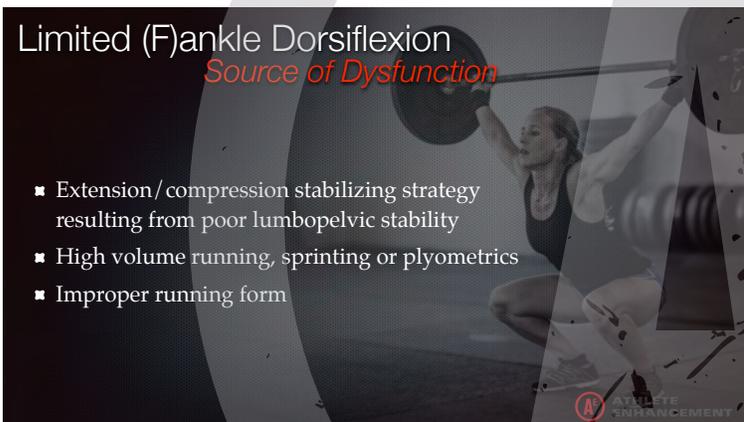
Limited (F)ankle Dorsiflexion

Anatomy/Kinematics

Ankle Dorsiflexion is produced by a combination of many movements:

- Ankle-mortis dorsiflexion
- Subtalar eversion
- Midfoot pronation
- Forefoot pronation/abduction

Requires proper functional length of both the soleus and gastrocnemius muscles.



Limited (F)ankle Dorsiflexion

Source of Dysfunction

- Extension/compression stabilizing strategy resulting from poor lumbopelvic stability
- High volume running, sprinting or plyometrics
- Improper running form

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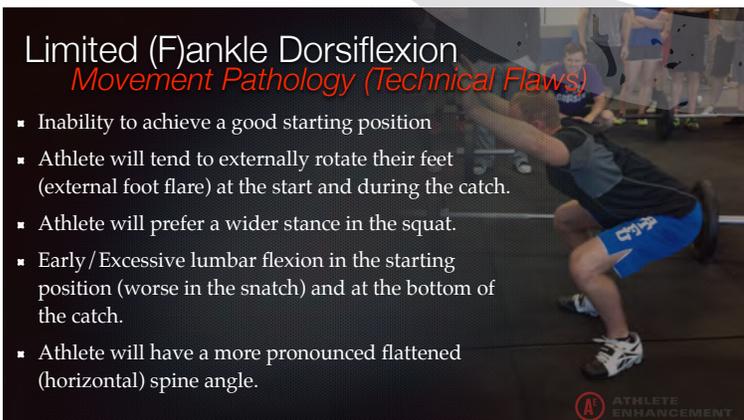


Limited (F)ankle Dorsiflexion

Injury Risk

- Knee problems (patellar tracking, patellar tendonitis, meniscus-like symptoms)
- Back pain (hyperactive erector spinae, lumbar disc pathology) - results from the flattened spine angle that puts the spine in a very mechanically disadvantageous position.
- Shoulder pathology (rotator cuff sprain/strain, labral tear)

ATHLETE ENHANCEMENT

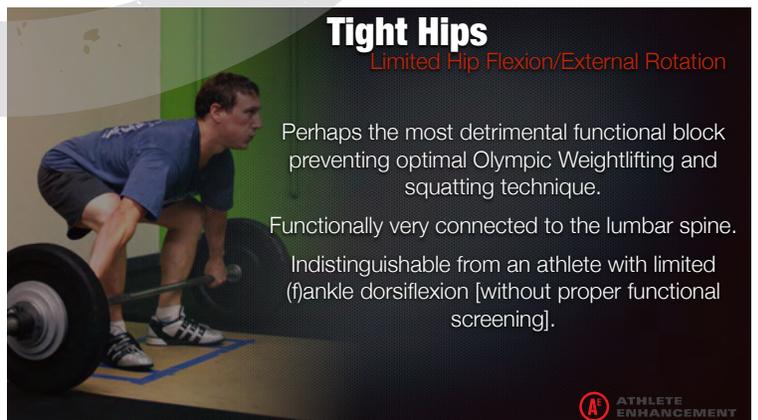


Limited (F)ankle Dorsiflexion

Movement Pathology (Technical Flaws)

- Inability to achieve a good starting position
- Athlete will tend to externally rotate their feet (external foot flare) at the start and during the catch.
- Athlete will prefer a wider stance in the squat.
- Early / Excessive lumbar flexion in the starting position (worse in the snatch) and at the bottom of the catch.
- Athlete will have a more pronounced flattened (horizontal) spine angle.

