

Iron Man


Gets Iron Slammed

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As I'm writing this, I'm underway for a six-month deployment with the world-famous Black Eagles aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72). Aside from being the command senior chief, I also have the pleasure of being the command fitness leader. Most people in the squadron affectionately call me the "PT Nazi," but only when I'm not around. I've been through extensive training and fall just short of being a certified personal trainer. I'm an avid runner and biker, and I'm really hardcore about calisthenics and circuit training.

I'd been doing circuit training for years without ever getting injured, which made me think I was above injury. But that was before I encountered what I'll call the "Iron Slam." My rude awakening came one evening in the forward gym as I was doing an abdominal routine to reduce my "love handles." I had a 35-pound weight in my right hand and was leaning toward my right side. With no warning, the ship took a slight roll. That 35 pounds must have doubled, because suddenly I found myself leaning a lot farther than I had intended. I slammed onto the deck. Ouch!

I knew there was a certain amount of danger in using free weights on a ship, especially while it was underway, but I had always thought the danger was only to novices or those out of shape. I was wrong. Many Motrin, Flexeril and Naprocin later, I can tell you the danger is very real to anyone. Now I know that

you have to use extreme caution when using free weights aboard ship, no matter what physical condition you are in or how long you've been working out. Or you could end up like me, "no gain, extreme pain." 



Shipboard isn't the only place to use caution with free weights. Even on a steady surface, the Safety Center recommends you use a spotter.