

WILD TRAINING

MONTHLY ARTICLE FROM JAMES GRIFFITHS

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS - EDUCATION - PERSONAL TRAINING



THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

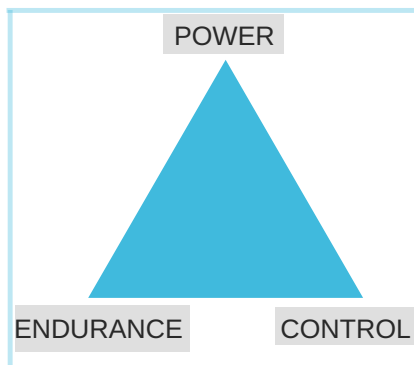
Training Triangle

Power

Endurance

Control

TRAINING TRIANGLE



HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOURS?

This concept was inspired by a simple image I saw when buying a bicycle. It had 3 points on it which said "Cheap", "Strong" and "Light".

The point was simple. You can only have 2. You can have a strong cheap bike, or a light cheap bike, but you can't have a strong, light, cheap bike. This made me think about how I balance my exercise programming.

"SO HOW DO YOU BECOME MORE POWERFUL?"

Wild Training is about maximising power, endurance and control across the full range of human movement. That is the best I could do to get the concept of Wild Training in to one line that sounds intelligent. Well, more intelligent than I normally sound in person anyway. So here I try to explain it with pictures and some slightly more detailed, but easy to follow explanations.

Power is the functional expression of strength at speed. So it's not just lifting heavy stuff. It's being able to create a lot of force, quickly. Power correlates with longevity in life and superior performance in sport.

So how do you become powerful? Build some lean muscle. Train that muscle to be strong so you can create a lot of force. Then train your body to create that force quickly.

"REMEMBER THAT STRENGTH IS A PRE-CURSOR TO POWER, SO STRENGTH ISN'T BAD TO WORK ON"

As an example, if two people can both squat 120kg but one takes 4 seconds to stand up with it and the other takes 2 seconds to stand up with it, the one that does it in 2 seconds has more power.

As a general rule for most sports, power is more important than strength because moving slowly isn't a big part of a lot of sports. Remember that strength is a pre-cursor to power, so strength isn't bad to work on. We need to build strength before we can achieve power.

Power is also a massive part of slowing down the ageing process, staying lean and reducing risk of injury. This comes down to positive hormone profiling created by power based training. You'll find it easier to get/stay lean and toned if you practice power focused exercise.

Reducing risk of injury, especially in older people can be achieved by maintaining power as part of a regular training programme that uses relevant exercise techniques. If you lose power then you can lose the ability to adjust your balance and the risk of falling will increase. Fall rates in the elderly can cause serious injuries.

Endurance never sounds as sexy as power, in terms of the body shape that endurance based training creates vs power, the majority of people in fitness for aesthetics reasons might agree. For a lot of stamina focused sports like running and cycling, 80% of training time is taken up by endurance training at less than 80% of max' heart rate.

Three things I think about when I'm training for endurance. Increase my oxygen threshold. Increase my lactate threshold. Improve my efficiency. Those three things are what will impact my performance in terms of endurance.

"WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT ENDURANCE?"

Both life and sport demand the ability to produce power over time, so having better endurance is key to being able to perform at our best in both life and sport. Control is the cool stuff. Movement. It's also what I've found to give people the most joy in their lifestyle.

We focus a lot on how much we can lift, how far we can run, or what we look like, but actually living without any pain and having absolute freedom in your movement, whilst building total confidence in your body to explore and challenge your limitations. That is what brings a lot of people I train the most joy.

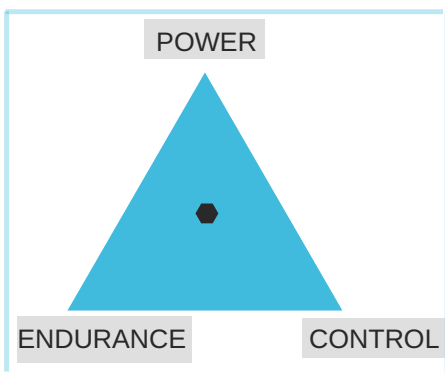
Why is it important in your training? Training good control of ourselves and external loads across full range of motion, allows power and endurance to be usefully applied. The combination of components like balance, stability and mobility.

"HOW DO YOU TRAIN CONTROL?"

Time. Lots of time working on exercises and skills that challenge the components mentioned above. So we have our three points of our triangle, but it's how we choose to use our time training that will determine what sort of fitness we have.

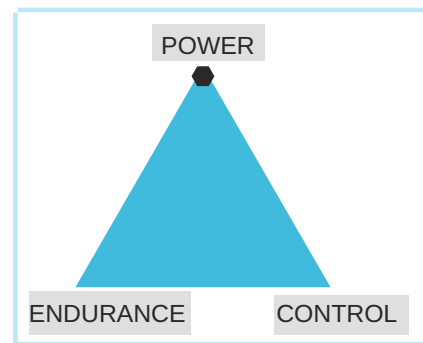
Balanced training triangle

The black dot in the triangle below would represent someone who has spent an equal amount of training that relates to power, endurance and control. For life and well-being, that might be perfect as long as that person enjoys the training balance, because no one should spend time training if they don't enjoy what they're doing.



