



Exercises You Never Knew You Were Doing Wrong, Part 3

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Well, we have reached the 3rd part of my 3 part series covering "Exercises you never knew you were doing wrong." This insert is by far the hardest to write. Not because I am hurting for exercises, but just the opposite, I am having a hard time narrowing my options to just two exercises. Nonetheless I think these two exercises are perfect ones to mention because they have become trendy in the last couple years and few people know how to do them correctly.

In reviewing the first and second group of exercises, I shared the common faults as well as the proper technique of the Romanian or stiff-leg deadlift, front shoulder raises, box squats, and finally front planks. These next two exercises, the dumbbell or kettlebell swing and the front rollout, as I mentioned have become increasingly popular especially with the explosion of kettlebell classes and devices like the Ab Dolly. However the owner's manuals must have been thrown out before they arrived at the gyms. Let's explore.

Dumbbell or Kettlebell Swings

The Problem:

This exercise was originally designed to be a glut and spinal erector exercise and when done correctly, it hits those muscles effectively. The mistake I commonly see people do is round their lower back when the dumbbell or kettlebell is brought in between their legs. The rounding of the lumbar or lower spine creates excess force to the front aspects of the lumbar discs. With enough repetitions, the disc material will begin to migrate posteriorly and weaken the outer layers of the disc on the back side. When the outer layers weaken enough, the disc begins to bulge leading to a herniation.

The Solution:

As the dumbbell or kettlebell begins to lower, keep the chest tall and remain as vertical as possible. This way your spine will be in great position when the you reach maximum depth.

Problem



Solution



Front Rollouts

The Problem:

This exercise is a very high level anti-extension core exercise. The problem is that it is a VERY high level exercise and people jump right into it without having developed their anti-extension muscle properly. The common fault I see with this exercise is that as the person lowers themselves closer to the floor, the lumbar spine begins to sag

into hyperextension. This hyperextension is a sign that the person is losing their core stability the closer they get to the ground. So what are the ramifications of doing this exercise incorrectly? Besides loading the muscle to failure with each rep (not a good thing), there is potential of over loading the facet joints of the lumbar spine which can cause facet joint inflammation, vertebral malalignment, and even stress fractures.

The Solution:

Maintain a neutral spinal alignment during the descent. You should look like you do in the kneeling position when you are fully lowered. In order to do this you may have to work on progressively lowering your depth with the exercise over time to progressively strengthen the anterior core muscles. A good way to monitor the exercise is to do it as you look into a mirror. Mirrors are a great way to provide instant feedback. Do you know mirrors in the gym were originally designed so people could monitor their techniques? Who knew they were not put there for people to check their muscle size and definition.

Problem



Solution



This concludes my three part series on "Exercises You Never Knew You Were Doing Wrong". I hope each of you got something from this information or were able to pass it on to a friend or family member who is involved in lifting weights. I always tell people, exercises are like drugs. If prescribed and taken correctly, they can be hugely beneficial. If done incorrectly, the side effects can be horrific.