

# **Concurrent Validity and Technological Error-Based Reliability of a Novel Device for Velocity-Based Training**

**Brief Title:** Reliability of a Novel Device for Velocity-Based Training

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**Conflict of interest:** The author Wladimir Külkamp declares that he is the manufacturer of the Ergonauta I encoder

1 **Abstract**

2 The aim of this study was to verify the concurrent validity and the biological error-free  
3 reliability of a novel low-cost commercial encoder (Ergonauta I). Validity protocol  
4 involved comparisons with a custom system and other encoder commercially available  
5 (Vitruve). Reliability protocols involved inter devices and inter unit comparisons. No  
6 participants were recruited, and reliability assessments were performed in a Smith  
7 Machine by bar free fall tests. Our results showed a significant bias for mean velocity  
8 (MV) estimated by both encoders only in one of the four conditions investigated  
9 (bias=0.05 m/s). Regarding sensitivity, the smallest detectable change suggests only  
10 values higher than 0.03 m/s must to be considered as real changes in performance, when  
11 monitoring MV and mean propulsive velocity (MPV) through Ergonauta I and Vitruve.  
12 Between-days intra-device reliability showed Ergonauta I remains highly reliable after  
13 one week for most assessments, whereas slightly less sensitive for peak velocity and peak  
14 power output.

15

16 **Key words:** Movement velocity; velocity-based training; biomechanics; reliability

## 17 **Introduction**

18 Velocity-based training (VBT) has often been described as a practical and accurate  
19 method for prescribing and monitoring strength training in real-time (Baena-Marín et al,  
20 2022; Weakley et al., 2021a; Weakley et al., 2021b; Kulkamp et al., 2021a; Włodarczyk  
21 et al., 2021). VBT proposes the use of movement velocity as the main variable to  
22 determine the intensity and volume of training, as well as to monitor fatigue and readiness  
23 of athletes in a simple but effective manner (Weakley et al., 2021b; Moore, Joseph &  
24 Dorrell, 2020; González-Badillo & Sánchez-Medina, 2011). Furthermore, the velocity of  
25 movement can also be used to determine the load associated with maximum power output  
26 in various exercises (Alt et al., 2020; Pérez-Castilla; García-Ramos, 2021) which is useful  
27 for multiple sports.

28         The existence of an intrinsic and stable relationship between relative loads and  
29 movement velocity has been confirmed throughout the scientific literature (García-  
30 Ramos et al., 2019; García-Ramos et al., 2017; Pérez Castilla et al., 2017a). Thus, it is  
31 reliable to use this relationship for adjustments of load intensity (autoregulation), and  
32 comparing expected movement velocity *versus* observed movement velocity (Weakley et  
33 al., 2021b; Thompson et al., 2021; Dorell et al., 2020). Moreover, to control the volume  
34 of sets and maximize gains in muscle strength or hypertrophy, it is possible to determine  
35 the optimal point to interrupt each set by analyzing the gradual decline in mean velocity  
36 (MV), rather than relying on a predetermined number of repetitions. This alternative  
37 approach offers a way to improve training outcomes. (Galiano et al., 2022; Pareja-Blanco  
38 et al., 2020; Weakley et al., 2021b; Pérez-Castilla et al., 2018; Pareja-Blanco et al.,  
39 2017b). The use of velocity loss thresholds between 5-20% allows for lower total training  
40 volumes compared to traditional resistance training routines, enabling better recovery  
41 both within and between sessions, without compromising neuromuscular adaptations,

42 although gains in hypertrophy were more pronounced when higher velocity loss  
43 thresholds were applied (Baena-Marín et al., 2022; Włodarczyk et al., 2021; Liao et al.,  
44 2021; Weakley et al., 2021; Weakley et al., 2019). Other well-known benefits of VBT are  
45 related to the safety and efficient determination of 1RM loads using sub-maximal loads  
46 (Morán-Navarro et al., 2021; Kulkamp et al., 2021b; González-Badillo & Sánchez-  
47 Medina, 2011). As a result, these approaches allow coaches and practitioners to control  
48 load and make decisions in real-time.

49         Currently, there are a number of different commercially available equipment  
50 which can be used for VBT purposes, which vary according to the technology used to  
51 estimate the movement velocity (e.g., velocity transducers, position transducers and  
52 accelerometers), which seems to affect their precision and accuracy (Kulkamp et al.,  
53 2021b). In the absence of linear velocity transducers (e.g. T-force, Ergotech, Murcia,  
54 Spain), the equipment mentioned as the most accurate and precise are linear position  
55 transducers, also known as encoders (Weakley et al., 2021a; Villanueva et al., 2021;  
56 Mitter et al., 2021; Martínez Cava et al., 2020; Courel-Ibáñez et al., 2019; Pérez-Castilla  
57 et al., 2019). Using encoders, movement velocity is estimated according to the rotational  
58 speed of their axis, where angular displacements are converted into linear distance  
59 measurements, and the time of each reading is then acquired by micro-controlled systems  
60 (Harris et al., 2010; Li et al., 2005). VBT suggests that even small variations in velocity  
61 can be related to actual changes in an athlete's physical condition (Weakley, 2019b).  
62 Depending on the precision and sensitivity of the equipment, this variation may be greater  
63 or smaller than the measurement error, which then has implications for how the  
64 subsequent data is used in practice. Given the variety of equipment currently available, it  
65 is essential to investigate the validity and reliability of each commercially available  
66 device. Furthermore, the importance of separating technological and biological error

