

# Special Report



# 5 Worst Exercises for Firefighters

## STOP DOING THESE!

*By Aaron Zamzow, BS CPT*

**To All Firefighters, EMTs and Paramedics,**  
**The time is now to make a positive change in our industry. Eat right, exercise and set an example for the community. I hope this program can help you obtain a higher level of fitness and get you “Fit for Duty.”**

**Stay Safe and “Train like a life depends on it.”**

**-Aaron Zamzow**



**Disclaimer:**

This information in this report is for education purposes only. It is not medical advice and is not intended to replace the advice or attention of health-care professionals. It is meant to supplement, not replace, proper exercise training. All recommendations in this book are not medical guidelines but are for educational purposes only. Be aware that all forms of exercise and stretching pose some inherent risk. The author advises readers to take full responsibility for their safety and know their own limitations. Before practicing the exercises, activities, and stretches in this book, please be sure that your equipment is well-maintained and do not take risks beyond your level of experience, aptitude, skill and fitness. Consult your physician before beginning or making changes in your diet or exercise program, for diagnosis and treatment of illness and injuries, and for advice regarding medications.

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## **The 5 Worst Exercises for the Fire Rescue Athlete.**

Fire Rescue Athletes (firefighters, EMTs and paramedics) must be physically ready to act. The job entails lifting heavy objects (or people), climbing up stairs, dragging hose line, hoisting ladders, along with other physically taxing movements. It is evident that in order to effectively do this job, you must have a strong and balanced body. Workouts and especially exercises must then match the demands of the job and prepare the body for such stress.

Now, I know that I am going to get a lot of “flack” for writing this article but I feel that it needs to be done. Exercise is meant to help you, right? Unfortunately, there are certain “exercises” that are very commonly used in most Fire Rescue Athletes’ workouts that are actually harmful. These exercises are being performed in firehouses (and gyms) all over the world and are actually bad for your joints and are useless when it comes to building functional strength or losing fat. These five exercises (there are more) were selected because they create muscle imbalances, have minimal functional benefit to the fire rescue athlete, and/or put joints into an unsafe position.

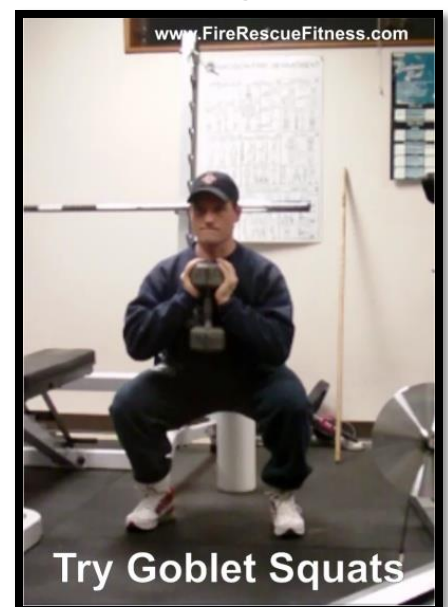
**1) Leg Presses**—Yep, probably one of the most popular exercises really isn't the best for you. Here's why; the leg press creates muscle imbalances, has zero functional benefit, and puts the knee and hip joints in unsafe positions. The muscle imbalances occur because the quads are generally stronger than hamstrings and the leg press reinforces this problem. An imbalance between your quadriceps and hamstrings can quickly result in a number of knee issues, including patellofemoral (kneecap) and meniscus damage. Even worse, when your quads overpower your hamstrings, it's not uncommon to develop restrictions in these muscles as your body attempts to even things out. These restrictions lead to increased pull on the top of your pelvis, tipping it forward, and placing pressure (and pain) in your lower back.

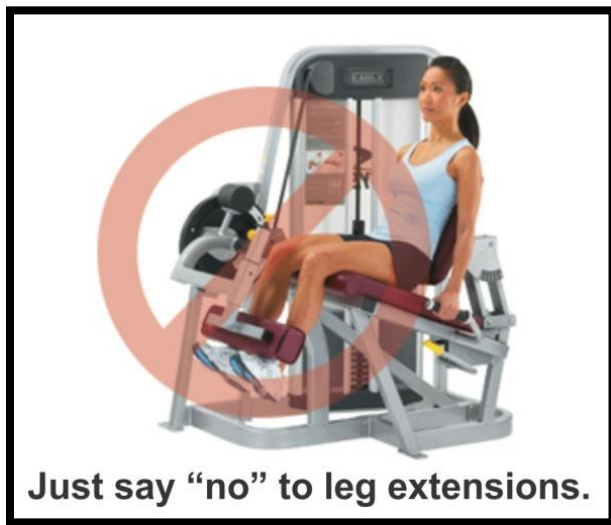


Need more reasons not to leg press? In most cases, when people are doing the leg press, they aren't coming down to a full 90 degrees of knee flexion, which is needed for getting in/out of a chair, lifting a cot, and climbing ladders. The leg press also supports your upper torso which takes the core component out of the exercise and doesn't strengthen the abs or low back.

**What exercises should you do instead (alternatives)?** There are some great functional alternative exercises like goblet squats, split squats, lunges and single- leg touchdowns.

**2) Leg Extensions**- First leg presses, now leg extensions? Yes, leg extensions are a very over-rated



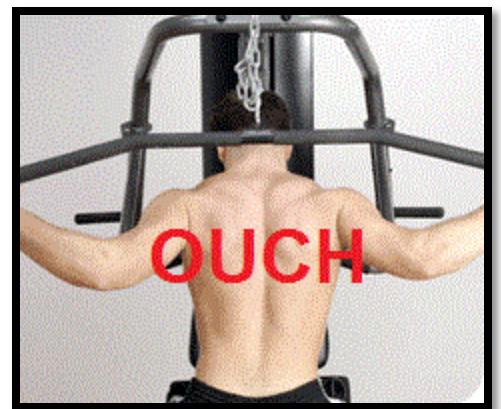


exercise. Now, before I get into why, I do have to say that they can have their place in a rehab situation but only when recommended and supervised by a physical therapist. Leg extensions, like the leg press can reinforce muscle imbalances. This exercise isolates the quads and can add to the quad to hamstring muscle

imbalance which puts a tremendous amount of torque on the knee. Think about a long screwdriver and a short screwdriver. It's easier to use the long one because you can generate more torque with the longer distance. In the case of the leg extension, the muscles worked are above the knee but the weight is applied below the ankle. Think about that distance... that's a lot of torque on the knees.

Alternative exercises: Instead of doing the leg extension, choose a more functional, compound movement such as squats, deadlifts, or lunges.

**3) Behind the Neck Pulldown or Presses**- This motion is by far the worst for the shoulder. Why? It puts a tremendous amount of stress on the rotator cuff and can lead to terrible neck strain. Watch someone do this exercise with heavy weight, they externally rotate their shoulders and jet their head forward. Honestly, if you have ever injured your shoulder or neck, you know the minimal strength gain from this exercise isn't worth the risk.



Alternative exercises: Pull-ups, TRX row, V-grip pulldown to the chin, presses in front of the head, body row, standing dumbbell rows or press...



**4) Machine Leg Curls-** Yep, another leg machine that you should not use, add this to the list with the leg press and leg extension. The main reason you shouldn't do this exercise is that it places a lot of force on the distal hamstring, rather than proximal. This results in increased pressure behind the knee which

then increases the potential for damage and fluid buildup. Also, I can't think of any reason you would perform an isolated movement like this in daily life, especially on the fire ground. This is a question of torque on the knee again. Also, in this case, the hamstrings tend to cramp a lot, which isn't necessarily a good thing or necessary at all.

Alternative exercises: deadlifts, good mornings, glute-ham raises, and/or single leg touchdowns...



**5) Bicep Preacher Curls-** I know what you're thinking; how can you sculpt my "guns" without this exercise? Well, first of all this exercise is awful for your posture- it forces the shoulders to round forward which leads to increased tension on the rotator cuff and biceps tendon. This extra tension can lead to rotator cuff tendonitis, biceps tendonitis, and increase the risk of capsule tears in the shoulder (all are very painful). Also, the biceps flex the arm at the elbow and also act in supinating the hand (meaning it turns your palm up). Preacher curls only work on elbow flexion, which means you're missing 50% of the muscle's action... not very effective.

Alternative exercises: Dumbbell curls, dumbbell hammer curls, cable curls, and/or performing curls in any standing position.

**BONUS worst exercise:** Long, slow cardio. Why? It's ineffective and a waste of time. Think about the work we do as Fire Rescue Athletes, usually its go, stop, go, stop, and go some more. Long, slow cardio doesn't simulate anything we do...

Alternatives to long slow cardio: Intervals, metabolic conditioning, bodyweight circuits, burpees and/or sprints. [You can read more about intervals for fire rescue athletes by clicking here.](#)



The idea of being a fire rescue athlete is to be physically ready for anything, any call, any situation and these exercises do not help you do that. We exercise to be stronger, more agile fire rescue athletes and to live longer, more functional lives. If an exercise has no true benefit to accomplishing any of these goals, then what's the point of doing it? Just because someone tries an exercise in a gym isn't a reason to make this part of your routine. I firmly believe that we as firefighters, EMTs and paramedics need to approach exercise and workouts like athletes do- have a thought process and plan for your workouts.

