Functional Daily Activities FDA’s

FDA’s are the movements we do in our everyday lives; picking up laundry baskets, carrying shopping bags, climbing stairs, getting in and out of the car. "It is true, the old saying, if you don’t use it, you lose it"; and if you don’t make the effort to mimic the above activities in exercise you may find yourself struggling with minor daily duties. Therefore functional strength training simply means training our bodies to better perform the types of movements we use for everyday life. Physicians typically prescribe aerobic exercise—and particularly walking—for the purpose of avoiding further heart complications, patients are more interested in being able to return to activities of daily living, such as mowing the lawn, lifting grandchildren, or vacuuming. The resistance training that would lead to that outcome is rarely prescribed.

When lifting a dumbbell the force in pounds applied is usually higher than the weight of the weight i.e.: lifting a 5lb dumbbell exerts 6lb force. Here are some examples of FDA’s in lbs!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Force (lbs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening refrigerator</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing lawn mower</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling lawn mower</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling out full dishwasher rack</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifting full laundry hamper</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing vacuum cleaner</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling vacuum cleaner</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifting full coffee pot</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing with aid of right arm to rise off bench</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening car door</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening door to cardiac rehabilitation facility</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interesting eh?

Let’s look at some of the movements our bodies go through every day with some ‘Tricks of the Trade’!

**Lifting:** Laundry, heavy saucepans, shopping, grandchildren, gardening. It may seem as if lifting is all about upper body strength and of course strong shoulders and arms are important; however legs, back and the abdominal section are your main protection factors in lifting heavy objects and supporting yourself with the change in the center of gravity. Here are a couple of exercises you can create out of everyday lifting:-
**Grocery Bag Lift:** Each time you go shopping strengthen your arms by lifting a bag 6 times to the front, side and rear. You can also do a modified bicep curl. Just remember to keep your shoulders back and abs tight while working your arms.

**Lift and Pick-up:** When you lift that heavy pet food bag or laundry basket, square your feet shoulder width apart, squat down, grab hold and push up with your legs. Put it down and do it again. If your knees hurt, practice lifting it from a chair until you get stronger.

**Push-ups:** Start with wall push-ups and progress to placing your hands on the kitchen counter. You can do 5-6 while waiting for the microwave to finish. These firm your chest, arms, abs and back.

**Reaching and pulling:** Opening the refrigerator or dryer, putting dishes away, picking things up from the floor, reaching up or low down into cabinets to pick up or put down items; especially heavy items, reaching behind to the back seat of a car or for an item too far away from you. Shoulders are at great risk with all of these movements and very difficult to heal as these movements are continuous and hard not to do during an injury. Patients may be told not to lift more than 5 pounds, that instruction would mean that patients couldn't even open the door to the cardiac rehabilitation facility. Opening a car door was equivalent to lifting a 10-pound weight. Check back to the table. Here are some exercises:-

**Baked bean cans rotator cuff:** Keep a couple of 1lb cans of food in the pantry. These are your dumbbells. While waiting for water to boil, or food to cook, stand tall holding cans, arms are a right angle to the floor (like you are holding ski poles), keep upper arms at sides of body and “open and close the arms like doors”.

**Wall Creeps:** While watching TV or listening to radio, stand with back against a wall and arms out to side, palms on the wall (wash your hands first! 😊). Keep shoulders away from ears and ‘creep’ fingers up the wall till you feel it, hold, breathe, count to 5 then ‘creep’ down again. Repeat a few times and do not worry if one goes higher than the other.

**Rubber bands:** Invest in some rubber exercise bands and leave one hanging around the banisters or door handle or solid piece of furniture. Once or twice a day when you walk past the band, STOP, pick up the ends and simulate a ‘row’. Hold band ends and either pull both ends back (squeezing with your shoulder blades) or allow one arm to pull whilst the other is extended then switch. Do up to 20!

**Twists:** On cold days (or not) stand tall with arms loose at side and twist, rotating from the waist and allowing arms to gently swing in front and behind you. Gently add a look behind you as you twist to rotate the whole spine.

**Power:** Standing up from chair, going up stairs, walking up a hill, getting in and out of a car, stepping up high into a train/bus/pool, getting off the floor. Some of these may not seem very ‘powerful’ to you but when you make a movement that is quick and takes effort even if only done once (as in that first step up into a bus), a lot of muscle fibers are firing up, calling on glucose for its fuel and contracting to make the movement. There is a huge amount of activity taking place that takes energy and produces fatigue easily. There is a mixture of strength and balance needed in some of these movements so the following exercises will ‘cross over’.
**Sit/Don’t Sit:** When going to sit at a table, in front of the TV or computer or just to relax; start to sit and then “change your mind” and stand again. Do 5 times each time you go to sit! Use your arms for balance and assistance if needed but try to take most of the effort in your legs.

