

WILD TRAINING

MONTHLY ARTICLE FROM JAMES GRIFFITHS

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS - EDUCATION - PERSONAL TRAINING



THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

What is the exercise paradox?

Training for our health vs for a specific goal

Recognising stresses on the body

BREAKING THE EXERCISE PARADOX

TRAINING IS HEALTHY, RIGHT?

For as long as I can remember the greatest challenge that I've had to overcome in my career as a fitness professional is the exercise paradox. This has been the centre of so many discussions with gym members, personal training clients and fellow personal trainers.

The exercise paradox is that we exercise to improve our health and fitness, but do so in a way that negatively impacts our longevity. Health is defined as a state of being absent of illness or injury. So if all exercise is healthy, why do so many people experience injury, illness or a general sense of fatigue and stress from the exercise they do?

This is most prevalent at the elite end of the spectrum. High performance athletes have to train at such intensities and volumes that they often suffer injuries from the exercise they do.

"SO IF OUR GOAL IS TO ACHIEVE AN ELITE LEVEL OF FITNESS, THAT GOAL RUNS IN PARALLEL WITH AN INCREASE IN RISK OF INJURING OUR BODY"

This is the exercise paradox and this is what I have wanted to break for all of my career. I believe I now have a theory and a system around how to achieve an elite level of fitness without negatively impacting your health and longevity in life.



If you take an equal volume of training, say 3 days. You have two options and two sets of outcomes.

Option 1: Less variety

So if you train the same sort of exercise style/movements for all 3 days, you'll see more progression in the components of fitness in that particular style of exercise.

If you train strength on all 3 days, you'll see your strength progress really well.

Because of the focus dedicated to that one or limited style of exercise, you will see a plateau or potentially even a regression in other components

of fitness that your chosen style of exercise doesn't support.

If you train strength on all 3 days you'll see a greater regression in things like endurance and speed. This makes it harder to manage fatigue/stress on the body as all three days cause the same type of fatigue/stress. This means potentially long phases of the same kind of training will lead to neural/metabolic fatigue, muscular/joint issues, plateaus in performance or at worst injury.

Option 2: More variety

So if you train different exercise styles/movements for all 3 days, you'll see less progression in the components of fitness in those particular styles of exercise.

For e.g. you train strength one day, movement and skill another day and then incorporate a stamina day, it will take longer to see progress in those components of fitness, opposed to having a singular focus for all 3 days.

By increasing the variety in your training, you will see less regression in all components of fitness as you can cover more of the stimuli the body needs to maintain good power, endurance and control.

It will become easier to manage fatigue/stress on the body as having more variety in your training causes less fatigue/stress. This means potentially phases can be longer and the body will have an easier time recovering from training. With good programming you'll experience less neural/metabolic fatigue, muscular/joint issues, plateaus in performance or injuries.

Having a mix is more fun and less of a grind, but will never be as progressive or performance driven.

The trick is bouncing around between more narrow focused training to progress to higher levels. Then mixing it up to balance the body and manage recovery.

Basic rules around programming

How to arrange your workouts during a week:

Novice - 1 Heavy - 2 Light

Intermediate - 1 Heavy - 1 Light

Advanced - 2 Heavy - 1 light



DECIDE WHAT A HIGH/HEAVY INTENSITY WORKOUT IS AND WHAT A LOW/LIGHT INTENSITY WORKOUT IS BASED ON HOW THE SESSIONS AFFECT YOUR RECOVERY.

You need to develop an understanding of fatigue and stress on your body so you can adapt your training when needed.

POWER

ENDURANCE

CONTROL

STRENGTH

BODYWEIGHT

SPORT

Strongman Power Lifting Olympic Lifting Heavy Free Weights	Heavy Functional Training	Kettlebells PHA Workouts Strongman Medleys Kit Based HIIT Workouts	High Rep Barbell	Indian Clubs Mace Training Landmine Training Slastix/Stroops	Plyobox Stability Training
Olympic Rings Pole Fitness Paralettes/Parallel bars Bodyweight Plyometrics	Calisthenics	Aerial Silks Bodyweight HIIT Shaolin Strength Capoeira	High volume Calisthenics	Flexibility Core Conditioning Urban Strength Bar Suspension Training/TRX	Agility Training
Hill Sprints Rugby Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Mixed Martial Arts	Wake Boarding	Distance Running Mountain Biking Hill Walking Stand Up Paddle Boarding	Swimming	Dance Kick Boxing Rock Climbing Tennis	Board Sports (Snow, Kite, Surf)

Strength - Light = TRX, Indian Clubs - Heavy = Strongman, <5rm compound training.

Bodyweight - Light = Movement Flow, Yoga - Heavy = Olympic Rings, Pole

Sport - Light = Stand up paddle boarding, LIIT Cycling - Heavy = MMA, Rugby

Basic rules around Power Endurance and Control would be to do 1-2 workouts of each type each week. This will create a good base of fitness and at a lower level of fitness you will see all components of fitness improve.

At a more advanced level of fitness, more specific training will be needed so then you might end up with 3-5 Endurance based workouts each week and only 1 power and 1 control workout each week. This will enable your endurance to progress. Then after that endurance phase you can create a similar focus for either power or control.

One way to maintain variety and reduce fatigue on the body is to vary the workouts across strength, bodyweight and sport. So for example if my focus is power and I do 4 power workouts per week, all of which focus on barbell training so squat, lunge, deadlift, press, row type compound lifts, my body is going to progress quickly with barbell training, but my body will only have one type of stress to deal with all the time which could culminate in an injury or hitting a plateau early.

