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By ANI January 9th, 2010

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WASHINGTON - The maximum time  takes to become exhausted while climbing may be the only determinant of his/her performance, reveals a new study.

Up till now, performance indicators for climbing have been low body fat percentage and grip strength. Moreover, the existing research was based on the comparison of amateur and expert climbers. The new study led by University of Granada researchers and conducted over 16 high-level climbers shows that the time it takes for an athlete to become exhausted is the only indicator of his/her performance.

The researchers assessed the climbers with body composition tests (weight, height, body mass index, body fat pc, bone mineral density, and bone mineral content), kinanthropometry (length of arms, hands and fingers, bone mineral density and bone mineral content of the forearm), and physical fitness tests (flexibility, strength of the upper and lower body and aerobic capacity measured at a climbing centre).

They found no significant differences between expert and elite climbers in any of the tests performed, except in climbing time to exhaustion and in bone mineral density, both of which were higher in the elite group.

"Therefore, the maximum climbing time to exhaustion of an athlete is the sole determinant of performance", Vanesa Espaga Romero, the main author of the work and researcher at the University of Granada told SINC.

According to experts, a fundamental characteristic of sport climbing is its "vertical dimension", making it unique given its postural organisation in space, and from a physiological point of view, the effect a gravitational load has on movements.

In short, to complete a climb successfully, athletes should maintain their effort for as long as possible to improve their chances of reaching the ultimate goal.

The study is published in the European Journal of Applied Physiology. (ANI)

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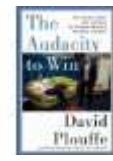
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