

No Holds Barred Fighting

The Ultimate Guide to Conditioning

Elite Exercises and Training for NHB Competition and Total Fitness

Mark Hatmaker

The sixth guide in the No Holds Barred Fighting series by NHB's #1 author.

950 photos



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**The Ultimate Guide
to Conditioning**

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Photography by Doug Werner

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No Holds Barred Fighting:
The Ultimate Guide to Conditioning

Boxing Mastery



Books are available through major bookstores
and booksellers on the Internet.

Special thanks from the author

To all the empirical minds in fight conditioning who have influenced this work in major and minor ways. A brief list includes Otto Arco, Georges Hebert, Scott Helvonston, John Jesse, Gina Kolata and Jerry Robinson. There are many, many others, but these names were at the forefront of my mind while compiling this work.

Also, where would any book be without a little sentimentality? I've resisted the urge in the previous manuals, but I guess the ramparts have crumbled.

Thanks to my wife Kylie, for everything and then some.

Thanks to my good friend ("good friend" is too mild) Mitch Thomas, who has been extremely supportive in all endeavors.

Thanks to Kory Hays for taking so much abuse over the years.

And last but not least, as you would not be able to read this portion without his contribution, thanks to Doug Werner. A true gentleman who took a chance. I gained a publisher and a friend.

Tired of sentimentality? Probably. Let's go to work.

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Warning label

Submission wrestling includes contact and can be dangerous. Use proper equipment and train safely. Practice with restraint and respect for your partners. Drill for fun, fitness and to improve skills. Do not fight with the intent to do harm.

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How to use the NHB (No Holds Barred) manuals

This book and the others in this series are meant to be used in an interlocking synergistic manner where the sum value of the manuals is greater than the individual parts. Our goal with each manual is to focus on a specific aspect of the twin sports of NHB/submission wrestling and to give thoughtful consideration to the necessary ideas, tactics and strategies pertinent to that facet of focus. We are aware that this piecemeal approach may seem lacking if one only consumes one or two manuals, but we are confident that when three or more manuals have been studied, the overall picture or method will reveal itself.

Since the manuals are interlocking, there is no single manual in the series that is meant to be complete in and of itself. For example, although *No Holds Barred Fighting: Savage Strikes* is a thorough compendium on NHB/self-defense striking, it is bolstered with side-by-side study of *Boxing Mastery*. While the book *No Holds Barred Fighting: Killer Submissions* introduces the idea of chaining submissions and can be used as a solitary tool, it is more meaningful with an understanding of the material that preceded it, *No Holds Barred Fighting: The Ultimate Guide to Submission Wrestling*.

While each book in the series can be consumed independently, I think you'll find them more effective if they are treated as a single volume.



Now that I've used some of your time by explaining the method to my madness, let's empty our teacups and examine the contentious world of fight conditioning.

Mark Hatmaker

Intro

“Conditioning is the best finishing hold.”

— Gene LeBell, grappling legend

“Fights are won in the gym, not in the ring.”

— Boxing Maxim

“The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in combat.”

— Special Forces Maxim

Anecdotal evidence. We all know what anecdotal evidence is. It is the personal stories offered as proof for a conclusion. It often takes this form, “Hey, I know a guy



who ate nothing but deviled eggs and biscuits for a whole month and lost 30 pounds.” Anecdotal evidence is, to be frank, absolutely worthless. I mean, sure your friend says he “knows a guy,” but who is this guy?

How many deviled eggs was he eating per day? How many biscuits? Did this guy also increase his caloric expenditure? Did he really stick to this bizarre two-food diet? Does the guy even exist? I’m sure you can think of more questions such as, “Why did Mark pick such an asinine example to open this book? Have I just wasted my money?”

If we are to believe anything, it is best to have empirically tested evidence. For example, we could take 30 people, record their weight and then place them on a strict deviled egg and biscuit diet for a month in varying degrees of consumption and wind up with measurable results as to which form of the biscuit and deviled egg diet (if any) are effective. Tested evidence beats anecdotal evidence hands down. You got that? I urge you to evaluate any claim on the basis of the evidence and not merely on somebody's say so (mine included).

With that hectoring out of the way, I offer you some anecdotal evidence of my own. Evidence that you should take with a grain of salt, although I assert that it is true. I have been playing this fight game for years. And in these years of play I have trained athletes from many other sports: marathon running, body-building, competitive swimming, football, rugby ... you name it. When they begin their NHB training, all of these athletes are gassed in a few short minutes. In other words, this game is grueling and makes fitness demands not found in other sports.

Some of the gassed feeling these athletes encounter is due to the specificity effect (more on that to come). But much of it is due to the fact that boxing/striking is a hard pursuit, and the training that a striking athlete puts himself through is commensurately difficult. Grappling/wrestling is perhaps even more taxing and the conditioning regimen required to perform well is no piece of cake. So with no holds barred fighting and mixed martial arts (NHB/MMA) we have taken two already tough sports at the top of the pyramid in

regard to conditioning and combined them. You might say that training is then twice as hard, but to anyone in the game, the conditioning required feels as if it has been cubed.

It is with the extreme demands of this sport in mind that this manual has been constructed. It is geared toward all skill levels — novice, intermediate, advanced and pro. You will find a variety of routines and regimens to fit your schedule, skill level and goal set. I suggest a single cover-to-cover read to grasp the principles, and then use the routine selection guide to construct your training as you see fit.

There are two considerations to keep in mind. First, the approach found between these covers is not the only way to fitness. Anyone with any experience in fitness training can say with complete assurance that someone who tells you that there is only one way to fitness is full of it. What is found here is not the be-all, end-all. As a matter of fact, much of what you will find here differs from a previous incarnation of this material offered as the *Gladiator Conditioning Program*. So, even if I don't always stick to a single method, why should you? Here you'll find the underlying principles with which to evaluate any conditioning mode, ideas on constructing a routine, and of course, specifics to directly complement the NHB/MMA game. This book, while comprehensive in its approach to the topic at hand, is by no stretch of the imagination a complete encyclopedia of the training possibilities for the sport. Perhaps we will address that topic another day.

The other consideration is for the dabbler, the dilettante, the individual who is attracted to the sport but has no desire to play. The advice and routines offered most definitely can be used by the person whose goals are not to fight or compete on any level, but to get fit using the concepts, exercises and routines used by some of the world's elite fighters.

No matter who you are or what your skill level, I can say with utmost confidence that the material presented within is sound and will take you to whatever level of fitness you desire. All that is required of you is a single four-letter word — WORK.

Injured?

Material on any physical activity warns you to consult a physician before beginning. I have no evidence to support what I am about to say (and we know what to think of unsupported supposition at this point), but I would wager that the vast majority of people who consume such material never take this precaution. I will say that probably goes double for NHB/MMA athletes. I mean, really, how many physicians would look at a knock-down, drag-out NHB match and give the thumbs up?

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying you should skip safety precautions. I'm just calling attention to something that has always struck me as odd. With that said, let's not be careless. We should always err on the side of safety in our training. Notice the heading of this section is "Injured" with a question mark. To which the vast majority of you will answer with a resounding "Yes!" I have yet to meet a practitioner of this sport, or

a serious athlete from any other activity, who wasn't taking a little extra care with some portion of his body. I also have yet to meet a serious athlete who let such injuries stand in his way.

What we have to do is strike a balance between toughing it out, which may lead to worsening an injury, and avoiding work because we have a convenient excuse. Who is the best judge of what you can and cannot do? I would wager that you are. You will know if an exercise will aggravate a preexisting problem or if it will strengthen an area weakened by injury. I am going to trust you to trust yourself. If you think an exercise isn't right for you, skip it and move to another in the same class. That's one good reason why we offer alternative choices.

Alternative choices are valuable tools for the fighter to continue training while taking care of the body. I'm reasonably sure that a physician would tell an injured athlete to skip this conditioning nonsense altogether (I've heard that advice plenty of times). But it is a curious animal attracted to NHB/MMA. This animal knows that the sport is knock-about and sometimes injuries happen at the competitive level, and the sensible advice of laying off for a while while an injury heals is a great idea in theory. In practice, the NHB/MMA animal would rather press on and work around it.

Don't take this as an excuse to avoid contacting your physician before beginning any of the exercises found in this book. Also, don't take my work-around-it point of view as the optimum prescription for physical therapy. I offer it as what the reality of the NHB athlete most

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often seems to be. The NHB athlete will continue to train no matter what, so please train safely. That's all the advice means. You're your best judge. Judge wisely.

1 Concepts



Let's get technical ... not

We won't get technical in this manual. Exercise science is a fascinating field. We could expand this manual's page count tenfold if we made the preamble a primer on kinesiology, ATP, the Krebs cycle and other such physiological processes. Instead, we will forego the talk of how the body does what it does beneath your skin and focus instead on what you need to do to let these internal processes work for you, whether you understand the science behind them or not.

Let's face it, some people enjoy reading and memorizing the process of glycolysis and are fascinated by the details of the Krebs cycle and want more information on pyruvate-to-lactic acid. For those folks, I offer a few books I have found of value in the *Resources* section. For the rest of us who just want the food on the menu and could care less about the secret herbs and spices hidden in the recipe, read on.

Variety

Variety is said to be the spice of life. Perhaps. Who knows for sure? What I can tell you with some authority is that variety is essential for conditioning regimens. The human animal is a novelty seeking creature. We crave the new and the different. We'd rather see a new movie or episode of our favorite show each week than be subjected to the same one week in, week out. No matter how much someone loves thin crust pizza with feta cheese as the primary topping, that pizza fan will find his enthusiasm waning if he ate that meal three times a day.

If we are that fickle in our passive choices (sitting in a chair eating pizza or watching the same episode of "Lost" each week) the human animal is even more so when it comes to something that requires a little effort such as a conditioning routine. Anyone with a background in any athletic endeavor that requires conditioning can tell you it doesn't matter how good an exercise routine is, or what results he is reaping, after a bit of time, he craves something new. If you don't find a way to vary your conditioning routine (especially a difficult one) you will find it almost impossible at times to overcome the inertia to get yourself into the gym and get started.

It is with an eye on this human propensity for fickleness/novelty that we have not chiseled in stone the conditioning routines found here. No matter how good a routine is, sometimes shaking it up and trying something new just feels right. It seems to energize our intellectual and emotional batteries. It seems to have an effect on our physical batteries as well. Your body wel-

comes and responds positively to the new challenge. For example, squats are an indisputably fantastic way to build endurance in the legs, but after a while grinding out 500 a day turns into mindless tedium. Switching to a few weeks of no squats and substituting wall-supported single-leg squats can make the whole routine feel fresh. Once the wall-supported squats become stale, we return to standard squats and, ta-da, they feel fresh again.

It is with an eye on feeding the novelty craving that we offer exercise menus. We offer the menus to stimulate progress in slightly different avenues within the same conditioning goal. You've got to shake up the system to continue to grow. Another example: Your cardio/Max O₂ may be benefiting from your daily three-mile run, but one day you substitute 15 minutes of skipping rope and you find yourself winded. What's happening here? To a large degree we are the victims of specificity again and we'll get to that later. We are experiencing the fact that the body, like the mind, desires variety/novelty. I assert wholeheartedly that if a conditioning regimen does not address the human need for variety/novelty that the athlete suffers in the end — either by abandoning the regimen altogether or suffering needlessly as you grit your teeth through yet another day of the same-o, same-o. When you feel stale, don't manufacture excuses and skip a day. That day can all too easily become two or three days. Instead, consult the exercise menus and skip your favorite pizza for a while until you begin to crave it again at a later date.

Efficiency

When approaching your conditioning regimen, keep an eye on efficiency. There are two definitions that shade this word. The first is how well an activity serves the purpose. We will skip that definition and label it effectiveness, which we will cover next. It is the second definition of efficiency that we concern ourselves with here. The definition that aims for maximum results in minimum time.

The menus presented here are designed to give you the most bang for your buck in the least amount of time. That time variable is almightily important. If you are a professional fighter or an aspiring one, you must devote a huge hunk of time toward your training because it's your job. But the club-level player, the weekend athlete or the person who wants to get fit and stay fit, doesn't have time to wake up early and run eight miles, hit the sauna, then the gym for two hours of working the heavy-bag, double-end bag, and so on. Then after lunch, you nap, hit sparring drills and follow that up with weight-training. Again, if you are a pro, that is your job. You are being paid to follow such a time intensive regimen. If you are the average athlete, you probably have a day job, a family and a home theater system to veg out in front of. You simply don't have the time to put in hours at the gym every day. Does that mean fight conditioning is out of your reach? Nope.

The menus have been composed to bring the greatest results in the minimum of time for two reasons.

1. Most of us simply do not have the time to train like an elite athlete.

2. You do not have to increase training time to get top-of-the-food-chain results. You merely have to alter training efficiency to reap the same rewards.

Tuning a conditioning regimen for efficiency is a key factor in your quest to becoming the best NHB/MMA athlete you can be. The more efficient your conditioning regimen, the less time it takes. The less time required by your conditioning regimen, the more time you have to devote to fighting technique, sparring drills and such that got you into the sport in the first place. Keep in mind at all times that your job is to learn to be a better fighter, not to be the best executor of squats, the best kettlebell slinger or the best weight lifter. There are separate competitions for these endeavors, and that is outside the purview of this manual.

Again, the focus of efficiency is to provide maximum results in minimum time so that you can increase the amount of time training for the sport or for your personal activities. You want to do squats for two hours? That's an excellent goal, but you have thrown efficiency out the window if fight training is your goal. That's two hours that might have been spent doing something better like punching drills, submission work or takedowns. After all, if fight training were merely a matter of conditioning, then the top competitors in power lifting and triathlons could step into the ring and reap the rewards easily. Don't get me wrong, these activities can contribute to fight training, but they are not substitutes for fight training. Your job in the gym is to train hard, get it done and then get down to the sport.

Effectiveness

Do not mistake my efficiency decree to mean that reduced training time insures fitness. That's nonsense. Efficiency is paramount, but it means nothing without effectiveness. If the conditioning regimen does not do the job it claims to do, then it is an ineffective workout whether it takes 15 minutes or 15 hours.

My workouts have been tested for effectiveness, but you are the ultimate judge. You know best your specific needs, weaknesses, strong points and goals. The menus are presented in a mix-and-match template so you can boost effectiveness according to your dictates. If a menu selection has plateaued or is not giving you sufficient intensity, then it is time to select the next option so that you can continue to train with effectiveness.

Going through the motions of a workout without bumping up the intensity will provide results for a while. But for a workout to continue to be effective, it must be tweaked now and again as we pay attention to the input (exercise choices) and the output (real world results). Effectiveness, more often than not, is keyed off two fundamental principles — intensity and specificity.

Intensity

This is where the rubber meets the road. Intensity separates those with the warrior heart from those who pose. For efficiency and effectiveness to be truly efficient and effective, your training must be intense because the sport is intense. To crib from a Special Forces mind-set, your training must reflect battlefield conditions. In other words, NHB/MMA competition is a physically grueling game. If you do not create grueling

conditions in your workout, then I can say with all surety, that you are not ready to play.

NHB/MMA calls for intense expenditures of energy, often in bursts, over a moderate time period that is marked by an overall elevated demand on endurance. The average NHB/MMA episode calls for 5-20 minutes of total work time. In that time there will be (optimally, for both the fans and the well-conditioned fighter) no cruising — moments of rest and inactivity. Demands of endurance are made of both the cardiovascular system and the muscular system. These endurance demands are the primary reason we place muscular endurance above muscular strength in the training hierarchy. Strength is terrific, but all things being equal, the endurance component is the bet to hedge if you have time to develop only one aspect.

Endurance training is approached in one of four ways:

1. Long Slow Distance Training (LSD)
2. Interval Training (IT)
3. Threshold Training (TT)
4. Peaking Threshold Training (PTT)

We discuss each approach briefly and then focus on the one most beneficial to the game in question. This manual contains advice for all four approaches, but you will detect an admitted bias for one form of training over the others.

LSD Training is aimed at building an athlete who can deliver a steady performance over the long haul with no bursts of intensity needed. Think marathoners and triathletes.

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Interval Training is intended to redline your system, meaning to push you out of the aerobic zone and into the anaerobic zone for short bursts of very intense activity. These bursts are followed by long rest periods. Think sprinters or football linemen.

Threshold Training is the middle ground between all-out interval training and LSD. We perform above a comfortable pace, but do not redline the system. Think middle-distance runners.

Peaking Threshold Training is a combination of interval and threshold training. We train at a pace above LSD and intersperse intervals/bursts into red line territory, then we drop back to the above LSD pace to “rest,” though never stopping or dropping to LSD. These are the conditions one encounters in NHB/MMA — short to medium duration (5-20 minutes) like the sport requires, and endurance demands that reflect the pacing of a well-matched fight. This last component will be of most concern in this manual. Although we will have our eye on Peaking Threshold Training, we must use the other approaches to prepare for this level. We will return to these levels for recovery days, since pure PTT is too demanding of the system to be done daily or even for several days per week.

The demands of the sport decree that we must err on the side of intensity — not only in the choice of PTT over the other endurance packaging, but also in the approach to all aspects of training. These intensity demands provide both good news and bad news.

The bad news is that intensity training is hard. Seriously

hard. You will have to dig deep to give it the discipline it demands.

The good news is that intensity training is so efficient that you will reap optimum results in minimum time leaving you with plenty of time to train your game.

Professor Martin Gibala of McMaster University conducted an experiment confirming what many fighting athletes have known for centuries. Gibala assembled test subjects and gave them a pretest of an 18.6-mile time trial on exercise bikes. He tested their VO₂ Max, which is the rate at which muscles are able to absorb oxygen. He then divided the subjects into three groups to follow an exercise regimen for the next three weeks.

Group one cycled for two hours at LSD pace each exercise session.

Group two cycled for 10 minutes per session, but included a few 60-second bursts of activity.

Group three cycled all-out for four 30-second bursts with four minutes of rest between bursts.

At the conclusion of the three weeks, each group achieved the same increase in fitness and VO₂ Max. The difference is that Group three did it with a total of only three minutes of exercise time per session.

It seems that if we follow Professor Gibala's findings to the letter, we should focus on interval training, but we will choose the middle course. Keep in mind the third

group worked hard for 30 seconds and then rested for four minutes. The body attunes to that pattern and begins to expect periods of inactivity for recovery no matter the fitness level. NHB/MMA will not allow such a work/rest ratio. What we take away from his study is that the 10-minute high-speed sessions that included 60-second bursts are very efficient and approach the overall fitness arc encountered in NHB/MMA.

Numerous research studies back up the results that can be attained via interval and/or PTT. Not only does this approach to training provide high fitness rewards in minimum time, but also is more efficient at burning fat despite burning fewer calories than the longer exercising LSD approach. This is proved by studies like those conducted by Angelo Tremblay and Claude Bouchard among many others. Do you get the idea that efficiency is not really efficient unless it is conducted with intensity? Intensity and efficiency go hand in hand to bolster effectiveness, but there is still one more major component to consider before we get to work.

Specificity

“Runners run, swimmers swim, fighters fight.”
— Pedro Rizzo, NHB Veteran

I’m sure you’re way ahead of me at this point. Let’s flog that Special Forces warrior maxim again, “Let your training be a reflection of battlefield conditions.” In the section on intensity, we made a case for selecting the optimum package for endurance training that best reflects the demands of the NHB/MMA game. Keeping Professor Gibala’s optimum findings in mind, does this mean that we can cycle for 10 minutes with one-

minute bursts and be prepared for NHB/MMA?
Absolutely not!

We must remember that the test subjects were pretested in a timed cycle trial, trained on a cycle during the experiment and then retested on a timed cycle trial. Their fitness gains were exercise specific. Yes, they increased general fitness contributing to better health, and they improved their ability to cycle, but not much else. Anyone who has tried a brand-new physical activity can attest to the “I thought I was in shape, but this is totally different” experience. This sport specific effect should be obvious to all. If sport fitness were a generalized phenomenon, then NFL players could play in the NBA in their off-season with no problem. Marathon runners could compete in Olympic swimming with little effort. Power lifters could compete in triathlons easily. And triathletes could clean and jerk twice their body weight with ease. But we all know this isn’t the case.

Practically any physical activity will improve health and the ambiguous term “fitness,” but to improve at an athletic activity, we must train that specific activity. You may have a great six-minute mile pace on your run, but if you switch to skipping rope for a day, you will find a 12-minute session with the rope a bit taxing. It doesn’t mean that you aren’t fit, it means you aren’t fit for skipping rope. It is with the idea of specificity in mind that we must adhere to exercises that best reflect the activities and demands of the sport we are training for. If we can design a series of activities that will raise both our overall fitness and our sports specific fitness, we are really on to something.

Running, swimming and lifting weights are great tools to have in the NHB/MMA conditioning toolbox, but what each of these activities most prepares you for is that particular activity. Cribbing from Pedro Rizzo, running makes you a better runner and swimming a better swimmer. We must use some activities that are not sport specific to build particular sport specific components, but we must use them in ways that better reflect the battlefield of what this sport is. This manual is specifically about the concept of specificity.

Synergy

Stay with me, we're almost to the meat of the program! A bit about synergy first. With no intent to insult your intelligence, synergy is an interaction between parts that results in a greater effect than the sum of the parts' individual effects. In a nutshell, we should choose exercise sequencing and packaging that boosts the overall effect of the conditioning session. To achieve this synergistic effect, we must keep in mind that sequencing and packaging are the keys.

Example: An enduring grip is a necessity for the NHB/MMA athlete. There are times when all that stands between you and a submission (or holding off a submission) is your ability to tolerate lactic acid buildup in your forearms. With this need in mind, it is wise to work on an "everlast" grip. A fighter also needs strong and enduring pulling power to keep an opponent in tight while riding, pinning, clinching and retaining submission setups. The pulling musculature is best trained with pull-ups.

So two essential conditioning components for the

NHB/MMA fighter are an enduring grip and strong pulling power. How can we work both of these aspects while boosting the effectiveness of individual exercises and not making the same exercise interfere with gains in the other group? The answer is synergistic sequencing.

You see, pull-ups require a grip on the bar, but the demand of that grip is not enough to make pull-ups satisfactory grip conditioners. You should not treat pull-ups as a combination exercise. Our single pull-up session will not satisfy both pulling demands and grip demands, no matter how much this apparent efficiency appeals to you.

You must work your grip separately to give it the attention it deserves. But when you work your grip in relation to pull-up exercises is of utmost importance. If you work your grip before your pull-up session, you will be working ineffectively and without regard to synergism. Grip work prior to pull-ups can fatigue your grip to such a degree that your pull-up sets may be hampered by the forearm fatigue already incurred. Working the grip prior to pull-ups is good for the grip, but bad for the pulling group.

Using the concept of synergy, we can see that it is wiser to work the pulling group before the grip. This allows the pulling group the emphasis with a minor demand made on the grip. This minor demand of the grip adds to the endurance component made of the grip exercises that immediately follow the pulling group. Via this sequencing, we have made use of synergy. We can approach all essential components in a

synergistic fashion to amplify our work.

Synergy also can be put to good effect by emphasizing multi-joint exercises over isolation exercises. There are a few valuable isolation exercises and we will recommend some. Isolation exercises are those that focus on a single muscle group — preacher curls for the biceps, for example. While preacher curls are an excellent exercise for this single muscle group, keep in mind our aim is to be effective and efficient so that we have more time to devote to training the sport.

Effective multi-joint exercises that emphasize the biceps while calling other muscles into play for greater conditioning, are standing barbell curls. Calling upon even more joint recruitment, chin-ups, particularly those performed with a weight belt, are great. These two exercises allow you to build strength in the biceps, but they also use secondary and tertiary musculature to assist the movement, which is akin to the muscle recruitment encountered in NHB/MMA. The oxygen demands made by recruiting primary, secondary and tertiary muscle groups also provide a cardiovascular benefit.

To employ a good use of synergy, we should strive for proper sequencing and multi-joint exercises. Combining these two ideas, we break our sequences into the following broad categories:

1. Hinge group (abdomen/lower back)
2. Fifth limb (neck)
3. Power group (legs)
4. Pushing group (push-ups/bench press and the like)

5. Pulling group (pull-ups/rowing)
6. Grip

This is the sequence I recommend when creating your regimen from the exercise menus.

Aesthetics

Bigger or badder? With some variation for genetic gifts and/or chemical enhancement, this is the choice the NHB/MMA athlete has to make. There is no doubt that appearing ripped, cut or whatever term you want to use to describe low-body fat and enhanced visible muscle striation and vascularity, is appealing. People like to look good, and there's nothing wrong with that.

The regimens in this manual will get you fit, there's no doubt about that. They will prepare you better for the NHB/MMA game, I guarantee that. What I can't guarantee is ripped to shreds, body building ready physiques. You will lose body fat, you will increase muscle definition, and you will make gains in the aesthetic realm, but these are fringe benefits. My least concern when engineering this program is how you will look at the beach or how the surface component of aesthetics stand in regard to body building. I have one concern — getting you to your NHB/MMA fitness goals.

To a large degree, the Adonis builds are the result of genetic determination and/or chemical enhancement (and we all know what I mean by that). There will undoubtedly be a good deal of improvement in the aesthetic component, but there is no guarantee that you will wind up looking like Phil Baroni. Each physique is

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unique and will respond to conditioning in its own idiosyncratic fashion. I'd like to point out the excellent fighter/athlete Murilo "Ninja" Rua. This warrior often has a "soft" look on fight night, but that look belies what this man is capable of. No one who has observed Rua's performances doubts his conditioning. Rua is a top-of-the-line athlete who made the decision to let form follow function. He made the fight the goal and let all else be subservient.

Rua's example is where this manual stands. Train with your eyes on the first prize of being the best you can be at your sport of choice, and let the aesthetic component fall into second.

2 Breathing

Breath control

What's a chapter on breath work doing in an NHB/MMA conditioning guide? It seems more appropriate to find it in a New Age or alternative health tome. Well, hold on to your hats because I'm here to tell you that breath work is perhaps *the* foundation on which successful mat work is built. Good breath work is fundamental to all athletic endeavors, but it seems to lend itself particularly well to a sport where partner compressions (i.e., heavy guy lying on your chest) can make normal breathing patterns impossible.

Breath work is the only component of the autonomic nervous system that falls under our control. Heart and digestion rates are out of our hands beyond their eventual shifts through conditioning, but your respiration can be controlled and directed. You can learn to choose the rate of your respiration, the depth of intake, the rate and force of exhalation, and even direct your breathing to different lung areas.

We know that the body is fueled by your nutritional intake (that you have control of and can modify), your liquid intake (again, under your power) and that you are fueled in the psychodynamic arena through thoughts, attitudes and anxieties regarding your athletic performance (again under your control although maybe a bit tougher to regulate than the physical concerns). Your respiration fuels all of these processes. There is no fuel process that can be metabolized in the body without the presence of oxygen.

Breathing

Oxygen is brought into the body by the lungs and distributed throughout the body by oxygenated blood. The lungs release depleted gases (carbon dioxide) on exhalation. So if all fuel functions can take place only in the presence of oxygen and oxygenated blood, it stands to reason that the base fuel process is that of respiration. After all, one can go for weeks without food and days without water but only a few minutes without oxygen.

By acknowledging that respiration is the core fuel process and gaining an understanding of how we can control its different characteristics, we can economize and energize our primary fuel usage.

Competing breath rates

Most people inexperienced in a particular athletic endeavor have a tendency to hold their breath during exertion or at the very least use inefficient breathing patterns. By doing so, they greatly reduce their overall performance and endurance.

A simple strategy I use when rolling is that of competing or comparative breath rates. Mat work is ideal for this strategy as the proximity of competitors allows one to hear what the other person is doing. To take advantage of this strategy, merely listen to the breath rate of your partner during a roll and attempt to bring your rate in under his. It's as easy as calming your rate and lengthening the intake and release of your breath. Doing so will more fully oxygenate your blood, calm your mind and body, and reduce any excess tension. Slower and deeper breath rates will outlast fast and shallow rates every time.

Clearing breath

The idea of breath control sounds fine in the theoretical sense, but practical application in a sport that goes into anaerobic areas makes it tough to downright impossible to maintain. Scrambled bursts that redline into anaerobic areas cause you to gasp for air once you come out of the anaerobic redline.

The reason for the hyperventilation is found in the name itself, anaerobic, which means “without oxygen.” When scrambled activity happens, present oxygen reserves get exhausted. As the activity continues at a fast rate, new oxygen intake cannot keep up. Once you come out of this redline, your lungs will naturally pump at a faster rate trying to rectify this depleted state. The problem is that your faster rate does not allow for maximum exhalation before your next inhalation. Waste gases (carbon dioxide) cycle within the lungs. They are taking up space and do not allow for a full oxygen intake — keeping you on the hyperventilation cycle — attempting to burn fuel where there really is none to be burned.

To pull yourself out of this cycle, all you have to do is the opposite of your natural instincts. Instead of gasping for air, forcefully exhale *all* of the contents of your lungs in a long audible breath (a sort of whooshing sound). Once all waste gases have been expelled by the clearing breath, your next breath will be a long controlled full breath of energizing oxygen. From there return to comparative/competitive breathing.

Energizing breath

This is a specialized pattern for use when energy reserves are low. You are in the late stages of the workout or match, and you feel sluggish (usually due to poor removal of waste products throughout the body). The energizing breath is a quick pick-me-up to access your core fuel source.

