



## PT Management of a Female NSGA Slowpitch Shortstop



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Viviers, 2023

# By the end of this session participants will be able to:



1

Discuss normal age-related LE biomechanical changes impacting physical fitness & performance in older athletes

2

Identify age-related LE biomechanical changes in videos of the case subject engaged in objective/functional testing

3

Describe 2-3 therapeutic exercises appropriate for addressing age-related biomechanical changes in older athletes

4

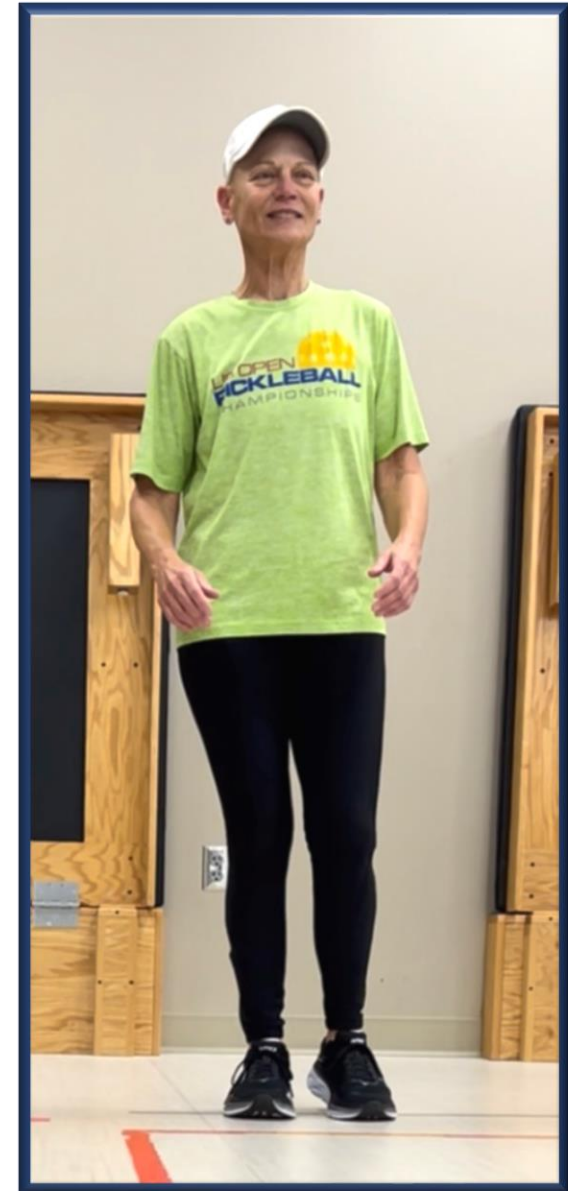
Discuss general guidelines on sequencing of exercise/recovery & nutritional intake appropriate for older athletes

image courtesy: Universal Studios

# The challenge of the Older Athlete

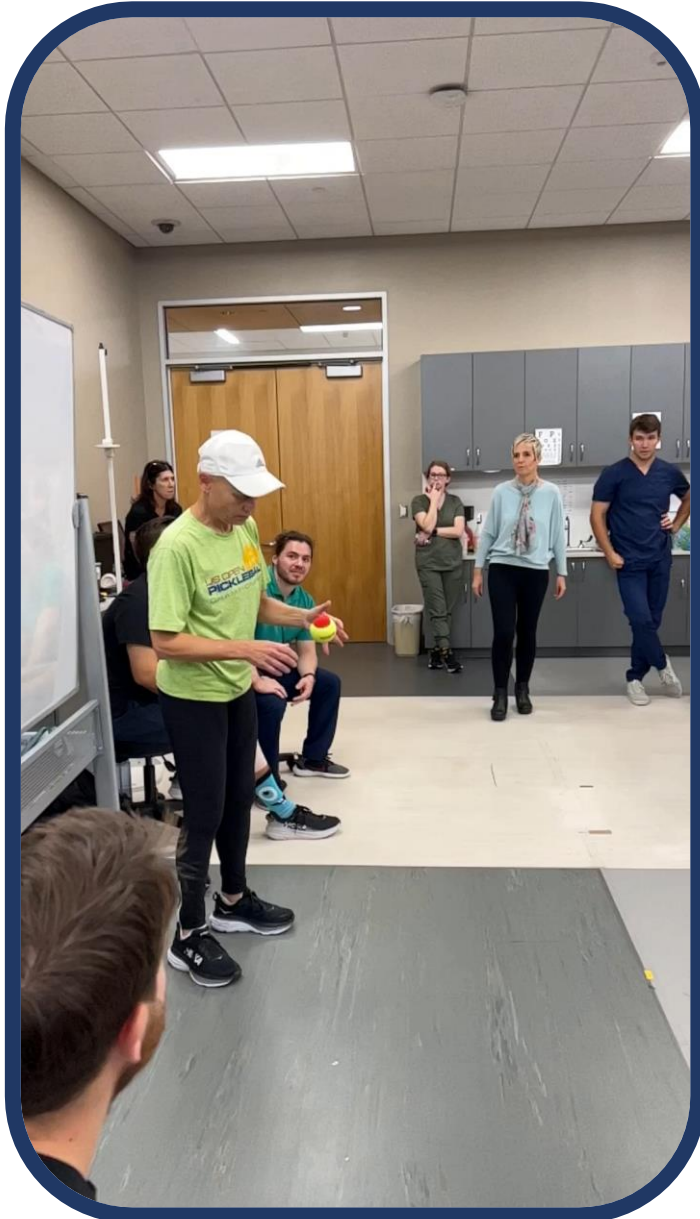


Thank you to Nancy,  
an extremely talented and gracious lady  
who gave me permission to use her as a  
subject for this presentation!



# Nancy - National-level Shortstop (67-years-old)

Screen



1

**Screen:**  
Campbell University

2

**Evaluation:**  
5 wks s/p screen

3

**Follow-up:**  
11 wks s/p screen

**Complains of:**

- R hallux MTPJ stiffness/pain ( $P_1 = 3-7/10$ )
- Painful plantar callous R 5<sup>th</sup> MTPJ ( $P_2 = 0-3/10$ )
- R AKP with ↑<sup>d</sup> exercise intensity ( $P_3 = 0-7/10$ )
- ↑<sup>ing</sup> Inflexibility over past 2 yrs (esp. LEs)



image courtesy: Universal Studios

**Pt goals:**

- ↑ LE Strength to be a stronger hitter & a faster base runner
- ↑ Flexibility & power to ↑ fielding range & accuracy of throws
- Maximize stability in the L knee

# PMH - L ACL 'Coper'<sup>1</sup> + R ACL repair

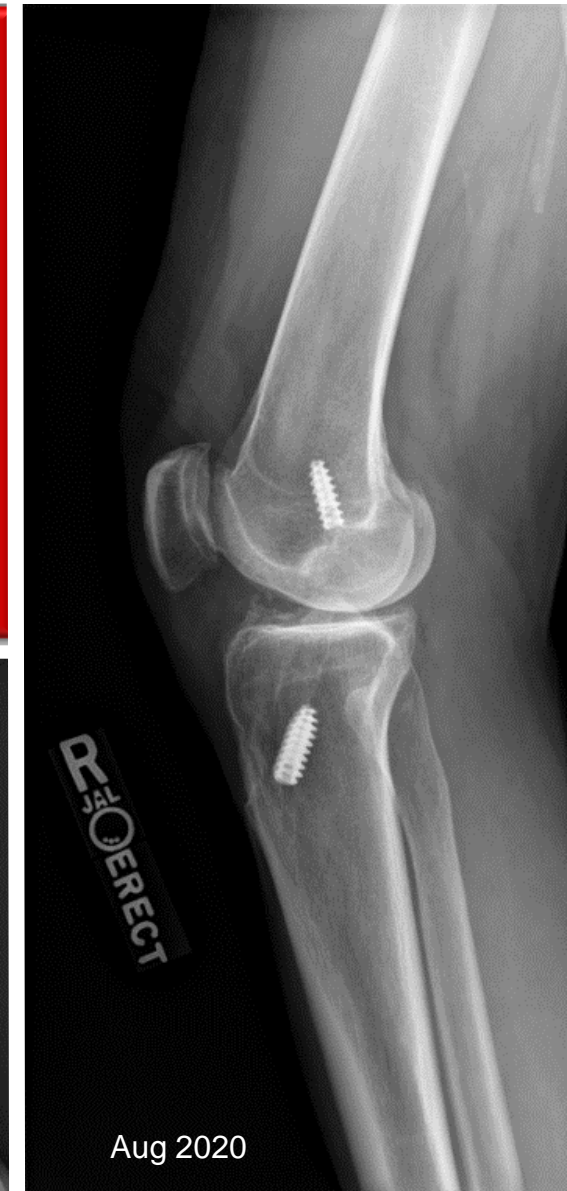
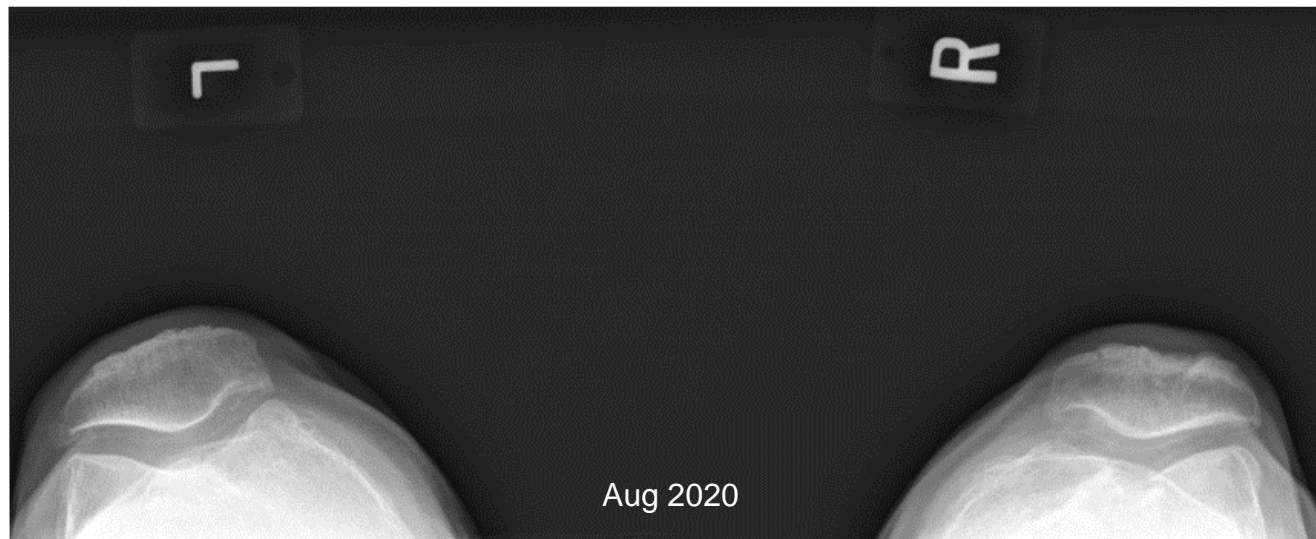


## Chronic L ACL-deficiency (ruptured 1985)

- NO subjective complaints of L knee instability
- Partial medial + lateral meniscectomy
- 4 x MUA (significant post-operative scarring Hs)
- MRI (Feb 2018) = Diffuse fissuring + chondral loss in medial, lateral, & patellofemoral compartments

## R ACL repair (1990 - Patellar tendon graft)

- Intermittent R AKP with high-intensity activity
- X-ray (Aug 2020) = Primary knee OA



# R Hallux pain (7-yr Hs) + Bilateral Functional Hallux Limitus (FHL)



July 2018



**FHL<sup>2</sup>**

↓ Ability to transfer body  
forward over the stance foot  
= ↓ hip EXT + ↓ push-off  
in terminal stance



Viviers, 2023

# Barefoot gait pattern + Athletic shoe wear-pattern



# Nancy's preferred athletic shoe (past 2 yrs)

Changes shoes approx. every 3 mths based on R Hallux symptoms

Curved carbon-fiber plate<sup>3</sup>  
embedded in the highly  
compliant midsole



