

American Society of Exercise Physiologists

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Endorses FATS as a Childhood Obesity Solution

Duluth, MN – Performing exercises in which the participant's own body weight is the primary resistance (i.e., pull ups, push ups, dips, and hand stand push ups) automatically improves when the participant loses enough body fat because the workload is reduced. For example, a 150 lb person who loses 25 lb would find it much easier to do pull ups, jump higher, or run faster because they're carrying 16% less resistance. By the same token, the performance of a 150 lb person who gains 25 lb of body fat will deteriorate because the workload has increased.

Exercises that use extrinsic, non-body weight resistance (i.e., weights, plates, springs, and rubber bands) don't enjoy the same automatic performance feedback. Your bench press, for example, won't automatically change just because you lost or gained 25 lb of fat.

Functional Acid Test Strategy (FATS)

This simple recognition has led to a new acronym in the field of childhood obesity prevention. Ironically it's called FATS which stands for *Functional Acid Test Strategy*. In the words of American Society of Exercise Physiologists Past-President and former collegiate gymnast Dr. Tommy Boone, "Certain body weight exercises are challenging enough that obese people can't do them. Pull ups, dips, and handstand push ups for example fall into that category."

One Example of FATS

So the FATS strategy suggests that a child choose one of those challenging body weight exercises as their own *functional acid test*, and then learn to master it. One example is on a program called [Operation Pull Your Own Weight](#) which says, "Kids who can do pull ups are never obese. If you start them early, before they've had a chance to gain much weight, most kids can learn to do pull ups in a predictable amount of time. And once they've learned to do pull ups, they're immunized against obesity for life, as long as they maintain the ability." A simpler, more cost effective solution to childhood obesity would be hard to imagine.

Focusing on the Positive

The beauty of the FATS orientation is that it focuses on a child's strength development (all kids want to be strong at everything) instead of focusing on the

negative and embarrassing concept of fat loss. With this extremely positive approach kids see it as cool, they buy in, and in a predictable period of time they can *naturally immunize themselves against obesity for life*.

Simple, Easily Documented, and Affordable

In Boone's words, "At ASEP we endorse active lifestyles and nutritious eating habits across the board. But we believe that the simplicity and positive character of the FATS orientation to childhood obesity prevention has something special to bring to this long and frustrating debate. It could be what we've been looking for all along. It's simple, easily implemented, documented, and afforded. Those kinds of assets are hard to beat these days."