‘The Top 8’ Tips for Improving your Footy Strength Training Program

1. ESSENDON
2. PORT ADELAIDE
3. GEELONG CATS
4. HAWTHORN
5. SWANS
6. RICHMOND
7. FREMANTLE
8. COLLINGWOOD
9. CARLTON
10. ADELAIDE
11. GOLD COAST SUNS

Including 1 that even the best programs out there don’t follow

AFL Strength Coach
The ‘Top 8’ Tips for Improving your Footy Strength Training Program

(Including 1 that even the best programs out there don’t follow)

AFL Strength Coach
1. Identify what your specific goals or areas of focus are

First and foremost, do you want to improve your performance on game day, or do you simply want to look better in the mirror like a bodybuilder, regardless of whether performance improves at all? Because as a footy player, the training methods aren’t all that concerned with how much your aesthetics improve. Of course, a functional strength training program for footy will certainly lead to the improvements in aesthetics, however this is only a bonus, rather than a primary goal. So this is an important question to get out of the way first, because to put it bluntly, bodybuilding-style routines where you break the body down into different parts on different days, and then blast the hell out of your ‘biceps’ or ‘shoulders’ for a whole training session will do absolutely 0 for your ability to perform athletic endeavors like a game of football to a high level.

More specifically, what is it that you would like to work on in terms of particular movements or tasks? There are numerous improvements in physical performance that player’s strength train in order to improve;

- More explosive acceleration
- Powerful and efficient deceleration and changing of direction
- **Higher vertical leap** (off 1 leg or 2 – both of which require different exercise progressions)
- More upper body strength to push off an opponent in a marking contest or ground level contest
- Improvement in functional tackling strength
- Injury prevention

Improved tackling ability and a more powerful vertical leap off 1 leg are just 2 of the many various improvements in physical performance that can be achieved with a functional and correctly periodised weight training program.

This short list just scratches the surface in terms of the types of physical tasks that require a sound baseline of functional strength improvement in, in order to improve. Whether it is agility (acceleration, deceleration and changing
directions) or more explosive power for jumping, you will not achieve improvement in performance of these tasks without first improving your baseline of functional strength.

You may want an overall improvement in several tasks, which isn’t a problem – in fact it is more common that not. And an additional goal as well as these improvements in physical abilities may be to also add a little extra size. This is also common. However, it is important that you don’t fall into the trap of just adding size for size’s sake, but rather ensure that any addition in size is also matched by an at least proportional improvement in the improved athletic performance you were aiming for.
2. Pick exercises that will achieve the most results with the fewest sessions per week

Let’s be realistic here; during the season, you are at club training twice a week, and then have a match on weekends. This already eliminates 3 days a week that you could potentially focus on strength training on. Additionally, you would be mad to do a session the day before a game, because after all the overall goal of all your training is to be ‘cherry ripe’ on game day. So we are down to 3 potential sessions per week. Additionally the day after game day is usually about recovery (either from the game itself, or in some guys cases, the night out after the game.) So realistically during the season you are only going to have 2 days a week which you can dedicate to strength training, which is plenty, provided the exercises are targeted and effective, and provided plenty of ground work has been done in the pre-season.

During the pre-season when you don’t have game day to worry about or prepare for, you will have slightly more time in which to get more focused strength work in. Pre-season club training will likely be 2-3 days a week, and giving yourself 1 rest day a week (which is equally as important as the training itself), will leave you with 3 days to focus on the functional strength training. Port Adelaide high performance manager Darren Burgess says in *High Performance Training for Sports*: ‘generally speaking, at least 3 exposures (to strength training) per week are recommended, during pre-season training periods.’