**Speaking of a program with a thought process.....**

**[Click here to get the FRF Ultimate Fire Rescue Athlete Program today and start losing fat, getting strong, and be the "fittest" on your department.](#)**

## **About Aaron Zamzow and Fire Rescue Fitness...**

My name is Aaron Zamzow. I'm a Firefighter, Training Officer and EMT in Madison Wisconsin and also a certified and degreed Personal Fitness Trainer and author. I am the owner of Fire Rescue Fitness ([www.FireRescueFitness.com](http://www.FireRescueFitness.com)) a company dedicated to creating products and blogs focused on keeping Firefighters, EMTs and Paramedics in top physical condition and "fit for duty."



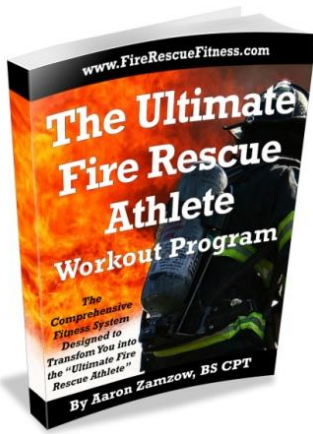
First and foremost, I am a firefighter/ EMT and have been for almost 10 years. I have also been working in the fitness industry as a Personal Trainer and author for 20 years. I've been fortunate to train with elite athletes for the NBA, NHL, and NFL and have studied under some of the top trainers in the world.

Please check out the Fire Rescue Workouts Page for programs created to get and keep you "Fit for Duty." I created Fire Rescue Fitness because I was discouraged by all of the programs on the market claiming to be geared toward firefighters. In most of these cases programs were written by trainers and not by firefighters. I developed the a wide range Fire Rescue Fitness Programs to give Firefighters, EMTs and Paramedics a foundation of fitness that not only gets you "Fit for Duty" but will take your fitness to the next level and keep you "Fit for Duty." All of my programs combine over 20 years of fitness and 10 years of firefighting experience and are endorsed by hundreds of fire rescue athletes and elite trainers.



Were you doing some of the above exercises?

***Get strong, lean and in the best shape of your life. Take a look (scroll down) at these exceptional programs created for fire rescue athletes.***



## FRF Ultimate Fire Rescue Athlete Workout

This is the most comprehensive workout program for Firefighters, EMTs and Paramedics. You will transform your body and take your level of fitness to its highest level. The FRF Ultimate Workout has taken over 10 years to develop and perfect. It is over 12 weeks of planned workouts that will improve every aspect of fitness (conditioning, strength, and power). This program creatively integrates fire ground movements and 10-minute interval overhauls, challenge workouts and build power, strength, muscle, and burn fat. This program is intended for those Fire Rescue Athletes that have been working out but are looking to take their fitness to the highest level. The FRF ultimate workout is the most practical and result producing exercise program for Firefighters, EMTs and Paramedics period.

### The Ultimate Fire Athlete Program includes:

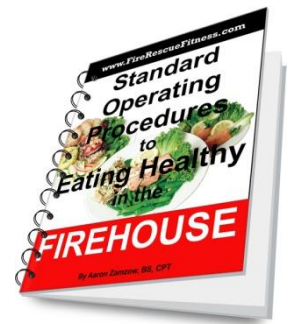
- ✓ 12-week Training calendar
- ✓ 9 full-body efficient and effective workouts
- ✓ Over 10 different Interval cardio workouts
- ✓ Over 100 Exercises including tutorial guides and videos
- ✓ Numerous efficient 10-minute Interval Overhauls
- ✓ Fire Rescue Athlete Training rationale
- ✓ Workout options for on-duty and crew workouts (group workouts)
- ✓ Core exercises and stretches (including a stretch and recovery guide)
- ✓ 5 challenge workouts to motivate and elevate your progress

**BONUS** (If you order today) –The FRF Ultimate Fire Athlete Gym Companion and Log Sheets

**BONUS #2** (If you order today) – The FRF Stretch and Recovery Manual

**DOUBLE BONUS-** Order Today and get the FRF Standard Operating Procedures to Eating Lean in the Firehouse. This guide contains:

- Easy to follow eating guidelines
- The Do's and Don'ts of eating LEAN
- Authorized Food Lists
- Healthy Recipes for you and the crew
- Daily eating plans that follow the guidelines



**[Click here to get more information about The FRF Ultimate Fire Rescue Athlete Workout Program--lose fat, get strong and be the "fittest" on your department.](#)**

**~~Regularly \$59.99~~**

**Order Today for \$29.99**

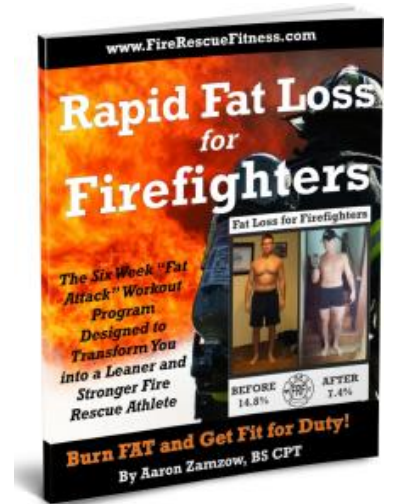
This is a downloadable e-book program. You will NOT receive a physical package shipped to you in the mail. The entire package will be immediately available for you to download and so you can get started right away after ordering. This program is NOT available in stores.

