

FEBRUARY, 2010

# FUNCTION FIRST FITNESS

*a personal training studio*



## The Greatness of Core Conditioning

BY: BOB YEHLING

### THE WAY TO STRENGTH, BALANCE & SO MUCH MORE!

**L**ike many distance runners approaching “that certain age” (50), I faced a dilemma: How could I squeeze better performances out of my body without piling on more miles? How could I reduce the tough, nagging injuries that were popping up whenever I tried to use extra tempo runs and speed workouts to lower my times?

The answer lay in what I was already giving to our high school cross-country and track runners on a three-times-weekly basis: core conditioning. It seemed too

much—an extra 30 minutes of working out on top of ridiculous schedule. Where would the time come from?

Almost 18 months have passed since I got serious about core workouts.

Core is, without a doubt, one of the most effective and healthy uses of 30 min. imaginable...

Here’s the quick report: Core is, without a doubt, one of the most effective and healthy uses of a half-hour

imaginable ... especially for those of us who are on the flip side of 40. And 50. And 60. And 70.

During this time, amazing things happened: My body became much stronger, the

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO:  
[karinyehling@functionfirstfitness.com](mailto:karinyehling@functionfirstfitness.com)

Check out answers to **YOUR** questions every month!

## Q & A Corner

**Question:**  
**ARE FAT FREE DRESSINGS THE BEST CHOICE FOR SALAD DRESSINGS?**

**Answer:**  
**No. You should have some fat in your dressing to help your body absorb the vitamins and minerals in the salad. An oil-based dressing, such as Newman’s Light Balsamic Vinaigrette, is a good choice. Avoid cream-based dressings such as Caesar or Ranch when possible.**



muscles more supple, bones stronger, balance better and posture more erect. My body weight became much better distributed, and my metabolism increased; no longer was there a problem with the “Winter 15”, even if I didn’t run that much and maintained the 5,000-calorie-per-day diet that normally fuels me during marathon training. My cardiovascular capacity, flexibility and agility all increased markedly. Recovery time accelerated. My times in the 5K and 10K dropped to levels not seen since 1976, when I was in high school – and that while logging 10% *fewer* weekly miles than in previous years.

This story is typical of people who introduce core conditioning into their fitness routines, to strengthen their bodies and/or stabilize their spines. By spending three or four days a week performing a series of simple exercises, you will greatly enhance any fitness goal you set – whether it is to lose 30 pounds, increase your overall strength, rehabilitate an injury, breathe better, or set the world on fire in your particular sport.

Best of all, this is pure living room or office stuff. If you have eight feet of available floor space, you can do core. If you train at Function First Fitness, then you have the added advantage of receiving expert tips, guidance and adjustments on proper technique, all very important.

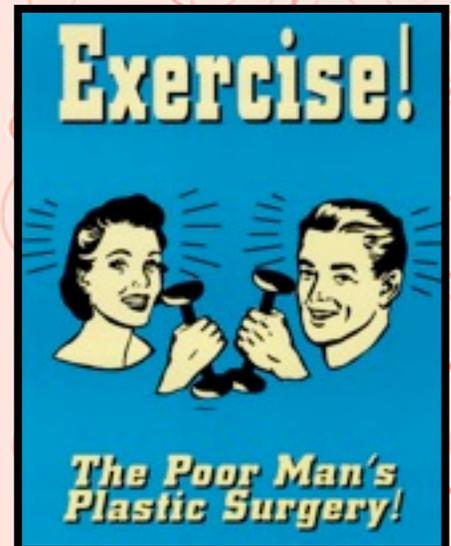
### How Does It Work?

So why is core conditioning so effective? How does it work?

Core conditioning focuses on the relationship between strength and movement. It also specifically stabilizes the spine. It addresses the body’s needs for joint support, endurance, flexibility and greater functionality – all major issues as we age. Having a strong core will carry over to hip and shoulder stability, which will in turn help decrease chance of injury to the ankles, knees and shoulders. Core also focuses on the very area that is hardest to maintain as we grow older, become more sedentary, and our metabolism slows: what expert Mark Verstegen calls “your pillar of strength.” This ranges from the thighs to mid-riff, most specifically the hips, lower spine, gluteus maximus and abdominal area. It also includes the shoulders. This is the gravitational center of the body, the home of our kidneys, liver, adrenal glands and spleen, as well as the center of food digestion and nutrient distribution. If this area is weak, our bodies are weak.

Our goal is to align and strengthen this area so we enjoy a constant transfer of energy from the upper to lower bodies. When energy transfers ideally, you will move more efficiently, your blood will be better oxygenated, your cardiovascular system won’t have to

## Monthly Chuckle



## Monthly Tip

Since *The Joy of Cooking* was first published in 1936, the calories per serving have increased by two-thirds on average. A serving of a meal in 1936 contained 268 calories (on average) compared to 437 calories in 2006. So, the “tip” is: watch your portions when you cook from recipes.

## Words to Live By

**"The first wealth is health."**  
~ Emerson

work so hard, and you will have less wear and tear. If you don't have this pillar strength, the energy will tend to leak out at the hips, which leads to degenerative hip and back problems.