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Tight Hips

Limited Hip Flexion/External Rotation

Perhaps the most detrimental functional block preventing optimal Olympic Weightlifting and squatting technique.

Functionally very connected to the lumbar spine.

Indistinguishable from an athlete with limited (f)ankle dorsiflexion [without proper functional screening].

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Hip Anatomy / Kinematics

Movement of the "hip" results from motion of the pelvis (sacroiliac joint and pubic symphysis) and the femoroacetabular joint.

Femoroacetabular joint is a ball-in-socket joint and, therefore, has good range of motion in all three planes.

Surrounded by a massive amount of muscle. Motion restrictions, therefore, are most often the result of muscular hypertonicity.



Adductor Magnus

The Forgotten Structure

Both structurally and neurologically connected to the erector spinae, it becomes hypertonic when the ECSS predominates the system.

Attaches on the ischial tuberosity and the distal aspect of the femur. [Does NOT cross the knee!]

The deeper the squat position, the greater the length demand.

Has a *much* greater moment arm to retrovert the pelvis than any other muscle in the hip.



Squatting violently challenges spine and pelvis stability, often activating the ECSS resulting in hyper activation of the erector spinae and the adductor magnus.

Ever wonder why squatting always tightens up the hips so much?



Tight Hips

Movement Pathology (Technical Flaws)

Athlete will struggle to achieve a decent starting position because the pelvis will have to retrovert, putting the lumbar spine into an excessively flexed position.

Athlete will greatly prefer a wider foot stance both at the start and in the receive position.

Athlete will struggle to execute full-depth squatting.

You will see an excessive amount of pelvic retroversion and lumbar flexion at the bottom of a squat to compensate.



Tight Hips

Source of Dysfunction

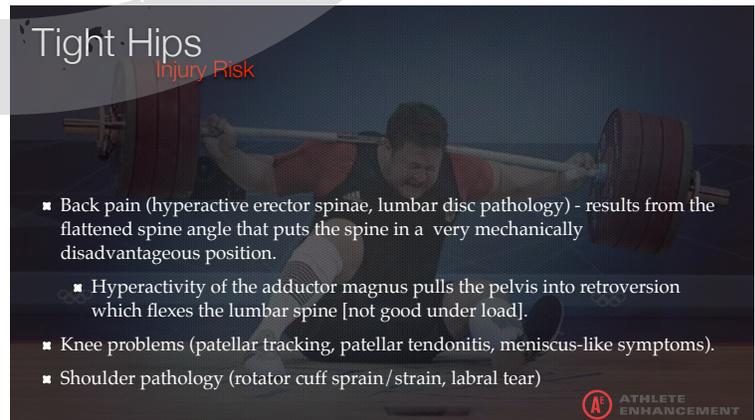
- Extension/compression stabilizing strategy resulting from poor spine and pelvis stability
- High volume squatting and Olympic lifting due to the aggressive challenging of the trunk and spine stability.
- Incomplete neurological development



Tight Hips

Injury Risk

- Back pain (hyperactive erector spinae, lumbar disc pathology) - results from the flattened spine angle that puts the spine in a very mechanically disadvantageous position.
 - Hyperactivity of the adductor magnus pulls the pelvis into retroversion which flexes the lumbar spine [not good under load].
- Knee problems (patellar tracking, patellar tendonitis, meniscus-like symptoms).
- Shoulder pathology (rotator cuff sprain/strain, labral tear)





Limited Thoracic Extension

Perhaps the most hidden and under-appreciated functional block.

Limitation in thoracic extension is a powerful driver of the extension/compression stabilizing strategy.