↑'s longitudinal bending  
stiffness = ↑ lever arm for  
propulsion



↑ PUSH-OFF



HOKA Bondi 8

Extremely thick  
rocker-sole at forefoot

# The SAFE Screen - Campbell University



SENIOR ATHLETE FITNESS EXAM



## Cardiovascular Fitness

- Waist Circumference
- Waist-to-Hip Ratio
- BMI



## Muscular Fitness

- Grip Strength
- 5 x Sit-to-Stand Test
- Fast Gait Speed



## Flexibility Fitness

- Shoulder Flexion
- Ankle Dorsiflexion
- Mod. Thomas Test
- Posture



## Balance Fitness

- Single Leg Stance, Eyes Open
- Single Leg Stance, On Foam

## Additional Tests/Measures

### Muscular Endurance Tests

- Plank
- Scapular Plank
- GMAX

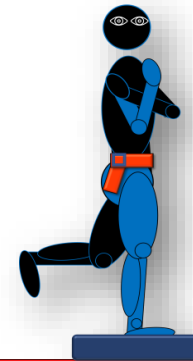
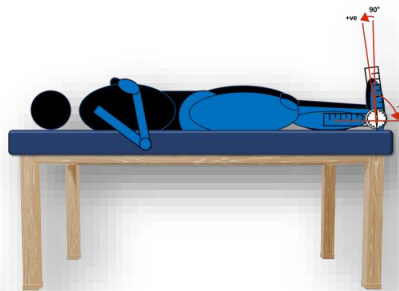
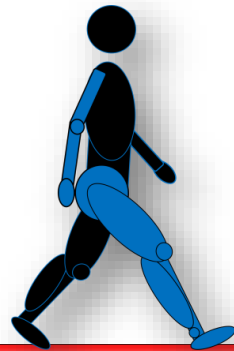
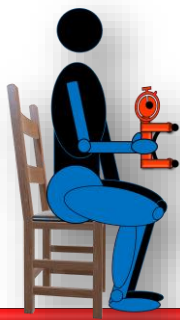
### LE Motor Control Tests

- Forward Step-ups
- 'Fairy-Jumps'

## Slow-motion Video Analysis

- Jumping
- Forward step-ups
- Fast Gait Speed (FGS)
- 5 x Sit-to-Stand (FTSTS)

# Screen Results **VS** SAFE & Community Dwelling norms

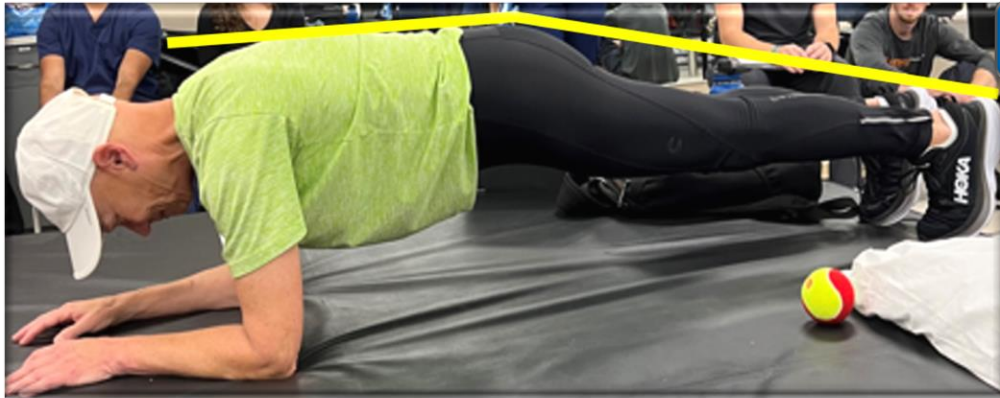
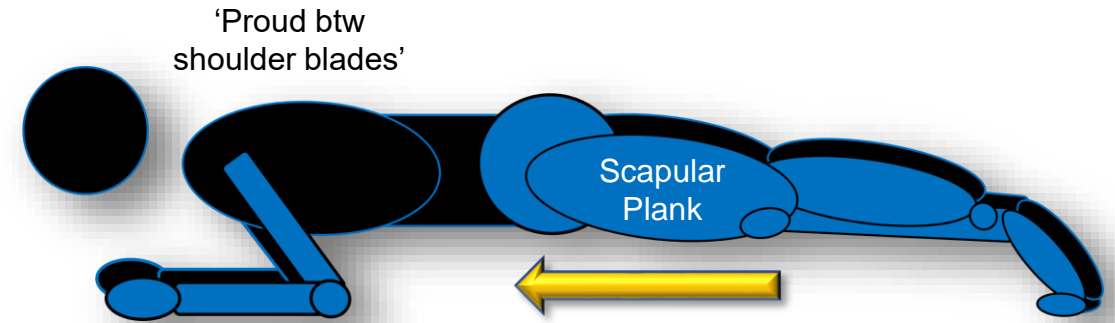
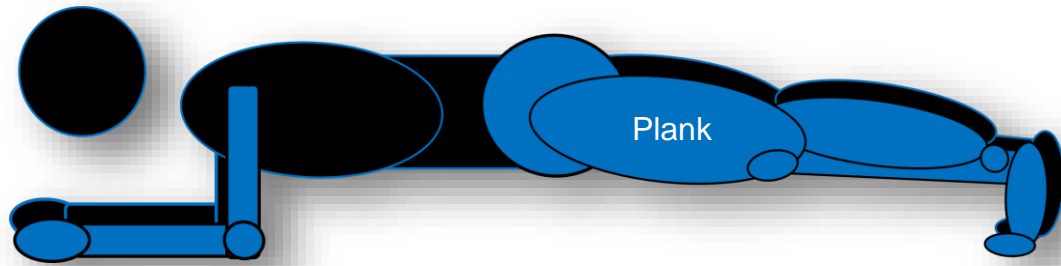


Calculation<sup>10</sup>



Grip Strength	FTSTS	FGS	Ankle DF ROM	SLS Eyes Closed	SLS Foam Eyes Open	Ave Relative Power
(♀ 65-69 yrs)	(60-69 yrs)	(60-69 yrs)	(60-69 yrs)	(60-69 yrs)	(60-69 yrs)	(♀ 60-69 yrs)
32 kg (R) 33 kg (L)	5.38 sec	2.2 m/sec	7° (R) 0° (L)	5.5 sec (R) 7.8 sec (L)	19.0 sec (R) 12.8 sec (L)	6.5 W/kg
SAFE norms						
31 kg (N = 286) <sup>4</sup>	6.89 sec (N = 1400) <sup>6</sup>	2.2 m/sec (N = 1277) <sup>6</sup>	7° (N = 1417) <sup>6</sup>	9.4 sec (N = 1393) <sup>6</sup>	18.5 sec (N = 1445) <sup>6</sup>	6.7 W/kg (N = 134) <sup>11</sup>
Community Dwelling Older Adult norms						
21 kg (N = 29) <sup>5</sup>	11.4 sec (N = 4184) <sup>7</sup>	1.84 m/s (N = 6) <sup>8</sup>	- <i>Viviers, 2023</i>	2.8 sec (N = 101) <sup>9</sup>	-	5.3 W/Kg (N = 39) <sup>12</sup>

# Screen - Scapular / Plank Muscular Endurance (sec)



Screen



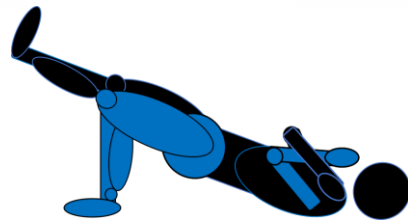
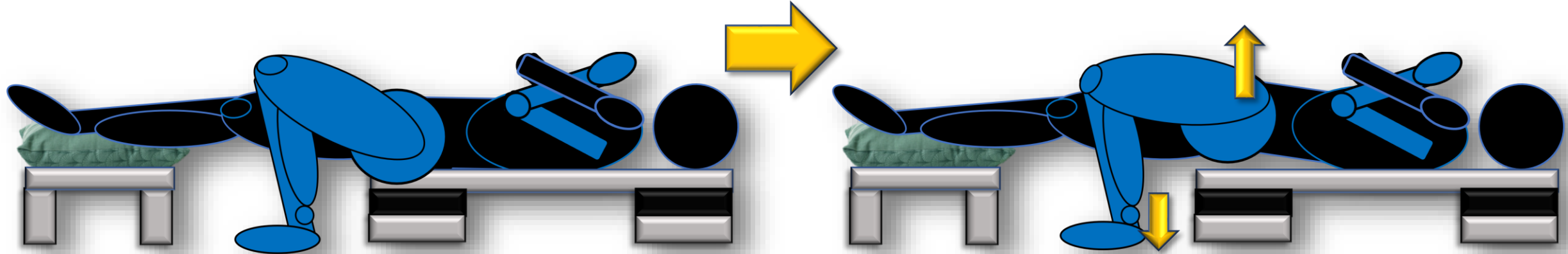
- Dropping btw the shoulder blades
- Using isometric shoulder IR
- Forward Cx 'give'



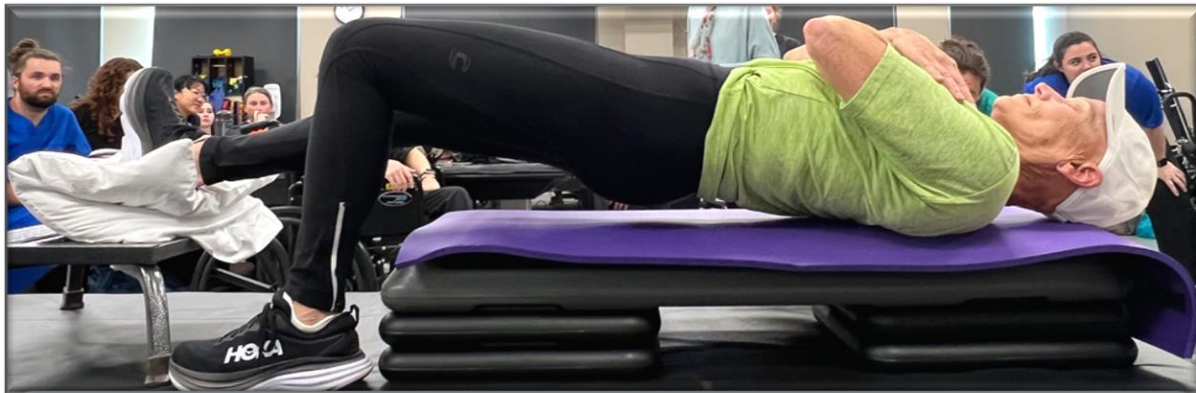
Follow-up



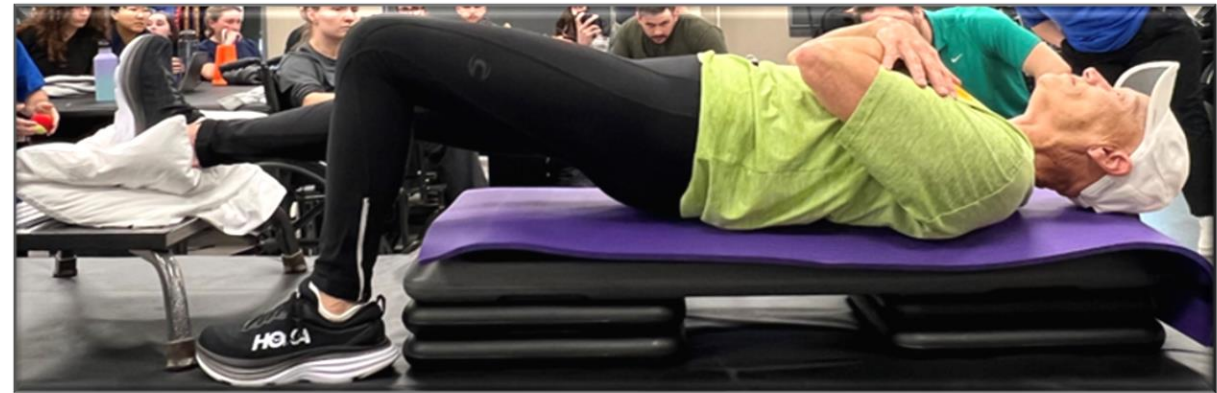
# Screen - GMAX Muscular Endurance (sec)



Difficult testing position  
for older athletes to  
sustain



- Using non-test hamstring to extend trunk
- Using test quad to extend hip (static foot slide)



