

METHODS FOR ASSESSING POSTURE AND FLEXIBILITY THAT WE HAVE DEVELOPED IN IRELAND

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POSTURE

The 15 aspects of posture listed in the previous abstract are assessed on a 5 point scale. Diagrams corresponding to (1) Good posture (2) Moderate deviation (3) Marked deviation, are provided in Watson (1995). This scale is useful for detecting defects but not for following changes over time, or with training. For this it necessary to take photographs as follows:- (1) A high quality camera and lens must be mounted on a tripod (2) Fine grain film is essential (3) Illuminate the subject with flash positioned over the camera lens (4) The subject's pose must be carefully standardised:- feet together, arms straight, hands 15 cm from body with palms facing thighs. A metric grid can be super-imposed on the photographs. This allows small amounts of asymmetry to be assessed and is essential for accurate posture assessment. Parts of the above assessment can be selected for use with children and athletes of moderate attainment. For top-level athletes and those at high injury-risk, the full assessment should be carried out.

FLEXIBILITY

Six measures of flexibility give a good indication of overall flexibility: -

(1) Spinal flexion	(2) Hip abduction	(3) Hip flexion (with the knee straight)
(4) Hip hyper-extension	(5) Ankle dorsiflexion	(6) Shoulder hyper-extension

The equipment to be used is described in the talk and can easily be constructed. The precision of measurement is greater than with goniometers which are very difficult to use. Flexibility is difficult to measure with accuracy. Inaccurate measurements are useless and mislead the athlete. Use the following precautions (1)No warm-up or prior exercise is allowed (2)The subject is dressed in swim-wear or a leotard (3)Flesh marks are placed on the body (4)Ensure that movement occurs only in the joint being measured - other parts of the body must remain stationary.

REFERENCES

Watson AWS: Sports injuries in footballers related to defects of posture and body mechanics. Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness 35: 289-94, 1995.

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