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The Postactivation Potentiation Effect of Either Plyometrics or Speed, Agility and Quickness Exercises on Linear Sprint Performance

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INTRODUCTION

Postactivation potentiation (PAP) is a phenomenon whereby the contractile history of the muscle positively impacts the force generation capacity of an athlete for subsequent activities.¹ Traditionally, PAP protocols involve heavy resistance exercises that may not be applicable for all athletes due to logistical considerations. As such, warm-up routines incorporating plyometric exercises have previously been shown to result in a PAP response during athletic activities.³ Other techniques such as speed, quickness and agility (SAQ) drills have not yet been identified as a viable warm-up tool that may potentiate performance.

AIM:

The purpose of this study was to explore the acute benefits of including either a plyometric or SAQ based warm-up, on linear sprint speed.

METHODS

Using a randomised repeated measures design, 16 (13 men, 3 women) recreationally trained athletes performed either a control (C), control and plyometric (P) or control and SAQ (SAQ) warm-up (table 1). The P and SAQ warm-ups were matched for total foot contacts. Following a four-minute recovery, subjects then performed three 10-metre linear sprints, recorded using the Smartspeed system (Fusion Sport, Coopers Plains, QLD, Australia). The fastest time (s) from each condition was used for statistical analysis. Testing sessions were separated by 48-hours. Ethical approval for this project was granted by the University of Cumbria ethics committee.

EXERCISES

Control	1. Linear jogging x20 metres	5. Lateral lunges x8 each side
	2. Side shuffling x20 metres	6. Leg swings x20 each side
	3. Backward running x20metres	7. 10-metre sprints at 50, 75 and 90% maximal effort
	4. Forward lunge x8 each side	
Plyometric	1. Hurdle hops x6 each leg	5. Drop jumps (20cm) x 10
	2. Lateral hurdle hops x10 each leg	6. Broad jumps x5
	3. Countermovement jumps x5	
SAQ	1. Forward in and out x10	4. Single leg linear hops x6 each leg
	2. Slalom jumps x10	
	3. Lateral scissor jump x10	

Table 1. Exercises and repetitions for each condition. For both the plyometric and SAQ warm-ups, total foot contacts equalled 36 per foot.

RESULTS

There was a statistically significant difference between groups for the 0-10m following a Friedman's ANOVA ($\chi^2(2) = 25.125, p=0.00$). Post Hoc analysis using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test with a Bonferroni correction identified no significant difference between the control and SAQ conditions ($Z = -0.906, p = 0.365, ES = 0.06$). However, there was significant improvements between conditions in favour of P; P vs. C ($Z = -3.518, p < 0.001, ES = 0.50$) and P vs. SAQ ($Z = -3.522, p < 0.001, ES = 0.44$).

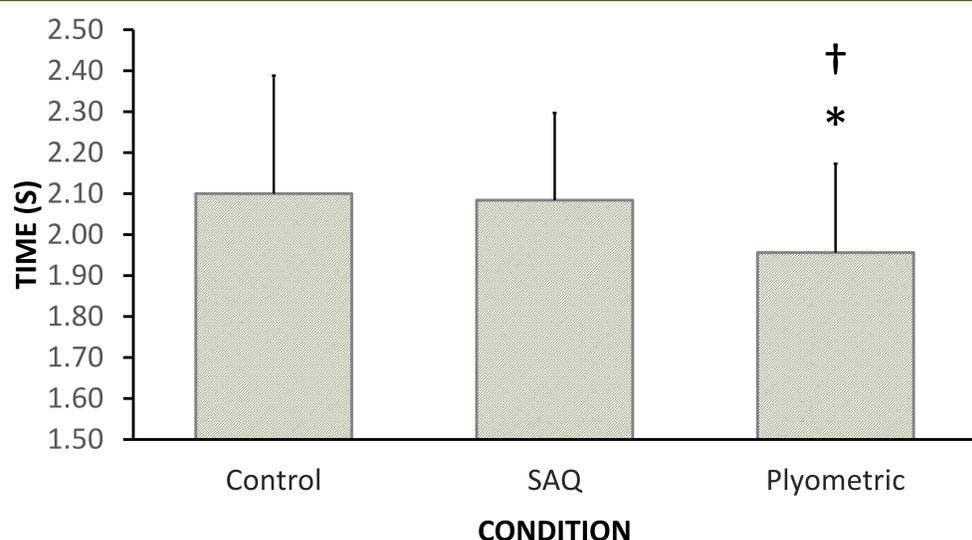


Figure 1. Times for 10-metre linear sprints following each warm-up condition. *Significantly different from control ($p = 0.001$). † Significantly different from SAQ ($p < 0.001$).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As sprint performance is strongly determined by the amount of force an athlete can effectively produce^{2,4}, a PAP response was not evident following the completion of the SAQ warm-up. Although not measured in this investigation, this is likely due to SAQ drills not requiring athletes to produce the high level of forces observed during plyometric exercises, therefore blunting the PAP response.

KEY POINTS:

- Linear 10-metre sprint time is not acutely improved with the inclusion of Speed, Quickness and Agility drills as part of a dynamic warm-up.
- A warm-up consisting of plyometric exercises results in an acute decrease in 10-metre sprint times.

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