However even these 3 days per week will not allow you to waste time by breaking the body down into parts and isolating them on different days. The days of ‘back and bi’s’ and ‘chest and tri’s’ and the very occasional ‘legs’ have been left behind by just about all sports people – who have access to the best educated conditioning experts around. These days (and for quite some time now too) the strength training efforts that these sports people, who’s primary goal is improved performance at their sport of choice rather than mirror muscles, are a lot more focused on movements and exercises which will have specific carryover to the areas that they are trying to improve on. This goes for top-level athletes right down through the grades.

This principle of achieving the most in the least amount of time is even more important to the everyday football player, because you don’t have the luxury of being a full time player, and being able to dedicate every minute of your day to your footy. With full time work and/or study, as well as other commitments like family, it is vital to be very targeted and specific with every exercise that you perform, as well as how you perform it (sets, reps, tempo, rest times, etc.) Stated bluntly, if you have just spent half an hour targeting ‘biceps’ with various forms of curls, you have just wasted half an hour doing something that will not benefit you on game day at all, and have also taken away half an hour of available time that you could have dedicated to exercises which actually would have a high level of functional carryover to the potential goals that we identified above.
3. Periodisation of your program

This is the ‘one’ area that most programs fall down in that we referred to in the title of this book. In fact many programs fall down well before failing to incorporate this, with poor exercise selection and poor programming of the exercises selected. But for the very few footy strength training programs that I see out there which do include good exercises with a high level of functionality for improvement for footy, the great majority of these also fall down because they have not been periodised AT ALL, let alone properly.

The following few paragraphs are a brief excerpt from the *Functional Strength Training for Australian Rules* book.

You have likely heard of periodisation before, and may have read about its use in conditioning athletes, particularly athletes in individual sports such as Olympic weightlifting. It all may seem very technical (particularly with all the numbers and graphs and %’s listed when you look at a weightlifters or a runners program) and over the top, and especially way to complex when all you want to do is train for a game of footy. And indeed it is, we will not be doing any technical calculations or percentage listings or using logarithms and formulas. At the highest level of footy a lot of this is done; with the layout of the whole year highly specific (yet obviously adaptable) and involves lots of monitoring of different variables and relying on software programs, as well as the combined efforts of several different specialists in their fields interacting together to refine minute elements of the program. However, this is highly unpractical for the everyday footballer who is simply conditioning themselves for their level of footy. But the fact is, *the basic premise of periodisation is still relevant*, and its basic principles can still be used to layout a program in order to get the maximum possible benefit from your training efforts. And that is what we do in this program – we *cover the essentials, and lay them out in an easy to understand manner, and most importantly do it in a way that is realistic to follow for guys who don't have the luxury of being full time athletes* and therefore are limited in time.

Periodisation is basically looking at the entire year in advance, and then laying out the plan for the whole year in advance. This does not need to be detailed down to the most minute specifics in number of sets and reps. Essentially what you do with periodisation is break the year down into blocks or periods of training, and have *particular areas to focus on* whilst in these periods. This is important because when aiming to get the maximal benefit from training, it is best to have a specific focus in each period. Furthermore, the variables involved in training (sets, reps, tempo, rest times, etc) will also change depending on what the aims are, and therefore must be focused in specific periods of time.

Another way of looking at periodisation is like a pyramid, where 1 block of training is built on top of another, with one period laying the foundation for the next period to be built on. That is, a particular period of training, with its specific goals, is also aimed at *preparing your body for the next period of training*, in order to produce *better athletic results*, as well as less injury. Because simply
performing and conditioning *anything* at the same time will not produce the same high quality results, and it certainly will not minimise injury.

‘An athlete who maintains the same type of work for longer periods of time will experience a plateau, stagnation of improvement or even a slight detraining, resulting in performance deterioration.’

