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Core-Tex : Anthony Carey's Balance Training Tool

Posted By [ldraper](#) On August 25, 2009 @ 6:14 pm In [Product Reviews](#), [Corrective Exercise](#) | [1 Comment](#)

My trip to the [Anaheim IDEA conference](#) was geared around mental saturation of anatomy, physiology, biomechanics and corrective exercise (I really need to be immersed before this stuff begins to sink in), but it was spiced by a visit with [Anthony Carey of Function First](#) and a few minutes play on his core trainer, the [Core-Tex](#).

My first introduction to Anthony was [his book, The Pain-Free Program](#), which I bought a couple months into this corrective exercise side-trip that started nearly two years ago. Floundering a bit, heading off in the wrong direction by guessing wrong a couple of times, the book brought me back to the path, and I became intrigued as his techniques quickly began to work.

About six months later, IDEA 2008 rolled around, and I was excited to see him on the schedule teaching What the Hips Lack Hurts the Back. My bullet-point notes from the session are [here, and cover the connections between hips and low back pain](#).

By this time, you know I'd become a fan and was an avid reader of [his blog](#), so when I saw he had invented a new core training device, I was eager to try it. It looks like a blast, but would it be more than just a few minutes of fun, sort of fake surfing for landlubbers?



I knew Anthony was teaching at this year's IDEA, because I was scheduled to hear him present Advanced Strategies for Correcting Kyphosis, which I'll discuss next week. And I knew he was planning to show the Core-Tex, but several runs through the Expo hall left me still on dry land. I figured I was out of luck this trip, until on the last Expo visit (a quick jaunt through after Paul Chek's session on posture to discover his recommended back strengthening book was actually a \$250 seven-hour dvd correspondence course), heading toward the door, I see Anthony shifting around on a big red disk. I'm going to get to try it after all!

I shoved him off and gingerly climbed aboard, holding the handrail with all ten fingers. I'd like to tell you I jumped on and surfed away, but... no, that's not how it went.

Still, it was AMAZING, and truly fun. The disk moves in all planes of motion, often at the same time. There's technical information about translation versus a fixed axis, but you'll have to [read this page for those details](#), since physics makes my head hurt.



(This isn't me; I'm not that young, not that thin, nor did I get that good on the Core-Tex.)

While sliding from fore to aft and round about, I asked Anthony if I'd get better at it, and if so, how long would that be expected to take. When he said ten minutes instead of the six weeks I was expecting, I released one of my gripping hands from the guide bar to make a move toward hands-free. A minute or so later, the second hand came off and it was pretty comfortable to go with the flow.

As I gained a little confidence, I got a little bolder; I began heading off for a full 360... and stumbled off in short order. Luckily, Anthony's quick on his feet – or maybe he was just watching and saw the signs– and grabbed me before I took out a line of people shopping medicine balls at the [Perform Better](#) booth where the Core-Tex was on display.

Later, I got to wondering about the falling-off part, and how that related to neural reprogramming, because I'd been thinking the Core-Tex was mostly to wake up dormant or low-functioning muscles. I wrote to ask if my thinking was correct, if so, would my nervous system remember the new pathways, or would it only remember the falling-off part.

Anthony wrote back, *"When standing on the Core-Tex, there is certainly an incredible amount of neural activity going on because the motions are so new and dynamic. Because there are so many combinations of movements available as the dish moves, it's not likely any*

reprogramming is actually happening. This is because you may never repeat exactly the same combination of movement and muscle activity the entire time you are on it.

"Instead, the goal is to improve the user's reactions. In other words, how quickly and efficiently does your nervous system react to the shift(s) in your base and communicate that to your our musculoskeletal system to act so that you don't fall? That is why we encourage the user to keep moving with the Core-Tex and "pitch and catch" with it. Just standing still on it, as is done with so many other pieces of equipment, doesn't require the same continual up-regulation of new information from the proprioceptors.

"Positions other than standing on it certainly place a very unique musculoskeletal demand on the body. The need to control the motion of the dish as you do, say, a push-up, fires additional stabilizers because the body is unable to predict how the dish will move next. It adds a lot of variety and fun to the workout. That's why we take so many exercises that are done on the floor and put them on the Core-Tex."

In the following clip, you'll seen some of the many ways the Core-Tex can be used in a personal training or coaching setting. Pretty much anything you can do on the floor can be done on the disc, feet on, hands on.. standing, kneeling... half-kneeling... planking... with or without the handle guide, and with or without training tools such as medicine balls and tubing. In another clip, Anthony uses a pair of ski pools to demonstrate pre-season ski training, which I guess would start right about now, wouldn't it?



One of the [clips on the Core-Tex website](#) shows [Gary Gray](#), certainly one of the primary forces behind today's study of functional movement, discussing balance and stability while using the unit. When Gary Gray says something really makes a difference, personal trainers and coaches should stop and listen.

I've been around people who've designed new inventions and brought them to market, and what's even more remarkable than the initial idea is the perseverance it takes to get a prototype made, make the changes and find a suitable manufacturer. And this unit, because of the infinite variety of movements, must have been a real bear to figure out. That someone was able to stick to the project from start to finish is truly impressive, quite hard to fathom, really.

I'll tell you one more thing: In addition to adding a fun variety to your personal training studio or athletic training facility, this gem will make your clients and athletes perform better, and isn't that the bottom line?



Facility owners and mobile trainers, get one of these in your winter budget, \$499-575. You know it would be on my list if I trained clients. Hey! I wonder if it's a suitable anniversary present.

[Laree Draper](#)

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