67 when investigating the reliability of each device has been emphasized (Weakley et al.,  
68 2021a; Courel-Ibáñez et al., 2019). According to our knowledge, there is only one  
69 scientific paper so far validating a VBT-applied device isolating technological errors  
70 (Weakley et al., 2020). The authors showed that the technological variance was around  
71 3.96% and when biological variance was introduced the variance increased to 9.83%.

72 Thus, the objective of the present study was to verify concurrent validity of a novel  
73 low-cost commercial encoder (Ergonauta I) as well as its reliability based exclusively on  
74 technological variations (biological error-free). Additionally, we also verified the validity  
75 and reliability of another encoder already validated in previous studies (Vitruve) (Pérez-  
76 Castilla et al., 2019; Martínez-Cava et al., 2020; Kilgallon et al., 2022). It was  
77 hypothesized both encoders would be considered valid with no significant bias in relation  
78 to the custom reference system, as well fully reaching accuracy and agreement criteria.  
79 Furthermore, they would be considered reliable attending pre-determined criteria for  
80 sensitivity and precision.

81

## 82 **Materials and Methods**

### 83 *Experimental Design*

84 The study was carried out in three steps. In the first step, concurrent validity, accuracy,  
85 and agreement were verified comparing the two encoders (Ergonauta I and Vitruve) with  
86 reference measures of range of movement (ROM), concentric phase time (Tcon) and  
87 mean velocity (MV). In the second step, the agreement and precision of ROM, mean  
88 propulsive velocity (MPV), and peak velocity (PV) measurements of the Ergonauta I and  
89 Vitruve encoders (between devices reliability) were verified, as well as agreement and  
90 precision of ROM, MV, MPV, PV, and peak power output (PPO) of two units of the  
91 Ergonauta I (interunit reliability). In the third and last stage, 7 days after the second stage,

92 these same protocol were performed again with one of the Ergonauta I encoder units  
93 (intradevice between-days reliability). In the second and third stages, the tests were  
94 carried out from the free fall of the bar on the Smith Machine. The study design is  
95 illustrated according to the Figure 1.

96 To verify the reliability during exercises, biological error was separated of  
97 technological errors (Weakley et al., 2021a). Thus, no participants were recruited in the  
98 present study, and reliability assessments were performed in a Smith Machine by bar free  
99 fall tests from pre-set heights. Five different measurements were used to assess device's  
100 reliability: ROM, MV, mean propulsive velocity (MPV), peak of velocity (PV), and peak  
101 power output (PPO; exclusively for Ergonauta I). MPV corresponds to the average  
102 velocity during the concentric phase until bar acceleration is less than gravity ( $-9.81 \text{ m/s}^2$   
103 ) (Sanchez-Medina et al., 2010).

104

105 *\*\*Insert figure 1 here\*\**

106

#### 107 *Equipment and data acquisition*

108 As recently suggested, gold-standard criterion measures should be utilized for validity  
109 approaches (Weakley et al., 2021a). However, in the absence of gold-standard measures  
110 such as 3D motion capture systems, a Smith Machine (Tonus, Sao Paulo, Brazil) was  
111 instrumented to determine standard distances and time interval references in which the  
112 bar would be displaced (Figure 2b). The Smith Machine allowed only guided vertical  
113 movements and presented a counterweight mechanism that confers to the system  
114 (including the bar) a mass equivalent to 10 kg. The frictional force between the bar and  
115 the guides (rails) was perceived as negligible. No extra load was applied and no traditional

116 resistance exercises were performed, whereas a researcher moved the bar whenever  
117 necessary.

118 As a criterion measure of ROM, we used the own natural phenomenon of  
119 displacement, according to pre-set distances in the Smith Machine. At the first study  
120 stage, two fixed and known distances were used, previously measured with a tape measure  
121 (LufkinBrasil® – 3m long, 1 mm resolution). As a criterion measure of Tcon, the  
122 GetTickCount function from Windows® was used. This function returns the total  
123 milliseconds between events (typically updated every 16 ms at 64 Hz) and is precise  
124 enough to measure average velocity in camera-based traffic monitoring systems (Pratama  
125 et al., 2016), in addition to measuring the speed of code execution and algorithms  
126 (Rayuwat et al., 2019). At the initial and the final points of ROM, limit switches were  
127 installed (Figure 2b), to inform the computer system the when the movement begun and  
128 ended. Thus, the MV measure was then assessed as an indirect outcome, obtaining the  
129 values dividing ROM by Tcon.

