THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST
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MORE PRESSURE, MORE... BALANCE?

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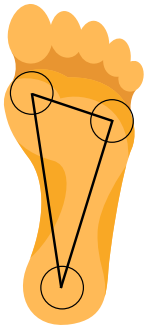
Have you ever heard of the motto, "No Pressure, No Diamonds"? It's a wonderful expression reminding us that pressure can produce some of the best results in life - i.e. diamonds. Although this analogy is alluding to the mental or psychological side of life, I have a newfound appreciation for all the multifaceted ways that pressure benefits our *physical* well-being, too. One of the most important ways? Our balance!

PRESSURE AND THE FOOT

Let's start at the foundation of balance: the foot. The bottom of the foot has three points of contact with the ground that make up what we consider the **foot tripod**: the center of the calcaneus (heel), the head of the 5th metatarsal (base of where your pinky toe meets your foot), and the head of the 1st metatarsal (base of where your big toe meets the foot).



FOOT TRIPOD

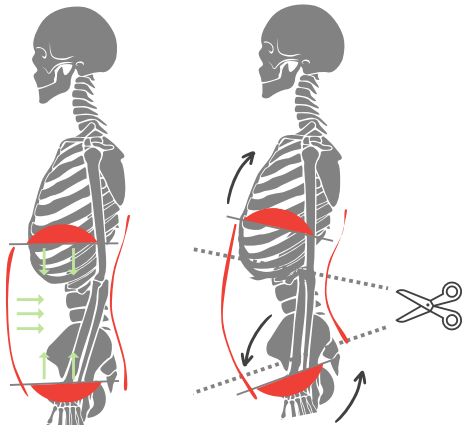
WHEN LIFTING, EVENLY DISTRIBUTE YOUR WEIGHT BETWEEN THESE THREE CONTACT POINTS, CREATING BALANCE AND A BIGGER SURFACE AREA TO PRODUCE FORCE.

When all three of these points of contact have equal pressure distributed between them, it results in optimal functioning of the arches and therefore **balance**. Oftentimes, when we lose balance, the first point of contact we lose is our big toe (lateral ankle sprain, anyone?). Practicing adding pressure to the big toe can help improve a quick recovery when becoming unbalanced.

When working on any single leg exercises or balance-specific exercises, make sure you take your shoes off! Building your foot's awareness of the contact to the ground and how to manage the pressure distributed between each point will exponentially improve your balance. No Bosu ball or uneven surface needed. 😊

PRESSURE AND THE ABDOMEN

The next important region when we think of balance is our abdomen, the center of our mass. Believe it or not, our abdomen actually functions like a pressure canister. We want equal pressure distributed between the diaphragm (top), the abdominal muscles (front), and the pelvic floor muscles (bottom). As you can see in the picture below, this equal pressure causes our ribcage to stack directly over our pelvis which is the optimal position for ANY movement, exercise, or even standing! It centers us directly over our foot tripod, setting us up to be stable when exposed to uneven forces.



CANISTER POSITION
RIBCAGE AND PELVIS STACKED

SCISSOR POSITION
PELVIS TILTED DOWNWARDS (ANTERIORLY) AND RIBS FLARED

TRY NOW

Try standing on one foot with hands on your hips. Take note of your ability to balance. Then, start over and this time, before lifting the opposite foot, tuck your pelvis, tighten your abdomen, and exhale air out to create abdominal pressure. Then, lift your foot off the ground. Notice a difference?

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