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# FORUM VIEWS

STRATEGY IN  
DIGITAL  
MARKETPLACE  
BY RAJIV VAID

THE  
LANDSCAPE  
OF  
"SMART BETA"

SUB BROKERS  
AUTHORIZED  
PERSONS  
COMPLIANCE

MAHARASHTRA  
SHOPS &  
ESTABLISHMENTS  
ACT

VOLATILE BASE  
METAL PRICES  
CALLS FOR  
RISK MANAGEMENT

## THE THOUGHTS CHANGING INDIA

THE NEXT PHASE OF  
GLOBALIZATION  
BY PIYA MAHTANEY

CONNECTING INDIAN  
MONEY INDUSTRY  
BY HANSI MEHROTRA

IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS  
FAITH ON BUSINESS  
SENTIMENTS OF  
STOCK BROKERS  
BY SHRIRAM DARBHA



IN CONVERSATION  
WITH  
VIVEK KULKARNI

# FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

By Nawaz Modi Singhania  
Founder  
Body Art, The Fitness Studio



"Of course, a person may also injure themselves doing all of the above if they were not particular about how their body moved in space. Kinesiology is the study of the principles of mechanics and anatomy in relation to human movement. How one walks, manages their movements or locomotes has a great impact on the human body's link or chain system."

## What is Functional Fitness and what are its benefits?

Functional Fitness entails being able to go about your daily activities in a fit, healthy, capable fashion, without injuring yourself. In my opinion, it's not only of prime importance but it's absolutely your birthright! After all, what's the point of being fit if you're not healthy & not injury free?

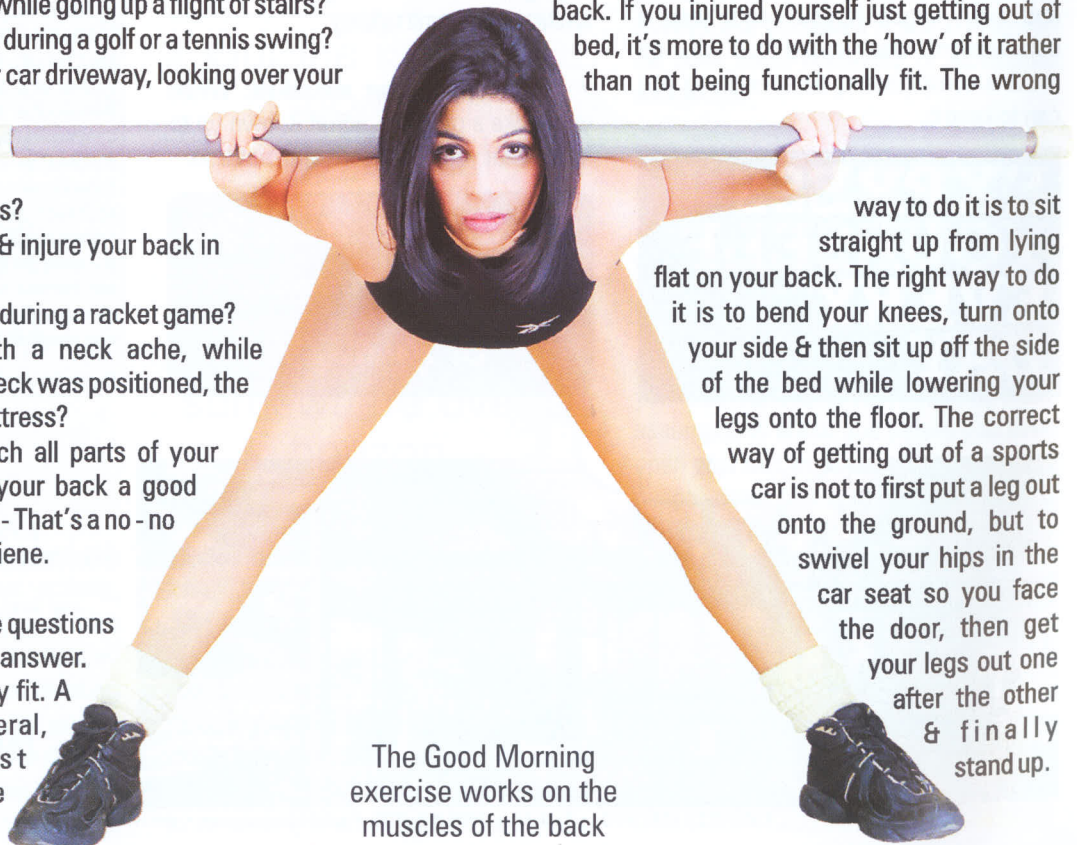
## How do I know if I'm functionally fit?

- Do you have trouble sitting on the floor and even more while getting up?
- Are you unable to get out of a low sports car with ease?
- Do your legs really hurt while going up a flight of stairs?
- Did you injure your back during a golf or a tennis swing?
- Did you back out of your car driveway, looking over your shoulder as you reversed and ended up injuring your spine in the process?
- Did you lift a travel bag & injure your back in the process?
- Did your wrist give way during a racket game?
- Did you wake up with a neck ache, while blaming the way your neck was positioned, the type of pillow or the mattress?
- Are you unable to reach all parts of your back in order to give your back a good scrub during your bath? - That's a no - no even with regard to hygiene.

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then there's your answer. You are just not functionally fit. A very large part of general, overall fitness must necessarily include Functional Training.

## Locomotor Skills

Of course, a person may also injure themselves doing all of the above if they were not particular about how their body moved in space. Kinesiology is the study of the principles of mechanics and anatomy in relation to human movement. How one walks, manages their movements or locomotes has a great impact on the human body's link or chain system. For instance, when lifting a travel bag - or anything heavy for that matter - one must always transfer the load onto the legs by bending them, and not lift with straight legs, which invariably puts a lot of negative pressure onto the back. If you injured yourself just getting out of bed, it's more to do with the 'how' of it rather than not being functionally fit. The wrong



way to do it is to sit straight up from lying flat on your back. The right way to do it is to bend your knees, turn onto your side & then sit up off the side of the bed while lowering your legs onto the floor. The correct way of getting out of a sports car is not to first put a leg out onto the ground, but to swivel your hips in the car seat so you face the door, then get your legs out one after the other & finally stand up.

The Good Morning exercise works on the muscles of the back

**Which exercises constitute Functional Fitness & how are they performed?**

Many regular & well known exercises constitute and promote functional fitness.

- The squat conditions the muscles of the lower body, particularly the quadriceps in the front of the thighs. These muscles are important in helping one sit down, stand up and walk up & down stairs. Keep them well toned, and you'll find that walking up stairs, sitting on the floor & getting up and getting in & out of low sports cars will be a breeze.
- Some spinal mobility exercises in Pilates using Pilates Studio equipment known as the Reformers are great to increase spinal flexibility and prevent injury. These exercises are particularly important for racket players and for any activities that require a spinal twist, e.g. looking over your shoulder while backing out of your car driveway.
- Back strengthening exercises such as bent over rows, hyperextensions, dead lifts & the good morning will maintain a strong, fit back, that can carry heavier loads without incident of injury.
- Front and side neck press exercises will keep the muscles

- of the neck strong, well conditioned and flexible so a crick in the neck when waking up is not a health hazard.
- Simple calf raise exercises along with its variations will keep the calves & the ankles strong, specially so if one does them using a step where the heels can dip down low before one rises up onto the toes again. If one is prone to spraining their ankles, these exercises will go a long way in keeping one functionally fit. However these exercises are best done post recovery and not during an active stage of the injury.
- Forearm and wrist curls & their variations will keep the forearms and wrists strong. For racket game players this is all the more important.
- Various variations of upper body stretches will increase the reach of the hands to all parts of the back.

Enjoy your new self. Relish being so functionally fit that you don't suffer cricks & pains, and so you don't see daily chores as a health hazard, which are all a part of our every day life.

More health & fitness-related info available on [www.bodyart.in](http://www.bodyart.in)

Squats work the muscles of the lower body



A very large part of general, overall fitness must necessarily include Functional Training.

Working the muscles of the calves & strengthening the ankles