130 Two commercially available rotary encoders were evaluated in the present study.  
131 The Ergonauta I (Ergonauta®, Florianópolis, Brazil) presents 400 pulses/revolution,  
132 1mm/pulse resolution, and variable sampling frequency, where pulses are time-stamped  
133 with a high resolution (about every 10µs), based on digital pins interruptions checking.  
134 Data obtained in real-time by Ergonauta I were transmitted via Bluetooth to a smartphone  
135 Zenfone Maxshot – Android® 9 (ASUS®, AsusTek Computer Inc., Taipei, Taiwan). The  
136 Vitruve® encoder (Madrid, Spain) has a sampling frequency of 100 Hz, and data  
137 collected were transmitted via Bluetooth to a smartphone iPhone 7 Plus – iOS 12.4.1  
138 (Apple®, Inc., USA) (figure 3). Both the equipment are based on the same working  
139 principle, where a retractable cable is mechanically fixed to the axis of an  
140 electromechanical sensor known as a position transducer. When the retractable cable of

141 this equipment is coupled to the object to be monitored, all variation in displacement is  
142 converted into rotation of the transducer axis, which in turn is converted into pulses and  
143 finally computed as linear displacement. The time at which each pulse occurs is identified  
144 by the micro-controlled system of each device so that the movement velocity and other  
145 kinematic and kinetic parameters (e.g. acceleration and PPO) can then be estimated (Li  
146 et al., 2005).

147

#### 148 *Procedures*

149 In the first stage of the study, two different distance measures were used (0.367 m and  
150 0.475 m), which corresponded exactly to the displacement of the bar from the support  
151 point to the endpoint (maximum extension) of the guided bar of Smith Machine (figure  
152 2a and 2b). Up and down bar movements were performed by one of the researchers and  
153 no traditional exercises were performed. Two speed intervals to be reproduced in the tests  
154 were arbitrated a priori ( $MV > 0.6$  m/s and  $MV < 0.6$  m/s). The researcher was instructed  
155 to move the bar faster or slower according to the objective in each repetition. Thus, it was  
156 possible to establish a set of 4 situations in which the encoders were compared with the  
157 reference system: ROM1xVM1; ROMxVM2; ROM2xVM1, and ROM2xVM2. A total  
158 of 11 repetitions were performed in each situation, allowing a wide range of MV values,  
159 usually observed in VM-based training sessions.

160 In stages II and III the measures were acquired based on the free fall of the bar  
161 from 3 different heights, corresponding to approximately 0.275 m, 0.622 m and 0.967 m.  
162 The bar was released from each specific height point and dropped down until it was  
163 contained by a rubber step, positioned just below, on a chair (figure 2c). A pulley system  
164 was coupled to the smith machine, in order to measure downward movements. A total of



165 10 repetitions were performed at each height stage. In stage II Ergonauta I and Vitruve  
166 were compared, and in stage III two units of Ergonauta I were tested and compared.

167 In all tests, the retractable cable of devices was attached to the same point of the  
168 barbell using a Velcro strap.

169

170 *\*\*Insert Figure 2 here\*\**

### 171 *Statistical Analyses*

172 The normality of data distribution was verified by the Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p > 0.05$ ) to  
173 guarantee the application of parametric tests. Different tests and statistical procedures  
174 were used to verify the validity and reliability. Concurrent validity was determined based  
175 on comparisons of means, absolute and relative accuracy, and level of agreement between  
176 encoders and criterion measurements, testing each ROMxVM group separately.

177 Comparisons of means were performed through ANOVA oneway (method as factor),  
178 applying Welch test correction whenever homogeneity of variance assumption was  
179 violated. Tukey's post-hoc was applied for pairwise comparisons when homogeneity of  
180 variance was present and Games-Howell when not. The effect size of differences was  
181 calculated from planned contrasts "t" values. Absolute accuracy was interpreted as root  
182 mean squared error (RMSE), while relative accuracy (accuracy %) was calculated as  
183 relative difference between criterion mean values and devices (encoders) mean values.

184 The Lin's concordance correlation coefficient (CCC; Lin, 1989) was used as an overall  
185 agreement statistic (exclusively for Tcon and VM). CCC associates the correlation  
186 coefficient (Pearson's r) between two measures (precision) with the degree of departure  
187 of the best-fit line concerning the 45th line passing through the origin (accuracy).  
188 Agreement based on CCC was interpreted as almost perfect ( $CCC < 0.99$ ), good ( $0.95 \leq$   
189  $CCC \leq 0.99$ ), moderate ( $0.90 < CCC < 0.95$ ) or poor ( $CCC < 0.90$ ) (Martins et al, 2014;

190 McBride, 2005). Additionally, systematic difference (bias), limits of agreement and  
191 proportional bias ( $r \geq 0.3$ ) (Bland-Altman, 1986) were also used as agreement analysis for  
192 the analysis of each ROMxVM group. The encoders should be considered valid if  
193 presenting no significant MV bias in relation to the custom reference system, as well  
194 accuracy% higher than 90%,  $CCC \geq 0.95$  and LoA smaller than 10% with respect to the  
195 mean bias.