**Walk Staircase:** It has been stated that if your house has stairs your life expectancy will be 3 years longer than those with no stairs! Look for steps and walk up them, turn around and walk down them. Make sure that your legs do ALL the work and try not to let gravity do all the work on the way down! Always use a banister or wall for extra assistance. If you have stairs, purposely leave stuff up stairs so you need to make trips!

**Step Ups/Downs:** Sometimes all that is needed is one step up. So practice with one foot on a step and straighten and bend that leg multiple times always holding a banister or wall. Switch legs. Then try the reverse, standing on the top of the step and with one leg and start to step down before returning to starting position. Repeat a few times and switch legs. Keep the step ups and down small if you feel any knee discomfort. You can always just pretend you have a step and while waiting for the microwave to ‘ping’ hold the counter and just dip up and down on one leg!

**Balance:** While chatting on the phone or to someone in the house or in the check out line, try standing on your toes; down, up and hold. Then try being a ‘stork’ and balance on one leg for 10 seconds (hold counter if needed but very softly), then switch legs. Do multiple times.

**Flexibility:** Something as simple as looking out of the car window as you reverse can cause a quick, painful ‘crick’ in the neck!

**Neck Shoulder Rolls:** Sitting in a parked car (engine off please!), in front of the TV or just in relax mode; try doing gentle neck rolls. Take your chin to your chest, then to each shoulder, then your ears to each shoulder. Do NOT look up and back without real caution and then only because you need to not as an exercise! Roll shoulders often during the day sometimes incorporate the arms as in swimming. Stretch out often.

**Move more in your daily life.**

Even if you don’t have a 15 or 30 minute window to dedicate to yoga or a bike ride, that doesn’t mean you can’t add physical activity to your day. If you’re not ready to commit to a structured exercise program, think about physical activity as a lifestyle choice rather than a single task to check off your to-do list. Look at your daily routine and consider ways to sneak in activity here and there. Even very small activities can add up over the course of a day.

**In and around your home.** Clean the house, wash the car, tend to the yard and garden, mow the lawn with a push mower, and sweep the sidewalk or patio with a broom.

**At work and on the go!** Look for ways to walk or cycle more. For example, bike or walk to an appointment rather than drive, banish all elevators and use the stairs, briskly walk to the bus stop then get off one stop early, park at the back of the lot and walk into the store or office, take a vigorous walk during your coffee break. Walk while you’re talking on your cell phone.
With friends or family: Walk or jog around the soccer field during your grandkid’s practice. Walk the dog together as a family, or if you don’t have your own dog, volunteer to walk a dog from a shelter.

While watching TV: Gently stretch while watching your favorite show, do push-ups, sit-ups or lift light weights during the commercial breaks—you’ll be amazed at how many repetitions you can fit in during the commercials of a half hour show! Better still, once a week turn off the TV and take a walk outside instead.

Focus on the benefits in your daily life and Make exercise a social activity

The most rewarding part of beginning a fitness routine is noticing the difference it makes in the rest of your life you’ll notice an improvement in how you feel as you go about your day.

Exercise can be a fun time to socialize with friends and working out with others can help keep you motivated. For those who enjoy company but dislike competition, water aerobics, or dance class may be the perfect thing.

Physical health benefits of senior exercise and fitness

Exercise helps seniors maintain or lose weight. As metabolism naturally slows with age, maintaining a healthy weight is a challenge. Exercise helps increase metabolism and builds muscle mass, helping to burn more calories. When your body reaches a healthy weight, overall wellness improves. Helps lessen fatigue and shortness of breath and promotes independence by improving endurance for daily activities such as walking, house cleaning, and errands.

Exercise reduces the impact of illness and chronic disease. Among the many benefits of exercise for seniors include improved immune function, better heart health and blood pressure, better bone density, and better digestive functioning. Seniors who exercise also have a lowered risk of several chronic conditions including Alzheimer’s disease, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, osteoporosis, and colon cancer.

Exercise enhances mobility, flexibility, and balance in seniors. Exercise improves your strength, flexibility and posture, which in turn will help with balance, coordination, and reducing the risk of falls. Strength training also helps alleviate the symptoms of chronic conditions such as arthritis.

Exercise improves your sleep. Poor sleep is not an automatic consequence of aging and quality sleep is important for your overall health. Exercise often improves sleep, helping you fall asleep more quickly and sleep more deeply.

Exercise boosts mood and self-confidence. Endorphins produced by exercise can actually help you feel better and reduce feelings of sadness or depression. Being active and feeling strong naturally helps you feel more self-confident and sure of yourself.

Exercise is good for the brain. Exercise benefits regular brain functions and can help keep the brain active, which can prevent memory loss, cognitive decline, and dementia. Exercise may even help slow the progression of brain disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease.