

**Basic vocabulary of terms used in sport and  
exercise science.**

**abdomen** *noun* a space inside the body that contains the stomach, intestines, liver and other vital organs

**abduct** *verb* to pull a leg or arm in a direction that is away from the centre line of the body, or to pull a toe or finger away from the central line of a leg or arm. Compare **adduct**

**ability** *noun* **1.** a natural tendency to do something successfully or well **2.** a high degree of intelligence or competence **3.** a particular gift for doing something well

**able** *adjective* **1.** physically or mentally equipped to do something **2.** having the necessary resources or talent to do something

**abrasion** *noun* a minor injury in the form of a graze to the skin

**absorption** *noun* the process of taking into the body substances such as proteins or fats that have been digested from food and enter the bloodstream from the stomach and intestines

**abstain** *verb* to choose not to do something

**acceleration sprinting** *noun* a training exercise in which the athlete begins by jogging and gradually accelerates to a sprint

**accelerometer** *noun* an instrument or device for measuring acceleration, especially one in which a sensor converts acceleration into an electrical signal .

**acclimatisation** *noun* the act of gradually getting your body used to something, e.g. heat or altitude

**acetylcholine** *noun* a substance that is released from the ends of some nerve fibres to transmit impulses to other nerve cells or to muscles

**achievement** *noun* the successful completion of something demanding

**Achilles tendon** *noun* a tendon at the back of the ankle that connects the calf muscles to the heel and acts to pull up the heel when the calf muscle is contracted .

**ACL** *abbreviation* anterior cruciate ligament

**acoustic nerve** *noun* the eighth cranial nerve which governs hearing and balance

**acquisition** *noun* the development of a new skill, practice or way of doing things

**acute injury** *noun* an injury that has happened recently, usually requiring immediate treatment

**adaptation** *noun* the process by which a sense organ becomes less sensitive to a stimulus after repeated contact

**adipose tissue** *noun* tissue in which the cells contain fat

**adolescent growth spurt** *noun* a period during the teenage years in which the skeleton grows rapidly, sometimes causing lack of coordination and weakness in the limbs,

**adrenal glands** *plural noun* two endocrine glands at the top of the kidneys which secrete cortisone, adrenaline and other hormones

**adrenoceptor** *noun* any of a group of receptors on cell surfaces that are activated by [epinephrine](#) or [norepinephrine](#) : an [adrenergic](#) receptor,

**aerobic capacity** *noun* same as **VO2Max**

**aerobic glycolysis** *noun* the breakdown of muscle glucose in the presence of oxygen to provide energy .

**aetiology** *noun* the causes of a disease

**agility** *noun* a combination of physical speed, suppleness and skill

**airway, breathing, circulation** *noun* the three main checks that should be performed during first aid for a person who has collapsed. Abbreviation **ABC**

**aldosterone** *noun* a hormone, secreted by the adrenal gland, that regulates the balance of sodium and potassium in the body and the amount of body fluid

**altitude training** *noun* training for athletes at altitude to acclimatise them and prepare them for competition

**alveoli** The plural of alveolus. The alveoli are tiny air sacs within the lungs where the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide

**amenorrhoea** *noun* the absence of one or more menstrual periods, usual during pregnancy and after the menopause

**amino acid** *noun* a chemical compound that is broken down from proteins in the digestive system and then used by the body to form its own protein,

**amputate** *verb* to remove a limb or other appendage of the body, especially in a surgical operation

**anabolic** *adjective* building up muscle or tissue

**anaemia** *noun* a medical condition in which an unusually low level of red blood cells or haemoglobin makes it more difficult for the blood to carry oxygen, producing symptoms of tiredness and paleness of lips, nails and the inside of the eyelids

**anaerobic exercise** *noun* exercise that involves the exchange of energy in the muscles without the use of oxygen

**anatomy** *noun* **1.** the structure of the body **2.** the branch of science that studies the structure of the bodies of humans and animals

**anthropometry** *noun* the science that deals with the measurement of the size, weight, and proportions of the human body/

**arrhythmia** *noun* a variation in the rhythm of the heartbeat

**bioelectrical impedance analysis** *noun* an accurate method of measuring body fat using an electrical current. Abbreviation **BIA**

**black belt** *noun* **1.** a belt worn by someone who has reached a high level of skill in a martial art such as judo or taekwondo **2.** someone at a high level of skill in a martial art, entitled to wear a belt that is black

**blood doping** *noun* the banned practice of reinjecting an athlete with his or her own red blood cells shortly before a competition in order to enhance performance. Also called **blood retransfusion**

**blood flow** *noun* same as **circulation**

**blood sugar level** *noun* the amount of glucose in the blood, which is higher after meals and in people with diabetes

**blood vessel** *noun* any tube that carries blood round the body, e.g. an artery, vein or capillary

**body fuels** *plural noun* same as **metabolic fuels**

**bomb calorimeter** *noun* a device for measuring the amount of heat released during chemical combustion

**brachial** *adjective* relating to the arm

**bradykinesia** *noun* an unusual slowness of muscle movement, symptomatic of depression or a neural disorder

**breathlessness** *noun* difficulty in breathing enough air

**callipers** *plural noun* an instrument with movable legs used for measuring body fat

**capillaries** *plural noun* extremely narrow thin-walled blood vessels that form a network throughout the body, enabling the exchange of substances between the blood and the tissues

**cardiac compression** *noun* artificial rhythmic compression of someone's heart in order to restore or maintain blood circulation after the person has collapsed .

**cardiac pacemaker** *noun* an electronic device that is implanted on a patient's heart or worn attached to the chest and stimulates and regulates the heartbeat

**cardiomyocyte** *noun* a cell of muscular tissue in the heart

**catecholamine** *noun* a compound belonging to a class that act as neurotransmitters or hormones

**cervical spondylosis** *noun* a degenerative disorder of the vertebrae in the neck, caused by repetitive bending

**cyanosis** *noun* a condition characterised by a blue colour of the peripheral skin an mucous membranes, a symptom of lack of oxygen in the blood, e.g. in heart or lung disease