



PC Conditioning

Personal Training for all Levels

Newsletter

December 2009

"There is only one way to happiness, and that is to cease worrying about things which are beyond the power of our will."

- Epictetus

Dear Readers-

Thanks for checking out the December edition of my newsletter. We're in full "holiday season mode" and we must take a moment for a cleansing deep breath. Too many Americans operate in fast forward mode 24 hours/day and it's simply not worth it. Don't forget to take some time for yourself this holiday season. Something as simple as 15 minutes of meditation or a relaxing walk with some enjoyable music on your iPod are each great examples of ways to decrease stress levels.

One additional method to decrease physiological stress is by adding new plants around the interior of your home. Recently, I was reading a book that discussed a study NASA conducted with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America. They focused on the abilities of plants to help clean indoor air and exonerate it of common pollutants (i.e. the chemicals found in many household cleaning products, fumes from paint, etc). We all know photosynthesis combats CO₂ emissions outside our homes. Utilizing green plants to neutralize the air in our homes may be another way to improve our overall health, beyond healthy eating and plenty of exercise, of course.

The results of this NASA study revealed the following plants to be the most effective in filtering out chemicals such as formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, and benzene:

- Bamboo palm (pictured: I'm admiring the one in my office as you read this!)
- Gerbera daisy
- Janet Craig
- Peace lily (I have two of these on my sun porch)
- Marginata
- Pot mum
- Spider Plant



Consider planting with your family. Have your kids take turn watering each plant. They'll enjoy the process of watching the plants flourish and you'll enjoy knowing you're creating a healthier environment for them.

To your health,

-PC

Exercise Tip of the Month

"No More Leg Extensions?"

While machines sadly remain the main piece of marketing for commercial health clubs (including the one I train most of my clients in), one specific piece of equipment that continues to see negative press is the Leg Extension (see pic 1). This machine isolates the muscles known as your Quadriceps (see pic 2). The problem with training on a leg extension machine is that the exercise is not "functional," in that it doesn't carry over into everyday life. Isolating those muscles, outside of a rehabilitative setting, does little to facilitate activities of everyday living (i.e. going up and down stairs).



Sergio Rojas, C.S.C.S., was recently quoted as saying:

"Since the load is placed on your ankle, far way from the knee joint, the amount of torque it puts on your knee is high. And at the point where your leg is almost straight, the added tension causes shearing forces on the ligaments and tendons of the knee joint. This can lead to a misalignment of the tibia and fibula and damage of the meniscus."

Strength and Conditioning Coach Eric Cressey also wrote a fantastic article a few years back I highly recommend checking out because it details the negative forces that leg extensions transmit to your quadriceps/knee joint. Check out the article here:
http://www.tmuscle.com/article/performance_training/the_truth_about_leg_extensions&cr=

My approach with clients is to focus on exercises where the lower body musculature works in a collective, more functional manner. These exercises include the following:

- Deadlift variations
- Squat variations
- Lunge variations

All of the above can be performed either bi- or uni-laterally (double, or single legged-respectively).

E-mail me (paulconnolly123@gmail.com) your training questions.

Nutritional Tip of the Month

“Lower your cholesterol”

Are you like many other Americans in that you’ve been diagnosed with having high cholesterol (“hypercholesterolemia”)? The following is a list of 5 foods that lower cholesterol:

- Oranges- rich in pectin, oranges provide ~3 grams of soluble fiber
- Oats- typically the most recognized suggestion with respect to lowering your cholesterol
- Beans & Lentils- both are high in soluble fiber; I add them regularly to salads
- Sardines- a classic choice
- Pistachio nuts- rich in mono-unsaturated fats



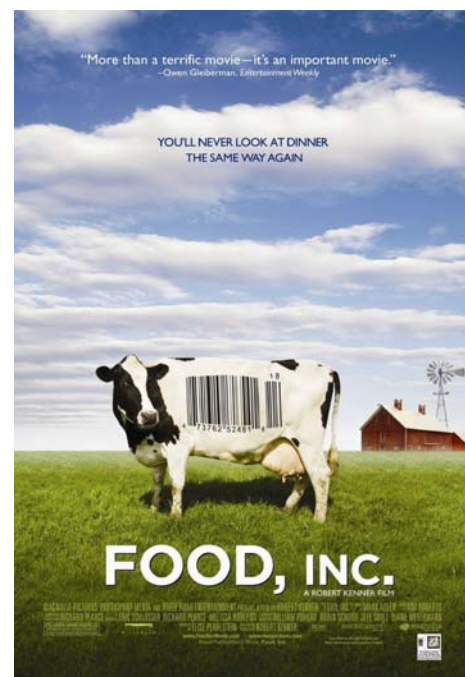
Blog

My blog continues to be the part of my web site and newsletter I get the most feedback on. Make sure to go back and check out past entries to get caught up. The direct link for my updated blog is found here: <http://pcconditioning.blogspot.com>.

