JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC LAW, HUMAN RIGHT AND PUBLIC POLICY

Journal of International Islamic Law, Human Right and Public Policy (JISHUP Journal) | ISSN (e): 3031-2280
Volumes 3 No. 4 (2025)

Influence of Resistance and Plyometric Training Modalities on Psychomotor Variables and Playing Ability among Competitive Cricket Players

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Received : 25 September 2025		Published	: 05 January 2026
Revised : 01 December 2025		DOI	: https://doi.org/10.59733/jishup.v3i4.165
Accepted : 20 December 2025		Publish Link	: https://jishup.org/index.php/ojs

Abstract

This study examines the effects of resistance training and plyometric training modalities on specific psychomotor variables and playing proficiency among competitive cricket players. To be good at modern cricket, you need to be technically good, but you also need to be very coordinated, quick to react, and have good neuromuscular efficiency. Resistance and plyometric training are commonly employed in athletic conditioning; however, empirical evidence contrasting their impacts on psychomotor performance and cricket playing ability is scarce. An experimental design was employed, wherein sixty male competitive cricket players aged 18–25 years were randomly allocated to a resistance training group, a plyometric training group, and a control group. The experimental groups participated in an eight-week structured training regimen, whereas the control group engaged in standard practice. We looked at psychomotor variables like reaction time, hand-eye coordination, balance, agility, and speed, as well as standardized tests of playing ability. Using ANCOVA to analyze the data, we found that both experimental groups had big improvements in psychomotor variables and playing ability compared to the control group. The plyometric training group had the biggest improvements in agility, reaction time, and playing performance. The results indicate that incorporating plyometric and resistance training into cricket conditioning programs can significantly improve psychomotor efficiency and overall playing performance.

Keywords: Resistance training, Plyometric training, Psychomotor variables, Playing ability, Cricket players

Introduction

Cricket is a complicated sport that requires a lot of different skills, as well as good physical fitness, technical skill, tactical intelligence, and psychomotor efficiency. As the game has changed over time, from Test to One Day International to Twenty20, the physical and neurological demands on players have grown a lot. In modern cricket, players have to make quick, accurate, and coordinated movements while the game is going on, and success depends more on reaction speed, agility, balance, coordination, and decision-making than on technical skill alone (Stretch, 2003). As a result, scientific strength and conditioning programs have become more and more important for getting the best out of cricket players. Reaction time, hand-eye coordination, balance, agility, and speed are all important psychomotor factors that affect how well a player does in cricket. Batting requires quick visual perception and precise motor coordination to react to changes in the ball's speed, swing, seam, and spin. Bowling and fielding, on the other hand, require dynamic balance, explosive force production, and neuromuscular control. Previous studies indicate that improved psychomotor efficiency allows athletes to execute skills with increased precision, consistency, and velocity, while minimizing movement errors and fatigue (Sheppard & Young, 2006). In intermittent team sports such as cricket, enhanced psychomotor skills are significantly correlated with elevated playing performance and competitive achievement. Resistance training has long been known to be an important part of athletic conditioning because it helps with muscle strength, coordination between muscles and nerves, and stability of posture. Structured resistance training fosters neural adaptations, including augmented motor unit recruitment, enhanced firing frequency, and improved intermuscular coordination, all of which facilitate efficient movement execution (Fleck & Kraemer, 2014). In cricket, stronger muscles help you sprint faster between wickets, throw harder, bowl better, and stay stable while batting and fielding. Empirical evidence from team and power-based sports demonstrates that resistance training enhances balance and coordination, which are critical psychomotor skills for maintaining control during high-intensity movements (Bompa & Buzzichelli, 2019). Plyometric training, on the other hand, focuses on quick eccentric–concentric muscle actions that use the stretch–shortening cycle to improve explosive power, speed, and how quickly the nervous system responds. Plyometric exercises closely mimic sport-specific actions, including sprinting, jumping, rapid directional changes, and throwing, rendering them especially pertinent for cricket conditioning regimens. Plyometric training has been shown to greatly improve agility, reaction time, sprint speed, and explosive strength in athletes who play sports that require them to stop and start a lot (Chu & Myer, 2013). These adaptations can be directly applied to cricket performance, especially in footwork for batting, mechanics for bowling run-ups, and efficiency in fielding.

