



**LB  
FITNESS**

# **FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH**

**BUILD STRENGTH YOU CAN ACTUALLY USE!**





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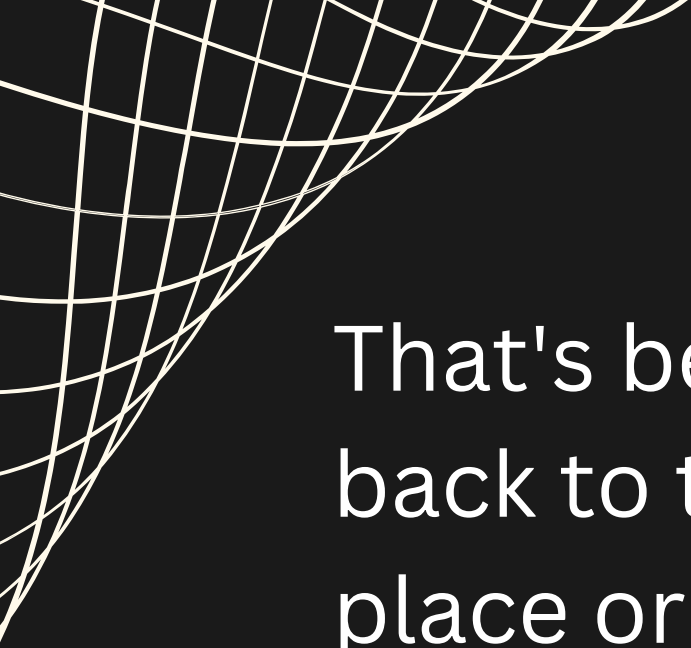


# WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH

Health and Fitness trends come and go all the time but unfortunately not all of them are worth your time and effort. Some of them don't work, some of them are overhyped and some of them are just plain dangerous.

But '*FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH*' is different. While Functional Strength is very much in vogue right now, it's not a 'fad' by any means. In fact, Functional Strength is a step in the right direction for all of fitness.






That's because functional strength take's it all back: It takes it all back to the reasons that most of us started training in the first place or at least the reasons we *should* be training.

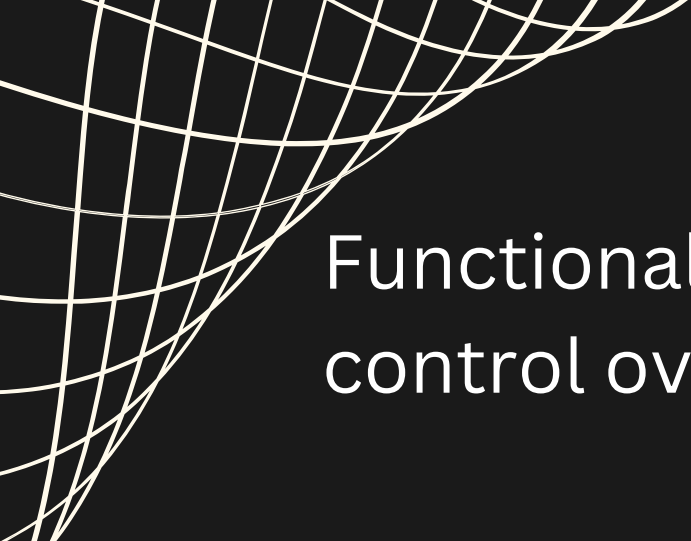
As the name suggests, Functional Strength is strength that is *functional*. In other words, it's strength that you can *use*.

So you're not trying to *look strong* or *look healthy* - you're trying to *be* those things.

An don't worry if you're not super fit or if you don't have any interest in becoming an elite athlete: Functional Strength is important for everyone.







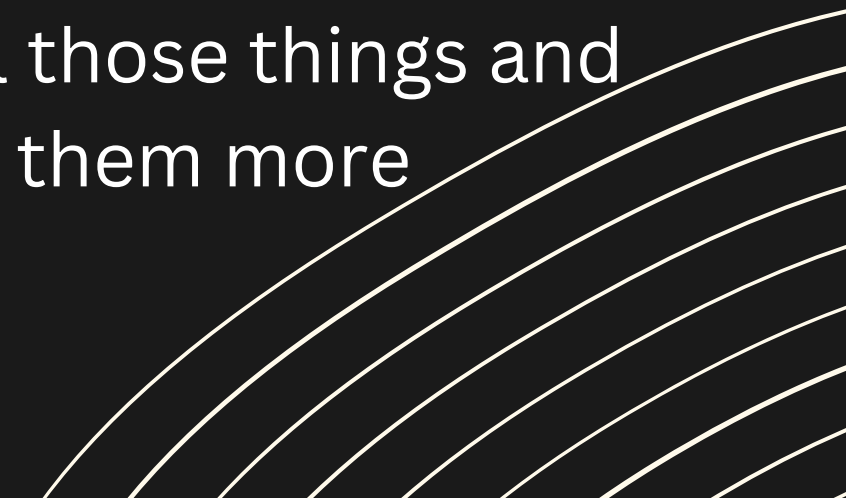
Functional strength helps you in every aspect of your life because it gives you better control over your body and your environment.

