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5 things to know about functional fitness

By Kristen Dearborn
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WALLINGFORD — Functional fitness is an approach to physical activity that incorporates movements found in daily life. One of the main goals is to increase strength, endurance, and flexibility to allow for easier transitions between sitting, standing, and reaching.

Jennifer Nuzzo is the owner of Main Street Wellness Studio in Wallingford and a certified personal trainer. Nuzzo's training business, DiversaFit, is centered on functional fitness. She works with clients who have diverse goals and skill levels, specializing in functional and therapeutic training.

1. Set goals

Fitness goals don't always have to be centered around weight or body circumference measurements. Nuzzo says that she tracks her clients progress based on the weights that they use and how their form improves. "If they can start to do these things that they couldn't do before, obviously it's a direct measurement of them being stronger," said Nuzzo.



Linda Gilbert holds her personal trainer, Jennifer Nuzzo, at Main Street Wellness Studio in Wallingford.

2. Find an activity you enjoy

In order to stick with a training regime, it is essential to identify the types of physical activity that you find pleasurable. Nuzzo focuses on alignment and positioning of exercises before moving on to more complex variations and adding weight. Nuzzo said that some clients prefer the TRX over traditional bodyweight exercises or have a preference for strength training over cardio. Nuzzo takes client's requests into consideration when developing their exercise

program to ensure that it's a plan they will actually stick to.

3. Push and pull

Nuzzo said that opening a car door and starting a lawn mower are common functional pulling movements. She designs workouts that enable her clients to sit, stand, and move around more easily. "I get people that come in that want to be able to play with their grandkids" said Nuzzo. She uses techniques to increase strength so that clients can seamlessly transition from one activity to another.

4. Build a strong core

"I work from the core and build on out from there" said Nuzzo.

Nuzzo recommends building a strong core foundation and steadily increasing resistance exercises once abdominal strength has been established.

Nuzzo keeps track of how long her clients can hold a plank. For advanced clients, she challenges them by adding elements of instability to an exercise by incorporating bosu balls or having them simultaneously lift their legs.

5. Therapeutic exercise

Nuzzo offers one on one training sessions at Main Street Wellness Studio. Her studio hosts group classes, strength bootcamps, yoga and Zumba. Nuzzo also offers therapeutic fitness clinics. These clinics are designed for people at any fitness level who are recovering from injuries or are looking for modified exercises. Nuzzo said that people looking to develop a functional fitness routine should start slowly with 30-minute exercise sessions so that they are not discouraged.

"Two to three days a week and you'll definitely start noticing a difference in the first few months" said Nuzzo.

For more information about fitness programs offered through Main Street Wellness Studio, 33 N. Main St., Suite B, visit: <https://wallingfordctshops.com/mainstreetwellnessstudio.html>. To learn more about DiversaFit, visit: <https://www.diversafit.com/>.

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