MovNat
explore your true nature

MOVNAT

RECONNECT TO YOUR TRUE NATURE

Movement Accuracy and Confidence Building

By: Clifton Harski

In the last issue of Paleo Magazine, we discussed adaptability, mindfulness, and increasing efficiency in our movements. In this issue, we will take a closer look at the importance of movement accuracy in adaptiveness and some additional benefits of MovNat training, such as confidence building and neurogenesis.

Movement accuracy

Movement accuracy is the ability to use the energy of our generated motion optimally. Movement accuracy enables us to move through varied environments more adaptively and as a result, with increased safety.

Generally, most fitness models lack emphasis on movement accuracy, promoting capacity alone, particularly in areas of strength, power, endurance, etc., and rarely address fine movement control in relation to one's immediate complex environment. A trail run, for instance, often causes problems for road runners untrained on uneven ground or in movement accuracy, for they struggle to place their feet in solid, safe, and effective spots with precision while maintaining speed. A yoga practitioner may be able to contort his or her body in impressive ways with perfect form and a wide range of motion on a leveled mat but fail to move dynamically with ease and accuracy when forced to crawl in a forest, a natural environment with unexpected obstacles. Similarly, lack of movement accuracy in typical body building folks--big and muscular but stiff--often leads to massive amounts of wasted energy when faced with unanticipated environmental demands.

Self-confidence

As we take MovNat into increasingly varied environmental settings demanding higher levels of movement accuracy, confidence in our ability to move safely increases as our movement control improves. Quite often, the drills we practice in the gym have little overlap with, or direct applicability to, our lives outside it. For example, while many are comfortable with a box jump inside the gym, they cannot jump and stick a landing on different surfaces or distance-to-height ratios out of fear of missing the landing. By safely and incrementally increasing the difficulty level of where we move, we gain confidence in our ability to efficiently adapt our movements to a multitude of contextual demands. This confidence is just as, if not more, important than the self-esteem one gains through improved body image. The confidence garnered from being able to move through real-life environments efficiently and safely is a fantastic thing to own.

Keep your brain young!

In addition to increased self-confidence, movement accuracy also stimulates neurogenesis, or the generation of new nerve cells. According to medicine.net, "in neurogenesis, there is active productive of new neurons, astrocytes, glia, and other neural lineages from undifferentiated neural progenitor or stem cells... [and] is considered a rather inactive process in most areas of the adult brain." The absence of neurogenesis in most adults is grave and unacceptable! Neurogenesis is a beautiful thing that can help regulate stress and prevent the brain from turning to mush. Dan John, a well-known strength coach said, in regard to exercise and strength training programs, that "everything works for six weeks" before a plateau or drop in effectiveness. The gains in the beginning of most exercise regimens stem from improved neural-muscular connections in response to new material, but once the program repeats itself and the movements become rote, the gains stop. With MovNat, we believe that by consistently challenging the body and mind through adaptive movements and new ways of interacting with the environment that these pathways will not stagnate and instead continually improve. MovNatting, or adapting complex, whole-body movements to a variety of intricate environments provides the best stimulation possible. MovNat will boost neurogenesis and keep your brain young!

MovNat practice

This issue's movement practice will build from the last issue's, where we jumped, crawled, lifted, and balanced. This time we will run, lift and carry an object, walk over and under an obstacle, and jump onto a target. We will perform this Combo for a continuous fifteen minutes after practicing each individual skill 10-20 times in preparation. The goals are to be precise with your movements and not rush in order to get more rounds in (keep a running count of imprecise movement). Aim to decrease the number of mistakes in subsequent workouts.

From Sept/Oct 2011 issue of Paleo Magazine

PALEO MAGAZINE
Modern Day Primal Living

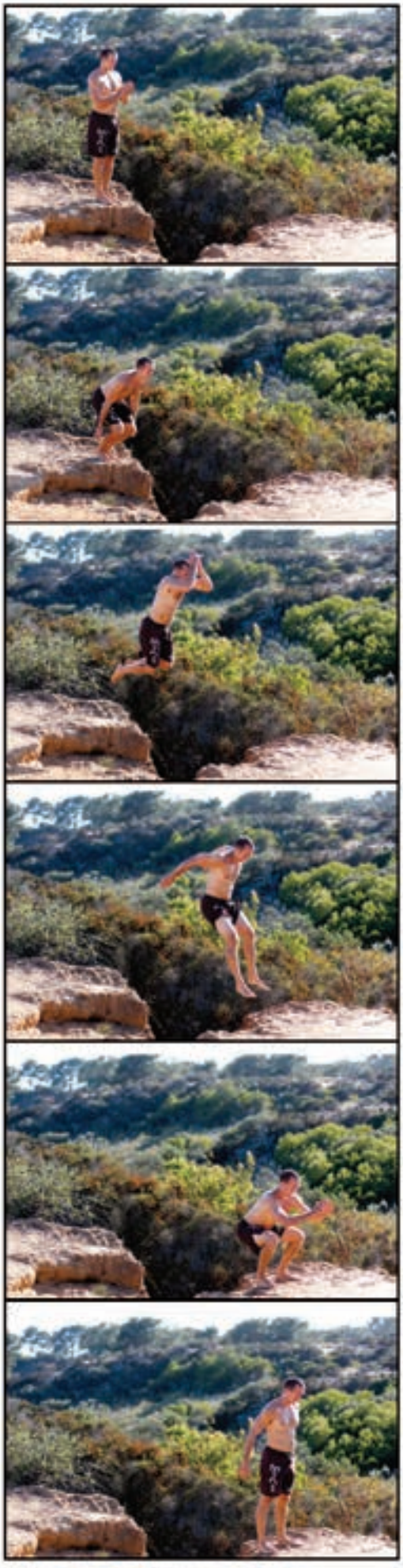
Lift & Carry an object *(stone, sandbag, med ball, or in this case a cinder block)*