Compensatory strategies expose multiplanar  
GMAX / posterior chain weaknesses

# LE Motor Control Screen - Jump for height / distance

Single-leg

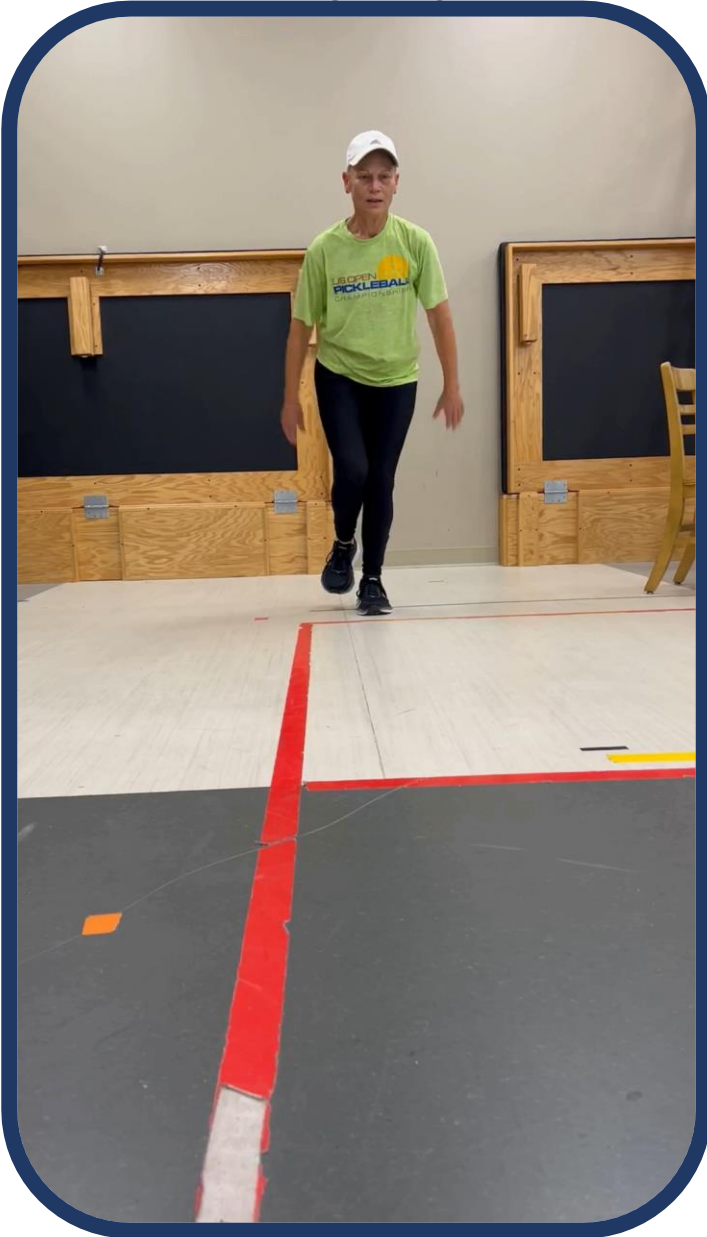
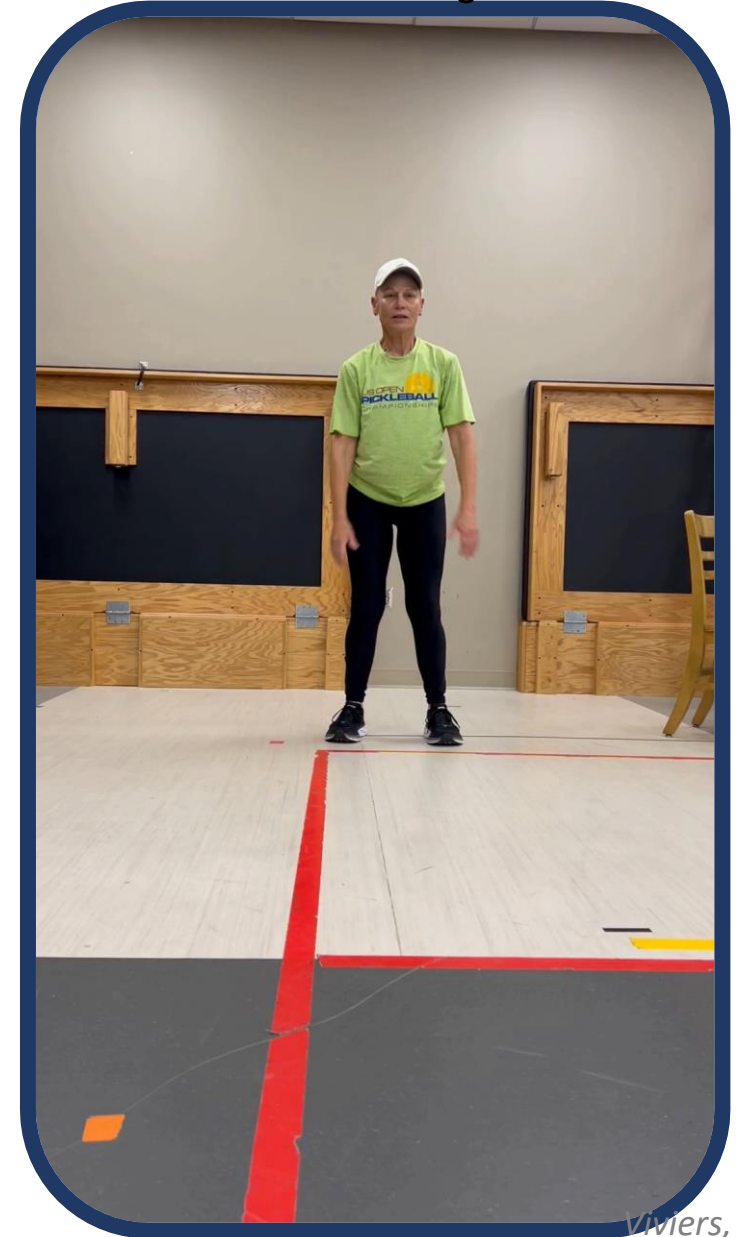


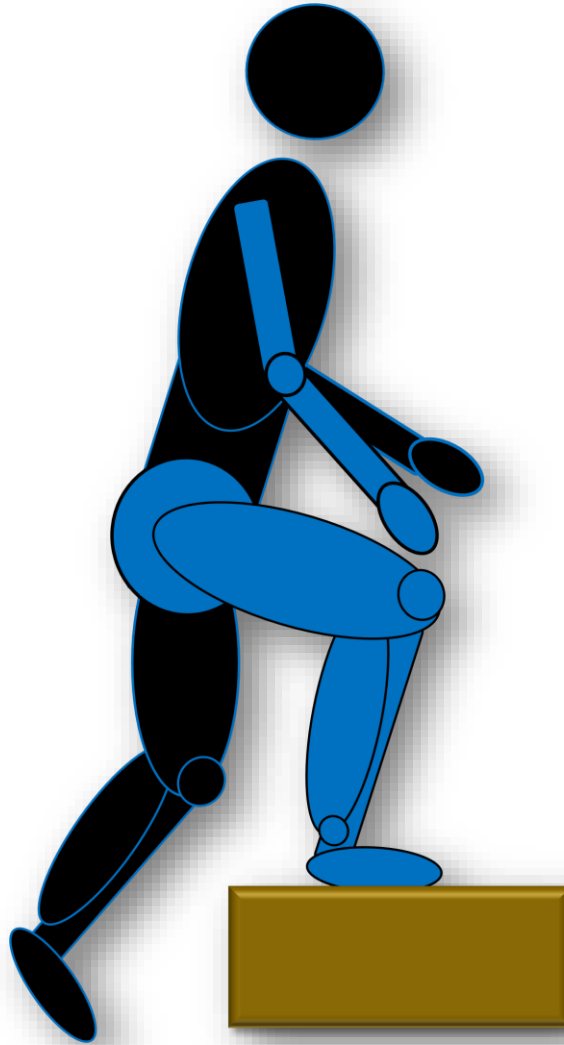
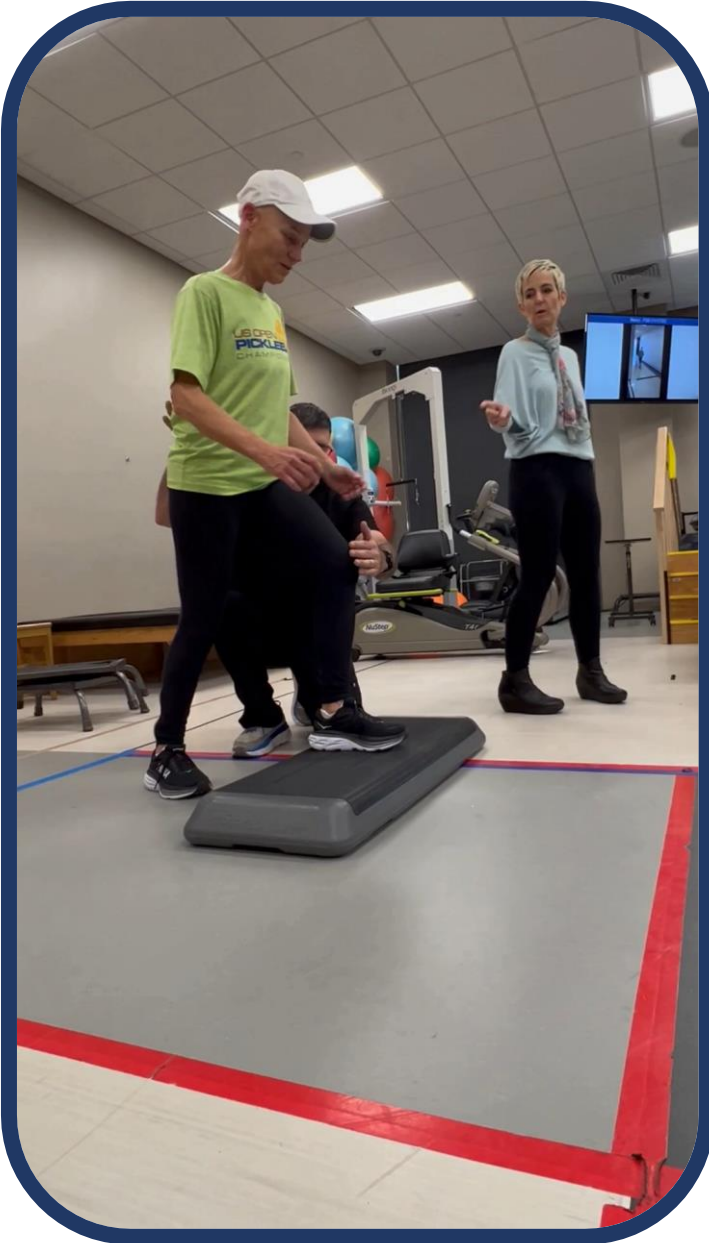
image courtesy: Universal Studios