Product Recommendation of the Month

I had the opportunity to check out the DVD, “Food, Inc.” this week after several colleagues suggested I check it out. Since I tend to put a lot of my focus on nutrition with clients, I thought it’d be a good idea for me to check out where a lot of what we eat actually comes from. While it opened my eyes to a few things, I can only imagine what some of my clients will think after they see it. Here’s the full review, courtesy of Amazon.com:

For most Americans, the ideal meal is fast, cheap, and tasty. Food, Inc. examines the costs of putting value and convenience over nutrition and environmental impact. Director Robert Kenner explores the subject from all angles, talking to authors, advocates, farmers, and CEOs, like co-producer Eric Schlosser (Fast Food Nation), Michael Pollan (The Omnivore's Dilemma), Gary Hirschberg (Stonyfield Farms), and Barbara Kowalczyk, who's been lobbying for more rigorous standards since E. coli claimed the life of her two-year-old son. The filmmaker takes his camera into slaughterhouses and



factory farms where chickens grow too fast to walk properly, cows eat feed, pumped with toxic chemicals, and illegal immigrants risk life and limb to bring these products to market at an affordable cost. If eco-docs tends to preach to the converted, Kenner presents his findings in such an engaging fashion that Food, Inc. may well reach the very viewers who could benefit from it the most: harried workers who don't have the time or income to read every book and eat non-genetically modified produce every day. Though he covers some of the same ground as Super-Size Me and King Korn, Food Inc. presents a broader picture of the problem, and if Kenner takes an understandably tough stance on particular politicians and corporations, he's just as quick to praise those who are trying to be responsible—even Wal-Mart, which now carries organic products. That development may have more to do with economics than empathy, but the consumer still benefits, and every little bit counts.

—Kathleen C. Fennessy

To check out Food, Inc., simply click the following link:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0027BOL4G?tag=pccon-20&camp=0&creative=0&linkCode=as1&creativeASIN=B0027BOL4G&adid=0K4S13X2RNBG1X96H2E4&>

Web links / Recommended Reading

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://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2009/01/17/minding-the-media-the-impact-of-the-biggest-loser/>

"The Impact of The Biggest Loser" - A quality review of a very popular TV show I used to watch.

<http://mboyle1959.wordpress.com/2009/09/16/the-three-medicines-everyone-should-take/>

"The Three Medicines Everyone Should Take" - Strength Coach Mike Boyle wrote a blog entry recently about the three "supplements" he thinks people should ingest daily.

<http://www.foodpolitics.com/2009/11/are-vegetarian-diets-ok/>

"Are Vegetarian Diets OK?" - Marion Nestle of NYU is someone whose work I closely follow. She has a lot of interesting things to say. I'm currently reading her book, "What to Eat."

Q&A

Topic: "Pregnancy Weight Gain"

Q: Paul, my husband and I are planning to conceive as we're shooting for a late summer/early fall birth for our first child. I am worried about gaining weight and was wondering if you could provide me with a safe weight gain guideline?

A: Good questions- and congrats in advance by the way! I just posted a piece on my blog about this very topic! Check out the article here:

<http://pcconditioning.blogspot.com/2009/11/optimal-pregnancy-weight-gain.html>



*If you've got a question, feel free to email me at the following: paulconnolly123@gmail.com.
Who knows- you may see your question published in a future newsletter!*

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About the Author

Certified through the National Strength and Conditioning Association as a personal trainer (NSCA-CPT), Paul possesses a degree in Exercise Science from UMASS-Boston where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. Holding a background in anatomy & physiology, human performance, and nutrition, he has been involved in the fitness industry since 2003 and has contributed to local and national media publications as a featured health and wellness columnist. The founder of suburban Boston-based personal training consulting service PC Conditioning (<http://www.pcconditioning.com>), 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's passion for fitness has led him to engage his clients in all major components of fitness including cardiovascular conditioning, nutrition, strength training, and flexibility. Adult AED and CPR-certified, Paul is available by appointment only.

He can be reached via e-mail at paulconnolly123@gmail.com.

"Understanding the fundamental concepts of exercise and optimizing daily function are key concepts in the training programs I outline for my clients. Injury prevention, improving self-confidence, and heightening one's knowledge of physical fitness through consistent hard work and dedication are all integral components of the approach I take with my clients. I see many people making similar mistakes in their conditioning programs and I make it a point to correct these areas. I demand 100% effort from my clients and make it a point to consistently educate them about the necessary lifestyle modifications required to achieve their respective goals."

Important Disclaimer: The information contained within this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice and is not intended for medical diagnosis or treatment. The intention of this article is for the sole purpose of disseminating fitness information. We recommend that you always request the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider before starting any new fitness program or with any questions you may have regarding your health or any medical condition.