

THE STARTING LINE

SEPTEMBER 2006



WALKERS AND RUNNERS AROUND THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

2006 W.R.A.C.E. Schedule

Info 519-979- 5852

Or Log on to www.wrace.org

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REMAINING RACES

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sun. Oct. 22	Halloween Hoot 5km-10km-Double Points Event	9:00 a.m.	Riverfront Civic Terrace
Sun. Nov. 19	Jingle Bell Run 5km – 10km	9:00 a.m.	Ken Knapp Ford, Essex

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Comments and Suggestions are always! welcome.

Please feel free to contribute your thoughts in our next "Starting Line" newsletter.

Send your email to admin@wrace.org

Climbing the food pyramid



No hierarchy of food images appears in the new pyramid. That is, an image with one food placed above another could get interpreted as that food being superior to another food.

The new food pyramid has been unveiled for more than a year now. When I first saw it, my reaction was: "a missed opportunity." Since then, I've been waiting for the pyramid's hidden messages to become clearer to me, but I have had no such luck. Certainly, the government could have created a better tool to teach us how to make dietary improvements and promote healthful eating? I've heard the pyramid was designed to be simple. But it's so simple, it actually seems meaningless! One reason for this simplicity (a.k.a. vagueness) relates to behind-the-scenes politics. The pyramid was shaped not only by a team of scientists, nutrition experts and health professionals, but also by lobbyists from the sugar, soft drink, red meat, dairy and other food industries that fought to protect their turf. They know a small shift in dietary recommendations can mean billions of dollars of lost money. Hence, no hierarchy of food images appears in the new pyramid. That is, an image with one food placed above another could get interpreted as that food being preferable and superior to another food.

Hidden messages:

To find out more about the pyramid's hidden messages, I logged onto www.MyPyramid.gov. This website, in contrast to the icon, offers an impressive amount of helpful information. Surfing to this treasure chest of information is a worthwhile use of time. Here is some of what I learned:

- Each wedge in the pyramid represents a different food group. The orange stands

for grains; green, for vegetables; red, for fruit; yellow, for oil; blue, for dairy; and purple, for meat and protein-rich foods.

- The variety of colorful wedges symbolizes the variety of foods that we need to form a balanced diet.
- The wedges have a broad base and a narrow top. This symbolizes we should choose portion sizes that vary according to our calorie needs. No longer is the message "one size fits all."
- The wedges also suggest we should eat a big base of nutrient dense foods and taper off our intake of foods with less nutritional value, including foods with fats and sugars. (That is, eat more apples, less apple pie; enjoy more baked potato, fewer potato chips.)
- The stairs symbolize the message of taking small steps to a healthier lifestyle.
- The person running up the stairs symbolizes the importance of daily exercise. (This could be the one clear message!)

The person also symbolizes the fact that the pyramid can be personalized. That is, at www.MyPyramid.gov, you can get a food plan based on your estimated calorie needs. Keep in mind that these calorie suggestions do not take into account your height or weight; just your age and level of activity. The website offers excellent information including tips to help you eat more of the foods that will invest in good health.

Eating according to the pyramid:

With your personalized on-line food plan, you can learn how much to eat of each type of food. The guidelines for a 1,800 calorie food plan (a minimal amount for most athletes) are:

Fruit: 1.5 cups of fruit and or juice per day. This is easy for athletes: A smoothie with a banana, berries and orange juice will do that job!

Vegetables: 2.5 cups per day, with a variety of colors. A salad tossed with tomato, peppers, carrots and baby spinach fulfills the veggie requirement, no sweat.

Grains: Six ounces of grain foods, of which at least half are whole grain. (Look for whole before the grain name on the ingredient list.) One ounce = 1 slice bread or 1/2 cup pasta, rice. Eating whole grain Wheaties at breakfast and a

lunchtime sandwich on rye bread can balance the dinner's white pasta.

Dairy: 3 cups low fat or fat-free milk or yogurt. Two ounces of cheese equates to one cup of milk.

Meat and alternatives: 5 ounce equivalents. One ounce of meat = 1 egg = 1 Tbsp peanut butter = 1/2 oz. nuts. This translates into a small portion of a protein-rich food at two meals per day.