Functional fitness extends to things like flexibility, correct breathing technique and posture. All these things enable you to move with less pain, more grace and more speed.

When you train for Functional Strength and Fitness, everything becomes easier: From opening a jam jar, to helping a friend move furniture, to getting out of bed in the morning.

And if you want to train for appearance as your first priority? Well then this is still the right way to go: Because when you train for strength and power, you look much better.

Don't believe me? Then think about it logically: The reason that humans find healthy people attractive is because we assume they have better genetics and are better able to protect themselves and their families. Someone with functional strength can do all those things and really is healthier - so they send all of those unconscious signals that make them more attractive to the opposite sex!






# THE 7 PRIMAL MOVEMENTS

A silhouette of a person in a dynamic, athletic pose, possibly performing a martial arts move or a functional fitness exercise. The person is positioned in the center-left of the frame, with one arm raised high and the other extended forward. The background is a cloudy sky, and the overall tone is dark and moody.

The unfortunate truth is that most of us, gym bro or not, are not '*functional*'. The majority of us find it difficult to move around in our environment, suffer from bad backs and knee pain and aren't all that strong.

This is a result of the way we live. Unfortunately, modern life is not conducive to functional fitness because we're very rarely challenged physically in any meaningful way. The majority of us spend most of our time sitting down and that means we're getting zero exercise.



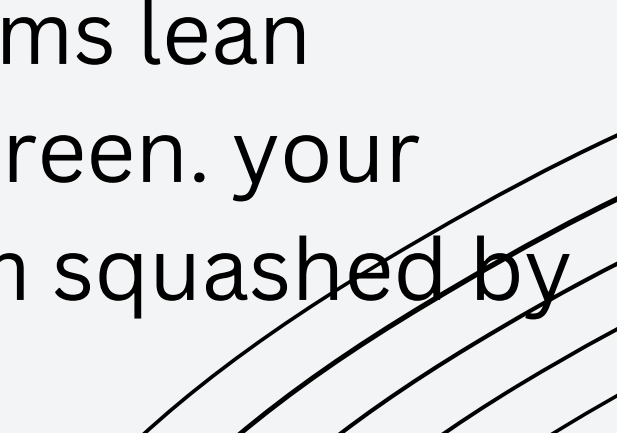
A decorative grid pattern of thin black lines, forming a series of concentric squares that curve towards the top-left corner of the slide.

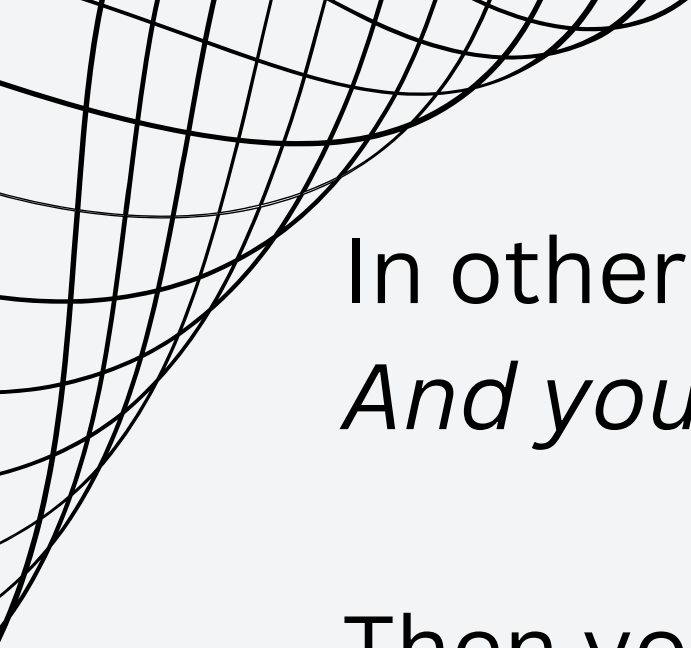
What makes this worse thought, is that sitting itself is actually bad for us too.

Why? because when we sit, we're forced into an unnatural position. Think about it: There were no chairs in the wild and you never would have made this movement.

When you sit at a desk, it forces your legs upward in front of you - will be shortened and tightened. At the same time, your hip extensors found the back, will be stretched and elongated.

Meanwhile, your pecs are also going to be bunched up as your arms lean forward and your neck will be constantly pointing down at the screen. your back will likely be rounded too, shoulders forward and diaphragm squashed by the weight of your upper body.

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A decorative grid pattern of thin black lines in the top-left corner.


In other words: you're gradually destroying your joints and musculature.  
*And you sit like this for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week!*

Then you come home and sit like it some more!

