

YOUR MUSCLES

Level 1-2

Muscles are one of the most important parts of the body for rugby players. Not only do you have to be strong, but your muscles also need to be conditioned.

Almost half the body's weight is muscle. Muscles are the parts of our body that allow us to move. They are made up of special tissues that can contract, or shorten, when they receive a signal from the brain. Your muscles are attached to your bones by stretchy tissue called tendons. When the muscles contract, they pull on the tendons, which pull on the bones and cause our limbs to move.

To keep our muscles healthy, we have to use them. Exercise and sports help them grow strong and flexible. We also have to train our muscles to do things. This is why sportspeople train for hours and hours. They are training their muscles to do a specific task.

Muscle actions can be voluntary or involuntary. Your brain automatically controls involuntary muscles, like your heart, diaphragm and intestines. You don't have to think about making them work. For example your heart beats between 60 and 80 beats every minute without you having to think about it.

TRY THIS

Can you roll up the sides of your tongue? Can you wink? Can you raise just one eyebrow? Can you wiggle your nose or ears?

Try these out and let us know how you got on. Plus:

How long can you stand on one leg?

How far can you pass a rugby ball?

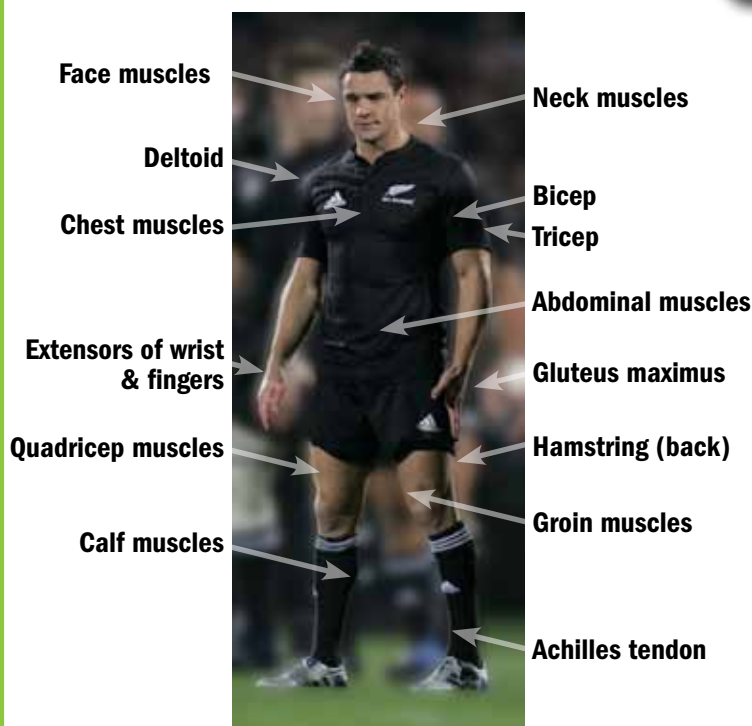
How far can you kick a rugby ball?

How fast can you run 50m?

How many press-ups can you do?

How many sit-ups can you do?

Can your tongue touch your nose?



FACTS

1. There are over 640 muscles in our body.
2. The heart is a muscle.
3. We have over 100 muscles on our face.
4. The longest muscle in the body is the sartorius, from the outside of the hip, down and across to the inside of the knee. It twists and pulls the thigh outwards.
5. The smallest muscle in the body is the stapedius, deep in the ear. It is only five mm long and thinner than cotton thread. It is involved in hearing.
6. The biggest muscle in the body is the gluteus maximus, in the buttock. It pulls the leg backwards powerfully for walking and running.