The bottom line:

Take mealtimes seriously; enjoy a variety of colorful foods; eat moderately & stay active.

Core conditioning program

The most important stabilizing muscle groups in runners are the aforementioned deep abdominals and the hip stabilizers -- namely the hip abductors and external hip rotators on the outside of the hips and buttocks. The core conditioning program I'm presenting here is a bare-bones program that focuses on just these two muscle areas with only four exercises per workout.

Phase I: Finding your stabilizers

Do these exercises three times a week for three weeks. In the first week, do each exercise once. In the second week, do each exercise twice. And in the third week, do each three times.

Lying Hip Abduction

Conditions the hip abductors and hip external rotators, enhancing hip stability

There are two versions of this exercise. First, lie on your side with your legs bent 90 degrees and your knees together. Now rotate your upper leg upward and backward, keeping the foot of this leg in contact with the other foot. Repeat 12-15 times or until you feel fatigue in your buttock, then switch sides. To make this exercise more challenging, perform it with a resistance band tied around your thighs.

To do the second version, straighten your legs and repeatedly lift the top leg toward the ceiling (toes pointing forward) as high as you can. Repeat 12-15 times and then switch sides. To make this exercise more challenging, do it with an ankle weight.

Cook Hip Lift

Trains the deep abs to stabilize the lower spine and pelvis while the glutes and hamstrings generate backward thrust

Lie face up with your legs sharply bent. Place one foot flat on the floor and draw the other leg up against your torso, holding it in place with pressure from your hands. Now contract the hamstrings and glutes of the grounded leg to lift your butt off the floor two or three inches. Keep your deep abs contracted and your pelvic neutral. Hold this position for five seconds and relax. Repeat five times and then switch legs. Progress by holding the contractions longer and/or by adding repetitions.

Kneeling Overhead Draw-In

Teaches you how it feels to contract the deep abs for stabilization

Kneel on both knees and raise your arms straight overhead. Draw your navel toward your spine and try to lift your fingertips another inch or so toward the ceiling, as though you're trying to place an object on a shelf that's just out of reach. Hold the contraction for five seconds and relax. Repeat a total of five times. To progress, add repetitions and/or hold the contractions longer. To make this exercise more challenging, do it with dumbbells or a weight plate in your hands.

Knee Fall-Out

Teaches you to sustain activation of the deep abs as your hips rotate

Lie face up with your legs sharply bent, knees together and feet placed flat on the floor. Contract your deep abdominal muscles by drawing your navel toward your spine. Don't arch your lower spine.

Now slowly let your knees fall outward toward the floor without relaxing your deep abs. (This is very difficult at first. If it feels easy, you're letting your deep abs relax!) Once your legs are splayed as wide as you can get them, pause briefly and return to the start position. Repeat a total of 10 times. Progress by adding repetitions.

Phase II: Stabilization and coordination

This phase of your core conditioning program should also last three weeks. Continue training your core three times a week. In the first week of this phase, do each of the four exercises described below just once and do the exercises of

the previous phase twice per core session. In the second week, reverse this ratio. And in the third week, do only the four exercises presented below, three times a piece.

Single-Leg Squat

Trains the hip abductors and external rotators to maintain hip stability during a single leg movement similar to running

Stand on one foot and bend the other leg 90 degrees. Lower your butt slowly toward the floor, keeping most of your weight on the heel of your support foot. Squat as low as you can without your butt moving to one side or the other (a sign that other muscles have begun to pick up the stabilization slack). Return to the start position. Do eight to 10 squats on each foot. Progress by squatting deeper and/or by adding repetitions.

Oblique Bridge

Trains all of the muscles involved in maintaining lateral stability at the hips, pelvis and spine

Lie on your side with your ankles together and your torso propped up by your upper arm. Lift your hips upward until your body forms a diagonal plank from ankles to neck. Hold this position for 20 seconds -- don't let your hips to sag towards the floor (watch yourself in a mirror to stay honest). Reverse your position and repeat. Progress by increasing the duration you hold the bridge position. To increase the challenge further, perform several hip abductions from the bridge position.