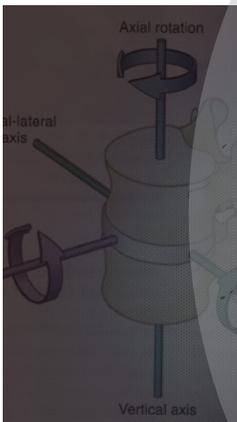
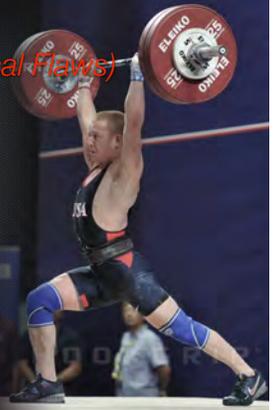
Limited Thoracic Extension

Movement Pathology (Technical Flaws)

Athletes will always have excessive lumbar lordosis (and the instability that comes with it)

Athletes will [sometimes] struggle with the front rack position. (Watch the lumbar spine for compensation.)

When it is pronounced, the athletes will struggle with overhead movements (full squat snatch, jerk)



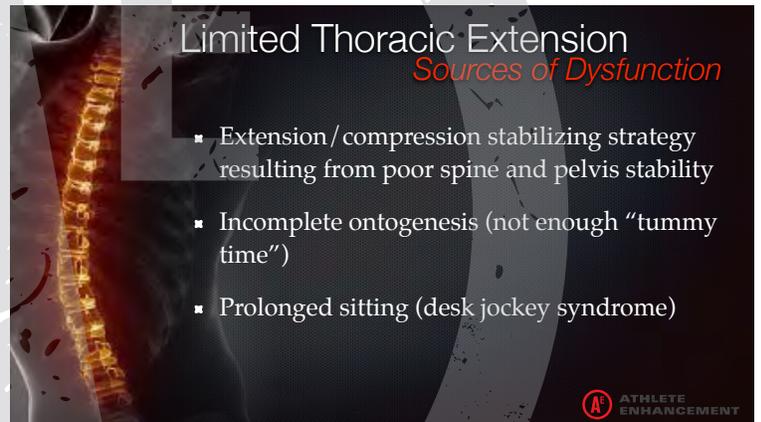
Limited Thoracic Extension

Anatomy / Kinematics

Pure thoracic extension is the result of a vertebral extension and anterior glide

Thoracic spine motion is heavily influenced [restricted] by the ribs.

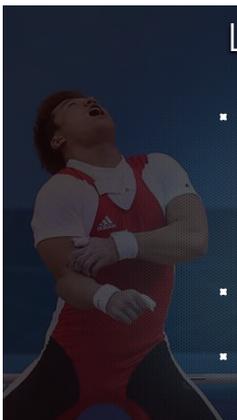
For ideal posture, function, and stability, the costovertebral joints must be able to counterrotate against thoracic spine motion (extension/upward rotation of the vertebral body with flexion/downward rotation of the costovertebral joint).



Limited Thoracic Extension

Sources of Dysfunction

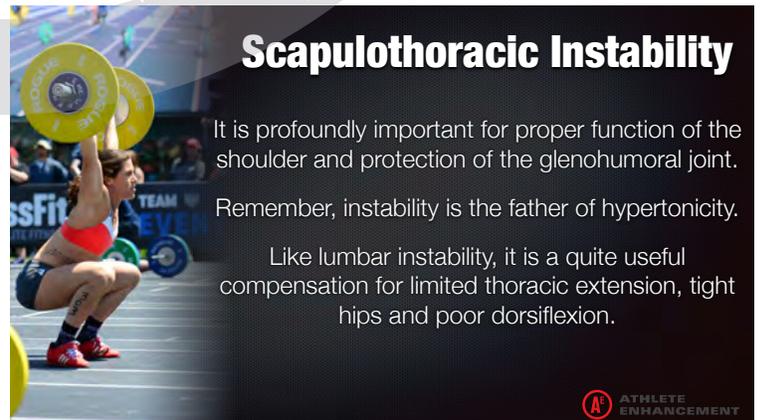
- Extension/compression stabilizing strategy resulting from poor spine and pelvis stability
- Incomplete ontogenesis (not enough "tummy time")
- Prolonged sitting (desk jockey syndrome)



Limited Thoracic Extension

Injury Risk

- **Back pain** (hyperactive erector spinae, lumbar disc pathology) - results from the increased need for lumbar extension as a compensation for the loss of thoracic extension. This perpetuates the ECSS because of the necessary hyperactivity of the erector spinae
- **Shoulder pathology** (rotator cuff sprain/strain or labral tear)
- **Cervical spine disc pathology**



Scapulothoracic Instability

It is profoundly important for proper function of the shoulder and protection of the glenohumeral joint.

Remember, instability is the father of hypertonicity.

