

## **Machine Workouts Are Outdated – Mini Report**

**By Mike Grafstein B.Ph.Ed, CAT(C), YCS, RMT**

Courtesy <http://www.EliteSoccerPower.com>

Why would you place a young soccer player on an exercise machine?

When they have their own body to use?

Machine exercise programs are a lazy way for outdated, uninformed dinosaur coaches to build strength so they don't have to worry about supervising young soccer players. I make no apologies about anything I say or write about youth strength training for soccer because this is how I feel and what I've had to deal with from a therapy perspective. So you will either like the message or not. It's your choice and if anything may be you will learn something new..?

Is it any wonder that strength training for young soccer players has a bad a name. Perhaps we need to put this in perspective. Really, if you think about the goal of any type of strength training program is to overcome or control resistance. This may be in a form of weights, sand bags, medicine balls or tires. The key is performing the correct exercise that is appropriate for the age group.

Next let's compare two exercises and decide which one has a better value for athletic performance on soccer field. Let's look at the leg extension (sitting with leg bent at knee) and the lunge. Many high schools and gyms have some form of the universal leg extension machine. I know because I've seen it and used it in the past in both high school and at the gym. It is easy for some one to sit on a seat and hold handles at the side to straighten the leg (extension).

Before I move on to the lunge, ask your self at what point in a soccer game does a player sit on the ground and straighten his or her legs? Let's talk about the lunge or more specific the reverse lunge. Let's take a close at the action of the reverse lunge. We start with our legs shoulder width apart then take a step back. From that position we drive the back leg forward with as much force as possible. As we do this the leg is moving into a straight position at the knee joint. Ask yourself does this action or a form of it occur during a soccer game. I think the answer is straight forward.

So let's look at positives of both exercises. The leg extension allows

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you to be seated so that your “core” is relaxed.

The reverse lunge forces you to maintain balance, brace the core and drive the leg forward for soccer strength, soccer power and soccer speed. It closely resembles the action of running or sprinting and of course these actions occur during a soccer game.

The other thing with the reverse lunge is that there is a focus on single leg strength. This type of strength is overlooked in any machine type exercise program. Most machine type exercises have either seated or lying on your back using both legs. This not appropriate or “functional”.

So there you have it. Part one of a three part series. To further serve your needs for proper exercise selection I suggest you head over to <http://www.elitesoccerpower.com>.

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Next let's compare two other exercises and decide which one has a better value for athletic performance on soccer field. Let's look at the leg press (sitting with leg bent at knee) and the squat.

Many high schools and gyms have some form of the universal leg press. I know because I've seen them and used them in the past in both high school and at the gym. It is easy for some one to lie on their back or sit on a seat and hold handles at the side to straighten the leg (extension).

Before I move on to the squat, ask your self at what point in a soccer game does a player sit or lie on the ground and push their feet forward in the air?

Let's talk about the squat. Let's take a close at the action of the squat. We start with our legs shoulder width apart then practically sit with out landing on a chair. There is bending at the hip knee and ankle. From that position we drive body up starting from the gluteus maximus muscles (buttocks or "butt") with as much force as possible. As we do this the leg is moving into a straight position at the hip, knee and ankle joints.

Ask yourself does this action or a form of it occur during a soccer game. I think the answer is straight forward.

So let's look at the positives of both exercises. The seated leg press allows you to be seated or lie on your back so that your "core" is relaxed.

The squat forces you to "brace" the deeper stomach muscles (core ) and drive the leg up forward for soccer strength, soccer power and soccer speed. It closely resembles the action of jumping for a 50 -50 ball for example or if you are keeper a jump to the top corner of the far post.

Again most machine type exercises have you either seated or lying on your back using both legs. This is not appropriate or "functional".

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Next let's compare these two exercises and decide which one has a better value for athletic performance on the soccer field. Let's look at the lying face down hamstring curl and the on your back hip raise.

Many high schools and gyms have some form of the universal leg curl for the hamstring muscle group. I know because I've seen them and used them in the past in both high school and at the gym. It is easy for some one to lie on their stomach, hold handles at the side and bend the leg at the knee joint (flexion).

Before I move on to the hip raise, ask your self at what point in a soccer game does a player lie on the ground and bend their legs at the knee joint? Perhaps if they are upset with missed opportunity and they are pounding the ground as well kicking themselves in the ...

Let's talk about the on your back hip raise. Let's take a close at the action of the hip raise. We start on our backs with our knee bent and feet flat. Next we raise the hip by contracting (tightening) the buttocks muscles and "bracing" the deeper stomach muscles until we've reached the point where there is a straight line from the knee joint to the shoulder blades.

Does this action or a form of it occur during a soccer game? I think the answer is maybe.

So let's look at the positives of both exercises. The lying leg curl allows you to lie on your stomach so that your "core" is relaxed.

The lying hip raise forces you to "brace" the deeper stomach muscles (core) and contract the glutes which are the major lower body muscles for soccer strength, soccer power and soccer speed. This particular exercise is for beginners.

Note how much more than muscle group must act together to perform this exercise effectively.

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