

## Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011

### Session 1 – Techniques

Everyone was invited to take off their shoes and socks and come outside onto the grass by Crossfit guru Peter Evans. Peter led a fun session with a lot of ‘heckling’.

In pairs we took turns being the coach and challenging our athlete to stay balanced in a number of positions while we gently (or otherwise) pushed and prodded (heckled) them. The athletes stood, lunged, squatted and held a prone bridge and a V sit all whilst been heckled. There was a lot of laughter when in twos we got to go back to back trying to nudge our opponent off balance while keeping our own. There was an element of healthy competition when we did the same thing shoulder to shoulder, first walking then running. We got the heart rate to rise with some jumping using our partner as the hurdle and Peter demonstrated how we could make things easier or harder for our athlete. Peter finished off by bringing the group back together and making us work together to do a team squat and obstacle course.

Everyone enjoyed listening to Peter talk and hearing his advice on keeping things simple and building up basic skills in our athletes before asking them to do more.

### Session 2 – 52 Weeks

Broni McSweeney shared with us some ideas about ‘warm up’. How many of us have considered that the warm up actually starts as soon as the first person walks through the door? Broni gave us some great ideas about having a reliable location to stand and having each participant come to you so you can give them some individual attention. She also talked to us about the kind of environment we wanted to create so that participants felt welcomed and safe to take part at whatever level they are comfortable with.

Scott Agnew started the afternoon off by making us all work very hard with a variety of moves from a prone bridge position and then he worked on our obliques with some crunches. After that it was nice to sit and listen to Scott talk about what it is like to instruct at Les Mills, how he learns his routines and how he instructs his class whilst working himself.

Elly McGuinness then took the hot seat and shared some insights into her time in the fitness industry. She gave some great advice – telling us to capitalise on our strengths and not to try and be like another instructor if it doesn’t feel natural. Be confident that people will come to your classes and keep coming back for whatever reason – find out what they like and build on it! Elly advised us to go to other classes and workshops and search the internet for ideas on how to improve our classes, then spend an hour or two each week planning how to use new ideas gained.

Paul Dunn was next up. Paul showed gave us some great ideas for 'boot camp' exercises – musical cones anyone? He demonstrated how easy it was to combine simple exercises like star jumps, press ups and burpees with running in pairs. Before you know it you've done 100 exercises and run hundreds of metres. Paul's ideas could be implemented both outdoors or indoors in a smaller space. Paul has worked in the mental health area and he gave some succinct advice to "be comfortable with silence" – it takes a kind of self assuredness to know we don't need to fill every silence with constant chatter. He also talked about having confidence in ourselves and what we're doing so that we don't feel the need to constantly be changing. Paul demonstrated with a kind of quiet confidence and made us feel that we too could achieve success in this manner.

To round off the day was the enthusiastic and energetic Erin Raines. Erin had us all up following her freestyle funk routine. This felt like something between dance and aerobics and was fun even for the more un co-ordinated (myself in particular!). I know I looked nothing like Erin whilst trying my best to 'funk' but the good part was it didn't really matter; the heart rate still increased and I still got a good work out. Erin told us that funk had taken a real hit from the 22<sup>nd</sup> February earthquake with no classes running at the moment. Hopefully with venues starting to come back on line this will change soon and Erin was also keen to encourage any budding funk instructors among us.

## Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May

### Session 3 – Seniors

Andy Hearn, a physiotherapist and lecturer at CPIT started the morning by talking about five key issues to consider when taking activities for seniors. The issues were 1) Supine Lying, 2) Joint replacements, 3) Beta blockers, 4) Osteoporosis, 5) Exercising and falls prevention.

As we age increased thoracic kyphosis is experienced and this can make it difficult to lie supine without extending the neck. This can compromise blood flow to the brain and effect the inner ear. It was interesting to hear from Andy that the elderly *can* exercise again following joint replacements and he suggested if in doubt to contact the physio or surgeon for a rehab protocol to follow. Andy used a great real life example to explain to us the role of beta blockers and how they affect the heart during exercise. There was a lot of good news about the role of exercise in osteoporosis and falls prevention. Weight bearing physical activity builds/maintains bone mass meaning that, happily, it is never too late to start exercising. And what about exercise and falls prevention? Well as Andy put it – it works! Exercise, particularly balance, strength and gait training were one of the two most effective ways to prevent falls in older people according to the American Geriatric Society (the other was modification of the home environment). If the elderly increase their mobility they increase their leg strength leading to decreased falls and a longer life!

Next up was Janet Straight, so we all got to sit down as she lead us through a seated exercise routine. However anyone expecting it to be easy soon found out that Janet was expert in getting the whole body moving and raising the heart rate. There was even a torture section where we had to stand from our chair and hold a squat position before sitting again only to repeat the move immediately several times over – there were a few groans! Pretty much all the basic moves that are done in a regular exercise class can be done in a chair. Janet explained how slight modifications could be made to accommodate people who had bad backs or who were less mobile. It was easy to imagine the older folk singing and enjoying the jaunty music Janet used. After the routine Janet opened her bag of tricks and brought out some everyday items that she uses to get the old folks exercising, we were amazed to see a feather duster (for waving as you reach up and down), Frisbees for throwing and even a soccer ball. Janet showed us a close contact small group soccer game that she sometimes uses although apparently some groups have banned it because it gets too rough!

The gentle art of Tai Chi was next. Hazel Thompson led the group through a series of movements which were from the Dr Lam style of Tai Chi. It was interesting to listen to Hazel talk and she told a most inspiring story of how Tai Chi had transformed the life of a previously frail 92 year old widower. It was pleasing to hear that ACC have just agreed to extend the funding for Tai Chi as part of its falls prevention programme.

#### **Session 4 – Helping the injured**

Renzie Hanham presented this session. Renzie is an amazing person who has represented NZ in karate and has been employed as a mental conditioning coach for NZ Triathlon, accompanying the team to the Sydney Olympics. Renzie talked us through our role as a coach or PT and his whole session emphasised the point that it was our role to provide clarity, expertise and accuracy. This is what our athletes need from us.

When it comes to injury, Renzie gave us a unique insight into the thought processes around injury. He made us aware that every athlete will have a story or a ‘truth’ which is their truth. It is not our job to judge, instead we need to listen without making assumptions. To emphasise the point about listening and being valued Renzie split us into pairs and 1 person told a story but unbeknown to them their partner had been instructed by Renzie to act bored and not listen. It was an uncomfortable few minutes and made us realise that just by simply listening we can make our athlete feel valued. Hopefully by providing clarity, expertise and accuracy we can put them into a place from where they can make decisions and move forward.

