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Original Article

An Experimental Study Of Resistance Training Effects On Sprint Speed And Agility Performance

Dr. Urvashi Kodli
College Director of Physical Education,
Government First Grade College, Aurad (B), Dist. Bidar, Karnataka India

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Corresponding Author:
Dr. Urvashi Kodli

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Abstract:

This study investigates the effect of resistance training on two key performance variables—speed and agility—among competitive sprinters. Using a pretest-posttest control group design, ten participants were divided into experimental (resistance training) and control groups. The experimental group underwent an 8-week resistance training program, while the control group continued with standard training routines. Speed and agility were assessed using the 40-meter sprint and the Illinois Agility Test, respectively. Results from paired and independent t-tests revealed statistically significant improvements in both speed and agility in the experimental group compared to the control group ($p < 0.01$). These findings highlight the effectiveness of resistance training in enhancing athletic performance and suggest its integration into sprint training programs for optimal results.

Keywords: Resistance Training, Speed, Agility, Sprinters, Performance, Athletic Training

Introduction:

In competitive athletics, particularly in sprinting events, performance is determined not only by the athlete's physical conditioning but also by their ability to generate explosive power, speed, and quick directional changes—collectively referred to as agility. As such, identifying effective training strategies that enhance these qualities is essential for both coaches and athletes. Among these strategies, **resistance training** has gained prominence for its role in improving muscular strength, neuromuscular efficiency, and overall athletic performance (Baechle& Earle, 2008).

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Resistance training (RT), which involves exercises that cause muscles to contract against external resistance, has traditionally been associated with gains in muscle mass and strength. However, recent evidence suggests that RT also contributes significantly to performance metrics such as sprint speed and agility when properly integrated into athletic training programs (Behm et al., 2017). For sprinters, the application of resistance training may lead to enhanced ground force production, reduced ground contact time, and improved running mechanics—all critical elements for achieving peak velocity in short-distance races.

Despite its widespread use, the **specific impact of resistance training on speed and agility among sprinters** remains underexplored, particularly through controlled experimental designs. While some studies have demonstrated positive correlations between RT and athletic performance, many focus on team sports or generalized athletic populations rather than competitive sprinters. Moreover, variations in training protocols, sample characteristics, and outcome measures contribute to inconsistencies in findings (Markovic & Mikulic, 2010; Saez de Villarreal et al., 2012).

Therefore, this study aims to **systematically evaluate the effects of an 8-week resistance training program** on two key components of sprint performance—speed and agility—using validated performance tests. By comparing pretest and posttest results between an experimental group undergoing resistance training and a control group maintaining regular routines, the research seeks to provide empirical evidence to guide training decisions for sprint athletes.

Research Objectives:

1. To determine the effect of resistance training on sprint speed.
2. To examine the impact of resistance training on agility.

Hypotheses:

H_{01}: Resistance training has no significant effect on speed.

H_{11}: Resistance training significantly improves speed.

H_{02}: Resistance training has no significant effect on agility.

H_{12}: Resistance training significantly improves agility.

Review of Related Works:

Resistance training (RT) has long been recognized for enhancing athletic performance, particularly in sports requiring explosive power, speed, and agility. Recent studies have further elucidated the specific impacts of various RT modalities on these performance metrics.

A 2023 study by Forster et al. systematically reviewed the effects of different training methods on pro-agility performance. The findings indicated that interventions involving sprint training, plyometric training, resistance training, and combined methods produced statistically significant improvements in pro-agility performance per session ($p < 0.05$).

In another study, Sunble et al. (2022) examined the effects of periodized resistance training on sprinting speed, agility, and power among domestic female cricket players. The results demonstrated

significant improvements in sprinting speed and agility, with post-intervention mean±SD of the Illinois agility test showing a significant effect (p=0.001) .
Furthermore, a 2023 study by Forster et al. highlighted that combining resistance training with plyometrics and agility drills achieved the most significant sprint improvements. The study emphasized the effectiveness of periodized training protocols incorporating resistance exercises, plyometrics, and sport-specific drills for enhancing sprint performance.

These recent studies underscore the efficacy of resistance training, especially when combined with other modalities like plyometrics and agility drills, in improving speed and agility among athletes. However, the specific effects on sprinters necessitate further investigation to tailor training programs effectively.

Methodology:

This study employed a pretest-posttest control group design to evaluate the impact of resistance training on speed and agility among sprinters. A total of ten competitive sprinters participated in the study and were randomly assigned to one of two groups: the experimental group (n = 5), which underwent a structured resistance training program, and the control group (n = 5), which continued with their regular sprint training without any additional resistance exercises. The intervention lasted for eight weeks, during which the experimental group completed resistance training sessions three times per week, focusing on lower-body strength and explosive power. Performance was assessed using two standardized field tests: the 40-meter sprint to evaluate linear speed and the Illinois Agility Test to assess agility and directional change ability. Pre-intervention and post-intervention test scores were recorded for all participants, and the data were analyzed to determine the statistical significance of performance changes within and between groups.

Table 1: Study Design and Measurement Tools

Group	Participants (n)	Training Intervention	Duration	Measured Variables	Measurement Tool
Experimental	5	Resistance Training (3x/week)	8 weeks	Speed, Agility	40-meter Sprint, Illinois Agility Test
Control	5	Regular Sprint Training Only	8 weeks	Speed, Agility	40-meter Sprint, Illinois Agility Test

Dataset:

The dataset for this study comprised performance measurements from ten competitive sprinters who were divided equally into experimental and control groups. Each participant was assessed on two key variables: speed and agility.

