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Proprioception – science and practical application

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Recently so called proprioceptive exercises have become very popular and have influenced the way exercise and rehabilitation professionals prevent, rehabilitate and augment performance. Additionally, several have claimed that balance and proprioceptive exercises improve proprioception. Not only do we find that the words 'balance' and 'proprioception' are used interchangeably in the literature, its exercise strategies and research measurements are applied interchangeably as well. As exercises are prescribed as an intervention to influence balance and proprioception a clear understanding of what proprioception, balance and proprioceptive exercises are is needed. This paper reviews the literature related to proprioception and balance, what its relationship is to injury and performance, how the concepts related to proprioception theories and research can be manipulated so performance or return to performance can be improved. Exercise recommendations are brought forward.

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