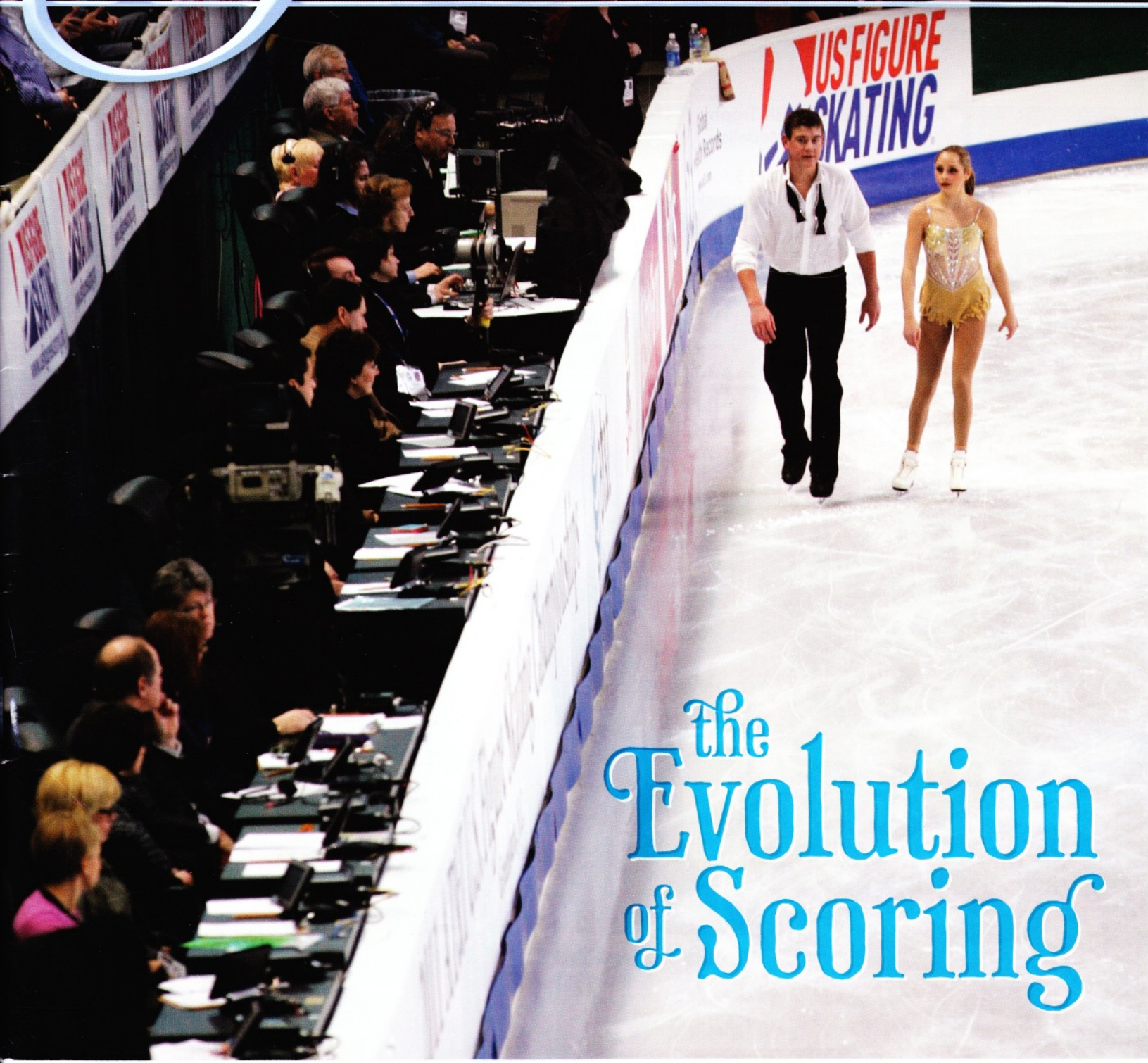


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The
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Sport Science

HEIDI THIBERT

Rossiter: Steps for Injury Prevention

By Nancy Stilson-Herzog and David Henre

What do overly stiff boots and joints have in common?

They can be the culprit of overuse injuries that affect skaters' feet and ankles, and contribute to injuries further up the kinetic chain including shin splints, and pain in the lower back, hips and knees. Today's figure skaters, focusing on triple and quadruple technical jump combinations, spins, pairs and dance lifts, are experiencing the performance-crippling effects of lace bite, pump bumps, tendonitis and stress fractures.

