

## Over 50 Muscle Balance – Keep your Body Balance in Check

As I continue to train for what I am hoping will be my next world record attempt, I struggle with trying not to over train key muscle groups tied directly to the record attempt movement. Overtraining select muscle groups leads to body and muscle imbalance and can lead to injury and negative performance. Maintaining a check on body balance over 50 is paramount in maintaining an active life or performing at an elite level in any sport and avoiding pain and injury.

Your body is a complex combination of muscles, ligaments, tendon and bones all connected in a specific and balanced fashion. Like the set up on a high performance race car, any imbalance in tire pressures, downdraft ratios or wing set up results in poor performance and a possible breakdown or accident. Your body is set up the same way.

Most people any age don't realize that there are corresponding muscle groups in your body and that there are ratios of strength for those specific corresponding muscle groups. Muscle pairs include:

- Biceps and triceps
- Deltoids and latissimus dorsi (lats)
- Pectorals and trapezoids
- Abdominals and erector spinae
- Quadriceps and hamstrings
- Hip abductors and adductors
- Gastrocnemius (back of your lower leg) and tibialis anterior (front of your lower leg)
- Iliopsoas (abdomen to hips) and gluteals (gluts)

These muscles work in groups that must be balanced in strength and flexibility, when the balance gets pulled too far in one direction it begins to pull your bones and joints out of proper alignment.

For non-athletes over 50, our daily routines and simple daily activities such as picking up groceries, working at a computer, sitting in one position for a long time, or lifting a grandchild can cause muscle imbalance over a period of time.

But for master athletes, muscle imbalance is likely to be an overuse issue as a result of a particular motion used in their respective sports.

- Weight lifters often develop the pectorals or biceps, while neglecting the muscles in the upper back or triceps.
- Pitchers in baseball often develop one arm and one side of the side without giving equal attention to the opposite arm/side.
- In tennis, imbalances develop after years of doing almost every motion with the dominant arm to the detriment of the non-dominant arm.

The simplest solution to this problem is to avoid it. This can be done by carefully structuring your programs by choosing exercises that strengthen opposing muscle groups. Avoidance is always the best answer. The beginning of a simple balanced routine could include:

1. Cardio or some kind of activity to get the blood flowing and heart rate up before you exercise or stretch
2. Bench presses (for your chest) and seated rows (for your back)
3. Bicep curls and dips (triceps)
4. Squats (hamstrings) and front or hack squats (quads)
5. Crunches and dumbbell or bent over rows
6. Leg abductors and leg adductors (normally on a machine)
7. Always stretch at the end of every workout

If you are over 50 and already feeling pain or injured, then to correct the muscle imbalance issue you first have to identify which muscles are out of balance. If you suspect that you have a muscle imbalance injury you may need to seek help to identify which groups are over developed or trained. This is most likely a therapist or sports injury doctor. Bottom-line; if you're not sure seek help.

To find more information on Walter Urban and his World and National records please visit [www.walterurban.com](http://www.walterurban.com)