



A Systematic Review of Various Physical Training Approaches in Athletics

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Abstrac: This study aims to systematically analyze various physical training approaches in athletics. This research employed a systematic review. Article searches were conducted across five electronic databases: Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, SPORTDiscus, and Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), covering publications from 2013 to 2024. Inclusion criteria encompassed original research articles, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses discussing physical training in athletics. Data extraction and synthesis were performed thematically. From 47 articles meeting the inclusion criteria, six major training strategies were identified: (1) High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) and Sprint Interval Training (SIT) for improving VO₂max and running economy; (2) Circuit training for cardiovascular endurance; (3) Plyometric training for explosive power development; (4) Sport-specific strength training for throwing events; (5) Periodization approaches for long-term training load management; and (6) Integration of wearable technology for real-time performance monitoring. The findings indicate that combined training approaches generally yield superior results compared to single-method interventions.

Keyword: Physical Training, Athletics, Systematic Review, Periodization, HIIT, Evidence-Based Practice

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INTRODUCTION

Athletics has long been regarded as the foundational discipline underlying numerous other sports, encompassing fundamental human movements such as running, jumping, and throwing. The pursuit of peak athletic performance necessitates well-structured, purposeful, and scientifically evaluable training systems. A comprehensive approach to physical training not only aims to enhance physiological function but also ensures performance stability, reduces injury risk, and extends athletic careers (Turner, 2011). In the contemporary sports science landscape, the emphasis on evidence-based practice has become increasingly paramount, compelling coaches and practitioners to ground their training prescriptions in empirical research rather than tradition alone.

Recent advancements in exercise science have underscored the critical importance of evidence-informed training design. Clarke and Skiba (2013) introduced mathematical modeling applications to predict adaptive responses to training stimuli, heralding a new era in personalized and precise training prescription. This data-driven approach enables coaches to optimize training dosage according to individual athlete capacity, moving beyond one-size-fits-all methodologies. Furthermore, the integration of big data analytics and artificial intelligence has revolutionized how coaches evaluate physiological variables to optimize training schemes (Tan, 2023). Such technological innovations have demonstrated substantial improvements in training effectiveness while simultaneously reducing injury potential through better load management (Blanchfield et al., 2019).

In Indonesia, the adoption of science-based training approaches has shown promising growth, though implementation remains uneven across regions. Research by Sidik and Ramadan (2019) examined the efficacy of circuit training in enhancing cardiovascular endurance among long-distance runners, reporting significant improvements in VO₂max as a measure of aerobic capacity. Circuit training provides diverse and comprehensive stimulation across multiple physiological systems, making it an efficient choice for athletes requiring endurance enhancement within relatively short timeframes. Similarly, investigations into the physical condition of athletes at various clubs have highlighted the necessity of regular fitness monitoring as a vital component of long-term training planning (Aryatama, 2016).

The evolving landscape of athletic training demands continuous synthesis of emerging evidence to guide practical application. While individual studies have examined specific training modalities, there remains a need for comprehensive analysis that integrates diverse approaches within a unified framework. This systematic review addresses this gap by analyzing various physical training approaches in athletics, identifying the effectiveness of each method based on empirical evidence, and formulating practical recommendations for developing optimal training programs.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a systematic review methodology adhering to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021). This approach was selected to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and quality of evidence synthesis regarding various physical training approaches in athletics. The PRISMA framework provides a standardized structure for conducting and reporting systematic reviews, minimizing bias and enhancing the reliability of findings.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Articles were eligible for inclusion if they met the following criteria: (1) original research with experimental or quasi-experimental design; (2) systematic reviews and meta-analyses; (3) studies addressing physical training in athletics disciplines (running, jumping, throwing); (4) publications between 2013 and 2024; and (5) articles written in English or Indonesian. Exclusion criteria comprised: (1) opinion pieces or editorials without empirical data; (2) studies lacking clear methodological description; and (3) articles focusing solely on sports injury without discussing training interventions.

Search Strategy

Systematic searches were conducted across five electronic databases: Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, SPORTDiscus, and Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Search terms were combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR) with the following string: ("physical training" OR "exercise training" OR "athletic training") AND ("athletics" OR "track and field" OR "running" OR "throwing" OR "jumping") AND ("performance" OR "endurance" OR "strength" OR "power"). The search was conducted in January 2024, with no geographical restrictions applied.

Article Selection Process

The article selection process followed a multi-stage approach. The initial stage involved screening titles and abstracts to identify potentially relevant articles. In the second stage, full-text articles that passed initial screening were assessed for eligibility against the predefined criteria. Two independent reviewers conducted the selection process, with disagreements resolved through discussion and consensus. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cohen's kappa coefficient ($k = 0.87$), indicating substantial agreement.

