

Editorial

Strength Training in Youth: No Doubt, It's Beneficial

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A long time ago, strength training in youth athletes has been considered unhealthy (e.g. stunts children's growth, epiphyseal plate damage etc...) and one of the major sources of injury risk. It is worth noting that the terms youth and young athletes refer to both children (up to ~11 years in girls and 13 years in boys) and adolescents (12 to 18 years in girls and 14 to 18 years in boys) [1]. During the last three decades, the debate around the question "would strength training be safely incorporated in the daily training routine of youth?" has not been stopped in view of the relevance of this topic when it comes to youth's long-term athletic development and especially, the preservation of their health status. Currently, scientific piece of evidence by a number of national associations (i.e., American, British, Canadian etc...) clearly suggested that strength training can be safe, beneficial and worthwhile activity for youth [1-3].

As indicated previously, the general consensus raised through the several existing meta-analyses over the last years is that strength training has the potential to enhance various measures of physical fitness of youth athletes [1-7]. In this context, highly reputable expert in the field around the world are in a quite agreement that, in case of being properly elaborated and supervised, strength training program can be safe, contribute to the improvement of muscular strength and power, increase motor skill performance, improve the young athlete's resistance to sports-related injuries and enhance the psycho-social skills and well-being of young athletes. Accordingly, the older myths stressing the adverse effects of strength training in youth have been confidently denied.

Consequently, the question regarding including or not strength training in youth does not make sense anymore. However, the most

important question now is "how to prescribe the suitable strength training program for youth respecting their particular physiological, physical and psychological characteristics?" The answer will be by strictly following the various recommendations raised in the large body of scientific evidence related to this matter. Henceforward, the way to do that is clear and accessible and it's up to coaches and strength and conditioning professional to take their responsibility and protect and/or promote youth's health and stimulating their athletic development.

We should keep in mind, however, that an improperly designed and supervised strength training program would be, no doubt, highly risky for youth.

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