



# BOOT CAMP BASICS

## The tools you need for maximum performance

**A**lthough fancy gyms with high-tech treadmills and expensive selectorized machines with lots of bells and whistles are here to stay, the fastest growing trend in athletic and physical fitness is the smaller, hardcore “boot camp” gym. This type of training is called “functional,” as its focus is on bodyweight and free-weight exercise. But whatever you call it, it’s one of the

fastest ways for ex-athletes and want-to-be-athletes to lose weight and get back in shape. Let’s talk.

Health clubs often print promotional brochures that have lots of photos of slender clients working out on their cardio equipment. But the truth is that often these “clients” are professional models who are not members of these clubs (seriously, look at the people working out in these brochures

Boot camp training is a superior method of training for fat loss, and involves the use of basic equipment such as the BFS Push/Pull Sled.

and then go to these clubs and try to find them). And although there are many people who are thin who perform cardio training and *only* cardio training, the fact is aerobic training is not the most effective way to get lean – and it’s certainly not an effective way to build muscle.

One problem with aerobic training is that it produces high levels of cortisol, a stress hormone that interferes

with the body's ability to build muscle and can actually cause the body to gain fat! As proof, a research study was performed on aerobic instructors to determine the optimal amount of training needed to lose weight. The researchers found that the instructors who had the highest bodyfat levels (over 24 percent) were the ones who taught the most classes! Renowned strength coach Charles Poliquin calls this cortisol-fattening effect "The Chunky Aerobics Instructor Syndrome." Further, it's been shown that aerobic training produces exceptionally high levels of free radicals, biochemicals that increase the risk of illness.

The fastest way to lose weight is with resistance training protocols that promote the release of growth hormone, a peptide hormone manufactured in the hypothalamus that helps regulate bodyfat. Hala Rambie, a Romanian exercise scientist who moved to West Germany, found that the best way to increase growth hormone production was with weight training protocols that use high reps and short rest intervals. What happens is that the short rest intervals produce high levels of lactic acid in the blood, which decreases the blood pH level, which in turn stimulates the release of growth hormone.

Since Rambie's work was published, other researchers have come to the same conclusion about using resistance training programs with short rest intervals. "Peer-reviewed research has shown that interval-type training produces a greater loss of subcutaneous fat than conventional training," says Paul Gagné, a Canadian strength coach who has trained numerous Olympians and professional hockey players. Gagné was actually a test subject in one such research study, which was published in the July 1994 issue of *Metabolism*.



Kettlebells, dumbbells and dumbbell racks are a must for any boot camp program.

The study was called "Impact of Exercise Intensity on Body Fatness and Skeletal Muscle Metabolism." The authors concluded, "The results of the present study show that for a given level of energy expenditure, a high-intensity training program includes a greater loss of subcutaneous fat compared with a training program of moderate intensity."

## Gearing Up for Boot Camp

This research into energy system training led Gagné to develop a fat loss interval-training program for his athletes, especially professional hockey players, that involved using medicine balls, push-pull sleds and even sledgehammers! Likewise, many boot camp programs have been springing up all across the country that focus on providing this type of, as Gagné calls it, "Radical Energy System Training."

If you're running a boot camp facility, or using this type of training with your athletes (or even doing it yourself in a home gym), BFS can provide you with exactly the type of quality equipment at a great price. Here are some of these products.

## Kettlebells

Unlike a dumbbell, which has two weights on each side of a single handle, the kettlebell has a U-shaped handle attached to a single round weight that looks like an old-style cannonball. The thick handle (usually thicker than on standard dumbbells) is necessary to provide a secure hold. Having the handle positioned farther from the center of mass than it is on a dumbbell allows for several release movements (in which you let go of the handle at the completion of a repetition) and swinging exercises to be performed more easily and safely than with a dumbbell. Also, consider that virtually any exercise you can perform with a dumbbell you can perform with a kettlebell.

With prices starting at under \$20, BFS offers thick-handled kettlebells in 12 weight increments: 10 pounds, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 60, 70 and 80. These *poods*, as they are often referred to, have a polished black finish and a durable rubber base.

## Dumbbells

Dumbbells are here to stay, and BFS has settled on two major types. Our economy versions have the highest durability (ASTM grade – 20

Iron), contoured steel handles, and a comfortable grip with consistent knurling. They range in weight from 1 to 100 pounds. We also have beautiful rubber-encased dumbbells that are made with a super tough rubber and that range in weight from 2.5 pounds to 125 pounds. We also offer 2-tier and 3-tier dumbbell racks, and our heavy-duty dumbbell racks now come standard with welded steel end caps.

