

# Healthy Habits

## from Prime of Life Fitness

### The 5 Essential Movements of Functional Fitness

Functional fitness is all about making your body work better. There's nothing wrong with fitness for its own sake, but for all the non-athletes out there, functional fitness is where it's at. With functional fitness you don't just train for cardiovascular capacity or build individual muscles. You train muscles, nerves and brain to work together efficiently and smoothly.

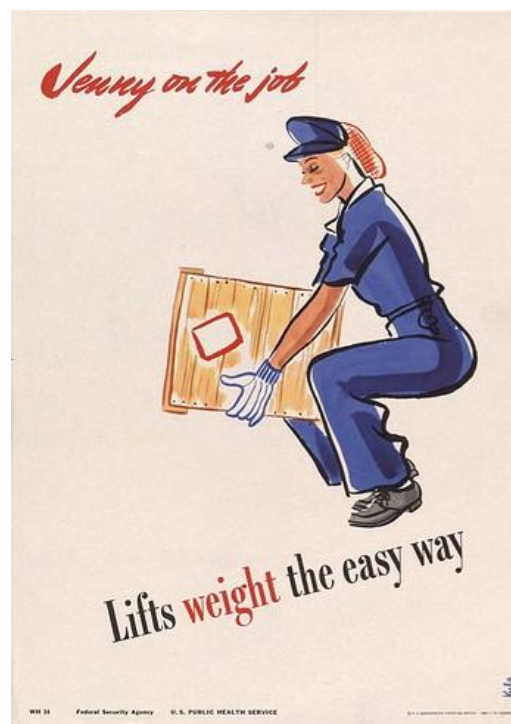
[Functional fitness](#) recognizes five essential movements that are the foundation for how we move in our daily lives. The ability to master these movements helps us age well and manage the activities of daily living.

**1. Bend and Lift.** In the gym you think of this as a squatting movement, but it's also how you sit and stand from a chair, or how you pick up your grandchild from the playpen. The bend and lift movement uses multiple joints and many of the largest muscles in the body. It also requires tremendous timing and coordination.

**2. Push.** Pushing movements look like a bench press or a push-up in the gym, but in real life you may be pushing a wheel barrow, or helping your neighbor free his car from a snow drift.

**3. Pull.** Pulling movements in the gym include lat pulldowns or rowing. In your daily life you pull the cord on your lawn mower, and you pull open the heavy doors at the bank.

**4. Single-Leg Movements.** At the gym you might see single-leg movements as



lunges or balance moves. In your life, the most common single-leg movements are walking and climbing stairs. Both require timing, coordination, balance and flexibility at several joints.

**5. Rotational Movements.** Many people forget to train for rotational movements, but we do them all the time in real life. Reaching around to buckle your seat belt, raking leaves or sweeping the floor, looking over your shoulder to back down the driveway or even swinging a golf club; these are all rotational movements that require core stability as your torso moves in a different direction than your lower body.

A workout that includes all five types of essential movements will help you age well and keep up with all the activities of daily living.

**Action Item:** Tomorrow, take inventory of your movements throughout the day. Can you identify these five movements in your everyday activities?



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