

Versatile Fitness

Have you climbed a thousand mountains or climbed the same mountain a thousand times?

Variety in your training is essential to prepare your body for the diversity of circumstances you will encounter in many sports and daily activities. Our bodies adapt quickly to the same exercises. Repetitive training becomes progressively less effective, no longer challenging the body. There are vast training options available to all of us, however few people ever use them. The equipment at the local gym dictates

most our training choices. We do what is available, not necessarily what is best.

When we move, either just performing our daily tasks or playing sport, we move in more than one direction at a time. We use multiple muscle groups and our bodies are also required to recruit our balance and coordination skills all at the same time. So it only makes sense for us to train our bodies like this when we exercise. Exercises, which challenge our bodies on more than one level of motion, will help to avoid building an over-adapted,

unbalanced body, which is prone to injury. This is functional exercise.

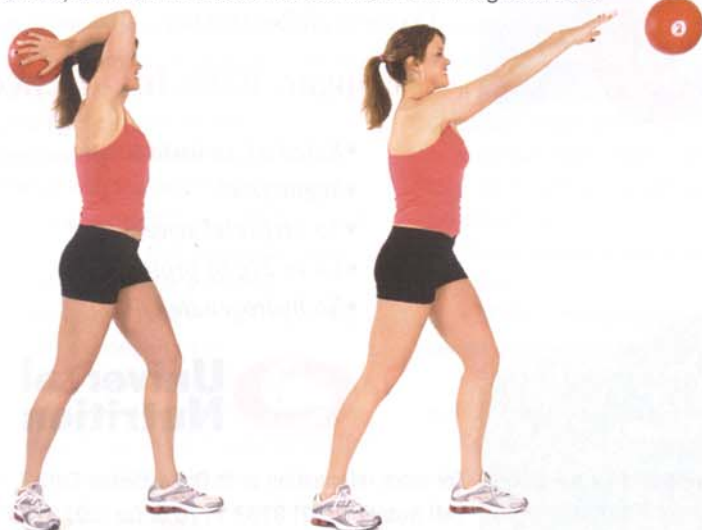
Many of today's exercise programs are designed around equipment that is too expensive to own and too cumbersome to move, creating a dependence on both the equipment and the venue. You can simplify and improve your training by choosing tools that require more from your body than the usual line-up of chrome-plated machinery found at the local gym, and you can save a lot of money in the process.

Try the following dynamic exercises to challenge your body and mind:

BOUNCABLE MEDICINE-BALLS

If I could choose a single training tool, the medicine-ball would be my choice, hands down. They offer limitless options for creative, functional exercise. The one to buy is not the old laced-leather sphere of years ago, but the new, bounceable rubber version of this old idea.

For most purposes, a 3kg ball is ideal. The ball is a simple and safe way to add resistance to movement in all directions and to develop mobility, range-of motion, strength and power. You can throw it off a wall, to a training partner or incorporate it into training games. Your body will react and respond to a myriad of movement situations, all with the added resistance of the weighted ball.

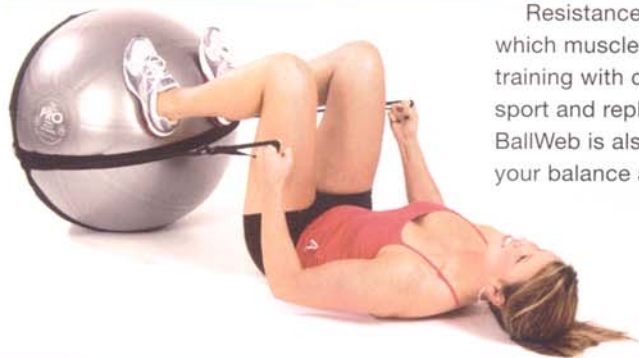


DUMBBELLS

Dumbbells can also be used for a wide variety of exercises and, unlike barbells and stationary machines, are not limited to a specific movement pattern. But don't get caught out buying the ones with fixed weight. Get a set which allows you to change the weight so you can use them for a variety of exercises, increasing or decreasing the weight as required.



BALLWEB OR RESISTANCE CORDS



Resistance cords are extremely versatile, not limiting your range of motion or which muscles groups can be challenged. To get the best out of resistance training with cords, think about the movement patterns you use in your chosen sport and replicate that with the resistance cord to challenge the body. The BallWeb is also a great way to get more out of your Swiss ball – challenging your balance and core stability at the same time.

SWISS BALLS

High quality, burst resistant Swiss balls are essential for training – they move randomly creating even sharper reaction/response for upper and lower body. You can use them in conjunction with a wide variety of tools – medicine balls, dumb-bells, resistance cords etc. There are many books and videos available to help you with your ball exercises.



JUMPING

Jumping or stepping over an object is an integral part of leg-circuits, a wonderful training protocol for leg strength, speed, stamina, and power. Use an aerobic step, bench or whatever you have available to you.



DURADISC

By forcing your ankles, knees and hips to work in sync to stabilize your body – even a simple squat, lunge or one-legged stance becomes a functional challenge with the duraDisc. For an advanced challenge, try using a medicine ball while standing on the disc. The duraDisc can also be used with balance plates.



Variety is not only essential in keeping our bodies challenged but also helps to challenge our mind and maintain our motivation. So add some

functional exercises which challenge a range of movement patterns, balance and coordination to maximize your training efforts and minimize your risk

of injury. And remember: Keep your tools simple, portable, and functional and you'll climb a thousand mountains, have fun, and play harder. **F**