

# Coaching movement patterns

Published 20 days ago by [Kelvin Giles](#)

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It is expected that, if you are using a certain movement pattern as either a general, foundation exercise or a more related movement to improve the sports-specific action/posture you need for improved performance, you would do well to know as much as possible about the detail of that chosen movement. Things like the sequence of body-parts, the timing of their connection and appropriate outcomes would appear to be relevant detail.

The problem arises when you have so much detail spinning around in your mind that you fail to work out what is 'different' and what is 'wrong'. No matter what the chosen movement (Squat, Lunge, Pull, Push, Brace, Rotate, Hinge, Landing – and all stations in between) the coach needs to view the action in context. There is not a sole unique, perfect movement, only the athlete's interpretation based on their own unique muscular-skeletal qualities, their unique neuro-muscular reaction and the constraints of the task and environment. Yes, there are certain principles of the movement that act as a guide for the coach's eye, but these principles are to be interpreted somewhere along the continuum from 'different' to 'wrong'. As long as the 'different' still allows the movement to thrive as it is subjected to varying speeds, directions, amplitudes, complexities and forces, then it can be left alone. If, on the other hand, the interpretation has the potential to fail in the ever-changing environment of training and competition, and become unsafe, then it is an error.

Too many coaches think that they need to sort the 'fly-sh\*t' from the 'pepper' and spend inordinate amounts of time fiddling about with a movement pattern that is actually sound and resilient. Others do the opposite and load a poor movement in a relentless drive for more and more force or speed. One of the assumptions each coach should question as their journey unfolds is this 'different' or 'wrong' one. Having been doing this for 50 years I think I now make fewer mistakes because many years ago someone got me to include this process in my coaching tool-box. It is never-ending quality control because I need to check and re-check each time I see the movement pattern within a sports-specific action.

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