To lift: Start by pushing your hips back, while keeping a good lumbar curve and straight spine as you lower your upper body to reach and grab the object between your feet. Once your grip is secure, press with your legs until the object clears your knees, at which point you will extend your hips forward to meet the object and end in the hang position. Make sure you maintain a lumbar curve and relaxed arms throughout the entire movement.

To carry: From the hang position you will raise yourself onto your toes and shrug your shoulders and pull the object up toward one shoulder with your arm flaring sideways. As the object approaches shoulder height drop your body underneath the object and catch it precisely and gently on your shoulder and hands. Walk with the load for 20 yards, drop it on the ground, and then repeat on the other shoulder. Be sure to choose an appropriate weight that allows you to keep excellent form. Keep track of poor catches on your shoulder.

Walk over & under

Hang a string or rope about 10 yards long between two trees or poles at about waist level. Stand with your side to the rope and raise the inside leg (the one closer to the rope) high enough to step sideways over the rope WITHOUT touching it. Repeat back the other way. Then step under the rope by pushing your hips back and bending your legs, again without touching the rope. Keep track of how many times you touch the rope.



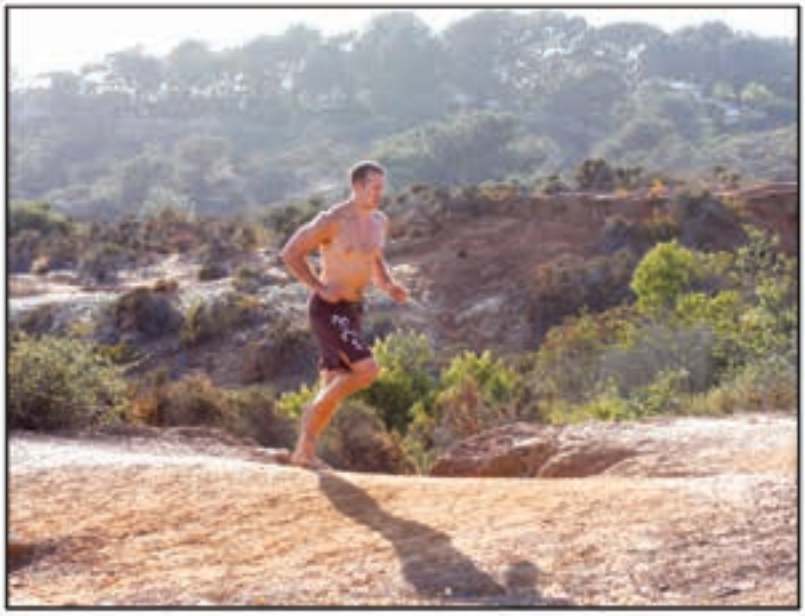
Jump and precision landing

Bend your knees, push your rear back, and let your upper body lean forward while maintaining a straight spinal posture. Pull your arms behind you, ready to swing forward. Swing your arms swiftly forward as you push off your legs and fully extend them to jump.

After the take-off, pull your heels up underneath your glutes to help bring your knees up and your legs forward more dynamically. At around mid-distance, your feet should be underneath your body and your arms down.

Land on the balls of your feet first and then let your heels come down, allowing you to absorb and sit back into the landing. As you land, swing your arms forward as a counter balance to help stabilize your body.

Create a target by placing something that will not slip on the ground, drawing a target, or picking out a specific piece of earth to land on. Land with soft but strong legs ready to absorb and control the landing (depending on the size of your target, you may have to remain on the balls and toes of your feet). A successful landing will allow you to stand with your feet still planted where they landed. Keep track of how many times you land incorrectly or without stability.



Trail Run

Begin with and maintain good posture. Then move through a 40 yard trail as quickly and safely as possible. Be light on your feet by landing on your forefoot (and letting your heels "kiss" the ground when possible) and picking precise spots for landings. Try to visualize multiple steps ahead of time. Keep your arms relaxed throughout. Keep track of how many times you stumble or trip.

References:

(http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-chat/2686622/posts)

From Sept/Oct 2011 issue of Paleo Magazine

PALEO MAGAZINE
Modern Day Primal Living