A perfectly balanced triangle won't be perfect for sport, or for a lot of people that don't have balanced fitness as a goal. Some people want to focus on one element because that's what they love to do for their training. A lot of athletes will have an ideal fitness profile that they need to achieve for their sport. So then balancing your triangle becomes way more interesting.

Power focused triangle

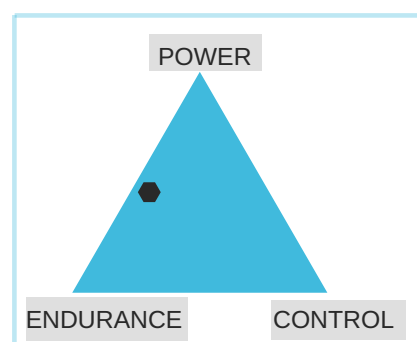


The above triangle shows the dot at the top, so a person that has totally focused their training time on power. They'll have a good amount of muscle, be strong and have power. Through spending all their time lifting big volumes of weights, pushing heavy intensity workouts, hitting explosive athletic programmes, they will have neglected endurance and control.

You can't become elite at all three, so to push your limit in one component of our triangle, you have to spend all your time training one way. So this triangle also shows someone that won't have a lot of mobility or stability and they won't have great endurance, so maintaining any level of intensity for time won't be a strength of theirs.

The triangle below is something that might look like a profile for an MMA fighter. Yes they need to be powerful, but we aren't talking strongman levels of force, so the training time spent focused on power can come down.

They need great endurance because gassing out in a 3-5 minute fight round is not going to go well. They need control but we aren't talking perfect form in a handstand. Most of the required control will come from their sport specific training.

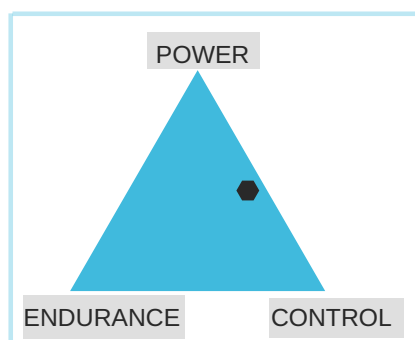


That is a massive generalisation and individual fighters will have unique styles that require consideration when profiling their training triangle, and that ideal training triangle will potentially change depending on who their opponent is and how they plan to beat them. That's what makes profiling fitness for sport so interesting. Perfect is a theory based on experience and strategy that may or may not be correct. Training triangles won't be constant either. Different athletes will need to spend more time in different areas based on training cycles as well. A weaker athlete might need 4-6 months of power focused training that then transitions in to more rounded training to give the athlete time to develop a higher power base.

"PERFECT IS A THEORY BASED ON EXPERIENCE AND STRATEGY THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE CORRECT"

Below we can see a pyramid where someone has split their time between power and control training. This might suit a gymnast, sprinter or break dancer. Loads of power, that can be applied efficiently with massive levels of control. They need the ability to sustain their activity for very short periods of time and that stamina will come from the specific training that they do.

Example of a power sport triangle



They won't benefit from spending training time doing endurance training at less than 80% of their max' heart rate. If they want to do it for fun, that's a different thing, but if we are talking how would you go pro, it won't be by wasting your training time.

So if you aren't a pro-athlete, you don't spend your time doing one specific sport and your focus is health, well being and looking good, what would your training triangle look like?

Well beauty is in the eye of the beholder so the best body shape comes down to what you want to look like. The MMA fighters triangle will deliver a pretty good body shape, as will the power sport triangle. We don't see a lot of overweight fighters or sprinters right?

Yet how many people trying to lose weight spend most of their time doing endurance training. For me I think endurance training impacts body shape the least. As a basic rule, endurance and control will give you a softer look, and power will give you a more toned look, which will be more muscular depending on how much volume you do.

If your aim is joy, feeling great in any situation. Having total freedom and confidence in your body, I don't think anyone would be disappointed with a balanced triangle. Practically each week that might look like 1-2 days of power training, 1-2 days of endurance training and 1-2 days of control training.

Doesn't have to look like. Maybe it's 4 power workouts per week for a month, then 4 control workouts per week for a month, and then 4 endurance workouts per week for a month. Then the pattern repeats.

One of the concepts I always build in to my training and my clients training is the 80/20 rule. I will get 80% of the benefit of a training style with 20% of my effort. So as a Strongman competitor where power is the main focus you can be tempted to spend 100% of your year training power. I'd look at the benefit in making that athlete spend parts of their training cycles on control and endurance.

"I WILL GET 80% OF THE BENEFIT OF A TRAINING STYLE WITH 20% OF MY EFFORT"

Small amounts of work in areas where we are weak create large gains in not much time. For some athletes in some sports this will create a better package than focusing on just their one key attribute all the time, and will reduce limitations in progression of your key attribute due to imbalance or injury rate.

There isn't a right and a wrong. There isn't going to be a perfect plan. In music, there isn't a perfect song. That's what makes it art. I don't mind the idea of looking at my training as art. Nice way of reminding yourself that exercise in any form should be something we enjoy.



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