



PC Conditioning

Personal Training for all Levels

Newsletter

March 2008

"Bad habits are like a comfortable bed, easy to get into, but hard to get out of."

-Unknown

Dear readers-

Believe it or not, spring is right around the corner. In fact, as I write this portion of the newsletter, it is mid-February (yes I always start writing the newsletters early) and the temps were in the mid 60s today! What a perfect day to...go bowling with my brother and his kids of course. There's a pic to the right of my brother teaching his kids the art of putting on their bowling shoes. I won't scare you with pictures of my gutter balls.



Since my last edition of the newsletter, I've started a couple new programs, but there's one in particular I'm excited about. I have been working with a select few from the Reading, Massachusetts Fire Department helping them with their respective fitness goals. They've done very well and I am in the process of starting training programs with various other fire and police departments throughout the state. The way I look at it is that these wonderful people (heroes, really) are responsible for saving our lives so they need to be in top physical condition. So many departments across the state have equipment yet a lot of the staff doesn't know how to use some of it so that's where I've stepped in to help. To those who've trained with me so far- great job!



-Paul J. Connolly, NSCA-CPT

Founder: PC Conditioning

<http://www.pcconditioning.com>

paul@pcconditioning.com

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Personal Training • Watertown, MA and the Greater Boston Area

Exercise of the Month

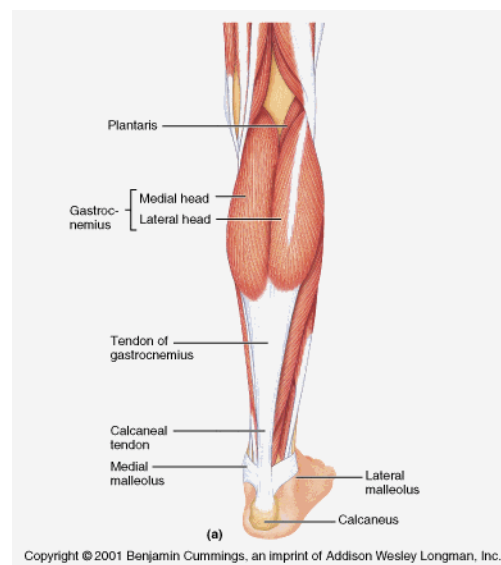
"Calf stretch"

I've decided to shake things up this month and focus on flexibility rather than strength. Specifically, I'm recommending a calf stretch for you to try. If I had to pick an area where I find people are chronically tight it's probably the calves. Hamstrings are a close second, but tight calf muscles are high on my list of areas to stretch out with clients. Tight calves can result from excess heel elevation via over usage of high heels or even sneakers with an excessive heel lift. Basically what happens is the back of the lower leg (calf muscles) become overworked and the muscles in the front of the lower leg (i.e. tibialis anterior) alongside the tibia (shin bone) become weakened. Try standing up with your legs straight and pushing off your toes 25 times- not too bad, right? Now try the same thing but flex your toes toward your shins 25 times and you'll realize how much harder the latter exercise is. We need to create more of a balance in the lower leg and one way (beyond strengthening the muscles in the front of the lower leg) is to stretch our calves more.



Standing calf stretch

The calf muscles are basically two muscles: gastrocnemius and soleus. They are activated when you push your toes into the ground and elevate your heel (basically every time you walk when you push off your toes to go into the next step these muscles are engaged). To stretch these muscles, simply face a wall in a staggered stance (see picture above). Make sure your hips and shoulders are squared facing the wall. Make sure there is a good distance between your two feet. Next, lunge forward by bending your front leg while keeping the back leg straight. Most importantly, make sure the back heel stays down. Stretch to a point of mild discomfort for 15-30 seconds a couple times on each leg to limit muscular cramping and to minimize post-workout muscle soreness.



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Nutritional Choice of the Month

"Broccoli"

Available both frozen and fresh, broccoli is arguably my favorite vegetable. An excellent source of Vitamins K, C, and A, as well as folate and fiber, broccoli makes a nice addition to salads. Broccoli is primarily a cool weather crop that does poorly in hot summer weather. Therefore, it may be less expensive to choose frozen varieties in the warmer months. A member of the cabbage family, original cultivation of broccoli actually occurred in Italy. While there are many powerful nutrients in broccoli, what I like most about it is that it contains the phytonutrients sulforaphane and the indoles, which have significant anti-cancer effects.



With respect to recipes, here is a very easy steamed broccoli recipe worth checking out:

http://www.elise.com/recipes/archives/001662steamed_broccoli.php

Blog

Numerous entries have been posted since my last newsletter was released. I really enjoy writing, so please take a few moments to check out my updated blog here: (<http://pcconditioning.blogspot.com>).

Articles

Please click the following links to check out the interesting articles I've come across these last few weeks and let me know what you think:

<http://coreperformance.com/article.php?p=3&s=2&id=682>

<http://sbcoachescollege.com/articles/single%20leg%20squat.html>

Q & A

This month marks the second edition of my newsletter featuring questions I've received recently from clients, newsletter subscribers, friends, etc... Each edition, I'll pick one or two that will hopefully help out with your training & nutrition. Onto this month's question:

Q: What are some forms of physical activity that I can do without having to actually go to the gym? -Mike: Boston, MA

A: While going to the gym can be monotonous for some, there are a plethora of activities to choose from that can help enhance one's health. These include the following: outdoor sports (i.e. skiing), washing the car, cleaning the house, gardening, dancing, and shoveling snow (be careful of your back!).

Paul Connolly, President and Founder of PC Conditioning,
is a National Strength and Conditioning Association Certified Personal
Trainer (NSCA-CPT) based in Watertown, MA



About the Author

Certified through the National Strength and Conditioning Association as a personal trainer (NSCA-CPT), Paul Connolly possesses a degree in Exercise Science with a background in anatomy & physiology, human performance, and nutrition. Founder of suburban Boston-based personal training consulting service PC Conditioning (<http://www.pcconditioning.com>), he has contributed to local and national media publications as a featured health and wellness columnist. Paul is an advocate of strength training for all ages and enjoys working with fitness enthusiasts of all levels. His diverse clientele includes high school and collegiate athletes, stay-at-home Moms, corporate 9-5ers, brides-to be, and seniors. Paul is available by appointment only and can be reached via e-mail at paul@pcconditioning.com

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