

Strength Training and Children



What is Strength Training?

Strength training refers to a programme of exercises that are designed to increase an individual's ability to exert or resist force. In children, strength training focuses on learning proper exercise techniques and training methods in a safe and fun environment.

Why is Strength Training important?

Children who perform some strength training may not only increase their strength but help to develop their motor fitness, sports performance and prevent and rehabilitate injuries. Furthermore, training may help to increase the strength of the connective tissues around the joints, improve body composition and enhance mental health factors such as self-esteem and confidence

What type of training is appropriate for children?

Children and young people can use body weight, resistance tubing and free and fixed weights to improve strength. Although there is no scientific evidence to define the optimal sets and repetitions suitable for children the American College of Sports Medicine recommends one to three sets of six to fifteen repetitions performed two to three times per week.

Strength training with maximal weights is not recommended for children due to the potential for injury related to the growth plates and bones.

General recommendations

- An adequate warm up should be performed prior to performing strength training exercises.
- Specific exercises should be first learned with no load or resistance to ensure the correct technique is mastered.
- A strength programme should involve the core and major muscle groups.
- Strength training programmes for children should be supervised by qualified and knowledgeable instructors.
- A cool down and stretch should be performed after the session.