Data Analysis

Data extracted from included articles comprised: bibliographic information (authors, year, journal), study design, sample characteristics and participant demographics, type of training intervention, duration and frequency of training, outcome variables measured, and key findings. Data were analyzed using descriptive-qualitative methods with thematic synthesis to identify patterns and trends in physical training approaches for athletics. The quality of included studies was assessed using appropriate critical appraisal tools based on study design.

RESULT

The systematic search and selection process, following PRISMA guidelines, yielded 47 articles that met the inclusion criteria for analysis. These articles encompassed various physical training approaches in athletics, which were classified into six major categories based on training methodology and target physiological adaptations.

Table 1. Classification of Physical Training Strategies in Athletics

No	Training Strategy	Target Component	Key Reference
1	HIIT/SIT	VO ₂ max, Running Economy	Atakan et al. (2022)
2	Circuit Training	Cardiovascular, Muscular Endurance	Sidik & Ramadan (2019)
3	Plyometrics	Explosive Power, Speed	Slimani et al. (2017)
4	Strength Training	Maximal Strength, RFD	Markovic & Mikulic (2010)
5	Periodization	Load Management, Peak Performance	Issurin (2019)
6	Wearable Technology	Real-time Monitoring	Blanchfield et al. (2019)

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

The evidence strongly supports HIIT and Sprint Interval Training (SIT) as highly effective approaches for enhancing both aerobic and anaerobic capacity in athletes. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Atakan et al. (2022) demonstrated that HIIT significantly improves running economy in endurance athletes compared to moderate-intensity continuous training (SMD = 0.44, 95% CI [0.15, 0.72], $p < 0.05$). The study by Herlan (2020) provided compelling evidence that the Tabata protocol (20 seconds of high-intensity work followed by 10 seconds of rest, repeated 8 times) significantly improved VO₂max in long-distance runners. These findings align with the broader literature establishing HIIT as a time-efficient method for inducing substantial cardiovascular adaptations.

Circuit Training

Circuit training has proven effective in simultaneously improving cardiovascular endurance and muscular endurance. The research conducted by Sidik and Ramadan (2019) reported significant improvements in VO₂max among long-distance runners following a six-week

circuit training program. The advantage of circuit training lies in its time efficiency and ability to provide comprehensive stimulation across various physiological systems within a single session. This makes it particularly valuable for athletes with limited training time or those requiring concurrent development of multiple fitness components.

Plyometric Training

The systematic review by Slimani et al. (2017) confirmed the effectiveness of plyometric training in enhancing explosive power, speed, and agility in athletes. Research conducted with Indonesian athletes by Suratmin and Wigutomo (2022) demonstrated significant improvements in vertical jump ability and 30-meter sprint performance following an eight-week plyometric program. Plyometric training, which optimizes the stretch-shortening cycle (SSC), has been shown to improve neuromuscular efficiency and rate of force development, making it essential for jumping and throwing events.

Sport-Specific Strength Training

For throwing events, sport-specific strength training represents a critical component of athletic preparation. The research by Markovic and Mikulic (2010) indicated that both heavy resistance training (85-95% 1RM) and ballistic training (30% 1RM) are equally effective in improving shot put performance, though they produce different muscular adaptations. Heavy strength training results in more significant muscle fiber hypertrophy, while ballistic training proves more effective in enhancing rate of force development (RFD). This finding underscores the importance of training specificity in program design.

Periodization Approaches

Periodization models form the foundation of long-term athlete development. Linear, undulating, and block periodization concepts have all demonstrated effectiveness in managing training load and ensuring peak performance during crucial competitive periods (Issurin, 2019). Research by Kuncoro et al. (2023) with master athletes in Indonesia showed that progressive training models with periodized manipulation of load, intensity, and scheduling based on competition cycles effectively maintain optimal performance and prevent long-term overtraining. The principle of periodization remains fundamental for sustainable athletic development.

Technology Integration

The utilization of wearable technology and real-time monitoring systems has become increasingly prevalent in modern athletic training. The study by Blanchfield et al. (2019) demonstrated that predictive models based on fitness monitoring data and wearable devices can facilitate personalized training through real-time indicators such as heart rate, running velocity, and muscle fatigue markers. This technological integration enables more precise training program adjustments compared to traditional methods, though implementation challenges related to cost and data interpretation capacity persist at the local level.