196 The agreement inter-unit (Ergonauta I 1 vs Ergonauta I 2), and intradevice  
197 between days (Ergonauta I 1 vs Ergonauta I 1)] was verified based on systematic bias,  
198 LoA and proportional bias ( $r \geq 0.3$ ) (Bland-Altman, 1986), as well through mean  
199 comparisons. Agreement criteria adopted were non-significant mean differences as well  
200 LoA lower than 10% related to average bias. Means comparisons between two different  
201 units of Ergonauta I and Vitruve were performed in the stage II via ANOVA one-way  
202 (device as factor), whereas in stage III (intradevice Ergonauta I between days) through  
203 “t” tests. The precision of the measurements was evaluated considering the Standard Error  
204 of Measurement (SEM), presented as Coefficient of variation ( $CV\% = SEM \div \text{mean} \times 100$ ).  
205 As pairwise measurements corresponded always to the same heights of free fall of the  
206 bar, SEM was considered to be the own standard deviation (SD) of the measures, alluding  
207 to the term “standard deviation within the subject” by Bland-Altman (1996). The  
208 sensitivity of devices Ergonauta I and Vitruve was verified from the Smallest Detectable  
209 Change (SDC), calculated as  $\sqrt{2} * SEM * 1.96$ . The SDC indicates the value from which a  
210 variation can be considered a real change, that is, a value outside technological error.  
211 Criteria for acceptable sensitivity were  $SDC < 0.07$  m/s for MV, MPV and PV (Kilgallon  
212 et al., 2022; Martínez Cava et al., 2020) and for PPO  $SDC < 150$ w (considering  $SEM =$   
213  $50$ w), and precision criteria was  $CV < 5\%$  for all measurements.

214 The effect size (ES) was presented as Cohen's "r", and was interpreted as trivial  
215 ( $ES < 0.1$ ), small ( $0.1 \leq ES < 0.3$ ), moderate ( $0.3 \leq ES < 0.5$ ), and large ( $ES \geq 0.5$ ) (Cohen,  
216 1988). For t-tests a "t-value" conversion to "r-value" was calculated. Statistical analyses  
217 were performed using the IBM® SPSS® software platform (version 20) and a custom  
218 Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet (Microsoft Office®, version 16). All analysis were  
219 performed adopting a significance level of 5%.

220

## 221 **Results**

222 The range of velocities investigated ranged from 0.4-0.74 m/s for validity  
223 analysis, considering concurrent method. For reliability tests, MV ranged from between  
224 0.56 to 1.02 m/s, considering Ergonauta I estimates. Table 1 show Ergonauta I and  
225 Vitruve proved to be valid, except for MV about 0.6 m/s, where a significant systematic  
226 bias was observed in relation to the reference system. It should be highlighted that Vitruve  
227 did not reach the overall threshold of validity for MV ( $CCC = 0.944$ ), although the  
228 difference was small (Figure 3). LoA of MV were acceptable for both devices ( $< 10\%$ ),  
229 although small to high heteroscedasticity was observed for MV when compared with the  
230 reference system ( $r = 0.2 - 0.7$ ; table 1), where the bigger the MV, the higher the  
231 heteroscedasticity (table 1). Parallel measurements (RMSE and systematic bias) also  
232 showed this. Surprisingly, table 3 shows a significant bias observed for ROM between  
233 Ergonauta I and the concurrent method, even though the bigger absolute differences were  
234 as small as 2 mm. About Vitruve, ROM bias was quite higher, ranging from about 1 cm  
235 to 1.5 cm in average. Table 2 and Figure 4 make clear that Ergonauta I and Vitruve have  
236 no agreement one each other, regarding ROM, MPV and PV. Moreover, they present  
237 proportional bias when compared each other ( $r > 0.3$ ). About inter-units and intra-unit  
238 reliability of Ergonauta I, a moderate proportional bias ( $r = 0.32 - 0.48$ ) was observed

239 only for PV and PPO when comparing two different Ergonauta I units, although non-  
240 significant difference was observed in the means. Tables 2 and 3, as well the figure 5  
241 revealed Ergonauta I and Vitruve fully reached the criteria for sensitivity and precision,  
242 proving to provide reliable measures under similar conditions as well at different ones.

