

Another Get Up Article

But, the first from this perspective

The turkish get up. What else can be said about this lift/drill/exercise? There are entire DVD's devoted to the benefit of TGU. I've been to workshops that are "an inch wide, and a mile deep" about the TGU. So why should you sit through ANOTHER article about the greatest exercise ever? Because, if you don't you won't fully understand WHY it is so great. Often times, people get so hung up on trying to understand something at the expense of forgetting to do what they are trying to understand. Other times, people do the opposite; jumping in and doing something without understanding why it is so good. We can discuss which approach is better, and why the other one is wrong, but the TGU is a great example of how we can meet in the middle. If you know nothing about the TGU other than how to do it correctly, you will be on great path to a better you. But, if you are going to teach the TGU and share its benefits with other people you owe it to you, your tradecraft, and the person you will be helping to know more.

The get up probably encompasses more attributes of physical training/movement practice/strength training than any other single lift. It covers mobility AND stability. It covers strength AND flexibility. It hits core strength AND prime mover strength. It is alpha AND omega. From a movement standpoint, it covers the entire gamut of the developmental sequence as perfectly as anything possibly could. I wrote an article previously about how it accomplished all the same things crawling covers and then some. But if we look deeper at it, it covers much more. There are a literal TON of variations and progression/regressions within the TGU that can keep someone busy for years. Which are good, which will benefit what you are working on and which are a waste for you? There is so much information on this topic that it can be easy to get lost trying to understand the TGU - paralysis by analysis.

Lets go through each component of the TGU and line it up with the patterns from the NDS that make that portion of the get up so awesome. First though, what are these patterns of the NDS? That is an entire other article. But, the 10,000 foot view is a sequence of patterns that repeat themselves over and over in every one of the developmental postures. This sequential progression of stability, which is what the patterns are, is:

1. Breathing
2. Head Control
3. Pushing Down
4. Weight Shifting
5. Perturbations
6. Dissociation



Overall, the TGU encompasses all 6 of these (for comparison, the goblet squat is only 3; the swing is only 3; the press is 4). If we look at each component of the TGU, we can see where each of these patterns becomes more dominant.

Roll to press

Weight shifting, pushing down, Perturbation

If we break this portion down, the roll is essentially a shifting of weight. Its not dissociation because the shoulders stay stacked over the hips as we move from side-lying to supine. Once in supine to press the bell into the firing range position, we begin by pushing down into the ground so that we can press the bell away - which is our perturbation.

Transition to Elbow

Pushing down (both heels, elbow), Weight Shift, Perturbation, Dissociation

In the transition up to the elbow, our 3 biggest errors all come from not taking advantage or having a problem with our pushing down pattern. These error all originate from an inability to apply this pattern to this position:

- the straight leg heel popping up
- the non-kb shoulder collapsing up to the ear
- crunching up / the bent heel popping up

Interestingly, there is one single problem that has three different expressions; the fix for all three errors is the exact same - a better focus on pushing down:

- the straight heel - pushing down the long axis of the leg
- the non-kb shoulder- pushing the elbow down into the ground
- crunching up - pushing the bent heel and the non-kb side elbow into the ground.

The position reveals and utilizes the pushing down pattern more-so than any other stage of the TGU. Since this is a lower level pattern, if we see issues in the application of this pattern we will also likely have issues with our weight shifts, perturbations, and dissociations.

Transition to Hand

Pushing down (both heels, hand), Weight shift, perturbation

To get up to the hand, we have to push down into the ground to change levels. Doing this creates a weight shift of our combined center of mass (CCoM) away from the body - we are moving our contacts point from our elbow out to our hand. If people have an incorrect set up - specifically the hand too close to the body- then we will see them intuitively re-adjust by sliding/moving their hand away from the hips so that the CCOM



will shift away. Not many people possess the mobility (hips or t-spine) with the combined stability to be in a completely vertical sitting position with the bell over head, which is why we need to shift our CCOM away from the hips at the stage to create space for the low sweep.

Low sweep

Pushing down (reciprocal limbs), weight shift, dissociation, perturbation

In the low sweep, we are raising our CCOM and decreasing our point of contact with the ground. Doing this requires more stability, which means our patterns have to be even more dialed in than in the prior stages. In order to efficiently raise the hips off the ground, we must push down through our hand and our bend leg foot. As we pull the knee back towards our hand, we must coordinate the weight shifts that occur so that the bell remains stationary (this is a great example of the “moving under the bell” statement we often hear). As we perform this, our hips and shoulders are no longer stacked over each other and we move into a dissociated posture.

Transition to half kneeling

Weight shift, pushing down, perturbation

The transition from our supported open half kneeling position that the low sweep took us to up to half kneeling is actually more complicated than it appears. First, in order to remove our hand from the ground we have 2 options: 1) we incorrectly leverage our shoulders up towards the ceiling. Our hips and shoulders start at roughly the same level and we pull the trunk up off the hand. 2) we shift our hips back towards our heel, which drops the hips below the shoulders and then push the down knee into the ground causing us to change levels as we remove our hand from the ground. Might seem like a very subtle detail, but this subtle detail will allow heavier weights to be used and it will keep your back from not liking this transition in the get up.

At this point we are in an open half kneeling posture and still aren't ready to stand up. We have 2 options here which will accomplish this: 1) windshield wiper the back leg or 2) lift the front foot and rotate to line the lower limbs up. Both will work, and both require shifting the weight to accomplish this. Either can be situationally correct.

Transition to stance

Pushing down, weight shift, perturbation



To move from half kneeling to standing up seems simple - but this is also a point where people are very “wiggly”. We also tend to see people demonstrate a forward lean as they are trying to stand up which pitches the bell forward and leads to nothing that we want. To improve the stability of this transition, we need to capture the pushing down pattern again. To accomplish this, we need to drive down into the ground through the front heel and the ball of the back foot while attempting to bring the knees together. This squeezing sets the stage for our stability which then allows us to shift our weight from an asymmetrical stance, to single leg stance to symmetrical stance while keeping a stable bell overhead.

Then, we repeat the entire process! One of the hallmarks of movement mastery is the ability to reverse the movement at any point - which is true from any stage within the TGU. There are a TON of benefits that come from the TGU - many of these can be explained because of how many postures AND patterns exist within this one movement.

