

Practical Functional Fitness

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Blueprint for Four Weeks

- **Week 1**

- Revisit principles/definition of functional fitness
 - Change your mindset about what fitness “is”, & what a fitness program “looks like”
 - Isolationist approach = dangerous
 - Very little equipment needed
- Discuss plan for next three sessions
- Focus on foundational movements
 - Teach positioning for each
 - Show variations for each
 - Show progressions for each
- Develop programming templates to follow

Continued...

- **Sessions 2-4:**
 - Introduce & continue basic movements
 - Bracing technique
 - Air squat
 - Step-up
 - Push-up
 - Row/Pull-up
 - Deadlift
 - Overhead press
 - Walking/running

Continued...

- **Session 4:**
 - Programming
 - Putting it all together
 - Sample programs
 - Tracking progress & increasing the challenge

Look to Nature for the Answers

- Need to start thinking critically
- Need to abandon quick fixes, and programs of convenience
- Most purposeful, functional movement involves a common core of movements

Squat



To Be Human is to Squat

- Essential to well-being
- Increases athleticism
- Increased function in hips, knees, back
 - In senior years
- NOT AT ALL detrimental to knees
 - In fact, rehabilitative of *bad* knees
- If you don't squat, your knees aren't healthy, REGARDLESS of pain-free state

Squat: the bottom position

- Nature's sitting position
- We rise from the bottom position
 - There is nothing artificial about this
 - Around the world, meals, ceremonies, conversation, gatherings, and defecation are performed in this position

Sitting in Chairs & Couches

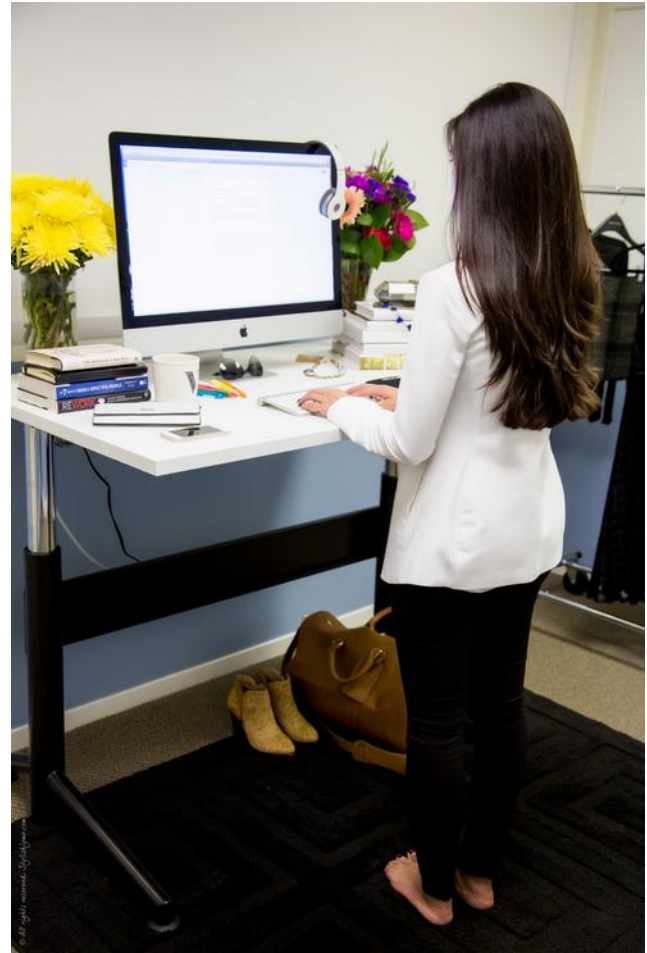
- Industrialized world phenomenon
- Contributes to decrepitude
 - Short & tight hip flexors
 - Short & tight low back muscles
 - Weak & lengthened abdominal muscles
 - Weak & lengthened glutes and hamstrings
 - Short & tight chest and shoulders
 - Weak and lengthened upper back stabilizing muscles
- Unloading of the skeleton
 - Inviting reduced bone mineral density

Sitting

- Your glutes = essential for good posture, lumbar pain avoidance, and all things hip extension related:
 - Stepping (up OR down)
 - Squatting (into a chair, car seat, or the throne)
 - Walking and pivoting
- The moment you sit, your glutes go on vacation. Period.
- Best way to avoid defaulting into bad position:
 - stand up and get re-organized every 15-20 minutes.

