



ASSESSING HIP STABILITY: AN OVERVIEW

In this next area of the program, we're focusing on two specific ways to assess hip stability.

In the first, we'll look directly at how the hip can function in extension. Simply put, your ability to perform this movement exactly as I describe will tell you quite a bit about how stable your hips are. Be sure to look at both sides. Be sure to scale the movement accordingly. Be sure to assess accurately and be honest with yourself about how easy – OR HARD – it is to do.

In the next area, we look at stability on a single leg in running. The choice is yours as to how you'll want to approach this. I do highly recommend you shoot video and analyze it accurately. Reach out if you'd like to do a Virtual Gait Analysis, which is absolutely the best and easiest way to ascertain exactly where you are right now.

Test, then re-test, then re-test again.

These assessments are best utilized if you can come back to them repeatedly. See how your skills improve to assess your progress.

Similarly, every movement we'll be working on in this program is a demonstration of your stability and skill. With regular practice, you'll be doing your own regular re-testing and assessing and hopefully learning a lot about how you're moving and progressing!

If you can know the purpose of each movement you do – what your goals are with it – where your weak links reside, you are bound to get more from them.

If you can learn and truly internalize the most basic concepts of human movement (as we know it today), you will become a MASTER of your body, AND your health.

If you become a master of your own body and leader of your health and wellness, you will get the absolute best results possible from the training you do.

While it doesn't contain specific instructions for this portion of the program, you may find the information below is helpful in getting the most from this program. Read up when the opportunity presents itself.

The “New” Science of Skill Development: Your Road to Mastery

When the book “Endure” by Alex Hutchinson came out, it created quite a stir in endurance sport circles. From academia to coaches to elite athletes to everyday athletes...so many from different backgrounds seemed to be “jumping onto the bandwagon” so to speak, to express their excitement and interest in the intriguing possibilities Mr. Hutchinson addressed in his book, as well as some of what the most recent scientific research had to say about the ultimate in human potential. *I'd say the most intriguing aspect of it all might have been how much more important our brains seem to be (that mind / body connection) for us to explode our true potential, than was previously believed.*

Shifting now to another book which delves into human performance and ‘expertise’ in particular, “PEAK.”

I was talking recently with one of my former teachers – who is himself one of the best in the world on his instrument. Among other things, we talked about “talent”. *We talked about skills, about practicing, and about a commitment to excellence – about being the best that we can be.*

The topic often came back to what it takes to be a great musician – and about the “talent” each of us possesses. Is it more a “gift” bestowed by the lucky few at birth, or was it the product of hours of

practice and relentless hard work and determination? In our conversation, I once mentioned the book, “The Talent Code” – a book that I believe is definitely worth reading.

There’s no doubt that “talent” is a combination of the above factors, and perhaps a few other things we aren’t yet fully aware of.

The bottom line: the greatest among us at any one thing, be it playing the piano, swimming or running the fastest, or throwing a football, **seem to have a certain amount of ‘natural’ ability but also work hard – relentlessly, for many hours, to explode that natural talent into something extraordinary. Most importantly, they also seem to be in love with the work itself, the process.** They don’t start out with a singular goal of being “the best,” but rather, are doing what they love. Trying to improve. *Embracing the journey, the process, of improving.*

In YOUR quest to explore your own potential what are some of the things you can take away from these books, and the book PEAK in particular, that may help you by either reinforcing some of your previously held beliefs or even exposing you to some new ideas?

And honestly, this is the reason why I coach the way that I do. I am not sure there’s anything as important as this and these ideas. #truth

The greatest among us over the long haul – not the flash-in-the-pan who demonstrates a lot of natural ability but is gone in a flash after a few “fast” performances, but those special few who demonstrate the ability to sustain a high level of performance and who continue to get better and better as the years go on (until reaching some as yet undefined physiologic “peak”), are always **highly skilled first and foremost**, in addition to blowing us away with their “seemingly natural” blazing speed or graceful gazelle-like movements.

Speed is a skill.

Quickness is a skill.

Strength is a skill.

