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universityfitness Q&A

By Matt Brzycki

Does eating food with a high glycemic index increase appetite?



Baked potatoes, white rice, white bread and several other foods have been implicated, with the suggestion that they will increase hunger and make a person gain weight. These criticisms have caused people to avoid them like the proverbial plague.

Quick question: When was the last time you ate nothing but baked potatoes for a meal? The fact of the matter is that when someone sits down for a meal, there are a variety of foods on the plate. In addition to a baked potato, it's likely that other vegetables will be on the plate, accompanied by some type of meat, poultry or fish. There might also be a salad and something to drink, such as a glass of milk. These foods would balance out — or dilute — any glycemic effect that might result from the baked potato. So, even if high-glycemic foods make a person hungrier, most meals contain a variety of foods that would soften the effect. **FM**

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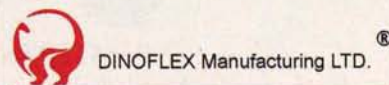
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How strong should the hamstrings be in relation to the quadriceps?

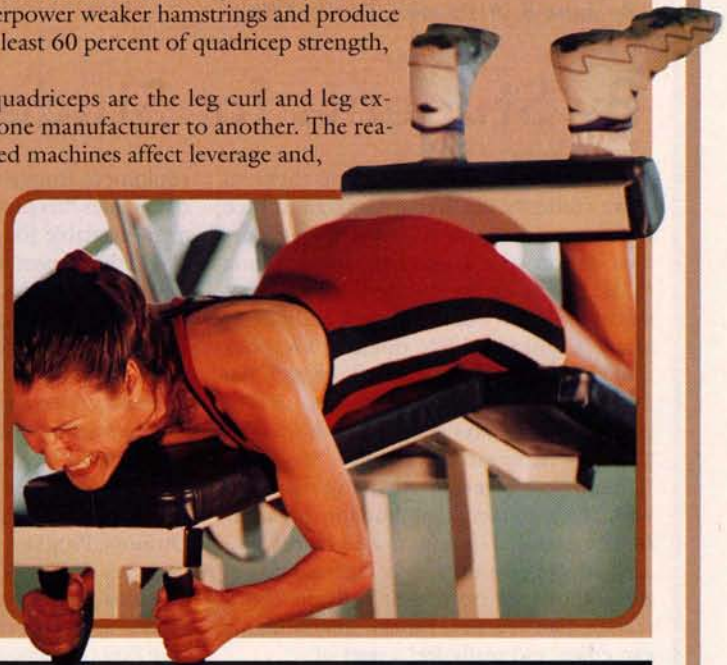
It has long been suspected that an imbalance of strength between the hamstrings and quadriceps increases the likelihood of an injury. Specifically, stronger quadriceps could overpower weaker hamstrings and produce an injury. It has been said often that hamstring strength should be at least 60 percent of quadricep strength, but there's no scientific support for this particular number.

The exercises that provide direct work for the hamstrings and quadriceps are the leg curl and leg extension, respectively. The resistance levels on machines differ from one manufacturer to another. The reason is because differences in the design of selectorized and plated machines affect leverage and, therefore, the amount of resistance that can be lifted. This makes it virtually impossible to make accurate comparisons of strength between the hamstrings and quadriceps — at least with conventional equipment.

Here's an example: When using a leg curl that's made by Company A, a person might be able to perform 10 repetitions with 100 pounds; when using a leg curl made by Company B, that same person might be able to perform 15 repetitions with 120 pounds. If this is the case, which resistance is used for comparison with the leg extension?

Also keep in mind that there are two different types of leg curl — seated and prone — which also have different designs that affect the amount of resistance that can be lifted. This is true even for machines that are manufactured by the same company.

The bottom line is, don't worry about percentages. The important thing is to make sure that the hamstrings are as strong as possible. **FM**



Matt Brzycki is coordinator of recreational fitness and wellness programs at Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. He has more than 20 years of experience at the collegiate level and has authored, co-authored or edited 11 books.

Do you have questions that you need answered? Email them to edit@fitnessmgmt.com.

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