Like lumbar instability, it is a quite useful compensation for limited thoracic extension, tight hips and poor dorsiflexion.



Scapulothoracic Instability

Movement Pathology (Technical Flaws)

Athletes will be unable to achieve and maintain a proper receive position in the snatch. [Their shoulders will consistently fall into protraction/elevation.]

This shoulder position is likely compensating for either thoracic extension limitation and/or tight hips (or CrossFit corporate teaches it as the correct position).

Remember, just because an athlete **can** catch with the shoulders protracted doesn't mean that they **should**.




Scapulothoracic Instability

Anatomy / Kinematics

The scapulothoracic "joint" does not have any osseous articulation and, therefore, is not a true joint.

Having minimal contributions to stability by the skeleton, the scapulae is stabilized almost exclusively by muscles, making it inherently unstable.

Proper cohesive activation and coordination of the muscles is paramount for optimal function and performance of the shoulder.




Scapulothoracic Instability

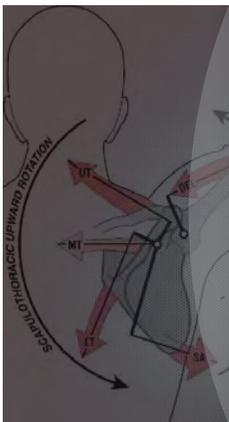
Anatomy / Kinematics

Chief stabilizers of the scapulothoracic joint are the **serratus anterior** and the **lower trapezius**.

The scapular stabilizers are responsible for moving the scapulae to assist in keeping the humeral head (upper arm) centered within the glenoid fossa (located on the scapula).

Each of these structures originates on the rib cage.

Inactivity/inhibition of the scapular stabilizers results in hyperactivity of the upper trapezius and levator scapulae, greatly increasing an athlete's risk for rotator cuff pathology.



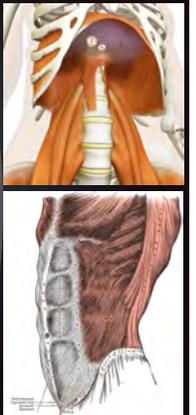

Stabilizers of the Stabilizers

Because the scapular stabilizers originate on the rib cage, proper activation of the spinal stabilizers is a prerequisite for optimal scapular stabilization.

The primary spinal stabilizers are the **diaphragm**, obliqueus externus, obliqueus internus, abdominus transverses and pelvic floor.

The diaphragm and abdominal wall act as a punctum fixum (fixed point) for the scapular stabilizers.

The more stable this fixed point, the more effectively and precisely scapular motion can be controlled.

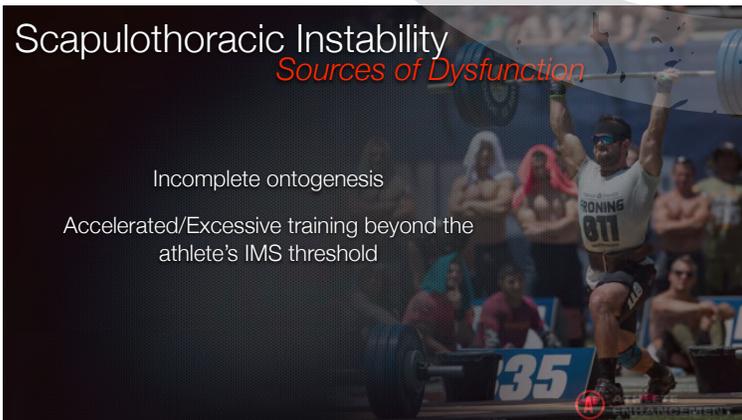



Scapulothoracic Instability

Sources of Dysfunction

Incomplete ontogenesis

Accelerated/Excessive training beyond the athlete's IMS threshold



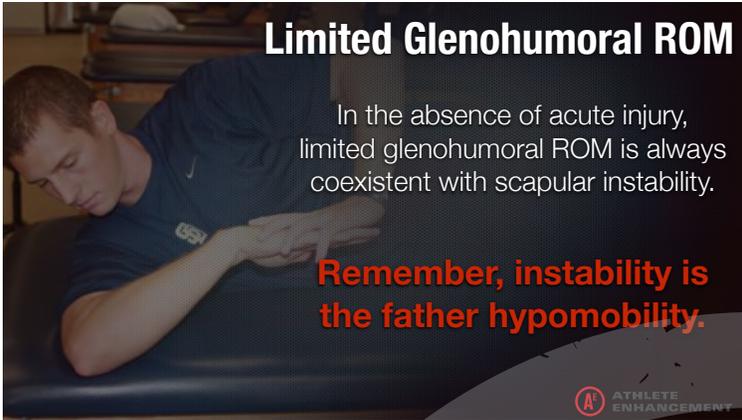

Scapulothoracic Instability

Injury Risk

Rotator pathology (rotator cuff tear and/or labral tear)