Stability is a skill.

We're learning every day now more than ever with our work with PAILs/RAILs that mobility is *ALSO a skill*.

And so it goes...that any of the sports whose ability to do very well we all covet, is first and foremost, about skills.

Here are a few quotes from the book PEAK to continue this thought process...in no particular order.

From the Introduction:

- “But we now understand that there’s no such thing as a predefined ability. The brain is adaptable and training can create skills – such as perfect pitch – that did not exist before.”
- “Sometimes these books (e.g. recently published books that emphasize the importance of hard work, desire, motivation, effort) leave the impression that heartfelt desire and hard work alone will lead to improved performance – e.g. “Just keep working at it, and you’ll get there” – and this IS WRONG. The right sort of practice carried out over a sufficient period of time leads to improvement. Nothing else.”
- “More than two decades ago, after studying expert performers from a wide range of fields, my colleagues and I came to realize that no matter what the field, the most effective approaches to improving performance all follow a single set of general principles. We named this universal approach “deliberate practice.”
- ...”gaining expertise is largely a matter of improving one’s mental processes (including, in some fields, the mental processes that control body movements), and because physical changes such

as increasing strength, flexibility, and endurance are already reasonably well understood, this book's focus will be mostly on the mental side of expert performance..."

From Chapter 1:

- "Research has shown that, generally speaking, once a person reaches that level of "acceptable" performance and automaticity, the additional years of "practice" don't lead to improvement. If anything, the doctor or the teacher or the driver who's been at it for twenty years is likely to be worse than the one who's been doing it for only five, and the reason is that these *automated abilities gradually deteriorate in the absence of deliberate efforts to improve.*"
- From Chapter 1 and on the topic of "Purposeful Practice."

"Steve Oare, a specialist in music education at Wichita State University, once offered the following imaginary conversation between a music teacher and a young music student. It's the sort of conversation that music teachers have with students all of the time (**Note from me: this is also similar to the conversations I sometimes have with athletes I coach). In this case, a teacher is trying to find out why the student hasn't been improving.

Teacher: Your practice sheet says you are practicing an hour a day. But your playing test was only a C. Can you explain why?

Student: I don't know what happened! I could play the test last night!

Teacher: How many times did you play it?

Student: Ten or twenty.

Teacher: How many times did you play it correctly?

Student: Umm...I dunno. Once or twice...

Teacher: Hmm....How did you practice it?

Student: I dunno. I just played it.

- “This is naive practice in a nutshell: I just played it. I just swung the bat and tried to hit the ball. I just listened to the numbers and tried to remember them. I just read the math problems and tried to solve them. Purposeful practice is, as the name implies, much more purposeful, thoughtful, and focused than this sort of naive practice.”
- “Purposeful practice has well defined, specific goals.”
- “Purposeful practice is all about putting a bunch of baby steps together to reach a longer term goal.”
- “The key thing is to take that general goal – get better – and turn it into something specific that you can work on with a realistic expectation of improvement.”
- “Purposeful practice is focused.”

I’ll wrap this overview with two important quotes from this first chapter, at least in my opinion... 😊

- **“Purposeful practice involves feedback. You have to know whether you are doing something right and, if not, how you’re going wrong.** In Oare’s example, the music student got belated feedback at school with a C on the performance test, but there seems to have been no feedback during practice – no one listening and pointing out mistakes, with the student seemingly clueless about whether there were errors in the practice.

- **“Purposeful practice requires getting out of one’s comfort zone. If you never push yourself beyond your comfort zone, you will never improve.”**

I think we can safely say that the concepts presented in this first chapter and introduction come back to these fundamental ideas.

This is ALL provided as food for thought to enrich and empower your training with this program.

****How mindfully do we practice and train? (Training is practice – practice is training).***

****How aware are you of how well you are performing what you are performing, an exercise or a rep or a set or a lap?***

****How often do you pay attention to moving “well” and executing a movement correctly vs. just going through the motions?***

****How often do you seek feedback to ensure you’re doing something correctly? Or wasting your time. (see the above).***