

Upgrading your workouts with a multi-plane approach

Variety in training can often be the factor that sustains motivation and breaks through barriers. One of the important aspects in your program and a place where variety can play a part is to make sure you are training using a “multi-plane” approach. Adding these new directions in your training, if they are not already being utilized, will maintain interest and improve results.

Are you training the three planes of movement that your body is capable of? Let’s find out. Movement is often classified in three planes, sagittal, frontal, and transverse. In normal function the body is capable of stabilizing or producing movement in all three of these planes. When you are walking forward or backwards or pushing or pulling something away from or towards the front or back of your body you are operating in the sagittal plane. When you are walking laterally or pushing or pulling something away or towards the sides of your body you are operating in the frontal plane. If you are rotating an object around you or reaching across your body for something you would be executing movements that primarily occur in the transverse plane. If you think your training is missing some of these movements you are missing elements of training that can be challenging, productive, and fun.

If you decide to expand your “menu of movements” here is my list of do’s and don’ts. Do give priority to exercises that you can perform while you are on your feet as ground based movements transfer much more readily into real life situations. Do maintain good posture at all times while learning new exercises as good postural habits in training often transfer rapidly into sport and other life activities. Do learn exercises that combine one or more of the three planes of movement. Do use free weights, cable type equipment, and elastic bands for your exercises. Do get outside feedback about your exercise selection and technique from a qualified professional. Don’t use machines, machines usually involve performing exercises in a seated position, or in a rigid, fixed path of motion that may not be natural for your body and can inhibit rather than produce proper movement. Don’t add more than a few exercises to your workout at one time if you want to get accurate feedback from your body on what’s working. Don’t overload resistance levels when first trying new exercises. Don’t overload your workout by adding new exercises and not cycling out some of the exercises you are presently using.

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