243 *\*\* Insert Table 1 here \*\**

244 *\*\* Insert Figure 3 here \*\**

245 *\*\* Insert Figure 4 here \*\**

246 *\*\* Insert Table 2 here \*\**

247 *\*\* Insert Table 3 here \*\**

248 *\*\* Insert Figure 5 here \*\**

## 249 **Discussion**

250 The aim of the present study was to examine the validity and reliability of a newly  
251 available device designed for VBT purposes. An important aspect to highlight was that  
252 reliability of encoder was analyzed purely from a technological perspective (biological  
253 error-free), using a Smith Machine to measure the free-fall of the bar, as as a novel  
254 approach in the absence of a gold standard. As recently suggested (Courel-Ibáñez et al.,  
255 2019), most of the available studies assessing VBT-applied devices have analyzed  
256 reliability disregarding the true source of error (biological or technical). Our data revealed  
257 the encoder Ergonauta I reached the pre-defined criteria of accuracy, agreement,  
258 sensitivity and precision, which allows practitioners to use it with confidence for VBT  
259 monitoring. We also confirmed the validity and reliability of the encoder Vitruve,  
260 although with some specific restrictions.

261 Although results showed a significant bias for MV estimated by Ergonauta I and  
262 Vitruve when compared to the reference system, the difference was detected only in one

263 of the four ROM x VEL settings (ROM 1 x VEL 2; table 1). It should be highlighted;  
264 however, Ergonauta I and Vitruve must not be used interchangeably, as their measures  
265 differ more from each other than when compared to the reference method, for all variables  
266 (table 1, table 2 and figure 4, respectively). Surprisingly, despite the significant  
267 differences observed in Tcon and ROM estimated by Vitruve (in opposite directions), its  
268 MV estimated values did not differ in relation to the reference method here adopted  
269 (except for ROM1xVEL2 setting; table 1). It seems reasonable to suppose the non-  
270 significant difference is likely due to one error compensating each other leading to a valid  
271 MV estimative (i.e., the two errors cancel each other out). Thus, we suggest to avoid using  
272 Vitruve for ROM assessments, since our results revealed errors greater than 1-2 cm, on  
273 average.

274         Regarding sensitivity, SDC revealed that only values higher than approximately  
275 0.03 m/s must to be considered as real changes in performance, for both Ergonauta I and  
276 Vitruve when monitoring MV and MPV (tables 2 and 3). In practical terms, this value  
277 allows practitioners to detect IRM changes < 5% for most resistance exercises (Garcia-  
278 Ramos et al., 2019; Sánchez-Medina et al., 2104; Morán-Navarro et al., 2021). This value  
279 of sensitivity (SDC) was similar to the value observed by Martínez Cava et al. (2020) for  
280 Vitruve and T-force, but smaller compared to the values presented by Courel-Ibáñez et  
281 al. (2019). For PV, Vitruve was slightly more sensitive than Ergonauta I (Table 2),  
282 although SDC values of Ergonauta I for PV is lower than that observed for other  
283 commercial devices (Lorenzetti et al., 2017).

284         Between-days intra-device reliability showed Ergonauta I remains reliable after  
285 one week for ROM, VM and MPV assessments, whereas some proportional bias  
286 (heteroscedasticity) was verified for PV and PP (table 3). Even though the observed

287 differences are not overly high from a practical perspective, SDC values revealed that  
288 changes in PV and PPO should be considered real if greater to 0.10 m/s and 100 w,  
289 respectively, when using Ergonauta I. These results and thresholds for PV and PPO were  
290 also observed when comparing two different units of Ergonauta I at stage II (table 2). It  
291 seems important to highlight that Courel-Ibáñez et al. (2019) observed higher values of  
292 SDC for PV in devices considered valid for VBT applications. Lower consistency of PV  
293 estimated by encoders has been previously reported (Lorenzetti., et al 2017). Even though  
294 PV can provide linear and reliable load-velocity relationships (García-Ramos et al.,  
295 2018), MV or MPV should be preferred when using Ergonauta I.

296         Kilgallon and colleagues (2022) published a recent paper assessing the validity  
297 and reliability of Vitruve. They concluded MV, MPV and PV measurements are valid and  
298 reliable, suggesting the device can provide reliable load-velocity profiles and repeatable  
299 1-RM predictions. Nevertheless, despite MV and MPV linear models being highly  
300 reliable, they displayed poor validity given they were not sensitive enough to replace a  
301 direct assessment of 1-RM. The authors observed values of sensitivity (SDC) and  
302 precision slightly worse than that observed in our data, for all of variables. As the authors  
303 assumed, their results could not separate the errors associated with the Vitruve from those  
304 associated with the subjects. In this sense, our work demonstrated that Vitruve was shown  
305 to be more reliable when biological variability is not included. Unlike Kilgallon et al.  
306 (2022), we did not intend or plan to assess 1-RM estimations with Ergonauta I in the  
307 present study. However, it seems reasonable to suppose that if the differences between  
308 devices remain similar in a different setting (e.g., during real resistance exercises), it  
309 seems likely that estimations of 1-RM would differ as well. Moreover, based on our  
310 results, as MV and MPV estimated through Ergonauta I are higher when compared with

311 Vitruve during the same conditions, it is expected 1-RM values estimated by Ergonauta I  
312 will be smaller than Vitruve.

