A Common Training Fallacy

There is a commonly held fallacy that "To succeed in competition, it is necessary to spend more time training.

This belief is a mantra repeated by many figure skating coaches attempt to foster practice schedules whose goal is to maximize the number of hours spent at the rink. Elite figure skaters are just beginning to expand their concept of what are the key ingredients in becoming a successful, high performing figure skater.

A new book contends that the key to success is not the traditional high-volume model of training, but a much shorter, competition paced schedule of exercises performed off ice. They unanimously found there was no logical basis for this training method.

A team of research scientists and physiologists set out to test the long-held belief that high volume training leads to a superior technique. The conclusion these experts reached was that long training sessions actually inhibit power development.

The book's title *is Strength Training for Swimmers*. True, the book is not about figure skating and it targets the racing aspect of the swimming, not diving. However, there are merits to looking at how we improve the technical skills of skaters and the conditioning that should be a separate issue designed to enhance performance in long and short free skating programs.

According to US physiologist Dave Costill, "Most competitive swimming events last less than two minutes. How can training for three to four hours a day at speeds that are markedly slower than competitive pace prepare the swimmer for the maximal efforts of competition?"

What scientific research was reported?

Strength Training for Swimmers is not written from a swimming coach's viewpoint. The procedures and exercises discussed in this book stem from extensive research into swim training, scientific analysis of the demands of competitive swimming, and proven methods from conducting a training program designed to optimize athletic performance.

The team of scientists undertook a great deal of research into swim training over three decades and found extra pool training is a waste of time!

The researchers found that there is no advantage gained in increasing the number of laps per day commonly associated with high-volume training programs found in most swimming programs.

Their conclusion was that the volume of training has no influence on swim performance. Faster, not longer training is the key to swimming success.

The high volume, low intensity model of training probably remains the most common practice strategy used by elite swimmers.

Even sprint swimmers competing in 100 and 200-meter events favor ratcheting up the number of laps rather than focusing on race-pace-specific training.

Are there drawbacks of high volume training?

High-volume training can severely compromise your competitive performance in two major ways:

- Depletion of glycogen muscle stores
- Fatigue and depletion of fast-twitch muscle fibers

Glycogen is necessary for sustained high-intensity muscle contractions. To perform at high levels in competition, your body must have a high level of stored glycogen. Continued high-volume training can compromise this, reducing the quality of your important high-intensity training workouts.

Swimmers have a high proportion of fast-twitch fibers and high-volume training can change these into slow-twitch fibers. Periods of high-volume training reduce the force production in the fast-twitch muscle fibers, essential for the high muscle power required to produce the fastest swim speeds.

To optimize strength and power, swimmers need to follow a program of exercises in the gym that replicates their swimming actions in the water as closely as possible. The research, together with full workout and exercises programs, are contained in *Strength Training for Swimmers*.

You can order a special review copy of *Strength Training for Swimmers* today. Click through to the order form page and qualify for a special 33% discount, with free postage, wherever you are in the world:

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