



Focus Intensity Training™ Integral Strength Training Practice

Have you ever thought about living a life grounded in strength? Strength is the presence of abundant energy, confidence and power. It is the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual reserves that makes for an extraordinary life. Focus Intensity Training™ (FIT) is a fully integrated strength training method that develops not only your physical strength, but integral strength: strength of body, mind, emotions and more. In a FIT strength training practice, you intentionally create periods of focused concentration and high degrees of physical and emotional intensity. These peaks in focus and intensity are alternated with periods of recovery characterized by low levels of physical and emotional activation in a state of awareness. FIT is a mindful strength training approach that will deepen your usual training. In the process you will discover a more efficient, effective and enjoyable strength training practice that yields greater energy for your demanding life and higher degrees of mental and emotional control, all while developing your very best body.

The FIT execution techniques in Phase B are preceded by pre-training rituals to focus your attention and energy on your workout and followed by post-training rituals to refine your strength training practice and facilitate the integration of FIT principles into other areas of your life.

Phase A: Pre-Workout Preparations (10 minutes)

1. Centering:

To help you set aside the preoccupations of your busy life and cultivate a state of awareness and presence for your training session. This may include: driving to the gym, getting dressed to train, music, self-talk, or focussed breathing...all while paying attention to the sensations arising in your body.

2. Plan & Visualize:

Review the plan and progression of your strength training session. Visualize yourself in your workout moving through each exercise.

3. Intention & Dedication:

Ask yourself: Why am I strength training? What matters most to me in my life right now? Connecting with your intention for training in this way improves your ability to emotionally fuel your session. Dedicating your training to someone or something beyond yourself is another way to use your emotional fire to elevate your training experience and integrate what is going on in your everyday life with your strength training.

4. Warm-Up:

5 -10 minutes of warming up to increase the circulation of blood and oxygen through your body in preparation for the intensity of Phase B. This can include light cardio like skipping, brisk walking, stationary bike, rower, aerobics, etc.

Phase B: FIT Execution Techniques (2 - 3 sets of each exercise)

1. Grounding: while approaching your exercise set (30 seconds)

Breathe normally and connect with your body in a relaxed yet alert posture. Bring your attention to the sensations and energy within your body. Feel your feet solidly connected with the ground.

2. Activating: just before you begin your exercise set (5 seconds)

Assume the starting position for the exercise. Take 3 short breaths into the upper chest to activate the nervous system and increase the amount of oxygen and energy available to the body. Smooth, controlled, quick inhale followed by fast, powerful exhale.

3. Focussing: during your exercise set

Center your attention deeply on the muscles that you're training, both lifting and lowering the weight. With each rep, draw your attention further into the sensations of the muscles. Breathing is powerful and purposeful.

4. Recovering: at the end of your exercise set (30 seconds)

Release your attention and allow your focus to spread to the sensations throughout your body. Drop your breathing into your belly. Consciously let go of the intensity of the exercise set.

Phase C: Post-Workout Closing (5 - 10 minutes)

1. Review, Record & Reflect:

Record what you did in your FIT strength training session. Note the exercises performed, the weight used, the number of repetitions and sets, and any other variables you want to track. Make note of any highlights, breakthroughs or breakdowns from which you can learn and grow in the future.

2. Closing your Dedication:

Recall the intention you set in your pre-workout preparations. Reconnect with the dedication you made and notice what qualities it brought to your strength training.

3. Project:

Look forward and plan your next strength training session. Use the clarity of this moment to establish the exercises, sets, reps and weight you will use next time.

4. Reflective Journaling: (optional)

This step allows you to reflect in greater detail about the physical, emotional and mental experiences during your strength sessions and can create a deeper understanding of your strength training experiences and how these relate to your life beyond strength training. It also allows you to contemplate how you will integrate your FIT experience into the rest of your life, thus allowing *strength* to become a way of being, rather than something you do.

Adapted from: *A Phillips Performance Solution*, and *Strength of Life*, by Shawn Phillips