So how would we relax in the wild? Simple: we'd squat. Squatting is natural equivalent of sitting and it's actually really good for us because it puts us in a full body stretch.

Today, a fair proportion of people are actually *incapable* of squatting at all. Try it yourself: are you able to completely squat down while keeping your heel flat on the floor?

This is considered one of the basic, fundamental movements that *all* of us should be able to do.

A series of thin, curved black lines in the bottom-right corner.




A decorative grid pattern of thin black lines, curved and overlapping, located in the top-left corner of the slide.

In fact, there are thought to be seven of the '*Primal Movements*' which are:

- Squatting
- Lunging
- Bending
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Walking or Running
- Twisting

If you can't do these basic seven things, then chances are that you're lacking in fitness, in flexibility and in general health - and it will very likely lead to injury and other problems somewhere down the line.


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A decorative grid pattern of thin black lines, forming a series of overlapping squares, located in the top-left corner of the slide.

So can you guess where we're going to go with this?

That's right: these are the basic movements that a good training program should be made up off. By training the 7 primal movements, you're able to strengthen yourself through all the regular movements that you might face in a daily life and you're able to prevent injury in all of them.

And now, if you introduce additional isolation exercise on top of just to *'hone'* a particular muscle group that seems to be lagging, then you'll be able to improve your aesthetics without worry about creating imbalances or potentially encouraging an injury.

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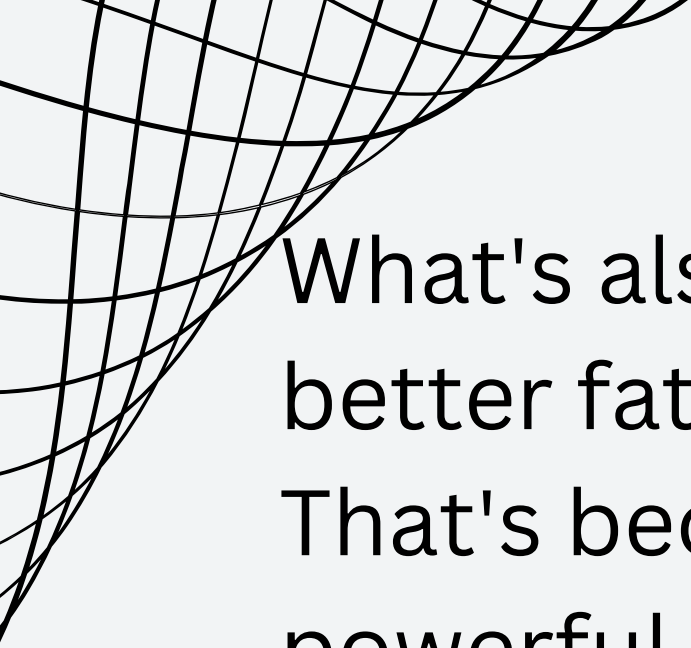


# ***COMPOUND MOVEMENT***

These are your movements that utilize multiple major muscle groups all at once Example of compound lifts include:

- Squatting - Squats, close stance squats, kettlebell swings
- Lunging - Lunges, side squats
- Bending - Deadlifts, sit ups, leg raises
- Pushing - Bench press, overhead press, push ups
- Pulling- Pull ups, row
- Rotations (twists) Heavy bag, twisting sit ups, cable woodchops
- Gait - Jogging, running, walking




A decorative grid pattern of thin black lines, forming a mesh that tapers towards the top right corner.

What's also cool about these movements, is that they actually lead to better fat loss and muscle gain.

That's because the body responds to us training our muscles into one powerful movement, will *really* encourage your body to go into a muscle-building zone.

What's also key to point out at this stage, is that compound movements also allow you to lift heavier weights. Why? Because when you go compound, you're using *more big muscle*. More *big muscle* means more power, means more weight! And as you might imagine, the more weight you move, the more intense the workout becomes for the body as a whole.

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# TOOLS FOR FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH TRAINING

Know that you've added compound movements to your training, your program is already far superior to that of half the people in the gym and will be better for your functional strength and overall health and fitness.

