



Player Loading

What is player loading?

In sport player loading refers to the amount (volume) multiplied by the intensity of training/playing an athlete does.

It can be expressed in an equation that looks like this:

Training Load = Training volume x Training Intensity

Internal and external forces are exposed to the body during sport (jumping, landing, contact, tackling etc). These forces place load onto the body.

Why is player loading important?

If player load is too low the body fails to adapt to training and they will find playing the game challenging.

If a players' training load is too high they are more likely to experience:

- Injuries
- Lack of motivation
- Fatigue more easily
- Irritability
- Decreased ability to achieve training/playing goals

It is important to achieve the right balance of player loading, which may be different in each young athlete.

There is a common miss-conception in our community (and in other sports) that to be good at Netball a young athlete needs to play more Netball.

More is not always better.

Over-use injuries in Netball are becoming more common in our young athletes. Injuries that can cause ongoing implications for life. Over-use injuries occur when the body doesn't have enough time adapt and recover from repetitive physical demands placed from the body by sport/physical activity. The human body does adapt to loading if it is progressively added in a gradual way, however there is always an upper threshold.

How to manage a players training load?

Netball New Zealand has developed [Player Development Guidelines](#) for all players that aim to:

- Reduce injury
- Retain athletes playing Netball
- Provide the best development opportunities to produce the best athletes.

Player loading Guidelines Year 1 - 8

	Year 1 & 2	Year 3 & 4	Year 5 & 6	Year 7 & 8
Session Duration	30-45mins	45-60mins	45-60mins	60mins
Session Frequency	1 Session per week	1-2 sessions per week	1-2 sessions per week	2-3 sessions per week

The NNZ player guidelines outline three key points:

1. *They show a clear and gradual progression*

The guidelines show a clear, gradual, sensible progression in both the frequency and duration of practices as a young athlete grows and develops. A young athlete's training load must be age-appropriate and any increase in training load must be done carefully and in small increments.

Spiking a player's training load also increases their chance of injury.

For example, if a player doesn't do any sport over summer and then they start doing 2-3 trainings a week plus a game, they are increasing their likelihood of sustaining an injury. It is important to only increase training loads incrementally.

2. *The guidelines create manageable training and playing sessions*

Once or twice a week sessions a week are manageable for a young athlete. Three or four sessions maybe okay for a while but will quickly become unsustainable. Coaches should be careful not to fall into the trap that more Netball will improve performance. Diversified activity will improve the capability of the child

3. *The guidelines allow for other activities*

As we read in Article three last week, Netball is a late specialisation sport. These recommendations allow for young athletes to be involved in other sports and activities as well as allowing adequate rest and recovery time. Training for sport should be fun!

How to monitor a player's training load?

Players, Coaches and Parents should work together to manage player training loads.

- As a parent you are the only adult that knows exactly how much sport or activity your child is doing in a week. It is important that you monitor this.
- As a coach be aware that young athletes in your team will most likely be involved in other activities. Share the load on young athletes.

Work as a community to ensure young players are participating in an appropriate amount of sport.