Tudor Bompa

*Periodization for Sports*

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**Anatomical Adaption**

**Functional Hypertrophy**

**Maximal Strength**

**Power**

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Periodisation Pyramid – Building each phase on top of the previous platform

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The basic outline of a footy season in a general year-long periodisation plan

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A closer look at the layout of a periodised pre-season strength training program for footy
So in short, for a program to be truly effective, and to remain so over the space of a season, not only must certain exercises be changed, but so should the programming of certain exercises which remain in the program. In *Functional Strength Training for Australian Rules*, we delve into more detail on periodisation – specifically as it relates to a footy season, and what it means in terms of how your program should look. Furthermore, the outlined program in the book is a fully periodised one over a 12 month period, broken down in easy to follow and easy to understand blocks.
4. Don’t forget injury avoidance

It may seem obvious, but there is more to this point than immediately meets the eye. It should be obvious that it is ensured with someone’s strength and conditioning training that injury in this process in completely avoided. After all, why get injured preparing for something. Let me make this clear, there is absolutely no excuse to get injured strength training. This is purely a preparatory stage, and a sound and truly functional program that is correctly executed will never lead to injury. However, there is more to this point than just avoiding immediate injury from training. Injury can occur at a later date as a result of your training exercises and programming today, be it next match, 2 months from here, or 6 months from here, or potentially even further away than that. This can arise for any one of a number or reasons; not enough recovery time between sessions, poor technique over time leading to muscular imbalances around joints, not enough correct exercises to properly prepare for the demands of a game of footy, just to name a few. I could expand on all of these but I want to keep this point brief. The key thing to take away from this point is that injury from training does not just mean injury that appears immediately, but also includes things that can arise later, as a result of what you do today. This is far more prevalent than you may think.

Injury avoidance in training has a second part, far less often considered, and that is training to avoid injury in the competitive environment, or a form of ‘pre-habilitation’ or ‘pre-hab’ if you will. Here I am not talking about isolating and training specific areas that you may already have a particular weakness in, but rather a more broad sense. Functional exercises will train muscles groups and muscle slings in a way that will lead to a reduction in certain injuries in a match or competitive environment, as a result of being conditioned in a similarly challenging way to how they will be challenged in footy. For example, the hamstrings, commonly injured be they full tears or just minor strains, are common. It may come as a surprise, but doing a hamstring curl on a machine (be it lying on your stomach or seated upright) will do absolutely zero to strengthen your hamstrings in a functional way to avoid hamstring strains in footy. A far better option would be a standing single leg cable bend and row. The key point here; functional training will provide for less injuries in the competitive environment of a match. And after all, how frustrating is it to be so well conditioned (or at least have the impression you are) and then go out and get injured as a result of a non-contact/impact movement like a kick or a change of direction running?
By simply looking at the running and kicking motion in the above picture, it should become instantly obvious how useless an exercise like a lying hamstring curl machine is for conditioning the hamstrings appropriately for such a task, and why something like a single-leg cable bend and row is a far better option.

Just one further thought on rehabilitation and surgery. Surgery is all well and good to fix the physical damage that has shown up on a scan, however, simply fixing a structure does not automatically return it back to its many functions. Many people have the mistaken belief that as soon as a physical trauma is ‘fixed’ in surgery and the appropriate recovery time is take, it will naturally take to any task that used to be required of it, so long as it is rested enough. On top of this, you have fixed the physical problem as it appeared, however what was the cause of this problem in the first place, and how have you gone about correcting this cause? In many cases the cause has to do with poorly trained movements and inappropriately trained muscle groups, and therefore in order to properly rehab an injury or to avoid such problems in the first place, correct functional training for the task at hand must take place.
5. Ensure functional carryover to Game Day
(\& Why leg press won't make you jump higher)

We will keep returning back to this central theme – **everything you do in the gym must be geared towards making you a better performer in a game of footy in one way or another.** It may make you more effective at pushing off an opponent at ground level. It may add a few centimeters to your vertical leap at a ruck contest. It may make you a more effective tackler. What we aren't as interested in is how your biceps look in the mirror (although this will be a bonus.)

But with every exercise you perform, it is important to continue to ask yourself 'how will this make me a better player – and what athletic quality is it that this exercise is contributing too.'