### Plyo Boxes

To properly conduct conditioning classes with plyometric boxes, coaches

should make certain to have access to boxes of various heights. Whereas the standard plyometric box for high school athletes is 20 inches, it's often necessary to have boxes as low as 10 inches, such as when training younger or heavier individuals. For safety reasons, boxes should be solid rather than open, as a trainee's feet can get caught in an open plyometric box.

Many of our competitors have tried to copy the design of our plyo boxes, which we have been manufacturing for over three decades. The reason is that ours have the safest

design with solid sidewalls and a pyramid shape. Our plyo boxes are made of sturdy 3/4-inch plywood, have 3/8-inch nonslip rubber tops, and can be easily stacked for storage. Our sizes range from 10 to 42 inches, and are available in custom colors.

### Bumper Plates

To save your barbells and your floors, rubber bumper plates are a must. The first bumper plates were primarily smaller-diameter weight plates with a rubber strip attached to the rims. They were certainly an improvement over solid steel plates, but they are not as durable as solid rubber. Plus, with steel prices being what they are, solid rubber bumper plates have become much more economical.

Our most economical bumper plates are composed of high-quality solid rubber with brass inserts. Our sizes include 10 pounds (for teaching purposes), 15, 25, 35 and 45. We also have solid-color stock bumpers (25, 35 and 45 pounds), and vertical and horizontal bumper plate racks.

### Platforms and Olympic Barbells

Bumper plates are great, but dropping heavy weights can easily damage a bare floor and can even crack the foundation. The early platforms were primarily wood, but the major problem with wood is that it can warp, which creates an unstable surface to lift on. Wood can also chip easily, especially around the corners, and as such often needs to be replaced when the divots create a safety issue. Polyurethane surfaces are also not a smart choice; they are sticky (like a basketball court) and do not allow the feet to slide easily for lifts such as power cleans and jerks.

The best surface for a platform combines rubber and a special vinyl



BFS came out with safe, durable plyo boxes over 30 years ago.





If you're going to use Olympic lifting exercises in a boot camp workout, the basic tools are platforms, barbells and bumper plates.

surface we call Protect-All®, which is placed on top of two layers of heavy rubber for shock absorption. Protect-All is an attractive gray surface that is easy to clean and extremely durable and has three to four times the life span of wood or polyurethane. Also, the surface can be customized with logos.

## Barbells and Hex Bars

BFS offers a variety of multipurpose and powerlifting barbells to fit any budget. We also have lightweight barbells, such as our 15-pound Aluma Lite bar, that can be used for teaching purposes. And we also offer a variety of hex bars, which are hexagonal barbells that allow the user to perform exercises from inside the encompassing bars. This design allows the hands to be placed at the sides of the body and for

the athlete to maintain a much more upright stance, which places less compressive forces on the spine. Our hex bars come in weights of 15 pounds, 45 pounds, 50 pounds and 75 pounds. We also offer hex bars with special handles that are more appropriate for taller athletes, as they allow enable the exercises to be performed at a higher starting position.

## Medicine Balls

Medicine balls are weighted spheres designed primarily for throwing and catching. They are great for warm-ups, core training and high-repetition energy-system training. Our medicine balls are thick, with durable rubber shells that are easy to grip. The weights available are 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 pounds, and we have three- and six-ball vertical storage racks.

## Push/Pull Sled

Pulling and pushing weighted sleds is a great lower body workout, and BFS offers a sled that is versatile and affordable. The BFS Push/Pull Sled can be pulled with the use of a specially designed harness, and pushed (with poles that enable you to run from either a low or an upright position). It is designed to be used on concrete, asphalt or any hard surface. The frame is made with heavy, 11-gauge steel tubing, and the slide plates are made of 3/8-inch solid steel. The unit comes with two Olympic plate holders.

If you're interested in learning more about these and our other boot camp training products, check out our e-store at [biggerfasterstronger.com](http://biggerfasterstronger.com). You'll find our selection, and our prices, are exactly what you need to join the boot camp revolution. BFS



Additional equipment popular in boot camp workouts are hex bars, which come in several variations, and medicine balls.

# PLYO BOXES

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# PLATEAU BUSTERS!

## KETTLE BELLS.

This versatile equipment has gained a large following and BFS can see a variety of exercises that could be incorporated into auxiliary days of the BFS Total Program. 5 through 100 lbs!



## MEDICINE BALLS.

Great for core work and used in countless ways. Medicine balls have long been a fixture in gyms and weight rooms. 6 ball set with rack \$239



## RACKS

Don't forget the rack for your medicine balls.  
Keep your weight room organized

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