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Effect of four-month vertical whole body vibration on performance and balance.

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Abstract

PURPOSE: This randomized controlled study was designed to investigate the effects of a 4-month whole body vibration-intervention on muscle performance and body balance in young, healthy, nonathletic adults.

METHODS: Fifty-six volunteers (21 men and 35 women, aged 19-38 yr) were randomized to either the vibration group or control group. The vibration-intervention consisted of a 4-month whole body vibration training (4 min.d(-1), 3-5 times a week) employed by standing on a vertically vibrating platform. Five performance tests (vertical jump, isometric extension strength of the lower extremities, grip strength, shuttle run, and postural sway on a stability platform) were performed initially and at 2 and 4 months.

RESULTS: Four-month vibration intervention induced an 8.5% (95% CI, 3.7-13.5%, $P=0.001$) net improvement in the jump height. Lower-limb extension strength increased after the 2-month vibration-intervention resulting in a 3.7% (95% CI, 0.3-7.2%, $P=0.034$) net benefit for the vibration. This benefit, however, diminished by the end of the 4-month intervention. In the grip strength, shuttle run, or balance tests, the vibration-intervention showed no effect.

CONCLUSION: The 4-month whole body vibration-intervention enhanced jumping power in young adults, suggesting neuromuscular adaptation to the vibration stimulus. On the other hand, the vibration-intervention showed no effect on dynamic or static balance of the subjects. Future studies should focus on comparing the performance-enhancing effects of a whole body vibration to those of conventional resistance training and, as a broader objective, on investigating the possible effects of vibration on structure and strength of bones, and perhaps, incidence of falls of elderly people.