

On the Effectiveness of Thrower's Ten

The question you posed made me consider these two quotes by Gray Cook from the dvds: "You got to do what the body needs" (and the author's understanding is that such "needs" are dynamically driven), and "you deem an exercise functional by what it produces, not by what it looks like" (Cook & FMS, 2006; Cook & FMS, 2007).

The author thinks that Andrew's "Thrower's 10" has some merit depending on what one's intention is--what end-effect does one hope to produce?

The "Thrower's 10" (particularly the waist-level exercises) may be a way to test/assess strength, but while strength is always functional, it is not synonymous with stability. Strength may allow one to create "stiffness" (compensation) which still is not synonymous with stability (Cook & FMS, 2006). Cook commented: how one screens/tests/assesses is not necessarily how one would want to train (the author remembers hearing this many times, but cannot pinpoint the exact quote).

When talking about shoulder integrity, Gray Cook and Brett Jones mentioned breathing and posture as the first two checkpoints that can really make a big impact (applicable to pretty much any "shoulder") (Cook & FMS, 2006).

Cook and Jones mentioned grip (third) and the concept of irradiation (Cook & FMS, 2006). Jones explained this as "the stronger the grip, the stronger all the nerves and muscles fire along that chain [grip to shoulder], increasing the neurological efficiency of the shoulder"--getting the rotator cuff firing the way it is supposed to (Cook & FMS, 2006). Cook and Jones recommended screening the neck and checking grip strength (for asymmetries), because any neurological issue in the neck/brachial plexus can show up in the grip/hand (Cook & FMS, 2006).

Joint position/centration is also important and may be aided by a strong grip. A strong grip [normally] naturally causes one to react [neurologically] by properly packing ("sticky shoulder" or "shoulder to butt") the shoulders (Cook & FMS, 2006). Cook explained this as the rotator cuff musculature being stimulated by joint compaction and distraction; the rotator cuff is reactive in how we naturally use it versus how we "test" it in internal/external rotation (Cook & FMS, 2006). The rotator cuff fires before one can think, "I am going to fire my rotator cuff to stabilize".

Cook and Jones mentioned that if mobility (which precedes stability) has been resolved and the client still has stability issues, then it is very likely a neurological problem (stabilizers misfiring). Some exercises Cook and Jones demonstrated included: shoulder packing; reach, roll, & lift; arm bar; half get-up; more grip; deadlifts; kettle bell swings; push up/row (Cook & FMS, 2006).

While the "Thrower's 10" may have merit for a specific case, the author does not view it as a solution for all cases. If the effect one hopes to produce is stabilization at the shoulder, then the author would definitely consider other exercises (apart from Thrower's 10) that may provide better functional transfer. Training the "Thrower's 10" waist exercises will improve performance of the "Thrower's 10" waist exercises.

Reference

Cook, G., & Functional Movement Systems (FMS) (Directors). (2006). *Secrets of the shoulder* [DVD]. USA: Functional Movement Systems.

Cook, G., & Functional Movement Systems (FMS) (Directors). (2007). *Secrets of core training the backside* [DVD]. USA: Functional Movement Systems.