

The Fitness Assistant

Tips & tools to help you succeed

December '07

perfect form, no trainer required

Webster Groves Personal Trainers are here to assist you in developing a comfort zone not only in the fitness center, but more importantly, in your own body.

While we strive to create an "environment of success" by providing external motivation, education, and accountability, our ultimate goal is to develop in each member a body awareness, internal drive, and overall confidence that can enhance any particular aspect of your life.

This includes having the confidence to safely and effectively perform a wide variety of exercises without always needing a personal trainer. This can be accomplished by following these

5 Keys to Perfect Form:

1. Comfortable & Safe -

before beginning the exercise, make sure you are comfortably in position, safe from losing your balance, and operating the exercise equipment correctly to avoid injury. If on a machine, check out the picture to make sure you are in the correct position.

2. Posture - train the way we want to live, stand, and sit. If we train with bad posture, we'll walk and stand with bad posture. Whether seated or standing, keep

your chest up, neck neutral, and your shoulders back but relaxed.

3. Breath - learn to control your breath. Although there are some exceptions, the rule of thumb is to *exhale with exertion*. Just make sure you DO NOT HOLD YOUR BREATH while performing any resistance exercise. This causes your blood pressure to rise and limits the oxygen required for energy recovery.

4. Feel it in the correct

muscle - "Work your body, not the machine". Before performing any exercise, you should be aware of why you are performing the movement, i.e. what muscle are you attempting to work. Keep this in mind as you perform

the movement to improve the "mind to muscle link". If you aren't feeling a stretch, fatigue or "burn" in the muscle(s) you are working, you are probably doing the movement incorrectly.

5. Minimize momentum -

When performing any physical activity, momentum often equates to lack of control, and therefore, increased chance for injury. Always attempt to control the cadence of your movement as you concentrate on the muscle you are attempting to work.

Summary. To challenge your body in different ways, it is important to periodically change the exercises in your workout. Therefore, we want to see our members attempt new movements, and not be held back being unsure how to perform new or unfamiliar exercises.

Do not let the worry of poor form stop you from doing so. Keep these tips in mind when attempting any machines or exercises, and before long, you'll be finding new ways to keep "your body guessing", and your workouts fresh and challenging.

If you have any questions concerning exercises you may not be performing correctly or safely, please contact Dave Reddy to schedule a consultation.

5 Keys to Perfect Form:

1. Feel safe and secure before performing exercise
2. Maintain good posture
3. Breath appropriately (exhale on exertion)
4. Feel exercise in the correct muscle ("mind to muscle" link)
5. Minimize momentum (uncontrolled momentum invites injury)