Table 2: Dataset Used for Analysis

ID	Group	Pre_Speed	Post_Speed	Pre_Agility	Post_Agility
1.0	1.0	6.2	5.95	17.4	16.2
2.0	1.0	6.35	6.05	18.0	16.5
3.0	1.0	6.5	6.1	17.8	16.3
4.0	1.0	6.1	5.85	17.2	16.0
5.0	1.0	6.25	6.0	18.1	16.6
6.0	2.0	6.3	6.28	17.9	17.8
7.0	2.0	6.45	6.43	18.0	17.95
8.0	2.0	6.55	6.5	18.1	18.0
9.0	2.0	6.2	6.18	17.7	17.6
10.0	2.0	6.35	6.3	18.05	18.0

Speed was measured using the 40-meter sprint test, while agility was evaluated using the Illinois Agility Test. Data were collected at two time points: pre-intervention (baseline) and post-intervention (after the 8-week training period). The experimental group participated in a structured resistance training program three times per week, while the control group continued with their regular sprint training without resistance exercises. The dataset includes individual scores for pre- and post-tests for both speed and agility, allowing for within-group and between-group comparisons. This structured dataset facilitated the application of paired and independent samples t-tests to determine the statistical significance of training effects. The table 2 summarizes the dataset used for analysis.

Data Analysis and Results:

Data collected from both the experimental and control groups were analyzed using paired and independent samples t-tests to assess changes in speed and agility before and after the 8-week training intervention. The experimental group demonstrated statistically significant improvements in both performance variables, with mean post-test speed times decreasing and agility scores improving notably ($p < 0.01$). In contrast, while the control group showed slight improvements, these changes were not statistically significant. Additionally, independent t-tests comparing post-test results between the two groups confirmed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in both speed and agility metrics ($p < 0.01$). These findings clearly indicate that the resistance training program had a substantial effect on enhancing athletic performance in the experimental group.

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Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Post-Test Scores

Group	Mean Speed	SD Speed	Mean Agility	SD Agility
Experimental	5.99	0.10	16.32	0.24
Control	6.34	0.13	17.87	0.17

Paired t-test results for Experimental Group:

- Speed: t = 9.95, p = 0.0006
- Agility: t = 18.78, p = 0.0000

Paired t-test results for Control Group:

- Speed: t = 4.35, p = 0.0121
- Agility: t = 6.53, p = 0.0028

Independent Samples t-test (Post-Test Scores):

- Speed: t = -4.89, p = 0.0012
- Agility: t = -11.78, p = 0.0000

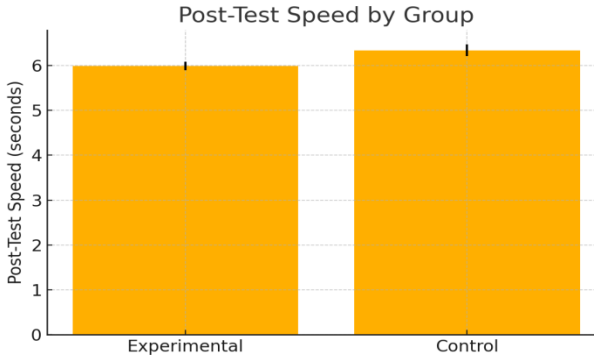

Figure 1: Post-Test Speed Comparison by Group

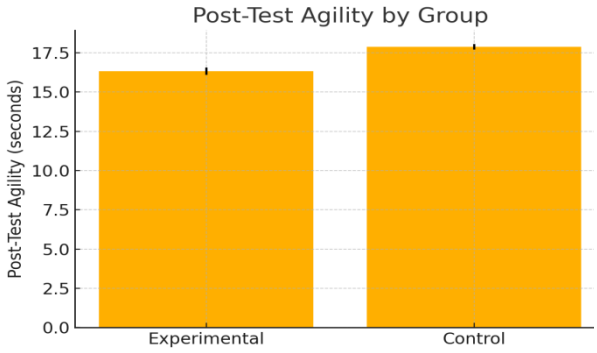

Figure 2: Post-Test Agility Comparison by Group

Discussion:

The results of this study clearly indicate that resistance training had a significant positive impact on both speed and agility among sprinters in the experimental group. Participants who underwent the 8-week resistance training program demonstrated marked improvements in their 40-meter sprint times and Illinois Agility Test scores, suggesting enhanced neuromuscular performance and power output. In contrast, the control group, which followed only standard sprint training routines, showed minimal improvement. These modest gains may be attributed to natural performance variation or test familiarity rather than a substantial training effect. The comparative analysis between the two groups further strengthens the argument that incorporating resistance training into sprint training regimens yields superior results. These findings align with existing literature, which emphasizes that resistance exercises improve motor unit recruitment, muscle fiber strength, and overall athletic efficiency. Therefore, this study provides empirical support for coaches and sports performance professionals to consider structured resistance training as a fundamental component of sprint training programs aimed at optimizing speed and agility.

Conclusion:

This study confirms that resistance training has a significant and measurable positive effect on the speed and agility of sprinters. The experimental group, which underwent an 8-week resistance training program, exhibited greater improvements in both performance variables compared to the control group. These results reinforce the growing body of evidence that highlights the effectiveness of resistance-based interventions in enhancing athletic performance, particularly in speed-dominant sports. Based on these findings, it is recommended that resistance training be integrated into conventional sprint training routines to optimize performance outcomes. Future research should explore variations in training frequency, intensity, and exercise types to further refine best practices for sprinters.

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