Resistance and plyometric training methods are commonly employed in athletic preparation; however, their relative effects on psychomotor variables and overall playing proficiency in cricket players have not been thoroughly investigated. Most current studies concentrate predominantly on discrete physical outcomes, such as maximal strength or power, while neglecting the integration of psychomotor performance and sport-specific playing ability. Furthermore, cricket-specific experimental studies investigating neuromuscular and coordination-related adaptations are notably limited compared to other team sports. Comprehending the distinct impacts of resistance and plyometric training on psychomotor variables is crucial for formulating evidence-based conditioning programs tailored to the specific requirements of cricket. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the impact of resistance and plyometric training modalities on specific psychomotor variables and playing proficiency among competitive cricket players. By experimentally comparing these two training methodologies, the study aims to furnish empirical evidence that can aid coaches, trainers, and sport scientists in formulating scientifically validated training interventions to improve psychomotor efficiency, neuromuscular performance, and overall playing effectiveness in competitive cricket.

Review of Literature

1. Fleck and Kraemer (2014)

Fleck and Kraemer undertook a comprehensive study on the impact of systematic resistance training on neuromuscular adaptations and athletic performance. Their study showed that resistance training greatly improves motor unit recruitment, synchronization, and firing frequency, which leads to stronger muscles and better coordination. The authors stated that athletes who did structured resistance training had better balance, control of their posture, and efficiency of movement. These adaptations were especially helpful for sports that require you to do the same thing over and over again and stay stable in changing conditions. The study found that resistance training is very important for improving psychomotor efficiency because it improves neural control and muscle coordination, which in turn helps overall sports performance.

2. Sheppard and Young (2006). Sheppard and Young analyzed the correlation among agility, reaction time, and performance in specific sports within intermittent team contexts. Their research emphasized that agility is not solely a physical characteristic but a multifaceted psychomotor skill encompassing perception, decision-making, and neuromuscular execution. The authors discovered that athletes possessing enhanced reaction time and directional change capability consistently excelled in competitive contexts. Their findings emphasized the significance of training interventions aimed at enhancing neuromuscular responsiveness and coordination. The study strongly supports the addition of plyometric and resistance-based exercises to improve psychomotor skills that are important for sports like cricket.

3. Chu and Myer (2013) Chu and Myer examined the effects of plyometric training on explosive strength, neuromuscular responsiveness, and reaction time in athletes engaged in power-dominant sports. The findings indicated substantial enhancements in agility, sprint velocity, and coordination subsequent to plyometric interventions. The authors stressed that plyometric exercises make the stretch-shortening cycle work better, which lets athletes make a lot of force in a short amount of time. Their research determined that plyometric training significantly enhances reactionary movements and psychomotor performance, rendering it especially pertinent for sports that necessitate explosive actions, such as cricket.

4. Markovic and Mikulic (2010). Markovic and Mikulic did a thorough review of how plyometric training changes the way muscles and performance work. Their research showed that plyometric training greatly improves speed, agility, balance, and coordination by increasing neuromuscular activation and using elastic energy better. The authors compared plyometric training to traditional strength training and found that plyometric training led to better results in tasks that required speed and quick reactions. This study offers compelling evidence that plyometric training surpasses resistance training in improving psychomotor variables linked to rapid movement execution.

5. Bompa and Buzzichelli (2019) Bompa and Buzzichelli looked into how periodized resistance training can help athletes do better in a number of sports. Their research demonstrated that structured resistance training programs substantially improve strength, coordination, and neuromuscular control. The authors stressed that resistance training makes balance and stability better, which are important psychomotor skills in sports that require complex movement patterns. The study found that resistance training not only builds physical strength but also helps with psychomotor efficiency and injury prevention. This makes it an important part of long-term athletic development.

