



# Functional Fitness Training: Exercising for Daily Living

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## Functional Fitness Training

While it is no doubt functional fitness training is not in the headlines and talked about as much as other forms of exercise such as CrossFit, HIIT, or typical weight machines, it is definitely not a form of exercise that should be overlooked. However, many individuals don't even know what functional fitness training is. According to the Mayo Clinic,

“Functional fitness exercises train your muscles to work together and prepare them for daily tasks by simulating common movements you might do at home, at work or in sports. While using various muscles in the upper and lower body at the same time, functional fitness exercises also emphasize core stability.”

Functional fitness training can provide multiple benefits if practiced correctly. In addition to being beneficial to one's overall health, this form of exercise does not need extensive equipment or

explanation since it is all based on movements and tasks done in typical daily activities.

### Why is functional fitness important?

It's no secret that as we age, some of the daily activities that used to be so simple and done with ease become more and more difficult. As we age, joints get stiffer, muscles lose their tone, bones can deteriorate, and activities of daily living (ADLs) can be harder and more uncomfortable than they used to be. By incorporating functional fitness training into your workouts and exercise regimen at a young age, the effects that aging has on the body can be postponed. Individuals who are older in age and haven't practiced this form of training before can pick it up any time! Younger individuals who participate in functional fitness training can experience benefits not only in ADLs but also in more intense workouts or exercise they do.



### Benefits to performing Functional Fitness Training

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) provides a few examples of benefits gained from participating in functional fitness training.

- Exercises imitating ADLs will result in more ease, better form, and technique when doing the ADL.
- Machines are not necessarily needed for this mode of exercise since it does not focus on absolute strength; instead it focuses on the amount of strength needed for the ADL in question.
- Neurons fire more synchronously, resulting in better balance, mobility, and efficiency.
- Functional fitness training can be performed at all stages of life. These types of programs are often times created for older individuals to improve their quality of life into older age.

**Body Weight Squat:**

- Feet shoulder-width apart
- Back straight, flat; chest up; head up
- Squat down until thighs are parallel to ground or lower
- Keep knees aligned over toes
- Return to standing position



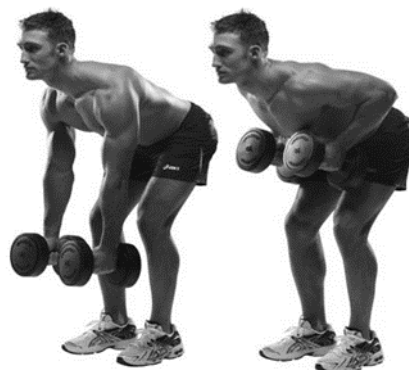
**Body Weight Step Up: (Box needed)**

- Begin with both feet on ground
- Step up on box with one foot
- Bring other foot onto box
- Step down to the ground with beginning foot
- Return 2<sup>nd</sup> foot back to starting position



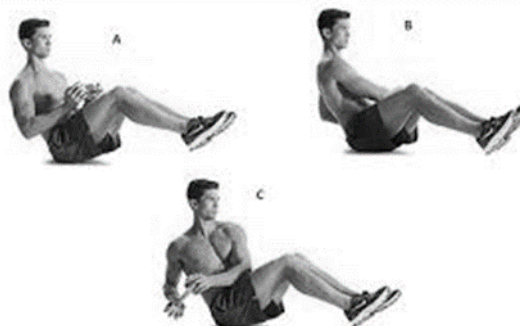
**Bent over Dumbbell Row: (dumbbells needed)**

- Keep slight bend in knees
- With a flat back, bend forward at the hips
- Start with arms out in front of you
- Row arms back, squeezing shoulder blades together
- Return to starting position



**Abdominal Twists: (weight optional)**

- Sit on the ground with knees slightly bent
- Lean torso back, away from thighs and hold weight (optional) at chest
- Maintain hip angle and rotate torso to the right, moving right elbow towards floor behind you
- Return to center, and repeat to left side



**References:**

Mayo Clinic Staff (2016). Functional fitness training: Is it right for you?. Retrieved from: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/functional-fitness/art-20047680>

Schoenfeld MS, B (2012). Is Functional Training Really Functional? Exploring the Functional