

Measuring Movement : ***The Best Kept Secret in Improving Athletic Performance?***

“How did you know that?” asks David, an aspiring young Bergen County track athlete, in astonishment. He wonders in amazement how his trainer, Eric D’Agati, knew his left calf was significantly tighter than his right. “I had a 50/50 shot,” Eric jokes, when in reality he is going over the results of a series of movement tests called a Functional Movement Screen that he has put David through.

In effort to continually gain an edge on the competition, athletes are always in search of the latest training techniques to improve their performance. Testing an athlete’s movement abilities is a relatively new phenomenon that is beginning to be implemented in some of the top training centers in the country, as well as with some professional teams. D’Agati’s training center, ONE Human Performance, has been doing this type of testing for the past five years and has begun to put it into practice with some of the teams they work with, including the New York Giants. “The Giants project has been a lot of fun, and we have seen some significant improvements with a lot of the guys in just a few weeks. The Training Staff, Strength Coaches and Coach Coughlin have really been big supporters.”

“The initial draw was the ability to detect potential markers for injury and significantly reduce their likelihood, as much as 3-4 times,” says Eric who compares the testing to tuning a guitar. “Even if you’re a great guitarist, your playing is never going to sound right if the instrument is out of tune. And when you tune it, you don’t just loosen or tighten all of the strings. You need to listen to each one and find which one needs what and how much. There are a lot of great athletes who never realize their potential because they are fighting against their body’s own imbalances.”

The Functional Movement Screen was created by Gray Cook, a top physical therapist based in Virginia, who consults with teams and sports stars around the country on how to rehabilitate and avoid injuries. The test includes a series of movement patterns, including squatting, lunging and leg-raising. A customized program is then given to each person tested that addresses their specific needs and helps them correct their weaknesses and imbalances.

David hopes that this will help him not break down late in races, as he has in the past, “I’m feeling very different when I run now, almost like I’m lighter.” D’Agati adds, “That is the next step for us. To really gather some significant data to show that this not only about staying healthy, but how it can dramatically improve performance, as we are seeing everyday with our athletes.”

*Eric D’Agati is one of the country’s top Fitness Professionals and specializes in Athletic Performance Enhancement. He is the Owner and Director of **One Human Performance Center**, located in both Pine Brook and Wayne, NJ.*

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