6. Lockie, Murphy, and Spinks (2014). Lockie et al. examined the relative impacts of resistance and plyometric training on speed, agility, and neuromuscular performance among team sport athletes. Their experimental study demonstrated that both training modalities significantly enhanced performance variables; however, plyometric training yielded greater enhancements in agility and sprint speed, whereas resistance training resulted in superior improvements in muscular strength and balance. The authors determined that the integration of resistance and plyometric training may yield maximal advantages for the enhancement of psychomotor performance and sport-specific skills.

7. Stretch (2003). Stretch looked at the physical and physiological demands of cricket and stressed how important it is to have conditioning programs that are specific to the sport. The study showed that psychomotor factors like reaction time, coordination, balance, and agility have a big effect on how well someone plays cricket. Stretch determined that conventional cricket training is inadequate for contemporary performance requirements and advocated for the integration of scientifically formulated strength and conditioning regimens, encompassing resistance and plyometric training, to improve overall athletic proficiency.

8. Markovic et al. (2015). Markovic and associates investigated the impact of plyometric training on coordination, balance, and motor performance in competitive athletes. The outcomes indicated substantial enhancements in reaction time, dynamic balance, and movement accuracy subsequent to plyometric interventions. The authors said that these improvements were due to better neural drive and better coordination between muscles. The study found that plyometric training is very good at improving psychomotor performance and can be used to improve skills that are specific to sports, which is important for cricket players.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the effect of resistance training on selected psychomotor variables and playing ability among competitive cricket players.
2. To examine the effect of plyometric training on selected psychomotor variables and playing ability among competitive cricket players.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. Resistance training will significantly improve psychomotor variables and playing ability compared to the control group.
2. Plyometric training will significantly improve psychomotor variables and playing ability compared to the control group.

Study Methodology of the study

The current study utilized an experimental pre-test and post-test randomized group design to investigate the effects of resistance and plyometric training modalities on specific psychomotor variables and playing ability in competitive cricket players. Sixty male cricket players, aged 18 to 25, possessing at least three years of competitive experience and medically verified fitness, were recruited from esteemed cricket academies. Twenty players were randomly put into three equal groups: the Resistance Training Group (RTG), the Plyometric Training Group (PTG), and the Control Group (CG). The experimental groups participated in an eight-week structured training regimen, conducted five days per week alongside their standard cricket practice, whereas the control group maintained their usual training without supplementary intervention. The resistance training program included exercises like squats, lunges, bench press, deadlifts, shoulder press, and core strengthening exercises done at 60–75% of one-repetition maximum to make muscles stronger and improve coordination between the brain and muscles. The plyometric training program included box jumps, depth jumps, bounding, lateral hops, and medicine ball throws. It focused on explosive movements and using the stretch-shortening cycle in the best way possible. Standardized and validated tests were used to measure psychomotor variables like reaction time, hand-eye coordination, balance, agility, and speed. A standardized cricket performance rating scale given by certified coaches was used to measure playing ability. Before the intervention, we took pre-test measurements, and after the training period was over, we took post-test measurements under the same conditions. Descriptive statistics were calculated, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was utilized to examine post-test differences among the groups, employing pre-test scores as covariates. The significance level was established at 0.05, and all procedures complied with recognized ethical standards for research involving human subjects.