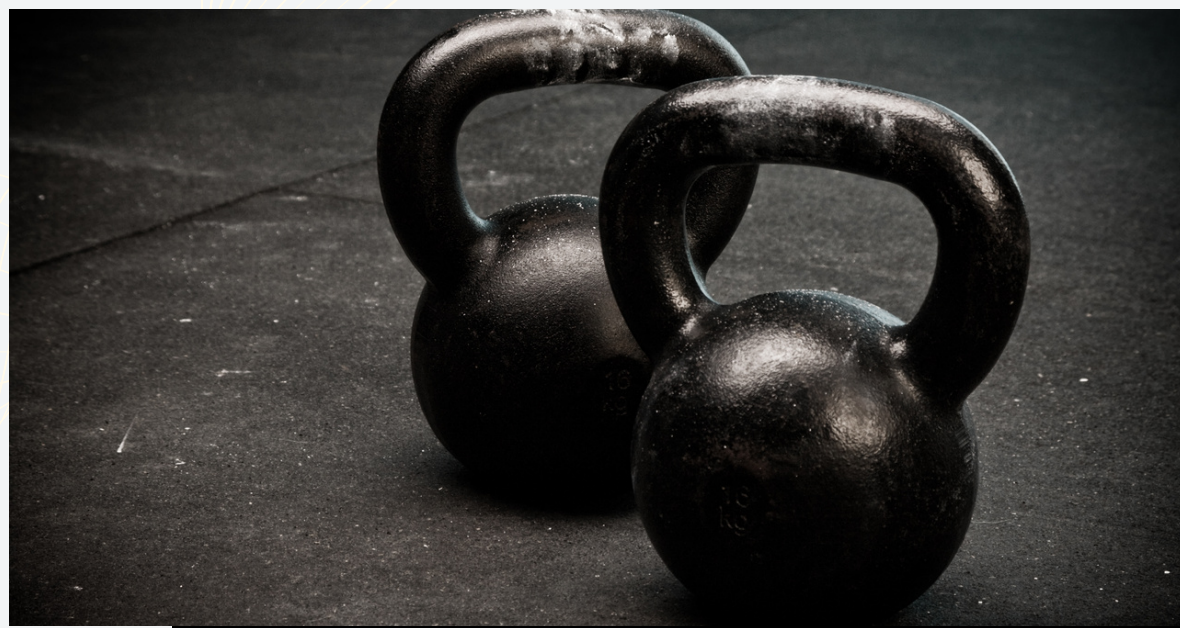
But there's just one problem... it's pretty boring!

Notice how in the real world, we don't find ourselves doing the same five things over and over again.

Notice how in the real world, we don't find ourselves doing the same five things over and over again. In fact, in the real world our 'form' on each movement is completely different every time we do anything.

You don't really squat in the wild, but rather you would pick up randomly shaped boulders. Likewise, you'd be forced to do pull ups on branches that were completely the wrong shape and size or you'd have to run across uneven terrain.

In other words, training should be constantly changing and varied if it's really going to mimic the real world and if it's really going to be 'functional'



# ***KETTLEBELLS***

Kettlebells have grown to become some of the most popular tools for the use in the gym as more and more people have been waking up to the importance of functional strength.

Kettlebells are shaped like an iron ball with a handle poking out of the top. What this means, is that when you lift it, the weight is *below* your arm and that means that it's capable of swinging and of creating its own momentum.

Therefore, it challenges you to lift at awkward angles and to generate power in unexpected ways.



Conclusion, kettlebells are more functional than dumbbells and provide some interesting new training options.

The most important use for kettlebells is the kettlebell swings. This is movement that involves grabbing the handle with both hands and then swinging the weight between your legs while going through a squatting and '*popping*' movement.

This mimics the movement you use when you perform deadlifts but means you don't need to find space in your house for a whole barbell that you'll be dropping repeatedly on the floor. It also means that the exercise is much faster, which turns into a great fat-burning move as well as muscle-building one.

When you combine these benefits, the kettlebell is alone one of the most versatile and important piece of training equipment in your arsenal.

Off the back of the kettlebell has come another very popular piece of training equipment: The Indian Club. The Indian Club doesn't look like anything special; rather it looks like a stick with a heavy ball on the end of it.

Like the kettlebell though, its strength lies in its awkwardness. When you wave around the Indian Club, the weight isn't where your brain expects it to be and you're essentially lifting it against a long lever arm.

These combined factors mean that you're once again forced to engage your core and your grip if you want to keep it under control. The Indian Club is great fun and an awesome training tool if you have a garden.

# ***INDIAN CLUBS***






# BODY WEIGHT TRAINING FOR STRENGTH

TRX and Gymnastic rings mix things up a little because they involve bodyweight training instead of lifting weights. Bodyweight training is actually *ideal* for general fitness and for functional strength in particular.

The reason is that bodyweight training means you have to lift your own body - something that we regularly have to do in real life.

If you can get stronger faster than you get heavier, then you can increase your strength-to-weight ratio and that in turn will make you far faster on your feet as well as more agile and flexible.






Another advantage of bodyweight training is that it forces you to utilize all the smaller supportive muscles in your body.

When you perform a press up, you are using muscle in your abs, obliques, legs, lower back and more to keep your body rigid and in position. The same is true when you perform a pull up - and if you try and cheat through the pull up, then your body will wobble around in the air and you'll end up wasting energy and tiring out faster.

This gets far more impressive as you start to approach more advanced movements. Imagine the kind of total-body control that is used when you perform a handstand press up, or planche press up (press ups where your feet don't touch the ground).

