

# ADJUSTED FOR LIFE

## CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH CENTRE



ADDING LIFE TO YOUR YEARS

## Functional Body for Functional Fitness

I have enjoyed discussing the different exercise regimens my patients have embarked on in the New Year to reach their fitness goals. A common theme for many is the use of some form of functional training. This is when you learn to train using integrated whole body movements instead of isolated muscle groups. The premise is that this type of exercise better prepares an individual for the rigors of daily living. Lifting your briefcase, laundry, the children or performing household tasks like vacuuming and making the bed require many different positions so training in a single plane of movement no matter how strong you become leaves you vulnerable to injury.

It has been our experience at the clinic that training for functional fitness is effective. We have implemented many of these concepts to help our patients recover. Like many ideas however, when they reach critical mass in the public domain it becomes over hyped and is thought to be the answer to all mans problems. As a result, today we see anything with reference to functional fitness getting endorsed. I would like to review the advantages this training offers along with some guidelines and precautions before you start.

### Advantages

The increased complexity makes it more interesting and fun to perform

Limited equipment needs (gym ball, Bosu balls, dumbbells, resistance bands) so it is less expensive, takes less space and can easily be completed while traveling.

Challenges the body with the complex integration of information given to the nervous system from sensory input of the eyes, inner ear, soles of the feet and the upper neck joints needed for balance.

The dynamic muscle strength required to complete certain exercises develops the coordination of nervous system function and the musculoskeletal system.

I would like to suggest some guidelines for your consideration when selecting a program that includes functional fitness. Many people benefit from the general application of the functional fitness concepts however the more specifically you can address your existing

deficiencies of the neuromusculoskeletal system the more effective the training program. It is critical that your body is properly prepared to take on the additional challenge of a functional fitness exercise regimen or the likelihood of injury significantly increases. It does not make sense to put the cart before the horse and overload your body to create a training response if you have not optimized your body's structure.

Functional testing evaluates gait, posture, balance, joint function and strength of the muscles needed for postural control such as the transverses abdominus, deep neck flexors and the lower trapezius as well as the length of the hip flexor, hamstring and cervical extensor muscles

#### Guidelines

Begin with single plane exercise and progress through to multi-plane exercise

Begin with simple exercise and progress through to compound exercise

Begin with exercise on a stabile surface and progress to a labile (dynamic) surface.

Perform your aerobic, balance and strength building components as separate endeavors first particularly if deficiencies or imbalances have been identified then progress to a more integrated exercise. This is when you can incorporate the principles of speed, agility and quickness

Remember a chiropractor is a biomechanical and structural specialist. To get the most out of today's modern training principles it is critical to have a body that is free from nerve interference, has correct alignment, full ROM, muscle balance and segmental joint function. Dr Davidson has expertise in these training concepts as well as preparing your body for optimal function so that you realize the most injury free benefit of this training.