

“What’s The Point?”

If you ask people in a gym why they exercise, you’re certain to get the usual responses, such as, “lose weight”, “de-stress”, “firm up”, or even “get shoulders and abs like Alias’s Jennifer Garner”.

Very rarely, if ever, will anyone respond with, “I want to improve my functional strength, muscle balance and coordination in order to improve performance levels and prevent injuries, while in the process getting a really great looking, lean body”!

What I’m talking about here is the fact that most of us do not exercise with functionality in mind, but quite often with only physical appearance as our major motive. While there is nothing wrong with that, what really is the point of having Jennifer’s shoulders and abs if you can’t get through your 60 minute gym workout, 8 hours at your computer, or even a 15 minute game of backyard soccer with your kids, without getting a sore, tired back?

What then is functionality and why is it important? Through evolution, nature has designed our bodies primarily for locomotion, manipulation of objects, carrying, support, balance etc. Therefore, it makes sense to also incorporate aspects of functionality in our exercise programmes to ensure that our bodies are being exercised in the right way. Unfortunately, that is very rarely what we do. As an example, I’m sure many of you have done abdominal crunches and biceps curls, or used adductor machines, to firm up those trouble areas. While it is true that these movements result in more isolated muscle action, they unfortunately have no practical application in our daily lives. It is important to remember that our muscles and joints do not work in isolation, but in highly complex, coordinated sequences under the control of our nervous systems in order to produce graceful, yet powerful, movements.

The bottom line is that we all need to perform exercises that do not just get us looking good, but are also good for us. Exercise focused on functionality not only improves our physical appearance, but also improves our performance in sports, work capacity and other everyday activities.

To give you just a small taste of the benefits and possibilities of functional training, I have introduced a trio of exercises using a versatile, new health and fitness aid, the Gymstick™. But be warned, these exercises all demand quite high levels of neuromuscular coordination and control, balance and concentration! Give them a try and you will see what I mean.

The Gymstick™ is an excellent training aid for individuals at all levels as it makes it easy to exercise all the body’s major muscles groups with a practically limitless range of exercises. In fact, you can easily create your own exercises once you have a command of the basics as you are only limited by your imagination.

So, when you’re about to start your next workout, I encourage you to ask yourself “What’s the point?” I truly hope you make the decision to get more functional in your approach to improving your health and fitness. You deserve it and your body will definitely thank you!

For more information call (03) 9646 6867 or visit www.gymstick.com.au

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Exercise 1: “Yanking the chain”

- Focuses on the biceps, lats and core muscles of the trunk on a solid base of static lower limb muscle activity.
- 7-10 reps per side. Make sure you keep your back straight and supported throughout!



Exercise 2: “Superwoman”

- Great for the shoulders, triceps and pectorals (upper body), glutes and thigh muscles (lower body), while at the same time high levels of balance and core stability.
- 4-6 reps per side, but remember to keep your balance!



Exercise 3: “Twist and shout”

- Excellent lunging exercise for the legs and glutes, with the added trunk twist to get the abdominal obliques involved. This exercise definitely requires strong core stability!
- 4-6 lunges per side with control should get the blood pumping!