Cervical disc derangement/stiffness



Limited Glenohumoral ROM

In the absence of acute injury, limited glenohumoral ROM is always coexistent with scapular instability.

Remember, instability is the father hypomobility.

ATHLETE ENHANCEMENT

Limited Glenohumoral ROM

Anatomy / Kinematics

The GHJ is a very mobile ball-in-socket joint that must be able to roll and glide to maintain proper position.

The rotator cuff is responsible for maintaining centration throughout all motions.

To accomplish this, the fibers of the rotator cuff blend with the capsule of the GHJ, allowing it to control the positioning of the humeral head.

Any dysfunction in the rotator cuff will result in improper kinematics increasing the propensity for pathology.

Humeral Head ATHLETE ENHANCEMENT

Limited Glenohumoral ROM

Movement Pathology (Technical Flaws)

Athlete will struggle to achieve a proper snatch receive position. You will see pronounced compensation to avoid this potentially painful position.

Athlete will often experience tightness/pain at the bottom of a full squat snatch.

ATHLETE ENHANCEMENT

Limited Glenohumoral ROM

Sources of Dysfunction

The #1 non-traumatic cause of GH hypomobility is scapular instability.

Repetitive overuse — especially if an incorrect receive position is trained in the athlete.

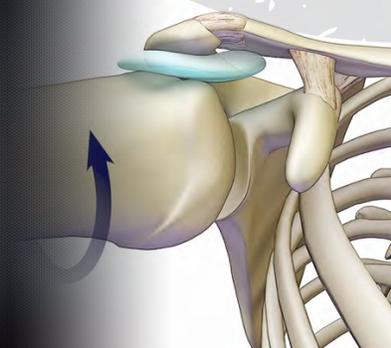
Poor posture.

Also, scapular instability accelerates the repetitive overuse process due to the increased load/demand placed on the rotator cuff.

ATHLETE ENHANCEMENT

Limited Glenohumoral ROM

Injury Risk



Rotator cuff sprain/strain/tear
Labral tear

ATHLETE ENHANCEMENT

Central Instability

Central instability is the king of all functional blocks because it is often the source which creates the rest.

Addressing a functional block such as limited (f)ankle dorsiflexion without restoration of central stability is fruitless.

Remember, central instability manifests as a regression to a more primitive neurological/ontogenical stabilizing strategy.

ATHLETE ENHANCEMENT

Central Instability

Movement Pathology (Technical Flaws)

Athlete will struggle to keep the lumbar spine in a neutral position.

If the instability is **compensated**, they will exhibit the extensor/compression stabilizing strategy. If they have **non-compensated** instability they will collapse into flexion more often.

Athlete will often possess limited range of motion at both the FAJ and the GHJ, which will produce the expected technical flaws.

Overhead squatting or full squat snatches will often be virtually impossible for these athletes.



Central Instability

Sources of Dysfunction

Incomplete neurological development.

Early introduction of athletics.

Accelerated progression through sports.

Over-emphasis on performance (results/output) in training.



Central Instability

Injury Risk

Meniscus Tear

Cervical disc herniation

Rotator cuff Sprain/Strain

Hip Labral Tear

Lateral Epicondylitis

Temporomandibular Dysfunction

Urinary Incontinence

Shoulder Labral tear

Plantar Fasciitis

Frequent Back Spasms

Achilles Tendonitis

Patellar Tendonitis

Lumbar disc herniation

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Gastric Reflux

Rib subluxation

Medial Epicondylitis

Exertion Headaches



Common Functional Blocks

1. Limited (F)ankle Dorsiflexion
2. Tight Hips
3. Limited Thoracic Extension ROM
4. Scapulothoracic Instability
5. Limited Glenohuoral ROM
6. Central Instability



Let's go hit the gym!