Lying Draw-In with Hip Flexion

Teaches your deep abs to stabilize the pelvis during alternating leg movements

Lie face up with your head supported by a large pillow or foam roller. Begin with your legs bent 90 degrees and your thighs perpendicular to the floor, feet together. Engage your deep abs by drawing your navel toward your spine. While holding this contraction, slowly lower your right foot to the floor, return immediately to the start position, and then lower the left foot. If you find this easy, you're failing to hold the contraction of your deep abs. Lower each foot to the floor eight to 10 times. Progress by adding repetitions.

Quadruped

Teaches your deep abs to stay active against a balancing challenge while performing alternating limb movements

Kneel on all fours with a broomstick or dowel rod balanced along your spine. Engage your deep abs by drawing your navel toward your spine. Holding this contraction, extend your right leg until it forms a straight line with your torso. Do this without rotating your hips. If you cheat and allow your hips to rotate (a movement that would allow your deep abs to work less), the broomstick will roll off your back to the left. Hold this position for 10 seconds, return to the start position, and then extend the left leg.

Repeat on both sides. Progress by holding the extension longer and by adding repetitions. To make this exercise even more challenging, extend your left arm forward as you extend your right leg backward, and then extend your right arm and left leg together.

Phase III: Functional stability

Continue training your core three times a week throughout this third phase of your off-season core conditioning program. In the first week, do each of these exercises just once and do the exercises of the second phase twice per core session. In the second week, reverse this ratio. And in the third week, do only the four exercises presented below, three times a piece.

Single-Leg Box Jump

Challenges your hip stabilizers to maintain hip stability during single-foot impact

Stand on one foot facing a sturdy platform such as an aerobics step. Leap forward onto the platform and land on the same foot. Make a small hop step on the platform for balance and then jump back to the start position. Repeat 10 to 12 times and switch legs. Concentrate on engaging your hip abductors and hip external rotators on your support side when landing. Progress by raising the platform and by adding repetitions (up to 20 per leg).

Stability Ball Leg Curl

Trains your deep abs to maintain pelvic stability against a balance challenge while the glutes and hamstrings generate backward thrust

Lie face up and place your heels together on top of a stability ball. Raise your pelvis so that your

body forms a straight plank from head to toes. Contract your glutes and hamstrings and roll the ball toward your buttocks. Pause briefly and return to the start position. Focus on keeping your pelvis from sagging toward the floor throughout this movement. Do eight to 12 repetitions. Progress by adding repetitions and/or by switching to a single-leg version of the exercise (straighten one leg and elevate it above the ball while using the opposite foot to roll the ball).

Swiss Ball Jackknife

Trains your deep abs to maintain stability in the pelvis and lower spine against a balance challenge while performing hip flexion movements

Assume a push-up position with your hands on the floor and the tops of your feet supported on a stability ball. Engage your deep abs by drawing your navel toward your spine and bend your legs sharply, rolling the ball toward your hands -- don't arch your lower spine. Pause briefly and return to the start position. Complete eight to 12 repetitions. Progress by adding repetitions.

Dead Bug

Trains your deep abs to maintain stability during alternating arm and leg movements

Lie face up with your head slightly elevated above the floor and your deep abs engaged. Begin with your right leg fully extended and also elevated a few inches off the floor, your right arm reaching towards your right foot, your left leg sharply bent with the knee drawn towards your chest, and your left arm extended straight behind your head, parallel to the floor. Keeping your navel drawn towards your spine, smoothly reverse the position of your arms and legs, and continue alternating arm and leg positions for 25 seconds. Progress by increasing the duration of the exercise.

*Matt Fitzgerald is the author of several books on triathlon and running, including **Runner's World Performance Nutrition for Runners** (Rodale, 2005).*

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National Sport at Manning-15% off regular footwear and apparel.

Tortoise and the Hare- 15%



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Get a new Wrace membership/renewal for 2007 available at the Halloween Hoot Wrace.**

Wrace Members please remember for those members who have not volunteered yet, Members must volunteer for one event out of six events.



Don't forget our last Wrace of the Season is the Jingle Bell Run at Ken Knapp Ford in Essex.