

WILD TRAINING

MONTHLY ARTICLE FROM JAMES GRIFFITHS
INDUSTRY INSIGHTS - EDUCATION - PERSONAL TRAINING



THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

Gaining skill

Applying force

**Change up your
training**

#LiveAWildLife

SIMPLE VS SKILLED EXERCISE

The fitness industry enjoys a lot of different trends and over time, through marketing, magazines and trainers trying to stand out we have to endure more buzz words than anyone wants to listen to.

Core training, functional fitness, LIC, Met Con, WOD, HIIT, AMRAP, NEAT... you get the picture. I've always said the beauty of exercise is in the variety, but I also understand why people get locked in to specific areas of fitness.

They follow their passion. They become a part of a community they enjoy and get a sense of identity. They fear trying new styles of exercise because they don't want to feel inferior.

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First two are totally valid. As a coach I’d want to help people with the last one. I’ve not found any magic leaps in performance... but if you are going to find them it won’t be where you are always looking.

So in this article I wanted to talk about the benefits of just two concepts of training I enjoy with all of my clients. A very basic concept that sits at the top of my programming rules.

SIMPLE VS SKILLED EXERCISE

Who’s stronger, a ballerina or a strongman. A strongman, obviously... until you ask them to do a developpe. Then the strongman will not look strong. I’d know. I’ve competed as a strongman and won... and I do not look strong while trying to do a developpe!

When I think about training and balancing someone’s fitness I’m looking at how much force they can produce and maintain, and then what they can do with it.

So start simple. Decent form, stamina and stability in basic movements. Build some lean muscle. Increase strength. Work on power and speed. Then apply all that to more skilful movements.

My jobs easy when you write it down like that, except no one ever does it in that order because that would be simple and boring. You want to do the training that you enjoy, or that you think will get you the results you want to see. Lifters want to lift. Sporty people want to play sports. Stretchy people want to stretch.

Different types of exercisers focus on their chosen style, they believe it is the best exercise in the world and they’ll tend to avoid anything that might make them not look as fit as they think they are.

SO WHAT WOULD SOMEONE THAT DOES SIMPLE FORMS OF EXERCISE LIKE BODY BUILDING OR SPINNING GET FROM PRACTISING SOME MORE SKILLED MOVEMENTS IN THEIR TRAINING?

What would a ballerina who focuses their time on developing chains of highly skilled movements, get from practising more simple exercises. I see it as a continuum, that for the most part has served me and my clients really well when it comes to achieving results and balancing progressive training with suitable recovery whilst staying injury free.

You’re always going to create and gain more force with simple exercises. More strength, more muscle, more power. Think body builder, power lifter, strongman. These are big, powerful people that can lift a lot of weight. Is their skill in what they do? Absolutely.

The more you train in these sports the more you respect the finesse in achieving the best performance in them, but in the grand scheme of movements, body building exercises aren’t very high up the skill ladder when compared to things like martial arts or rock climbing.

More force sounds cool. Simple exercise is a winner. You know there is a but. For me it happened in 2009 when I got myself to a 135kg bench press at around 76kg body weight, and I still couldn’t do a planche press up.

“MAKE IT FUN, KEEP IT EFFECTIVE, INCLUDE EVERYONE. I CALLED IT WILD TRAINING”

I wasn't even close. They both look like pressing movements, but the fact I was close to benching double my body weight meant very little when I tried to lift my body weight off the floor and stay horizontal. The force didn't transfer to other similar movements I wanted to improve.

That started a journey of discovery and learning where I tried to find the best activities for people to feel fit and strong everywhere. Like any given situation, you want 100% confidence in your body not letting you down.

Make it fun, keep it effective, include everyone. I called it Wild Training.

So 10 years later what can I now write down that normally takes me a very passionate conversation to get across to people willing to listen.

You are always going to create and gain more force with simple exercises, but force gained through simple movements doesn't transfer up to more skilful movements efficiently without extra training.



Increased levels of force gained from more skilful movements like gymnastics, dance or sport will always transfer down to less skilful movements.

You will never achieve those peak levels of force that you can from simple movements, but you can transfer the control, mobility and the ability to feel strong at different ranges of movement, in different postures or planes of motion.

So simple exercise gives you higher peak outputs, and skilled training helps you apply those peak levels of fitness to more activities. Is it just me that thinks mixing it up sounds like a good plan?

You don't have to go from body building to ballet, but could a power lifter gain something from learning a bit about strongman? For sure.

Could a gymnast improve their performance with some specific weight lifting? Absolutely.

The devil is in the detail and luckily that's why my job isn't maybe quite as easy as I made out earlier.

For every individual the balance of simple vs skilled training is going to be different based on their experience, sport and individual needs.

“KNOWING WHAT EXERCISES BEST TRANSFER UP OR DOWN THE CONTINUUM IS SOMETHING I’VE BEEN WORKING ON FOR OVER A DECADE. I’M STILL LEARNING AND STILL HAVING A LOT OF FUN SHOWING HOW EFFECTIVE THIS IDEA OF PROGRAMMING CAN BE”