But there is a very common mistaken belief out there that simply targeting certain muscles will make you better at a task involving those muscles. This again goes back to the bodybuilding approach to training, and the way that bodybuilding principles have infected all forms of athlete conditioning, and the fitness industry at large.

I can't be any clearer – simply hitting a particular muscle repeatedly (particularly with isolation exercises like bicep curls and shoulder raises) does not mean that you will be better at tasks which require the use of that muscle. This point isn't a particularly hard one to get across to most guys who are serious about sport rather than mirror training anymore, as the general exercising public are more and more knowledgeable about how the body works. Once you learn the fact that all movement is directed by the nervous system rather than muscles, and therefore that improvement physical performance is achieved by improvements relating to the nervous system more so than muscles, it's pretty easy to understand why **training movements rather than muscles** is the way to go when footy is the goal.

But there is still more learning to be done. I will give a couple examples - 2 commonly performed exercises. The first one, which is virtually useless to a footy player, and the second one which is useful to a footy player, provided it is **integrated to the rest of the program correctly.**

**First Exercise Example – Leg Press**

A leg press is a very commonly performed exercise at the gym. Guys love it because they can push a tremendous amount of weight, and all whilst in the comfort of a nice padded seat. The leg press is often compared to the squat, as if the 2 are closely related exercises. However in reality, they are nothing of the sort.

Leg presses are often performed by footy players under the mistaken belief that performing a heavier and heavier leg press, or also a more powerful and explosive leg press, will result in **improved performance in their vertical leap.**
However, there has never been any sort of definitive quality research linking the 2. And this is hardly surprising, because there is nothing about a leg press which would carryover to a vertical leap – it is just that old ‘muscles’ mentality and approach to training seeping in again. Let’s compare some key reasons why the leg press is useless for developing a vertical leap:

- A leg press is performed seated – almost lying down. A vertical leap requires you be standing (I have never seen one performed any other way).

- When performing a vertical leap, the most important joint in your body which generates the majority of your power is your hips. A leg press removes your hips from the exercise, by locking them in place, basically just isolating your knee joint. So you are removing the most important joint in the vertical leap…..in order to train a vertical leap?? And with some of the enormous amounts of weight that can be moved on these machines, isolating the knee in such a way isn’t a great idea anyway.

- Due to the nature of the leg press which will allow you to move lots of weight, and perform plenty of reps (as the exercise requires no control or no skill what so ever), you will likely end up gaining muscle mass around the legs. However, this extra mass also means you will now have more weight to move, and therefore will require more power just to maintain your current vertical leap. And performing leg presses will not achieve this. In other words, your leap will only diminish.

- Many vertical leaps will be performed off of one foot anyway. Think of running jumps like a center bounce or a jump when leading for a mark. Ahhhh yes but then you can just do leg press with one leg, as a few more guys are deciding to do. Refer to the previous points.

These 2 movements are NOTHING like each other. There is no carryover from leg pressing to vertical leaping. That guy on the leg press may very well be asleep right now…you could literally be doing that with your eyes closed.
Jumps are regularly performed in games of footy – off 1 leg or 2, and certainly standing. Therefore set a good baseline of functional strength with exercises that require you to perform similar movements, in a standing position, of both 1 leg or 2, that will require you to train your body through a very similar movement pattern, such as squats and step ups. Then build on these with functional plyometric movements such as various forms of step up jumps.

So if vertical leaping is on your list of things to improve, do yourself a favour, and drop the leg press. Instead decide whether it is a single leg or a double leg vertical leap (or both) that you want to work on, and go to work with a periodised program of functional single and double leg exercises, including specific plyometric and power exercises, that are periodised correctly over the space of a season. In Functional Strength Training for Australian Rules we outline such exercises, as well as how they should be programmed and adjusted over a 12-month period.

