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1 • SPORT TRAINING

THE PERFECT  
ELITE GYMNAST,  
DOES HE EXIST?  
A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this review was to create an all-round profile of the elite artistic gymnast. Therefore, an extended literature search was performed in PubMed and PsycINFO databases. The main inclusion criteria were that the content of the article was about artistic gymnastics and that the gymnasts were of elite level and senior age. The extended literature search resulted in a total number of 22 articles, which were split up into 2 domains: the physical domain included 13 articles and the psychological domain included 9 articles. Results of the physical domain showed that the elite gymnast is small and has a low body mass, an athletic posture, a good postural control and balance and a high explosive muscular performance. Results of the psychological domain showed that the elite gymnast has a high intrinsic and achievement motivation, good concentration and confidence, strives for perfection and excellence and uses psychological strategies. These characteristics seem to be important for an elite gymnast although it is not clear yet which characteristics are most important, neither is the relation of the several characteristics to each other.

**KEYWORDS:** artistic gymnastics; elite level; multidimensional; profile; senior.

## INTRODUCTION

Gymnastics is a sport that is governed by the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique and consists of several disciplines: Artistic Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Aerobic Gymnastics, Acrobatic Gymnastics and Trampolining. This review is about Artistic Gymnastics (by using the term gymnastics, Artistic Gymnastics is mentioned). Artistic gymnastics has developed enormously over the last decade. A lot has changed, for instance an increased complexity in movements on apparatuses. For example, in 2001, the traditional vaulting horse was replaced by a new vaulting table. This new vaulting table is more elastic, bigger and more stable. This resulted in a safer apparatus than the old traditional vaulting horse. Therefore, the routines that gymnasts perform could become more difficult and spectacular;

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