

SPRINGING INTO POWER

The role and value of elastic bands in strength training



Original Research
Wallace, B., et al.
Effects of elastic bands on force and power characteristics during the back squat exercise. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* 20(2):268-272, 2006.

USING ELASTIC BANDS IS A POPULAR WAY TO TRAIN FOR STRENGTH AND POWER. A NEW STUDY SHOWS THAT THERE IS SOME VALUE ATTACHED TO THIS TRAINING METHOD.

PHOTO: SHAWN WARREN

The nature of sport is such that the athlete and coach will always look for novel ways to increase sport performance. Using elastic bands in conjunction with traditional barbells has been suggested to increase an athlete's strength and power over the traditional use of barbells alone. Naturally, based on simple physiology, if you were to start using bands in your training you would experience a training gain. The question is, are those gains significant and will they ultimately result in increased sports performance? Anecdotal reports from athletes and coaches would suggest so, but do these reports represent fact or simply a feeling? Previous research on the topic of bands has been mixed, often due to the conditions in which the experiment was conducted. Most recently, scientists from the University of Wisconsin, Louisiana State University, and Edith Cowan University in Australia collaborated to find out how training with bands might affect strength and power compared to not training with bands. They found some benefit to training with elastic bands and were able to determine the proper use and application of bands, but some questions related to sports performance remain.

Power Key: elastic bands, variable resistance training, peak power, peak force