

PERFECT PRACTICE™ in Strength Training

This issue of Personal Trainer Network includes the PERFECT PRACTICE™ in Strength Training chart – the third in this exciting series of visual aids to help you and your clients maximise performance and minimise risk.

The three step PERFECT PRACTICE™ training philosophy of 1) assessing your client's posture, 2) aligning them perfectly and then 3) taking that perfect alignment into their exercise session is critical for performance maximisation and risk minimisation in *all* forms of exercise but even more so in strength training as the increased loads really can wreak havoc on a misaligned body.

Here's a quick re-cap of why PERFECT PRACTICE™ in strength training is so important. Earlier this year (Autumn and Winter 2006) *Network* magazine featured our two part series on Cutting Edge Core Control. In it, we described how the ability to maintain perfect postural alignment during exercise relies on the integrity of the client's deep postural muscles. If you notice that your client can *not* maintain perfect alignment, it is a sign that your client does not have the core control required for the task they are trying to perform. When this is the case, pain and injury are knocking on the door!

During strength training, signs of poor postural control include:

- dropping into a sway (increase lumbar lordosis) or a slump
- poor breathing pattern, i.e. inability to activate the diaphragm correctly, shoulders raising or the abdominal wall protruding while inhaling
- bracing or doming of the abdominal wall
- losing knee alignment
- general poor technique or over-compensating with muscle groups not directly involved in the exercise

If you see these signs you have a few options to bring your client back into the realm of PERFECT PRACTICE™. These options include: lightening the load, slowing the exercise down, or changing the exercise to one that is not as difficult. Techniques such as practicing the movement pattern with no extra load can also help to imprint the perfect alignment required.

The PERFECT PRACTICE™ in Strength Training chart includes only a small selection of exercises, but it is our hope that having this visual tool will remind you and your clients of how to apply these principles to every exercise they perform. Keep your standards and integrity for perfect alignment high and your clients will not only be less likely to become injured, but they will reach new heights in performance as well! ♦



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*Lisa is a multi-talented exercise specialist. In her role as a director of the Australian Fitness Network, she has had a positive influence on the development of the fitness industry in Australia for nearly 20 years. Lisa has shared her expertise and knowledge as an instructor trainer, program developer, convention presenter and author. She works as a personal trainer, teaches pilates and children's movement classes and inspires equestrian athletes through her book *Riding from the Inside Out*. With Anna-Louise Bouvier she is co-creator of the PERFECT PRACTICE™ training system.*

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