

# Functional Movement Testing is Changing Physical Medicine and Sports Training



The National football league has become a multibillion dollar industry where players are getting multiple year contracts worth tens of millions. Given this high player value teams are sparing no expense to minimize their risk when evaluating talent. One of the new tools they have begun to use is Functional Movement evaluations. It gives them a way to assess a player's weaknesses, movement problems as well as potential for injury. At the NFL combine teams run their own testing on players they are interested in drafting. This testing commonly

includes Functional Movement testing as well as medical evaluation, psychological evaluation and positional skill evaluation. A team wants to know what it is getting into before investing millions on that player.

Understanding the value in being drafted early, college players that are invited to the NFL combine are now commonly attending highly specialized training programs so they can improve their performance at the combine and hopefully raise their draft status. Functional movement testing is used in all these programs to identify each player's specific limitations. Based on the results of the functional movement assessment, a corrective exercise program is developed and implemented so each player can improve their unique problems. This gives the players the foundation needed to maximize results from the intense athletic training, combine event training, and positional skill instruction that is also a part of these NFL draft/combine improvement programs. These players know that 1-2 tenths of a second reduction in their 40 yard dash or performing well on a functional movement test can make all the difference in whether a team drafts them in the first round, or the third.



Functional movement testing and training is also helping athletes of all ages and ability levels. Youth athletes, high school athletes seeking a college scholarship, and adults that want to improve their weakened sporting performance are all signing up for athletic enhancement programs. Almost all these programs start with a Functional Movement Assessment so a specific corrective exercise strategy can be implemented to improve each athlete's specific limitations and movement problems. This develops the foundation they need to be successful with the specific athletic training associated with these programs and with their sport. It's been well documented that your skill development will never exceed your movement quality and poor movement increases your chance for injury and repetitive strain. This is why athletic training and physical rehabilitation are moving away from training the strength and length of muscles and instead working more to improve movement quality.

NFL teams also use Functional Movement testing to evaluate players that are recovering from injury. The testing helps guide their physical rehabilitation and is also used to help determine when they are ready to return to the field of play. This concept is also making



its way to the general public as specially trained chiropractors and sports medicine professionals are incorporating Functional Movement testing into the diagnosis and management of patients with mechanical pain and/or physical injury. It is improving the quality of care and speeding the rate of healing as it helps to identify underlying problems that often slow or prevent recovery. The focus of care is not isolated to the area of pain, but also includes the other moving parts that affect the pain area.



*Dr. Mark Bryan is a chiropractor who has practiced in Olympia, Washington for over 25 years. His post graduate training includes: Functional biomechanics and movement assessment, orthopedics, kettlebell training and corrective exercise strategies. He practices at Bryan Chiropractic Center on Yelm Highway where he has successfully helped thousands of patients with mechanical pain involving the spine and the extremities. The office also has a fully equipped exercise suite where Dr. Bryan can evaluate a person's ability to perform functional movements and then design and teach corrective exercise strategies to correct movement problems and muscle imbalances.*