Although repetition is the key to learning, it unfortunately increases muscle tightness and joint clogging, which can cramp flexibility and mobility. Limited range of movement prevents skaters from performing a move accurately, making him or her prone to falling and overuse injuries. As figure skating performances dramatically evolve, so do overuse injuries and the dire need for smarter off-ice conditioning.

Progressive off-ice conditioning coaches, Nancy Stilson-Herzog and David Henre, work with the Fort Collins Figure Skating Club in Colorado to attack overuse injuries at the source of the problem. They use a convenient, natural and non-invasive technique—the Rossiter System—that takes the “issue out of tissue.”

Rossiter is a proven connective tissue stretching method used for injury prevention and rehabilitation that quickly and effectively restores proper function in the body. Rossiter returns the body's corrupted connective tissue to normal, allowing all body parts and organs to move and function as they're supposed to. “Athletes stretch their muscles and need to stretch their connective tissue too,” said David Henre, certified Rossiter Instructor. “Rossiter goes hand-in-hand with the flexibility and mobility components of off-ice conditioning.”

HOW DOES ROSSITER WORK?

The anatomical system of space inside your body is the connective tissue system. Tightness, swelling, pain, aching and limited movement in muscles and joints occurs when connective tissue shortens and tightens from repetition

HOW TO FIND A ROSSITER COACH

To find a Rossiter coach in your area, visit www.therossitersystem.com and contact the instructor in your region.

HOW TO BECOME A ROSSITER COACH

Visit www.therossitersystem.com to register for classes.

and overuse. Rossiter attacks the source of a problem by fundamentally changing the nature of connective tissue. It loosens connective tissue naturally while restoring the space and circulation the body requires to function properly.

“Everything in the body revolves around the theory of appropriate space,” Henre said. “Your body can tighten down so much, requiring assisted relief. Rossiter first provides temporary relief like massages. However, it has much greater long-term effects because we're actually helping you

manipulate your tissue.”

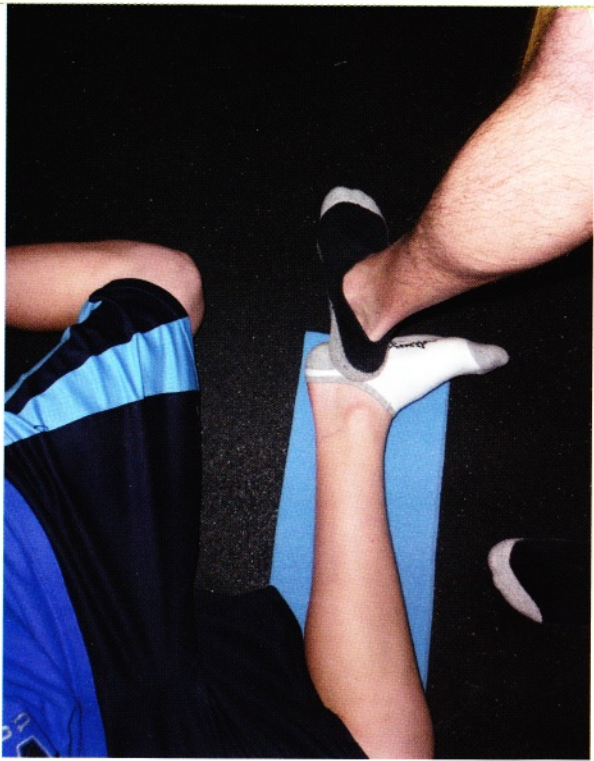
Rossiter is deeper than stretching. It involves two people: the coach and the person in charge (client). The coach uses a pin-and-stretch method to anchor connective tissue in key areas while guiding the client through a series of stretches to restore space and mobility. These are deep and technical stretches the skater cannot achieve on his/her own. “The patient is the one in control,” Henre said. “We don't stretch your connective tissue for you. We pin it down so you can achieve a deeper stretch.”

Most of the 200 Rossiter stretches involve weight from the coach's foot; a few involve weight from the elbow. The average session varies from 15-45 minutes and involves elongating and loosening connective tissue so that movement becomes pain-free, supple, fluid and normal.

ROSSITER FOR SAFETY

Young skaters with immature bodies are at risk of serious musculoskeletal injuries, if not early in their skating career, than later. “Rossiter is the key to longevity of your connective tissue and skating career,” said Stilson-Herzog, advanced certified Rossiter Coach. “It allows skaters to reach their goals with as little risk of injury as possible because it allows a greater range of motion. If you have mobility and strength in your joints, your body has a greater tolerance for extreme movement.”