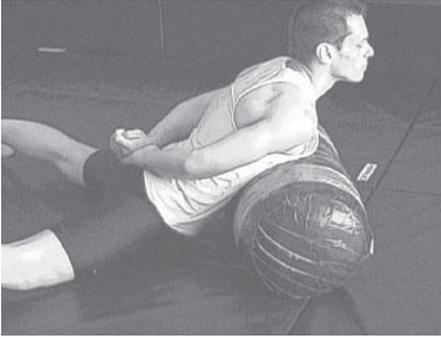
You essentially hyperventilate at an extremely fast rate, two to four inhalation/exhalation cycles per second, using shallow breaths. This rapid pattern need be done for only 15 to 20 seconds to forcefully reintroduce your core fuel. Try this not only in your training but in your everyday life when sluggishness sets in. It can provide an extra temporary boost.

Side note

It is advisable to make all of your breathing patterns audible. By inhaling and exhaling in audible whooshes, the sound itself can act as a mnemonic device to remind you to concentrate on your breath control first and foremost. The audible pattern also helps provide mental focus. And lastly, the audible pattern has been known to be a bit disconcerting to unseasoned rolling partners and can be just one more weapon in your arsenal.

Compressed breath

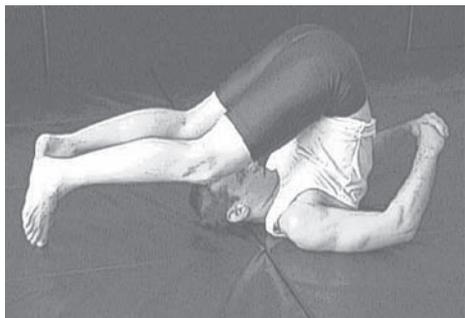
There will be times when your chest will be compressed by your opponent or you will be stacked in unnatural positions. It is in these compressed positions that extreme diligence must be paid to breath control. You've got to learn to relax in what are decidedly unrelaxing positions. In these positions you will not have



access to your entire lung surface area. By relaxing your breath, you can learn to make the most of the surface area you do have access to.

To train this without an actual partner, grab a heavy bag and lay it on the mat. Lie cross-body on the bag placing your diaphragm against the bag. Stay off your knees and arch your diaphragm into the bag. The only points of contact will be your toes on the mat and your diaphragm pressed into the bag. Hold this position for three minutes. Performing this exercise will allow you to relax your breathing even when you have less than full lung access.

For extra stress, try performing a series of jump squats and then immediately move into this exercise to duplicate the higher breath rates that scrambles induce.



Stacked breath

This is a companion exercise to the compressed breath.

Again we are dealing with less than optimal lung coverage. Lie on the mat and roll your

legs over your shoulders in imitation of a stacked position — in yogic parlance, a plough posture. Compact your stack as extreme as you can tolerate and hold for three minutes while you learn to breath in this shallow lung position.

Try performing the same exercise after a series of jump squats, as stated in the previous pattern, to learn to control the breath after a scramble. These two exercises are of significant value because they adhere to the specificity principle in conditioning.

Relaxing breath

This pattern is meant to be performed before or after your rolling session. It entails filling the lungs to full capacity, holding the breath in an anaerobic state and then conditioning the diaphragmatic musculature to assist in full expulsion. It is also useful for calming pre-match jitters and can be used in your daily life in addition to your NHB training.

To perform the relaxing breath, adhere to the ratio: 4-7-8. In other words, inhale to full capacity at a slow 4 count, hold your breath at full capacity for a 7 count, and then slowly, fully exhale at a slow 8 count. Perform

a minimum of ten cycles of this ratio for full benefit.

That's it. Breath control strategy, physiology and five patterns to assist you in your conditioning. Remember, breath control is as vital as technique, and it is advisable to make it a regular part of your training. As a matter of fact, there should be no aspect of your training where you are not aware of your breath rate and its quality. This sort of attention to your core fuel source will accelerate your rate of learning appreciably.

Breathing



3 Counting



1, 2, 3 ...

We're going to steal from military PT (physical training) leaders to make the instruction of conditioning exercises easier. Practically any exercise you think of can be broken into a short chain of movements. If we apply a numeral to each individual link in the chain, we come up with a count value for any given exercise. The following examples should make this point easily digestible.

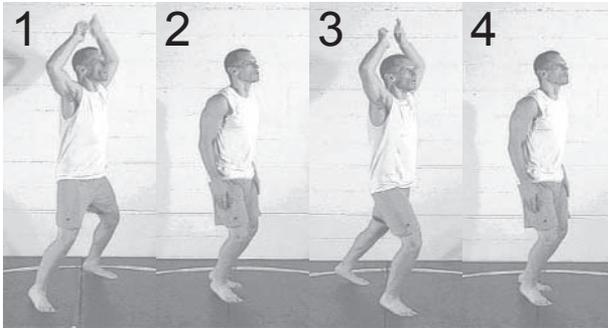
Counting

2-count, push-ups



Starting from the top of the exercise, we descend to brush our chest to the floor for a count of 1 and return to the top of the exercise for a count of 2. Push-ups are, therefore, a 2-count exercise.

4-count, fore-and-aft jumping jacks



From a standing position jump your legs to a straddle position with your arms overhead. That's 1. Return to the standing position with arms at your sides. That's 2. Jump and bring your right leg forward and your left leg to the rear while you reach your arms above your head. That's 3. Return to the original position for a count of 4. This is a 4-count exercise.

Here's how to count a 5 repetition set of a 4-count exercise.

1, 2, 3 — 1

1, 2, 3 — 2

1, 2, 3 — 3

1, 2, 3 — 4

1, 2, 3 — 5

A quick check of the exercise photographs and descriptions should help make the count values of each exercise easier to visualize. There are three benefits to using count cadences while conditioning.

1. If you are leading a class conditioning session, the count cadences spoken aloud keeps the group on task. It let's everyone know just what is expected of them. Nothing makes a human dig a little deeper than a bit of peer pressure.

2. By vocalizing the count sequences in a loud clear voice, you are learning to control your breathing during exertion. You can't talk while holding your breath or huffing and puffing. So my suggestion is to learn the count values and count them out loud while you work.

3. The last benefit may be a bit idiosyncratic. I find that when I count aloud it gives me something to focus on rather than all the wonderful burning and discomfort. Maybe this distraction only works on someone with my limited cranial capacity, but give it a shot. Maybe it will work for you, too.

Ready to get down to it? I thought so.

Counting



4 Warm-up

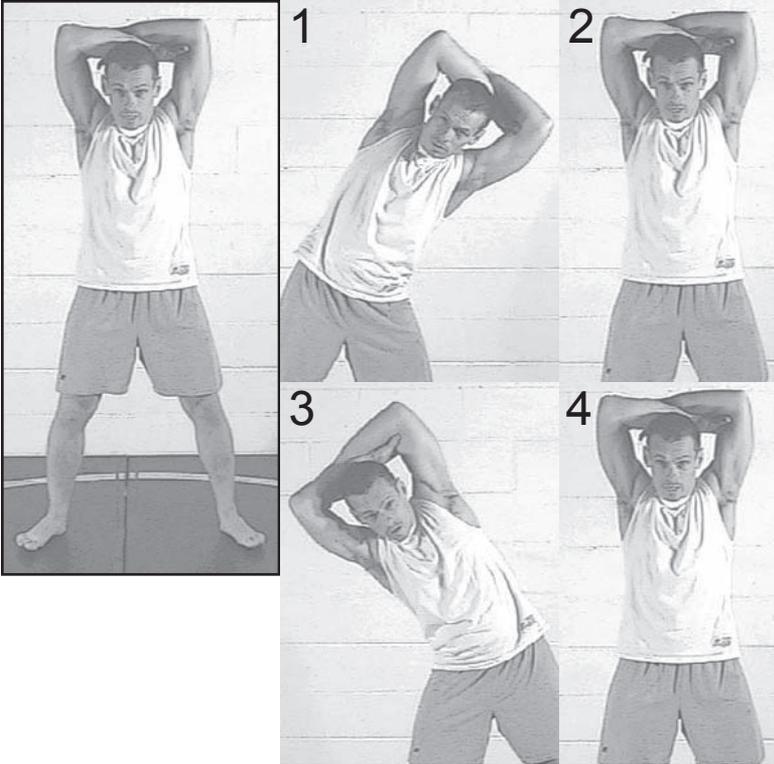


Basic warm-up

Warming up before a workout is paid a lot of lip service but is often ignored, as it is more fun to get to the real work straight away. But warming up is, as the research says, mightily important. There is no need for your warm-up to take more than 3-5 minutes, and you can use any light physical activity of your choice (except for stretching, see the “Flexibility” chapter for reasons why).

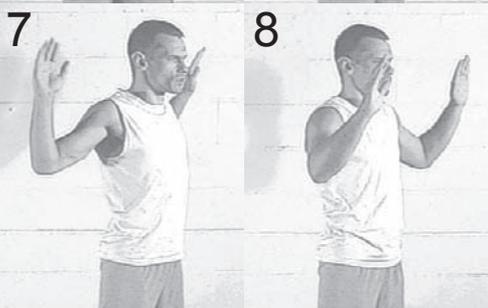
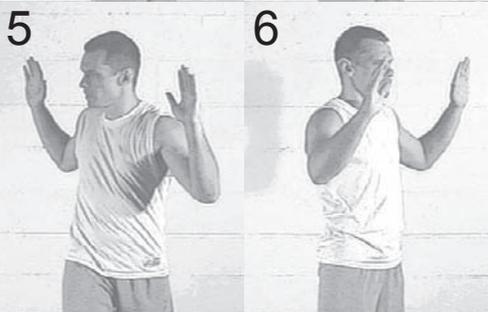
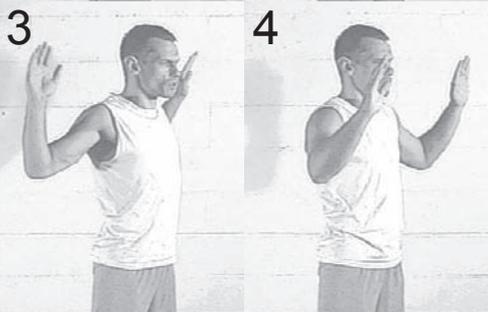
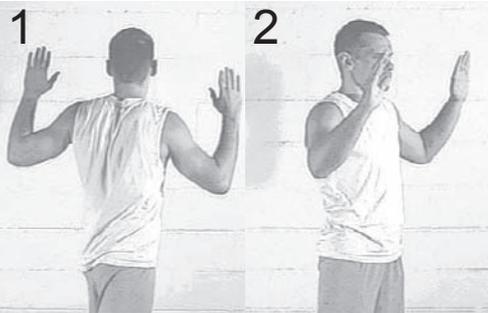
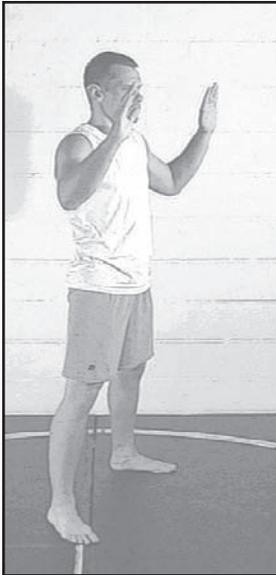
A prescribed warm-up follows. Hit ten repetitions of each exercise.

4-count side bend



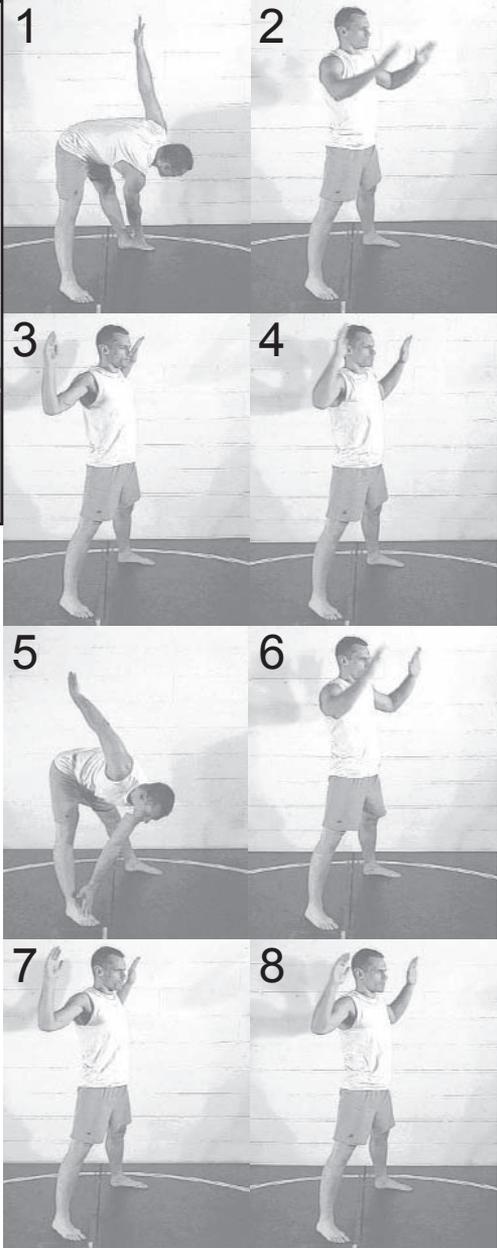
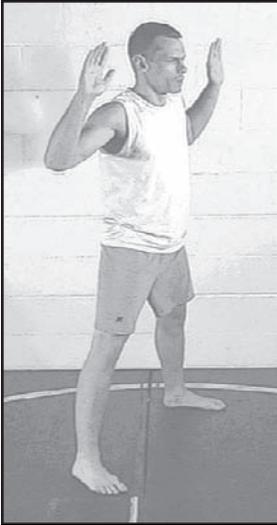
- Bring your arms overhead and bend them, each hand grabbing the opposite elbow.
- Bend your torso to the left — Count 1.
- Back to center — Count 2.
- Bend right — Count 3.
- Back to center — Count 4.

4-count torso twist with pec fling



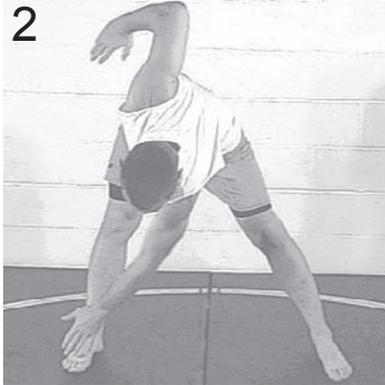
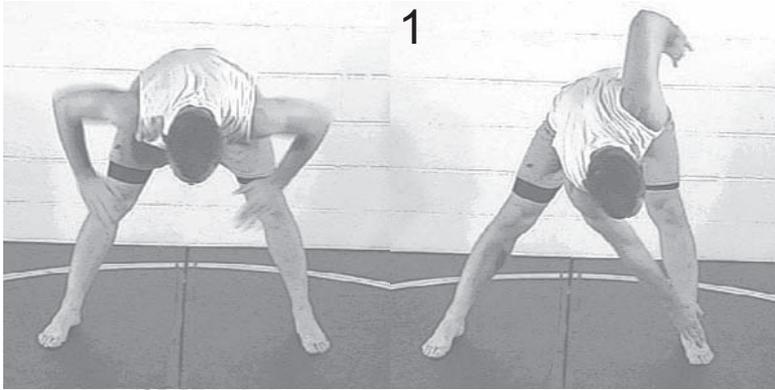
- Stand with your arms extended to each side.
- Bend the arms at the elbows, fingertips pointing up and palms facing forward.
- Turn your torso to the left — Count 1.
- Back to center and fling your elbows back as if bested by a Pec-Deck Machine — Count 2.
- Turn to the right — Count 3.
- Back to the center for another fling — Count 4.

