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Comparison of Positive and Negative Verbal Cueing on Muscular Endurance in College-Aged Females

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An individual's optimal athletic performance is dependent on physical preparation, technical skills, and cognitive state. It is well known that verbal instruction is one of the most common ways to alter an individual's cognitive state. Verbal instructions can shift individuals' attention from an internal to external focus. Internal attentional focus disrupts motor movement, whereas external attentional focus improves motor movement. External attentional focus leads to automaticity of motor movements and has been linked to increasing individual's motivation, self-efficacy, and self-confidence. Despite established correlations between verbal instructions and athletic performance, little research has been done on assessing the type of verbal instructions on athletic performance outcomes. **PURPOSE:** To assess the effects of positive and negative verbal cueing instructions on muscular endurance in college-aged females. **METHODS:** Twelve subjects (age 20.2 ± 1.2 yrs, body mass index 24.1 ± 3.2 kg/m², weight 67.0 ± 13.3 kg) completed a randomized, cross-over study that consisted of completing repetitions to failure for the barbell back squat while hearing positive (POS), negative (NEG), and no (CON) verbal cueing instructions. POS cueing instructions contained the phrases "keep pushing" and "drive", whereas NEG cueing instructions included the phrases "don't fail" and "don't stop". No phrases were given for the CON verbal cueing instruction session. Experimental sessions were separated by one week. **RESULTS:** There was no significant ($p > 0.05$) main effect of condition (POS: 37.9 ± 11.2 reps; NEG 36.6 ± 8.9 reps; CON 34.3 ± 11.4 reps) on repetitions to failure for the barbell back squat. There was no significant ($p > 0.05$) interaction between verbal cueing instruction preference and the number of repetitions performed for the barbell back squat. **CONCLUSION:** Positive and negative verbal cueing instructions did not affect the number of repetitions performed for the barbell back squat in college-aged females.

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