“Muscles are made for moving,” Henre added. “If a person can't move an area the way it is designed to move, the area will deteriorate, weaken, shrink or become



nonfunctional.” Joint position and motion are controlled by surrounding muscles. Joints need a balance of flexibility on all sides to move in a proper range of motion. If an imbalance of muscle support and length exists, a skater will perform a slightly misaligned movement over-and-over, which makes him or her more prone to injury. When muscles are restricted in movement, nerve impulses are suppressed in their ability to send messages. Fatigued impulses lead to miscommunication and delayed reaction time. Rossiter keeps tissue loose allowing for adequate circulation, blood flow and control.

ROSSITER FOR PERFORMANCE

Joint immobility and inflexibility restrict proper skating techniques. “Sure spirals and split jumps require extraordinary flexibility, but even basic elements require a certain muscle length to be performed safely and accurately,” Stilson-Herzog said.

Muscle flexibility and joint mobility control the angle of the ankle, knee and hip joint on a jump take-off and landing. Any deficit in muscle length can affect the quality of a jump. “Rossiter has proven to enhance performance by increasing range of motion,” Henre said. “Skaters are experiencing increased jump height, stroking power, rotation speed of jumps, improved upper-body strength for choreography movements and enhanced posture on ice.”

“If we keep everything loose and mobile, then muscles will fire properly,” Stilson-Herzog said. “This affects how much control skaters have of their body and their aptitude to succeed. Kids are more confident as they’re noticing they’re faster and more powerful.”

ROSSITER FOR RECOVERY

Rossiter naturally expedites any rehabilitation process and gets injured skaters back on the ice quicker than surgery recovery time. When connective tissue is injured, overworked

or traumatized, it shortens and the body loses its ability to communicate effectively. Nerves cannot communicate with muscles; messages to and from the brain are short-circuited. Rossiter alleviates pressure in the injured tissue, which allows the body to receive adequate amounts of enriching food and oxygen. Tissue needs a certain amount of nutrition to remain healthy, vibrant, free of waste and able to repair and perform freely.

ROSSITER: FOOT-IN-FOOT WITH OFF-ICE CONDITIONING

Off-ice conditioning coaches are required to pay careful attention to the health of their skaters’ bodies. “Off-ice conditioning coaches understand the physiology of each individual skater’s body,” Henre said. “It makes sense to have your trainer, the person whose job is to understand and improve your body, to be the one who makes corrections.”

Personal trainers who are certified to apply Rossiter have the ability to address issues immediately. “If the skater or coach recognizes a problem, we can get to the issue right away, which makes Rossiter convenient and cost effective,” Stilson-Herzog said. “Skaters don’t have to schedule an appointment or wait for results because we can get to the source of the problem and attack the issue immediately.”

Rossiter helps off-ice conditioning coaches gain a competitive advantage. It improves the effectiveness of work with clients, boosts income and gives the trainer a powerful approach to pain relief that does not involve drugs, surgery, splints/braces/appliances or medical intervention. “It’s a valuable system to add to your tool box,” Stilson-Herzog said. “There’s a great demand for off-ice conditioning coaches to be able to perform these preventative exercises because we spend a lot of time with the skaters. We need to be well-versed in all things related to fitness and recovery.”

Parents and coaches trust Rossiter. “We’ve built a high level of trust within our figure skating network,” Stilson-Herzog said. “The coaches and parents always say ‘go to the trainer—tell them what’s going on’ and the skaters know how we can help them. They are conditioned to know when they need to be stepped on and where they need to be stepped on. Parents, coaches and skaters believe in Rossiter. David is The Pain Slayer and I’m The Miracle Worker.” ❖

Nancy Stilson-Herzog has over 25 years of personal training and group fitness class experience and has been working with figure skaters for 14 years. Nancy became a certified Rossiter Coach in 2008 and in August 2010, she completed the advanced Rossiter workshop ‘Pain Slayer,’ which only 10 people in the world have completed. fitnas@hotmail.com; 970-231-7201

David Henre is active in Colorado’s athletic and bodywork community. David is one of the top 12 original Rossiter instructors in the United States and the first in Colorado. He became a certified Rossiter coach in 2004 and has trained more than 50 Rossiter coaches. In August 2010, he completed the advanced Rossiter workshop, Pain Slayer, which only 10 people in the world have completed. coloradocore@rossiter.com; 970-420-9603