

Andrea Clark: Functional Core Training

At 27, Andrea Clark is gaining back the fitness level she had as a Cave Spring Knight. She was a very active high school student, often working

Injuries also played into Clark's decreased workout regimen. At age 19 her kneecap shifted out of place while dancing, causing her chronic pain and putting her on a physical therapy schedule. She also experienced hip pain for years due to bursitis. Every time she did anything high-impact such as running or hiking, her hip pain would rear its ugly head and along with the discomfort in her knee, exercising felt like a beating.

"Physical therapy became both a financial and a time burden so I gritted my teeth and took enough ibuprofen to fill a fish bowl to work through the pain my hip and knee caused," says Clark.

Clark took her frustrations to personal trainer Krista Kurvits, co-owner with her husband Hayward Statum II of Xcelerated Performance, a functional core

training facility, the muscles in your pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen work in harmony. Over time, a weak core can make you susceptible to poor posture, lower back pain and injury." (www.mayoclinic.com).

"Instead of just training a muscle to be bigger and stronger, we use movement patterns to make those muscles more physically powerful," says Kurvits.

Kurvits immediately set Clark up with a personalized nutrition/exercise program to begin her journey to better health.

"I had tried a lot of fad diets before and had lost weight with them, but I always gained the weight back," reports Clark. "I also didn't like having a 'no-no' list that I always had to keep in mind while eating. I just craved certain foods even more when I learned that I wasn't supposed to have them."

Kurvits assessed Clark's eating habits by giving her a test that indicated that she needed more protein to feel full. Kurvits also advised for Clark to pay



Before. Stubborn area around hips and belly wouldn't budge.

out two times a day between running with her dad in the mornings and working out at the gym with friends. Slipping into a bathing suit or the perfect little black dress never phased Clark, but as high school came to an end she stayed in Roanoke to attend Virginia Western Community College, while her workout pals left the area to attend various colleges and universities. It wasn't just too much pizza that caused the freshman 15 to creep onto Clark's 5'2" frame, it was the lifestyle change she experienced. Juggling a full-time school schedule, a job and the role of student government president during her second year, Clark began to exercise less, sit more and her eating became erratic.

training facility, with goals of improving her overall health, lowering stress levels and returning to her previous fitness level.

Functional core training is a holistic approach to integrating both training and conditioning for optimal results. At Xcelerated Performance, Kurvits and Statum work with clients to rectify imbalances in the core muscles and to train towards the goals of the client.

"When you have good core stabil-



After. Closely working with Krista Kurvits enabled Clark to lose inches – four from the hips alone.

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close attention to her portions, stop eating before completely full, eat whole foods and consider supplements.

"The program was easy to incorporate into my lifestyle," says Clark.

The main focus was on exercise. Specifically, Kurvits wanted to improve Clark's strength and her cardio endurance.

As a result of the 12-week program, Clark has gone from doing push-ups on her knees to being able to do "real" push-ups – 12 from the floor and 20 from a slight incline. She also increased the free weights she was lifting.

"I was amazed at the fact that I was doing chest flies with a 25 pound weight in each hand," exclaims Clark.

Her lower abdominal strength improved substantially. She went from doing a one-leg lift to doing a two. Much harder.

As for legs, one of the exercises Clark worked to improve on was "step-ups", a simple motion of stepping on and off of a four-inch tall block. To start with, Kurvits had Clark stepping up one leg at a time to work on her single leg strength with hand weights of about six pounds each. As the weeks went by Clark worked her way up to doing the step ups with a 45-pound bar resting on her shoulders, and finally adding 20 pounds onto that. As the weight increased, Kurvits also increased the height of the block to amplify the exercises.

To increase cardio endurance, Clark practiced on a timed circuit in Kurvits' studio. It consisted of a series of exercises that included a fast shuffle between cones, agility work through a flexible ladder, sit ups with a weighted ball, ball slams, squats and dashing between two inclines – all for time. Those times decreased every time she did them.

"The first time I ever did the timed circuit I completed it in three minutes and eight seconds," says Clark. "The very last

time I did it I completed it in two minutes and twenty-four seconds."

Another one of her goals was to increase her running pace, and she has done just that.

"I usually plod along at a pace of a 12 minute mile, but now my quarter mile time has gotten down to 2:06," Clark says with a smile.



Measuring progress. Kurvits took fat caliper measurements to assure that as Clark lost inches she was losing fat and not muscle.

So her strength, speed and endurance had all increased, but what about her appearance? Were people noticing changes?

Not only were other people noticing her body toning up, but even Clark's toughest critic -herself- couldn't help but smile when looking in the mirror.

