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PROPER DEVELOPMENT OF FLEXIBILITY SKILLS IN YOUNG ATHLETES

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Abstract: This thesis covers the theoretical and practical aspects of the correct and gradual development of flexibility in young athletes. The importance of flexibility in sports technique, movement amplitude, coordination, and injury prevention is analyzed. Taking into account the age and individual characteristics of young athletes, recommendations are provided for the use of active, passive, and mixed stretching exercises, the standardization of training loads, and regular pedagogical supervision.

Keywords: Young athletes, flexibility, stretching exercises, movement amplitude, physical fitness, sports training, pedagogical supervision, injury prevention.

Introduction

Flexibility is one of the important physical qualities in shaping the physical fitness of young athletes. Flexibility is the ability to perform a large or sufficient range of motion in the joints, which helps to effectively perform the technical movements of a sport. Especially in gymnastics, track and field, wrestling, football, swimming, rhythmic gymnastics, and other sports, a sufficient level of flexibility development directly affects the quality of movements.

Due to the active growth and development of the organism during youth, there are favorable opportunities for the development of flexibility. However, incorrect selection of exercises, excessive strain, or unprepared stretching can lead to excessive strain on muscles, tendons, and joints. Therefore, the process of developing flexibility should be organized in accordance with age, gender, type of sport, level of training, and individual anatomical and physiological characteristics.

Body The development of flexibility depends on the elasticity of muscles and tendons, the anatomical structure of joints, neuromuscular regulation, body temperature, and specific training conditions. In sports practice, flexibility can be divided into general and special. While general flexibility expresses the amplitude of movement in various body joints, special flexibility allows for the effective execution of movements necessary for a specific sport.

When developing flexibility in young athletes, it is first necessary to focus on proper warm-up exercises. Before the main part of the session, light running, joint-moving gymnastic exercises, and dynamic stretching can be performed. This serves to prepare the body for the main load.

To develop active flexibility, the athlete performs exercises that increase the amplitude of movement using their own muscular strength. For example, exercises such as swinging the legs forward and to the sides under control, rotating the arms in various directions, and turning and bending the torso are among them. Such exercises must be performed while maintaining motor control.

In slow-moving flexibility exercises, the amplitude of movement is increased using external assistance or body weight. It is advisable to organize such exercises



with young athletes carefully, under the supervision of a qualified coach. One should not use stretches that increase pain or are performed under extreme pressure.

Static stretching exercises are also important in developing flexibility. In this case, the athlete enters a comfortable amplitude and maintains the position under control for a certain period. Static exercises should be selected based on the objectives of the session. Before activities that require strength and speed, it is better to use dynamic preparation instead of using prolonged static stretching as the primary means of warming up.

To develop flexibility during training, it is recommended to adhere to the following methodological principles:

1. Gradual increase in exercises from simple to complex, from low to high amplitude.
2. Adapting each exercise to the individual capabilities of the athlete.
3. Do not allow sharp pain to occur during stretching.
4. Perform the exercises while controlling correct breathing and body position.
5. Ensuring regularity during training sessions.
6. Developing flexibility in harmony with strength, coordination, and general physical fitness.
7. Evaluation of results through regular pedagogical control.

Simple and safe tests can be used to monitor the flexibility of young athletes. For example, the forward flexion test, the assessment of shoulder joint mobility, and the determination of hip joint amplitude are re-measured at specific intervals. It is important to consider not only the absolute result but also the dynamics of the athlete's individual development.

In the development of flexibility, it is of particular importance to correctly determine the volume and intensity of the training load. When working with young athletes, it is incorrect to use excessive stretching exercises to accelerate the result. Training must be combined with recovery processes, and the athlete's level of fatigue must be taken into account.

Conclusion

The development of flexibility in young athletes is a long-term and systematic pedagogical process. Its effectiveness depends on the correct selection of exercises, taking into account age and individual characteristics, gradual increase in load, and regular monitoring. The application of active, dynamic, and static stretching exercises in accordance with the requirements of the sport serves to improve the athlete's range of motion.

Thus, the primary goal of flexibility development is not merely the achievement of maximum amplitude, but the formation of the movement amplitude necessary for the athlete at a safe, controlled, and functional level. Properly organized training helps improve the technical preparation of young athletes, improve the quality of movement execution, and increase the efficiency of the training process.

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