Double-leg



# Forward Step-ups - Screen **VS** Follow-up (11 wks)

Screen

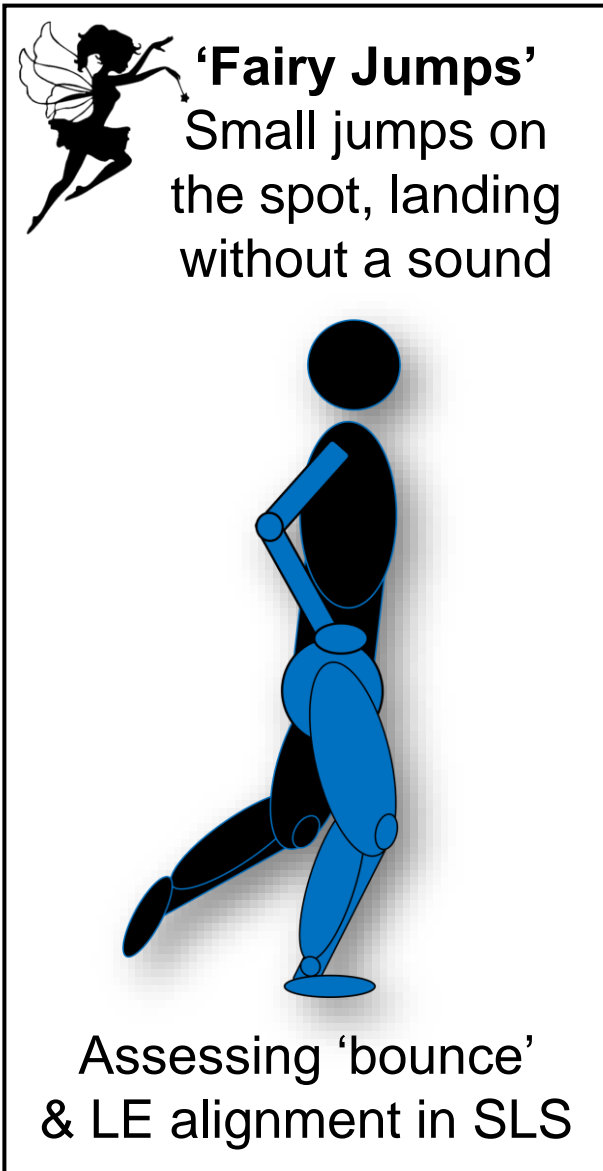
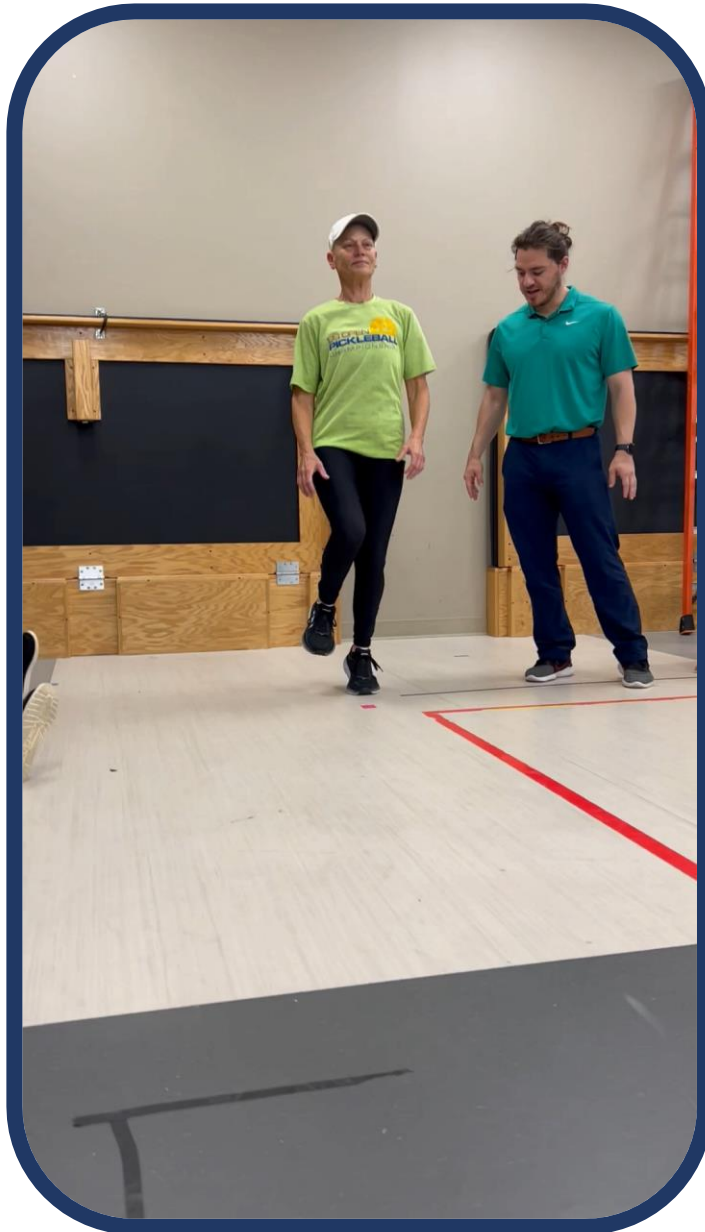


Follow-up

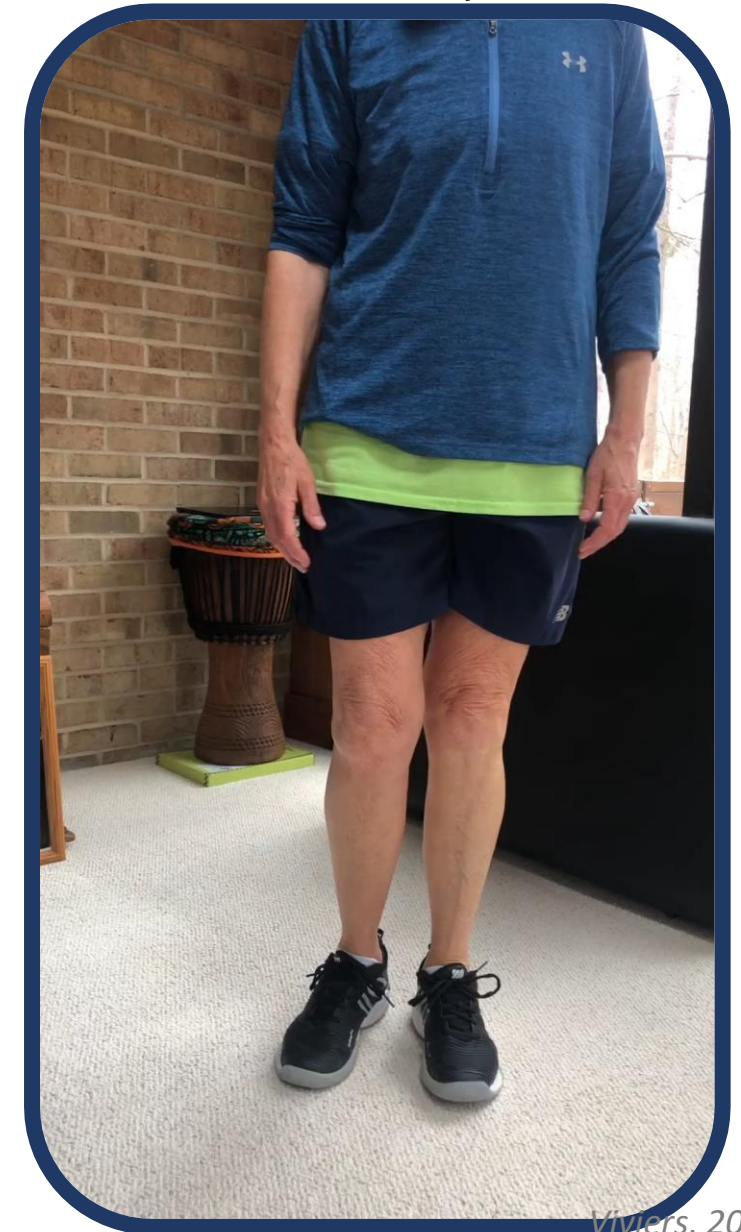


# 'Fairy-Jumps'<sup>13,14</sup> - Screen **VS** Follow-up (11 wks)

Screen



Follow-up



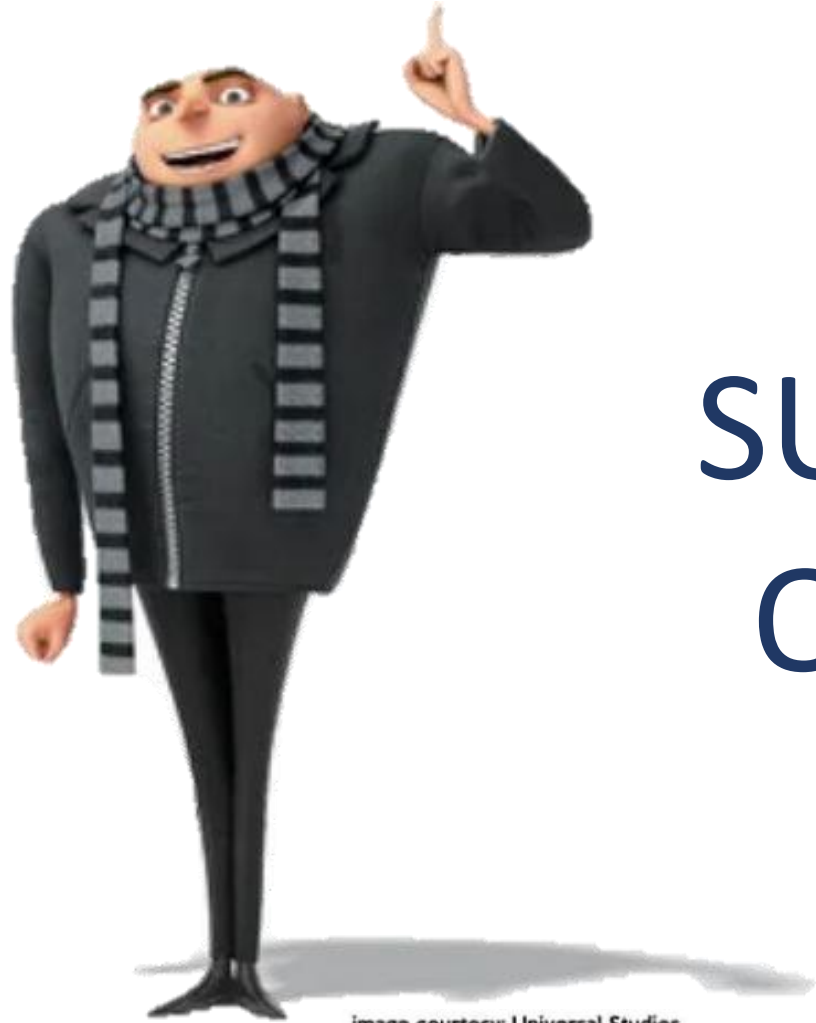
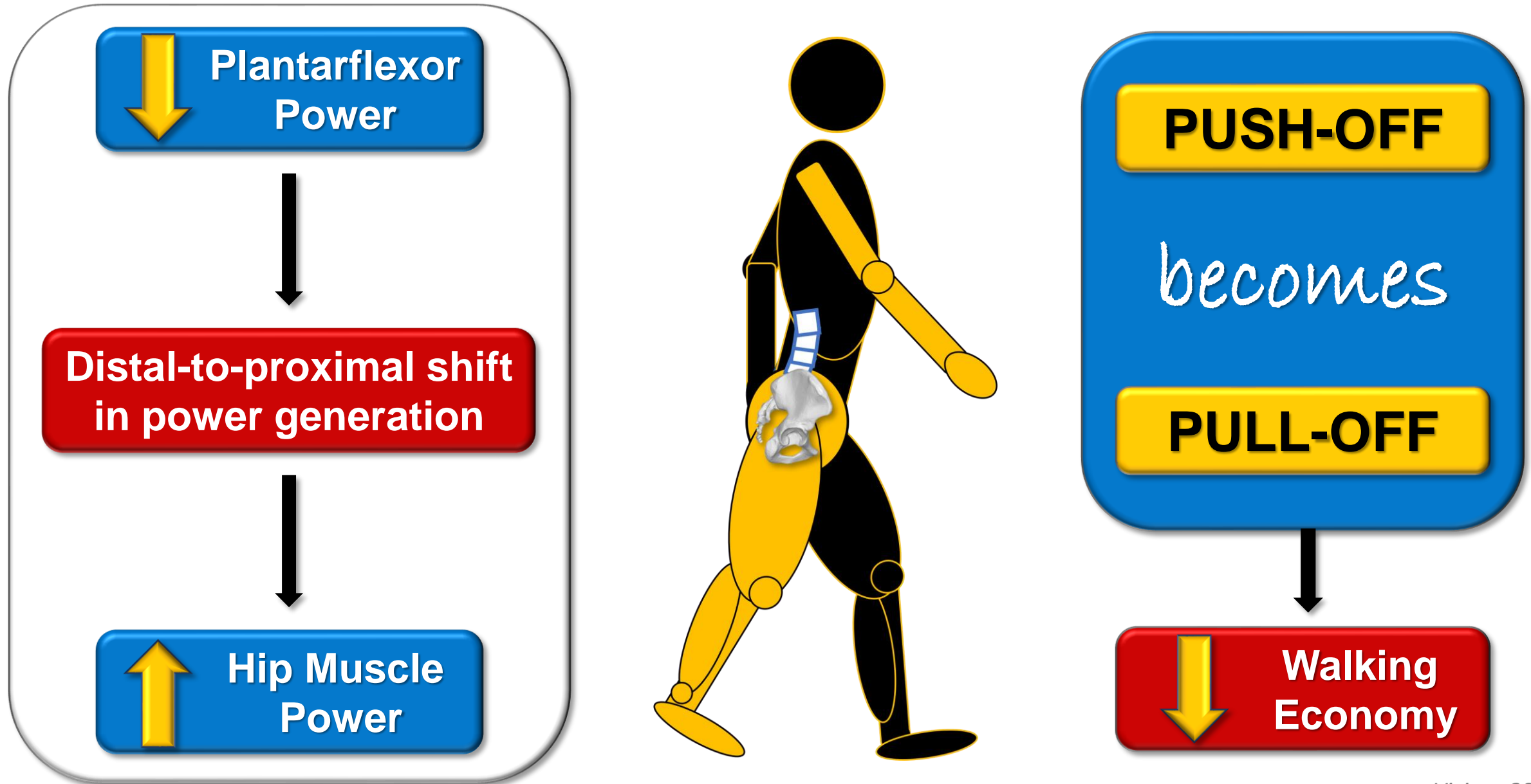


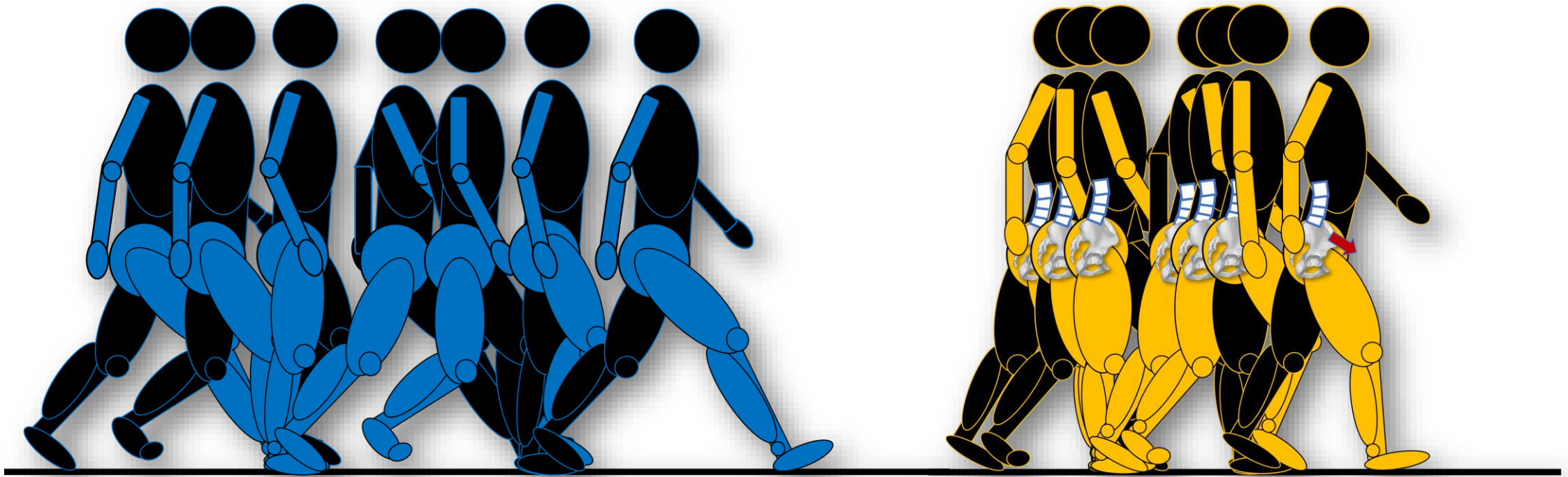
image courtesy: Universal Studios

GAIT SPEED IS A  
SUMMED EXPRESSION  
OF THE UNDERLYING  
BIOMECHANICS<sup>15</sup>

# Key age-related changes in gait biomechanics<sup>15-18</sup>



# Increased Cadence instead of Step Length<sup>15-16, 20-21</sup>



Compared to younger adults, healthy older adults  $\uparrow$  **gait speed** by



Ankle mechanical output  
drives step length

$\downarrow$  STEP LENGTH



Hip mechanical output  
drives step frequency

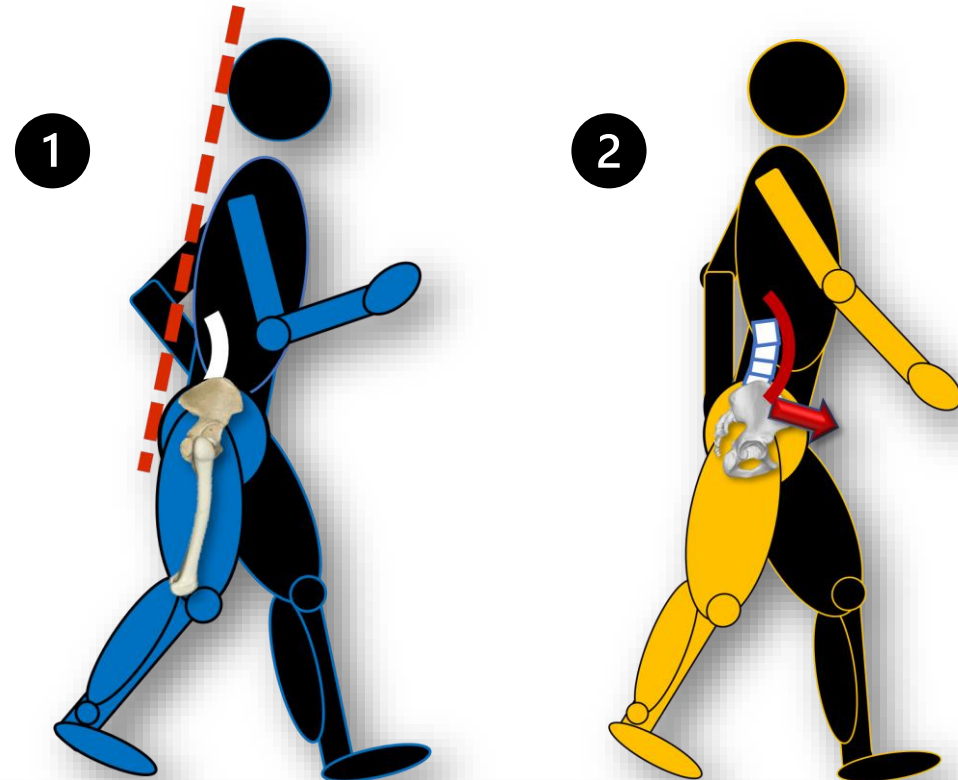
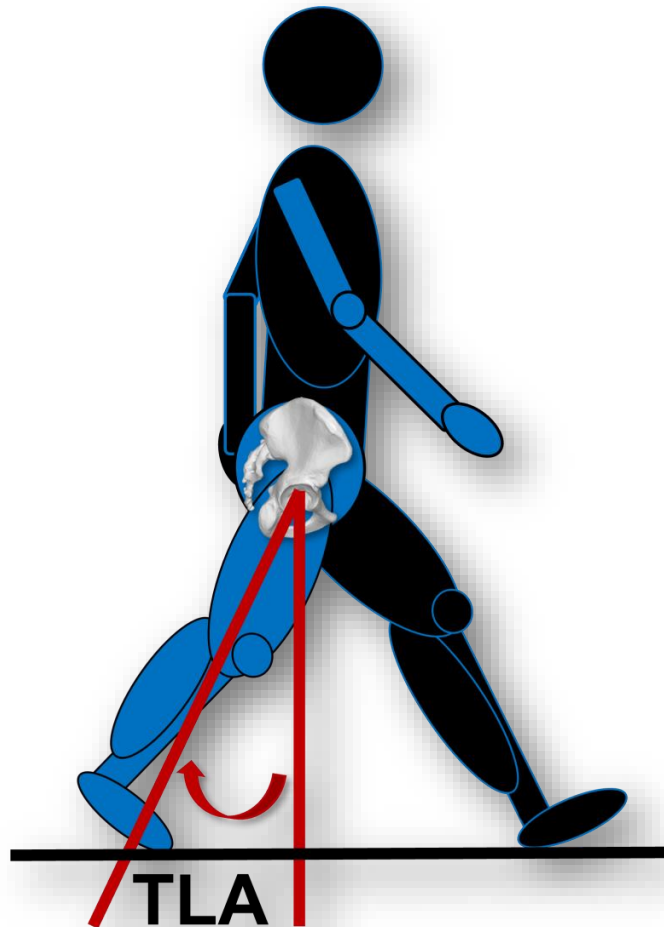
$\uparrow$  STEP FREQUENCY

# Propulsive Force & Trailing Limb Angle (TLA) during gait<sup>17,22-24</sup>

## Contributions to Propulsive Force;

TLA at terminal stance = **65%**

Ankle PF moment during stance = **33.7%**



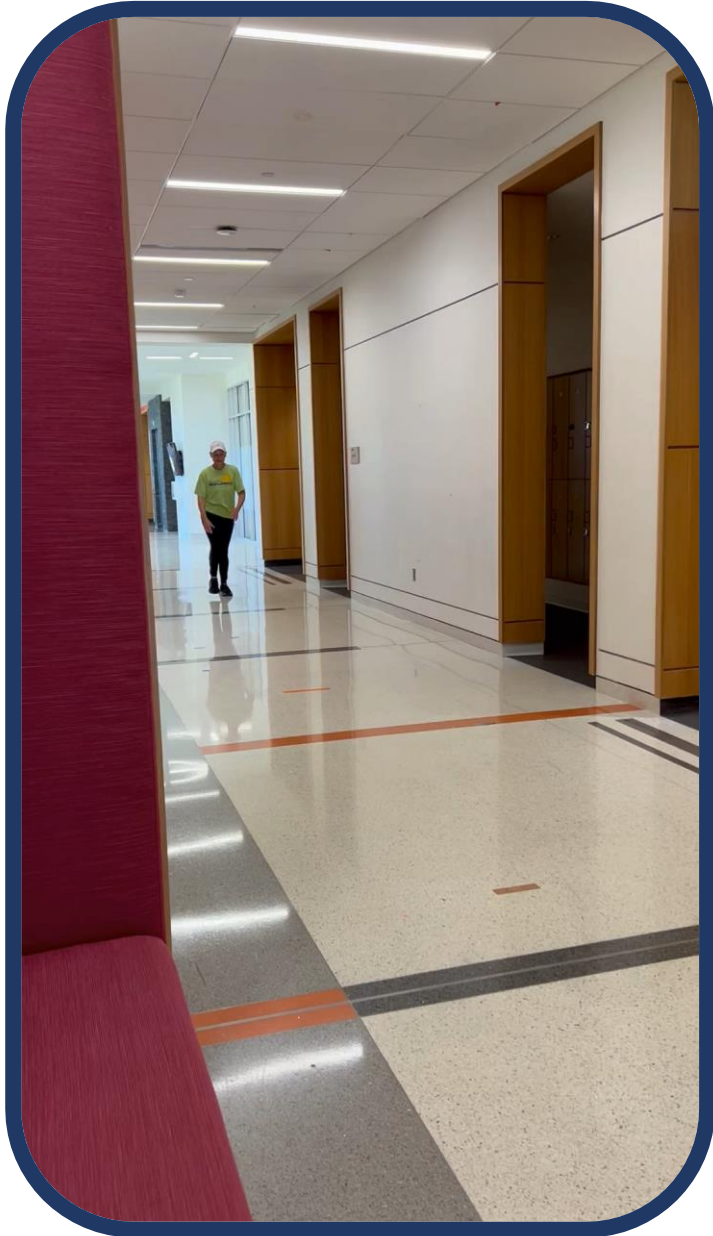
## Athletes with LE inflexibility / weakness

### increase TLA by:

- (1) ↑'ing Trunk FLEX (↑'s GMAX mech. advantage)
- (2) ↑'ing Anterior pelvic tilt & therefore Lx EXT ('drive' from Lx extensors instead of stance leg)

# Analysis of FGS at Screen **VS** Follow-up (11 wks)

Screen - 2.2 m/sec



- ☐ Step length / Cadence
- ☐ Trunk FLEX angle
- ☐ Anterior pelvic tilt / Lx EXT
- ☐ Pelvic motion (frontal plane)
- ☐ LE EXT in terminal stance (TLA)
- ☐ Push-off in terminal stance

Follow-up - 3.3 m/sec

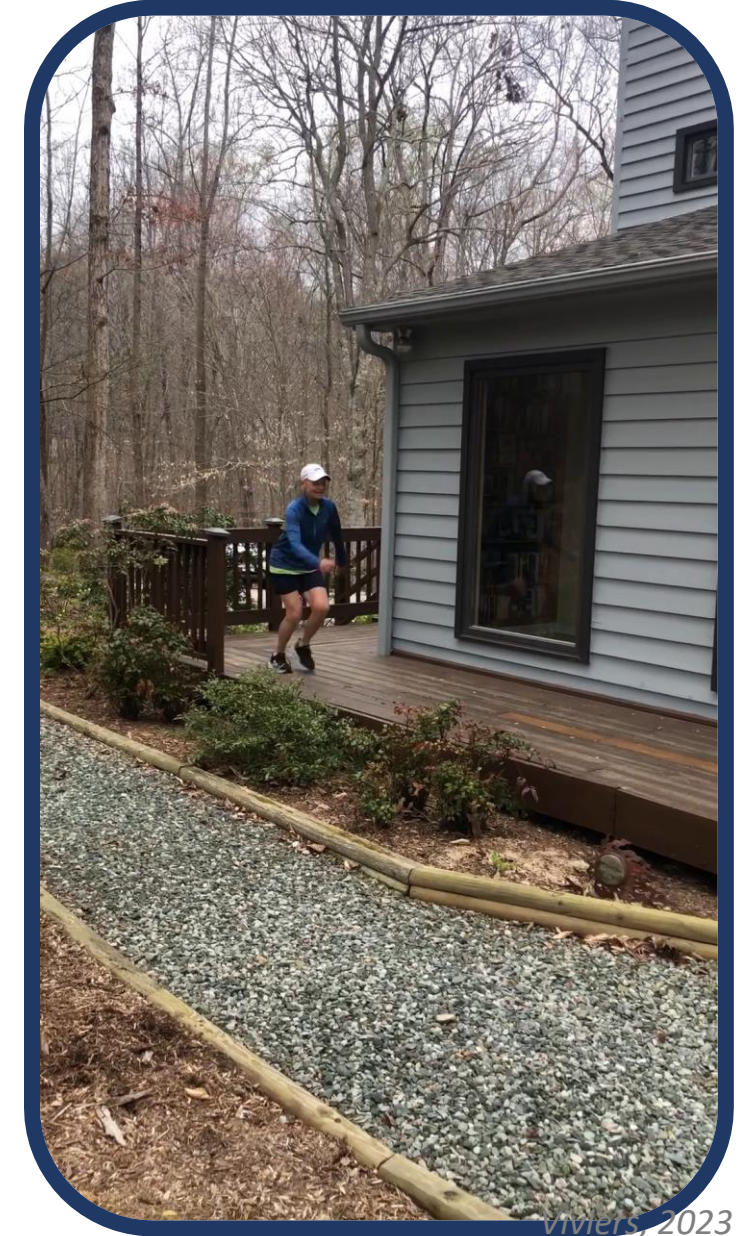


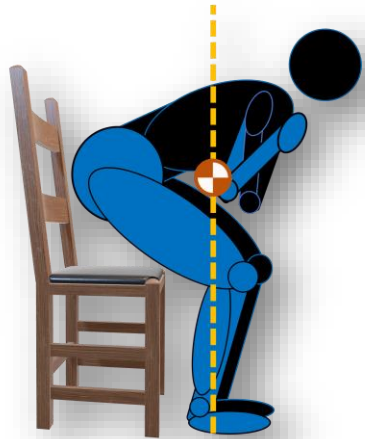


image courtesy: Universal Studios

GMAX, PLANTARFLEXORS, &  
QUADS ARE PRIMARY  
CONTRIBUTORS TO THE  
FORWARD PROPULSION OF  
THE COM DURING WALKING,  
RUNNING, & **SIT-TO-STAND**<sup>25</sup>

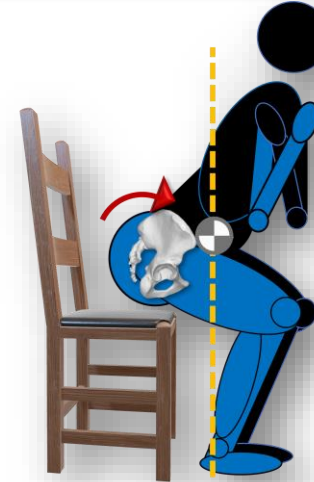
# Key age-related biomechanical changes in Sit-to-Stand<sup>25-29</sup>

Hip/knee extensor + abdominal weakness



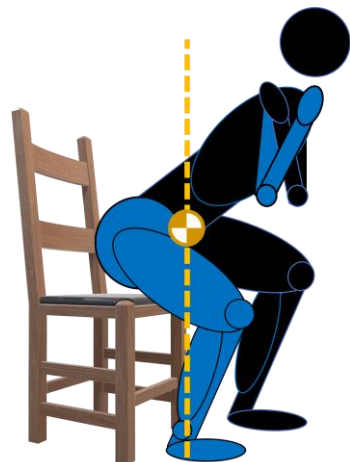
↑ TRUNK FLEXION

GMAX + abdominal weakness / ↓ hip EXT ROM



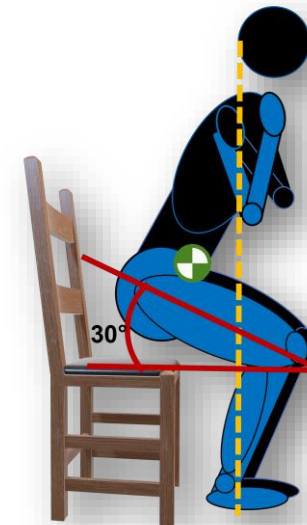
↑ ANTERIOR PELVIC TILT

Hip abductor weakness + postural instability



FEET > HIP DISTANCE APART

Hip extensor weakness (esp. eccentric GMAX)



UNCONTROLLED STAND-TO-SIT

# Analysis of FTSTS at Screen **VS** Follow-up (11 wks)

Screen - 5.38 sec



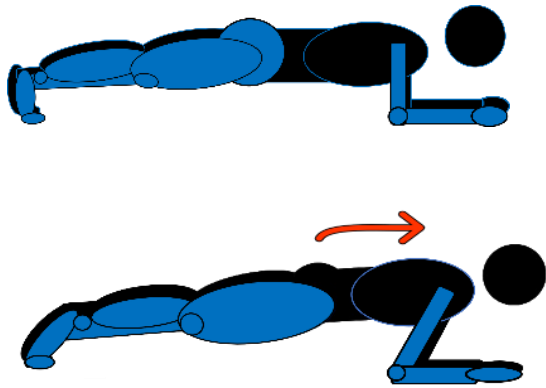
- ☐ Trunk position at lift-off
- ☐ Sagittal pelvis rotation at lift-off
- ☐ LE EXT on Sit-to-Stand
- ☐ LE alignment (frontal plane)
- ☐ Eccentric LE control on Stand-to-Sit

Follow-up - 4.68 sec

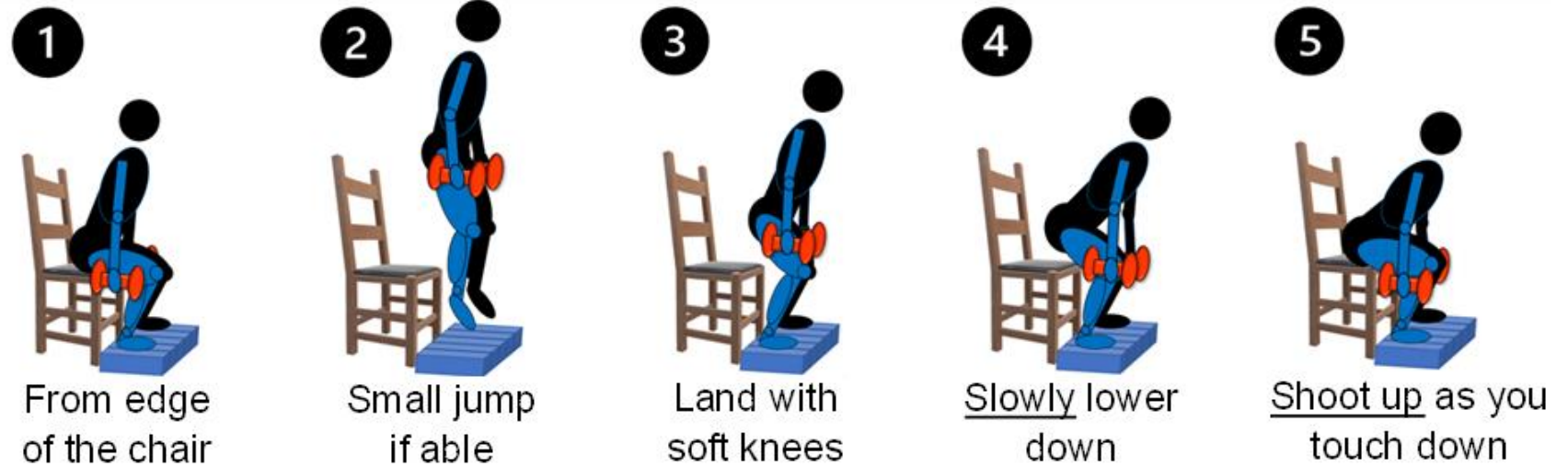


# HEP 1 - s/p Screen

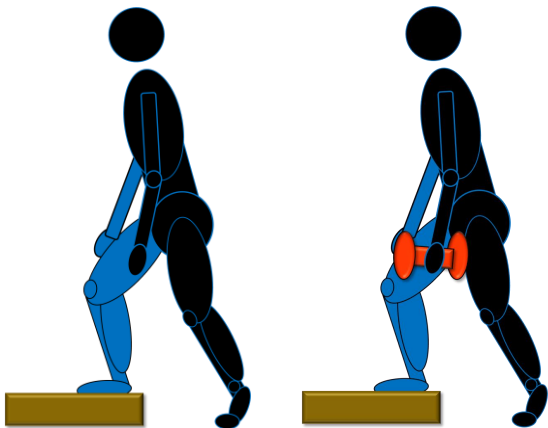
## Scapular / Plank



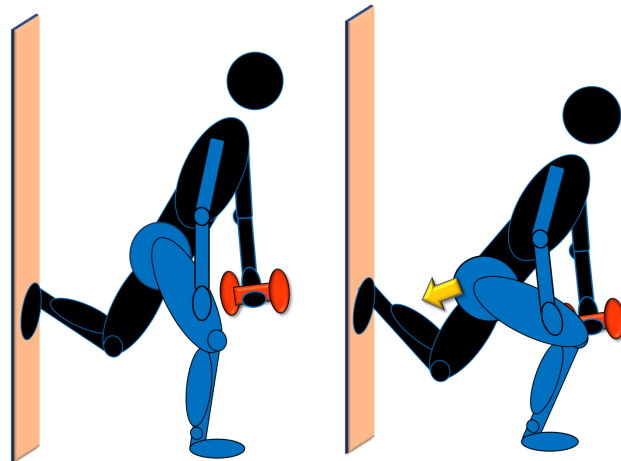
## 'All-in-One'



