

Train for career longevity when preparing for summer activity

If your summer recreation season is almost upon you your conditioning program should be in full swing with a primary goal of injury prevention. This article will cover some methodologies used by professional athletes that anyone can benefit from.

The NFL combine is an awesome display of athletic talent and sport specific training, within the combine an athlete is facing the biggest tests of his athletic career. To a pro football prospect tenths of a second, fractions of an inch, or the difference of one or two repetitions can make or break a professional career or make a difference of millions of dollars at contract time. It has become commonplace for NFL prospects and their sports agents to enlist the services of one of several elite sports training centers around the country. These centers and their trainers have become masters at optimizing an athlete's ability to perform the various events that make up the NFL combine.

If his performance earns him a contact with a team the player will usually return to the same training center for the next phase of his training. In this next training phase the number one priority will shift from maximum performance in the combine to injury prevention and career longevity. Elite level trainers have learned that a strategy of injury prevention and career longevity gives them a lot of "bang for the buck" because correcting even minor problems a client may have with balance, strength, or flexibility will also improve performance. Many of the longevity concepts that have evolved at this level are not complex, make perfect sense, and can easily be applied to anyone's conditioning program that has already "made" their team.

The first step for you will be to get some help from a trainer or therapist familiar with movement assessment. An effective movement assessment will find out if you have weaknesses or imbalances with regards to strength & mobility. Second work with your trainer or therapist to develop, learn, and employ the needed protocols to correct these limitations, as just getting stronger at the expense of not addressing areas of greater need is a recipe for injury.

Once you are on your way to correcting limitations here are some adjustments that the rest of your program may need. First get on your feet! Elite sports training centers and trainers stay away from the use of seated strength training and conditioning equipment. If you are using these types of machines incorporate more free weights, cable machines, and body weight exercises. Second learn and execute a good warm-up, activation, and movement preparation routine at the beginning of your workout or to get ready for a game. Third develop and use an effective warm-down routine to initiate and speed recovery.

After all, your career is your life, make it last!