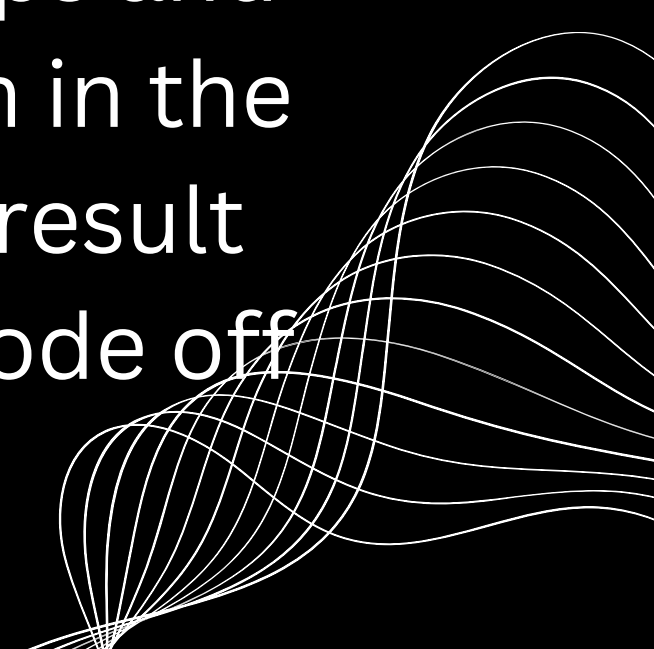





# ***How To Approach Bodyweight training***

The problem is that many people approach bodyweight training all wrong. if you're just pumping out a set number of press ups and sit ups everyday, then you can't expect to progress much. Instead, you should be challenging yourself with increasingly difficult moves in your 8-10 rep range and should be using techniques to push past failure.

Find press ups easy? Then how about training with clapping push ups and trying to launch yourself in the air? This move requires acceleration in the muscles, which the body treats just the same as heavy weight. The result is that you'll recruit more fast-twitch muscle fibers in order to explode off the floor.



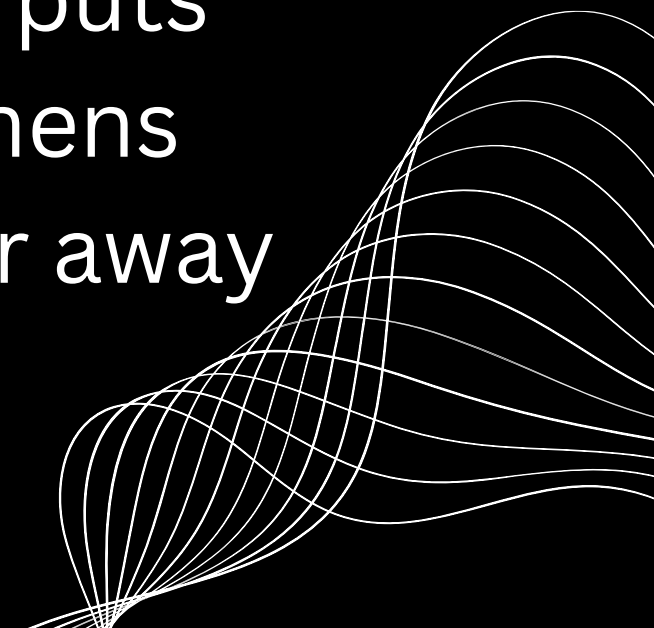




And now if you try and perform some 'normal' push ups, you'll find it's a lot more challenging.

Likewise, if you perform a push up with one hand, that will also make it harder, as well as requiring you to strengthen your core to avoid tipping. You can build up to this by placing both hands on the floor but putting 80% of your weight on one hand. As you get tired, move more and more weight onto the other side. Now you're controlling your distribution of weight in order to maximally challenge the muscle.

You can also just move your arms back closer to your waist, which puts you in a position called a 'Maltese pushups'. This movement lengthens the lever arm - just like the Indian Club. Now your weight is further away from away from your hands, which forces you to work harder.





# DIET

No training advice would be complete without a section on diet tough. So to get the most functional fitness and power, you need to make sure you're eating right too.

What kind of diet advice goes well with functional training? Well, the most obvious 'fit? is yet another popular 'health fad'. This time we're looking at the Paleo diet.

We're moving primal, so why not *eat* primal too?

