



HIP STABILITY AND STRENGTH: AN INTRODUCTION

***“FAILURE is a few errors in judgement, repeated every day.
SUCCESS is a few simple disciplines practiced every day.”***
– Jim Rohn

There are two parts to this “introduction” to the program.

In Part 1, I explore some general concepts, ideas, and philosophies that I believe will empower you and help you to have success.

In Part 2, I delve into the idea that our daily living and training “habits” – how we are moving specifically – can and often does play a role in determining our ultimate success. To find out what I mean, keep reading!

One NOTE: In the area here in the program, STEP 2 – ASSESSING Hip Stability, I’m going to continue to delve even deeper into the idea of “habits” and skills – these are going to be the critical elements that will help determine just how much success you are able to glean from this program. It’s up to you!

OK, to Part 1. Keep reading!

Part 1:

“Work involves whatever a body is obliged to do. Play involves whatever a body is not obliged to do.”
– Mark Twain (from Tom Sawyer)

I hope that quote made you laugh a little bit to yourself. How we frame a task means everything when it comes to how much time we’re willing to spend on it – AND how much benefit might be gleaned from it!

Which gets me thinking...*what does it mean to have “fun” when doing this kind of work? Which at times is certainly a “grind” and never seems to go as fast as we hope?*

Similarly...what about hard races? Are THOSE fun?

Let me ask: Have you ever told a training partner or friend to “have fun” as they were approaching a race or workout? *I know I have, many times.*

If it's a really challenging race or workout we're talking about, *what in the hell is “fun”* about going so deeply into oxygen debt that you feel like you're gonna die or worse, throw up all over yourself?

That question has resonated with me for a while. And it certainly resonates when we're talking about the challenging training that's inside of THIS program.

I mean, I *always* say.... “have fun”... to an athlete I am speaking with when I know it's the last time I'll chat with them prior to a race.

What's YOUR value hierarchy?

In his most recent book, "Everything is F*ucked - A Book About Hope," author Mark Manson tells a story of a good friend of his who at one time, was one of the hardest *partiers* he'd ever known. She'd "stay out all night and then go straight to work from the party - with zero hours of sleep." In order of importance, really awesome DJs, drinking and drugs, were tops for her - sleep and work was at the bottom.

Then, as he puts it, "she did one of those volunteer abroad things, where young people spend a couple of months working with orphans in a Third World country." That "changed everything." All of a sudden, "suddenly, as if by magic, the parties stopped being fun. Why? Because they interfered with her top priority: helping suffering kids." He went on to describe how she changed careers and was all about her work. Drinking and doing drugs? A thing of the past.

She didn't "lose" the partying. As Manson explained, she didn't *lose* anything by giving up the parties. It's just that they stopped being fun.

"Fun" is a function of our value hierarchies: I'll admit I get a little emotional at times when I talk about running injuries - training smart for the betterment of our body, not to its detriment. Aging "gracefully" and extending our active lifespan so that we can run and train and race for as long as we're fortunate to be alive. *Passion* is a word that's often used to describe me when I'm speaking about it.

It's funny weird, but I often find myself getting so passionate about it, it can be a little intimidating for the listener. And that can sometimes put people off a little bit. I get it.

Engaging in one form of pain (desirable) to avoid another form of (undesirable) pain

Training and racing – and the discomfort and suffering that can sometimes go along with it – the process of improving and getting fit can be a *lot* of fun... until an injury stops us in our tracks – suffering from that kind of pain isn't fun.

Routinely doing the kinds of supplemental exercises to build stability, mobility, and strength isn't always fun, either. A certain 5-time Ironman Age-Group world champion I coach is known to call that type of training,

“boring.”

But, is it really?

If you've been injured, you know how frustrating that can be. Looking back before “it” happened, there can be some regret. The phrase “if only” can pop into our heads. That isn't a bad thing. It shows we're growing. Learning.

In the end, it's emotion that drives our actions. And our values (somewhat like the hierarchy I'm talking about here) *can't be changed* through reasoning. If you've had the experience of being injured, you know what I mean. Only our own experiences can change what we value – how we live and grow. And train.

I mean, hell...certainly not listening to me go on and on about why you should do x or y exercise! That won't do a lick of good until our experience and what we value, changes.

It comes back to me, you, us.

When we value things like aging gracefully, running healthfully and training for the betterment of our body, I think the daily grind of doing the “boring” stuff becomes a lot less of a grind, and a lot more “fun.” It's growth. We're pursuing our hopes and dreams. We're becoming the best version of ourselves. We're living in a way that represents what is most important to us.

And it's obviously not just the routine exercises to maintain a healthy body. It's also the suffering that happens at the lowest and most difficult parts of our races – when we are feeling our worst – questioning why we got ourselves into that position in the first place. I will say – I LOVE that feeling. You probably do, too.

