

Sportwall Training For Athletes

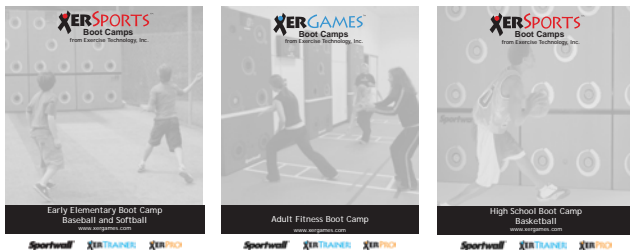
Rated #1 in User Enjoyment and Energy Expenditure
(The Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, 2011)¹

Introduction

When the words “exercise” and “gaming” were combined to yield “exergaming”, the term was used to describe video games that are also a form of exercise². While Sportwall’s XerPro and XerTrainer are recognized as two of the original, most enduring concepts in the category of exergame fitness training, they differ significantly from modified video games that promote physical activity. Instead of simulating play, they engage players in a real kinesthetic experience with innovative athletic activity using actual sporting goods.

Success is measured by the ability of participants to keep the game in play as a result of real athleticism rather than emulated movement called for in other exergames. The original concept behind the creation of Sportwall was to create fun, short, fast moving full-body games that engage full intensity and focus with results measured via electronically generated scores and rewarding sounds. Today, this approach continues to incentivize repeated play until mastery takes place.

This concept has evolved into a wide range of applications, from training high performance athletes to providing highly engaging play for beginners where basic skills for sports are learned in a fun, controlled easy environment where progressive improvements happen rapidly. Instructors are free to choose from an impressive array of curriculum/lesson plans for every sector of the community. See our web site for curriculum options: <http://www.xergames.com/customer-support/bootcamps.html>.



Sportwall Conditioning for the Mind and Body – How it Works

Sportwall programs are multisensory training programs for all ages and ability levels. In other words, visual, auditory, and physical tasks are integrated in performing the motor skills required. When it comes to localizing and tracking moving objects, it is likely that the human brain evolved to develop, learn, and operate optimally in multisensory environments³. Thus, multisensory-training protocols can better approximate natural settings and are more effective for learning³.

These protocols, with their profound and SIMULTANEOUS brain/body stimulation, are the key element that differentiates a functional training program from a general conditioning program. Sportwall programs are specifically designed to stimulate the body and the brain concurrently. This is

accomplished by:

- Encouraging team participation and engaging sustained focus with short-attention grabbing computer games that are played sequentially to pursue mastery of skills and score
- Providing full body exercise by stimulating the hands, feet, eyes, ears, and vestibular system in playing real games with real sporting goods (not simulated)
- Requiring high levels of attention and focus for success (staying consciously “in-the-now”)
- Engaging in cognitive decision making under pressure
- Delivering a cardiovascular workout in a game format



Sportwall’s programming improves functional abilities (eg flexibility, speed, balance, power, and strength) while concurrently developing high levels of neuromuscular efficiency. This process of engaging the hands, feet, ears, and eyes develops not just eye/hand, but visual-perceptual motor skills. The added element of integration of the right and left brain hemispheres has been well documented to enhance brain plasticity as well as whole brain thinking, cognition, attention and focus for learning.

Sportwall Physical Training for Athletes

Because the Sportwall XerPro/XerTrainer ramps up its demands in a systematic fashion, it is appropriate for athletes of all abilities and levels of competition. The system challenges professional athletes as far as they are willing to be pushed, yet is accessible to amateurs and beginners. The level of the athlete will determine which training is initiated and its specific progression.

Sportwall has the ability to quantify/score the success of individual movements. To an accomplished athlete, an improvement of ONE percent can represent a huge competitive gain, but that gain is correspondingly difficult. Accurate scoring/feedback become extremely important when the athlete is digging deep for effort and the highest levels of motivation are required. Sportwall is there!

The athlete or coach gets accurate assessment and can track progress. Athletic improvement can be accomplished in a systematic and highly engaging format, allowing the highest level of sports specific endurance.



For Athletic Training the XerPro/XerTrainer can be utilized to improve:

- First step quickness
- Reaction time
- Dynamic balance
- Plyometric adaptation in sports specific movements
- Explosive change of direction
- Kinetic chain linking and complex movement linking

Opening the Doors to Participation in Sports

“Many schools, gyms, community centers and hospitals include [Sportwall’s] digital target games that challenge players on speed and motor skills as they throw a ball allowing for sports simulation games that allow users to feel like they’re playing games such as soccer, tennis or baseball.” Jeannine Stein, Los Angeles Times March 13, 2011

Sportwall provides a perfect match for every player since the system always plays the ball back at the speed and direction established by the player. The result is that feedback and response modification is instant, which produces a rapid development of the necessary skills to maintain play, all in the fairly contained space in which the systems are usually installed. The desire score points provides the motivation to develop the intensity, power, placement and positioning needed to for continuous play and higher scores, which in turn develops skills that are transferable to sports.

All of this develops skills that are transferable to sports since these activities provide movement that can flush out natural skills and a love for activity that, besides developing the body and brain, can lead to a new confidence and a stronger desire to pursue life-long physical activity that otherwise may not have occurred. With respect to self-esteem, we frequently see the correlation between the ability to throw and catch a ball and social acceptance among children in the playground because they have the ability to contribute positively to the team. We continually observe children who were previously on the social sidelines being integrated into playground activity just weeks

after participation with the comparatively unthreatening Sportwall at their school.