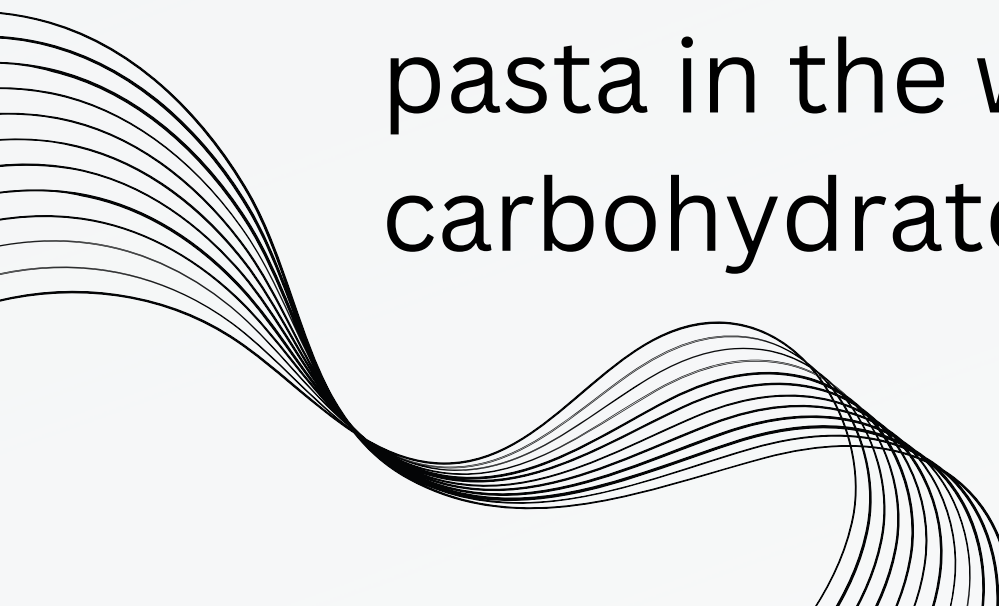




# What is Paleo Diet?

The general concept behind the paleo diet is that you should eat as closely as possible to whatever you would eat in the wild. That means you shouldn't be eating anything that comes from a wrapper, or anything that has lots of additives in it.


It also actually means that you end up eating far fewer carbs. Think about it: how often would you come across a bowl of pasta in the wild? Or a loaf of bread? Our main source of carbohydrates in the wild were fruits and vegetables.

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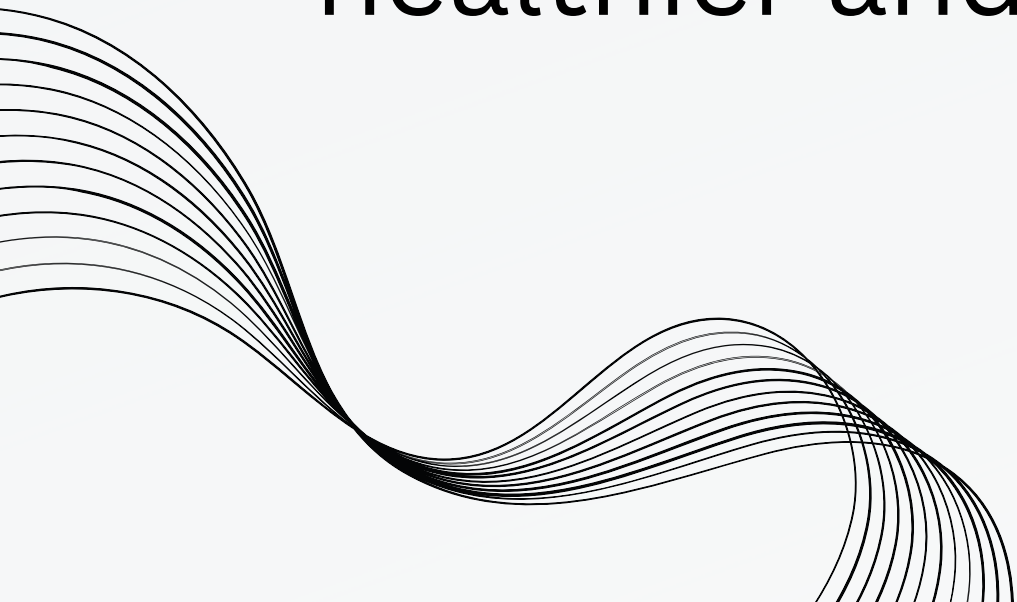
Fruits might be rich in sugar but they're also *fantastic* source of vitamins, minerals and other crucial nutrients that work wonders for the body. Vegetables meanwhile are slower to release their sugar but feed us with just as many crucial nutrients.

The rest of the diet? Well that comes from meat of course! And this is great news for anyone looking to build functional strength as meat is where we get our amino acids - which are building blocks of muscle.

A decorative graphic consisting of multiple thin, black, wavy lines that originate from the left side of the frame and curve downwards and to the right, creating a sense of movement and flow.

Better yet, a truly paleo diet doesn't just eat any old meat but will seek out a lot of organ meat. In the wild, you wouldn't have been fussy about eating the heart or liver! Sgai, this is smart today as well because organ meat happens to be jam packed with all sorts of crucial nutrients.

If you follow this basic diet: eating more meat, more organ meat, mor fruit and more vegetables - then you will feel healthier and more powerful than you ever have done.





# REST & RECOVERY

One thing you might have noticed when trying to attempt the compound movements, is that when trying these movements though is that... you can't. Or at least you can't very confidently.

