Developing a functional strength training programme.

The following is the step by step process to design and implement a functional strength training program.

- Clearly define the goals of the strength training program.
- Ascertain how those goals fit in context with the total training program.
- Select the exercises.
- Classify the exercises in terms of general, special or specific strength relative to the sport:

  **General Strength** – these exercises are directed toward the development of the force component of power. They are characterized by slower speed, higher force movements. Traditional weight training exercises and other resistance methods that do not seek to imitate any aspect of specific sport skill. Speed of movement is of little or no concern. This is all about force, not speed.

  **Special (Transitional) Strength** – The purpose of these exercises is to convert general strength into specific strength. These exercises could be considered similar but not the same as specific sport movements. Olympic style weight lifting, medicine ball work, stretch cord work and plyometric training usually fit into this category. There is still a force component present, but there is a higher speed component. The exercises are more specific.
Specific Strength – these exercises are characterized by movement with resistance that imitates the joint action of the sport skill. Rather than similar it is very much the same. There is a high degree of specificity in terms of mechanics, skill and above all speed of movement. This obviously will have the highest degree of transfer to specific sport skill.

There is an obvious overlap. The amount of this overlap will vary with the athlete and the sport. General strength will predominate during a general phase of training because it provides the base.

Distribute the exercises throughout the training week. In a four day training week distribute the work as follows: 1) Speed 2) Power 3) Recovery, 4) Strength 5) Work Capacity. In a three day training week distribute the work as follows 1) Speed/Power 2) recovery 3) Power/Strength 4) Recovery 5) Strength /Work Capacity

Determine the cycles for strength training – once again, correlate this with the other training components.

Design the individual workouts.

Determine the order of exercises within the workout

Classify the exercises as Remedial, Ancillary or Focus exercises:

**Remedial Exercises** – These are basic strength training exercises designed to address basic movements. This is designed to wake up the nervous system and work on the smaller synergistic and stabilizing muscles that often fail before the larger muscles most involved. There is no need to have more than two remedial
exercises in a daily program unless there is a specific deficiency that must be corrected. An example of a remedial exercise for the lower extremity is the single leg squat. For the upper extremity an example would be the push-up.

**Ancillary Exercises** – These are supportive exercises designed to specifically prepare the body for the stress of the focus exercises. The movements are similar and the load is usually less. The goal here is a stepwise progression to the heavier loading of the focus exercise. An example of an ancillary lower extremity exercise would be a front squat or even an overhead squat. For the upper extremity it would be a dumbbell bench press or an alternate dumbbell bench press. There should be no more than three ancillary exercises in a workout or the exercises would detract from rather than enhance the focus exercise.

**Focus Exercise(s)** – These exercises are the focal point of the workout. Traditionally these have been called core exercises, but that has become misleading with core exercises referring to a whole separate classification. Everything in the workout is directed to these exercises. At most there should be two focus exercises in a session. The focus exercise is characterized by heavy load, multiple joint exercises. Examples would be the bench press or the squat.

Determine sets, reps and intensity.
Execute the workout.

Keep accurate records and evaluate each workout in the context of the ultimate goal.

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