

## TIPS FOR BODY BUILDING / WEIGHT LIFTING

In order to keep or reach your goal of flexibility, range of motion, balance, symmetry, strength and grace, here are a few tips for your gym workout:

Working out with weights is repetitive motion, just like repetitive motion problems people acquire from their jobs, and movements they make in everyday life. Therefore it is essential that when weight training, you do not twist or compress joints. Keep feet, knees, back, and neck all tracking straight. Arms and legs must “track” straight and evenly while performing the exercise, or the body will become more unbalanced. Keep your shoulders down, and your neck and head on your shoulders. (Knees can be slightly bent- just keep them pointing forward.)

In order to avoid problems down the road, carefully inspect your workout, your form, and body position. Look in the mirrors, or have a buddy look at your form.

Mentally check as well as look in the mirror often. Keep notes on what is not even. Example-Does one foot or elbow turn out more? Is one arm or leg tighter or more awkward while doing the exercise? Can you lift more weight with one arm? If so, you are ingraining this pattern into your body more and more at each workout. Discuss your findings with your Rolfer, Structural Integration Practitioner, or Professional Structural Integrator, so they can change the pattern.

### NO-NO's

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No Hyperextensions

No Behind the neck pull downs.

No squatting without a Straight back, and legs forward at an angle from torso. (back against the wall or board). If you do a regular squat, you are shortening your lumbar spine and drawing it deeper into your back.)

No Using a barbell or machines for bicep curls- instead, use dumbbells or cables. Not Don't curl with fist up to the ceiling, instead:

a) do hammer curls, and b) curls with fist inward, curling from your side to your sternum.. This will work both heads of the bicep, and keep from twisting out your arms, which would lead to shoulder and neck pain.

No Shoulder shrugs for traps-this will shorten and tie up your neck. In general, keep back and neck straight at all times, when sitting, standing or lying down.

When standing, keep knees slightly bent. And head and neck on your shoulders.

If you are making faces or straining your neck, the weight is too heavy.

If your form is not impeccable, or you are using other muscle groups to help lift the weight, you are trying to lift too much.

For your upper body: free weights will help you develop balance and symmetry. It is best not to use any machines, especially if you cannot fully extend in or out, or if the machine causes you to compress shoulder joints, or if your body does not feel 100% comfortable.

When lying on a horizontal bench, put knees up, and feet together on bench. Keep back and neck flat on the bench. Always come from your “dorsal hinge” (mid thoracic) with any arm movements, not your shoulders.

Do not go past 180° (coming down on bench press) or you will drive your spine further into your back. You will probably have better form and results, when doing rear delt exercises, if you lie face down on a vertical slant board, or sit backwards on an incline bench. This way, your body is supported, while you can concentrate and isolate rear delts. If you exercise rear delts while bent over standing, the tendency is to tighten up the whole upper back and neck as well.

Over head triceps, keep elbows right up against your head/ears. Triceps pull downs, keep elbows at your side.

Shoulder press- keep neck and head on shoulders, don't strain your neck. Keep back straight. When sitting on extension machine or other, keep back flat.

If you are doing ab work, then psoas stretches are essential to lengthen the psoas, and balance the abdomen. (Psoas Stretches- While laying flat- on bench, or bed, or couch, Be close to the edge. Keep opposite knee up, and other leg close to edge, swing over edge and stretch to floor. Slightly pick knee up, then stretch down again.) Do other leg too.

After your Rolf series, if you plan to work out as a regular activity, you may want to check in with your Rolfer or Professional Structural Integrator once in a while, to make sure your movements are smooth and flowing. The nature of weight training is to shorten and contract muscles and fascia tissue.

Rolf/Structural Integration lengthens, extends and organizes muscle and fascia tissue. It's the Yin and the Yang.

In the meantime, Yoga and stretching are great to help with flexibility and lengthening, to balance the shortening and contracting that happen in weight training. Muscles that are bound up and tied together are not as strong, and do not grow as fast, as well as muscles and fascia that have knots, twists and adhesions cease to work as efficiently and as effectively as tissue that does not.

With organization, balance and length, comes strength, symmetry, flexibility, balance, and grace.

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