



Athletic Trainer's Corner

St. Francis Sports Medicine

Strength and Conditioning Can't Be Taken Lightly

by Kenny Cabe, ATC

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At one time, it was thought that strength and conditioning was just for football players, to be done in the off-season in order to prevent injuries and keep players in shape. Now, strength and conditioning programs have become a major part of every sport, in both college and high school athletic programs. Additionally, adult athletes are using strength and conditioning programs to augment their training for sports like running, cycling and even triathlons. Athletes of all kinds are working 12 months a year to be bigger, stronger and faster - and usually the inclusion of strength and conditioning training translates into better performance.

As much as a good strength and conditioning program can contribute to the success of an athlete when done appropriately, it can do an equal amount of harm if done improperly. An athlete's program needs to be customized for the individual - working with a strength coach or athletic trainer who specializes in the particular sport will help. The individual that is customizing and implementing the strength and conditioning program must be qualified, and the program must be designed appropriately and functionally.

When deciding on a trainer, consider the individual's credentials and specific qualifications. Look for a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) who follows the standards of the [National Strength and Conditioning Association](#).

A recent trend in strength and conditioning is to train athletes more functionally, which means focusing less on how much weight they can bench press in the gym, and focusing more on tailoring the athlete's strength to skills they need in their particular sport. A qualified coach or trainer can easily include functional training in an athlete's exercise program, whether they are recovering from an injury or preparing for competition.

There is no substitute for hard work and a good trainer! Learn more about starting your own strength and conditioning program by downloading these tip sheets: [Starting Functional Strength Training >>](#)

- [Starting a Conditioning Program >>](#)

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