313         Given the Ergonauta I is only recently commercially available, there is a lack of  
314 published empirical research relating to it at present. Only one article published to date,  
315 where the Ergonauta I was used as a concurrent device to propose a new method (called  
316 Magnet method) for correcting MV estimates of the My Lift application for smartphones,  
317 has been published (Külkamp et al., 2021b). The authors showed how close the ROM  
318 measurements acquired by Ergonauta I are, compared to a real measurement of distance.  
319 As a reference measurement, the authors used a Neodymium magnet sliding over the bar  
320 of a Smith Machine during concentric movements of the bar in the bench press exercise.  
321 With this approach, the magnet works analogously as a hydraulic dynamometer dead  
322 pointer (see Külkamp et al., 2021 for details). Ergonauta I presented almost perfect  
323 correlations ( $r \geq 0.99$ ) in relation to the magnet Method and no significant bias regarding  
324 ROM ( $< 1\%$ ) and MV ( $< 1.7\%$ ). The authors concluded that when the My Lift app is used  
325 in conjunction with the magnet method, it becomes a suitable alternative to monitor  
326 velocity during single repetitions (Martínez Cava et al., 2020; Courel-Ibáñez et al., 2019).  
327 Our results confirmed the high accuracy of Ergonauta I to estimate ROM when compared  
328 to real displacement measurements, in addition to verifying estimates of MV and MPV,  
329 when compared with two concurrent systems.

330         This study presents some limitations which should be acknowledged. The first one  
331 concerns the lack of a real “gold standard” method to assess movement velocity (e.g. T-  
332 force device or 3D motion capture systems). Although this is always preferred (Weakley  
333 et al., 2021a; Martínez Cava et al., 2020; Courel-Ibáñez et al., 2019; Lorenzetti et al.,  
334 2017), in the absence of these technologies, we decided to get as close as possible to valid  
335 and reliable measures. Although MV was indirectly estimated, the ROM measurements

336 provided undoubtedly correspond to the real distance travelled, given this was measured  
337 with a tape measure. As such, any error in MV estimations can be attributed to the time  
338 measurements (Tcon). Nonetheless, despite the small sampling frequency, maximal  
339 errors of about 32 ms can be expected (summing starting and ending points), which would  
340 correspond to an addition of 0.015 m/s and 0.04 m/s to the smallest and the highest MV  
341 mean values of the reference system (stage I). When looking at table 1, it can be noted  
342 that these differences would make Ergonauta I even more accurate, unlike Vitruve. A  
343 second limitation corresponds to the small spectrum of velocities investigated, ranging  
344 just from about 0.4 m/s to 0.75 m/s in the validity approach and about 0.5 m/s and 1 m/s  
345 in reliability assessments. This corresponds to loads of approximately 45-85% 1RM in  
346 the bench press (González-Badillo & Sánchez-Medina, 2010). It is well known, that  
347 velocities above and below these thresholds are traditionally applied in VBT (García-  
348 Ramos et al., 2021; Pérez-Castilla et al., 2020). Thus, some doubt remains about the  
349 validity and reliability of Ergonauta I when using lower and higher velocities, which  
350 should also be investigated in future studies.

351 Finally, we can state that this study has important implications for practitioners  
352 who seek to utilize VBT technology for training purposes, as it sheds light on the  
353 reliability of encoders and provides an alternative approach for assessing VBT outcomes.

354

## 355 **Conclusion**

356 Ergonauta I is a valid device for VBT applications when compared with a custom  
357 reference system, over the range of velocities investigated. Furthermore, it is a highly  
358 reliable equipment, considering its measurements inter and intra-device are consistent  
359 enough when biological error is removed. Our data also confirmed the validity and  
360 reliability of the encoder Vitruve, although it should not be used interchangeably with the



361 Ergonauta I. Furthermore, Vitruve is ill advised to be used when measuring ROM in  
362 isolation. Since the sensitivity of both encoders was about 0.03 m/s for MV and MPV,  
363 they are recommended as suitable devices to monitor performance changes during VBT  
364 approaches. We suggest that the Ergonauta I also be tested under real-life conditions (i.e.,  
365 during traditional resistance exercise) to confirm the appropriateness of such device in  
366 practical settings.

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543 **Figure Legends:**

544

545 **Figure 1.** Schematic of study design

546 **Figure 2.** Instrumented Smith machine

547 **Figure 3.** Level of agreement between technologies based on the Lin's concordance  
548 correlation coefficient (CCC). Each encoder device was compared with the reference  
549 system. Tcon = concentric time. MV=mean concentric velocity. SEE = standard error of  
550 estimative.

551 **Figure 4.** Level of agreement between Ergonauta I A and Vitruve based on Bland-Altman  
552 graphs.

553 **Figure 5.** Level of agreement between Ergonauta I's devices based on Bland-Altman  
554 graphs. Left panels correspond to interunit reliability (stage II). Panels on the right  
555 correspond to between days intra-device reliability (stage III).