Less vs. More

A Photo Essay



The Bracing Sequence

- Should be the FIRST element of any movement
 - Needs to become “automatic”
1. Squeeze your butt as hard as you can.
 2. Pull your ribcage down.
 3. Get your belly tight.
 4. Head in neutral position.
 5. Screw shoulders into position.

Squat: The **Set-Up**

- (watch video)
 - Stance is with heels at shoulder width
 - Full extension at hips and knees
 - Weight on heels
 - Chest up, abs braced, neutral spine

Squat: The Execution

- Hips travel back and down
- Bottom of squat (ultimately) is when hip crease is below the top of the kneecap
 - Initial modifications may apply
- Knees stay in line with the line of the feet
- Neutral head position

Squat: The **Finish**

- Drive through the heel
- Keep knees tracking out and over the feet
- Return to full extension at hips and knees

The Squat Sequence



Squat Progressions

- Counterbalance box squat
- Prisoner box squat
- Counterbalance air squat
- Prisoner air squat
- Overhead counterbalance box squat
- Overhead counterbalance air squat
- Overhead air squat with shoulder press

The Push-Up



Push-Up: The Set-Up

- Kneel down, situate hands hands at shoulder-width placement
- Fingers pointing forward
- Feet together
- Squeeze glutes
- Screw hands into floor/externally rotate shoulders
- Shoulders retracted
- Position hands over shoulders
 - Elbow pits forward

Mid-Range position

- Keep forearms vertical
- Keep elbows in
- Shoulders retracted
- Continue to screw hands into floor
- Belly tight & glutes engaged into descent
- Lower to bottom position

Mid-Range UPWARD phase

- Press straight up
- Keep abs tight, back flat
- Screw hands
- Shoulders retracted
- Elbows in!

The Pull-Up



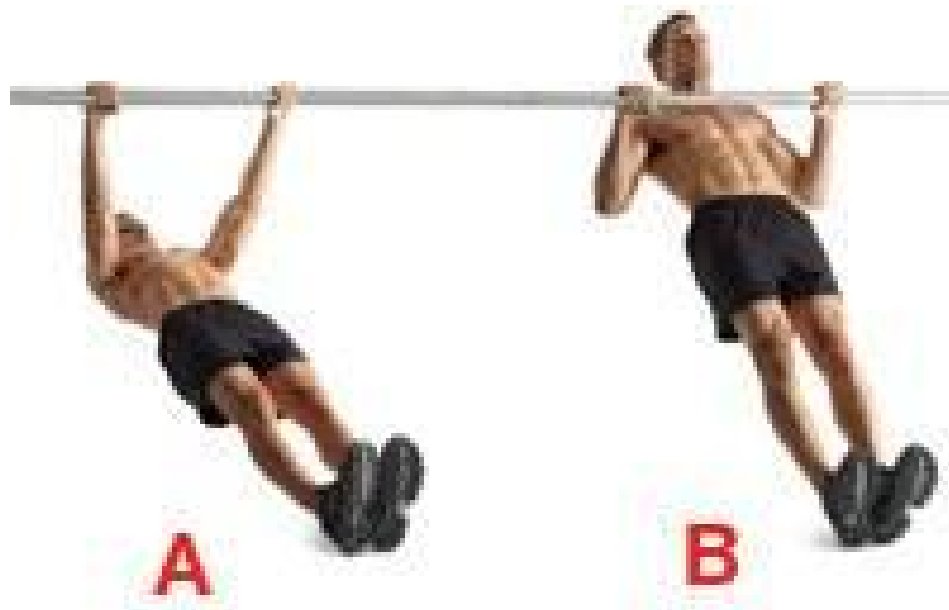
Variations

- Strict
- Inverted row
- Ring Row

Strict Pull-Up



Inverted Row



Ring Row



Band-Assisted Pull-Up



Pull-Up Cues

- Use a hook grip, at shoulder-width distance
- Brace your trunk
 - Squeeze glutes
 - Draw-in abs
- Point toes, keep legs together
- Keep CORE tight throughout
- Pull up, keeping shoulder blades retracted