If the focus was to work on power, but we did 2 strength workouts per week, one with a barbell, and one with less conventional equipment like strongman or kettlebells, then for the other two power workouts I could use a bodyweight system like pole strength and a sport system like rock climbing, my body would then start to work through a greater variety of stresses and would be given more rest time from any one type of stimulus.



This approach wouldn't see progression at an elite level as quickly, but it wouldn't be as fatiguing to the body and would likely be a safer way to maintain a broadly higher level of fitness than a singular system approach.

Recognising different stresses

The stress we feel in our bodies can often be caused by more than just the amount of exercise we do.

- Mental stress - work life/job, financial, relationship stress.
- Injury - physical injury has an impact on so many levels, including mental stress, but we can certainly see correlation between injury and over training symptoms.
- Mood/mindset - when you're in a negative pattern of thinking, it will have a negative impact how your body can manage all kinds of stress.
- Social pressures - this is probably best described as 3rd party input. Meaning any pressures added to your lifestyle from 3rd party input.
- Lifestyle. Alcohol, smoking, refined foods a lack of activity.

Symptoms of over training stresses on the body:

- Immunosuppression.
- Mental health issues: depression, anxiety, and lowered libido.
- Decreased performance.
- Weight loss.
- Sleep problems.
- Higher risk of injury which is also linked to improper periodisation and overuse.
- Fatigue.
- Increased risk of illness.
- Lack of appetite.
- Muscle twitching.
- Slow strength and endurance gains.

Advanced periodisation for endurance at a higher level of conditioning, assuming that basic skills have already been developed in each style of training we want to approach might look like this:

Endurance phase 6-8 weeks.
(1 x Power, 3-5 x Endurance, 1 x Control)

Power phase 6-8 weeks
(3-5 x Power, 1 x Endurance 1 x Control)

Endurance phase 4-6 weeks
(1 x Power, 3-5 x Endurance, 1 x Control)

Control phase 4 weeks
(1 x Power, 1 x Endurance, 3-5 x Control)

After this Endurance phase you could choose to repeat it after the 4 week control phase or go on to a power phase which would look like this:

Power phase 6-8 weeks
(3-5 x Power, 1 x Endurance, 1 x Control).

Endurance phase 6-8 weeks
(1 x Power, 3-5 x Endurance, 1 x Control)

Power phase 4-6 weeks
(3-5 x Power, 1 x Endurance, 1 x Control)

Control phase 4 weeks
(1 x Power, 1 x Endurance, 3-5 x Control)

After this Power phase you could choose to repeat it after the 4 week control phase or go on to a Endurance phase which would look like this:

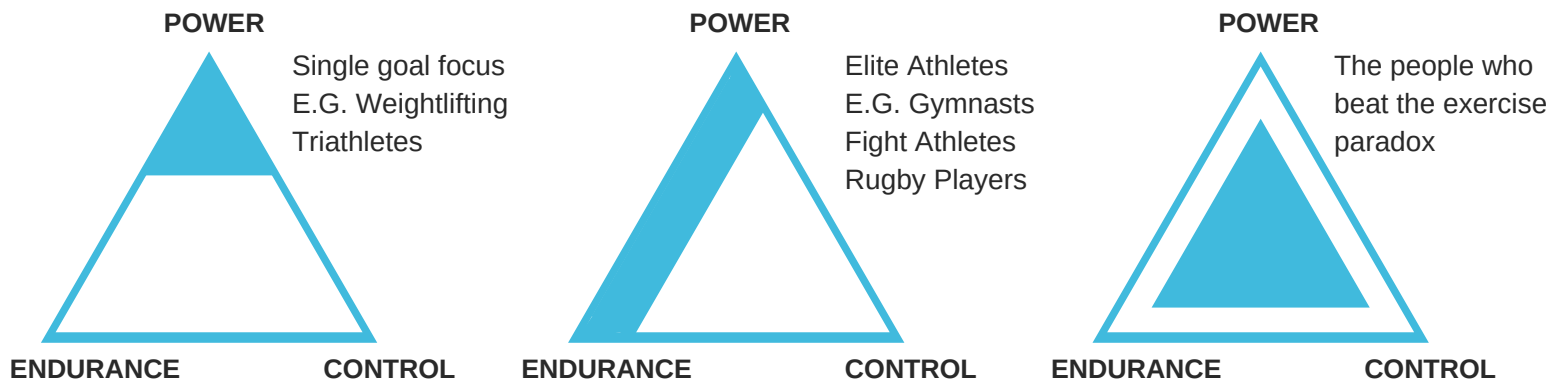
Endurance phase 6-8 weeks
(1 x Power, 3-5 x Endurance, 1 x Control)

Power phase 6-8 weeks
3-5 x Power, 1 x Endurance 1 x Control)

Endurance phase 4-6 weeks
(1 x Power, 3-5 x Endurance, 1 x Control)

Control phase 4 weeks
(1 x Power, 1 x Endurance, 3-5 x Control)

What we are trying to achieve is a full triangle. If you look at the Power, Endurance and Control triangle, we want to develop each component of our fitness so our own fitness profile fills as much of the triangle as possible. The above example of periodising your programming will allow each component to progress, even at high levels of fitness, without allowing anyone component of fitness to be forgotten about.



That concept of building all our components of fitness, and filling our triangles, is what I believe will achieve the greatest sense of freedom, confidence, performance and longevity in life that we can all enjoy long term without any negative impact to our health, wellbeing or mentality.