

PEAK SPEAK- April 2007

PEAK PERFORMANCE Fitness Center

Welcome to our newsletter!

In PEAK SPEAK you'll find general fitness info, workout ideas, nutrition tips, and news about our health club.

Feel free to forward email or printed copies of our newsletters to anyone you think might find the content interesting.

We'll keep past issues available on our web site.

If you have any questions about the content, or ideas for features, please see Joe or Pete.

In this edition:

- ***Core Training***
 - ***Unfit Kids- How YOU Can Help***
 - ***Peak's Teenage Weight Lifting Program***
-

Core Training

This is a hot topic, and it seems that you can't pick up a health/fitness magazine without seeing various articles extolling the virtues of Core Training.

What is the "core"?

The National Academy of Sports Medicine defines the core as "the lumbo-pelvic-hip complex." Basically that means anything above the thigh and below the ribs. Think of the core as your body's hub. There are around thirty muscle attachments in this region, and the core is where much of our motion and power originates.

Some of the more important muscles in this region are the inner abdominal muscles and the gluteus maximus.

The innermost muscles of the core, such as the deep abdomen muscles (not the six-pack muscle) provide support and stabilization to the lower back.

The Gluteus Maximus are a major component of the core, and should be one of the largest and most powerful muscles in the body. Glutes are important in many common activities such as walking, running or jumping. Properly functioning glutes take unnecessary stress away from the hips and lower back.

Weakness in the core muscles can be a direct cause of problems like lower back pain, improper motion, and the development of various orthopedic difficulties. When core muscle groups are weak or under-conditioned, other muscles in the core are called upon to compensate. This leads to imbalance and undue strain, and explains how weak abdominal muscles can contribute to lower back problems.

Strengthening and conditioning the core muscle groups is very important to overall fitness, balance and performance.

Core Training (cont'd)

Generally, flat-plane weight bearing exercises do not effectively work the core muscle groups. For example, consider the difference between the bench press and the push up. The bench press is an effective exercise for developing strength in the muscles in the chest and (secondarily) to the arms and shoulders. The dynamic principals involved ensure that the focus of the exercise is limited to the target muscles (you may have heard the term "isolating" a target muscle during an exercise). That's what makes the bench press such an effective upper body exercise: it focuses the stress on a those specific muscles.

Now, consider the push up. Yes, there is stress on the upper body (chest, shoulders, arms). But in addition to that, the lower body is engaged, as the hips and trunk provide balance and stabilization while the legs form the foundation for bearing lower body weight. So, the push up is a much more effective total-body exercise than the bench press. Using an exercise ball (Swiss ball) further increases the engagement of stabilizing muscle groups in the core.

That is one of the key principals of core training: executing movements in such a way as to cause stabilizing muscle groups to be engaged. This not only works the important core muscle groups, but also burns more calories and provides a better total-body workout.

It's easy to add core training exercises to your workout routine. We suggest that you begin by introducing one or two Swiss ball movements into your program, starting with low-impact movements like Swiss ball squats or sit-ups.

As always, if you have any questions, please see Pete or Joe.

“Unfit” Kids: How You Can Help

Young Americans today are far less fit than those of past generations, and the trend is worsening. The incidence of overweight and obesity in young American children is skyrocketing. Studies show that 30% of children under 18 are overweight, and 15% are obese. Both of these statistics hold true for children as young as 5! This unfortunate trend is contributing to problematic increases in the incidence of diabetes and other serious health issues in our young people. Kids are becoming much more sedentary, and are being subjected (or subjecting themselves) to diets loaded with “bad” calories, excessive sugar and unhealthy preservatives.

What’s driving this trend that is justifiably called a “national epidemic”? There are many reasons: the proliferation of technology as entertainment, societal changes and safety concerns that discourage parents from allowing kids to just “go out and play”, the bombardment of kids with advertising for fast foods and unhealthy snacks- the list goes on and on.

But there is one driving factor that we believe is overlooked: the example of parents and other adults in their lives. External influences are obviously powerful and significant, but the power of positive adult role models should not be underestimated. Consider, for example, the fact that a child is much more likely to remain overweight if his/her parents are overweight. Kids are also more likely to smoke if they are regularly exposed to adults who smoke.

On the flip side, we think it’s obvious that children can benefit greatly by exposure to adults (parents, other relatives, friends, etc) who eat responsibly, exercise and pay attention to fitness. There are many sources for information and support that will help you guide the kids in your life into a making more healthy choices. But keep in mind that YOU may be one of the best sources.

Are you setting a good *fitness example* for the young people in your life?

PEAK SPEAK- April 2007

Summer Strength Training Program for Teenagers

Too many teenagers participate in weight training programs without proper guidance on form and technique. This not only puts them at risk of **serious injury**, but it also limits the potential benefits of training.

Our certified fitness experts have put together a Five-Session program that will provide a solid foundation for training properly, safely, and effectively. Upon completion of this program, attendees will be well prepared to participate in advanced strength training programs.

This high-impact program will deliver expert instruction in these key areas:

- *Proper form and technique that will enable you to maximize results while minimizing risk of injury*
- *Training secrets for developing power and endurance*
- *Concepts for designing an effective weight training program*
- *How stretching and warming up help you get more from your workouts*

If you know a teenager who is (or plans to be) engaged in weight training, help him or her get the right instruction to do it safely and effectively.

Please see Pete or Joe for details.