

Should you train like an Olympian?

The winter Olympic Games brought out many different articles related to how you can train like an Olympian. Many of the articles quoted former Olympic athletes to tell the average person how they can use the training exercises and methods of Olympians.

Aside from some of the usual recommendations on how to train, as for example, be a hard worker, be strongly driven, be open to criticism, don't be afraid of failure, and set realistic goals, they offered little in the way of actual training. In many cases they offered bad advice.

One of the worst recommendations that I read was that you should do dynamic resistance exercises. On the surface this is an excellent recommendation. But the example given of dynamic resistance exercise was bad ? it was plyometrics.

Plyometrics was recommended in the aim of strengthening explosiveness and to help build strength in the legs. That plyometrics can improve explosiveness is accurate, but the rest is not.

Plyometrics is not an example of dynamic resistance exercise because it is not used to develop strength. Dynamic resistance exercise is reserved for weight training or any form of resistance training to replace the weights. The exercises are executed at a moderate rate of speed But plyometrics is executed explosively.

To make matters worse it is stated that plyometrics is another name for jump training. But jump training is very different from plyometric training ? at least as created and defined by its originator, Yuri Verkhoshansky. His concept of plyometrics is best known as the shock method as exemplified by the depth jump.

The depth jump is also recommended by the experts so that you too can train like an Olympian. But if done correctly it is an excellent way of getting injured. This exercise is typically not recommended, even for athletes, until the second or third year of training.

To prepare for plyometrics - but not jump training - you need prior dynamic resistance exercise training. You must build a strong strength base before you start plyometrics which is executed in an explosive manner.

It should be understood that the training of high-level athletes is substantially different from the training of the average person and even low-middle level athletes. To train like an Olympian means to train for injury if referring to the average person and low to middle level athletes.

It is equally true that if high-level athletes train like low or mid-level athletes, they too can expose themselves to injury and poor results. The training of athletes, if done effectively, is different on each level of mastery. One type of training does not fit all!