**Second Exercise Example – Bench Press**

The most commonly performed exercise by any male gym goer, with an honourable mention to the bicep curl in 2nd place. The big difference between the bench press and the bicep curl in terms of training for footy though, is that the bench press is actually useful. Or more to the point, it has the potential to be useful, provided it is programmed correctly, and combined with other exercises in order to bring out the most benefit in it.

There is no better exercise for developing raw upper body pushing strength than the bench press. The nature and position of the bar and the bench provides for a platform that allows you to move a large amount of weight, and with a very simple movement. It is very simple to learn. So when it comes to wanting to develop more upper body strength for a task such as pushing off an opponent in a body-to-body contest of some sort, the bench press is an obvious first and best choice.
However it is important to remember some important differences between the bench press, and a body on body contest, in order to understand why the bench press alone is not enough to train for such a thing, and why simply increasing your bench press ability, will certainly not guarantee any carryover to a game of footy. Here’s a few key points;

- A bench press requires you to lower the bar to chest, and then push it away again extending your elbows. A marking contest involves you trying to keep you balance with most of your weight on 1 leg, whilst pushing into an opponent, who is trying to push you off you center of gravity, whilst you watch and try to judge the flight of the ball flying through the air towards you. So there’s slightly more neural complexity and whole body involvement in the movement than just pushing

- A bench press is performed lying down. The contest is performed standing – requiring a lot more whole body integration from the lower body, through the hips, core and finally up through the chest and arms

- On a bench press, the machine is your support. Out there in that body-on-body contest, your own body and core strength is your only support.

As you can see, there is slightly more involved in a contest, than in a bench press (which would be obvious I guess), but when you really break it down, it should be easy to understand why simply bench pressing wont be enough by itself to generate the improved performance in the ability to push off or hold off an opponent. The key is to incorporate the bench press into the program with other pushing exercises, in a periodised and progressive manner, which will link the chest to the rest of the body more effectively, and turn the strength potential for footy developed on the bench press, and convert it you usable full body pushing strength in a game of footy.

How exactly this achieved, including the exercises involved, and how to program and periodise them is outlined in easy to follow detail in Functional Strength Training for Australian Rules Football.
6. Don’t get too caught up in the mirror

I just needed to touch on this point again in case you are losing focus and thinking about your bi’s and tri’s again. The mistaken belief that just because you look bigger and more ripped automatically meaning improved performance on game day is a common one, but that doesn’t make it any more right. Proof is that many of the best players on your team **won’t even look the strongest or fittest**, but yet they just seem to move better and more effectively than others. Remember, your nervous system is responsible for movement – it controls your muscles. Your muscles are no more than sacks of flesh, and slaves to your nervous system. Therefore without training the nervous system, and improving the movements and the physical parameters required, it doesn’t matter how much more impressive your physique is, it won’t do you any good on match day.

The picture on the left shows the central nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal chord branching out to our peripheral nervous system, consisting of the nerves themselves. The picture on the right shows these nerves and subsequent fibers (the yellow parts) innervating the muscles of the leg. Whenever you run, kick or jump it is this system controlling it, not your muscles, and the quality and power with which you will perform these tasks are determined by the quality of the program in the nervous system, not by the look and size of your muscles.
These guy’s physiques may look impressive – and indeed they are. But remember that what you see them doing here is all they are required to do – this is what they train for. They would be useless at any athletic movement required in any sport. Again, posing on stage is what they train for. But what do you train for?
7. Don’t lose sight of the fact that strength training is only a part of the overall program – it is not the end goal in itself

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that strength training is only one aspect of training for footy. There are of course many other aspects or physical qualities that go into performance improvement, particularly things like running ability, speed, agility, explosive power, acceleration and deceleration, coordination as well as the often less thought of factors like injury reduction and movement efficiency. But the reality is that strength is the underlying quality of most, if not all the other variables in physical performance, and as a result, you cannot improve in any these qualities, if you haven’t improved on your baseline of strength first. That is, you will not be able to accelerate, decelerate and change directions more effectively and with less likelihood of injury, if you haven’t first developed your functional strength capacity to do this. Internationally renowned strength and conditioning for sports expert Vern Gambetta says it himself in his book Athletic Development: The Art & Science of Functional Sports Conditioning;

‘In the athletic development process, strength training is possibly the most important area because it is the underlying quality of so many other components.’