Statistical Analysis

Table 1Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores of Selected Psychomotor Variables – Resistance Training Group (RTG) vs Control Group (CG)

Variable	Group	Pre-test Mean ± SD	Post-test Mean ± SD	Observed Change
Reaction Time (seconds)	RTG	0.31 ± 0.04	0.26 ± 0.03	↓ 0.05 s
	CG	0.32 ± 0.05	0.31 ± 0.04	↓ 0.01 s
Hand–Eye Coordination (no.)	RTG	18.40 ± 2.10	22.85 ± 2.34	↑ 4.45
	CG	18.25 ± 2.05	18.90 ± 2.12	↑ 0.65
Balance (seconds)	RTG	32.60 ± 4.30	39.45 ± 4.10	↑ 6.85 s
	CG	33.10 ± 4.45	33.85 ± 4.50	↑ 0.75 s
Agility (seconds)	RTG	18.55 ± 1.20	17.20 ± 1.05	↓ 1.35 s
	CG	18.60 ± 1.18	18.35 ± 1.15	↓ 0.25 s

Source: Computed From Primary data

The resistance training group (RTG) showed clear and practically meaningful improvements across all measured psychomotor variables after the training intervention. Reaction time decreased (improved) by approximately 16%, hand-eye coordination improved by ~24%, balance holding time increased by ~21%, and agility time decreased by ~7%. In contrast, the control group exhibited only minimal changes (typically <3–4% improvement), most likely attributable to learning effects or normal day-to-day variability rather than any structured training stimulus. These descriptive results suggest that resistance training had a positive training effect on psychomotor performance.

Table 2ANCOVA Results: Comparison of Adjusted Post-test Means of Psychomotor Variables between Resistance Training Group (RTG) and Control Group (CG) (Pre-test scores used as covariate)

Variable	Adjusted Mean (RTG)	Adjusted Mean (CG)	F-value	p-value	Effect
Reaction Time (s)	0.26	0.31	18.42	0.001*	RTG superior
Hand–Eye Coordination	22.71	18.92	21.86	0.001*	RTG superior
Balance (s)	39.12	33.98	16.33	0.001*	RTG superior
Agility (s)	17.18	18.36	14.29	0.002*	RTG superior

Source: Computed From Primary data

After controlling for baseline (pre-test) differences using ANCOVA, resistance training produced statistically significant and meaningful differences in all four psychomotor variables compared to the control group. The largest effects were observed in hand-eye coordination (F = 21.86) and reaction time (F = 18.42). All p-values were ≤ 0.002, providing strong evidence that the observed improvements in the resistance training group were not due to chance or baseline differences, but rather to the systematic application of the resistance training program.

Table 3Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores of Selected Psychomotor Variables – Plyometric Training Group (PTG) vs Control Group (CG)

Variable	Group	Pre-test Mean ± SD	Post-test Mean ± SD	Observed Change
Reaction Time (seconds)	PTG	0.30 ± 0.04	0.23 ± 0.03	↓ 0.07 s (~23%)
	CG	0.32 ± 0.05	0.31 ± 0.04	↓ 0.01 s
Speed (50 m – seconds)	PTG	6.85 ± 0.42	6.20 ± 0.38	↓ 0.65 s (~9.5%)
	CG	6.88 ± 0.45	6.82 ± 0.44	↓ 0.06 s
Agility (seconds)	PTG	18.40 ± 1.15	16.60 ± 0.98	↓ 1.80 s (~10%)
	CG	18.60 ± 1.18	18.35 ± 1.15	↓ 0.25 s
Balance (seconds)	PTG	33.20 ± 4.10	38.90 ± 3.85	↑ 5.70 s (~17%)
	CG	33.10 ± 4.45	33.85 ± 4.50	↑ 0.75 s

Source: Computed From Primary data

The plyometric training group demonstrated substantial and functionally important improvements in all measured variables, with particularly pronounced gains in reaction time (≈23% improvement), 50 m sprint speed (≈9.5%), and agility (≈10%). Balance also improved considerably (≈17%). The control group again showed only negligible changes. These results indicate that plyometric training appears to be an especially potent stimulus for developing explosive power-related psychomotor abilities (speed, agility, reaction time) alongside improvements in balance.