“...everyone knows Michael is a huge foundation and fundamentals guy. All the crazy stuff you see him doing in the air, all the fancy moves, he never practiced those – he practiced the fundamentals, because he knew if he mastered the fundamentals, mastered the foundation, those other moves would automatically come. That was the same philosophy I had. We started out with the basic compound movements.”

– Tim Grover (Michael Jordan's personal trainer throughout his storied hall-of-fame career)

Be disciplined and accountable

I've always believed discipline is one of the sincerest forms of self-love.

At this point in time, beyond the compassion and empathy that's needed more than ever, we also need to express basic discipline – which, by the way, IS an innate part of who YOU ARE. Trust me, if you

weren't a disciplined person, you wouldn't be reading this right now.

If it's simple discipline that gets you out the door OR on the floor for some supplemental training, then ok! *Whatever it takes.*

“..the only thing that works to fight entropy is effort.”

– Unknown

Breathe!

We're all literally “fighting” every day to balance our sympathetic (fight or flight) and parasympathetic (recover – rejuvenate) nervous systems – and working hard in a training program like this only makes it more challenging!

What often results is ramped up chest breathing – or sometimes worse – we stop breathing altogether.

My advice? Go back and regularly rewatch and practice the **Basic Three-Dimensional Breathing Practice video in Circuit 1 of RESTORE: The Foundation**, to get a tune-up on how to habituate the kind of deep diaphragmatic breathing that will facilitate much better core control AND recovery!

“Knowing and not doing is not knowing.”

– Author Unknown

The soft tissue tug of war

If it seems like the various sides of your body, in-out, front-back, are in a constant tug of war, it's

probably because they are. True tissue balance in the body is elusive at best.

Our daily lives and habits combined with all of the training we've done to this point, leaves us in the imbalanced and asymmetrical state we are typically in.

The pectorals fighting with the traps and rhomboids – and of course, more specifically as it relates to this program, the hip flexors such as the iliopsoas, quadriceps and tensor fascia lata, all fighting with the external rotators and extenders of the hip and posterior chain. A chronic push-pull that limits force production, wastes energy, and causes more frustration!

The key to winning out starts with KNOWING your body and acting accordingly.

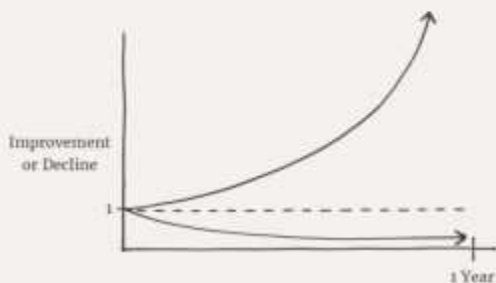
That is, pay close to attention to the feelings and sensations – know your injury history – and deal with any chronic soft tissue issue head-on, right from the get-go.

Part 2:

“We’re tight because of how we move, and weak because of how we move.”
– Gray Cook, PT

The Power of Tiny Gains

1% better every day $1.01^{365} = 37.78$
1% worse every day $0.99^{365} = 0.03$



When I first heard Gray repeat the above quote at a strength and conditioning conference, it really resonated with me. It was so simple. Yet so profound.

How did I interpret this simple sentence?

THIS: Every athlete – every person in fact – we all have our movement “issues” and challenges. We’re all unique – weaker in some areas, tighter in some areas, and also very stable and strong in some areas. It’s always a mixed bag.

When it comes right down to it – virtually every one of those weaknesses and strengths is the direct result of how we have moved in our everyday lives – and in how we’ve trained – to that point.

In other words, it’s the movement habits we groove that determine how muscles either develop and improve or not.

Not sure what I mean? Keep reading...

Let’s use a very pertinent real-world example to illustrate this point:

The topic? **Our HIPS! Versus, our low-back.**

Do you “train” your hips BUT MOVE through your spine?

You can do all of the best hip stability and strength exercises ever designed – within what is the “ideal” training progression...but if you don’t then take those skills and begin to *groove them daily, both in the gym and out*, then **the odds of you getting the greatest benefit are significantly reduced.**

Why?

One way to interpret what Gray said, is this: **our daily and training habits create our health – and our movement *reality*.**



Think of it this way: If we’re *always in the habit of twisting our spine* to bend over and pick up something from the ground – as time goes on and we repeat that habit over and over – *our hips won’t get used as they should*, and on the opposite side, our spine may get OVER used.

As a result, the tissues adjacent to the spine (as well as the discs themselves) may start to get a little bit pissed off. Tissue change (both good and bad) is impacted.

Inflammation and even eventual deterioration may ensue.

[VIDEO]

[VIDEO]

The “take-home” message should be clear:

Make sure you groove your daily habits as much as your training habits, in order to get the full benefit of this program.

And part of that means **focusing on basic and fundamental skills like hip-hinging, so that the improved stability and strength results will come very easily to you** – simply as a result of increased demands (load) on the muscles.

You’re now ready to move on to STEP 1 – A Review of the Fundamentals.

You’ve got some momentum. Keep it going! Don’t lose it.