When you practice core, the most critical muscle that activates on any bodily movement is the transverse abdominis (TA), the deep spinal stabilization muscle Verstegen calls "nature's weight belt." It originates at the lower spine and wraps around and attaches to the ribs, abdomen and pelvis. People with weak TA muscles also tend to slump forward – a tendency for all of us who work on computers. There is no support for their upper body and shoulders.

Ready for a workout?

### **A Typical Core Routine**

A typical core workout can take between 15 and 45 minutes. Generally, for busy people and those using it to supplement general fitness, 20 to 30 minutes three times a week is good enough. There are several dozen different exercises; ask Karin at Function First Fitness to take you through a combination that is right for your particular fitness and exercise needs.

When beginning a core conditioning program, the stabilization phase is the foundation. These exercises involve virtually no movement of the spine. A routine of four exercises to see quick results and develop enthusiasm might include: the prone iso ab, the side plank, the bird dog and the bridge. When performing the plank and prone iso ab, begin by holding the position for 2-5 seconds. Repeat 3 times. Increase your holding time up to 30 seconds for each repetition. The bird dog and bridge can be held for 5 seconds and repeated from 5-20 times on each side, alternating sides on each repetition. In this phase, your rest period is 0-90 seconds, depending on how you feel. Click here [Videos](#) to see a demonstration of each of these exercises and their progressions.

This progression will take you to additional exercises for everyday movements, such as squats, leaning, diagonal chopping, balancing and others.

Let us know how core conditioning works out for you!



BOB YEHLING is a three-time Boston Marathoner, high school track and cross-country coach, author of seven books, and editor of the Greater Evansville (IN) Running & Walking Club newsletter. Oh yes – he also has direct family ties to Function First Fitness!

**CALL KARIN AT  
(818) 456-4395  
TO START  
YOUR PROGRAM  
TODAY!**

# **Classes Forming NOW!!**

## **SEMI-PRIVATE PERSONAL TRAINING!**

Function First Fitness has launched a semi-private training program. This is geared towards those whom:

1. Want to work out with a friend or friends
2. Want to work out at a reduced rate
3. Want a little "friendly" competition

**Each session is 1 hour and will include a warm-up, work out and cool-down.**

**Prior to beginning the training cycle, I will conduct a thorough evaluation, including a movement assessment, on each person to determine his/her general fitness level.**

**It may be recommended that an individual complete a 10-session one-on-one personal training package to increase movement skills and decrease risk of injury.**

**This program will:**

1. Boost your metabolism
2. Increase your flexibility
3. Increase your strength
4. Decrease your body fat
5. Make you work hard!

**[CLICK HERE!](#)**

*To refer a friend or family member for the Function First Fitness Newsletter. Get monthly tips, recipes, tidbits and news.*

# TRX: Something for Everyone!

**S**everal months ago, I purchased a TRX for my fitness studio. I already had the pulleys and weights, but I realized that the TRX would provide even more for my clients, and yes, for myself. That “more” factor is body weight training, which turns on the core musculature, for any fitness level.

Think of a full push-up. If it’s done properly, with the spine in complete alignment, the core is fully engaged. If not done properly, your hips will dip to the ground. As you can imagine, most people can’t do a full push-up. The TRX allows me to get an 80-year-old client in an elevated push-up position. This position surpasses the pushup from a countertop. The TRX is free-moving, so that same 80-year-old has

to control arm movement as well as the tendency of the hips to dip.

Some examples of upper body exercises using the TRX include: pull-ups, chest flies, chest press with hand rotation, one-arm pull-up with rotation, swimmers, tricep press, bicep curls, inverted shoulder press, and decline push-ups.

Some examples of lower body exercises: hamstring curls, lunges, one or two-leg squat.

Core exercises on the TRX are limitless. They can include mountain climbers with both feet suspended and hands on the ground, bridges, side bridges, planks or isoabs.

One of the things I really like about the TRX is its versatility. It can be fastened to a wall, hung over a door, or attached to a tree, pole, swing set,

or monkey bars. You can now workout outdoors. If the weather is bad, bring it indoors. And you can travel with it. So, no more excuses when you’re on the road.

Like I said previously, I have my clients ages 80 and up using the TRX. NFL players use it; as a matter of fact, athletes from every sport are using it.

The TRX Professional kit comes with a DVD which explains how to hook it up, as well as how to do a variety of exercises. The best part: it’s under \$200 and takes up no space!

This has, in all honesty, become my Most Valuable Piece of equipment.

You can watch examples here: [Videos](#)  
You can purchase the TRX, through my website, at this link: [Buy Products Here](#)



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### BAKED PARMESAN CHICKEN STRIPS

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 8-10 strips
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2/3 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- 2/3 cup plain breadcrumbs
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¾ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 ½ teaspoons dried basil
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Spray a baking sheet with non-stick spray.
2. In a shallow dish, combine milk and egg.
3. In a plastic zipper bag, combine Parmesan cheese, bread crumbs, onion powder, garlic powder, thyme, basil, pepper and paprika.
4. Dip chicken strips first in milk mixture, then toss to coat evenly in the breadcrumb/cheese mixture.
5. Place on baking sheets and bake at 400 degrees F for 20 minutes or until golden.

*Satisfying & Easy!*

**Karin Yehling**  
FFF Trainer

