



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR RUNNER CLIENTS TRAINING ON THE GYM FLOOR

WITH RANELL HOBSON

INDUSTRY INSIDER | #003

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RANELL HOBSON

Ranell is a 25+ year internationally acclaimed Sport & Fitness Industry leader and an award-winning presenter. Founder of the Academy of Sport Speed Australia (ASSA) and Running with Ranell (RWR), she is a specialist running coach for Sprint, Endurance and Running sport athletes. Ranell has a degree in Sport Science and Coaching and a Masters degree in High Performance Coaching, she is an ASCA L2 Pro Coach and a L3 ATFCA Coach.

In 2019 Ranell was awarded the Australian Strength & Conditioning Associations 2019 Performance Development Coach of the year for her work with emerging athletes. Ranell is a regular presenter at S&C and Fitness Conventions and has presented her Running courses and Athlete clinics across Australia, the UK and Asia.

Ranell works with sports players and athletes to international standard worldwide and has conducted workshops at major sporting academies such as Arsenal, Southampton and Leicester. The athletes that Ranell coaches have been rewarded with full scholarships to the USA or football academies within Europe, or national team selection in their chosen fields. She has been referred to as an “expert in speed” by European football (soccer) technical directors.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?



Ranell views her athletes continuous improvement and Personal Best Performances as her favourite achievements. An elite masters athlete in her own right, Ranell holds multiple State, National and Oceania titles in the Sprint events and is a previous World Record holder in the 4 x 100m relay. Ranell is also a recipient of the Blue Mountains Australia Day Sportsperson of the year and NSW Minister for Education, Quality Teaching Award which is limited to the top 40 teachers across all education platforms (Tertiary, Secondary and Primary).

Ranell has successfully presented at the past 2 ASCA International Strength and Conditioning conferences in succession. She was also the Head Teacher of the Sport and Fitness Department for NSW TAFE for 20 years, responsible for training countless PT's that have gone on to highly successful careers. In 2019 she was honoured to be awarded the prestigious ASCA Performance Development Coach of the Year, for her work with long-term youth athletic development.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN AREAS NEGLECTED BY PERSONAL TRAINERS WHEN WORKING WITH RECREATIONAL OR PERFORMANCE RUNNERS?

Firstly, it's important for Personal Trainers to truly understand the stress placed on the runners musculoskeletal system during both shorter, faster and prolonged duration events to write programs that are effective. I believe that most runners do not lift heavy enough in the weight room thinking that they only need to build muscular endurance for performance. But the act of running itself is a series of submaximal contractile efforts. To enhance the effectiveness of running and make the act of running easy, Personal Trainers should be encouraging runners to lift heavy and strengthen muscles, tendons and joint structures above and beyond what is required in competition, this way the physical stress of running becomes no stress at all.

Secondly, development of postural integrity is critical to running performance and is often neglected or misunderstood. Strength through the complete torso from shoulder girdle to pelvic girdle allows a runner to maintain sturdy posture through a complete race, this delays the onset of fatigue for the runner allowing them to achieve greater performances. Postural integrity also builds a feeling of lightness to each stride as the athlete is able to maintain a higher pelvic position due to the postural strength and cycle the legs with fluidity. A runner with great postural integrity maintains seamless horizontal propulsion for the entirety of the race.

WHY DO YOU THINK STRENGTH TRAINING IS IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF A CLIENT'S TRAINING PROGRAM?

When a runner is strong, everything is easier. There is so much research that proves that strength training improves performance and decreases the risk of impact and chronic injuries. Runners should begin with general total body strength training to increase postural control,



improve running economy and build resistance to fatigue. Then progress to more running specific strength training designed to increase propulsive forces which increase stride length. For beginner runners, hill running can serve as strength training but running specific strength training for the torso and legs can not be understated for enhanced performance. Examples of lower body exercises include: Bulgarian split squats, Step ups, Rear Lunges, Romanian Deadlifts and Calf raises. Upper body exercises include: High and Low cable pulls, Dumbbell Y's and variations of rows.

The manipulation of reps, sets, intensity and total training volume yields very different results in physiological adaptations. The PT's understanding of these nuances allows them to get very different results for the 100m sprinter to the ultra trail runner. You won't get heavy and slow by lifting weights, the opposite in fact is the reality, the runner will feel light on their feet and increase running speed.