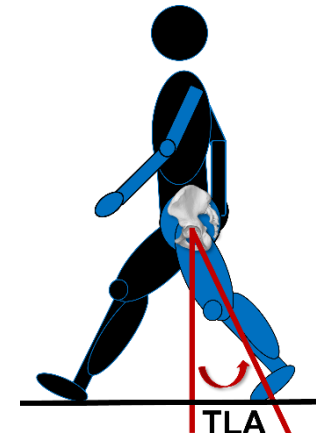
## Forward Step-ups



## 'Running-man'



## Gait retraining

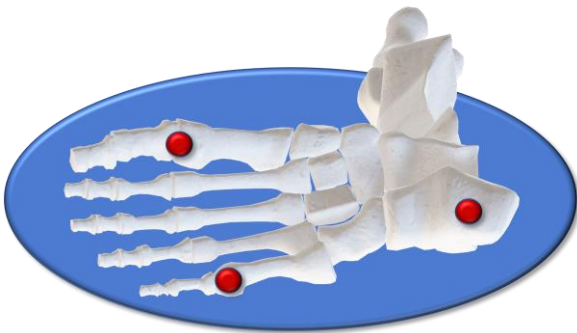


## Soleus stretch

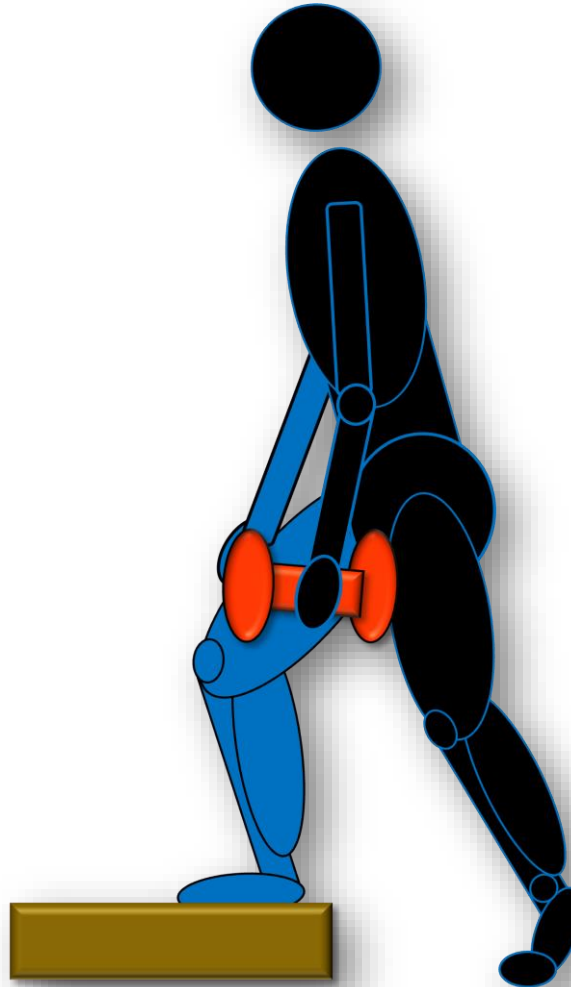


# Step-ups for GMAX Rehabilitation<sup>30-32</sup>

Rock body forward as a unit until weight is on front leg. Push up onto step, extending to a 'soft knee'. **DO NOT push off with back leg.**



Keep equal pressure under big toe, little toe, & heel of front leg



3 x 5 reps each side, alternating sides

## Actions of GMAX;

Generates concentric/eccentric hip movement in sagittal plane

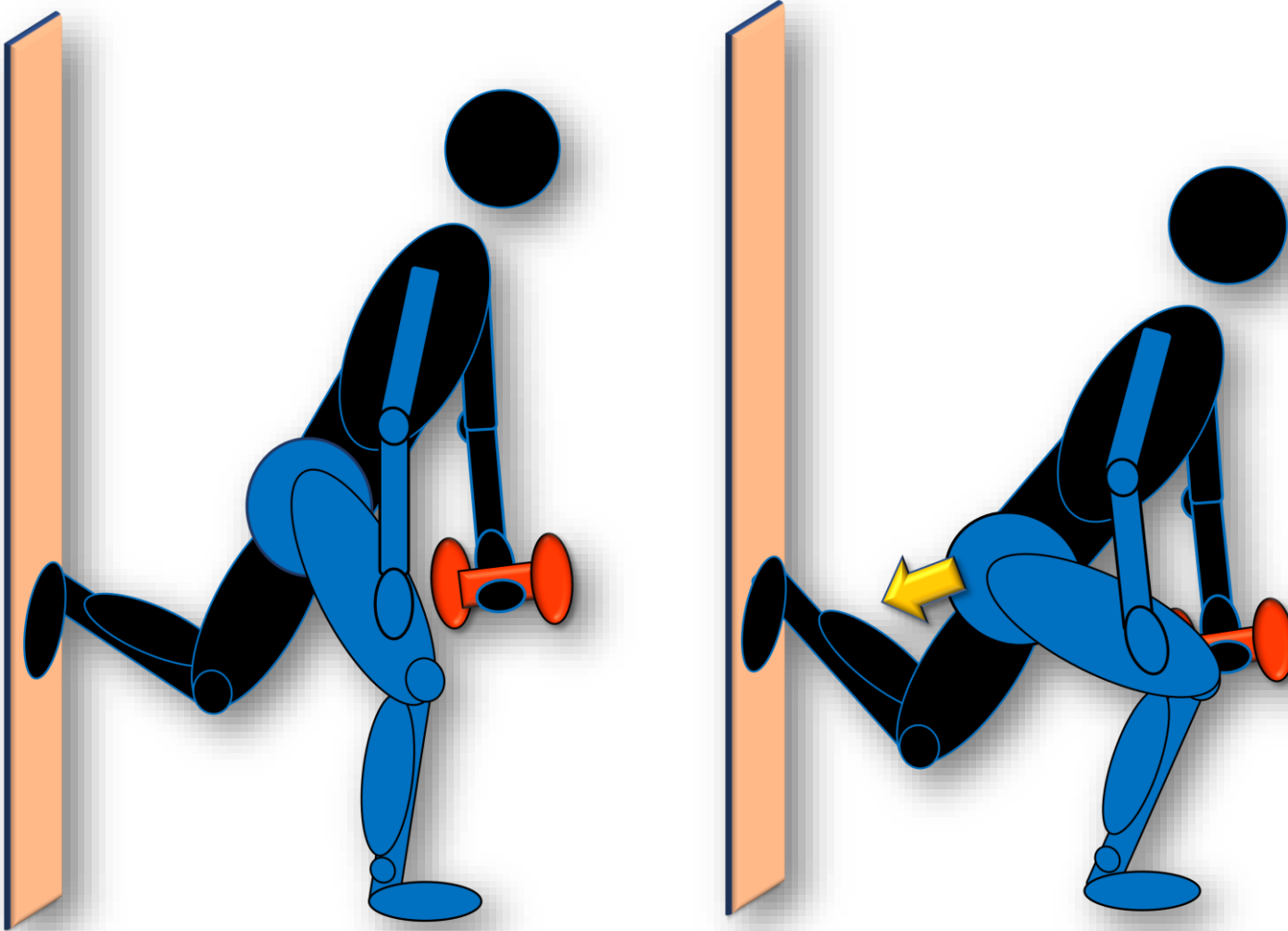
Stabilizes hip in frontal plane (counters hip ADD)

Stabilizes hip in transverse plane (counters femoral IR)

Counters trunk rotatory force with a contralateral load

The step-up exercise = highest levels of GMAX activation

# 'Running man' - Functional Sports Rehabilitation



3 x 8-12 reps each side,  
alternating sides

## Single-leg stance exercises;

Mimic motor control demands on stance leg in multiple planes during gait & sport (high demands on GMAX / GMED / posterior chain).<sup>32</sup>

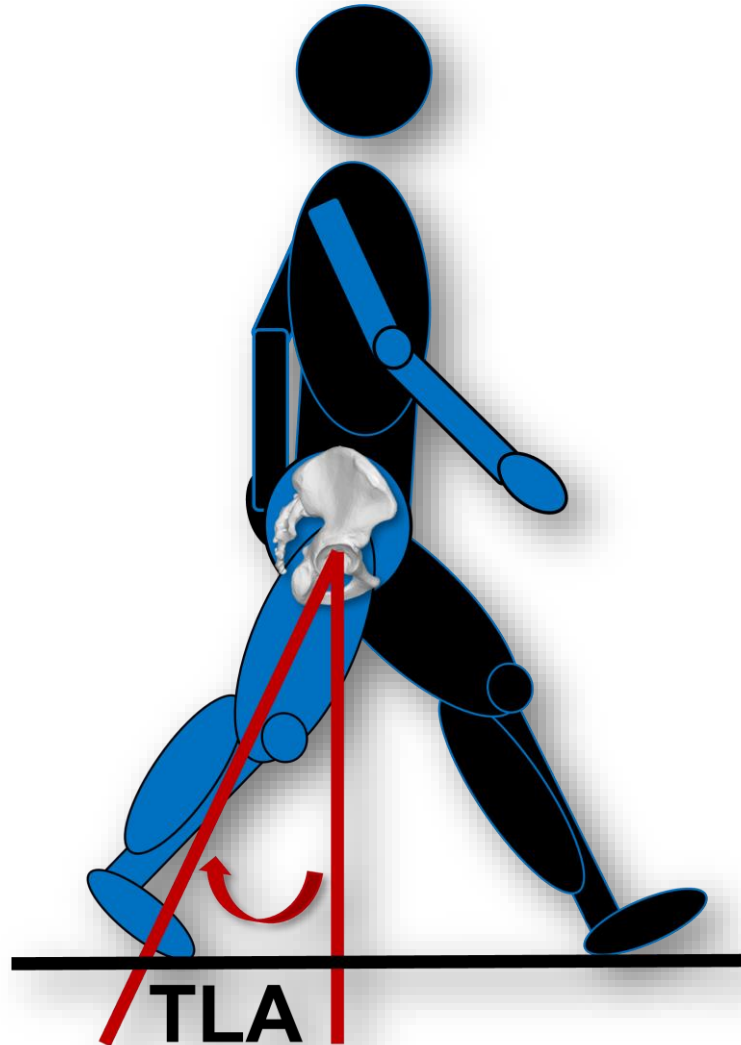
- Foot of 'swing' leg on wall
- With tailbone back, slowly bend/straighten stance knee
- Hand just above the knee resists isometric hip ABD
- Felt in stance leg GMED > GMAX, not Quadriceps

# Gait retraining to improve TLA & Push-off



Healthy, active older adults can walk with as vigorous a push-off as younger adults but choose not to, to maintain dynamic balance control (modulated by muscle weakness and ↓<sup>d</sup> flexibility)<sup>17</sup>

image courtesy: Universal Studios



## Gait retraining progression

1

↑ Hip + knee EXT in terminal stance **without** ↑<sup>ing</sup> trunk FLEX or Lx EXT at **USUAL** gait speed

2

As per (1) at **TOP** gait speed

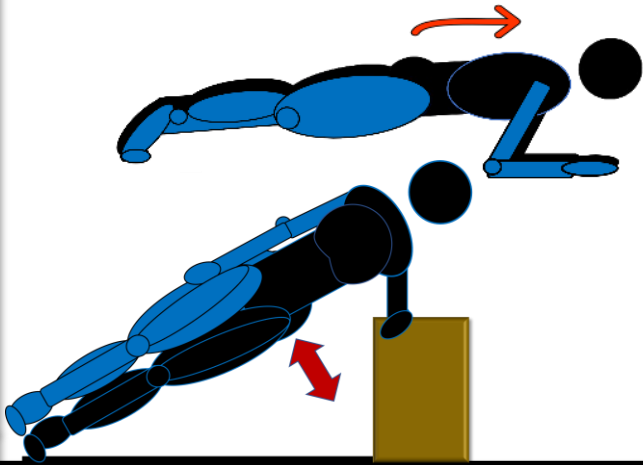
3

As per (2) + push harder into the ground at push-off

Remediate LE ROM deficits & LE/proximal strength deficits concurrently

# HEP 2 - s/p Evaluation

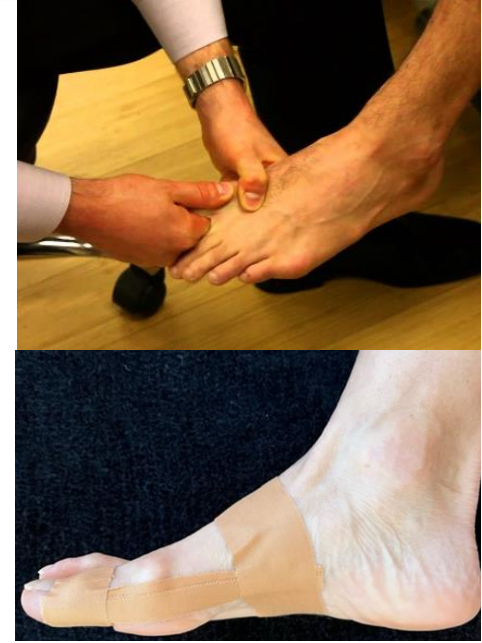
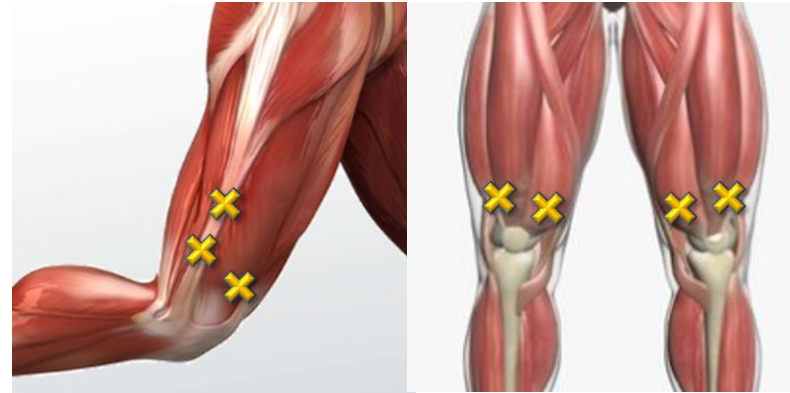
Scapular / Plank  
+ 'Side Plank'



