

Movement Patterns

I was thinking the other day about human movement patterns and how they change over time. I have been to many lectures throughout my career. I've heard many speak on this topic such as Grey Cook, Alwyn Cosgrove, Al Vermeil just to name a few and the list goes on. All of the lectures were geared to fitness professionals so we could learn, get better and apply our new knowledge to our clients or athletes. The common denominator in most of the lectures were about getting your client to feel better or move better through different training protocols or insight into how the body responds to those training protocols. The main goal of a strength coach is to get our athletes to move more efficiently and prevent injury. In my mind that should be the goal for everyone especially the population who no longer plays a sport on a regular basis and just goes to work and comes home.

Our body was designed to move in all 3 planes of motion (frontal, sagittal and transverse) but as we get older we tend to only move in one plain most of the time due to a decrease in activity level. I'm going to break this down a different way so everybody has a clear picture of what happens to our body as we age in the USA. Culture plays an important role into our movement patterns. People move differently growing up in different cultures and regions. An example of this is NYC where I live now is a commuter city and we walk a ton here. It's not conducive to have a car in Manhattan. It's much easier to walk then to drive. So when friends visit and complain that their legs are tired from all the walking we do I have to remember that the New Yorkers walk and are accustomed to walking ten, twenty and even thirty blocks or ride their bikes to work. This can be very overwhelming and tiring for someone not from NYC.

Every living being on earth has movement patterns. Do you know what yours typically are? Understanding your movement patterns is the first step in addressing any pain or asymmetries in your body (tight hips, tight back, poor ankle mobility). Most kids start playing as soon as they can walk. Have you ever watched kids at a playground? They do just about everything the body can do. Running, jumping, skipping, hopping, climbing, sliding, reaching, tumbling and falling. Kids are pliable and play in all 3 planes of motion (frontal, sagittal and transverse). When you play a sport there are specific patterns to the sport. Most sports are played in all 3 planes of motion which is great for the body. If you played a sport in high school or college do remember how good your body felt? How does your body feel now? For some of you who continue to be active I'm sure you feel great but how about the population who just goes to work and comes home. How does your body feel? I'm sure not the best and if you were never active you probably do not know how your body is suppose to feel or are in tune with your muscles.

Throughout life your movement patterns change due to lifestyle preferences, type of job, where you live, injuries and motivation. Over 60% of Americans are obese which is very sad for a country which has more gyms and personal trainers than any other country in the world. There are also a plethora of reasons why people who

have been sedentary for a long time decide to start exercising. One reason is for health purposes. How many people do you know started an exercise regimen because the doctor told them to? If you get to the point where your doctor says exercise or you will have to take these pills for the rest of your life or possibly you are on your way to heart failure more than likely the culprit is that you stopped moving period and have poor eating habits.

Pain can be caused by weakness or muscle imbalances from lack of movement or moving only in one plane of motion (sagittal). If you work a desk job and are not active or your only activity is running, you are only moving in one plane of motion (sagittal). It's imperative we use the body the way it was designed which is to move in all three planes of motion. It's also important to choose different activities which encompass this. If all you do is go to spin class and run on the treadmill or outside guess what, you're only moving in one plane of motion straight ahead. It's great you're exercising but you're doing it wrong because there are two planes of motion you're ignoring. My advice is to take a hard look at your own movement patterns and see what you're doing right and what you're doing wrong. What we should all strive to do is move like we are on the playground when we were kids. Not only will it be fun but it will be different which is the stimulus you need to reset the movement patterns your body already has programmed into itself.