

Fitness for Your Lifestyle: Functional Training

It's easy to become a couch potato over the holidays, which is why it's so important to stay active. If your usual exercise routine has lost its thrill, use some of your time off to try functional training—it's a buzzword in modern fitness circles, and it gives new meaning to getting in shape.

Functional training is an individually-tailored approach to fitness that's centered on you and your activities of daily living. It enhances your ability to do what you do each day—from carrying children, to working at a desk, to playing golf—by specially training the muscles you use the most. “It has something to offer just about everyone,” says Jennifer Tucker, an exercise physiologist at the Venice YMCA.

Focusing less on conventional strength training machines, functional training works through all three planes of motion using minimal exercise equipment. It strengthens crucial core muscles—like those in your back and abdomen—which, over time, can help you prevent the aches, pains, and sprains that happen so often in everyday life.

If you're interested, check with the YMCA. They offer skilled personal trainers, as well as classes like “Boot Camp” that provide functional training in a group setting. For more information, call 941-492-9622.