Overhead Shoulder Press



Shoulder Press

- Foundational to all overhead movements
- Good opportunity to work on bracing and shoulder torque
- Great rehab tool
 - Recovering from knee injury
 - One of the first exercises to reintroduce
 - Helps with external rotation and co-contraction
 - Strengthens surrounding musculature

Set-Up

- Stance is hip width
- Hands just outside the shoulders
- Bar resting on the front of shoulders: “the rack”
- Elbows up and in front of bar
- Keep chest up
- Brace torso
- Hook grip (closed grip)

Execution

- Retract shoulders, and retract head slightly
- Press bar upward, past chin and nose
- Extend arms fully and lock arms overhead
- Head can resume normal position under bar

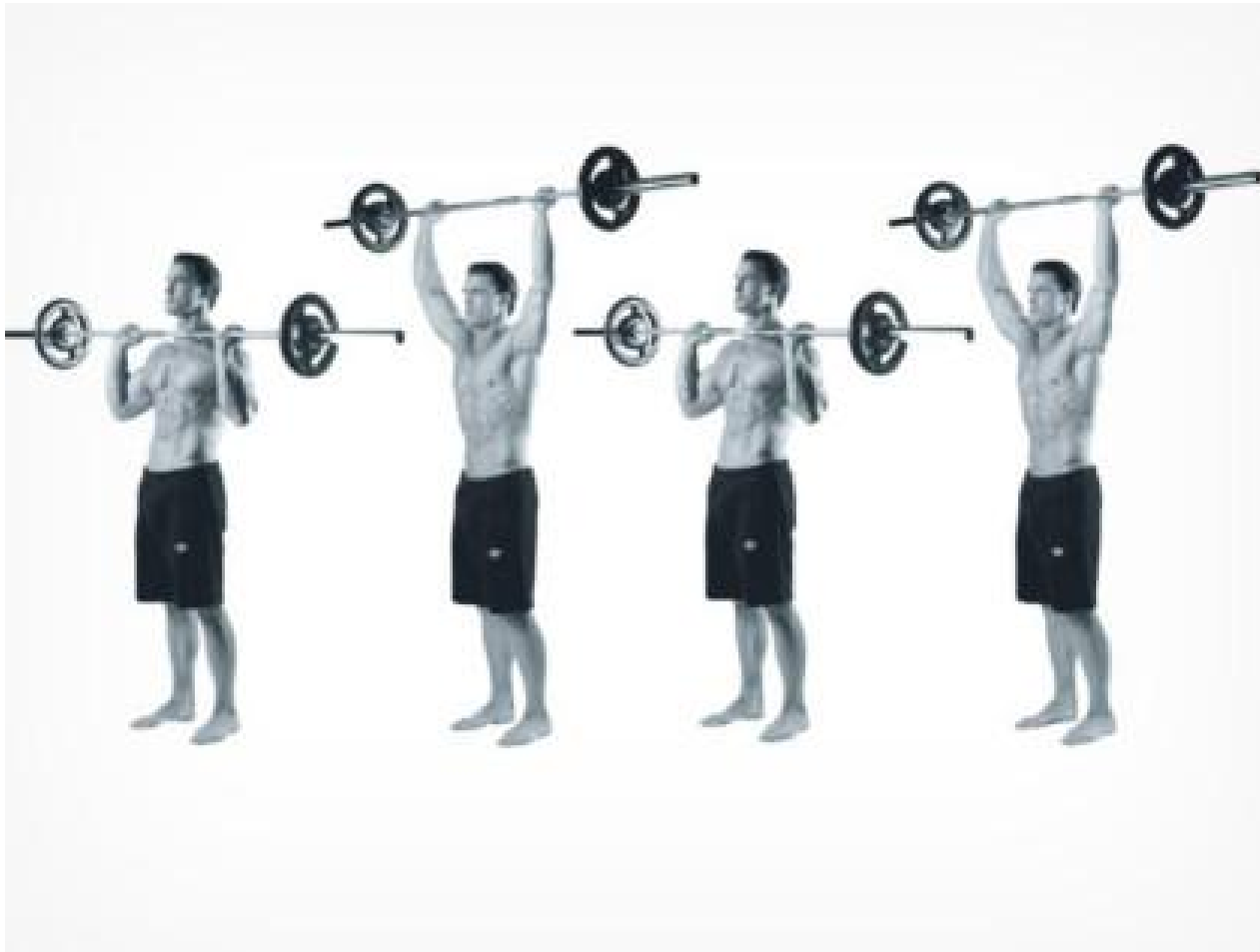
Finish

- Keep shoulders “active”
- Hips and knees at full extension
- To return the bar, retract face and allow bar/weight to return safely to the “rack”

With Dumbbells



With Bar/Barbell



Alternating



Dumbbell vs. Barbell?