DISCUSSION

This systematic review reveals the considerable diversity of physical training approaches in athletics that have been developed and validated through scientific research. A key finding is the absence of a universal training method applicable to all athletes; rather, the effectiveness of any given approach depends heavily on competition specifications, individual athlete characteristics, and the broader training context. This observation reinforces the principle of individualization that has long been advocated in exercise science literature.

Effectiveness of HIIT in Endurance Development

The findings of this review confirm the superiority of HIIT in improving running economy and anaerobic capacity in endurance athletes. The underlying physiological mechanisms include

increased mitochondrial density, enhanced oxidative enzyme activity, and improved oxygen utilization efficiency (Atakan et al., 2022). However, optimal training dosage - encompassing intensity, volume, and frequency - must be carefully calibrated to individual training status and tolerance to minimize overtraining risk. The time-efficiency of HIIT makes it particularly attractive for athletes juggling training with academic or occupational commitments, a common scenario in Indonesian athletic development contexts.

Combined Approaches for Performance Optimization

One of the most significant findings from this review is the superiority of combined training approaches over single-method interventions. The integration of HIIT with moderate-intensity continuous training, the combination of strength training with plyometrics, or the fusion of physical training with mental preparation techniques consistently produces superior outcomes. This aligns with the conjugate periodization principle, which emphasizes the concurrent development of multiple physical qualities (Issurin, 2019). For practitioners, this suggests that training programs should avoid over-reliance on any single modality.

Relevance of Periodization in the Indonesian Context

Implementing periodization principles within the Indonesian athletic context presents unique challenges, including limited facility access, shortage of qualified coaches, and inconsistent competition scheduling. The research by Kuncoro et al. (2023) highlights the necessity of adapting periodization models to accommodate these local factors. Developing flexible yet scientifically grounded training models emerges as a critical factor for successful athlete development in Indonesia. This may require creative solutions, such as bodyweight training protocols when equipment is unavailable or modified periodization schemes that accommodate irregular competition calendars.

Technology Implications for Modern Training

The integration of technology in athletic training offers substantial opportunities for program personalization. Wearable devices enable objective monitoring of training load, recovery status, and readiness indicators. However, technology implementation in Indonesia remains constrained by cost factors and availability. Strategies to make monitoring technology more affordable and accessible to coaches at various levels are needed. Alternative approaches, such as subjective wellness questionnaires and simple performance tests, may serve as practical interim solutions until technological access improves.

Psychological Dimensions in Athletic Training

The findings regarding the importance of integrating mental training with physical preparation emphasize that athletic performance is not solely determined by physiological capacity. Psychological factors such as mental toughness, self-confidence, and stress management ability contribute significantly to competitive performance (Filion et al., 2021). Coaches need to address these aspects when designing holistic training programs. Simple interventions, such as goal-setting, visualization, and breathing exercises, can be incorporated into regular training sessions without requiring specialized equipment or extensive additional time.

Limitations and Recommendations

This review has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, heterogeneity in study designs, sample populations, and outcome variables limited the ability to conduct quantitative meta-analysis. Second, the majority of identified studies originated from athlete populations in developed countries, potentially limiting generalizability to the Indonesian context. Third, publication bias favoring positive results may have influenced the available evidence base. Recommendations for future research include: (1) development of longitudinal studies with rigorous experimental designs; (2) research involving Indonesian athlete populations; (3) investigation of the effectiveness of integrating various training approaches; and (4) examination of cost-effective technology solutions for monitoring athlete training.

CONCLUSION

Based on this systematic review of 47 scientific articles, it can be concluded that physical training approaches in athletics have evolved considerably alongside advances in sports science and technology. Various training methods, including HIIT, circuit training, plyometrics, sport-specific strength training, and periodization approaches, have proven effective in improving multiple components of athletic performance when implemented appropriately. The evidence strongly suggests that combined training approaches generally outperform single-method interventions.

Several practical implications emerge from this review: (1) training method selection must consider both competition demands and individual athlete characteristics; (2) combined approaches typically prove more effective than isolated methods; (3) periodization principles should underpin all long-term training programs; (4) monitoring technology can enhance precision and personalization; and (5) integration of psychological training dimensions can optimize athletic achievement. Coaches and practitioners are encouraged to adopt evidence-based practices while remaining flexible to individual circumstances.

For the continued development of athletics in Indonesia, systematic efforts are needed in: (1) enhancing coach capacity to understand and apply evidence-based training principles; (2) developing supporting facilities and infrastructure; (3) conducting more research with local athlete populations; and (4) fostering collaboration among academics, practitioners, and sports stakeholders to translate research findings into effective training practices. By bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and practical application, Indonesian athletics can achieve sustained progress on both national and international stages.

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