



Balance

There are 3 types of balance that will affect your performance as an athlete;

Physical Balance
Muscle Balance
Life Balance

In order to reach your peak performance all of these must meet equilibrium.

Physical Balance

This is the ability to control your body's movement through space. Staying upright is just part of the equation. To train physical balance you must train your nervous system. Your nervous system can be trained in the same way your muscular system can by using the SAID principal. SAID stands for Specific Adaptation to Imposed Demands, which means that your body will adapt to whatever demands you put on it.

Therefore to train your balance you must make demands on it. One-legged postures, Balance balls etc are an excellent way to do this. After a while your balance will become second nature and as a result your brain will be better equipped to maintain your balance through everyday activities. This will also equate to better performance while running as your responses become faster.

Muscle Balance.

Muscle balance is usually the thing most people are concerned about as it can cause injury and pain.

Every movement your body does is due to a muscle contracting and pulling on a bone that is used as a lever. For each movement there is an opposing movement. For example you can bend your knee or straighten your knee. The opposing movements are caused by opposing muscle groups. For example the knee is bent by the hamstrings and straightened by the quadriceps. These opposing muscles are referred to as the agonist and antagonist.

The opposing muscle groups must be in balance to aid in the fluid motion of the body and prevent injury. If one muscle is much stronger than the other or too tight from a lack of stretching it can cause a joint misalignment that could lead to pain or injury.

The most common cause of back pain is an imbalance between the abdominal and erector spinae muscles. Runners Knee is an imbalance between the quads and hamstrings. Shin splints are an imbalance between the calf and tibialis anterior muscles. Strengthening the opposing muscle as well as stretching can avoid most injuries.

Life Balance

Nothing will be as unfulfilling as an imbalance in your life. The wellness triangle has three sides representing the mind, body and spirit. An imbalance between these

three components of wellness will result in poor performance in many aspects of your life.

By concentrating solely on one of these components you will neglect the others so it is important to balance all three. You must train your body and mind and feed your spirit to live a balanced life. Your spirit is not necessarily religion but you should aim to feel good about how you live your life. Spend some time for yourself or enjoy your family or friends. Without this important component you will feel burned out and will not perform at your best.