

Putting the “Fun” in Functional Training: Getting Clients on Board and Enthused

Have you been trying to introduce functional training to your clients, but they just don't “get” it? Functional training is one of the most versatile types of exercise, and almost anyone is capable of doing it – even clients who are obese, out of shape, partially disabled, or who have medical issues that preclude high impact or high heart rate exercises. Functional training is also extremely beneficial for clients recovering from injury or illness, who need to work their way back up to a full workout routine.

The core concepts of functional training are:

- Use all 3 planes of motion.
- Integrate the entire body.
- Enrich the mind.
- Make the workout fun!

The only point of contact with the ground during functional training is the bottoms of the feet, so the goal is to remain stable at all times. Functional training can improve all of the following:

- Strength, power, and speed
- Flexibility and range of motion
- Muscular endurance
- Cardio vascular fitness
- Prevention of and rehabilitation for injuries
- Posture and balance

The body itself is the prime workout accessory, but you can make functional training more interesting and fun by introducing props such as kettle balls, dumbbells, medicine balls, core boards, Indian clubs, and more.

Functional training can include one on one and group exercises – and encouraging “play” scenarios isn't just allowed, it's encouraged. So are seemingly silly “kid style” moves that you may not have thought of in years, including:

- Crab walking relay races – you might be surprised when it's not the leanest, fittest members of the class who win.
- Time competition – who can cross one foot over the other knee while standing (as if attempting to tie a shoe) and keep it there the longest?
- Speed competition – set a number of objects on the floor and have class members bend at the knees to reach them and straighten to place them on a high shelf.

You can make functional classes fun, and turn them into gateways for new clients to work up to joining more advanced or complex focused classes. As always, ensure your fitness trainer insurance is up to date, especially when working with those who are out of shape or recovering from an injury.

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