

ATHLETE SCREENING

A practical guide for athletes, parents and coaches

Screening helps guide the next step. It brings together health and injury history, training context and selected physical measures. It is not a pass/fail test and cannot predict an individual injury with certainty.



1 Health and injury history

Current symptoms, previous injuries, relevant health factors and anything affecting safe participation.



2 Training and recovery

Recent training changes, competition demands, sleep, stress and how the athlete is responding.



3 Growth and wellbeing

For young athletes, consider growth and maturation over time. Discuss sensitive health or energy concerns respectfully and plan referral where needed.



4 Physical capacity

Select measures to answer a useful question. VALD ForceDecks and Dynamo+ can assist with selected jump, force and strength measures.



5 Goals and context

Include the athlete's priorities, sport, competition timing, coaching environment, school demands and practical barriers.



6 Agree on next steps

Explain findings in plain language and agree on priorities: training, rehabilitation, monitoring, further assessment or referral.

Use findings to guide an action, not to label or predict injury. VALD measures can help establish a baseline and monitor change. A score alone does not diagnose injury or predict who will be injured.

DEVELOPING ATHLETES

Growth and maturation can affect coordination, strength and training tolerance. Interpret findings in context and avoid ranking young athletes by maturity. ESSA's Pre-Exercise Screening System for Young People is an age-specific starting point for health risks; it does not replace a sport-specific clinical assessment.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE

Stop exercise and seek prompt medical assessment for chest pain, fainting or near-fainting during exercise, unexplained marked breathlessness, or a sudden significant health change. Recurrent injury, persistent fatigue or worsening pain also deserves review.

Evidence note: Common movement screens and isolated tests are not reliable stand-alone tools for predicting sports injury. Screening is most useful when it informs an appropriate conversation, decision or intervention.

Strides Performance • 426 Princes Hwy, Narre Warren VIC 3805 • 0411 876 851 • strideshealth.com.au
Key reading: Bahr R. Br J Sports Med. 2016;50:776-780. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2016-096256 | ESSA / SMA / Fitness Australia. Pre-Exercise Screening Systems: essa.org.au