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Offseason Training Programs Improve Fitness Of Special Olympic Athletes

Department of Health and Human Performance, University of Montana



Brittany Graham

Introduction/Purpose

- Many Special Olympic athletes have not been known to follow an offseason training program. The aim of this study was to provide individualized fitness programs for each of the participating athletes, and to have them work out twice weekly following their personalized program.
- This is an ongoing study involving many athletes that are part of the YMCA's "Get Fit For Sport" program. This poster describes my findings with the single female athlete that I had designed a program for and worked out with on a weekly basis at the YMCA.

Materials and Methods

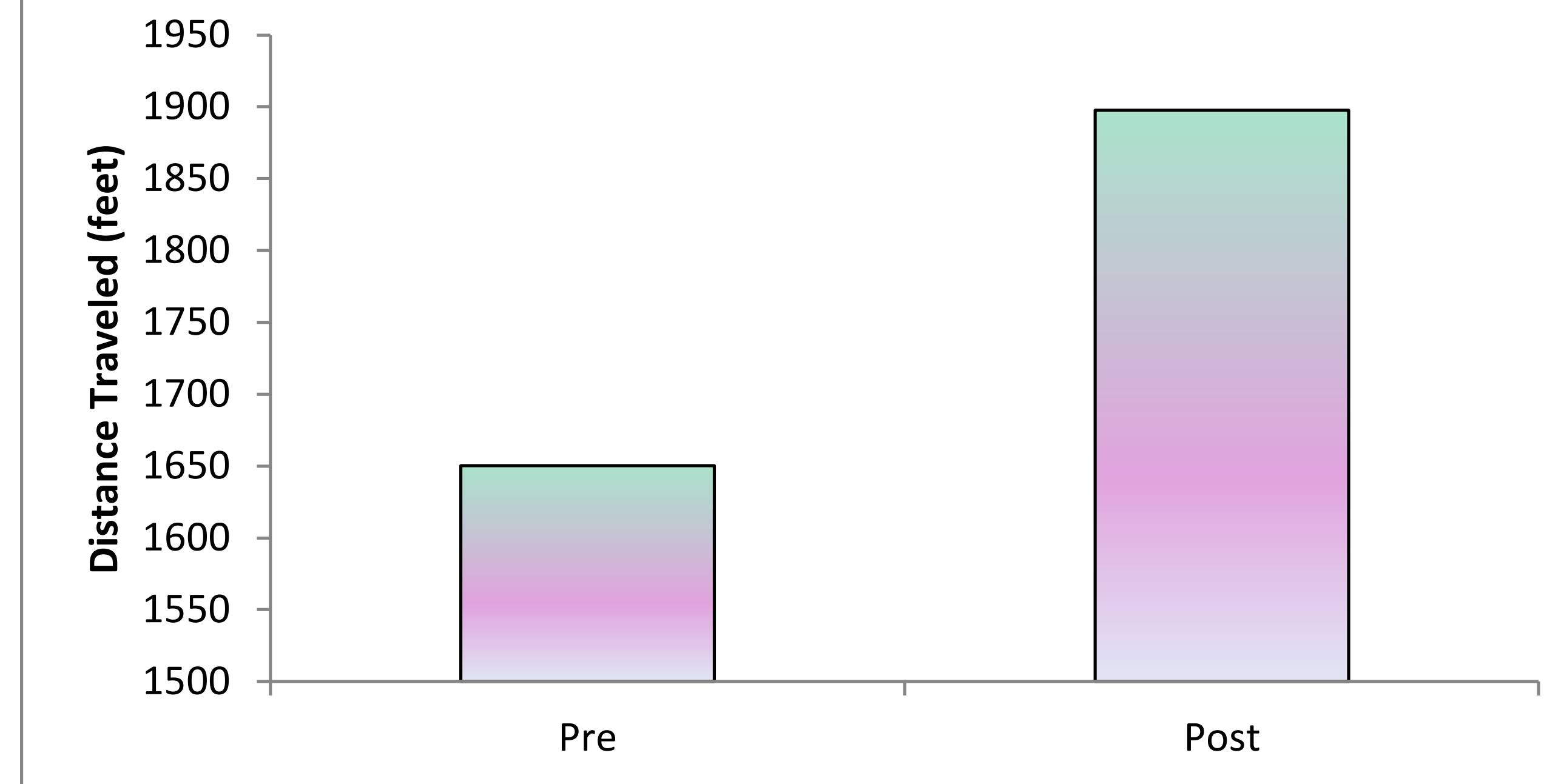
- The athletes were tested before the start of the program and after 6 weeks of training.
- Each athlete was tested in the fields of aerobic fitness, strength, balance, and flexibility.
- Aerobic Fitness**
timed 3-minute walk/run
- Strength**
timed sit-to-stand test
partial sit-up test
seated push-up test
- Balance**
timed single leg stance (eyes open)
timed single leg stance (eyes closed)
multidirectional, functional reach test
- Flexibility**
Modified Apley's Test for functional shoulder rotation
Sit & Reach test

