**Modified sport and appropriate training**

Many sports have recognised that the needs and abilities of children are different from that of adults and have developed modified sports.

Successful modifications to sports include:

* size of equipment
* playing area and goals
* duration of games
* team sizes and interchanges.

These modified games use equipment that better suits the size and ability of the children, smaller playing areas, goals that are smaller or lower, smaller teams and/or more interchanges.

**Sample training session for young people**

The ideal coaching session for young people will last between 45 to 75 minutes, depending on the age of the athletes. The plan in the related downloads is based on an hour session and can be modified according to the time available, and the age of the group involved.

**Weight training for young athletes**

Strength and conditioning is a key element of technical training for adults and there has been much debate about whether weights or resistance training is appropriate for young people.

The current position on youth resistance training is that a properly designed and supervised training program is safe and can help to increase strength, prevent injury, and enhance motor skills and performance. It is very important that coaches of juniors at any level have a clear understanding of what should and shouldn’t be done.

In 2003 Narelle Sibte, Australian Institute of Sport Strength and Conditioning coach provided an article for Sport Australia’s Sports Coach magazine about pre adolescent strength training. Key recommendations from the article include:

* Strength training for pre-adolescent athletes should focus on skills and technique
* Children should work on strengthening all the big muscle groups, using free weight and body weight movements with relatively light loads
* Adolescents should initially perform one to three sets of 6-15 repetitions of a variety of exercises, beginning with a frequency of 2-3 days per week on non-consecutive days.