This will be a result of all those years of sitting at your desk and not doing anything. So how do you get back some basic mobility and learn to move properly again? One thing that can help a great deal is to practice stretching, in which case you'll be able to regain your full range of motion.

So how do you go about this?





# *How To Relax Into Stretch*

According to Pavel Tsatsouline, the vast majority of us go about this the wrong way entirely. If you're used to stretching by forcing yourself into a position until it hurts, then you may actually be doing more harm than good. So stop it right now!

How do we know this is a bad move? Well, it can be demonstrated with a simple bit of self-experimentation. Simply lie on the ground on one side of your body so one leg is touching the floor beneath you.

Then...





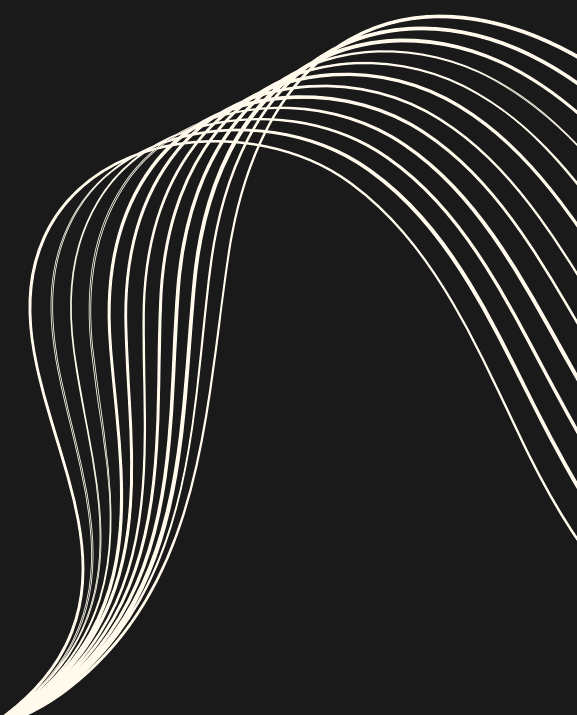




Now, raise your leg up 90 degrees to the point right at the ceiling. It should be fairly easy.

Now roll onto the other side and raise the opposite leg up again. Easy, yes?

So if you can move both legs to 90 degrees, why can't you do the middle splits?

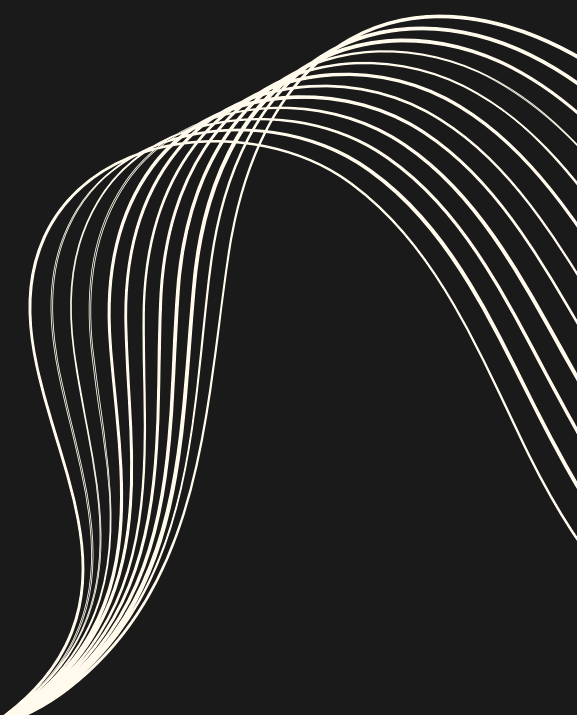
It's got nothing to do with any 'tissue' connecting your legs either. In fact, there is no tissue other than bone between your legs – no ligaments and no muscle to prevent you from doing the splits.







According to Pavel then, what's actually happening is that your brain is forcing you to stop before you reach full split in order to try to prevent an injury. Again, it comes down to the fact that you don't normally utilize this amount of flexibility, which teaches your brain and body that it's bad news.

More specifically, it comes down to your central nervous system, which is responsible for all the 'knee jerk reactions' of musculature that lie outside the domain of your conscious control. It's also your CNS that is responsible for eye blinking when someone is trying to get an eyelash out of it.

