

Charles Poliquin Quote

from [The Tim Ferriss Show](#) on July 21, 2015
Click [HERE](#) to listen to the excerpt on YouTube

Tim Ferriss:

Are there free weight exercises that you would remove for novice and intermediate trainees?

Charles Poliquin:

There are some that I'd remove for all cases. One, the goblet squat. That is such a moronic exercise. Basically, you're limited by the strength of your rhomboids, your anterior deltoids, and the elbow flexors. So if you can do a goblet squat and overload your legs, it means you have really, really weak legs - you should be in a wheelchair. That's a moronic exercise.

A lot of the kettlebell stuff, like the kettlebell swings. Ask any chiropractor, they'll tell you their business went up for disc injuries when the CrossFit box opened up next door - they did a lot of kettlebell swings. I think the kettlebell swing is very harmful to the disc structure. But the thing is, the way it harms you, it's like a dental cavity. It doesn't happen overnight - you know, you don't brush your teeth on a regular basis, and one day, you have a cavity. People don't make the link between the kettlebell swing and their back problems. That's an exercise I really hate.

One exercise I find to be overrated is the plank.

Another one I find utterly moronic is glute bridges. There are so many exercises that recruit the glutes more effectively. If it was that great, all Olympic lifters and powerlifters would do them because success in Olympic lifting and long jump and high jump is glute strength-dependent, and no one does that exercise because it's a moronic exercise.

When does it ever happen that the load is on the anterior pelvis area in real life - only if you dismount an obese sexual partner. That movement pattern with an overload never happens in life. Unless you like to date obese women, it's a non-functional pattern.

And again, for cervical health, I'm not convinced it's the greatest thing for you. Because it's like cavities - the damage is done over time - people don't associate the problems.

Tim Ferriss:

What are good exercises for glute activation or engaging the glutes?

Charles Poliquin:

You can't beat deadlifts and squats and any type of split squats - those will transfer to ordinary, everyday life activities. They'll improve your vertical jump, they'll improve your horizontal jumping ability, and so on.

The thing is, if you look at the guys that advocate those exercises - look at their track record. It doesn't exist. They never produce anybody. What I see in this industry, it's very normal human nature to figure out where you are in the food chain. These guys want to move up the food chain by saying something different.

I always use your analogy: If you're going to do something different, there needs to be an improvement or it needs to be fun.... a lot of the new stuff is like wearing your underwear over your jeans, it's no improvement, and the only thing it's fun for are the people watching you because they make fun of you for wearing your underwear over your jeans.

Like I said, there's nothing new since 1896, in my opinion. There are better ways to do the stuff from 1896, but the concepts were there a long time ago.

Tim Ferriss:

Do you think that kettlebell swings are harmful given any technique from the swing? Or is part of the harm from a Crossfit box in the way that they perform a kettlebell swing?

Charles Poliquin:

There's no safe way to do the kettlebell swing.

There's an exercise called the [lumberjack](#). In the lumberjack, the bar is moved vertically – not into a swing process. Some people say, “Well, you recommend the lumberjack.” Yeah, but the lumberjack is a different load pattern for the power snatch.

The goal in weightlifting is to lift the most weight in the most vertical way. So the best way to lift a lot of weight is actually to keep the weight in a straight line.

The more horizontal displacement there is for the bar, there's more wasted effort, and less weight is lifted. That has been studied in biomechanics for years. There's no two ways about it.

What I don't like about the kettlebell swing is the weight displaces away from the disc. In squatting or snatches or clean and jerk, the bar always stays close to the center of gravity.