



Training Principles

Specificity Principle

The best way to develop physical fitness for your sport is to train the energy systems and muscles as closely as possible to the way that athletes use them in your sport.

Overload Principle

To improve their fitness, athletes must do more than what their bodies are used to doing. You can apply overload in duration, intensity, or both.

Progression Principle

To achieve steady improvement in the fitness of your athletes, you must continually increase the physical demands to overload their systems.

Diminishing Returns Principle

When unfit athletes begin a training regimen, their fitness improves rapidly, but as they become fitter, the amount of improvement lessens as they approach their genetic limits. A corollary to this principle is that as their fitness increases, athletes need more work or training to make the same gains.

Variation Principle

After your athletes have trained hard for several days, they should train lightly to give their bodies a chance to recover. Over the course of the year use training cycles (periodization) to vary the intensity and volume of training to help your athletes achieve peak fitness for competition. You should also change the exercises or activities regularly so that you do not overstress a part of the body.

Reversibility Principle

Use it or lose it. When athletes stop training, their hard-won fitness gains disappear, usually faster than they were gained.

Individual Differences Principle

Every athlete is different and responds differently to the same training activities. The value of training depends in part on the athlete's maturation; pretraining condition; genetic predisposition; gender and race; diet and sleep; environmental factors such as heat, cold, and humidity; and, of course, motivation.

Moderation Principle

Remember that training is a slow, gradual process. Give athletes time to progress. You want to coax your athletes' bodies into superior condition, not beat them up by overtraining.