So understand that we are strength training for improvements in functional performance, not just in functional strength that can actually be used in footy, but also in order to improve in all the other aspects of physical performance (agility, jumping, acceleration and deceleration, etc) that first require an improvement in strength to build on.

Also remember that strength training is only one piece of the puzzle for physical performance in footy (along with running, skills, etc), albeit a very important and underrated one. But don’t fall into the trap that many guys do of losing sight of the end goal, and seeing strength training and muscle development as an ‘end’ in itself.

Never lose sight of the overall picture, and the overall goal, and exactly where your strength training fits into this holistic picture.
8. Stay focused on the job at hand – and don’t fall into the trap of copying programs designed for other things

Just because the guy next to you at the gym is doing something, does not mean that it is appropriate for your goals (nor does it mean it is appropriate for his goals for that matter.)

Just because a muscle magazine or inside sport magazine has released their ‘football strength training program’ in their latest issue doesn’t mean you should take this on board as anything more than the garbage it is. All these programs are, are standard bodybuilding style programs, which have simply had their name changed. They are no different than any other cut-and-paste job like any other standard program. Proof enough is that I have never seen even one periodised version in a magazine. And if it isn’t periodised, you will instantly no its no good for your goals as a footy player.

‘Functional’ – Overused buzzword?

And a final very important point on this is the issue of ‘functional.’ This is the most overused buzzword in the fitness industry (even worse than ‘core’) that I cringe every time I say it or type it now. Especially when you consider what is pedaled as ‘functional’, and the mistaken understanding of what exactly this term means. This topic is a detailed and all-encompassing discussion – and is unique to each sport and each goal. Indeed we go into an in depth discussion on specifically what functional for Australian Rules is – and what all the rules that must be met for an exercise and a program to be counted as functional for footy are in Functional Strength Training for Australian Rules. But all I want to point out here is that there is no such thing as a ‘functional exercise’ period.

Function can essentially be looked at as purpose. Functional training in other words, can therefore be looked at as training for a specific purpose. Are squats functional?…. your immediate answer would likely be ‘yes’. But really, my response would be, ‘that depends what you are training for specifically.’ Not only that, but what you are training for specifically will determine just how functional an exercise is.

Renowned strength and conditioning coach Vern Gambetta makes a great point about functional training and functional exercises and their relation to training for sports performance, and that is looking at exercises along a ‘functional continuum’, rather than a case of ‘black and white’ and simply being classified as functional or non-functional. I really like this because what it means is that depending on what the individual athletes current position is, combined with what their goals are, everything can be considered functional to a certain extent, and even an exercise that would be instantly considered ‘functional’ like a squat or a deadlift or a lunge, can be improved upon to be even more functional for certain goals. In many instances in football, certain exercises like these will be only mid-range on this continuum, particularly as you get more advanced in your
ability and you require a greater challenge for the conditioning of your nervous system.

**Functional continuum** – from least functional for the goal, to the most functional for the goal

Below is a very brief example of what we are talking about. Let’s just say you were training to improve your vertical leap off two feet (say for a ruck contest.) There are of course other exercise options to those included in the diagram, and indeed certain exercise can be combined. But the purpose of this diagram is to show the order in which these 5 exercises would be ranked in terms of functionality or functional carryover to this particular goal.