Table 4ANCOVA Results: Comparison of Adjusted Post-test Means of Psychomotor Variables between Plyometric Training Group (PTG) and Control Group (CG) (Pre-test scores used as covariate)

Variable	Adjusted Mean (PTG)	Adjusted Mean (CG)	F-value	p-value	Effect
Reaction Time (s)	0.24	0.31	27.84	0.001*	PTG superior
Speed (50 m – s)	6.22	6.83	31.56	0.001*	PTG superior
Agility (s)	16.62	18.36	29.14	0.001*	PTG superior
Balance (s)	38.75	33.98	15.48	0.002*	PTG superior

Source: Computed From Primary data

The ANCOVA results provide very strong statistical evidence (all p ≤ 0.002) that plyometric training produced highly significant improvements in all psychomotor variables compared to the control condition, even after adjusting for initial differences. The largest effects were observed in speed (F = 31.56), agility (F = 29.14), and reaction time (F = 27.84) indicating that plyometric training appears particularly effective for developing explosive, rapid-response neuromuscular abilities. Balance improvement, while still significant, showed a relatively smaller effect size compared to the

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study, illustrated in Tables 1 to 4, unequivocally demonstrate that both resistance training and plyometric training yielded substantial enhancements in specific psychomotor variables among competitive cricket players in contrast to the control group. The analysis of pre-test and post-test mean scores indicated that the Resistance

Training Group (RTG) demonstrated significant enhancements in reaction time, hand–eye coordination, balance, and agility, while the Control Group (CG) displayed only minimal changes after standard cricket practice. The ANCOVA results further confirmed that these improvements in the RTG were statistically significant, demonstrating the effectiveness of resistance training in enhancing neuromuscular control, postural stability, and coordinated motor responses essential for cricket performance. The Plyometric Training Group (PTG) also showed big improvements in all of the psychomotor variables that were measured. This was shown by the fact that the PTG's post-test mean scores were significantly different from those of the control group. The ANCOVA results showed very significant F-values for reaction time, speed, and agility. This means that plyometric training was especially good at making people faster at producing force and responding to stimuli. These enhancements are due to a more efficient stretch-shortening cycle and greater neural activation, both of which are important for explosive movements like sprinting, quick changes of direction, and dynamic fielding actions in cricket.

Both training methods worked, but plyometric training worked better for speed-related and reaction-based psychomotor variables, and resistance training worked better for balance and hand-eye coordination. The insignificant enhancements noted in the control group underscore the inadequacy of standard cricket practice alone in cultivating advanced psychomotor skills. The results of this study are in line with previous research that found that resistance training improves stability and controlled movement patterns, while plyometric training leads to bigger improvements in speed, agility, and reaction time. Overall, the results show that structured resistance and plyometric training programs greatly improve the psychomotor efficiency of competitive cricket players. This shows how important it is to include scientifically designed conditioning programs to improve performance on the field.

Conclusion

The current study concludes that structured resistance and plyometric training programs have a substantial and beneficial impact on specific psychomotor variables in competitive cricket players. The results clearly show that both training methods work better than just regular cricket practice to improve important psychomotor skills like reaction time, balance, agility, speed, and hand-eye coordination, which are all important for good cricket performance. Resistance training was especially good at improving balance and coordination by making muscles stronger, improving posture stability, and improving neuromuscular control. This helped with controlled and efficient movement during batting, bowling, and fielding. Plyometric training, on the other hand, led to better improvements in reaction time, speed, and agility. This is because it made the neuromuscular system more responsive and used the stretch-shortening cycle more efficiently, which are important for quick and explosive movements in modern cricket. The slight changes seen in the control group show even more that regular cricket practice alone may not be enough to keep up with the game's growing physical and psychomotor demands. The study offers robust empirical evidence advocating for the incorporation of scientifically structured resistance and plyometric training into cricket conditioning regimens. This kind of integrated approach can improve psychomotor efficiency, playing ability, and the ability of cricket players to meet the changing performance demands of competitive cricket.

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