

## Fitness Tips for the Sedentary & Time Constrained

A number of years ago I noticed that dozens of exercises in most resistance-training facilities involved sitting or lying down. It's ironic that as we try to combat the effects of a sedentary lifestyle we often exercise while sitting or lying down. Seem strange? It did to me.

For most people improved quality of life is their primary fitness goal. Weight management, improved vital signs, and physical function are primary components related to this goal. If your chosen lifestyle requires that you spend most of your day seated, and you have a limited amount of free time, as most people do, then your workout should focus on ground based core training and full body workouts. This approach is not only effective but also efficient.

Exercises can be classified hierarchically. At the top of the chain are ground based core exercises, movements that require the greatest demand with regard to balance, intensity, number of muscles used, and the amount of body weight supported. A number of advantages exist with ground based core movements. First the body was meant to work as a unit and nothing matches the strength, balance, and metabolic demands of high intensity work that also demands the body to support itself. Second, you can do them almost anywhere, at anytime. Another attribute to full body ground based training is better function and more natural appearance. Adding resistance to ground based core exercise, when and where you are able, raises the demands to produce ultimate levels of progress in the shortest time. Furthermore, these exercises incorporate many muscle groups, so they are, over all, more efficient. Why do several exercises when you can do two or three?

Ground based core exercises should be the foundation of your fitness and strength program. For equipment-free, or body-weight strength training, a few examples would be squats, lunges, step-ups, push-ups, and calisthenics. Even with little access to equipment, these exercises and their variations can greatly challenge you. While you might consider them basic, exercise classes or direct supervision should be considered as proper technique is critical. Doing one or more well structured workouts per day with 48 hours of recovery time between workouts can have dramatic results.

In fitness facilities, stick to the full body workout and incorporate resistance using free weights, cables, or elastic bands. From the perspective of exercise selection, you can now add pressing and pulling movements. Whenever possible, avoid the use of single joint exercises-for example, arm curls-and exercise benches. Machines that attempt to mimic the ground based core movements should also be avoided. These principles also apply to aerobic training. To produce the greatest metabolic impact while using bikes, treadmills, elliptical-trainers, or stair-mills/climbers, choose equipment that requires you to support as much body weight as possible, and still maintain proper posture and avoid leaning on handrails.

If you are just starting a fitness program, ground based core exercises are the most effective and efficient way to improve your fitness level, which has a direct impact on your overall quality of life. If you are already training and fallen victim to "the invasion of the body shapers" or the "machine age" try going back to ground based core training and build your program from the ground up.

Steve Howard owns & operates The Steve Howard Fitness Studio at the Weight Room in Rapid City. He is a Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) by the National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA) since 1998. He is also a USA Weightlifting Certified Sports Performance Coach through certification programs performed at the Olympic-training center in Colorado Springs Co.