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High Intensity Training (HIT) has emerged as a new form of exercise that challenges traditional views on the best way to improve health. This approach involves short bursts of intense activity, followed by recovery periods, which can be applied to various sports like cycling, jogging, and swimming. ========== According to recent research published in the Journal of Physiology, Professor Martin Gibala from McMaster University in Canada has found that doing less exercise can be more effective than time-consuming periods of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities. HIT is a simple yet effective method that involves a warm-up period followed by short bursts of intense activity, usually lasting 30 seconds to one minute. ========== High-Intensity Interval Training (HIT) has been shown to be more effective than regular exercise in burning calories, with up to 80% of the body's muscles being engaged compared to up to 40% for moderate jogging or cycling. Several experiments have been conducted to measure the caloric burn of HIT workouts. One study led by Kyle Sevits at the University of Colorado involved five male volunteers who were tested for their heart health and body composition. The participants were given a specific diet and then subjected to a short but intense workout on a gym bike, pedaling as fast as possible for 5 x 30-second periods with 4-minute recovery periods in between. The results showed that the volunteers burned an average of 200 extra calories despite only doing high-intensity exercise for just 2.5 minutes. Other studies have also revealed similar results. In Japan, a team from the National Institute of Fitness and Sport separated individuals into two groups. One group performed moderate-intensity exercise for five hours per week over six weeks, while the other group did eight 20-second intense workouts followed by ten seconds of rest. The oxygen intake of the second group improved by 15%, compared to 9% for the first group. High-Intensity Training (HIT) has been found to increase human growth hormone (HGH) production by up to 450% during the 24 hours after a workout, which can lead to increased calorie burning and slowed-down ageing process. ========== The Thames Tunnel was a groundbreaking engineering feat built under the River Thames in London. It held great significance and attracted a significant number of visitors from all walks of life. The initial opening in 1843 sparked immense curiosity, earning it an exaggerated title as the "Eight Wonder of the World." Initially, the tunnel was reserved for pedestrians only, with thousands of people flocking to witness its marvels on its inaugural day. This unique attraction catered to a diverse range of individuals, including both working-class citizens who used it as a practical means of crossing the river while commuting to work, and the middle and upper classes who viewed it as a tourist experience. As an expensive venture at £500,000, the tunnel's financial success was far from guaranteed. Although it attracted approximately 2 million visitors annually, each individual paid only a penny to use the facility. Despite initial expectations of generating revenue through cargo transportation via wheeled vehicles, these plans ultimately failed. The tunnel eventually transformed into a tourist attraction focused on selling souvenirs and serving as an exclusive pathway between riverbanks. However, in 1865, the Thames Tunnel became an integral part of the London Underground railway system, continuing to be utilized today.The ancient Egyptians built over a hundred pyramids, but the most famous one is the Great Pyramid of Giza, which is only one of them. There's been a lot of discussion about how they were built, especially considering that it was over 4,000 years ago and technology was not advanced enough at that time. Scientists are still working to figure it out. They had to move huge blocks of stone from quarries to the pyramids, which is an incredible feat given the distance and weight of the stones. They used boats on rivers or wooden sledges on land to transport the materials. It's surprising that they didn't use wheels, as the ground was too soft for them. To make the sledges move, the Egyptians would wet the sand in front of it, which helped reduce friction. These sledges were pulled by people or animals, depending on how easy it was to move over the ground. Interestingly, the Romans also used similar methods 2,000 years later at Baalbek. Once the blocks arrived at the construction site, they were moved into place using a ramp and pulley system. The ancient Egyptians are known for their impressive building skills, particularly given the primitive technology they used. However, there's no magic or mysticism involved in how they built the pyramids, as people often think. While some believe that the Great Pyramid was built using slave labor, this theory has been discredited. The first pyramid built in a pyramid shape is believed to be the Stepped Pyramid, which consists of six steps stacked on top of each other. The credit for building a smooth-sided pyramid goes to Imhotep, an architect commissioned by King Sneferu. The construction of pyramids was not a one-time achievement but rather the result of trial and error. Scientists have solved the mystery of how the pyramids were built, but some people may think that magic played a role. The Great Pyramid was indeed built using advanced techniques, not slave labor. It took several attempts to get it right. ========== Beethoven was born on December 16, 1770. He is widely considered the greatest composer of all time. His father started teaching him music at a very young age, but his approach was brutal and affected Beethoven for life. Beethoven practiced almost daily, studying violin