



Todd is always outspoken and always gets the job done! How does posture play into functional movement? Read on...

Smitty

The Diesel Crew



Functional Movement for Dummies

Todd Hamer

I never liked the books “_____ for Dummies.” I guess it is just my nature, but I love to question things. If you’re going to dumb something down for me then I would rather not hear it. I read this quote the other day, and it really fits my philosophy (I will try to get it right): “Make a man believe he is thinking, and he will love you; make a man truly think, and he will hate you.” I am not even sure who said this but it becomes more relevant to me everyday.

The purpose of this article is to help strength coaches or personal trainers who aren’t schooled in movement patterns to make them part of their plans. I am far from an “expert” on functional movements. If you want an expert, call Gray Cook. I would also recommend that everyone talk to and learn from Eric Cressey. Eric definitely understands this stuff better than I do. I just named two people who understand this better than me so why am I writing an article about movement? Because I, like most strength coaches out there, must find a way to take what I learn from people like this and fit it into 45–60 minutes with 20–30 athletes and make sure my coaches are 100 percent convinced that I’m doing the “newest” and best training the industry has to offer.

Volleyball

To illustrate how I work functional movement into training, I'm going to use examples from my volleyball team. When my volleyball team comes in, we always begin with a dynamic warm-up for about 10–12 minutes, which includes postural work. In my opinion, postural work is underrated. In everything that we do, we must have good posture. This is very important to stress from the beginning (the warm-up). I have seen many people do walking lunges to warm-up, but I have seen few do it with good posture. You will be surprised at the difference this makes. We also spend time loosening our hips and getting our glutes to fire. We utilize hip pop-ups, hip circles, and side and rear leg raises. Most of these movements are shown in the Parisi Warm-up DVD. The only thing that I would add to his DVD is POSTURE. When doing these activities, make sure that you keep perfect posture!

After the warm-up, we go over the lift. This is important so the athletes can get answers to any questions that they may have before we even touch a barbell. At this point, we do a weight room specific warm-up (WRS), which is a mixture of 2–4 exercises super-setted that focus on important areas for the movements we're going to do. Some examples are hypers (body weight) 3 X 10, lat pull-downs (light weight) 3 X 10, or hanging leg raises 3 X 10. This should not take any longer than 3–4 minutes. The idea here is to get the muscles firing under a light load before moving to a loaded movement.

After all of this, we actually begin to lift. Our lift consists of squat cleans. I always prefer squat cleans over the power version for the increase in mobility that is created. Not all of my teams do squat cleans. For smaller teams who have a coach who shows dedication to the weight room, squat cleans can be taught. Following this, we either do a box squat, back squat, front squat, or overhead squat. If this seems like many variations, that's because IT IS. If a team is willing to learn and has good form, use all the tools that you need to get the job done.

At this point this team moves onto accessory movements. Accessory movements can be any of the following and there are thousands more: single arm dumbbell bench, glute ham, reverse hypers, rows, pull-ups, jump pulls, lunges, pull-thrus, and band good mornings. Following the lift the team has a menu of stretches to follow. These are always done with a partner, and as always, posture is stressed.

I'm sure many people are reading this and thinking, "I thought this article was about movement patterns, not what we're doing in the weight room?" Well, it is about movement patterns. Never forget that everything in the body is connected. So that I sound smart, I will call the body a "kinetic chain." Our "core" begins at about the big toe and ends somewhere near the top of our head. The body must be trained as a unit, and it must not be segmented. Everything I wrote about in this article pertains to functional movement patterns from discussing the warm-up to teaching a good squat clean (this is not easy but can be done for certain athletes) to finishing with active isolated stretching.

Remember, as Buddy Morris once said, "...*everyday is an assessment.*" Treat each warm-up, each rep, each training session as that and you will help your athletes' achieve and stay injury free.

Todd Hamer is currently a Division I strength and conditioning coach. Todd has also competed in powerlifting for last 7 years. His best lifts include a 375 Bench, 545 Squat and a 500 Deadlift. Todd can be contacted through his website www.hamerstrength.com.