Results

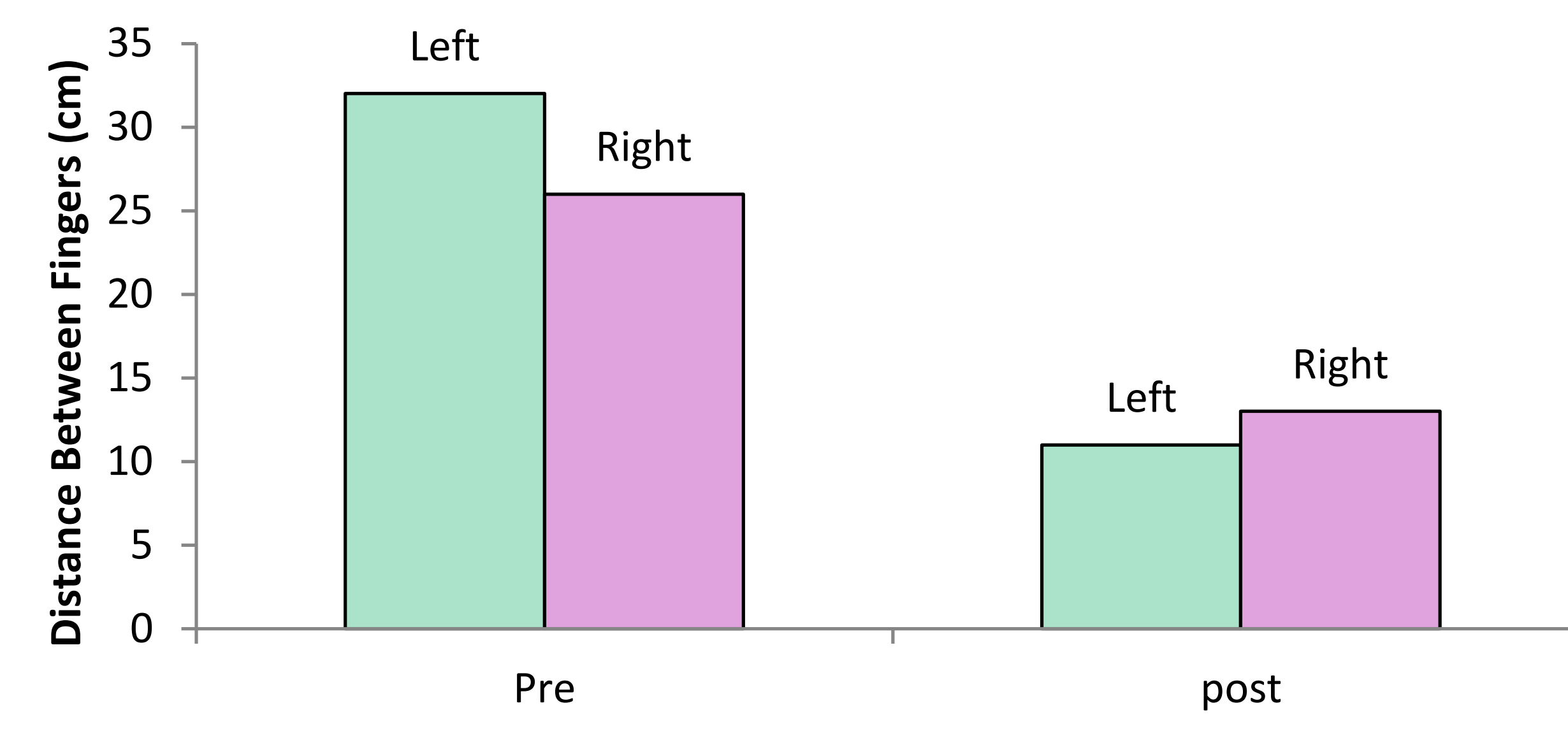
After 6 weeks of training...

