

# Forget going for the burn and go for results

I recently returned from a three-day functional training summit with more than 40 nationally recognized presenters in the training/wellness industry. I had the opportunity to attend one of two lectures or one of two hands-on sections each hour. My clients would have paid *mucho dinero* to see me undergo sweat and muscle pain as I learned new, innovative concepts, philosophies, and current training drills.

Surprisingly, I was also reunited with my first strength and conditioning mentor, who launched my career as a movement specialist. His tutelage brought a greener-than-grass trainee-hopeful into the world of almost all sports at Michigan State University, from field hockey and golf to rowing and gymnastics. Nothing like throwing me to the wolves. In speaking with him about the past decade, he explained to me how much his training philosophy at the collegiate level has changed, how the training facility now uses few machines and how functional training is part of how they increase the overall power of the student-athlete. He also explained how his approach

has changed so dramatically, which sparked this article.

I would like to share some of the changes in my training history that have helped me train my athletes (everyone I train is an athlete, no matter who they are) to become stronger, faster, and perform better.

As one who has had an opportunity to train many athletes at many levels, I have discovered I cannot train everyone. I enjoy helping any and all people with training advice and training tools to enhance his/her quality of life through exercise, but some personalities just don't mesh. Sometimes the way trainers instruct just does not work with everyone, and that's OK.

A trainer should always look out for the best interest of the athlete but not be afraid of losing the client. He should plan for the time allotted, give instruction, offer constructive criticism and positive reinforcement.

In my training years, I used to think that a new exercise or corrective exercise I learned at a conference or from another colleague worked for everyone I trained. It doesn't. Regardless of

how well designed a particular exercise is, that does not mean everyone should try it. For example, exercises for the shoulder found in magazines are not for everyone, especially if one has a bad shoulder. Also, those who have a bad back should not be performing ab crunches (spinal stability is created before spinal mobility).

When they hire a trainer, athletes expect a "kick butt" workout in which "the burn" is felt. Well, I find "feeling the burn" to be a small part of training, not the big picture. Feeling the burn of one body part does very little for function.

Don't get me wrong. If you ask my athletes, they undergo a serious burn, but a whole-body burn. Beating the hell out of one muscle group makes it difficult to effectively train the next day.

Athletes who are paid to play work out twice a day, depending on the sport. If they perform exercises that waste or burn out certain muscle groups only, then they will be unable to perform the next day at the capacity desired, and thus a day of training is lost.

The goal is to work out every day. Again, working hard and just feeling the burn are two different concepts. Unfortunately, many athletes still perform the latter and think it is the

best type of training.

This brings me to another training approach that has never really been effective, body building. Unless you are a bodybuilder, stop training to become a bodybuilder. Arnold Schwarzenegger ruined how we train today. He brought great notoriety to the sport of bodybuilding, which turned the tide of how we train today.

To become better at a sport activity, stay healthy, or pick up grandchildren, but stop bodybuilding. That is a sport unique to itself and provides little transfer to a sport activity. Just performing a bunch of lunges is not going to make you a better skier. Lateral side raises with the arms are not going to make you a better pitcher. If anything it will slow down your performance.

Train with exercises that will allow you to perform functional activity and make you look better automatically. Try out exercises that allow the sport activity to become better. There are millions of exercises out there. Choose the ones that fit you, the athlete.



**Training to be balanced**

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