



Functional Performance Gym: By Nicholas Walsh

To date many clubs have been setting up community gyms in their local clubrooms. Will the GAA player benefit from this machine based extra safe equipment that may build beach muscles? Perhaps, but it surely won't give the GAA player an overall Functional base that is needed to play Gaelic Games.

In 2006 one of the my first projects as Football Development Manager for Cavan GAA, was to put together a "Gym" for the County teams and development squads of Cavan GAA. Within 5 weeks the old tea room was converted into a €20,000 state of the art functional performance gym.

In my opinion whatever you do on a football field has to resemble what you do in your Gym based activities. For example we take the high catch. If you break it down, basically you are doing a single leg half squat, an explosive jump but also an extension of the arms. Something like this can be resembled with a 4-6kg medicine ball. All can also be individual exercises.

Your ideal functional performance gym would also have a major emphasis on rehabilitation for those injured players and basically if they couldn't train on a Tuesday or Thursday night, then they would be in the gym looking out at the boys. The programme which an injured player would receive would be quite challenging and would encourage them to get back out training as soon as possible.

Our functional gym consists of a rower, a boxing bag and 2 spin bikes, just to top up on the cardio end of things when carrying a leg injury. Olympic Bench Press, 2 Chin up bars, Leg Press machine, Power Cage and Olympic platform to perform all Olympic lifts. Dumbbells 2-30kg along with a variety of medicine and Swiss balls help players to perform functional core exercises. Gym ropes hanging from the ceiling are an ideal tool to aid young players in the development of own body strength. Plyo boxes, FHIT bags and mirrors are the added extra's that take it to another level.

Does your club need to invest €20,000 for a state of the art facility? Perhaps not, but clubs should be providing and investing in some sort of strength and conditioning facilities, to at least allow their players to compete with the rest of the GAA world.





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In September 2008, GaelicPerformace will be launching ClubGym. This will allow Clubs to install a world class Strength and Conditioning Facility at a fraction of the normal costs associated. The ClubGym package will include consultancy, installation, and Education. ClubGym will be where the successful clubs of the future will invest their resources.