

Workout Principles for Fluid Strength

1. Begin every movement with the breath.

The exhale gives power to the movement, the inhale gives power to the form. A strong, integrated diaphragm action is key to fluid movement, and reduces the need for effort elsewhere.

2. Every movement should feel good. If it doesn't, slow down and make adjustments until it does. Work until the movement feels pleasurable and fluid. Stop before you feel tired.

3. Focus on the feeling, not the doing. Stay present in the sensation while you workout. Keep returning the attention to the feeling in the body (not the doing of the exercise, or the way it looks, or how many you've done, or on unrelated conversations or thoughts.) The body's natural intelligence will emerge if you listen to your body sensations and let them guide your workout.

4. Relaxing the outside while you workout helps the body focus its effort on the intrinsic muscle system. As the inner muscle layers get stronger, longer and more coordinated, movement flows more smoothly.

5. Find the feeling of balance from your feet. Pressure receptors on the bottoms of your feet are designed to inform you of your internal weight distribution. Drop in to the sensation at the bottoms of the feet to ballast you.

6. Make it feel beautiful. Beauty is inherent in fluid, functional movement. Practicing beautiful movement increases function.

7. Let any machines you use help you lengthen and open. Release fully into the pull of the machines with each movement, especially on the inhale.

8. Natural movement in the body happens in arcs, spirals and waves. Practicing these directions increases naturalness and gracefulness in your functional habit patterns. Short linear movements increase bulk and choppyness.

9. Practice integration not isolation. Support every movement from the whole body and the depth of your breath.

10. Release tension, increase attention. Tension is a parasite that robs you of your life energy. Attention on what you are doing while you are doing it brings unity of body and mind, and allows for more conscious choice.

11. Success helps your body. The body likes to feel successful in the face of challenging exercises. Do only as many, as big, as heavy, or as fast as you can feel successful. Work deeply but without struggling and without compensation patterns kicking in. (Practicing exercises that you have to struggle with only teaches your body to struggle.)

12. Pause frequently during your workout time, and for at least 5 minutes at the end, to return to sensing your body at rest. Cultivate the ability to remain still in an energized, aware, transparent, and fully embodied state.

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