4-count windmill with pec fling

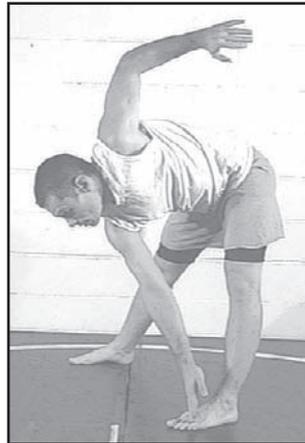


- Arms in the same position as the preceding exercise.
- Bend forward at the waist and touch your left toes with your right hand — Count 1.
- Back upright and fling — Count 2.
- Bend forward and touch the toes of the right foot with the left hand — Count 3.
- Return to upright and fling — Count 4.

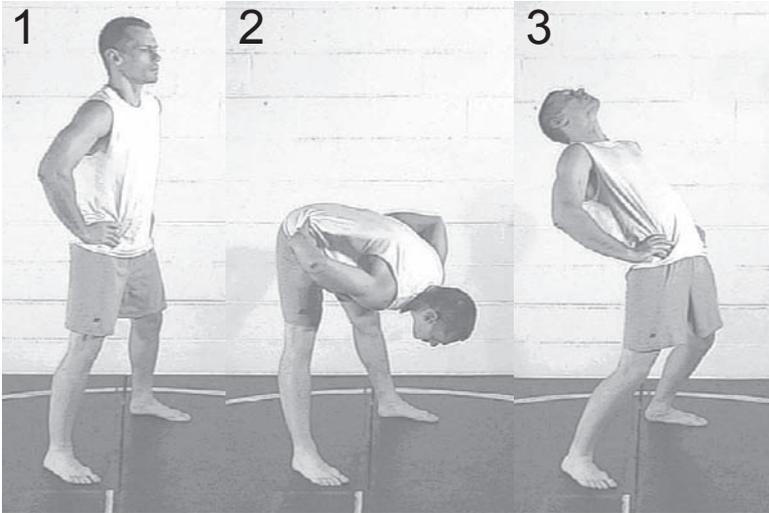
2-count windmill



- Bend forward at the waist and remain there throughout.
- Twist and touch the toes of the left foot with the right hand — Count 1.
- Twist and touch the toes of the right foot with the left hand — Count 2.



Fore and aft bends



- Stand upright with hands on hips.
- Leaving the knees locked, bend forward at the waist deeply.
- Reverse this motion and arch backward as far as comfortable.
- That is one repetition.

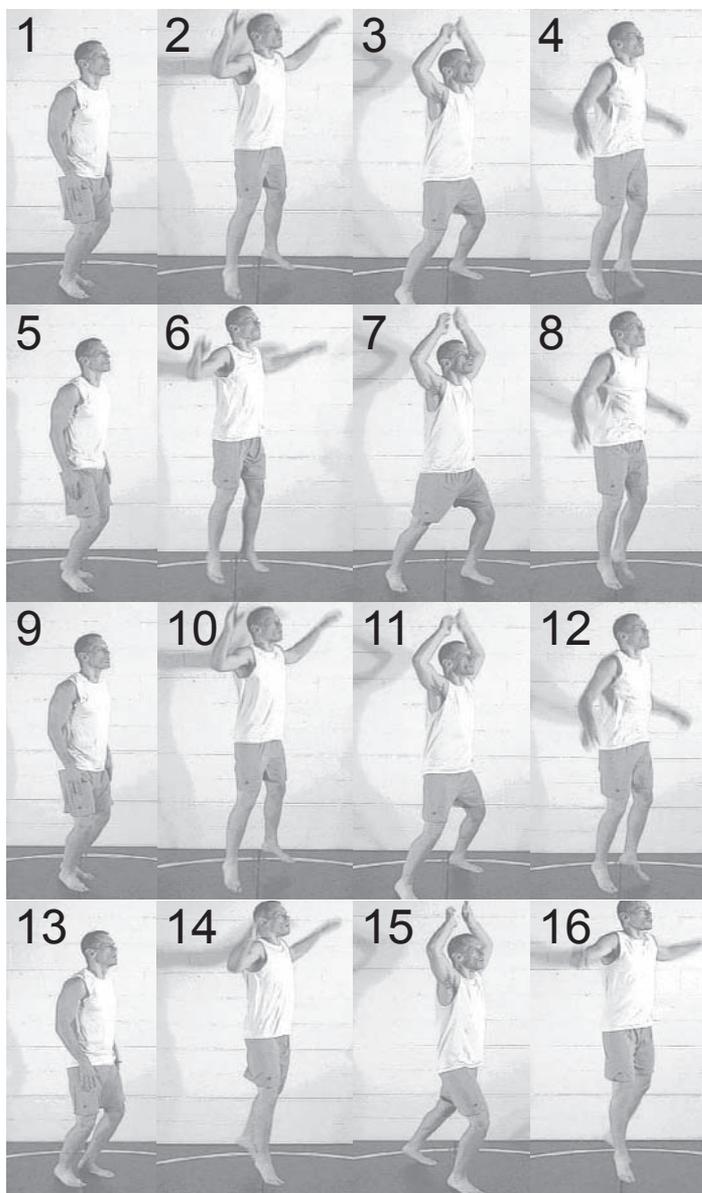
4-count jumping jack



Note — This is a standard jumping jack with the addition of a fore and aft leg movement. The arms always travel overhead and to the sides.

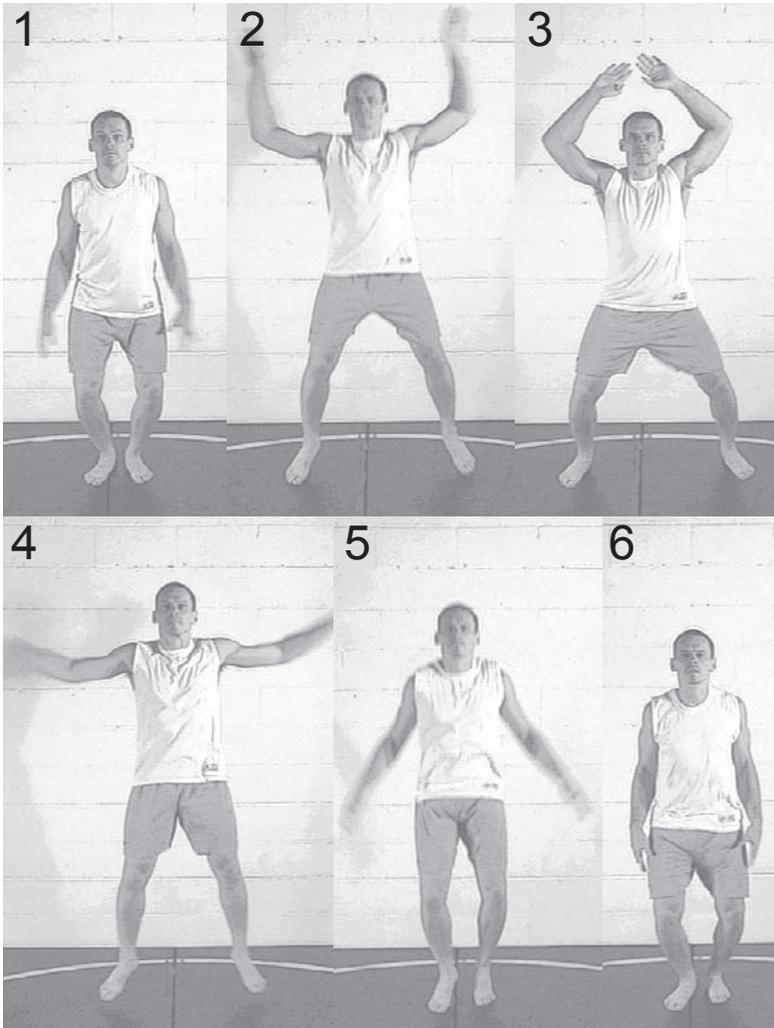
Note #2 — Do not clap your hands overhead or to the sides of your thighs. We want to control our motion throughout.

- Perform the standard jumping jack, feet jumped to straddle, arms overhead — Count 1.
- Feet together, arms to sides — Count 2.
- Arms overhead and one foot forward and one to the rear — Count 3.
- Feet together and hands to the sides — Count 4.



Warm-up

2-count jumping jack



These are the standard jumping jacks. Straddle jump only — no fore and aft.

You do not have to use these particular warm-up exercises, but please do perform some sort of warm-up before you begin the day's conditioning.

5 *Body-weight exercises*



Somatotrophics

Neat word, huh? It sounds technical, but it isn't really.

Somatotrophics are nothing more than body-weight exercises. Literally, somatotrophics is a souped

up word for calisthenics. I decided to toss the word at you because somatotrophics actually are a wee bit different from standard body-weight calisthenics. The key to the difference can be found in the root word itself. *Soma* is Greek for body and *trophics* refers to growth — as in muscular hypertrophy or muscular growth.

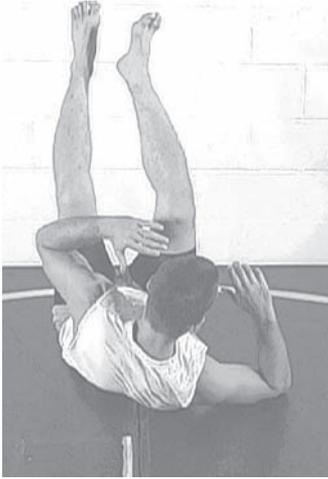
Body-weight calisthenics, as commonly practiced, are great conditioners for muscular endurance and make demands of the cardiovascular system to some degree. But there is not necessarily a muscle growth component. If we approach body-weight calisthenics with our friends synergy and specificity in mind, we can add muscular growth to the equation.

Much of the beginning portion of this material will focus on somatotrophics. You will not find weight exercises until later in the program. Is this because weights are useless? Absolutely not. Weighted resistance training is invaluable for the NHB/MMA athlete. We emphasize somatotrophics first because we want to ensure that athletes can handle and move their own body weight

Body-weight exercises

with complete control before we graduate to weight training. After all, if you can't move your own weight, are you ready for even more?

6 Hinge group



We start each conditioning session by working the abdominal girdle. The muscles that encircle the trunk are the hinge that ties the upper body and the lower body into a cohesive whole. I am suspicious of any conditioning regimen that emphasizes only upper-body or lower-body strength and ignores the hinge. There are hundreds of hinge exercises we could highlight, but I present those

that require no special needs beyond a space on the floor and your determination.

Hinge exercise laws

1. Keep your head off the mat at all times. Your head is heavy, so be thankful for this extra neck conditioning. Do not drop your head.
2. Do not touch your head with your hands. There is sometimes an enormous temptation to assist your rising/crunching movements by pulling your head. Don't do it. You are to have your hands behind your head for added resistance, but do not touch your head.
3. In all crunch motions, attempt to crunch your hips off the mat at the same time as your upper shoulders.

Hinge group

Think making your floating ribs and your pelvis meet.

4. Do not use momentum. Control each and every motion.

General format

Now that we're finally to the exercise portion of the text, observe the format. We will illustrate each recommended exercise. Then at the end of the chapter, we will suggest sequences and repetition numbers for each of the following classes of athlete.

Novice: You've never worked out in your life, or it's been some time since you have.

Intermediate: You've done some work, but are new to hard core.

Advanced: You already work hard. I suggest this level as maintenance.

Pro: Competition is a chief focus for you and/or you have the time to spare.

Hinge group one

These exercises target the lower abdominal region.

Rock back



☒ With your head up (do I even need to mention that?) and your hands under your butt to ensure proper back positioning, rock your knees toward your shoulders.



☒ Return your feet toward the mat with the feet never touching the mat throughout the exercise.

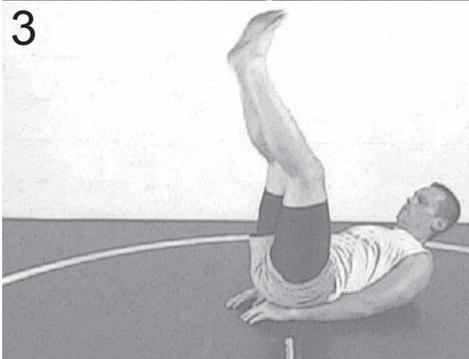
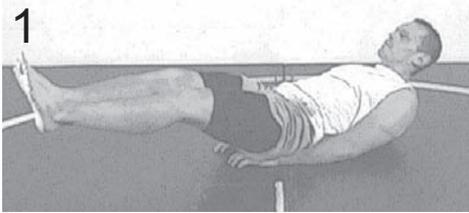
Hinge group

Hip thrust



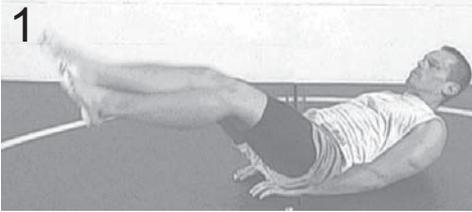
- ☒ With your legs in pike position and your hands under your butt, slowly push your feet toward the sky and raise your hips from the mat.
- ☒ Return your hips to the mat.



Leg lift

- ☒ Begin with your hands under your butt, legs extended and feet held six inches above the mat.
- ☒ Bring your legs to the tuck position.
- ☒ Extend your legs to the pike position.
- ☒ Return your legs to the tuck position.
- ☒ Extend your legs six inches off the mat.
- ☒ That is one repetition.

Flutter kick



- ☒ Begin with the legs extended to six inches above the mat.
- ☒ Elevate the right leg approximately two feet above the mat while keeping your left leg to just above the surface of the mat.
- ☒ Reverse this position to left leg high and right leg low.
- ☒ Reverse again.
- ☒ And reverse again for a single repetition. In other words, right/left/right/left is one repetition.

Hinge group 2

These exercises target the middle of the hinge and the external obliques that gird along the side of the body.

Crossed leg crunch

1



2



- ☒ Begin with the left sole of your foot on the mat and your right ankle crossed over your left knee.
- ☒ Your left hand is behind your head (but not touching).
- ☒ Crunch your left elbow to your right knee.
- ☒ After the targeted number of repetitions, perform a set on the other side of your body.

Crossed leg reach

1



2



- ☒ The soles of both feet are on the mat.
- ☒ Crunch up and to your left attempting to touch the outside of your left ankle with your right hand.
- ☒ Return to the beginning of the exercise and repeat on the other side.
- ☒ Right and left is one repetition.

Oblique crunch

1



2



- ☒ Roll onto your right side, put your hands behind your head and square your chest toward the sky.
- ☒ Perform crunches for the desired number before repeating on the opposite side.

