

# Use the ACE Mover Method to Add Muscular Training to a Client's Program



## Hesitancy to Add Load

For the past six months, you have been working with a 58-year-old client, Samantha. She currently trains with you three times per week following the ACE IFT Model for Muscular Training. Samantha began her journey with goals to move better, improve balance and posture, and increase mobility in her joints. Samantha has progressed from performing primarily Functional Training movements focusing on core and balance exercises to Movement Training. Here, the emphasis has been on continuing to develop what was accomplished during Functional Training and the development of good control when completing the five primary movement patterns. At this point in her training, Samantha will continue to include exercises specific to the Functional and Movement Training phases of the Muscular Training component of the ACE IFT Model while gradually adding weight to the primary movement patterns. During a training session, you attempt to introduce 5-pound (2.3-kg) hand weights

to a bend-and-lift movement pattern and the mood of the exercise session shifts. Samantha's body language and facial expressions change, and it is clear she is not happy about something.

## ACE → ABC APPROACH™

The following example demonstrates how the ACE ABC Approach™ can be used to explore unique situations that may arise during training sessions.

**Ask:** Ask open-ended questions to uncover what may have occurred that led to a change in Samantha's demeanor.

**Personal Trainer:** When I mentioned adding weight to the bend-and-lift pattern exercise, you seemed to hesitate and it looked like you were not too sure about this progression. What caused your hesitation?

**Client:** I'm happy with the way things are going, and I'm not sure why I need to lift weights when I don't want to be a bodybuilder. The idea of using weights makes me nervous, and I'm not sure I'm ready or that it is even necessary.

**Personal Trainer:** You enjoy the program as it is, and you don't feel muscular training is important because you don't want to be a bodybuilder.

**Client:** That's correct. I'm a 58-year-old woman, and I don't want to have big bulky muscles.

**Break down barriers:** Asking more open-ended questions will enable you to learn about the client's beliefs and hesitations.

**Personal Trainer:** What do you already know about muscular training and getting bulky?

**Client:** Well, it seems to me that all the people I see lifting weights get big and muscular, and that is not my goal. Are there other reasons why people lift weights that I am not thinking of? Why do you think it is important for me?

**Personal Trainer:** Great questions! There are a lot of reasons why people lift weights. One of those reasons may be to get bigger muscles or more defined musculature. Other people might lift weights to increase strength for the activities they do. Some might do it to improve their endurance so they can use their muscles effectively over a long period, or even to maintain or increase muscular power. Weight training is a vital component of slowing the loss of muscle mass that occurs with aging, which can be up to 5 pounds (2.3 kg) of muscle per decade. Other reasons to lift weights would be to increase or maintain BMD to help prevent or combat osteoporosis. You could also reduce your risk of injury by becoming stronger through lifting weights. I know this is a lot of information. I don't want to make you feel like it is something you must do. It is up to you to decide if you want to incorporate more resistance into your muscular training program. Part of my job is to make sure you have all the information you need to make your decision. What else might you want to know about this topic?

**Client:** I had no idea there was so much to consider. I just thought lifting weights meant you got big. I didn't realize that you lost muscle as you got older! Won't I get bulky if I lift weights?

**Personal Trainer:** Under natural training conditions, women can enhance muscular strength and size, but they will rarely develop large muscular physiques. Women naturally



have lower anabolic (muscle building) hormones and less muscle tissue. Even most men have a hard time building big muscles in response to muscular training. Just like in our current program, we would work together, one step at a time, to make sure what we're doing is working. If adding weights to your routine gives you undesired results, we can always just stop.

**Client:** I'm skeptical, but I'm willing to give it a try, just as long as we can stop at any point if I don't like the way it makes me look or feel.

**Collaborate:** Work together with the client to determine next steps by partnering with her to decide how she would like to move forward with the introduction of weight to her existing training program.

**Personal Trainer:** You have my word; you are in control here. I would be doing you a disservice if I didn't give you all the information you need to make the best decision. How would you like to move forward today?

**Client:** Let's try what you have planned for today and check in at the beginning of our next session to reassess the addition of weight training to my existing program.

**Personal Trainer:** Great! For your next set of the bend-and-lift movement, we are going to introduce 5-pound (2.3-kg) dumbbells and see how the movement feels and how your body handles the added weight.

Although it may seem like there is not enough time to use the ACE ABC Approach during training sessions, it can be used at any point. Listening to and partnering with your client as soon as a situation arises can add significant value to the experience you are delivering to your client. When you look for coaching moments, you will find them. ▲