“The number of games and activities that might be used is endless,” Health and Physical Education Supervisor Eileen Dibattista told the Medford High School. “The wall is designed to stimulate the body and the brain simultaneously.” This is because the Sportwall set up allows for individual or team activities where students can compete to attain the highest scores while attaining both traditional game skills and total body conditioning.

“With childhood obesity being the epidemic that it is, I think it is great that this is available for our kids,” said Medford High School Committee member George Scarpelli, himself a coach. As for the specific physical benefits of the XerPro, Dibattista stated, “The functional training program of the Sportwall XerPro provides a mind and body connection. This is unlike a traditional conditioning program, which focuses on isolated muscle groups.” She added that some of the athletic benefits include improved throwing accuracy through a series of targets, increased arm strength, and improved speed, and agility and passing techniques. Body balance, stability, core strength and coordination can be improved as well by adding other elements such as agility ladders.

Dibattista concluded, “It is exciting to provide our students with this additional opportunity. The XerPro enhances our physical education classes by providing a modern and improved delivery model. Technology is what students expect in today’s world.”



Pulling It All Together

While it can be argued that many of the components discussed in this document can be fulfilled with other programs, there is nothing that compares with the Sportwall XerPro and XerTrainer in several significant areas. First, programming is extremely diverse and caters to athletes from all population groups. Second, the programming does not discriminate with regard to skill level as it meets players at their ability level. Finally, and most importantly, these are programs that have mainstream appeal and are able to break down the barriers and engage the traditionally inactive.

Because the structure of the programming involves multiple short games played in teams, there are no permanent winners. Instead, the chance for everyone to succeed is repeated every

couple of minutes which incentivizes continual play. Group and team play format creates a high level of camaraderie and the combination of rapid skill development, along with social connection leaves players on a positive note after the class. Of particular interest is the fact that computer gamers sense no barriers to overcome as they see their activity as a game rather than a workout or something done only by “jocks.” Seniors have affirmed that play is for the “kid in all of us” and have reported that their mental clarity was sharper for days after participating in a class.

Since the programming is so diverse, facilities have preferred to install the systems in general purpose rooms where everyone can have access to them rather than dedicating them to a room for a particular group. This way, for example, seniors can use them in the mornings, youth in the afternoons, and adults and athletes in the evenings. An added advantage is that when not in use the systems take up only 4” of depth on a wall, which alleviates the need to use a dedicated room. When instructors fully engage with the wide range of programming available, they begin to create their own routines and programs. This is when a level of excitement ignites and true believers are born as they discover the limitless possibilities of Sportwall programming.

An effective way to ensure sustained use is to incorporate score tracking and team competitions. This can be done in two ways: by using the score tracking charts or by encouraging players to post their scores on a social networking site (such as Facebook) along with a video clip of the play to validate the authenticity of the score. Facilities can either dedicate their own page to tracking scores or they can use the company’s official score tracking site. Some facilities also hold competition days where teams challenge each other for the high score of the day in a particular game. Since games average sixty seconds, it is easy to get a lot of action happening quickly.



We have developed a significant number of program manuals designed to get instructors started in their own field of interest, whether for sports training, a group exercise class, or a personal training session. Using our drills initially provides a feel for how the process and results come together. We have experienced that new ideas quickly emerge as instructors find themselves easily adapting drills to achieve their desired results. To capture these, we are encouraging instructors to share their ideas on our blog, <http://www.xergames.com/blog/> or on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com> on Sportwall XerGames. This way, resources

available to both new and experienced users will grow continually.

What people are saying about XerPro and XerTrainer:

“Most noticeable to me was that the less skilled participants got the most encouragement from their team members and showed the most improvement in both skills and attitude. It definitely improved their self esteem and motivated them to work hard and do their best. My most moving revelation happened when I noticed how some 3rd graders were integrated into play during recess because they had learned to throw and catch a ball.” Karen Perry-Kaplan, Physical Education Teacher, Schoefield Elementary, Wellesley MA

“Students love this equipment and have so much fun they don’t even realize how much exercise they are doing. I give Sportwall my highest recommendation and commend the designers of this cutting-edge equipment for new hope in the fight against childhood inactivity/obesity.” Dr. Wayne L Wescott, PhD., CSCS, Fitness Research Director, South Shore YMCA

“XerPro is a technological marvel! It makes training as much fun as an actual match through exciting interactive, virtual competition. It’s computerized, lighted targets get you to focus and hit your spots - just like in match play! With XerPro players are getting cardiovascular fitness, sports training and they are having fun at the same time! It’s a great way to get today’s young computer game players off the couch and exercising again. XerPro is truly a blast!” Billie Jean King

“We have been using XerPro at the ATP international headquarters for two years. Kids and adults alike really enjoy playing the games and seeing their consistency, accuracy and focus improve. This is the first product I have seen that not only activates kids, but really gets them excited about the game of tennis.”

Brian Gottfried, Former #3 in the World, Winner of 25 singles and 54 doubles professional tennis titles. ATP International Headquarters - Tennis Director

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