



## Fitness Vocabulary from A to Z, Part Two

*By Joe Stein, President*



Break time is over! School is back in session. Starting where we left off last month, let's do some work on your fitness vocabulary.

**N: Negatives:** Despite its name, it is a good thing. Negatives are the second half of a strength training repetition. This eccentric or "down" phase of a lift is the lowering of the weight during a bench press or biceps curl. Even though it is generally the easier phase, muscle fiber stimulation is greater as the fibers are being elongated.

**O: Obliques:** The sets of muscles in your core used for stabilization and twisting at the waist. The internal and external obliques on each side of one's torso wrap around to form a natural girdle. Exercises such as bicycles, twisting bent-knee sit-ups and Russian twists can help to tone the waist.

**P: Pilates:** A form of mind-body exercise that emphasizes strengthening the core through a series of slow, controlled, movements. Developed by Joseph Pilates during WWI as a therapy to help wounded soldiers rehab their injuries, Pilates has morphed into a leading modality practiced by over 10 million people. Many clients have asked if Pilates mat exercises will help them look like Uma Thurman. If you are a six-foot tall blond woman, it couldn't hurt.

**Q: Quads:** Short for Quadriceps, this group of muscles allows extension of the knee. These are our "go" muscles as they allow us to walk. Squats, lunges, stair climbing and leg press are among the best exercises to develop this important muscle group.

**R: Rhomboids:** This is a small and oft-forgotten muscle group in the upper back. By elevating the shoulder girdle and adducting the shoulder blades, this little foursome, the major and minor on each side, is responsible for good posture. Chin-ups and rows are two great exercises to develop these important little giants.

**S: Set Point:** This is either your best friend or worst enemy. It is your body's internal control system, designed by eons of evolution, to maintain a certain level of body fat, once a necessity for survival in the days of cavemen, famine and wooly mammoths. This system regulates one's weight in the

face of dieting or weight gain, cajoling it to return to its baseline. The only proven way to reset this natural thermostat is to increase one's muscle mass through strength training. In case you missed it, see last month's article and look under mitochondria.

**T: Trainer:** A person dedicated to helping clients achieve their fitness and wellness goals. Part drill sergeant, part iron chef and part psychoanalyst, these dedicated people help push you to the limits of what you can do to help yourself.

**U: Upper Body Ergometer:** This is one of the most challenging pieces of equipment in the cardiovascular training arsenal. Looking like a set of bicycle pedals set at shoulder height and cranked by hand instead of feet, this device is ideal for the cardiovascular conditioning of wheelchair athletes.

**V: VO2 Max:** This is Trainer's shorthand for saying the maximum amount of oxygen consumed at one's cellular level. This is our maximal cardio capacity. The heart is similar to other muscles...the more exercise it receives, the stronger it gets, the larger its stroke volume becomes and the more efficient the capillaries become in extracting oxygen from our blood. My apologies to Mies Van Der Rohe, but in this case...more is more.

**W: Wolff's Law:** Julius Wolff (1836-1902) was a well-known German anatomist and surgeon who developed a theory that states a person's bones will adapt to loads placed on them by becoming stronger in order to support the new stimulus. In contrast, if the load placed on bone structure decreases, the bones will become weaker and more brittle. This is the underlying principle used to develop strength training protocols for people with osteoporosis. Use it or lose it!

**X: Xiphoid Process:** This cartilage-based bone is at the bottom end of the breastbone. This spot anchors our ab muscles to the ribcage. It should be noted this bone should be avoided when administering CPR as it can be broken off and puncture the heart or diaphragm if hand placement is not precise.

**Y: Yoga:** A series of ancient spiritual practices originating in India over 3000 years ago, Yoga was designed to quiet the mind and put one in touch with their soul. Today Yoga has morphed into a variety of mind-body exercises designed to increase flexibility, improve breathing and posture and reduce stress. Everything old is new again.

**Z: Zottman Curls:** A particularly tough arm exercise developed by exercise pioneer George Zottman. This exercise is similar to a standing biceps curl on the "up" movement. The "down" phase is where things get interesting: Turn your palms so they face downward when the weights are lowered. Keep your elbows at your sides and lower the arms slowly on the down phase. The beauty of this movement is that it equally emphasizes the biceps in the

upper arms as well as the brachialis and supinators in the forearms. Producing a fiery burn only a true believer could love, the beauty of this exercise is in the arms of the beholder.

Well, dear fitness students, that's it for today's lesson. Now that you know how to talk the talk, it's time to get your quads in gear and learn to walk the walk. Enjoy the start of warm weather at the Jersey Shore.

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