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## Improve performance: Get specific

- By Kimberlee Kabbes, AFAA, CPT and Rob Sinnott, CSCS, PFT (UK Health & Wellness Graduate Assistants)



Specificity of training is a training principle defined by performing exercises similar to the sport or activity that you complete most often or that you wish to excel in (the target activity). Simply put, train with movements that mimic your desired activity to increase performance. Athletes and other highly active individuals use this principle to enhance performance by incorporating specific resistance training exercises for target muscle groups or planes of motion in which their sport or activity is performed. For example, many people that play basketball include free weight squats into their workout to increase their vertical jump.

Free weight squats strengthen the muscles of the glutes, thighs, and calves as well as the core which are utilized greatly while playing basketball. Squat exercises are performed in the sagittal plane (separates right and left sides of the body) which is the same as the plane of a vertical jump. While exercises such as leg press, leg extension, and leg curl will also strengthen the muscles of the glutes and thighs, they are not exercises that mimic movements of basketball players in the same plane of motion, and, therefore, will not have as great of an effect on increasing the athlete's vertical jump. For beginners, it is suggested to start with body weight squats and then work up to free weight squats. Both Body Shop facilities allow you to examine your form perfectly by using the mirrors for front and side views throughout the exercise.

You also can approach any one of our knowledgeable Body Shop staff members for pointers on your squat form. For those who prefer yoga, Pilates, and other group fitness classes over conventional sports, this principle applies to you as well! Exercises specific to those activities include any core stabilizing exercises and exercises to improve your upper body strength. Practicing these exercises build strength in order to hold poses to perform other challenging movements. The last issue of Fit News covered multiple core exercises for reference, but the following is an example of a combined "core and upper-body specific" exercise that any of our staff members can gladly show you.

Start with a four-point plank. In this exercise, you are facing the ground, bridged on your forearms and toes, with your body positioned in a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders. Hold this for twenty to thirty seconds and then complete twenty push ups (modified or regular) without resting. Rest for thirty seconds to a minute and repeat up to five times. Core exercises are a great addition to the beginning of a workout to help you warm up, or after a workout to cool down. Ending with stretching can aid in yoga, Pilates, and other group fitness workouts. If you have any questions about how to make your workout more "sport specific," please contact a Body Shop staff member. We would love to help!

## Calendar

### Register now for the Heart, Sole & Glove 5K Run/Walk

The UK Health & Wellness Program's annual Heart, Sole & Glove 5K Run/Walk is Saturday, Feb. 7, at 10:00 a.m., (Kids' Fun Run at 9:30), at Coldstream Park (Newtown Pike/I-75, Embassy Suites Parking Lot). The race is open to the community! The entry fee is \$15 for pre-registration and \$20 for day of race. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Kentucky Children's Hospital. The first 100 entrants will receive a free pair of winter running gloves. For more information, please visit [www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/5k.html](http://www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/5k.html).

### Winter/Spring WOW Schedule Now Online

Wellness On Wheels is a FREE mobile health screening. Ten-minute appointments are scheduled at various campus locations throughout the year. Appointments consist of tests for non-fasting cholesterol, glucose and triglycerides, height, weight, blood pressure, body fat percentage, and waist circumference. To make your appointment, please visit [www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/healthscreening.html](http://www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/healthscreening.html).



Happy New Year! Is 2009 your year to get fit? Check out the **new Group Fitness schedule**, now online at [www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/fitnessclass.html](http://www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/fitnessclass.html)



### Meet January's Membership Specialist

New to the Body Shop? Have questions? Kimberlee is a Graduate Assistant for Health & Wellness who is here to help you. Feel free to ask her questions, offer suggestions, or set up a time to get oriented to the Body Shop facilities. You can find her in both facilities or you can reach her at [healthandwellness@email.uky.edu](mailto:healthandwellness@email.uky.edu). You can also read her -- and other staff profiles -- at [www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/profiles.html](http://www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/profiles.html).

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