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WHAT ARE THE KEY AREAS A PERSONAL TRAINER SHOULD FOCUS ON IN ORDER TO MAXIMISE RUNNING PERFORMANCE?

Strength, stability and postural Integrity to increase running economy and delay the onset of fatigue, hence improving performance. Range of motion around joint structures i.e. freedom of movement and elastic qualities of tissues to increase stride length, ease of running and guarantee longevity in the sport. Finally, if qualified to do so, running technique to improve running efficiency which in turn increases running economy as well. A well-structured holistic program will allow you to cover all physical competencies within the weekly training cycle. A summation of small gains in each area leads to very large performance gains in a short period of time.

HOW SHOULD MOBILISATION TECHNIQUES BE BEST INCORPORATED INTO A TRAINING PROGRAM TO ACHIEVE OR MAINTAIN HEALTHY FASCIAL AND MUSCULAR INTEGRITY?

Ensuring athletes have the physical capacity to achieve desired positions and postures during running, allowing for continued loading and force production capabilities is critical to performance. It's important for a personal trainer to have the knowledge and skills to mobilise joint capsules, regain tissue integrity and return elastic function for improved running performance and recovery. This is best achieved by having a two-pronged approach -

- 1) A pre-training movement preparation routine that uses techniques such as pressure waves, action yoga and running motor control drills.



2) A recovery and regeneration routine which involves 15 to 20 minutes each day (usually post run) incorporating passive and active stretching, tack and release techniques and banded distraction to increase joint function where required.

Most runners that I meet need to do some serious regenerative work to improve muscle tissue integrity and joint function before they can move to a maintenance schedule. It can be tough to motivate clients to do the homework required to achieve the results needed for enhanced performance and more importantly longevity in the sport of running but the results are well worth it. Your clients will see a reduction in physiotherapy visits and in niggles and sore spots making running even more enjoyable.

CAN YOU RECOMMEND ANY PSYCHOLOGICAL OR COACHING STRATEGIES PT'S CAN USE WITH THEIR RUNNERS?



One of the simplest yet underused coaching strategies is goal setting, not just setting process and outcome goals, but having clearly defined daily objectives. This really allows clients to focus on what they need to do today. The achievement of daily objectives adds to the “I did it” self esteem bank and gets client well on their way to achieving longer term goals.

A coaching strategy that takes minimal time but means a lot to your clients is regular check ins. We may see our face to face clients 3 hours a week out of a total 168 hours. That’s not a lot of time to influence daily behaviours. Sending a quick daily text of motivation, encouragement or a happy handy hint will get your clients achieving their goals sooner.

When it comes to achieving those daily victories it’s useful to have a mantra, one that works for many of my clients is “every day is race day”. This is a modification on Mark Verstegen’s

“Every day is Game Day”. On race day, you wouldn’t eat poorly, you’d make sure you got plenty of sleep the night before, you’d stretch upon waking and prepare mentally to tackle the day. Every day should be treated like race day. This way you really will achieve your very best performances, not just in running but in Life.

TOP TIP TO PASS TO OUR EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

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In Personal Training try to work with as many different age groups and cultures as possible.

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Be as multi-skilled as possible, and never stop learning, have a goal of attending at least two new courses each year. In fact, as a professional you will benefit from working in as many skill areas and with as many different clientele types as possible for several years before moving into specialisation. I started as an Aerobics Instructor (Group Exercise Instructor) at 17, and quickly got my Aqua Instructor and Personal Trainer qualifications while studying my first degree.

Being multi-skilled allows a facility to schedule you in the gym, on the aerobics floor or in the pool. It adds variety to your week and you are more likely to gain employment over someone with only one skill set.

In Personal Training try to work with as many different age groups and cultures as possible, this develops within you a great depth of understanding in building relationships and hones your communication skills which is critical to long term success in our industry.

Finally, the most important thing to remember is that Personal Training is a service industry, we are here to serve our clients, build their physical fitness competencies and their emotional confidence. Remembering that it's not about you, but the person in front of you, will ensure a long and successful career! 😊





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