

I would first like to thank all the responses I acquired regarding the hiking programs and saving your knees during hiking in the last two articles that I have written. I hope the additional opinions I supplied helped.

Training To Be Balanced (T2BB) now changes gears. Our training methodology is applied to seasonal change. Regardless of athletic endeavor, training occurs in three phases – off-season, pre-season, and in-season training. This is not to say that singular type training is our mantra. We rely on complete training by capitalizing on five basic components of balance, strength, flexibility, agility/coordination and power. We train a variety of movements based on season due to the how well the body adapts. The body adapts so well it is inertly lazy...particularly the muscles. If muscles had a choice they would be on permanent vacation. The body always finds the least path of resistance to physical movement.

Think about this: homeostasis by definition according to the *Oxford American Dictionaries* is a state of equilibrium, or a tendency to reach equilibrium especially maintained by physiological processes. For example, internally, the body attempts to maintain a neutral acidity and alkalinity, which is a Ph of seven. It adjusts when the body is too acidic or too alkaline. The heart rate is another example of equilibrium of the body. During the beginning stages of any sport activity the heart rate accelerates only to subside to an average maintained heart rate.

The body tends to balance itself out or adjusted to irregular activity, whether biking, hiking or running. The recent fad name to this is “muscle confusion”. Whatever you want to call it, the consistency of change to the body with physical movement warrants growth in overall fitness. This is why T2BB encourages change or variety in training and sport specific activities.

As the season of autumn approaches, children prepare for fall sports in which youth athletes are under the impression that training for one sport activity will excel his/her future in getting better at that sport activity. Don't read this wrong. I am all about excelling in a sport activity and nothing gets you better than practicing a particular sport activity. However, a monumental attribute to any sport activity is a different sport activity. Or better written, change in training offers increase sport activity.

Grab your offspring from the other room or highlight this next sentence for him/her to read later on the refrigerator. It is fact, that youth participation in another sport activity prepares him/her better than youth specialization of one sport activity, reduces potential overuse injury and successful longevity in physical activity.

James Johnson is a professor of exercise and sport studies at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts and writes a well thought out column relating overuse injuries and specialization of sport.

The multisport athlete is almost a thing of the past, as coaches apply intense pressure on athletes to specialize in one sport. In San Diego alone, there are more than 125 baseball teams for children ages 10 and younger, many playing 80 games a year, far more than most college teams. The prevailing thought is that if children do not specialize by the eighth grade, then they are not prepared for higher-level competition.

Scores of children lose out on the diversified development gained by participating in a variety of sports. The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that “Young athletes who specialize in just one sport may be denied the benefits of varied activity while facing additional physical, physiologic, and psychologic demands from intense training and competition”.

Clearly, one question we need to ask is whether the increased interest in specialization and competition reduces physical activity in later life. A common goal stated to support youth sport programs is the promotion of lifelong physical activity. We now frequently read about overtraining, staleness, fatigue, burnout, and overuse injuries. This overtraining syndrome is often defined as a succession of psychological and physiological changes that result in reduced performance. In a recent review, Brenner suggests that burnout may have a detrimental effect on lifelong physical activity.

Leaders of children's sports are often well meaning, but occasionally ill informed based on adult models, historical

precedence, and anecdotes. Coaches and leaders of children's sports need basic knowledge of growth and development, pedagogy, and exercise science. Further, they need to apply this information to youth sport. Lastly, James Johnson offers recommendations to reduce overuse injury that involve specialation. When teaching sport skills, reduce endless repetitions of the same task. Teach motor skills in a distributed manner, interspersing frequent rest periods with work periods. Use random practice, mixing up activities so that the same activity is not repeated excessively. Use frequent games to vary practice and enhance motivation. Keep workouts interesting and age appropriate. Gradually increase progression of the workload. Periodize training on a weekly and seasonal basis. Take 1–2 days of absolute rest each week. Schedule breaks every 2–3 months with a change in activity. Encourage children to participate in a variety of sports.

Good luck Bronc's in this year's sport activity and remember mulitsports participation in your youth will make you better in your preferred sport to be!