Hinge group

Side leg lift

1



2

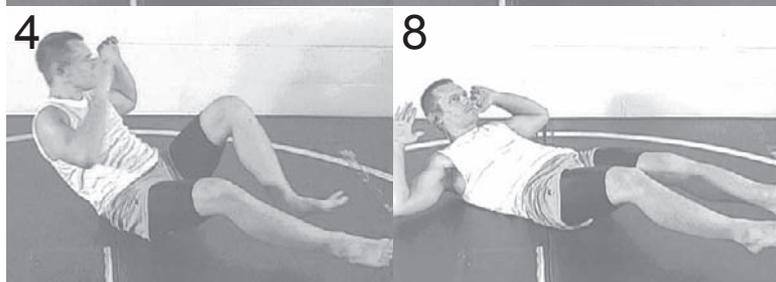
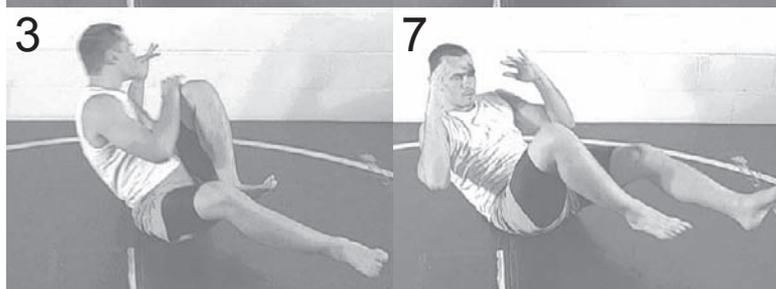
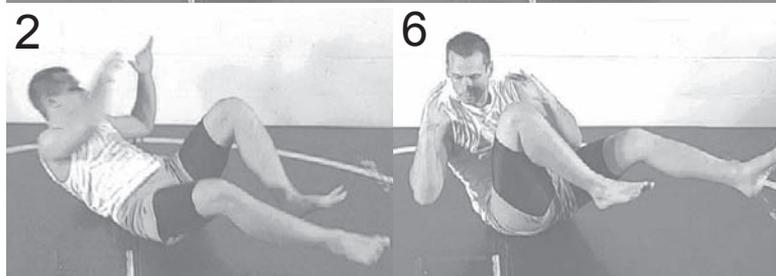


- ☒ Roll onto your right side with your body straight.
- ☒ Place your left hand behind your head.
- ☒ With your left leg extended, bring your left leg toward the sky while you attempt to raise your upper body from the mat. It won't happen, but try.
- ☒ Perform for the desired repetitions, and then repeat on the other side.

Bicycle tucks →

This is a variation of standard bicycles.

- ☒ Begin by lying supine with your hands behind your head.
- ☒ Tuck your body bringing your feet and upper body off the mat at the same time.
- ☒ Take your right elbow to your left knee.
- ☒ Return to the mat.
- ☒ Tuck again and take the left elbow to the right knee.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.



Hinge group 3

This group of exercises emphasizes the upper abdominal region.

Tuck crunch

1

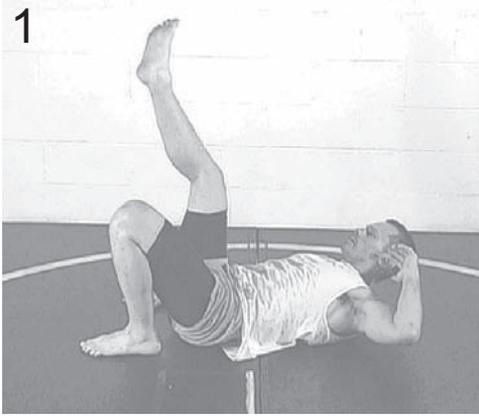


With hands behind your head and your legs held in the tuck position, crunch straight up the middle.

2



Single-leg pike crunch



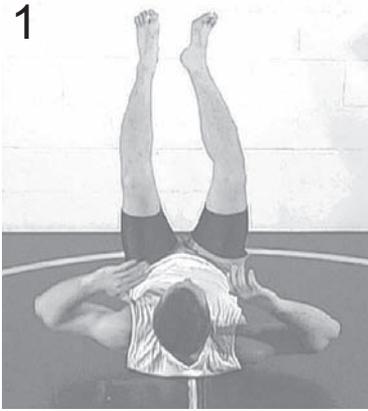
- ☒ Left sole on the mat, right leg extended in pike position.
- ☒ Left arm behind the head.
- ☒ Strive to bring the left elbow to the right knee.
- ☒ After completing the desired number of repetitions, repeat on the opposite side.



Hinge group

Pike crunch

1

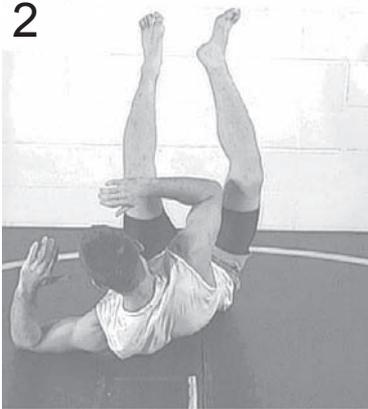


☒ Begin with hands behind your head and both legs in pike position.

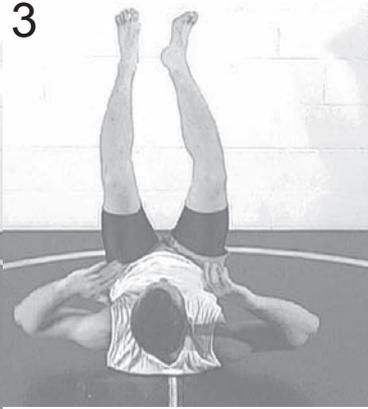
☒ Crunch right elbow toward the left knee, return to the mat and repeat on the other side.

☒ Right and left is one repetition.

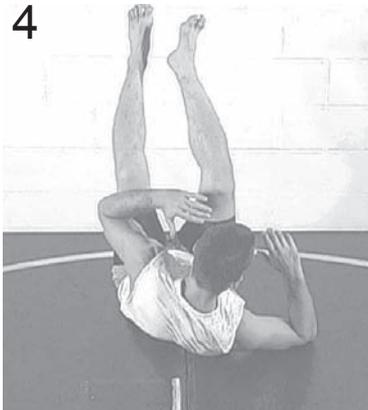
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3

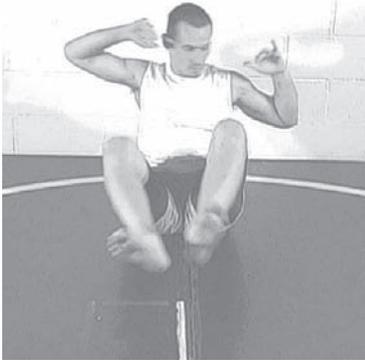


4



Scissor kick

1



2



3



4



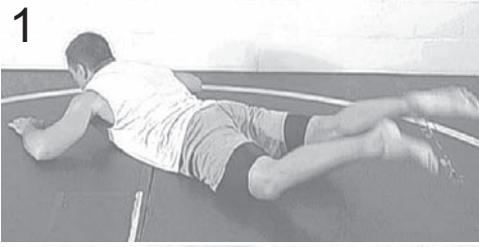
- ☒ Balance on your butt with your hands behind your head and your legs extended in front of you six inches above the mat.
- ☒ Scissor your legs bringing the left leg over the right and then the right over the left.
- ☒ While scissoring, twist your body and strive to touch the left elbow to the right knee and then the right elbow to the left knee.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

Hinge group 4

A single exercise works the lumbar region.

Reverse flutter kick

1



2



3



4



- ☒ Lie prone on the mat with your legs extended.
- ☒ Use the same right/left/right/left cadence for one repetition like the standard flutter kicks in Hinge group 1.
- ☒ It is vital that you bring your entire thigh off the mat with each repetition and not merely bend at the knees.
- ☒ I recommend you begin each somatotrophics or weight training session with hinge work. At the very least, work the hinge three days per week.

Reps for hinge group

These are the suggested sequences and repetition numbers for each class of athlete.

Novice

- ☒ Ten repetitions of each exercise from all groups.
- ☒ Allow yourself a 10-second rest between groups.

Intermediate

- ☒ Fifteen repetitions of each exercise from all groups.
- ☒ No more than 10 seconds of rest between groups.

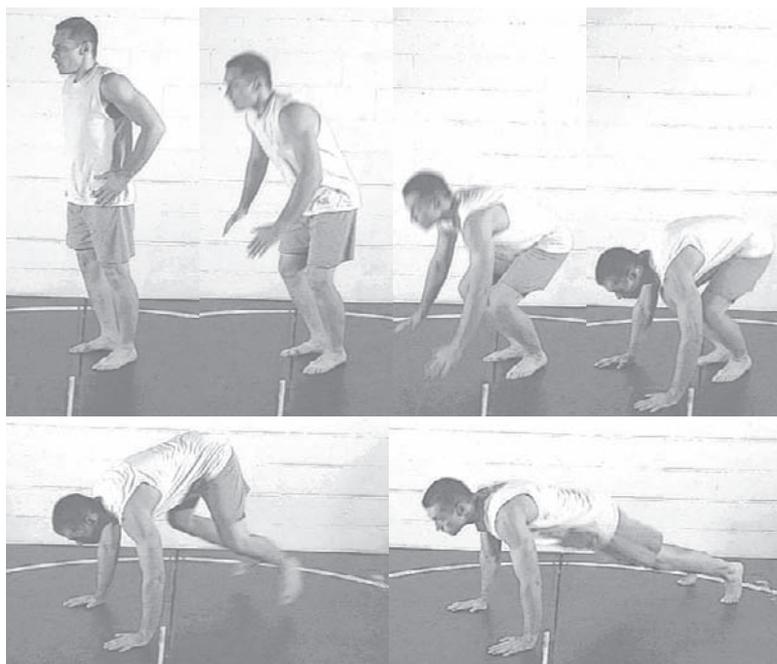
Advanced

- ☒ Twenty repetitions of each exercise.
- ☒ No rest between groups.

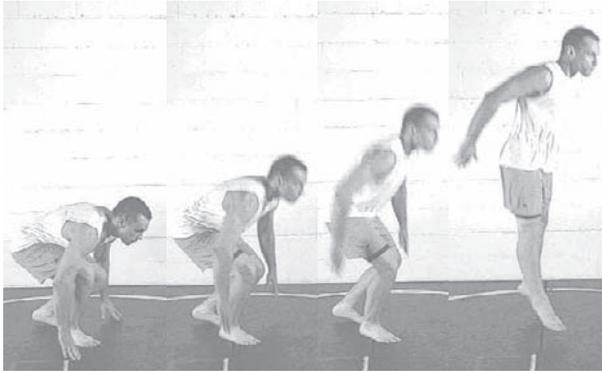
Pro

- ☒ Twenty-five repetitions of each exercise.
- ☒ No rest between groups.

Hinge group



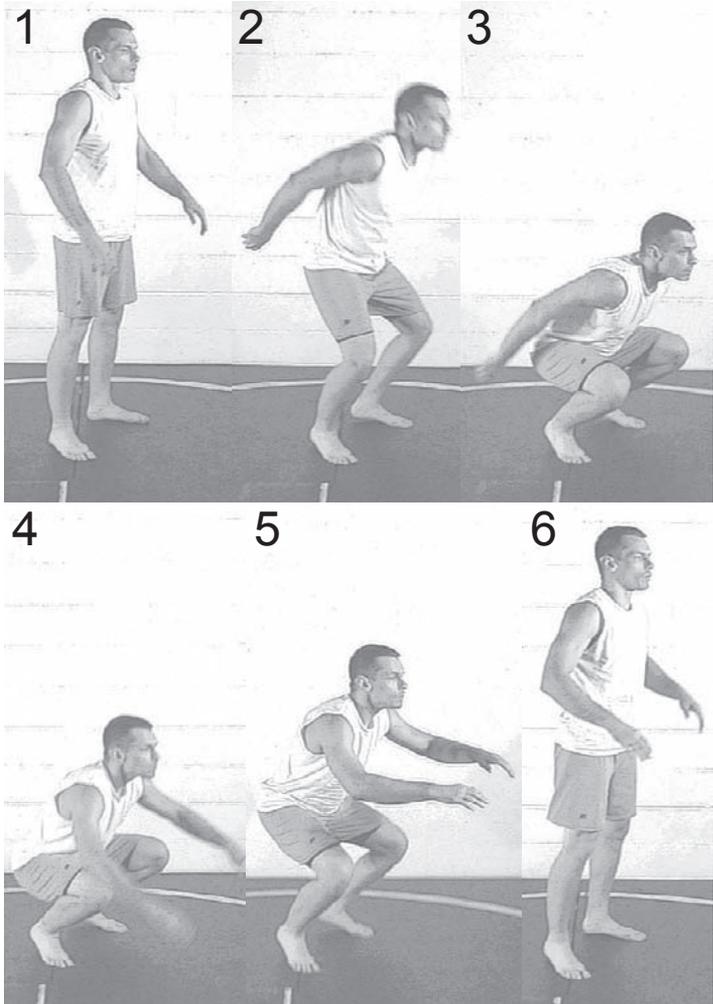
7 Power group



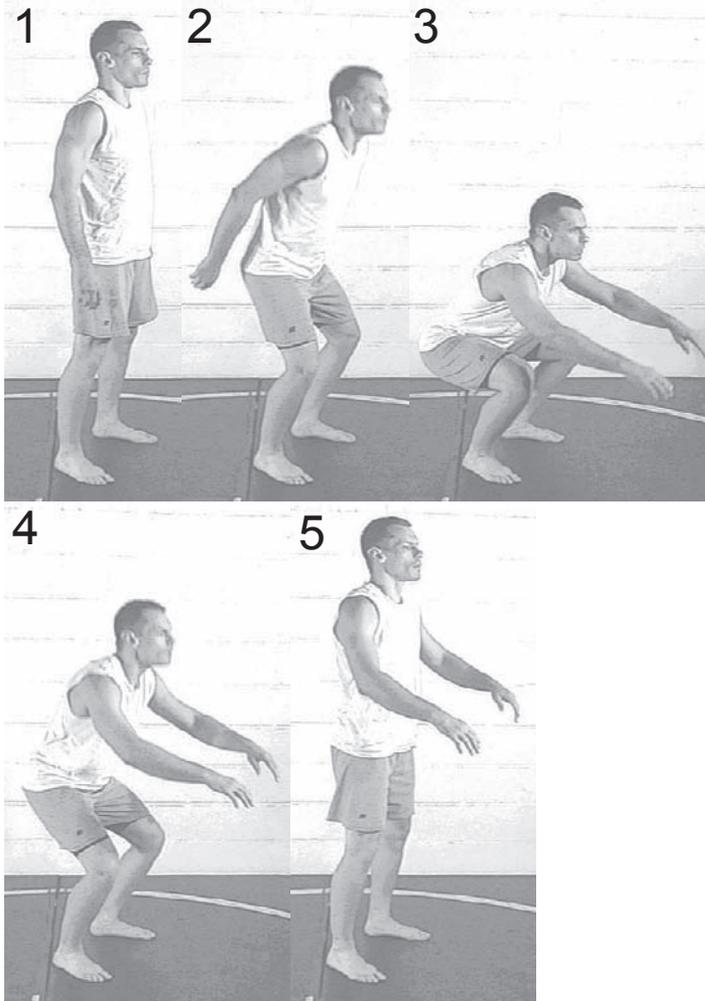
Conditioning of the legs is our next priority. There is perhaps no single factor that determines a fighter's endurance than the ability of his legs to carry him the distance. Endurance and strength come from the legs, so we must take special pains (and I do mean pain if you are new to leg conditioning) to build the most solid enduring foundation possible.