Her dress size went down one and then some. At the six-week point in her program Clark's warmer weather skirts had become baggy and loose, pushing her into the mall for some skirts a size smaller than her usual. Now, at the conclusion of her program those smaller sized skirts have become too loose for her hips to hold on to. Even the piece of clothing that most women struggle with had gone from being too tight to too loose – her jeans.

"I ran into Xcelerated Performance one day and showed Krista and Hayward that I could pull my jeans down without even unbuttoning them," Clark says.

"I have never been so humored and so proud at the same time when Andrea ran into our studio and started pulling her pants off," Kurvits laughs in remembrance, "Being able to physically see and feel your clothing getting larger is a true testament that what you are doing for your body is actually working."

With her final measurements taken, it is easy to see why Clark's clothes weren't fitting anymore. She had lost nearly 11 inches from her body measurements in only 12 weeks. Some of the major losses included two inches in her thigh as measured from six inches above the knee; one and one-fourth inches lost in her thigh gauged from eight inches above the knee; one and three-fourths inches from her waist; and an astounding four inches from her hips. These dramatic drops along with other smaller losses from all over her body factored into her remarkable transformation.

In addition, Kurvits performed measurements with fat calipers to check that as Clark was losing size, she was losing fat and not muscle. Clark lost five millimeters of fat from her lower abs; arm measurements didn't change size, but two mm of fat were lost from the front of her arm and three mm shed from the back of her arm. For a total of 10 mm of fat gone.

"Fat calipers are used to show that a person is in fact losing fat and not muscle, and it was pleasing to see that Andrea was doing just that," says Kurvits.

Another pleasant surprise that came to Clark was that her old injuries didn't affect her progress in Kurvits' program. This was because Kurvits was instructing Clark to improve her single-leg strength, which made her knee and hip significantly stronger.

"At the beginning of every session she'd ask how my hip felt," says Clark, "As we progressed through the 12 weeks I was able to tell her it felt fine more days than not. Here at the end I can't even remember the last time it bothered me. I've not had to take any ibuprofen for my hip in at least a month," Clark also adds "My knee never seemed to bother me at all and we did quite a bit of jumping, running and squats."

"Andrea is such a dedicated person, she really poured her heart and soul into this program which made working with her a joy," Kurvits says.

"I want to continue toning up and losing sizes this way," says Clark, "It wasn't quick and it certainly wasn't easy, but when I'd lost weight quickly before I got sick every single time. Doing it this way



Smaller jeans. Perhaps the best payoff for all of the hard work – a new pants size.

allows me to gain strength as I get smaller without getting a cold or stomach bug every other week."

With a renewed confidence and a wealth of motivation, Clark plans to continue with her healthy new lifestyle. She hopes to improve her fitness levels and we'll check in with her in the January/February wrap up of The Roanoker's makeover series.

To learn more about Andrea Clark's fitness makeover visit our website at www.theroanoker.com.

For more information on functional core training call Krista Kurvits at 330-3936 or Hayward Statum II at 580-9939, or visit them at Oak Grove Plaza, 2009 Suite K Electric Road.

-Lauren Eubank



Krista Kurvits. She found functional core training to be the missing link for her clients and herself.

Krista Kurvits: Xcelerated Performance Brings People to Peak Fitness Levels

Imagine a method of exercising that strengthens your core muscles and trains you in such a way that everyday tasks become easier. The risk of injuries is minimized. This is functional core training (FCT).

FCT trainers Krista Kurvits and husband Hayward Statum II are co-owners of Xcelerated Performance, Roanoke's first functional core training facility.

Kurvits and Statum were personal trainers certified by the National Academy of Sports Medicine for nearly seven years before Kurvits fell in love with FCT at a fitness conference in Richmond three years ago.

"It was like the missing link to what I was doing with bodybuilding," says Kurvits. "I realized this was what I was looking for and got real excited."

Kurvits and Statum left their personal trainer jobs at a large Roanoker gym and opened Xcelerated Performance in April, 2004. Already they've had to expand their space to accommodate more clients. Kurvits believes that getting results they can feel is

what makes her clients keep coming back for more.

"They can actually see the improvements in their movement patterns," says Kurvits. "Basketball players can jump higher and dancers can kick a leg up and be far more stable than before."

Athletes are not the only people who benefit from FCT. One of Kurvits' clients finds gardening easier - even after a long winter off since she is in better physical shape.

"At the beginning of every warm season she had aches and pains after gardening," says Kurvits. "After working with me one day a week she got to next spring and had no problems whatsoever."

That is the perhaps the biggest benefit of functional core training. Devotees find everything easier from gardening to gran joles. After all, fitness is about more than having six-pack abs, which FCT can also give you.

For more information call Krista Kurvits at 330-3936 or Hayward Statum II at 580-9939.

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