

Fitness Tips



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5. Exercises of the month

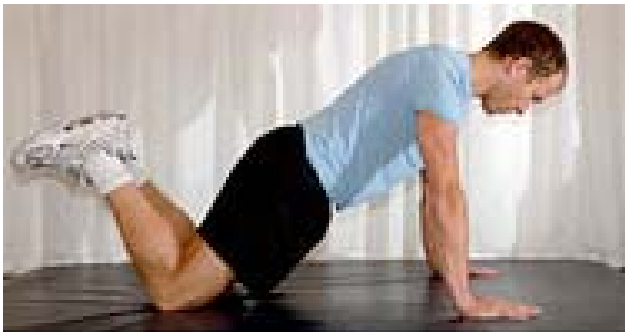
Stability ball press-up



- Draw belly button to spine whilst maintaining a neutral spine
- Hips must be held in line with the shoulders and knees
- Lower chest to ball. Keep elbows above wrists
- Do not poke chin forward or let your lower back sag
- Breathe out as push up



Three-quarter press-up



Kneel on the floor with your hands resting on the floor, arms shoulder width apart.

Slowly bend your elbows lowering your chest towards the floor – breathing in as you go down.



Slowly come back up to the original start position – breathing out as you do so.

The wall press-up

It is probably the easiest form of press-up and is a good way for beginners to strengthen their upper body.



Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.

Place your hands against a wall, with your arms stretched out in front of you and your fingers pointing to the ceiling.

Keeping your back straight and your head looking straight in front of you, slowly bend the arms at the elbows.



Aim to lower yourself a couple of inches away from the wall and then push back to your starting position.

If you want to increase the level of difficulty then a good tip is to move your legs further back.

4. ABS of Steel (Part 1) - Develop the torso of your dreams.

Everyone wants abs of steel! There is nothing like a well toned torso to boost confidence when visiting your local swimming pool or when your strutting your stuff on the beach on holiday.

Unfortunately, however, many people are hiding their highly toned ABS not behind clothes but behind a layer of fat. Everyone has abdominal muscles it just a matter of exposing them!

Over the next two weeks I will be delving into some of the facts and myths about abdominal training and how you can achieve the torso of your dreams!

'You can burn fat around the abdominal areas by completing a few hundred sits-ups each day'. This is a myth that many of us still believe. You can not burn fat in specific areas of the body by targeting the muscles in that area. The best way of burning fat from you ABS is to have the right mixture of cardiovascular exercise and weight training in your regime. This along with a

sensible diet will reduce body fat levels to exposed the ABS underneath.

'Sit-ups are the best abdominal exercise'. Sit-ups are definitely not the best abdominal exercises as they predominantly use a hip flexor muscle called the iliopsoas to bring you up into the sit-up position. Due to the attachment of this muscle to the spine sit-ups can lead to back pain and muscle imbalance. Crunches are a better alternative to sit-ups as they isolate the abdominals and don't involve the hip flexor muscles.

To be continued next week.....

3. Back to Basics - Develop your CORE muscles for improved back strength, balance and posture.

Most of us have heard of 'CORE training', but do we know what it really is? There are a lot of misconceived ideas about what core training is all about and how to train the core effectively. I've lost count of the number of times people have told me they are going to train their core, only to then go and spend their workout annihilating their abs by completing hundreds of crunches and crunch type exercises. In reality these people, although getting an effective ab workout, are only really training one fifth of their core!!

In order to get a truly affective CORE workout you need to be aware of the muscles involved and their roles in both our health and fitness.

The five muscles groups of the core are the obliques (love handles), erector spinae (back), transverse abdominus (deep core muscle), pelvic floor muscles and the abdominals (ABS). Each of these muscles groups perform different movements which means you will need more than a selection of ab exercises to work all five.

A healthy core is essential for maintaining back strength and posture which can help in preventing back injury. A strong core also means better balance, total body strength and a firm torso that you are not afraid to show off!! Not only that, but by improving core strength, which in turn can improve posture, you can also maintain your youthful complexion! A recent study has shown that bad posture can impede the nervous systems signals to vital organs which can have an aging effect. SO BY HAVING AN EFFECTIVE CORE WORKOUT YOU CAN MAINTAIN YOUR YOUTH..... BONUS!!

2. Get Real - Begin with the end in mind.

Last week we talked about being specific with your training. However, in order to be specific you first need to set yourself goals. I can't stress enough how important it is to know where you are going with an exercise programme before starting it! I'd probably be right in saying that most of us don't just head out in our cars and drive aimlessly! More often than not we have a destination in mind, and so it should be the same for our exercise. It's the same with our training programme, its important to know where you are heading whether its to lose 3 stone, run your first marathon or be able to bench 100kg.

Set yourself short term and long term goals e.g. what you want to achieve in 6 months and what you want to have achieved at the end of each week? Give yourself more time than you think you need to reach your goal. Realistic, achievable goals are generally better than goals that are difficult to reach. Setting unrealistic goals more often than not leads to failure and reluctance to try again e.g. if someone training for a their first marathon tried to run marathon distance in their first week training chances are they are going to fail.

Make your personal goals specific for each week and train towards that and try not to do everything at once as it takes time and hard work to achieve any goal. Remember our bodies need time to adapt to training and so you can't expect to do a couple of weeks weight training and achieve rock hard pecs!!

So be smart when it comes to setting goals and don't beat yourself before you start!

1. Be specific - Define your desired outcome, and create your action plan accordingly.

If you hear the word 'Fitness' what is your immediate thought. I would probably be right in saying that an overweight man or woman struggling for breath after climbing a few steps would be most peoples idea of 'unfit'? Some of you may associate fitness with a power lifter shifting unimaginable weights in the gym, or perhaps you think of a top class athlete completing ultra endurance events such as an 'IRONMAN'? Both of these guys are without doubt extremely 'FIT' and well conditioned for their

chosen sport. However, if a power lifter were to try and beat the world record in the 10,000 metres or on the other hand a 10,000 metre runner tried to beat the world record in the 'Clean and Jerk' chances are the word 'Fitness' would NOT spring to mind. 'Fitness' can therefore be quite specific depending on the conditioning of any individual.

Fitness training needs to be specific to the results you want to achieve. Your body adapts and learns to cope with different stresses applied to it e.g. by training your body to run long distances your bodies muscles become more tolerant to lactic acid (a waste product produced through the use of energy in our body, which gives a burning sensation in the muscles), meaning we can run for longer. Your muscles will also become stronger if you lift heavy weights, their cross section will increase as well as their ability to contract which in turn improves strength.

So whether you want to be the next 'Mr Universe', run a marathon or simply lose weight BE SPECIFIC!!