

Tips from a FMS expert in the field:

Different Approach for Using the FMS Results

Submitted by:

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Creating symmetry in an asymmetrical world.....

As I was sitting at my desk reviewing the latest functional movement screen test I couldn't help but be in absolute amazement. But why am I amazed? I have seen this time and time again for the last 5 years. I have seen it with some of the best athletes in the world from future hall of famers to players no one has heard of, and recently some of the better high school and college athletes around. So why was this one so different? It wasn't, but it does not make it all the less bewildering. Just because you've seen something time and again does not make it less impressive. Michael Jordan dunking a basketball was equally incredible from his first to his last.

The typical person would look at these latest findings and study the movement screen score for this individual and what they would find is a total score of 17 on March 20th, 2007 and on May 8th, 2007 a total score of 17 again. In approximately 7 weeks we did absolutely nothing to help this player improve foundational movement. We intervened with myofascial stick work, self-stretching, partner stretching, corrective exercise which included assistive work, stabilization training and RNT exercises. On top of all of that this athlete is heavily entrenched in off-season training to prepare for his third season as a linebacker and special teams player in the National Football League. Why the intervention one would ask? He already has a 17. The best he could do is 21. He has no pain on clearing exams. Some would be left to wonder if you have anything better to do with your time? Do you also hit on 17 at the blackjack tables or split two tens?

The answer lies at the second level, which we believe is actually the first level. As Gray Cook and Lee Burton so effectively point out the asymmetry literature is out there. It is out there and has been for some time. How can we ignore it? Do we just not want to face it? Is it too hard to deal with? As Tom Hanks said in the movie *A League of Their Own*, "Hard.....Hard.....It's supposed to be hard, It's the hardness that makes it great!" In reality it is not hard, it is accepting that foundational movement is the way we need to study our people. Do they have appropriate foundational movement patterns or are they compensating for some deficiency that will eventually lead to decreased performance in training and competition, increased inefficiency of movement and most of all increase the risk for injury.

Taking a look at the next level we find this player has an asymmetrical Active Straight Leg Raise with a score of 2/3 and an asymmetrical Rotary Stability with a score of 2/3. When we see that we attack it faster than a doctor would throw antibiotics at a virus. Over the last five years when we have seen an asymmetry in the ASLR and the RS we have seen SI joint issues, low back 'issues', sports hernia symptoms, groin pain and overall poor core stability. This is an accident waiting to happen. If this test were recorded at training camp we would be hesitant to put this player on the field full time for fear of losing him for a significant period. In sports,

any time is significant time. A further look at this player's history shows a "sports hernia" as a junior in college that he played through but did not practice, a left knee surgery in college and a left shoulder surgery in college. The "sports hernia" (awful phrase) was "repaired" surgically prior to his first NFL season. The player has knee pain and lower back tightness as training and practice intensity increase. Further evaluation reveals a hypertrophied left lower back, tight hip external rotators, asymmetrical T-spine rotation, tight lats, quad dominance, lacks symmetrical ankle flexion, hyperlordotic with hypermobile lumbar extension. Palpation and movement of his PSIS and ASIS reveals imbalance in the pelvis. We could go on and check everything from ear lobes to pinky toes. No matter how much or how little we can, should or do evaluate, the screen will guide you to the solution. So as might be expected we attacked the patterns that affect the Active Straight Leg Raise test (pelvic rhythm, hip flexion, hip extension) and the Rotary Stability. This player also had a 2 Deep Squat, a 2/2 Hurdle Step, a 3/3 In-Line Lunge, a 3/3 Shoulder Mobility and a 3 Trunk Stability Push-up. The Squat and Hurdle will be dealt with later in training. We need to work from the primitive pattern on up.

In keeping with the philosophy and prescription to let the screen guide the way on we went with stick work, self-stretching, partner stretching, assistive work, stabilization training, RNT exercises all in an effort to improve the asymmetries in the ASLR and the RS test. Each day we trained we put the work to the test. What does that mean? When the player comes in we check the pattern. While the player is working we check the pattern. When the player has completed the work we check the pattern. Get the idea? If what we are doing does not correct the pattern we need to try something else. Always have a system to check your work. How do you know where to go if you don't know where you are? A full formal repeat of the screen revealed no asymmetries after this time period. Also, the player no longer requires treatment for his low back during training, does not require treatment for his knee during training, is stronger on the strength training benchmarks, power training benchmarks, and no longer has to leave a running session before it is over, but is actually leading the group.

What does this mean? If you look in Gray Cook's book "Athletic Body in Balance" he speaks of the pyramids of athletes. This is a powerful grouping of people that is a great picture of the type of athlete or client you are dealing with. The athlete referenced above is one of overpowered, that is he has a high level of strength, high level of power, performs well, runs well and will outdo most in typical strength and conditioning tests. The problem with that is the power was larger than the foundation. The asymmetrical foundation that his astounding athletic numbers were sitting on could not support it. Therefore, breakdown occurred. We have now changed the balance of power. We have stretched the foundation underneath the strength and power and now we have a complete athlete. We have learned that this type of athlete with a minimal foundation and huge athletic numbers will be the quickest to breakdown and have injuries where most cannot figure it out.

In summary, pay attention to asymmetries, they are the biggest virus. This player actually got better by getting worse. He took his scores in the ASLR and RS and made them worse but he got better. The reason for this is we know that he has the mobility to perform the tests to a respectable score of 17. He does not however have the stability. By focusing on stability we created symmetry.

Be aware of the superior athlete with a poor foundation and relay the groundwork. Check your work and the athletes movement versus the screen and don't be afraid to change course. Let the screen be your GPS and you will never get lost. Good luck. The next couple of articles will feature more case studies and take a look at some of the more common questions out there such as how to implement the FMS and corrective exercise to the masses. Is that

possible? It is and we will guide you through it. Email your questions by clicking the contact button.

The list below shows the initial movement screen score followed by second formal test. As a reminder we frequently check the asymmetrical pattern.

<u>Initial test</u>		<u>Second Test</u>	
Deep Squat Test	2	Deep Squat Test 2	2
Hurdle Step Left: 2	2	Hurdle Step Left: 2	2
Hurdle Step Right: 2		Hurdle Step Right: 2	
In-Line Lunge Left: 3	3	In-Line Lunge Left: 3	3
In-Line Lunge Right: 3		In-Line Lunge Right: 3	
Shoulder Mobility Left: 3	3	Shoulder Mobility Left: 3	3
Shoulder Mobility Right: 3		Shoulder Mobility Right: 3	
ASLR Left: 2	2	ASLR Left: 2	2
ASLR Right: 3		ASLR Right: 2	
TSPU: 3	3	TSPU: 3	3
Rotary Stability Left: 2	2	Rotary Stability Left: 2	2
Rotary Stability Right: 3		Rotary Stability Right: 2	
Total	17	Total	17