



interview with Paul Swainson about



Personal Trainer Chris Kershaw recently interviewed Creating Chaos Master Trainer Paul Swainson about Primal Flow™, an exercise concept tipped for great things in 2013

CK: Hi Paul, thanks for talking to us. So, what is Primal Flow™?

PS: Primal Flow™ is, in a nutshell, a bodyweight training system which maximises the movement potential of the human body. The system allows you to create an unlimited number of exercises using natural movement patterns such as pulling, pushing, squatting and crawling, and put them into a workout structure which has a more functional carry over to sports and activities than traditional exercise formats whilst enhancing enjoyment and motivation to train.

Essentially it's about building sequences of movements rather than repeating the same movement for a certain number of repetitions as in normal resistance training. Watch a few videos online and that will give you a better idea. As we say to anyone who asks, it's very difficult to explain in words, so the best way to understand it is to do it!

CK: It's definitely changed the way I train people! How did it come about?

PS: It was the brain child of Phill and Jenny Wright, the directors of Creating Chaos and was inspired by a combination of factors. When they began delivering bootcamps for example, minimal equipment was available and there was a need for exercises that can be performed in a field. Also the fact many clients prefer to exercise at home rather than the gym and therefore want a more practical system without expensive gadgets and weights was a driving factor. Being an educator in the fitness industry, Phill is often asked for new exercise ideas. Now you could just create a list of body weight exercises, but as the saying goes, 'give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime'. So Phill thought 'why not devise a complete system that enables you to create your own exercises?'

CK: On the Primal Flow™ instructor course, you talk about how the system could be beneficial for injury prevention. Can you explain a bit more about that?

PS: We're certainly not saying that doing Primal Flow™ will mean you don't get injured, but the philosophy behind it means it could help reduce the risks for a couple of reasons. Firstly, we can broadly say that injury occurs when the joints of the body find themselves in a position they have no experience of, for example a range of motion they haven't been to before or an angle they aren't used to. In other words, the neuromuscular system has no 'knowledge' of how to recover from that position. If we can improve the body's proprioception of as many different positions, angles and ranges as possible, it greatly reduces the chances of it finding itself in an unknown place. The way to achieve this is to add as much variety as possible to the movements someone engages in, in a progressive way. PF is all about exploring the movement potential of the body and essentially expanding its comfort zone.

If you think about it, thousands of years ago before transport and technology intervened, humans performed primal movements as part of their survival. Running, walking, jumping, climbing and throwing were daily activities but they weren't done with strict control and technique, there was huge variation in the terrain being crossed and the directions moved in for example, so the body had to adapt to multiple stresses.

The second advantage of the system is its sequential nature which means that we don't repeat the same movement pattern consecutively for more than 45-60 seconds generally, depending on the aim of the programme. This minimises the risk of pattern overload which can occur when taking joints through exactly the same path of motion repeatedly, as often happens with overuse of fixed-path machines. Going back to the human of the past, they wouldn't have thrown a spear 20 times in succession, run for an hour then squatted 15 times to pick something up, they would most likely have performed each movement once or for a limited period of time (throwing a spear at prey, running after it briefly then bending down to retrieve it before carrying it back home). So Primal Flow™ reflects this sequenced approach to movement.

It is becoming gradually more accepted in the industry that working one movement or isolating one muscle repeatedly has limited benefit. Primal Flow™ is the natural 'evolution' of the whole body, integrated approach, which is ironic given it is how we were designed to move in the first place!

CK: Apparently bodyweight training is going to be a popular trend in 2013...

PS: Indeed. The ACSM's predicted top fitness trends for 2012 include bodyweight training at number 3, the only new entry in the top 10. That's probably a combination of economic reasons which mean people want to exercise without spending money on expensive equipment, and also a growing appreciation of 'back to basics' training approaches.

Traditional body weight training tends to focus on the same exercises that have been around forever such as squats, press ups, planks and ab curls. Although there's nothing inherently wrong with these, by offering a complete system together with unlimited exercise possibilities, Primal Flow™ provides something completely new - it is the 'evolution of body weight training' as the strap line says.

CK: So what's the next step for the concept?

PS: In early 2013 we'll be launching PrimalFlow.com. As well as information on training courses, videos and resources for both the public and trainers, we believe there's huge potential for the system to become the next big thing in group exercise. It's so versatile in terms of the results that can be achieved - fat loss, health improvements, strength and sports conditioning to name a few, but perhaps the most important part is fun. Everyone who tries it enjoys it and comments how quickly time flies when you have to focus on what you're doing instead of getting bored of the same exercise for 45 minutes.

So anyone who completes the instructor course has the opportunity to become a Primal Flow™ licensee and will benefit from a support structure and branding which we will provide to help them set up classes in their area.

CK: Thanks for talking to us Paul. Where can people find out more information?

PS: No problem. For now, you can follow us on Twitter: [@PrimalFlow](https://twitter.com/PrimalFlow), or Like the Facebook page: Facebook.com/PrimalFlow. The website will be up in the New Year but if you want to contact us directly, send an email to info@creatingchaos.co.uk