- 247.5 ft. increase for aerobic test
- 8.5% average increase on strength tests
- Major Improvement (>100%) on flexibility tests
- No Improvement on balance tests

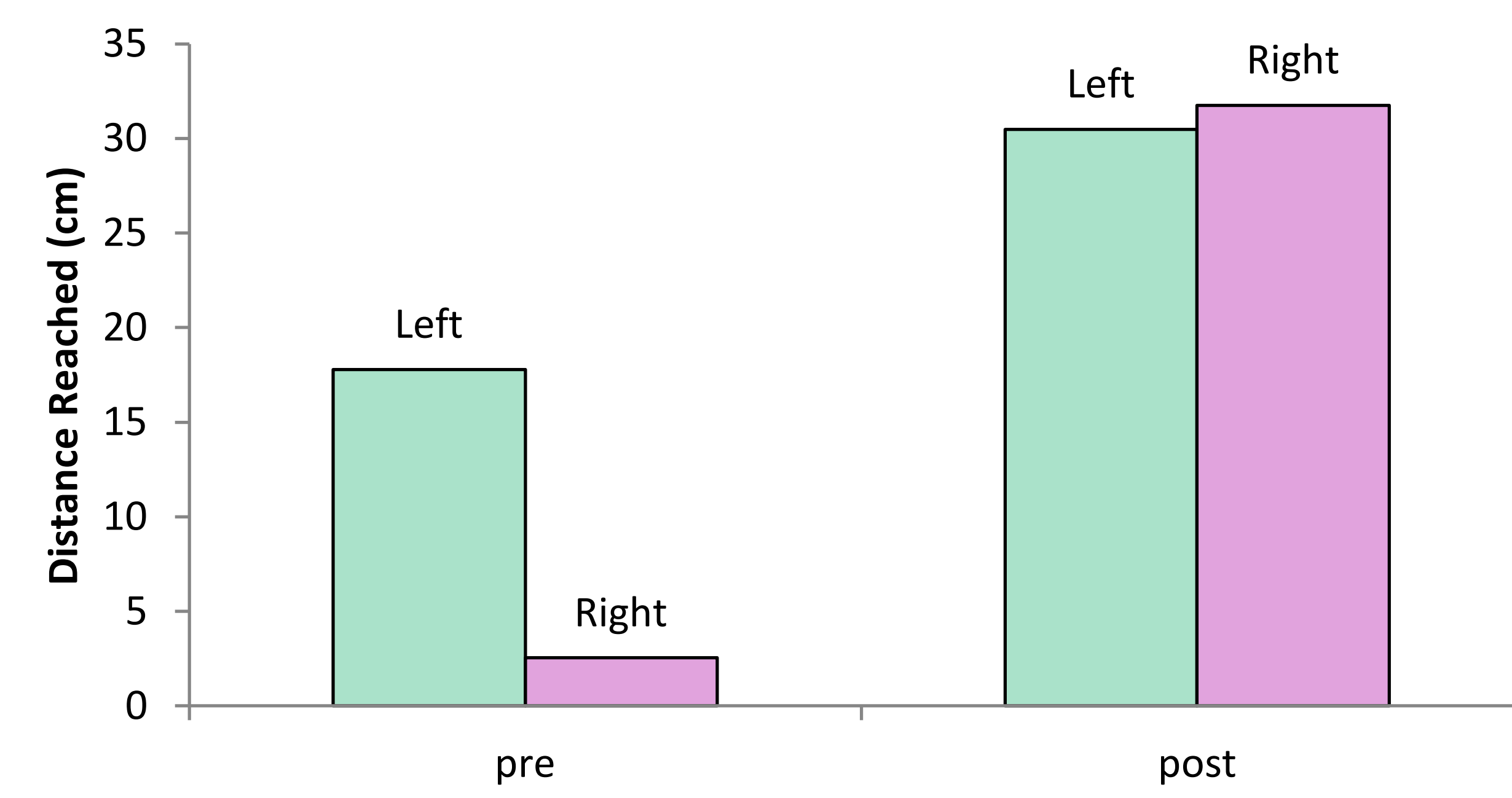
Timed 3-Minute Walk/Run



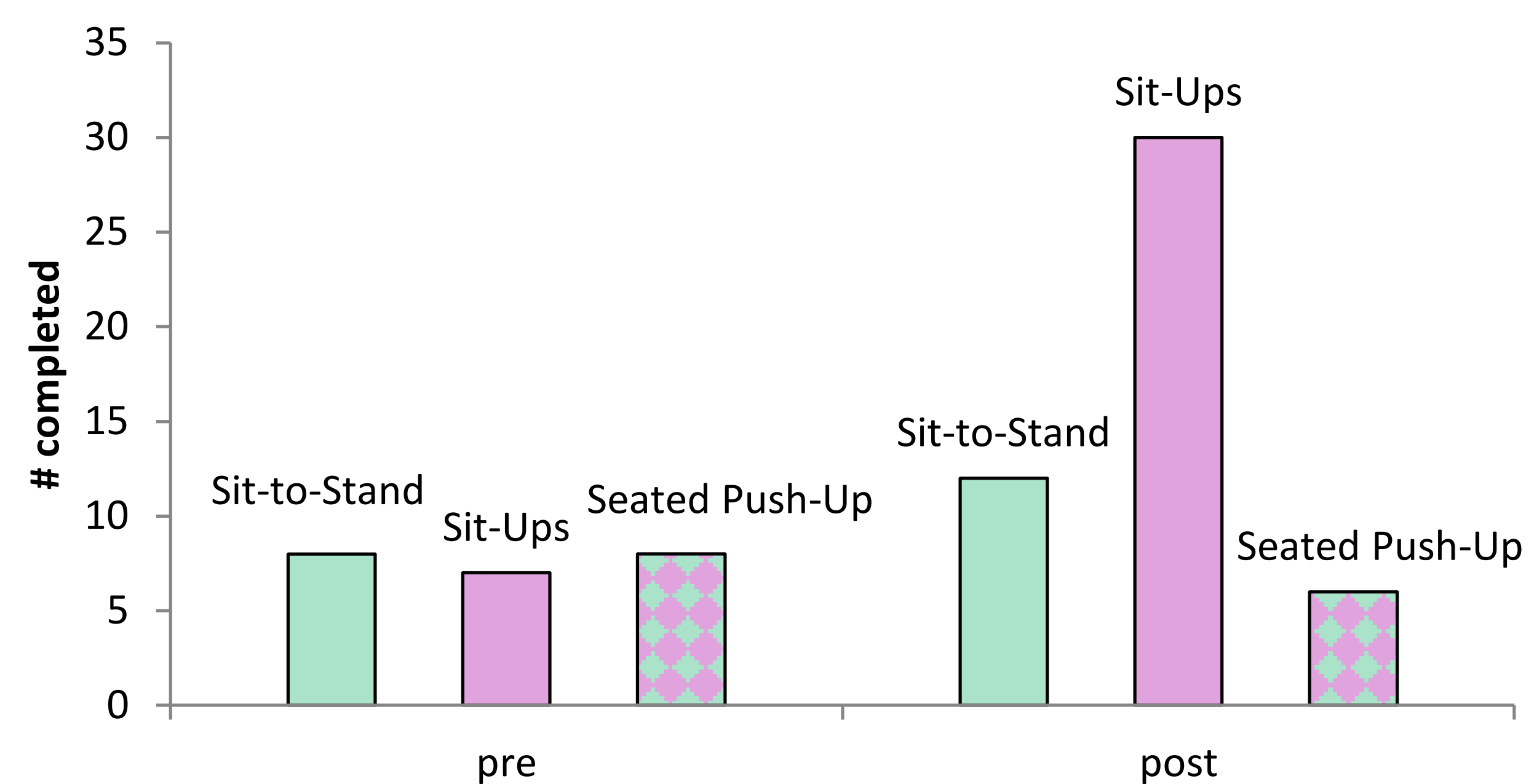
Modified Apley's Test For Functional Shoulder Rotation



Sit & Reach Test



Strength Tests



Conclusions and Implications

- The implementation of an off-season training program for Special Olympic athletes is already generating positive results.
- The continuation of personalized, training programs for these athletes is likely to yield even further improvement of their fitness levels.

Acknowledgments

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