***Or...Check out the New***

## **The FRF Rapid Fat Loss for Firefighters**

Do your turnouts fit a little “tighter” these days? The Rapid Fat Loss for Firefighters program was designed for those Fire Rescue Athletes that want to get leaner and stronger in only 6 weeks. This is a “spin off” of the highly successful FRF Ultimate Fire Rescue Athlete Workout Program (Click here for more information and testimonials about the program). This comprehensive Fat Burning Program creatively integrates fire ground movements, crew workouts, 10-minute metabolic interval overhauls, challenge workouts and will get you stronger, leaner and more efficient on the fire ground. This program is intended for those Fire Rescue Athletes that have fallen off the fitness wagon and need an efficient plan to help get their turnouts and uniform fitting better. The 6-week Rapid Fat Loss Program includes:

- 6-week Rapid Fat Loss Training calendar
- Full-body efficient and effective workouts including 2 challenge workouts
- 4 different Interval cardio workouts including crew workout options
- Over 30 Fat Burning Exercises that will challenge every muscle in your body Exercises Exercise tutorials and video links
- 5 Highly Metabolic Interval Overhauls
- Fire Rescue Athlete Training rationale
- Including workout options for on-duty and crew workouts (group workouts)
- Core exercises and stretches (including a stretch and recovery guide)



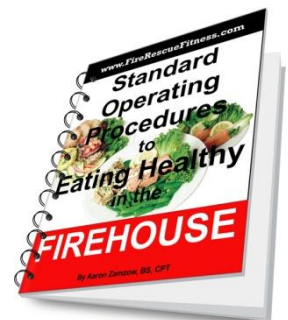
**[Click here to get more information about The FRF Rapid Fat Loss Workout.](#)**

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- Daily eating plans that follow the guidelines



***Regularly \$59.99***

**[Click Here to Order Today for \\$19.99](#)**

This is a downloadable e-book program. You will NOT receive a physical package shipped to you in the mail. The entire package will be immediately available for you to download and so you can get started right away after ordering. This program is NOT available in stores.

***Has it been a while since you have consistently worked out? If you so, the FRF Foundations Program is for you.***

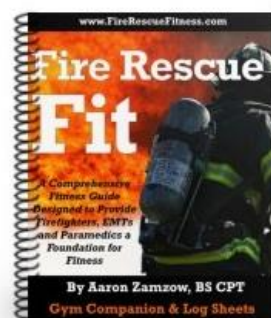
**[FRF Foundations Program](#)**

Courtesy of

**[www.FireRescueFitness.com](http://www.FireRescueFitness.com)**

It all starts with this program. The foundations program was created to help Firefighters, EMTs, and Paramedics lose extra pounds, get stronger, get leaner and be a better Fire Rescue Athlete. If it's been a while since you have been consistent with your workouts or you are coming off a prolonged "break"- this is the program for you. This is a comprehensive 12-week program that includes:

- Training calendar
- Six full-body efficient and effective workouts
- Two challenge workouts
- Interval cardio workouts
- Exercise guides and videos
- Lean eating guidelines
- Daily eating plans
- Fire Rescue Athlete Training rationale
- Authorized food lists
- Core exercises and stretches that will prolong your career



**BONUS (If you order today)** –The FRF Foundations Gym Companion and Log Sheets

- Printable workout calendar
- Printable workout sheets and logs to help you track your progress and use for reference in the gym
- PDF format that you can download on to your android phone, iPad, iPhone and/ or iPod.

**BONUS #2 (If you order today)** – The FRF Stretch and Recovery Manual

**Double BONUS-** Order Today and get the FRF Standard Operating Procedures to Eating Lean in the Firehouse.

- Easy to follow eating guidelines and daily plans
- The Do's and Don'ts of eating LEAN
- Authorized Food Lists
- Healthy Recipes for you and the crew



**[Click HERE for more information or to ORDER the FRF Foundations Workout](#)**

**~~Regularly \$49.99~~**

**Order Today for \$24.99**

*This is a downloadable e-book program. You will NOT receive a physical package shipped to you in the mail. The entire package will be immediately available for you to download and so you can get started right away after ordering. This program is NOT available in store*

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