

The white shroud of gold powder has arrived! Before the foundation finishes for all of us to strap on gear I would like to elaborate on a few winter training concepts that we present to all of our members during Ski Performance Training and that we all should keep in mind throughout the winter.

If you have read any of these articles you will know that I try to bleed the importance of the core. The core at Training To Be Balanced (T2BB) is described as from the armpit to the outside of the hip and everything around it. This includes the low back muscles; every muscle attached to the shoulder; glutes; and of course the abs. The abdominals represent 20% of the core although an important 20% but only 20%.

The core needs to hold itself up. If it does not then some other part of the body has to compensate for it...the legs, in particular, the hamstrings. Figure this, the hamstrings are working to do what ever winter activity they are asked to do, in addition, working double to hold up the core. Thus, many people feel they have tight hamstrings, stretching them profusely. Therefore, the hamstrings are getting three times the work they need which can all be eliminated by keeping the core strong.

One example of helping the core stay strong is the side plank. Begin on sideline with forearm on floor under shoulder; lift body in straight line off floor. Hold as long as possible without hips sagging. For more of a challenge lower and raise hips without touching floor followed by hips moving forward and back followed by circling the hips in both directions. Perform 10 repetitions of each or until quality of form is unrecoverable.

Ensure you always have a glute hamstring connection during exercise and outdoor winter activities. The angle or sheer force the knee undergoes with skiing is just not good for your knees. However, the more the entire legs are utilized (especially the glutes and hamstrings) to ski the reduced chances you have of your knees ever hurting after long days of skiing. You must remember this if based on experience, antimony, genetics, previous injuries and athleticism of our members.

The better your glutes works WITH your hamstring and vice versa the more you can get out of legs to perform any winter activity. The hamstrings and glutes are made up of three major muscles. Add that with calf muscles and which part of the body has more capacity of muscle usage? Front side or back side of the body? The driving force for most activities are done with the back of your legs...glutes and hamstrings. In fact the glutes are the strongest muscle in the body per cross sectional area (the thickness).

Glute hamstring exercises are more regular than you think. One of the top exercises for glute/hamstring connection and strength development is the Roman Deadlift (which has many other names as well). Begin standing at hip width apart with weights by sides of body; bend at the waist and lower weights until (straight) back is parallel to the floor; ensure body weight is shifted to the heels for on your return to starting position; you use your low back, hamstring and glute muscles.

Lastly, the term “finish strong” at T2BB means that you don’t collapse across the finish line. It means that you finish with “quality of effort”. I have no problem training our members to grind hard, or lay everything on the line during our ski performance group trainings, however, with good form! We preach that if someone were to walk in during his/her workout that he/she does not know if we are finishing or starting the workout. That is how good our form should be performed.

Perfect practice make perfect. Thus, all our “quality of effort” conveys to the mountain or skate skiing (which relies heavily on form). This in turn allows us to listen to our bodies if we are fatigued or feeling sluggish. How one trains is a direct relationship to how we perform in winter activities. If we understand how much to push our bodies during exercise, then we know how to push our bodies in winter conditions.

Enjoy the winter, snow, and outdoor adventure this year. Be safe and always remember to have fun! By the way Happy Thanksgiving from myself and the team at T2BB.