**Table 1.** Parameters of validity and agreement of encoders Ergonauta I and Virtuve when compared with the reference system

	ROM 1 x VEL 1			ROM 1 x VEL 2			ROM 2 x VEL 1			ROM 2 x VEL 2		
	RS	Ergo	Vitruve	RS	Ergo	Vitruve	RS	Ergo	Vitruve	RS	Ergo	Vitruve
<b>ROM</b>												
mean	0.367	0.366	0.375	0.367	0.366	0.377	0.475	0.477	0.491	0.475	0.477	0.492
(SD)	(0)	(0.001)	(0.001)*‡	(0)	(0.001)	(0.002)*‡	(0)	(0.001)*‡	(0.001)*‡	(0)	(0.001)*‡	(0.001)*‡
accuracy %	100	99.83	97.72	100	99.75	97.2	100	99.66	96.56	100	99.54	96.36
RMSE	-----	0.001	0.008	-----	0.001	0.01	-----	0.002	0.016	-----	0.002	0.017
Syst. bias	-----	-0.001	0.008	-----	-0.001	0.01	-----	0.002	0.016	-----	0.002	0.017
LoA	-----	±0.002	±0.002	-----	±0.002	±0.003	-----	±0.001	0.002	-----	±0.001	±0.002
Prop. Bias (r)	-----	0.224*	0.485*†	-----	0.196*	0.216*	-----	0.089	0.313*†	-----	0.092	0
<b>Tcon</b>												
	0.915											
mean	(0.079	0.869	0.991	0.587	0.546	0.657	0.900	0.847	0.991	0.646	0.60	0.0716
(SD)	)	(0.094)	(0.101)**‡	(0.02)	(0.02)*‡	(0.024)*‡	(0.058)	(0.071)	(0.070)*‡	(0.054)	(0.05)	(0.056)*‡
accuracy %	-----	95.05	91.69	-----	92.9	88.16	-----	94.10	89.89	-----	92.82	89.16
RMSE	-----	0.054	0.079	-----	0.043	0.070	-----	0.056	0.093	-----	0.048	0.073
Syst. Bias	-----	-0.045	0.076	-----	-0.042	0.07	-----	-0.053	0.091	-----	-0.046	0.07
LoA	-----	±0.062	±0.048	-----	±0.023	±0.017	-----	±0.038	±0.039	-----	±0.024	±0.044
Prop. Bias (r)	-----	0.053	0.153*	-----	0.104*	0.196	-----	0.46*†	0.278*	-----	0.527*‡	0.486*†
<b>MV</b>												
	0.404								0.498			
mean	(0.037	0.425	0.382	0.626	0.672	0.575	0.530	0.566	(0.034)**	0.74	0.801	0.691
(SD)	)	(0.044)	(0.036)**†	(0.024)	(0.025)*‡	(0.022)*‡	(0.033)	(0.046)	‡	(0.064)	(0.073)	(0.051)**‡
accuracy %	-----	94.78	94.47	-----	92.63	91.91	-----	93.1	94.02	-----	91.66	93.38
RMSE	-----	0.025	0.024	-----	0.048	0.051	-----	0.039	0.033	-----	0.064	0.054
Syst. Bias	-----	0.021	-0.022	-----	0.046	-0.051	-----	0.037	-0.032	-----	0.062	-0.049
LoA	-----	±0.028	0.016	-----	±0.026	±0.015	-----	±0.029	±0.016	-----	±0.036	±0.05
Prop. Bias (r)	-----	0.203*	0.228*	-----	0.202*	0.344*†	-----	0.549*‡	0.017*	-----	0.722*‡	0.184*

\*statistically different from GS (p<0.05); \*\*statistically different from Ergonauta I (p<0.05); |: small effect size; †: moderate effect size; ‡: large effect size

Syst. Bias = systematic bias; Prop. Bias = proportional bias; LoA = limits of agreement; RS = reference system; Ergo = Ergonauta I