Body-weight squats have been used by wrestlers for years to condition the legs. They came to prominence in the Hindu grappling systems hence the name Hindu Squats. They are technically called baithaks for the historical sticklers.

Hindu squat



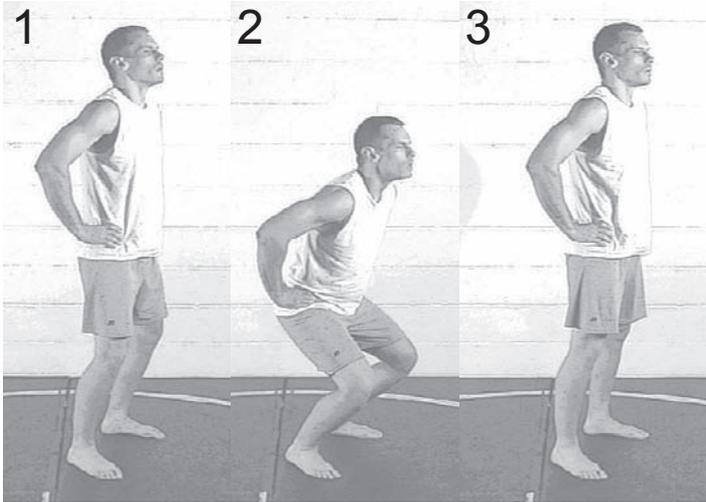
- ☒ Stand with the feet shoulder-width apart.
- ☒ Squat down allowing yourself to rise onto your toes.
- ☒ Go all the way down — ass to heels, folks. Literally, no half-assed work. A lot has been made of what to do with your arms during this exercise. You can swing them, put them on your hips, behind your head or in your pockets. It doesn't really matter.

Half squat

☒ Perform this exercise as in the preceding, only stop with your thighs parallel to the floor.

This exercise is not meant to take the place of Hindu squats but it's a nice addition. You will find the simple act of having to halt and control your descent will burn the legs in a different manner.

Quarter squat

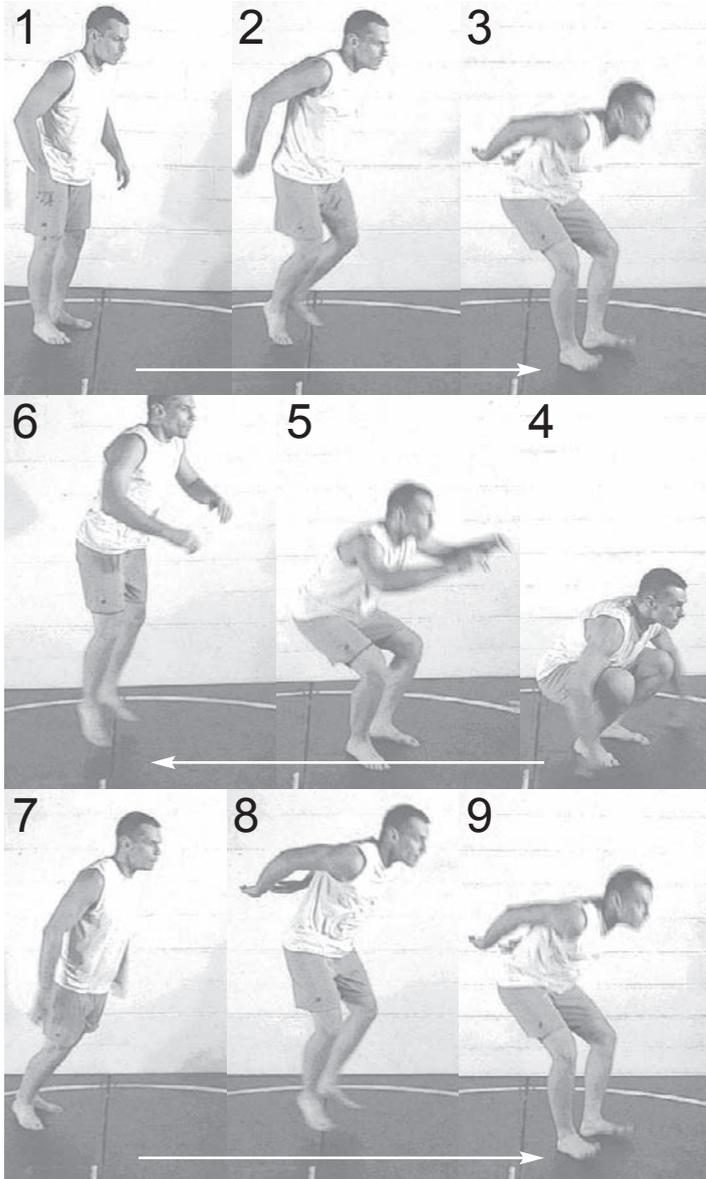


☒ You're ahead of me. Squat only a quarter of the way down.

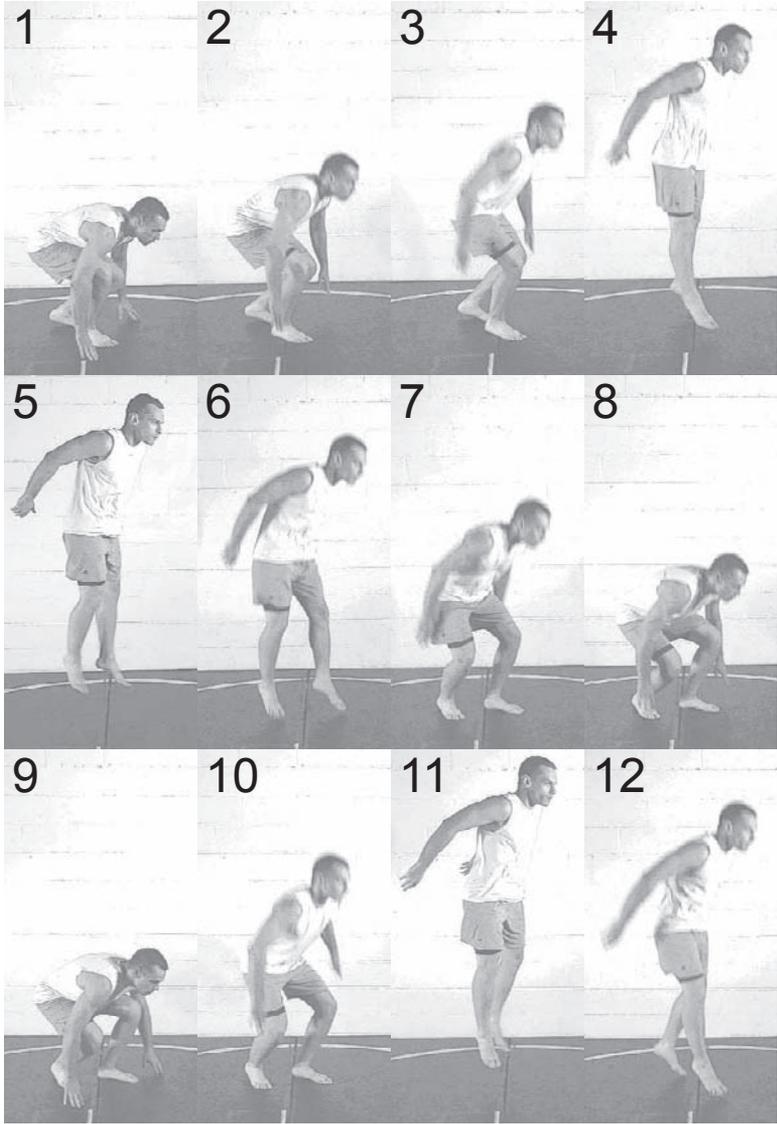
The key here is to not bend forward at the waist but to keep your body upright, which keeps the emphasis on the legs.

Rip squat, aka Hindu jumper squat →

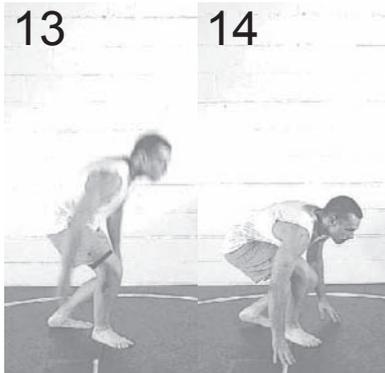
- ☒ Jump forward approximately three feet landing at the bottom of the Hindu squat position.
- ☒ Immediately rise and jump back to the original position three feet to the rear to complete one repetition.



Switching jump squat



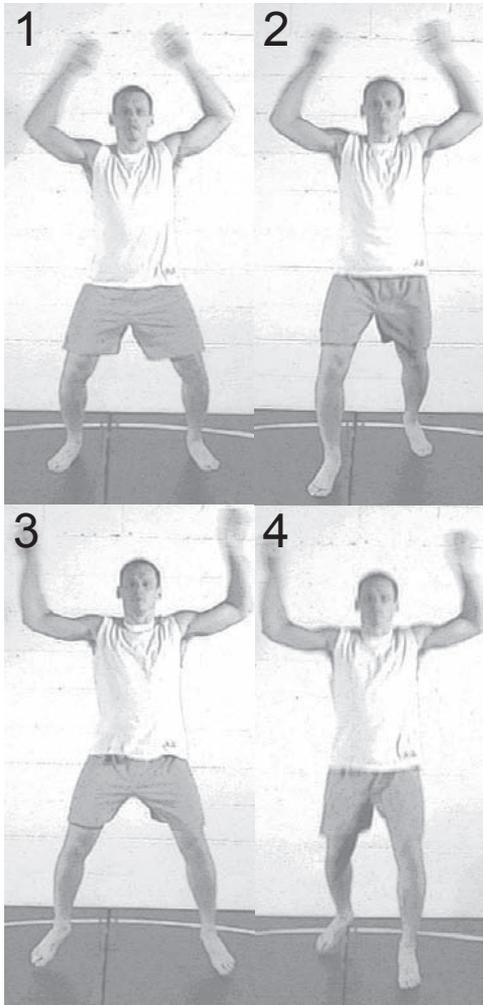
- ☒ Step your right foot one natural step forward.
- ☒ Squat low and touch your fingertips to the mat. Make sure your fingers touch because you are squatting and not merely bending at the waist.
- ☒ Jump for height reversing your leg position in the process landing with the left leg forward and the right leg to the rear.
- ☒ Immediately launch again, switching your right forward and your left to the rear.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.



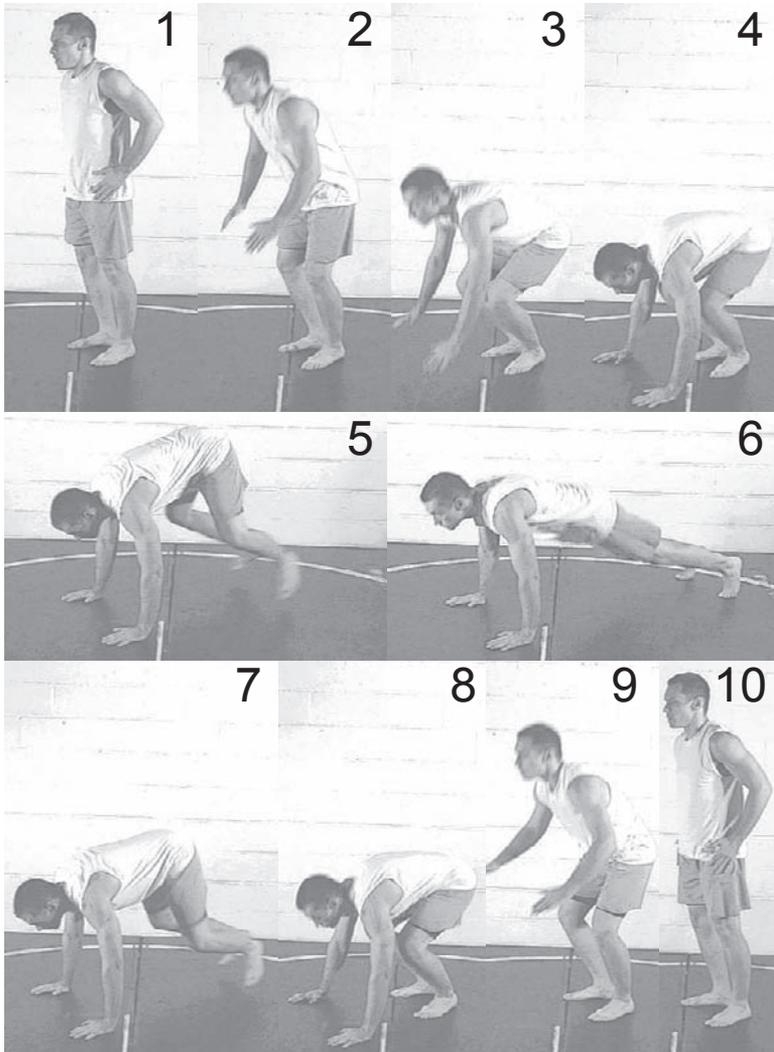
4-count jumping jack

For the uninitiated, this is a standard jumping jack with a fore and aft leg switch.

- ☒ Perform your standard jumping jack, legs to the side, arms overhead.
- ☒ Return to position.
- ☒ Jump again taking the right leg forward and the left to the rear, the arms will rise overhead still.
- ☒ Return to position and repeat the sequence.
- ☒ Do not clap your hands overhead or slap them to your thighs. We want to control our movement throughout. That is part of the exercise.



Squat thrust aka burpee



- ☒ Squat and place your palms on the mat in front of you.
- ☒ With your weight on your hands, burst your legs to extended push-up position behind you.
- ☒ Jump your legs back underneath you into the bottom of the squat position.
- ☒ Stand up. That's one repetition.

Reps for power group

I suggest these sequences and repetition numbers for each class of athlete.

