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The Fitness Experts

Kick Start Guide



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The importance of good form

If you didn't already know, exercise technique is extremely important. Not only will you save yourself some pain and discomfort associated with poor technique, but you will also reap the benefits of increased repetitions and weight used by way of better movement patterns.

Many people go into gyms to lift with no care in the world for their exercise technique. They just keep adding weight to the exercise as their technique becomes exponentially poorer. This ultimately leads to aches and pains which might not have been there if they had paid more attention to their movement in the first place.

So, in short, the better your technique is with every movement, the better you can target the muscles that should be working. In the end, you'll feel better and be more prepared for daily life, as well as helping you get closer to your goals. Don't be the guy in the corner that goes to town on squats and doesn't have a clue that he is about as close to herniating a disc as he could be without actually doing so.

Pay attention to your exercise technique on every repetition while training and every movement day to day. Remember, just because a movement isn't considered an exercise, doesn't mean it can't hurt you if you move improperly.

One movement which is used a lot because of its effect on so many large muscle groups (and therefore the calorie burning) is the squat. It is a simple move that most small children can do perfectly, however we lose our ability to do it properly because we rarely need to anymore. Keeping your heels on the floor (or a support) mean more stability and depth, which recruits more muscle, especially the glutes, a major muscle group which is generally underused.



Keeping the head up and core tight keeps the spine inline and prevents injury. Knees tracking over toes helps prevent injury to the knee itself.

This doesn't only apply to squats, all exercises need to be done properly to get the best effect from them and keep you injury free and make life easier.

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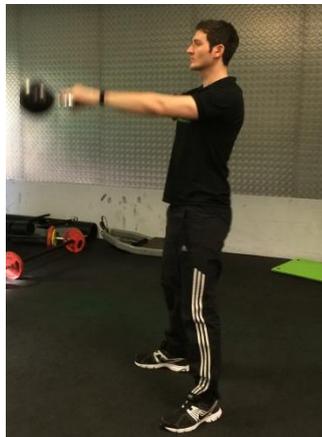
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Kettlebells

Kettlebells—cannonball-like weights with thick handles—were the weapon of choice for Russian lifters more than a century ago. They're just now getting their due worldwide. The weights offer all the benefits of dumbbell training, plus a few more. The super-thick handles challenge your grip, and the position of the weight in relation to the handle works your core extra hard. Best of all, kettlebells are versatile. They're ideal for explosive exercises that work major muscles, burn body fat, and build power, but they also add a new dimension to classic moves like chest presses and flies.

Why It Works

The weight of a kettlebell hangs a few inches below its handle, which makes it more difficult to control. Everything from your grip to your core has to work harder than if you were using a dumbbell, so you get more out of even standard dumbbell moves. This extra muscle activity means your body burns more calories. Couple that with exercises that target the whole body and you have a formula for significant fat loss.



One move used a lot is **the kettlebell swing**. This move uses the kettlebell to activate the 'posterior chain' which is the muscles from your back down to your calves. Most important of all is the glutes (your backside). We spend a lot of time sitting these days, in school, offices and cars, so the glutes are less active. The swing forces these muscles to work and since they are a large powerful muscle group they burn a lot of calories, making it great for fat loss.

Many people blame the kettlebell for back problems, however they shouldn't if done properly as the glutes should be doing the work and the back is stable throughout. If you find you do feel it in your back, remember the muscles you should be tensing and bracing and ensure you are.

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TRX/ Suspension training

The TRX Suspension Trainer workout system leverages gravity and your bodyweight to perform hundreds of exercises. You're in control of how much you want to challenge yourself on each exercise - because you can simply adjust your body position to add or decrease resistance.

The TRX Suspension Trainer:

- Delivers a fast, effective total-body workout
- Helps build a rock-solid core
- Increases muscular endurance
- Benefits people of all fitness levels (pro athletes to seniors)

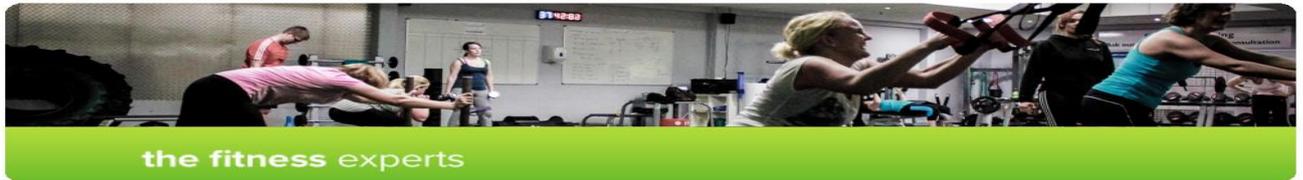
The main points to consider when using this equipment are to constantly brace your core, and to keep adjusting your position to let you carry on. If you are doing trx rows for 30 seconds and you fatigue after 15 seconds, you just move your feet to change the angle and keep going. This way you get the 30 sec work without having to stop to change weight or rest.



As you can see from the picture above, the positioning of your feet and the angle made will greatly change the resistance felt. The left picture would be harder and the right easier, just by that small change. You can also see the core work, since the body is rigid like in the plank, not hips dropping down. This activates the inner core muscles as well as the abs, which will mean you will be stronger in other moves and activities.

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Core work

Core fitness exercise has become synonymous with abdominal conditioning. In terms of core stability, the abdominal muscles do little. Without proper strength and conditioning of all core muscles, injury, aches and pains can occur more frequently. The core of the body is responsible for supporting the back, spine and shoulders. Core fitness exercises should aim to strengthen all muscles related to these areas.

