

# The Circuit Training Phenomenon



## Combine cardio conditioning and functional strength training with FITMOVES

**F**ITMOVES circuits are the most effective way to combine cardio conditioning with functional strength training. We developed this unique circuit training in an effort to provide an alternative method of training that is safe, fun, efficient and effective. The FITMOVES format can be utilized by an individual, a small group or very large groups. The circuit format consists of rotating stations composed of major movements that the body naturally recognizes — the four pillars of human movement. These four categories of movement are: 1) locomotion, 2) level changes, 3) pushing and pulling, 4) rotation. Since the four pillars are the basis of functional human movement, they are the foundation of the functional training behind the FITMOVES circuits. All four pillars are represented in the circuits via exercises that effectively enhance them. Although functional human movement is the foundation of FITMOVES, various themes can be emphasized, such as cardio, hypertrophy, stability, balance or core work. The arrangement of the circuits, work-to-rest ratios, repetition schemes or the exercise selection can delineate the emphasis of a particular theme. A single theme can be represented through the

entire class (45- to 60-minutes long), or several themes can be designed within a class.

### The Rationale Behind FITMOVES Circuits

Most circuit-type formats (e.g., Spinning, Step, etc.) are designed around a specific fitness component, such as cardio, toning, flexibility, etc. The first circuit classes in the fitness industry were aerobics classes, which were made popular back in the '70s and emphasized cardiovascular conditioning. Since then, many other group fitness classes have been developed, from Spinning classes to weight training (i.e., Body Pump) classes. To this day, no circuit class has been developed that encompasses the entire fitness spectrum, until now.

The FITMOVES circuits incorporate the best of Spinning, Body Pump, Step, Core and even "Boot Camp" classes. The use of various pieces of equipment (medicine balls, stability balls, dumbbells, sand bags, rubber tubing, balance equipment, etc.) and training methodologies allow unparalleled application and diversity. This diverse application allows the participant to partake in various cardio-related exercises that enhance motor skills



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and cardiovascular parameters: weight training exercises that build muscles and bones, calisthenics that improve flexibility and body awareness and balance and stability exercises that enhance postural awareness and body alignment.

### Who Can Participate in the FITMOVES Circuits?

The circuits are designed for the asymptomatic, healthy individual. However, exercise intensity can easily be enhanced or reduced to match a participant's level. Fitness professionals using FITMOVES can modulate exercise intensity by manipulating the speed of the exercise, the lever arm of the exercise and the base of support used during the exercise. Therefore, the circuits can be used by just about anyone individually or administered to a class consisting of athletes and non-athletes. Regardless of the population involved in training, FITMOVES provides safe, effective and consistent training.

### Design Philosophy and Considerations

The philosophy of the FITMOVES circuits is based on Juan Carlos Santana's Four Pillars of Human Movement. The Four Pillars model is a simple and

be addressed by a station involving some form of squatting, stepping or lunging. A push-up or band-pull station can represent Pillar #3 (Pushing and Pulling). Finally, a station using rotational exercises with a band or medicine ball can represent Pillar #4 (Rotation).

Stations consisting of movements that combine any of the four pillars, such as a dumbbell squat curl and press, can add an infinite amount of diversity to the design of a class. The four pillars can also be represented with different emphasis. For example, Pillar #3 can be made more functional with a standing alternating band pull, or we can provide a hypertrophy emphasis with a bent-over dumbbell row or dumbbell curl. Pillar #1 lends itself to static balances for the frail population or the incorporation of plyometrics designed to increase locomotive speed and power in more advanced populations.

### FITMOVES Circuit Progressions (tweaks)

All stations within a FITMOVES circuit can be tailored to meet the needs and capabilities of any individual. The "art" of modification and progression has been simplified so that any trainer or coach can supervise the circuit, especially when



effective way of looking at what the body does and providing specific and appropriate training.

The circuit stations represent each of the pillars to some degree. Pillar #1 (Locomotion) can be represented by a station consisting of a rocker-board balance, band-resisted running or a single-leg exercise. Pillar #2 (Level Changes) can

involved with large classes. We use four basic "tweaks" to modify exercises. These tweaks can be delivered from across the room with one to three words. This simple approach allows the instructor to coach from a distance with minimal instruction, making the system very effective for fast-moving group classes.

The four major classifications of progression tweaks to use during FITMOVES circuits are: increase in speed of movement, increases in the resistance lever, reducing the base of support.

### The Basic FITMOVES Home Circuits

The equipment used for the FITMOVES circuit can consist of a medicine ball, an exercise band,

### The Basic FITMOVES Group Circuits

The circuit can be applied to a group of individuals. As a matter of fact, the original FITMOVES pilot study had 12 stations. Therefore, don't get caught up in the number of stations and order of exercises; have some fun with it. As long as all of the four pillars are trained each day, the program will be effective, safe and



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a stability ball and an exercise step. Setting up the equipment is easy. Inflate the stability ball per the manufacturer's guidelines. Attach the bands to a closed door or around a stable structure, such as a rail or fence. Set up the equipment so that it is in close proximity around the step.

There are two circuits in FITMOVES. Each circuit will have five stations: medicine ball, band, stability ball, body weight and a step. You will perform 30 seconds of each exercise at each of the five stations. You will rest for 15 seconds while transitioning to the next station in the circuit.

fun. The original FITMOVES circuit had 12 stations and a criss-cross pattern. The reason for this was that the equipment in our room was set up a certain way, and we had to tailor the flow to match the equipment setup. If you have the choice, set up in a clockwise fashion; participants have an easier time following the flow of the circuit when it flows in a clockwise fashion. Below is a sample of the original set used in the FITMOVES pilot study conducted at the Institute of Human Performance (IHP) and in conjunction with Florida Atlantic University.

Our original FITMOVES has been modified many times since its original design, and we recommend that trainers and coaches exercise their creativeness to design circuits that are safe, fun and effective. Use the FITMOVES methodology as a guideline, not as a rule, and you will enjoy many years of excellent training.

*Juan Carlos Santana is a highly acclaimed presenter, author and president of the Institute of Human Performance in Boca Raton, Florida.*