Novice

Squats 25
4-count jumping jacks 10
Half squats 25
4-count jumping jacks 10
Quarter squats 25
4-count jumping jacks 10
Rip squats 25
4-count jumping jacks 10

Intermediate

Squats 50
Switching jump squats 10
4-count jumping jacks 10
Half squats 50
Switching jump squats 10
4-count jumping jacks 10
Quarter squats 50
Switching jump squats 10
4-count jumping jacks 10
Rip squats 50
Switching jump squats 10
4-count jumping jacks 10

Advanced

Squats 75
Switching jump squats 10
4-count jumping jacks 10
Half squats 75
Switching jump squats 10
4-count jumping jacks 10
Quarter squats 75
Switching jump squats 10
4-count jumping jacks 10

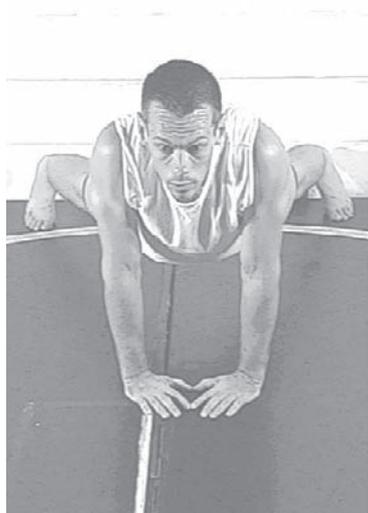
Rip squats 75
Switching jump squats 10
4-count jumping jacks 10

Pro

Squats 100
Switching jump squats 12
4-count jumping jacks 10
Squat thrusts 10
Half squats 100
Switching jump squats 12
4-count jumping jacks 10
Squat thrusts 10
Quarter squats 100
Switching jump squats 12
4-count jumping jacks 10
Squat thrusts 10
Rip squats 100
Switching jump squats 12
4-count jumping jacks 10
Squat thrusts 10

If you're wondering why the squat reps seem a bit low even on the upper levels, consider that we are recommending a rapid work rate to keep the intensity high. That rapid rate combined with the jump work should do the trick. Enjoy!

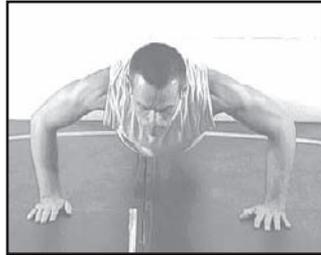
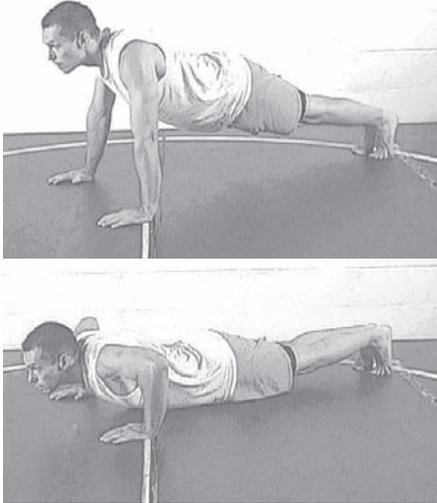
8 *Pushing group*



Whether punching or grappling, you have to be able to move your arms away from your body while overcoming a modicum of resistance. Push-ups and all their varieties are ideal zero-cost exercises to build this valuable pushing strength and endurance. There are literally dozens of push-up varieties we could highlight, but I emphasize the high-percentage versions that will get the job

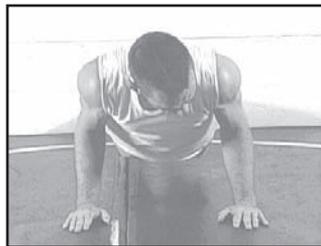
done. The pushing group will cycle through a broad range of pushing motions to prepare the shoulder girdle for the eccentric positions that grappling demands of the athlete.

Standard push-up



Feet together and hands on the mat at slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, your body in a plank position. We all know how to do standard push-ups, but let's guard against a few common cheats.

- ☒ When you descend, go all the way down and allow the chest to lightly touch the floor.
- ☒ Travel the elbows to the side away from the body. Bringing the elbows close to the body decreases the difficulty of this exercise. Who wants that?
- ☒ Keep your head up. No dropping the head pretending that because your nose or forehead touched, you went all the way down.
- ☒ And lastly — slow down. No need-for-speed repetitions in which you utilize bouncing momentum. This also decreases difficulty. The key in the standard is to control the body's weight.



Bad form — Elbows should be away from the body as shown above.

Triceps dip



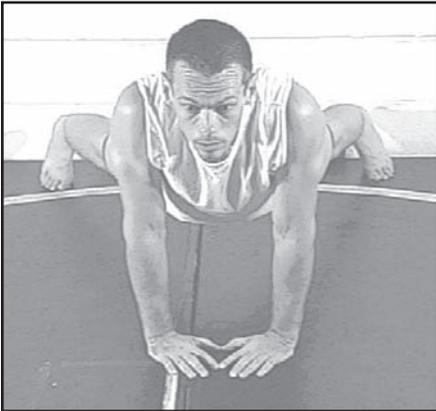
There are three variations of dips, but we utilize the basic dip because it is the most useful for our purposes.

- ☒ Grip the dip bars (or the backs of two sturdy chairs) and support your body's weight on the palms of your hands.
- ☒ Keeping your body upright (do not lean forward), descend until your elbows are at a 90 degree angle.
- ☒ Return to the top of the exercise.



Leaning forward and traveling the elbows away from the body increases the amount of work done by the chest. We don't want that here. We are trying to overload the triceps.

Diamond push-up



This exercise is offered as an alternative to dips or as a preparatory exercise for the novice who isn't quite ready for dips.

☒ Place your palms on the mat with index fingers and extended thumbs touching forming a diamond shape (looks more like a spade from card suits to me, but they are called diamonds, nevertheless).

☒ Support your body in plank position with your feet spread two shoulder widths apart.

☒ Descend and touch your chest to your hands.

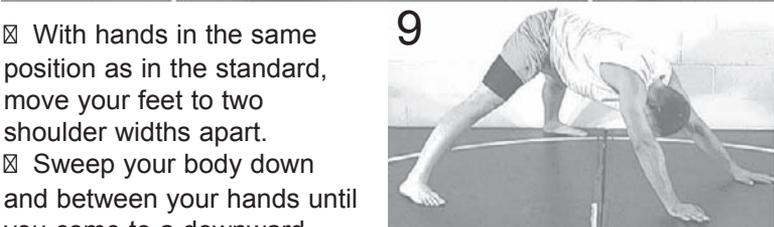
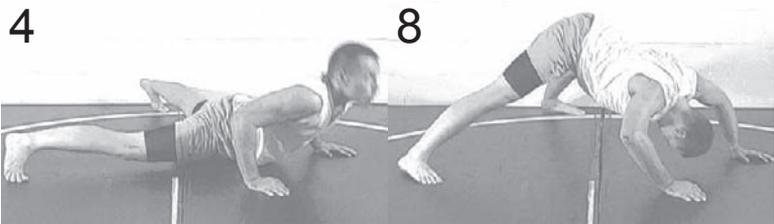
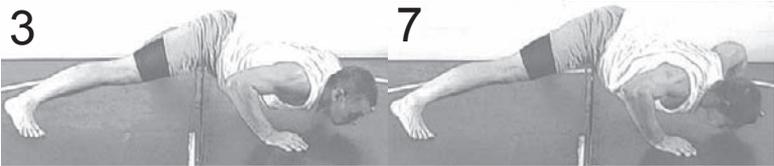
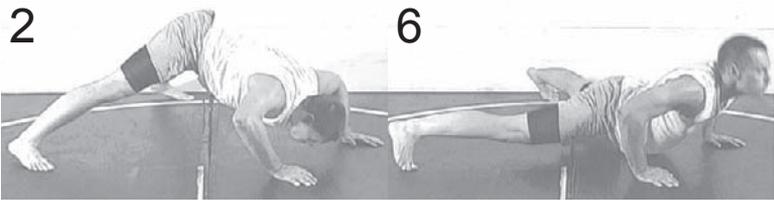
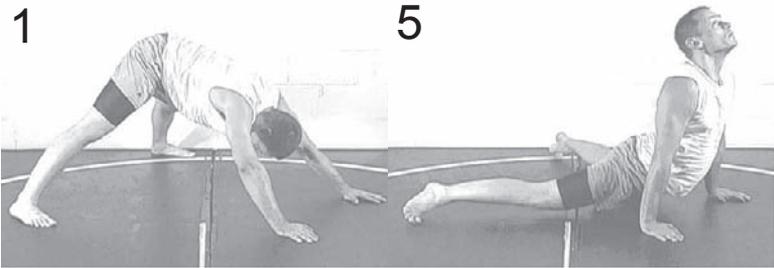
☒ Return to the top of the exercise.

Reverse push-up

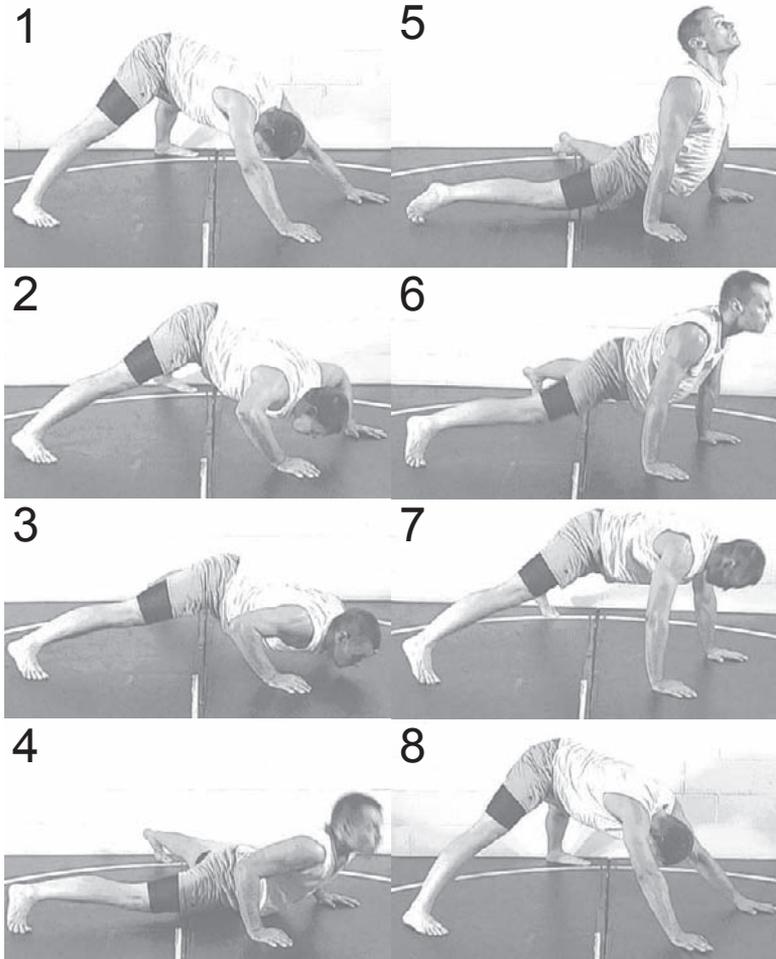


- ☒ Lie supine on the mat with your palms on the mat above your shoulders, fingers pointing toward your shoulders.
- ☒ Press your body toward the sky, leading with your hips and chest.
- ☒ At the top of the exercise your weight will be supported by your palms and feet. You can rise onto your toes for greater range of motion.
- ☒ At the bottom of the exercise, allow only your upper shoulders to touch the mat, and not the entire back. Touching the entire back allows a rest point, which is useless for our purposes.

Dive bomber



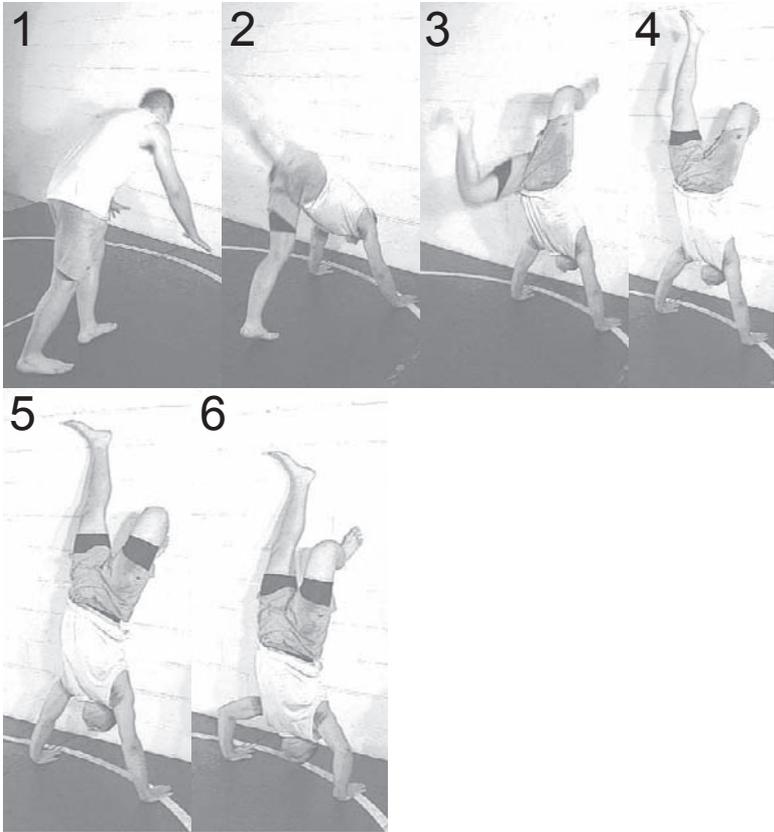
- ☒ With hands in the same position as in the standard, move your feet to two shoulder widths apart.
- ☒ Sweep your body down and between your hands until you come to a downward arched position with your face looking at the sky.
- ☒ Return along the same path.
- ☒ That is one repetition.

Hindu push-up

Another standard of the Hindu wrestlers. They are also known as dands and are basically half dive bombers. I prefer dive bombers as they work the entire shoulder girdle in both the positive and negative aspects of the exercise. The dand only works the forward sweep.

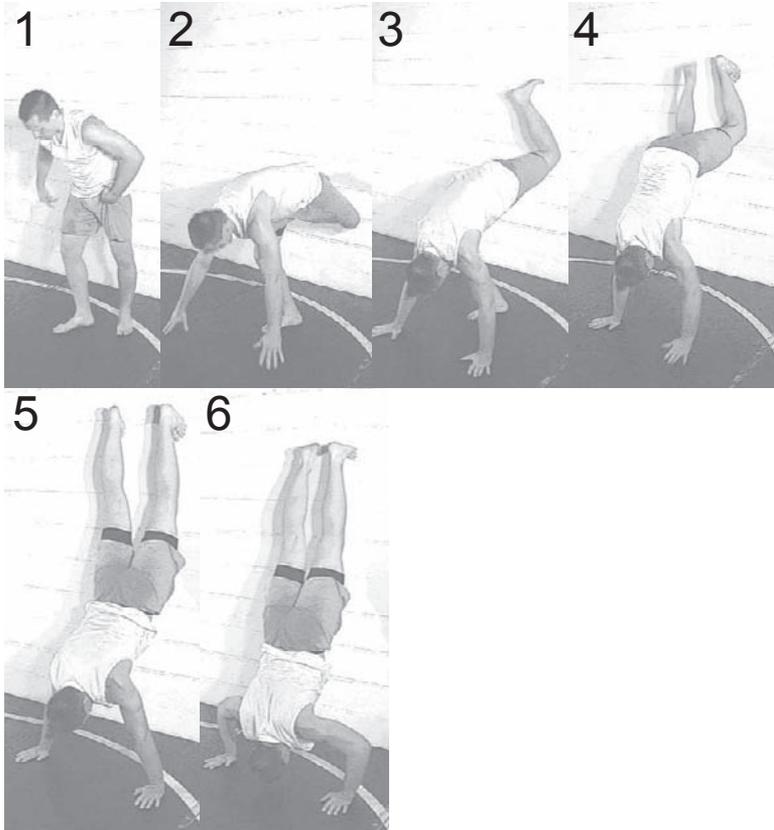
- ☒ Perform the downward sweep of the dive bomber.
- ☒ Push back to the starting position without the return sweep.