The Power to Work Harder in the Gym

Strength and power originate in the core of the body. When the trunk, torso and pelvis are strong and stable, power is transferred to all other muscles. Powerful contractions, such as rapid muscle movements, require a strong core. The more stable the core, the more energy transferred to the muscles leading to quicker repetitions and more effective training.

Improved Posture

Core fitness exercises also support proper posture. Imbalances of posture can lead to improper weight lifting form, injuries, and undue pressure on the lower back. Pressure and pain of the lower back is a common symptom of weak core muscles.

Improved Balance

The abdominal muscles are important to core stability and strength. When the abdominal muscles are weak, the lower back holds additional pressure and weight from simple daily tasks like walking. When exercising, this pressure grows exponentially leading to painful back injuries. Strengthening the abdominal muscles allows the weight of the upper body to be evenly distributed over the front and back. When weight is distributed, balance improves.

The torso can be pictured as a solid unit. This unit needs to be strong and stable like the frame of a car. If the torso is weak, the muscles of the body will not perform at optimal levels. Core fitness exercises can help build stability of the core.

Although we do use standard 'ab exercises', this is to strengthen the abs. we focus more on planks and other movements to get the core working as a unit and providing the benefits above. These can also be done at home to supplement your training and help your out with the other moves you do regularly in bootcamps.



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MST

Modified Strongman/woman Training is an excellent way to burn fat and maintain lean muscle, while gaining strength (which is helpful for everything). Most people get their initial impression of strongman training from televised events that show large, bulky competitors doing feats of amazing strength. We have refined this to a training session which uses movements designed to help build strength in activities from everyday life (such as farmers walk helping carrying heavy objects) in a way proven to burn fat effectively and increase fitness.

Remembering positioning/posture is important in all MST exercises. Since they are generally heavy objects, you must ensure you brace your core and keep your back inline as you do the movements and think about the muscles you should be using. One that scares most people is the tyre flip, so here are a few points to remember.



- Start close to the tyre, squat down and place hands under.
- Keep back straight
- Look up, over the tyre, not through the middle of it.
- Lift with your legs
- Use knee to support as go from lift to push.

MST only works if you go heavy enough for it to tire the muscles, so use this type of training to push your limits a little and go heavier. Take your time on the heavy exercises (it will still be hard) and use speed on the cardio based exercises such as rope slams and prowler.

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Foam rolling and flexibility

Foam rollers offer many of the same benefits as a sports massage, without the big price tag.

The foam roller not only stretches muscles and tendons but it also breaks down soft tissue adhesions and scar tissue. By using your own body weight and a cylindrical foam roller you can perform a self-massage or myofascial release, break up trigger points, and soothe tight fascia while increasing blood flow and circulation to the soft tissues.



How It Works

The superficial fascia is a soft connective tissue located just below the skin. It wraps and connects the muscles, bones, nerves and blood vessels of the body. Together, muscle and fascia make up what is called the myofascia system. For various reasons including disuse, not enough stretching, or injuries, the fascia and the underlying muscle tissue can become stuck together. This is called an adhesion and it results in restricted muscle movement. It also causes pain, soreness and reduced flexibility or range of motion .

Myofascial release is a body work technique in which a practitioner uses gentle, sustained pressure on the soft tissues while applying traction to the fascia. This technique results in softening and lengthening (release) of the fascia and breaking down scar tissue or adhesions between skin, muscles and bones. But this can be done by you on the foam rollers with ease.

Myofascial release has also been shown to relieve various muscle and joint pains such as IT band syndrome and shin splints as well as improving flexibility and range of motion.

It is best used on the larger muscles of the lower body and combined with stretching can give full body flexibility and muscular health with little time needed.

A simple foam rolling and stretching routine for at home:

Foam roll the calves, hamstrings, glutes and quads. Then stretch these, followed by stretching the chest, back, shoulders and triceps. 20 seconds on each of these takes up just a few minutes, but will aid in keeping your mobility and flexibility to help you in day to day life and in bootcamp work. See the next couple of pages for a reminder of the movements.



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20-30 seconds on each of these will aid general flexibility and recovery as well as after training.
Doing just the foam rolling movements before a bootcamp can also help performance.

Calf rolling



Hamstring rolling



Glute rolling

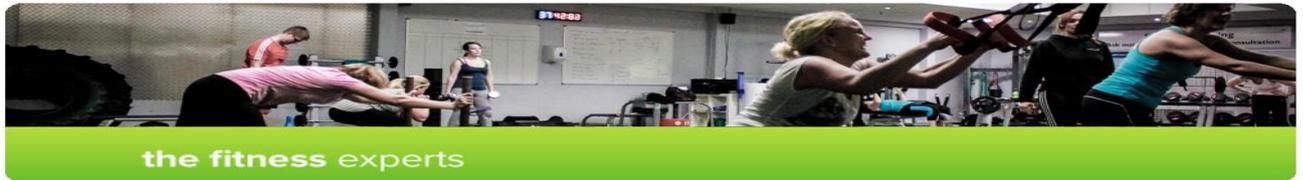


Quad rolling



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Remember that good form should happen throughout bootcamp, even when we want you to go quickly. Speed should be as fast as you can...with good form!

We will do our best to make sure everyone is getting the most out of the exercises, doing them safely and effectively, so don't take it the wrong way if we correct you on things, its what we are there for! 😊

One of the reasons Personal Training works so well is because you get 1-2-1 tuition, including making sure your technique is spot on and you're getting the most out of every exercise. If you are interested in trying PT, why not take advantage as a new member of the PT Power Pack, giving you an insight into what it can do for you and your goals, with no obligation, at a reduced rate.

Email admin@thefitnessexperts.co.uk or speak a trainer for more info.