and clavier with his father, as well as taking additional lessons from organists in town. Beethoven displayed flashes of creativity from an early age, traits that would later become characteristic of his most original work - his Symphony No. 3, "Eroica". This symphony debuted in Vienna in 1805 but caused problems for the musicians due to its complexity. At the same time, Beethoven struggled with his hearing and tried to conceal this issue. Beethoven's life was often miserable despite producing beautiful music. He died on March 26, 1827. ========== The prevalence of unwanted messages in China has led to the country being ranked as one of the top recipients of unsolicited texts. In 2013, the number of such messages surpassed 300 billion, with the majority received by residents of Shanghai and Beijing. On the other hand, Americans sent more than any other nation in 2011.Techniques Mind mapping Construct a visual map with “HIIT” at the center, extending to related ideas: Intensity levels (high, low), Time intervals (work, rest), Benefits (fat burn, cardiovascular health), Exercise types (running, cycling, bodyweight exercises), Equipment (treadmill, stationary bike, no gear). Storytelling Envision a narrative: “Hannah’s Amazing Interval Training” where Hannah, initially struggling with long, dull workouts, discovers HIIT. She alternates between sprinting (high-intensity) and walking (low-intensity), finishing her session in half the time and feeling more energized than ever. Practice Exercises Draft a paragraph highlighting the advantages of high-intensity interval training for busy professionals. Contrast high-intensity interval training with steady-state cardio in a short essay. Design a sample workout plan for a beginner incorporating high-intensity interval training. Debate how high-intensity interval training might be adjusted for different age groups or fitness levels. Evaluate the potential downsides or risks of high-intensity interval training and suggest safety measures. Conclusion Mastering the concept and vocabulary of high-intensity interval training can significantly boost your performance in the IELTS exam, especially in tasks related to health, fitness, and lifestyle topics. Remember to practice using this term in various contexts and sentence structures to become more comfortable with it. We encourage you to start integrating “high-intensity interval training” into your English practice immediately. Try creating your own sentences or short paragraphs using this term and related vocabulary. If you have any questions about how to use this phrase or want to share your practice attempts, please feel free to leave a comment below. Your engagement will not only help you but also benefit other learners in our community. For further exploration of related fitness concepts, you might find our articles on sprint intervals and fartlek training helpful in expanding your vocabulary in this area. Athletes and stress IELTS Reading test answers & explanation For IELTS candidates, navigating complex passages in the Reading section can be challenging, and Cambridge IELTS 19 offers a perfect example. In Test 2, Passage 2, we explore the psychological and physiological stress faced by athletes. From the anxiety that top tennis player Emma Raducanu experienced during a high-pressure match, to the scientific breakdown of how stress hormones impact performance, this passage provides a rich exploration of the demands athletes endure. For students aiming to excel in the IELTS Reading section, this blog post will dissect key strategies and examples from the passage to enhance both comprehension and scoring potential. Whether you’re targeting a band 7 or beyond, understanding complex texts like these can give you an edge. Let’s break it down and help you score higher in your next IELTS Reading exam! You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14–26, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below. Athletes and stress A It isn’t easy being a professional athlete. Not only are the physical demands greater than most people could handle, athletes also face intense psychological pressure during competition. This is something that British tennis player Emma Raducanu wrote about on social media following her withdrawal from the 2021 Wimbledon tournament. Though the young player had been doing well in the tournament, she began having difficulty regulating her breathing and heart rate during a match, which she later attributed to ‘the accumulation of the excitement and the buzz’. B For athletes, some level of performance stress is almost unavoidable. But there are many different factors that dictate just how people’s minds and bodies respond to stressful events. Typically, stress is the result of an exchange between two factors: demands and resources. An athlete may feel stressed about an event if they feel the demands on them are greater than they can handle. These demands include the high level of physical and mental effort required to succeed, and also the athlete’s concerns about the difficulty of the event, their chance of succeeding, and any potential dangers such as injury. Resources, on the other hand, are a person’s ability to cope with these demands. These include factors such as the competitor’s degree of confidence, how much they believe they can control the situation’s outcome, and whether they’re looking forward to the event or not. C Each new demand or change in circumstances affects whether a person responds positively or negatively to stress. Typically, the more resources a person feels they have in handling the situation, the more positive their stress response. This positive stress response is called a challenge state. But should the person feel there are too many demands placed on them, the more During high-pressure situations, individuals