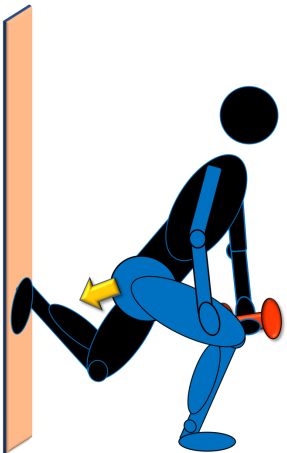
'All-in-One'  
(no jump)



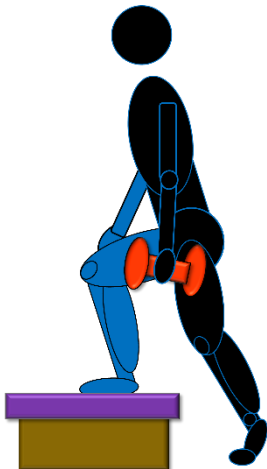
Self-MFR with active knee F/E,  
R Hallux mobs & taping



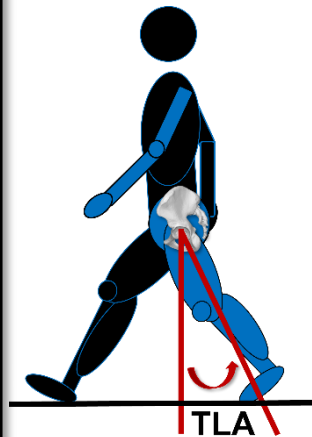
'Running-man'



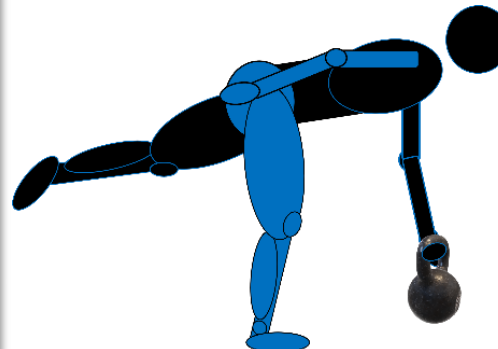
Step-ups



Gait



Romanian  
Dead-lift



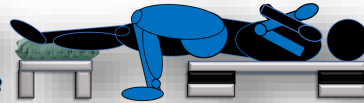
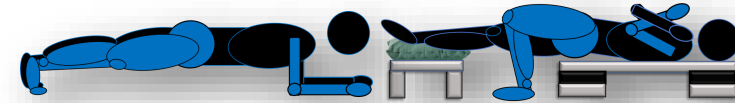
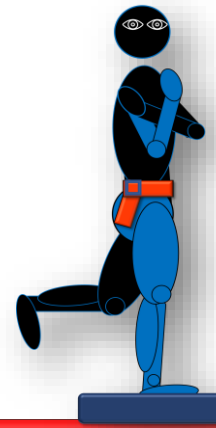
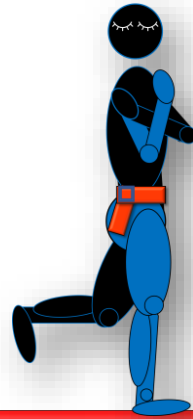
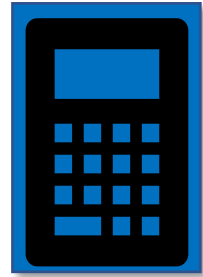
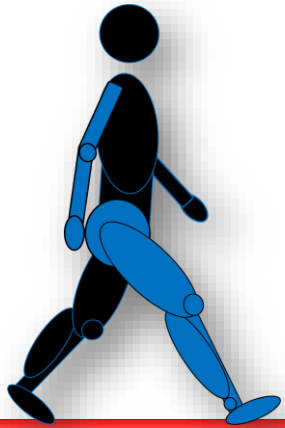
Foot / ankle / hip Stretches



# Exercise Intensity, Sequencing, and Recovery

FITT-VP <sup>33</sup>	NANCY - GENERAL EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION PARAMETERS	
<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therex - 3 days/wk (no &gt; 2 consecutive days)</li> <li>• Stretching - 7 days/wk</li> <li>• MFR - 7 days/wk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gait retraining - 3-4 days/wk (no &gt; 2 consecutive days)</li> <li>• Walking - 5-7 days/wk</li> </ul>
<b>INTENSITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heaviest weight you can use to perform 8-12 reps with good form at RPE = 7-8/10 (70%-80% of 1-RM)</li> <li>• High enough to induce muscular fatigue after 1 x 8-12 reps that recovers within 1-2 mins of rest, with inability to recover within 1-2 mins after completing 3 x 8-12 reps</li> <li>• Gait retraining - USUAL-TOP speed with max. TLA + push-off</li> <li>• Walking for 3-4 miles at RPE = 7-8/10 (moderate-vigorous intensity)</li> </ul>	
<b>TIME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total Plank time - 9 mins max./session</li> <li>• Total stretching time -10 mins max./session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total MFR time - 5 mins max./session</li> <li>• Total Gait retraining time - 15 mins max./session)</li> </ul>
<b>TYPE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loaded Therex, static stretching, MFR, Theract (gait retraining), walking</li> </ul>	
<b>REPETITIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General muscular fitness - 8-12 reps bilaterally</li> <li>• Step-ups - 5 reps bilaterally</li> <li>• Plank variations - 3 x 1 min</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stretching - 3 x 30 sec static holds bilaterally</li> <li>• Gait retraining - 3 x 5 mins</li> </ul>
<b>SETS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therex/Theract - 3 sets/session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest btw sets - 1-2 mins (unless alternating legs)</li> </ul>
<b>VOLUME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therex - 9 sets max. of each exercise/wk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gait retraining - 60 mins max./wk</li> </ul>
<b>PROGRESSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ↑ Weight when you can perform &gt; 3 x 12 reps after 1-2 mins of rest <b>OR</b> &gt; 12 reps in any exercise set after 1-2 mins rest <b>OR</b> 3 x 12 reps with an RPE = &lt;7/10</li> </ul>	

# Performance Measures - Screen **VS** Follow-up (11 wks)



**FGS**

**FTSTS**

**Ave Relative  
Power**

**SLS  
Eyes Closed**

**SLS Foam  
Eyes Open**

**Plank**

**GMAX  
Endurance**

**Screen**

2.2 m/sec

5.38 sec

6.5 W/kg

5.5 sec (R)  
7.8 sec (L)

19.0 sec (R)  
12.8 sec (L)

1:04:00

1:01:00 (R)  
0:48:10 (L)

**Follow-up (11 wks)**

3.3 m/sec

4.68 sec

7.8 W/kg

9.1 sec (R)  
14.5 sec (L)

30.0 sec (R)  
22.5 sec (L)

2:17:08

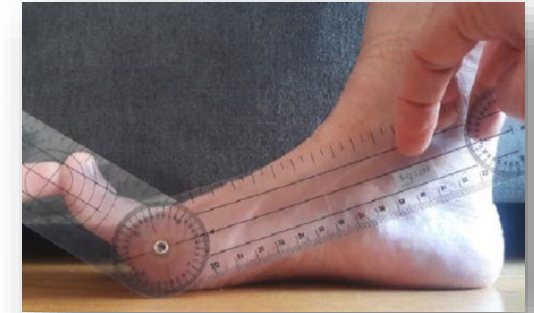
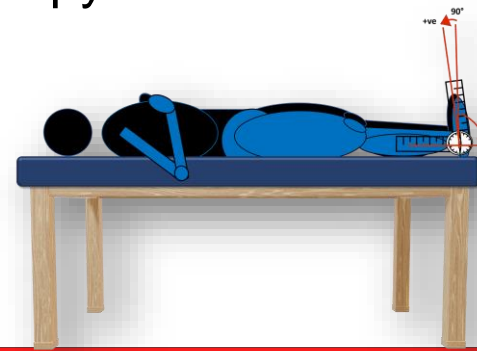
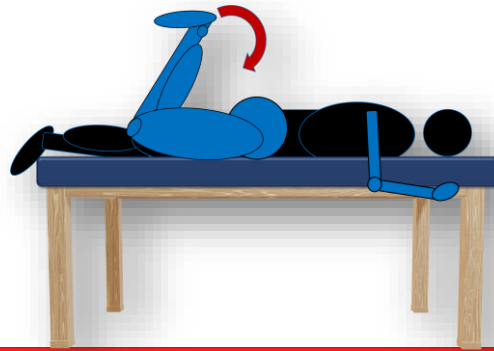
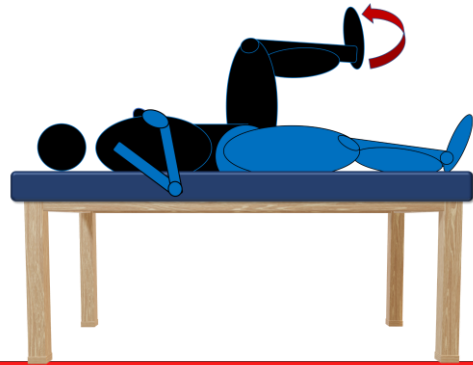
1:32:04 (R)  
1:07:00 (L)

(60-69 yrs)  
9.4 sec  
(N = 1393)<sup>6</sup>

(60-79 yrs)  
2:04:07  
(N = 60)<sup>38</sup>

# Flexibility measures at Evaluation + Follow-up (5 wks)

\* Manual therapy x 1 \*



**Hip 90/90 IR**

**PKB Knee FLEX**

**Ankle DF ROM**

**WTB Hallux  
Dorsiflexion**

**Evaluation**

8° (R)  
15° (L)

115° (R)  
100° (L)

7° (R)  
0° (L)

26° (R)  
22° (L)

**Follow-up (5 Wks)**

12° (R)  
24° (L)

120° (R)  
114° (L)

18° (R)  
6° (L)

31° (R)  
32° (L)

**Norms**

35°  
(60+ yrs, N = 300)<sup>34</sup>

131°  
(60+ yrs, N = 100)<sup>34</sup>

7°  
(N = 1417)<sup>6</sup>

48.5°  
(N = 44)<sup>35</sup>

# Protein requirements for Performance & Recovery in older athletes<sup>36,37</sup>

To optimize strength and power gains during general training  
 **$\geq 1.2$  g/kg/day**

To optimize lean muscle mass gains during resistance training  
**1.5 - 1.6 g/kg/day**  
(0.4 g/kg post-training + 0.3 - 0.4 g/kg, 3-4 x during the day)

Postmenopausal female endurance athletes  
**1.6 - 1.8 g/kg/day**

Consume **high-quality protein** (e.g., soy, lean chicken, fish, egg white) / refer athletes who are vegetarian to a dietician for a sport-specific diet containing optimal amino acid balance

Chronic dietary protein insufficiency may lead to **NET muscle protein catabolism**, slower recovery, and  $\uparrow$  injury risk



# How much protein is that??!



1 🍳 = 6 g protein

For strength & power gains  
**≥ 1.2 g/kg/day**

73 g = 12 🍳

For lean muscle mass gains  
**1.5 - 1.6 g/kg/day**

91 - 97 g = 15 - 16 🍳

For chronic endurance training  
**1.6 - 1.8 g/kg/day**

97 - 109 g = 16 - 18 🍳

For recovery post-exercise  
**0.4 g/kg**

24 g = 4 🍳

**Nancy = 60.6 kg (134 lb)**

**BMI = 22.7 kg/m<sup>2</sup>**

## Breakfast

1 Large egg = 6 g protein



## Lunch

½ Can tuna in water (69 g) = 13 g protein



## Snack

3 Tbsp peanut butter (48 g) = 11 g protein



## Dinner

1 Cup chicken breast (140 g) = 43 g protein



**Average daily protein intake = 73 g**

# QUESTIONS?



image courtesy: Universal Studios

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