- Dumbbells
 - good for those limited range of motion or imperfect technique
 - Good for those with pain and limitations at the shoulder
- Barbells
 - Better for progressing to heavier loads and transferability

Programming

- When?
 - Most days of the week
 - Bottom line: a body in motion stays in motion, a body at rest decays.
 - 3-on, 1-off, 2-on, 1-off
 - Allows for challenge AND recovery
- Which movements/exercises?
 - Stick to total-body, functional movements
 - The ones we have reviewed as well as their scaled variations
 - Scale the movement AND/OR the volume as needed!

Workout Ideas

- Single element
- Multiple element
- Rounds for time (RFT)
- As Many Rounds as Possible (AMRAP)
- 21-15-9
- Tabata

Examples

For time

- 25 rows
- 25 push-ups
- 25 sit-ups
- 25 air squats

AMRAP

- 5 rows
- 10 push-ups
- 15 squats

Cont'd

21-15-9

- Step-ups
- Dumbbell shoulder press

Tabata

- Pick a movement
- Do 8 rounds of 20 seconds “on”, 10 seconds “off”
- 4-min workout!

Cont'd

Rounds for time (RFT)

5 RFT

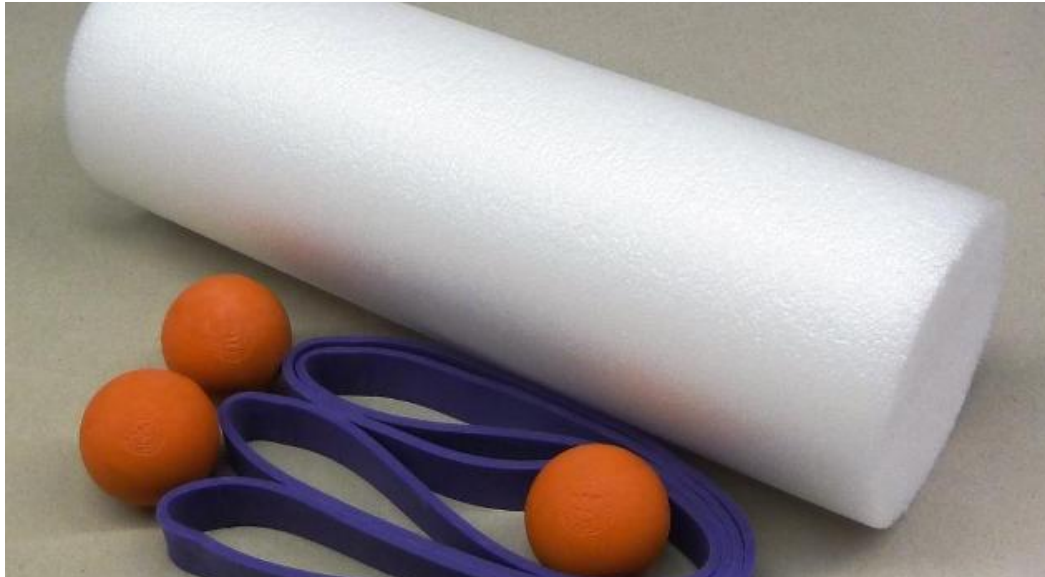
- Row 250m
- 10 Sit-ups

Skill work

- Spend 20 minutes just working on refining movement

Soft tissue work

- Self-myofascial release
 - Foam rolls, massage sticks, lacrosse balls
- Before or after workout session



Banded Distraction



Note:

- Remember to approach new exercises slowly and progressively, and ideally, in the presence of a qualified exercise professional
 - Not all “personal trainers” are qualified
 - Choose someone with strong academic preparation in exercise physiology and kinesiology, as well as experience in exercise rehabilitation

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