

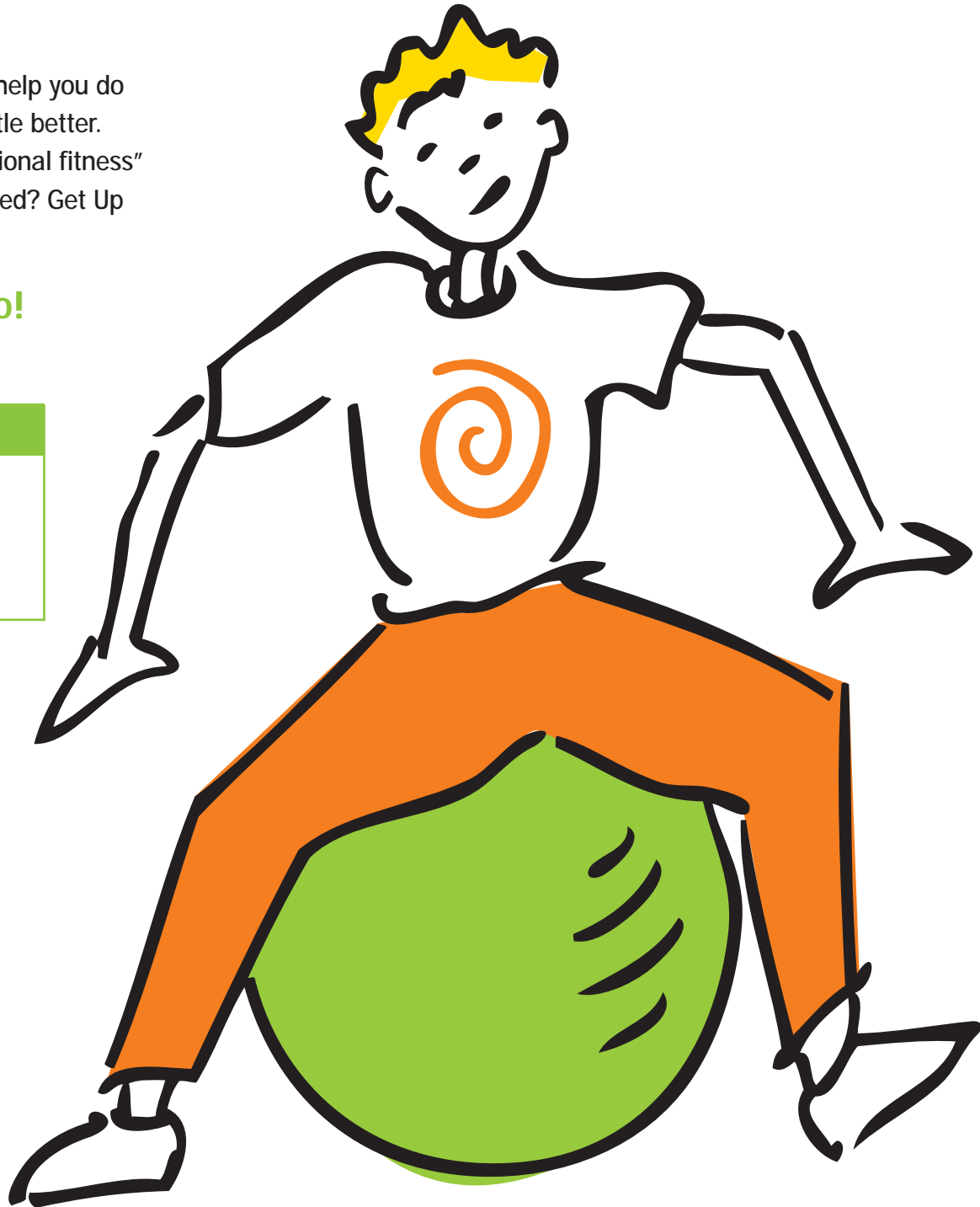
What's Your Function?

Functional fitness can help you do everyday activities a little better. Wondering what "functional fitness" is, and how to get started? Get Up and Go is here to help.

Ready? Let's go!

