

Benefits of a Weighted Vest

Today's exercise world offers an exceptional variety to trainees. If you are in the mood for a machine resistance-training day, you have that option. If the free weights are calling your name the next day, you simply move to the other side of the gym. In addition to these two traditional weight lifting implements, the fitness industry offers a number of unconventional training methods. Weight vest training is one of these unconventional practices that comes equipped with a number of excellent benefits.

Supplement Your Resistance Training

Resistance training performed on its own is a great strength, mass and power builder. However, when resistance training is combined with use of a weight vest, the potential for performance enhancement shoots through the roof. A Texas Tech University study tracked a group of athletes performing traditional resistance training and a second group performing resistance training in addition to weight vest training. After six weeks, both groups were evaluated to determine progress. Although both groups improved in the 40-yard dash, broad jump and vertical jump, the group supplementing their resistance training with weight vests produced substantially better results.

Serves as a Tool for Variation

Variation is a necessary component of a successful exercise program. Whether positive or negative, our bodies adapt to certain movements after a period of time. This adaptation is usually the result of halted progress in exercise. Weight vests provide a great tool for variation that our bodies aren't prepared for. This unconventional exercise method allows us to throw our systems off whenever necessary.

Takes Cardio to a New Level

Just as weight vests have been proven effective in the resistance-training realm, they have also made their mark in the cardiovascular arena. As if running with your own body weight wasn't difficult enough, consider throwing on a 50 lb. weight vest and attempting to do the same. That is exactly what 12 distance athletes were asked to do in a study published in the "European Journal of Applied Physiology." One group performed exercise with vests weighing approximately 10 percent of their body weight, and another group performed the same exercise without the weight vests. The group wearing the weight vests emerged victorious with improvements in both their "VO2 max (a measure of the body's ability to consume oxygen) and lactate threshold (the exercise intensity at which

lactate begins to accumulate in the blood)," two crucial factors affecting endurance exercise.

Considerations

Although the benefits of weight vests are numerous, their use should be limited. As with any other type of exercise, overtraining is a potential threat. While weight vests are a great supplemental exercise, they should be cycled-in only occasionally to avoid possible injury and overuse.

Where Can I Get One?

The following vendors have weighted vests. B5 Fitness does not advocate any one vendor over another nor do we receive any incentives to promote these companies.

- www.zfosports.com
- www.CompetitiveEdgeProducts.com
- www.fitnessfactoryoutlet.com