



**Jamie Smith:** Drill less, learn more: Creating unique learning environments for the developmental athlete



Jamie Smith is a lifelong learner, mentor, coach, proud husband and father. He founded The U of Strength, a facility dedicated to influencing the human movement system of athletes of all ages and sports. Explore a missing piece of the athletic development puzzle.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Never stop moving.

Basics: **What and Why**

- What is your coaching lens? Traditional lenses include: powerlifting, olympic weight lifting, bodybuilding, track and field, functional, physiotherapy. Consider a new lens that is skills-centered and provides a bridge or physical preparation to the sport using a holistic approach.
- In a skilled athlete the game looks effortless, easy, and fluid. They find adaptable, in the field solutions to varying movement patterns. Movement is context specific and relies on anticipation and reaction. Success requires a varied, expansive toolkit including optimal speeds, control and precision, as well as self management.
- Traditional physical prep is only part of the puzzle. Sport is a problem-solving activity where movements are used to create the necessary solutions.
- The key to learning is not memorizing or rehearsing behaviours, but being able to solve problems.

Inspire: **Dynamic Learning**

- Train the human being, before the athlete. Developmental athletes are dynamic and growing. Train the person in front of you today. As their capabilities change and they experience improvements in strength, power, speed or coordination, strategies must change.
- Consider Sean Mishcka's 3 Bs: the brain, biomechanics, and behaviour, ie "perception, action, intention".
- Encourage exploration, decision making, and creativity. Early exposure to these helps development.
- Karl Noel's Constraints-Led Approach explores how movement develops and emerges and how individuals, the environment, and tasks interact with each other.

Flow: **How**

- 5 themes: be comfortable in uncomfortable positions; manage uncertainty; appreciate space (create/close down); respect speed; team synergies.
- Train in context: teach athletes to read the environment, opponent, task and current situation, and create "affordances" for AUTHENTIC ability to maneuver within the constraints of the field.
- Offensive intentions: make opponents overcommit, force them into disadvantageous positions, create space.
- Defensive intentions: make the opponent predictable, close down space, disrupt offense and maintain advantage.
- 4 components: offense with/without the ball, defense with/without the ball.
- Teach them to look for intention, rather than skills. The goal is to maintain effective positioning for variability.
- Use failure as a learning tool. Use repetition without repetition through a change of circumstance with each rep.
- Encourage team synergy and individual creativity by allowing athletes to act their own drill, rep after rep.

Resources

- ❖ **Website:** <https://www.theuofstrength.com/>



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**Gil Hedley, Ph.D.**, is an author, educator and somanaut, dedicated to exploring inner space. He has been developing the field of "Integral Anatomy" for the past 25 years, teaching intensive workshops in the dissection lab, and documenting his approach visually with online videos and courses.

**Integral Anatomy** is an approach to understanding the human form that emphasizes textural layers, continuities and relationships. Gil is on a mission to challenge the cultural problematization of the body, and to share an integral vision of the human form. He believes the body is not a problem to be solved, but a gift to be received, appreciated and explored.

To study further with Gil, go to [www.gilhedley.com](http://www.gilhedley.com) and join the site. You will automatically receive **3 free full-length video courses** that will deeply impact your embodiment practice.

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