may experience a negative stress response known as a threat state. Research indicates that challenge states lead to enhanced performance, whereas threat states result in decreased performance. In Emma Raducanu's case, the heightened audience expectations and confrontations with more skilled opponents might have led her to perceive increased demands, ultimately triggering a threat response within herself. This dichotomy between challenge and threat responses significantly impacts an individual's physiological reaction to stressors, influencing the production of adrenaline and cortisol – commonly referred to as 'stress hormones'. When in a challenge state, adrenaline increases blood flow from the heart and expands blood vessels, providing more energy to muscles and the brain. This correlation has been consistently observed across various sports, including cricket batting, golf putting, and football penalty taking. However, during a threat state, cortisol counteracts the positive effects of adrenaline, resulting in constricted blood vessels, elevated blood pressure, slower psychological responses, and accelerated heart rate. Essentially, a threat state induces anxiety, impairing decision-making capabilities and leading to subpar performance. In tennis players specifically, cortisol has been linked with more unsuccessful serves and heightened anxiety. It's worth noting that athletes often experience anxiety when under pressure, characterized by increased heart rate, perspiration, heart palpitations, muscle tremors, shortness of breath, headaches, nausea, stomach pain, weakness, and an overwhelming urge to escape in extreme cases. Anxiety can also compromise concentration and self-control, leading to overthinking. The intensity of this experience depends on the individual's perception of demands versus available resources. Anxiety may manifest as either excitement or nervousness, depending on the stress response. Prolonged negative stress responses can have damaging effects on both physical and mental health, increasing the risk of heart disease and depression in repeated cases. Fortunately, athletes can foster a positive response under pressure through strategic language use by themselves and others (coaches or parents). Psychologists can also assist athletes in reinterpreting their physiological reactions – for instance, reframing a faster heartbeat as excitement rather than nerves. Moreover, developing psychological skills such as visualization can help alleviate physiological responses to threats. Visualization might involve recreating mental images of successful past performances or envisioning future success. Additionally, training under simulated competitive pressure can aid athletes in learning how to handle stress effectively. This could include tasks like scoring against peers to mimic competition while still allowing for stress management practice.Calisthenics is a time-tested method of resistance training that has been employed by various cultures throughout history. ========== Athletes and stress IELTS Reading passage Summary The passage “Athletes and Stress” discusses the challenges faced by athletes, particularly the psychological pressures of competition. It starts with a real-world example of British tennis player Emma Raducanu, who withdrew from Wimbledon 2021 due to performance stress, illustrating the intense mental strain athletes endure. The passage explains that stress in athletes results from the balance between demands (such as physical and mental effort or risks) and resources (such as confidence or perceived control). When athletes feel overwhelmed by demands, they experience a “threat state,” leading to poorer performance, while feeling capable of meeting demands results in a “challenge state,” enhancing performance. It also details the physiological effects of stress, noting how hormones like adrenaline improve performance in a challenge state, while cortisol hampers it in a threat state. The passage also delves into how anxiety manifests in athletes, its harmful effects if not managed, and how athletes can cope with stress through techniques like visualization, positive language, and recreating competitive pressure in training. This comprehensive explanation of stress and anxiety in sports highlights both the negative effects and the strategies to overcome these challenges for better athletic performance. ========== calisthenics has been used for physical development using only the body's own weight, dating back to around 480 B.C. with Herodotus' account of the Battle of Thermopolylae, where Spartan warriors were said to have practised bizarre movements resembling a tribal dance to build strength and endurance. calisthenics revives ancient greece ========== calisthenics was a sport that promoted the body and mind connection, focusing on physical beauty and strength. The question of whether calisthenics is A) the world’s oldest form of sports training B) a strength training C) a battle technique D) being emphasized by many popular gyms is true according to the passage. The correct answer is D). Paragraph 29 discusses the origin of the word ‘calisthenics’. Paragraph 30 talks about the last popular supporter of calisthenics. Paragraph 31 explains the first use of calisthenics as a training method. Paragraph 32 provides information on a multidisciplinary approach to all-round health and strength. Paragraph 33 explains reasons for the survival of calisthenics throughout the ages. Paragraph 34 discusses the use of a medical substance to increase muscle mass and strength. Paragraph 35 describes travelling showmen who displayed their strength for audiences. The summary can be completed by filling in the correct words: (36) functional strength, (37) mass monsters, (38) injuries, (39) weight training, (40) cardiovascular health