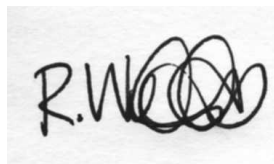


Investigation of metabolic responses to exercise in adolescents and adults during high  
intensity exercise and recovery

Submitted by Rebecca Willcocks to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy by Research in Sport and Health Sciences, May 2011.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Willcocks', with a stylized, circular flourish to the right of the name.

Rebecca Willcocks

## Abstract

Children and adolescents are thought to use oxidative metabolism to a greater extent than adults during high intensity exercise. The studies reported in this thesis examine the nature and implications of age-related differences in muscle metabolism during high intensity exercise and recovery. Chapter 4 concluded that during heavy intensity exercise, phosphocreatine (PCr) kinetics did not differ with age or sex, while Chapter 5 revealed that during very heavy intensity exercise, the fundamental  $\tau$  was slower and slow component amplitude greater in men compared with adolescent boys, indicating that exercise intensity might play a role in determining age-related differences in muscle metabolism. In Chapter 6, two bouts of very heavy intensity exercise were completed, and prior exercise reduced the PCr slow component amplitude in men but not boys. Deoxyhaemoglobin (HHb) kinetics was faster in adolescents compared with adults during both heavy and very heavy intensity exercise, indicating that matching of oxygen delivery to oxygen utilisation is less precise at the onset of exercise in adolescents compared with adults. PCr recovery from high intensity exercise was faster in boys than men, but not different in girls and women, as described in Chapter 7. The speed of PCr recovery was correlated with maturity in adolescents, but was not correlated with end-exercise [PCr] or pH. Two different tests to measure mitochondrial capacity in adolescents were evaluated in Chapter 8, and a fitted curve and gated test were both used to determine PCr recovery kinetics. Finally, in Chapter 9, age-related differences in muscle metabolism and oxygenation during fatiguing exercise were examined; a strong trend for greater fatigue in adults compared with adolescents was accompanied by greater metabolic perturbation in adults. Overall, these data show that muscle metabolism and oxygenation differs between adolescents and adults during and following very high intensity exercise.

## **Acknowledgements**

I'm very grateful for the support of everyone in the School of Sport and Health Sciences, but especially Craig Williams, under whose guidance I was trained not only in research but also in how to be a responsible, productive, and successful scientist. The input of Neil Armstrong to this body of work is very much appreciated, and the support and guidance of Alan Barker throughout my studies has been invaluable. I'm grateful to many others in the school for their useful feedback on my work, for their practical support in the lab, and for their encouragement throughout the PhD process.

Jon Fulford deserves thanks for many things, including the countless hours he has devoted to helping and educating me, but I'm especially grateful for his generosity in sharing his extensive knowledge.

The participants in each of the studies made this work possible and also made it fun, and I owe them thanks for their time and effort.

The practical and emotional support of Melitta Winlove and Kate Janse Van Rensburg was invaluable over the past few years. Thank you for your friendship.

Mum, Mark, Dad, Jody, Sam, Chelle, and other relatives too numerous to list have been a constant source of encouragement; I can't imagine a better family.

Finally, thanks to Gary Todd for everything. You make things more fun.

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