

8 Common Sense Mistakes, Part 2

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Let's start off part two with a good one.

5. **“Crunches do not give you a six pack.”** – Seriously, do I have to go over this one? As I am writing this article I am watching someone who is seriously overweight complete their 100th crunch (yes I sat here and counted it).

Sigh....ok

Apparently, I do have to go over this common sense mistake.

Crunches do not give you a six pack. If they did, it would mean that someone with 40% body fat would only have to do “5 minutes of abs, every other day” to “get the toned flat tummy of their dreams.” Hmmmm...something smells fishy here, and yet there are thousands of people out there who still believe this common sense mistake. I live in a college town, and when I get a coed who wants to look good for spring break, I immediately tell her to stop doing crunches and save the effort for intervals, more sets/reps or to just up the intensity in their session. The same conversation ensues, with me proving to them that crunches do not in fact give them a six pack, but rather a good diet and low body fat.

Common Sense – Go to your local gym, and do cardio for 30 minutes. Watch how many overweight people do crunches, then get off the machine and do as many pushups and squats as you can in 5 minutes, because you just did cardio (pansy), and you have to do something constructive while at the gym. Besides, doing the 5 minutes of body weight exercises will probably give you more bang for your buck than the 30 minutes of cardio.

6. **“If you eat like hell, you will NEVER succeed in your goals”** - I will make this one simple. People who eat well are thin, people who eat like crap aren't.

Any questions?

If your goal is to lose weight, and you're not succeeding, check your diet. If your goal is to increase lean body mass and you're not getting there, check your diet. Someone can be on a great program designed by the best trainer in the biz, and they won't see near the benefits that they could if their diet is all whacked out. On the other hand, you could be on a crappy program developed by Joe Bob Trainer at your local YMCA and have a great diet, and you will still see some pretty decent results. The bottom line: Most people don't know how to eat to reach their results. Or they do know, but they are too lazy to do what needs to be done.

Common Sense – If you work out like a bandit two hours a day, every day, and you're still overweight, something is going on. Either you're not taking in enough calories to lose weight (you need to get calories to burn calories), or you're taking in too much. The latter is rarely the case with overweight people, or average people for that matter. They usually starve themselves,

hoping to find the easy way out of weight loss. Suck it up people. It's called a "work" out for a reason. There is no easy way to lose weight. If there was, we would all be thin.

7. **"I don't squat because it's bad/it hurts my knees, lower back, upper back, shoulders, neck, ankles, big toes, pinkies, clavicle (you get the point)"** – Do you go up stairs with your head and chest back as if someone were pushing on your chest? Do you get out of your chair at work by sliding onto the ground and pulling yourself up on make shift pulleys? Do you crap standing up? I thought not. So then how can squatting be bad for your...whatever? More often than not you either; A) don't know how to do the exercise right, or B) have a mobility issue. I have yet to meet someone who couldn't squat after they did mobility exercises and learned the proper form. In fact, when I was with the Rangers there was a particularly big operator who came down and asked how he can strengthen his core for PLF's (parachute landing falls). I mean BIG, the kind of big you get from carrying heavy things, all the time, everywhere you go. He was about 6 foot, and pushed the scales at about 240 with probably around 12-15% body fat. I told him to squat. He told me that every time he did it hurt his back and his knees. So we went over and I had him show me how he squatted. His form and technique were horrible. It was like a cross between a good morning, squat, push press and jump. I had him load up 135 on the bar (keep in mind this man had thighs that were, no joke, almost as big as my torso), and I taught him the right way to do squats. After about 5 minutes of instruction and 40 reps, he finally let out a grunt as if he were in pain.

"Sir, are you ok?!"

"Yeah man, you're an a\$*hole, my hamstrings are on fire, my quads are killing me, and I think I just blew out my ass. Sh!t coach is this how they're supposed to feel?" (Rangers swear...a lot)

"Yup, how do your back and knees feel?"

"Not a thing, they feel great!"

I started to make fun of him a little bit for being such a baby and having a weak ass, at which point he challenged me to a fight (which could or could not have been to the death, you can never tell with those guys). Then he challenged me to a 20 mile march with 60 lbs of gear on my back.

I politely declined and shut the hell up.

Sub Rule #7 – Don't make fun of people who fight for a hobby and go to war for a living. Those guys are crazy. Also, don't tease a Ranger about having a weak ass.

The mobility issue in squatting is another common sense mistake. I was talking to a guy the other day about the back squat, and he told me that it hurts his knees whenever he squats. I had some free time so I told him I would take a look at his form. There was no flexion at his

hips. Everything was coming from his knees. I asked him if he ever went lower. His reply, “No I don’t have very good knee flexibility.”

Who the hell has good knee flexibility!? I don’t even know what that means.

I asked him who taught him how to squat, and his inevitable reply when asked about one of the more complex free weight movements was. “No one. I taught myself.”

Common Sense - Every time you take a step you are doing a type of squat, albeit a small ROM squat, but a squat none the less. Take a look at people walking up and down stairs; it’s a very similar motion to a squat. Squats aren’t bad for your back and/or knees. However, squats performed incorrectly are horrible for your back/knees. What’s worse for your back and knee’s is spending 8 hours a day sitting at a computer desk with your legs sprawled out and you’re back rounded. Sit up straight and put your feet flat on the floor. Trust me, you will feel much better. Talk to a trainer and learn how to squat better. This brings us nicely to our last mistake.

8. **“If you taught yourself how to do a free weight exercise, you’re probably doing it wrong”-**

I will probably piss a lot of people off with this one, but it’s never bothered me before, so I won’t stop now. A free weight exercise is a very complex movement, especially the heavier the load. Machines are fairly simple. I haven’t seen too many people be very successful at incorrectly using a machine. Take the common exercise of the bench press. Most people will get under the bar and start pressing, then claim that they now know how to bench press. However, do you really think that person, in doing the bench press, remembered to pull his scapula back and together, tried to push himself away from the bar, or positioned his feet right? Probably not, and yet those are all basic points in the technique of the bench press.

Common Sense - Find someone who knows more than you. I don’t know...say...a TRAINER, and ask them to check your form when doing a complex exercise. You would be amazed at how bad self taught form can be. Did you teach yourself how to ride a bike? I bet not.

There ya go folks, 8 common sense mistakes people make in the gym which are easily fixed with some common sense.