

# What Makes A Patch?



October 18, 2007 - Casey Lyon

## **What constitutes a Patch workout?**

Well, the Patch is born from the idea that our environment is our bodies' playground. Every environment is potentially a play zone. And the only limit to our play consists of our own creative limitations. What to do and how much to do may be dictated by space and time restraints. But, more importantly, how we interact with our environment is key to gaining a fun workout. Children instinctively understand this principal, and since we were all children at one time, it serves as our common frame of reference as we begin to play again.

# PATCH FUNDAMENTALS

There are six fundamental components to a Patch workout:

- 1) GO OVER SOMETHING.
- 2) GO UNDER SOMETHING.
- 3) GO AROUND SOMETHING.
- 4) CHALLENGE AND REMOVE YOUR LIMITATIONS.
- 5) USE MULTIPLE ENVIRONMENTS.
- 6) HAVE FUN!

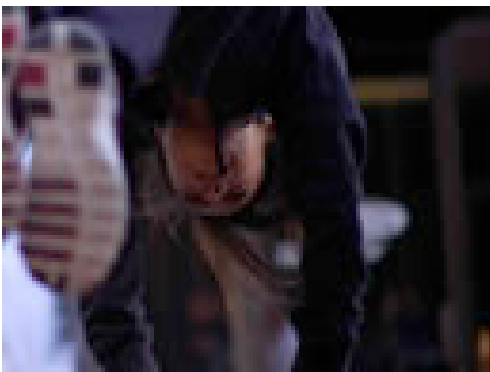


## 1) GO OVER SOMETHING

Climbing is a function of the human body and can be done in various ways. We can use our hands and feet in a unified effort to scale a wall or climb a tree; we can rebound from wall to wall in a shift of momentum like those performing Parkour feats; we can vault our bodies up and over a fence using our upper body as a fulcrum; and the list goes on. However, “go over something” does not only refer to the act of climbing. It means take the body over an object in any possible manner.

Stepping up onto a bench or rolling over an obstacle can satisfy the requirement as well. Moving over an obstacle is commonly seen as different or scary as we get older but is a common way to approach obstacles as a child. Remember when climbing a tree was as natural as walking? Or hopping over a wall or the neighbor’s fence? We were conditioned to avoid doing those movements as we got older. We’d hear directives like “get off of that” or “don’t climb up there” and thus we were conditioned only to retreat around obstacles, and trees became only for sitting under.

Stand up and step over your chair right now! There is a movement that you don’t often associate with a chair. I guess they are not just for sitting anymore.



## 2) GO UNDER SOMETHING

Ever have to get down on the floor and look under the couch for your missing keys?

In an age where we are taught to bend a certain way or we are told to lift with our legs, and so forth, we are more and more conditioned to the world above our waist. The act of picking something up sets into motion an instruction booklet of procedures rather than instincts. When did getting down on the floor or bending over become such a chore?

No doubt it has something to do with all of the back pain alarmists and our own fear that bending is somehow an unnatural movement. We begin to believe that the body is not designed to move under things. Or even worse, we think that it is so fragile that it must be supported at all times when bending.

Getting on the floor also represents a non-adult-like activity. It gets us dirty, messes up our manicures, stains our clothing, and other such bothersome occurrences. These are perhaps valid concerns—and also a sign that maybe fun was had! You know children are having a great time when they return from playing outside with all kinds of grass stains and dirt on their clothing. It is nothing a little soap and water can't get out. And the health benefits far outweigh the time and energy required for clean-up!



### **3) GO AROUND SOMETHING**

*If life were just forward and backward, we would constantly be waiting in lines.*

Moving around obstacles is already a part of our common, every-day functions. If we are driving, we take detours. If we are in a line that is too long at the grocery store, we move to the one with fewer customers, and so on. When we approach obstacles in life in this manner we are avoiding unnecessary delays, or potential accidents, zigzagging in the name of efficiency.

Moving around something in a Patch workout means to do so with deliberation and effort. The goal is neither to save time nor to avoid hazardous situations. It is zigging and zagging for zigzagging sake. Going side to side or switching direction is a natural human function. And in times with less technology at our disposal, our ability to move around obstacles and change direction could have meant the difference between catching dinner and being dinner.

### **4) CHALLENGE & REMOVE YOUR LIMITATIONS**



As you progress through a workout of your own design, it is important to understand your own limitations. Limitations may show up as hesitations or a demonstrated, real, physical inability to perform certain movements. As a Patch FUNstructor, observing these limits is your first priority. The participants will be well aware of their own limitations and may wish, at least at first, to avoid movements that will exploit these limitations. When this happens, your encouragement is needed for them to attempt the movement again. In a group setting, participants can provide each other with support; at other times it will need to come from the FUNstructor.

There may be times when a member of the group does not recognize a limitation is showing up as they perform the workout. There is a lot of energy being created and used during a Patch workout, and sometimes we can get carried away with the time we are having and awareness of the actual movements may be lacking. Fun is our overall goal with every workout—it is not important to overly correct the form—but, it may be necessary to point out someone's preferences when doing certain movements such as when dismounting from the "O" Course, or favoring a particular side when doing field work. Once the participant is made aware of the preference, it is up to them to try and balance the form, fun, and fear.

## 5) USE MULTIPLE ENVIRONMENTS

The Patch is everywhere! Throughout your day, you come across numerous places that could accommodate a Patch workout: bus stop, park, living room, picnic table, a wall, hiking trail, stairway, etc. All can become Patch playgrounds. Your imagination is the key to turning these random spaces into a workout! Tapping in to your creative side is where much of the fun is generated. Locations that were never considered to be fitness oriented now become your playground. Inspiration and fun are the inevitable result.

Now, with the availability of both outdoor and indoor “O” Courses, it is easier and more convenient than ever to let your imagination run wild.

We can transform our environment into Patch playgrounds.



## 6) HAVE FUN!

A belief in our own possibilities as physical and emotional beings is what drives the message of The Patch. Fun is a universal feeling that allows us to be free of rules and structure, free of judgment, and free of the work associated with being healthy. Our children are the teachers when it comes to having fun and all that is really required of us is that we begin.

# Go play!

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## TIME TO PLAY...

Take a few moments to walk through some of the familiar places you frequent and look at them with your imaginative workout eye. Could any be transformed into a Patch? Do you need an “O” Course? Get creative.

Take a tripod and a video camera to these spots and film a few minutes of video; take it home and review, and put together some exercises you could perform here. You just created your own Patch workout!

