

What's so functional about that? by Rob Crenshaw, NSCA-CPT.

Everyone has seen someone standing on a BOSU ball doing dumb bell curls in the name of functional training. But is this true functional training? The answer, that is so often the answer for many things in personal training is, it depends. (Don't you feel satisfied now?)

Although this does increase your awareness of how your body moves and where it is in space, or what we like to call proprioception, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is functional. In order for an exercise to be functional, it must train the body to move in the most efficient manner to accomplish a normal task. For instance; a new mom bending over the railing of a crib to pick up a new born baby or a construction worker lifting a large sack of concrete mix from the ground to the mixer.

The body is made to do one or a combination of 4 different types of movement: Locomotion, elevation, pushing or pulling, and twisting. Every movement that you do during your day is made up of one or more of these movements. If you break each movement down to its basics and then training that specific movement in a similar manner, you will improve the efficiency of your body helping you do more with less effort and avoiding more injuries.

Remember, just because an exercise looks harder does not make it more functional. So in the case of someone doing dumb bell curls on a BOSU ball, unless they are standing on an unstable surface pulling things up in a curling manner, this exercise is not the best "functional" exercise.

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