**Table 2.** Inter device (inter-unit) reliability parameters of Ergonauta I.

	<b>ROM 1</b>			<b>ROM 2</b>			<b>ROM 3</b>			<b>Average</b>	
	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo B</b>	<b>Vitruve</b>	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo B</b>	<b>Vitruve</b>	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo B</b>	<b>Vitruve</b>	<b>Ergo</b>	<b>Vitruve</b>
<b><u>ROM</u></b>											
mean			0.285								
(SD)	0.278	0.280	(0.003)**	0.627	0.626	0.640	0.974	0.976	0.989		
SDC	(0.002)	(0.002)	‡	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)**‡	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.001)**‡		
CV%	0.006	0.006	0.008	0.006	0.003	0.006	0.008	0.014	0.003	0.007	0.006
	0.719	0.714	1.053	0.319	0.160	0.313	0.308	0.512	0.101	0.455	0.489
<b><u>MPV</u></b>											
mean			0.513								
(SD)	0.558	0.565	(0.008)**	0.810	0.807	0.773	1.003	0.999	0.965		
SDC	(0.009)	(0.006)	‡	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.009)**‡	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.010)**‡		
CV%	0.025	0.017	0.022	0.036	0.036	0.025	0.042	0.036	0.028	0.032	0.025
	1.613	1.062	1.559	1.605	1.611	1.035	1.496	1.301	1.036	1.448	1.210
<b><u>MV</u></b>											
mean	0.563	0.573		0.815	0.813		1.014	1.021			
(SD)	(0.009)	(0.008)	-----	(0.013)	(0.013)	-----	(0.011)	(0.010)	-----		
SDC	0.025	0.022	-----	0.036	0.036	-----	0.030	0.028	-----	0.030	-----
CV%	1.599	1.396	-----	1.595	1.599	-----	1.085	0.979	-----	1.376	-----
<b><u>PV</u></b>											
mean			0.986								
(SD)	1.011	1.027	(0.013)**	1.581	1.574	1.453	1.943	2.014	1.803		
SDC	(0.013)	(0.011)	‡	(0.037)	(0.053)	(0.038)**‡	(0.03)	(0.059)	(0.012)**‡		
CV%	0.036	0.030	0.036	0.103	0.147	0.105	0.083	0.164	0.033	0.094	0.058
	1.286	1.071	1.318	2.340	3.367	2.615	1.544	2.929	0.666	2.090	1.533
<b><u>PPO</u></b>											
mean	979.7	980.5		1528.4	1571.3		1875.5	1954.7			
(SD)	(38.716)	(10.501)	-----	(42.834)	(59.046)	-----	(33.237)	(66.47)	-----		
SDC			-----			-----			-----	115.8	-----
CV%	107.315	29.107	-----	118.730	163.667	-----	92.128	184.245	-----	66	-----
	3.952	1.071	-----	2.803	3.892	-----	1.772	3.401	-----	2.815	-----

\*\*statistically different from Ergonauta I (p<0.05); |: small effect size ; †: moderate ES; ‡: large effect size; Ergo = Ergonauta

**Table 3.** Between-days (Intra-unit) reliability parameters of Ergonauta I.

	<b>ROM 1</b>		<b>ROM 2</b>		<b>ROM 3</b>		<b>Average</b>
	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo A</b>	<b>Ergo A</b>
<b><u>ROM</u></b>							
mean							
(SD)	0.278 (0.002)	0.276 (0.002)	0.627 (0.002)	0.623 (0.002)	0.974 (0.003)	0.970 (0.003)	
SDC	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.008	0.008	0.006
CV%	0.719	0.725	0.319	0.321	0.308	0.309	0.450
<b><u>MPV</u></b>							
mean							
(SD)	0.558 (0.009)	0.554 (0.006)	0.810 (0.013)	0.809 (0.010)	1.003 (0.015)	0.999 (0.011)	
SDC	0.025	0.017	0.036	0.028	0.042	0.030	0.030
CV%	1.613	1.083	1.605	1.236	1.496	1.101	1.356
<b><u>MV</u></b>							
mean							
(SD)	0.563 (0.009)	0.564 (0.007)	0.815 (0.013)	0.811 (0.010)	1.014 (0.011)	1.007 (0.008)	
SDC	0.025	0.019	0.036	0.028	0.030	0.022	0.027
CV%	1.599	1.241	1.595	1.233	1.085	0.794	1.258
<b><u>PV</u></b>							
mean							
(SD)	1.011 (0.013)	1.055 (0.020)	1.581 (0.037)	1.613 (0.021)	1.943 (0.03)	2.008 (0.050)	
SDC	0.036	0.055	0.103	0.058	0.083	0.139	0.079
CV%	1.286	1.896	2.340	1.302	1.544	2.490	1.810
<b><u>PPO</u></b>							
mean	979.7	1017.2		1558.6	1875.5	1953.8	
(SD)	(38.716)	(20.601)	1528.4 (42.834)	(24.149)	(33.237)	(64.116)	
SDC	107.315	57.103	118.730	66.938	92.128	177.720	103.322
CV%	3.952	2.025	2.803	1.549	1.772	3.282	2.564

Ergo = Ergonauta



Step 1

- **Reference System versus both encoders**
- *Analysis: concurrent validity, accuracy and agreement*
- *Variables: ROM, Tcon, and MV*



Step 2

- **Between devices reliability (Ergonauta I vs Vitruve)**
- *Analysis: agreement and precision*
- *Variables: ROM, MPV, and PV*
- **Interunit Ergonauta I reliability (Ergonauta I 1 x Ergonauta I 2)**
- *Analysis: agreement and precision (technological errors only)*
- *Variables: ROM, MV, MPV, PV, and PPO*



Step 3

- **Between-days intradevice reliability ((Ergonauta I 1 x Ergonauta I 1)**
- *Analysis: agreement and precision (technological errors only)*
- *Variables: ROM, MV, MPV, PV, and PPO*