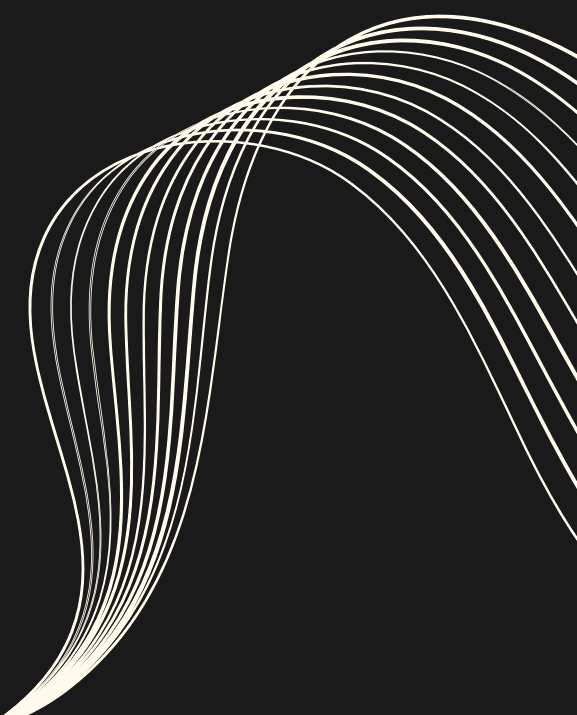








Years of training yourself to believe that you can't do the splits and years of moving within a far more limited range of movement have taught your body to 'lock' in place when you try and move outward.

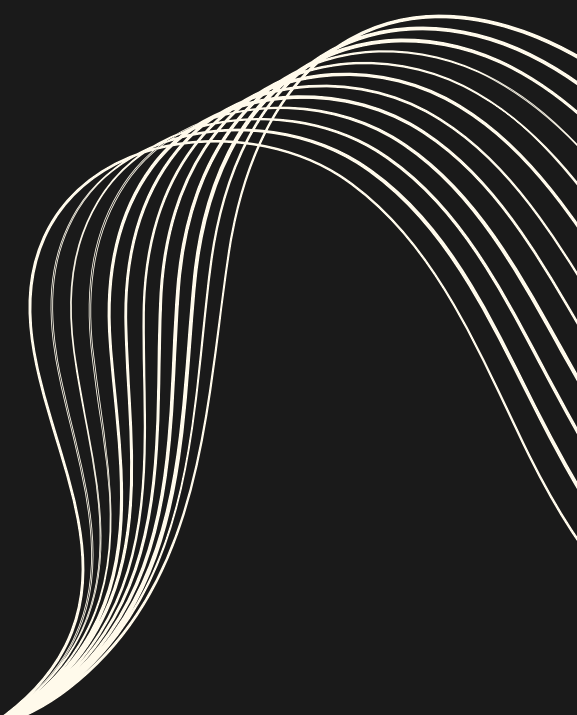
So guess what happens if you try and force yourself into a split? That's right: your body fights back by tensing up your muscles and making it even more difficult. And you further teach your body that it can't go into that position.







Years of training yourself to believe that you can't do the splits and years of moving within a far more limited range of movement have taught your body to 'lock' in place when you try and move outward.

So guess what happens if you try and force yourself into a split? That's right: your body fights back by tensing up your muscles and making it even more difficult. And you further teach your body that it can't go into that position.







Instead then, the better technique is to much gently ease yourself into these positions and then to actively relax your body as much as possible. Move to the point where it just start to hurt and then relax your body as much as possible.

The more you do this, the more you'll remove that knee-jerk reaction and you'll regain your *natural* flexibility.



# CREATING YOUR PROGRAM

So now you hopefully have a pretty good idea about functional strength, how it works and how it's different from other forms of training. Hopefully you'll be excited to start increasing your real-world strength and power and to move more freely without pain. It's worth putting in the effort, as you'll find every aspect of life becomes easy. Even your brain will feel sharper and more youthful!

But how do you put all of this together into a training program you can actually use?



To start with, you have your seven primal movements, which we assigned some specific movements, like:

- Squatting – Squats, close stance squats, kettlebell swings
- Lunging – Lunges, side squats
- Bending – Deadlifts, sit ups, leg raises
- Pushing – Bench press, overhead press, push ups
- Pulling – Pull ups, row
- Rotations (twists) Heavy bag, twisting sit ups, cable woodchops
- Gait – Jogging, running, walking

Finish with some overcoming isometrics and grip work –

Whether that means bending a bar, pushing a wall, using a power twister or resistance machine. Finishing off with foam rolling and stretching.

These exercises alone will prove enough for most people to create a workout that challenges every part of the body and that triggers the maximum anabolic response.

Choose one from each of the seven movements and train for high weight and relatively low repetitions on the compound lifts (eg. 3 sets of 10)



This means you'll be training your whole body rather than doing a 'split' but remember that this is the most effective way to train. Not only does it mean that you're involving more muscle and thereby triggering a bigger anabolic response – it also means that you're using your time more efficiently.

Ultimately, this means that if you ever miss a session, it won't be so hard to get back into your routine. It also avoids scenarios where you go for two weeks without training your biceps!

So you only need to train 3 times a week. Therefore, you won't tax your central nervous system and cause injury.

Combined this training with plenty of protein and nutrients.

The last ingredient you need is time. Keep it up and soon you'll feel fitter, stronger and healthier than you possibly ever imagined.

Welcome to the world of Functional Strength