Functional Continuum for training for a stationary double-leg jump

So remember, it isn’t black and white and a case of simply functional or non-functional, this is too simplistic. But rather, it is a case of how functional? If someone says ‘yeh I do this functional training and that exercise blah blah blah’ don’t just blindly follow them, ask yourself, ‘how exactly will this carryover to MY goals, and benefit MY footy?’
Are you playing football, and looking to improve your physical performance? Which of these are you aiming for?

- Higher vertical leap
- Explosive first 5-10 steps in a sprint
- Decelerating quickly and efficiently
- Changing directions more effectively than your opponent
- Pushing off an opponent with 1 arm or 2, whilst sometimes being off balance or only on 1 leg
- Improved landing power (from a jump)
- Tackling an opponent powerfully and effectively, and for repeated efforts
- Evading a tackle swiftly
- Stabilising every joint in your body when receiving a bump or tackle
- Or any number of variances or combinations of the above
- As well as the ability to be able to do these things over and over

Then a functional strength training program MUST be the cornerstone of your training program, as functional strength is the physical quality that all other physical qualities (agility, speed, power, etc) are built on top of.

If you are doing the same bodybuilding training that everyone else at the gym is doing, then you aren’t improving your strength in a way that will carryover to improved performance in footy at all!

Click image

Functional Strength Training for Australian Rules Football is;

- A truly [Australian rules specific](#) strength training program
- [Time efficient](#), allowing for you to train between 2-3 times per week, depending on your ability, time availability, and time of the season
- Functional – all 3 planes of motion, full body, inner unit core and stability, maintaining a focus on postural balance
- A [periodised plan](#) culminating in power development
- Comprehensive yet easy to follow and understand
- A learning tool as much as something to follow – you will understand completely why you are doing what you are, and will always be able to make the best choices for yourself and your footy going forward
- Based on the principles used at the elite levels of sport
- Adaptable - Designed for everyone from the teenage footballer picking up his first weight, to experienced state level player looking for a 2% improvement in their work capacity

Functional Strength Training for Australian Rules Football will provide the pathway for you to;

- Greatly reduce the risk of soft tissue injury
- Stronger body at contests – with an equally proportionate amount of usable strength
- Learn and perform exercises (properly) that will actually benefit your physical demands in footy
- Put into place correct programming and varying of sets and reps and weight for all the key exercises, over the course of a year
- Entire 12 months of strength training program laid out, as well as how to use this exact template for the following seasons with progressions, depending on how quickly you progress
- Actually get ahead of the pack (while everyone else is still training incorrectly)
- Achieve far more in less time
- Look better at the same time – and you will perform as well as you look

Functional Strength Training for Australian Rules Football includes;

- In depth discussion of what exactly functional means in terms of Australian Rules – made up largely of discussion points almost NEVER mentioned
- A thorough needs analysis for Aussie Rules – with more specific and hardly discussed variables (not just the usual ‘run faster’ ‘kick further’ ‘tackle’ needs)
- Detailed outline and description (including picture and video demonstrations) of the key exercises to build every strength training for footy program around
- More than 20 detailed exercises, including descriptions and directions of how they should be programmed
- Discussion and outline of functional core work for Aussie Rules footy
- How to scale certain exercises, depending on your level of experience and current ability with strength training
- Direction going forward for how to progress certain exercises, depending on your rate of improvement and your current ability
In depth discussion on the importance of periodisation, and how exactly this looks in terms of a footy season – as well as several footy seasons.

Not only that – we have outlined a year long periodised training plan, with direction and detail right down to how many weeks certain exercises and periods should be performed.

The video demonstrations of the key exercises thrown in for FREE with the book.

In addition to the strength training exercises and detailed periodised program, we also cover:

- Effective running conditioning – and how this ties together with the strength training program
- The importance of agility – and how to get it
- The essentials of the various forms of stretching for footy
- Functional warm up direction
- Discussing the Olympic lifts and their position in a footy conditioning program
- A detailed discussion on the pro’s and con’s of crossfit training (in terms of their relevance to football)

Stop training like everyone else, and start training like a footballer today!!