

The benefits of RECORDING & MONITORING your training

Take a look at your training career and try recall every single technique you've learnt or every single workout you've done... impossible you say? *I agree*. What if you had written down every single technique you've learnt and recorded every workout you've done? *Then the answer would be easy*. Recording and monitoring your training is such an important factor, but one that many tend to neglect. Lets have a look at some case studies to further illustrate this issue...



John and David both train at the same Jiu-Jitsu club three nights per week and do strength & conditioning training two times per week. Two months ago John began making notes on the techniques he learned in each class. At the gym he makes a note of the exact weights that he has lifted and the number of reps as well as his times and distances when he runs. David on the other hand continues to go from one training session to the next without keeping track of what he did or what he learnt. After a two months John notices that he has made good improvements in his strength & conditioning and also that he is able to remember new techniques much more clearly whereas David is still making slow progress.... Obviously John is more likely to progress faster however most people are more likely to follow David's example,

If you plan to get the most from your training it is essential that you come up with a plan of what you want to achieve and how you intend to do it. It is also a good idea to break this major goal down into smaller goals which can be viewed as checkpoints along the way to your ultimate objective of success.

As an example, your main goal may be to win a state championship title next year, so leading up to this goal you can set yourself smaller targets to aim for such as winning your division at a smaller competition at the end of this month. You may also have set yourself targets to be achieved every week in your training or maybe strength & conditioning goals, such as beating your best time for a 5km run.

However there is no point in having these goals or checkpoints if you cannot monitor them, otherwise how can you tell if you are making any progress towards your goal?

These checkpoints also makes it easier to see if you are on the right path to achieve your goals and if you aren't then you know that you will need to make adjustments to your training schedule or perhaps your diet or other areas of your life. But how do you really monitor these checkpoints in a useful way? Most people tend to rely solely on their own memory & judgement to tell them if they are doing well or not, for example they will say 'I think I did this well' or 'I'm no good at that'. This is a very inefficient approach as your memory can be very unreliable and can easily be influenced by your moods and emotions. Memory can also be very easily influenced by the observations of others.

It is important to realise that the feedback which you need to tell you about the efficiency of your training must be as accurate and precise as possible. This means keeping accurate records of how you performed in training sessions & competitions, exact records of your 'personal bests' for all types of exercises and any other information which will be relevant to your success.

Most professional athletes (and coaches) keep extremely accurate records of their training sessions and everything else that may affect their performance, the easiest and most reliable way to do this is by using a diary to record the results of your efforts, this way you will be easily able to tell if you are making progress or not.

Most people actually do the opposite to this, (like David in the example above) going from one practice session to the next without letting the results from one session influence the next training session, this leads to either lack of progress or occasional sporadic progress

Part of the reason for this may be the expectation that your instructor will look out for you and correct your path if you aren't making progress, however this is easier said than done, for example if there are 25 people in your gym or class then its hard for the instructor to know exactly how each one has been performing each practice session as well as if they are feeling more or less energetic today and how their diet has been.

This is a bit like expecting your teacher to do your homework for you when you were at high school. If you want to make progress it is up to you to do as much work yourself as possible rather than relying on your coach.

The other reason is that it makes it easier to look back and see exactly what you did right leading up to a good performance or what you did wrong that may have led to a failure in competition. This kind of information can be critical in both planning your future training sessions as well as your preparation for future competitions. This can also give you a psychological boost before you compete knowing that you followed the same steps that have proven to be successful for you in the past.

As John in our case study found out there can be numerous benefits from recording & monitoring your training and once you start you will be amazed by how much difference it can make.

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