

MEDICINE BALL

Why use a medicine ball when training?

A medicine ball is a 'large, weighted sphere' that adds weight resistance to exercises. Medicine ball exercises help to develop functional strength. (This is where you combine movement with balance). Medicine ball exercises are more fluid and move through a full range of motion as compared to free weight exercises. These exercises involve throwing, catching, twisting, and turning movements.

There are different types of medicine balls. Leather medicine balls have been around the longest and are ones that are listed by a range of weight (i.e. 12-14 lbs). These types of balls can also bounce. Soft gel medicine balls do not bounce but they are perfect for throwing activities. Medicine balls with handles can be used in the place of dumbbells or can be used during throwing exercises.

Safety

When using a medicine ball it is important to be alert and attentive. Medicine balls are heavy; therefore it is important to have a solid base with throwing and catching exercises. When throwing a ball, you want to fully extend your arms while having a strong base of support. When catching a ball, make sure to catch with both hands with fingers spread. Upon catching the ball you want to continue to move your hands in a backward motion to absorb the force.

When choosing the weight of the medicine ball make sure you can move through the full range of motion. Medicine balls can range from 2 pounds to 25 pounds.

How to long should a routine last?

First, complete a total body warm-up (i.e. light cardio and dynamic stretches) for 3-5 minutes before completing medicine ball exercises. There should be a day of rest between each medicine ball routine.

Fitness Level	Number of Exercises	Number of Sets	Number of Reps per exercise
Beginner	5	1	6-10
Intermediate	10	1-2	10-16
Advanced	15	2-3	16-20
Elite	15-20	3	16-20+

How do I create a medicine ball routine?

First, familiarize yourself with each of the ball exercises. Try to complete the ball exercises in isolation, this means try to perform each exercise for one repetition through the full range of motion.

To begin, select five exercises. Arrange the exercises from 1 to 5. Start with the 1st exercise and go through to the 5th exercise and then go backwards from 5 to exercise 1. Start by performing one repetition of each exercise then progress to 5, 10, 15, etc. Remember to go slow when performing each exercise.

Here are two routines to try:

- Beginning medicine ball routine
- Intermediate medicine ball routine