Inside This Month

- 2 It's Everywhere
- 3 Getting Stronger, Getting Better!
- 4 You Did It!
- 5 Activity Log



It's Everywhere

What is functional fitness? "It's moving the body the way that it was meant to be moved," says Cyndi Rodi, an exercise expert with a program called CrossFit Kids. "It is in every part of your life."

Make a list here of some of the physical activities in your life that you would like to do better. (Check our list if you need some ideas.)

OUR IDEAS

- * walking the dog
- * carrying the groceries
- * not getting tired in PE class
- * better at dancing
- * be able to touch my toes
- * lift heavier things
- * play soccer better
- * throw farther

I would like to be better at...

(list activities)



Read on to learn some ways that you can improve your functional fitness.

Getting Stronger, Getting Better!

Look at your list of physical activities you'd like to do better. Think about what your body needs to be able to do in order for you to improve. Do any of your activities have to do with walking or running, or lifting or carrying things? Maybe some of them have to do with improving your skills or flexibility. Exercise can help you improve in all of these ways.

Take a look at these surprising ways to put the "fun" in "functional fitness."



Go for a race

You might be surprised to learn that wheelbarrow racing would be considered exercise at all! But wheelbarrow racing involves your core muscles. These are muscles in your center (similar to the core of an apple) and include your abdominal muscles, commonly called your "abs," and obliques.

Just be careful—slow and steady wins the functional fitness race!

Get in the hot seat!

This exercise is called the "hot seat." Stand in front of a chair or bench as if you are going to sit down on it. Bend your knees and move your rear end down toward the seat. But just as you touch the seat, pretend that it is very hot and slowly stand back up the same way you went down. (Make sure that you aren't leaning forward when you stand back up.)

"Hot seats" are actually squats. Squats are great exercise for your legs. They are sometimes called "the king of exercises."

TRY IT!

Gather up some friends and organize your own field day. Include games such as a water balloon toss, hula hooping, sack races, and of course wheelbarrow races. Or try the games listed in your *Current Health* magazine, such as tag, dodgeball, or musical chairs. You can also search online for field day games or ask your PE teacher for ideas.

You Did It!

It's hard to tell, from day to day, whether or not you are getting healthier and stronger. That is why it can help to keep a record of your exercise and your abilities.

You can start with last month's Get Up and Go packet (Missed it? Visit our Web site at www.weeklyreader.com/getupandgo and download the packet for September 2009). Do the activities mentioned and write down your results. Don't forget to write down your goals! Then fill out the activity log for every day that you exercise. Put all the sheets of paper in a binder.



Then add this month's packet, and the activity log on the next page. You can print an activity log for each week of the month.

Keeping an exercise log can help you get healthier and help you celebrate your successes. You can also learn more about yourself. That's what happened to Justin R., of California, when he started keeping track of his health. He kept a log of his exercise as well as what he was eating.

Justin was especially surprised to realize that he was eating a lot of "empty calories," such as breads and other carbohydrates. Those foods would fill him up but didn't offer much nutrition otherwise. "I was eating some really bad stuff," Justin says.

He learned he needed to make his diet more balanced. "I stopped eating bread a lot," he says. "I started eating a lot of good fats and protein." Now he's on his way to meeting his healthy goals!



Personal Get Up and Go Activity Log

Fill in the days of the week and the date for the week as shown in the sample. In each day's log, write down each activity you did and the amount of time you exercised for. Then, at the bottom of each day's square, write down the total number of minutes you spent exercising. Experts say kids and teens need at least 60 minutes of exercise most days of the week. (Try to aim for even more!)

date: Oct. 1
played basketball • 2 hours
walked to football game • 1 hour
played on Wii • 1 hour
dance class • 1 hour

Track Yourself!

Make a special three-ring binder or folder with prongs to keep track of your progress. Punch holes in each week's planner and file it in your binder. Decorate your binder or folder with photos and sayings to help keep you motivated. The binder will also help you look back at how far you have come, and celebrate all your hard work!



My Exercise Goal: _____

(Write something you hope to get out of your Get Up and Go plan. You don't need to tell anyone else! This is just for you.)

date:	date:	date:	date:	date:	date:
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