Regaining Muscular Strength, Endurance, and Power

William E. Prentice, PhD, PT, ATC, FNATA

Following all musculoskeletal injuries, there will be some degree of impairment in muscular strength and endurance. For the athletic trainer supervising a rehabilitation program, regaining, and in many instances improving, levels of strength and endurance are critical for discharging and returning the patient to a functional level following injury.

By definition, muscular strength is the ability of a muscle to generate force against some resistance. Maintenance of at least a normal level of strength in a given muscle or muscle group is important for normal healthy living. Muscle weakness or imbalance can result in abnormal movement or gait and can impair normal functional movement. Resistance training plays a critical role in injury rehabilitation.

Muscular strength is closely associated with muscular endurance. Muscular endurance is the ability to perform repetitive muscular contractions against some resistance for an extended period. As we will see later, as muscular strength increases, there tends to be a corresponding increase in endurance. For the average person in the population, developing muscular endurance is likely more important.