



Active Lifestyle Challenge

WEEK THREE

Functional Fitness

Welcome to week three of the Active Lifestyle Challenge!

Included in this packet are all the resources you need for your third week.



ACTIVE LIFESTYLE CHALLENGE

Week Three Overview

Functional Fitness

Remember to track each completed activity on your challenge tracking sheet!

Watch 'Full Body Functional Training'

20-Minute Video

Watch Now



Read 'Functional Fitness Through the Ages'

Pages 3-4

Read 'Neuromotor Exercise'

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Complete 'Turn Everyday Activities Into a Workout Mini Challenge'

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Functional Fitness Throughout the Ages

What is Functional Fitness?

Fitness routines and recommendations vary widely on an individual's goals and interests. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends individuals participate in 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise each week, including a variety of strength, cardio, flexibility and neuromotor exercises. Functional fitness is a great way to incorporate strength, balance, and mobility into your routine in order to meet these guidelines. It includes any exercise that improves your body's natural movement patterns and emphasizes functional movements that can be used in everyday life. These movements are especially important to reduce fall risk, prevent injury and promote independence in old age. Functional movements are great for any fitness level, or anyone looking for a general workout routine. Continue reading for recommendations based on age.

Generally...

Consider the different movements you perform throughout your day. Such as when you reach up to grab something off the shelf or when you squat to pick up a heavy box. Then, think about how you can strengthen the muscles you use in these everyday activities. See below for everyday activities paired with strengthening exercises to help you maintain daily function. Keep in mind that you can also practice the actual everyday activity to strengthen these muscles.

Everyday Activity	Strengthening Exercise
Lifting a heavy object off the floor	Weighted squats and deadlifts
Vacuuming the house	Holding lunges on both sides, plank, and arm extensions
Shoveling snow or dirt	Squats, biceps curls, and Russian twists
Walking up steps	Stepping up on a stable box and lifting free leg knee to a 90-degree angle
Mowing the lawn	Pushing a weighted sled
Carrying groceries	Biceps curls and extended arm lifts or farmer walks
Picking up children	Weighted squat to torso twist paired with biceps curls or bent over row

Recommendations Based on Age

Ages 20 – 39

Look to the future: If you imagine retiring and hiking in the mountains of Hawaii, make sure you can do that now. Starting in your 30s, you lose between about 3 and 8 percent of your muscle mass per decade. Focus on building muscle now to protect your bones and joints for the future.

Lean into your interests and hobbies:

Participate in sports groups, group exercise classes or outdoor activities when possible. Find something that you enjoy so it can become part of your lifestyle.

Develop healthy habits like quitting smoking, getting adequate sleep, eating a balanced diet, regular appointments with your primary care provider etc.

Ages 40–59

The risk for breaking a bone increases due to bone loss as we age. This is especially true for women when estrogen levels drop during menopause. Incorporate exercise that strengthens muscles to prevent falling and therefore breaking a bone. Exercises to consider include:

- › Toe and Heel Raises
- › Walking backwards and sideways
- › Lower body exercises like squats, lunges, calf raises and deadlifts,
- › Core exercises

Emphasize exercises that increase balance and stability. As you age, muscles and tendons get tighter and make injuries more common. Start doing balance-boosting exercises like single-leg stands and weight shifts, or workouts like Tai Chi and Pilates.

Don't forget to incorporate stretching before and after your physical activity to better

prepare the body for a strong workout.

Listen to your body. If you are experiencing pain on a regular basis, visit with your primary care physician to determine if something is wrong or for alternative exercise options.

Ages 60+

Joint Mobility and Flexibility: Aging can bring stiffness and reduced joint mobility.

Incorporating gentle stretching and range-of-motion exercises helps maintain flexibility, reducing the risk of injury and promoting joint health.

Strength Training for Independence: Functional strength is crucial for maintaining independence. Weight-bearing exercises, resistance training, and bodyweight movements help seniors build and maintain muscle mass, supporting activities like standing up from a chair or carrying groceries.

Balance and Stability: Falls are a significant concern for the aging population. Balance and stability exercises, such as standing on one leg or practicing Tai Chi, enhance coordination and reduce the risk of falls, promoting a sense of security in daily movements.

Cognitive Engagement: Functional fitness for seniors goes beyond the physical. Incorporating activities that challenge cognitive function, such as balancing while performing a simple mental task, contributes to overall brain health and well-being.

Remember the use it or lose it principle - If you aren't using your muscles and joints on a regular basis, your body may eventually lose the ability to do so. As people age, they often lose the ability to do basic movements like overhead reaching or standing up from the floor. Maintain a quality and happy life and by caring for your body to last a lifetime.



Neuromotor Exercise



Neuromotor activities are an important part of functional fitness. They challenge our proprioception and include motor skills like balance, agility, coordination, and gait. Improving these functions will reduce your risk of falling and help you correct yourself should you slip or lose your balance. It can also make training more interesting and challenging. Make the following adjustments to your exercise routine to challenge yourself and improve your neuromotor fitness.

Improving balance can be accomplished by challenging the nervous system's control of posture and equilibrium. This can be done by:

- › Reducing the body's support base, for example standing with both feet together or on one leg
- › Displacing the body's center of mass, for example standing on a bosu ball or stepping over an obstacle
- › Limiting or removing visual or proprioceptive feedback, for example closing the eyes during an exercise.

Incorporate the following exercises to your routine.

- › Single leg deadlift
- › Dumbbell chest press on exercise ball
- › Step back into a lunge while doing a cable row
- › Walking lunges
- › Step-ups
- › Agility footwork

Other activities that combine neuromotor exercise with resistance exercise and flexibility, like yoga and tai chi, or dance are fun alternatives!



Mini Challenge

Turn Everyday Activities Into a Workout

Mix up your exercise routine by adding in these functional fitness moves. Functional fitness is a great way to incorporate strength, balance, and mobility. It includes any exercise that improves your body's natural movement patterns and emphasizes functional movements that can be used in everyday life.

Complete seven of the following activities throughout your week to complete the challenge! For each exercise, complete 3 sets of ten. (i.e. ten squats, repeated three times.)

Static stretch reaching for toes

Daily Benefit: Tying your shoes

Shoulder stretch, reach your hand behind and up your back as far as possible

Daily Benefit: Putting on your seatbelt

High knees

Daily Benefit: Avoiding stepping on toys

Pigeon stretch

Daily Benefit: Putting your socks on

Weighted squats or deadlifts

Daily Benefit: Lifting a heavy object off the floor

Walking lunges, plank or arm extensions

Daily Benefit: Vacuuming the house, mowing the lawn

Squats, biceps curls and Russian twists

Daily Benefit: Shoveling snow, dirt or other yard work

Biceps curls and extended arm lifts or farmer walks

Daily Benefit: Carrying groceries

Weighted squat to torso twist paired with biceps curls or bent over row

Daily Benefit: Picking up children

Box squat, weighted squat

Daily Benefit: Getting out of a chair

Glute bridges, lunges or wall sits

Daily Benefit: Getting down on the floor/up off the floor

Stepping up on a stable box and lifting free leg knee to a 90-degree angle.

Daily Benefit: Walking up steps

Single leg deadlift, Russian twists or plank

Daily Benefit: Preventing a fall/Catching yourself while falling



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