Handstand push-up



There are three ways to hit the inverted position necessary for this exercise.

1. Above. Face the wall and place your hands on the mat. Kick your legs up until the heels or the soles of your feet touch the wall for balance.
2. Opposite page. With your back to the wall, place your hands on the mat and walk your feet up the wall until you reach the inverted position.



3. Not shown. For the gymnastically inclined, pop into a free handstand and rip repetitions without training wheels.

- ☒ Once in the inverted position, descend touching the top of your head to the mat.
- ☒ Press yourself back to the top of the exercise.

Tent push-ups



This exercise is meant as an alternative or preparation exercise for those not quite ready for the handstand push-up.

☒ Place your hands on the mat in standard position.

☒ Rise on to balls of your feet and walk your feet forward until your body is in a pike position.

☒ Perform your push-ups from this quasi-inverted position.

Reps for pushing group

Suggested sequences and repetitions for each class of athlete.

Novice

Standard 25
 Diamonds 20
 Reverse 15
 Hindu 10
 Tent 5

Again, for those who consider the numbers too light even at the top end, understand that we are advocating slow controlled motion and minimal rest between sets and exercises.

Once you experience the synergistic effect of combining the exercises in the prescribed manner, the wisdom (I mean the burn) should present itself.

Intermediate

Standard
 2 sets of 20 (from here forward, sets and repetitions are written as fractions, as in 2/25)
 Dips 15
 Diamonds 15
 Reverse 2/12
 Dive bombers 2/10
 Handstand 2/5

Advanced

Standard 2/25
 Dips 2/20
 Reverse 2/15
 Dive bombers 2/10
 Handstand 2/5

Pro

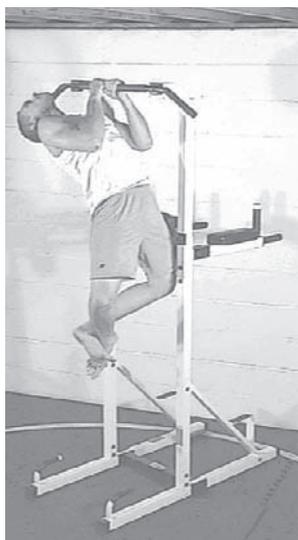
Standard 50
 Dips 40
 Reverse 30
 Dive bombers 20
 Handstand 10

Pushing group



9 Pulling group

The pushing group might be more important for the striker than for the grappler because striking calls for movements away from the body. Pulling, though, is a huge part of the grappling aspect of NHB. Whether bringing an opponent to you or retaining him once you've got him where you want him, it is the pulling group that does the job. We use a simple pull-up set to give us what we need in this area.

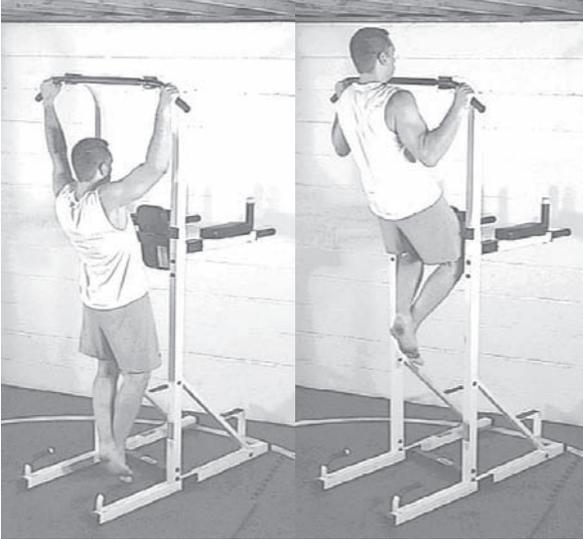


There are dozens of pull-up variations, but we emphasize only those you'll need. Pull-ups are a tough exercise for many, but please don't let that be an

excuse to skip them. Even if you find yourself unable to perform even one repetition of any of the offered varieties, I still want you to grab that bar and give it what you've got for each repetition. If you can only budge yourself one inch for each rep, that's still one inch of progress. You'll get there, trust me. But you'll never get there if you don't grab the bar.

Pulling group

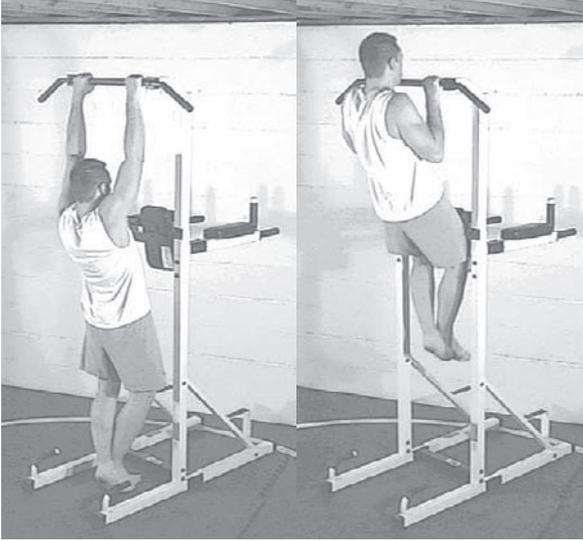
Wide pull-up



- ☒ Grab the bar with an over-grip (palms facing away from you) at slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.
- ☒ With slow controlled motion, pull your body up until your chin is above the bar.
- ☒ Descend with control to about 2 inches from the bottom of a dead hang and repeat.

Note — When taking the chin above the bar, don't cheat. From the bottom of the exercise to the top, always face forward so you truly rise above the bar. No "chicken-necking" — when you're near the top of the bar and you lift up your chin to make it pass the top. Perfect form is the law.

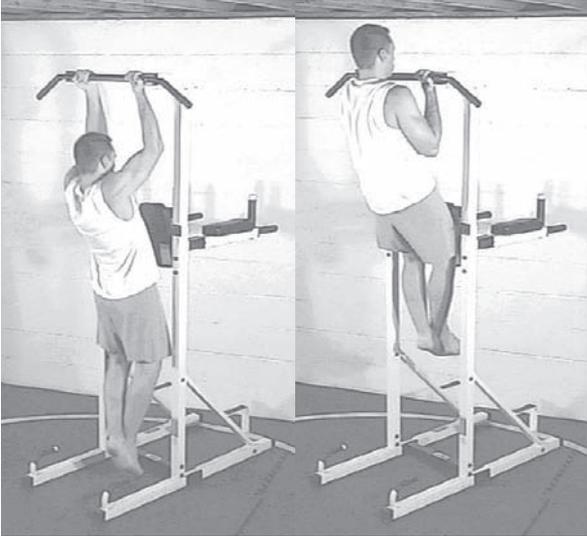
Standard pull-up



- ☒ Grip the bar in an overgrip with your hands at shoulder-width apart.
- ☒ Perform as in the previous exercise.

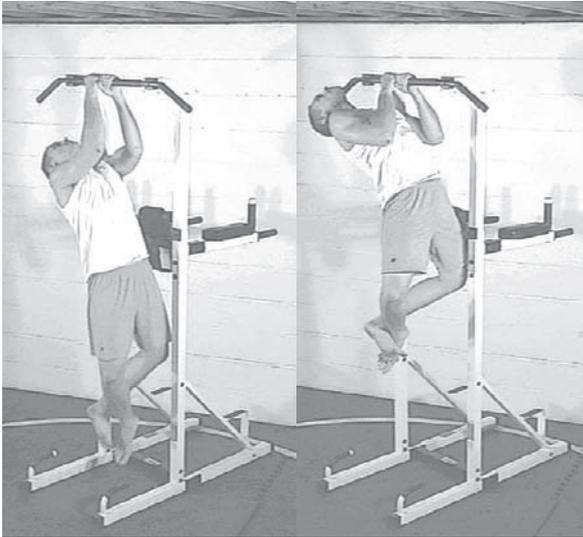
Pulling group

Chin-up



A chin-up is merely a pull-up with an under-grip on the bar (palms facing you). Most people find these easier to perform than pull-ups. That is the reason we place them late in the synergistic routine. Perform as described before.

Arch pull-up



More often than not, while grappling, we are pulling a limb or an opponent to our core (see “Take it to Heart” in *No Holds Barred Fighting: Killer Submissions* for a full explanation of this concept). This pulling follows a curve slightly different from the previous exercises. The arch pull-up remedies this omission.

- ☒ Stand under the bar and grip it in a hand-over-hand manner.
- ☒ While pulling up, keep your elbows traveling toward your sides and drop your head back.
- ☒ Your goal is to touch your solar plexus to the bar, not to bring your head up on either side of the bar.
- ☒ As you descend, allow your body to return to the vertical.

Reps for pulling group

Suggested sequences and repetitions for each class of athlete.

Novice

Wide grip 5
Standard 5
Chin-ups 5
Arch 5

Intermediate

Wide grip 8
Standard 8
Chin-ups 8
Arch 8

Advanced

Wide grip 12
Standard 10
Chin-ups 8
Arch 8

Pro

Wide grip 15
Standard 12
Chin-ups 10
Arch 8

10 *Fifth limb*

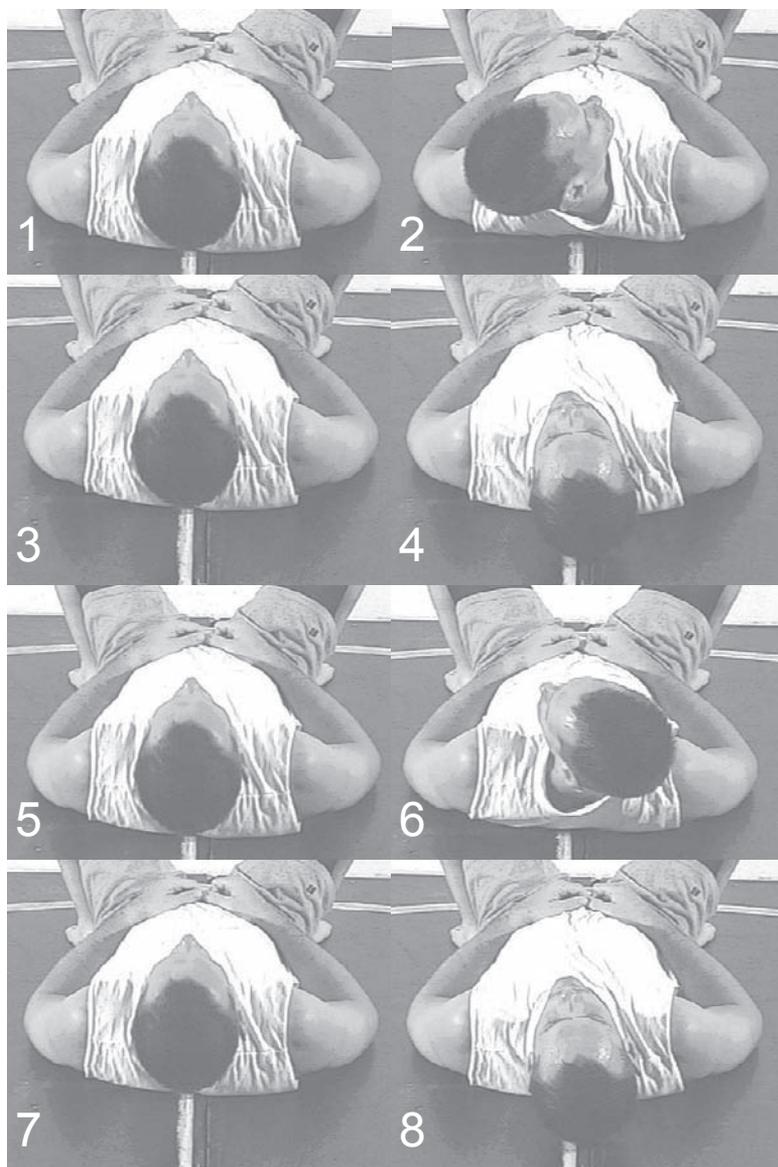


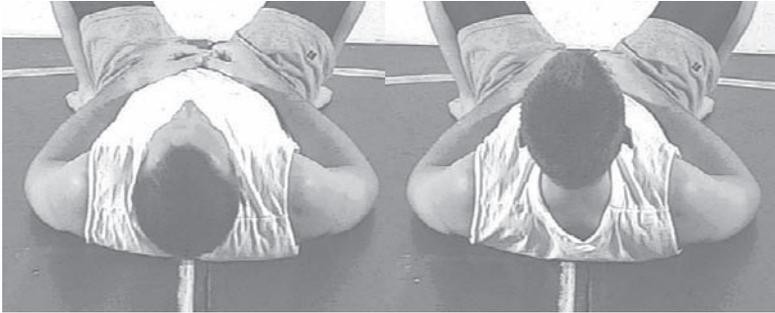
Prurient connotations aside, we are referring to the neck. There is perhaps no other sport that demands neck conditioning to the degree that grappling requires. A strong neck allows the fighter to bridge onto his

head with confidence, better stave off head attacks, and even use the head with greater force to drive or post an opponent into position. Neck conditioning is key for the NHB grappler. What follows is a simple neck conditioning set that will fulfill your needs in this area in minimum time.

When on you're back using the bottom scissors/guard position or caught underneath a top saddle/mount, you've got to keep your head off the mat. Taking a punch while your head is backed up by planet Earth is nothing anybody looks forward to. Yet you still see fighters on their backs with their heads on the mat. Sometimes this is due to poor technique, but most often it's a matter of conditioning. Your head is heavy, and the mere act of holding it up while supine is more difficult than it first appears. The following two exercises will give you the endurance needed to keep your head up.

Fifth limb



Neck lift

- ☒ Lying on the mat, hold your head off the mat as shown.
- ☒ Lift your head straight up the middle attempting to touch your chin to your chest.
- ☒ Drop your head back to just above the mat.
- ☒ Repeat.

**4-count neck lift**

- ☒ Lie supine on the mat.
- ☒ Lift your head from the mat and keep it off the mat throughout the exercise.
- ☒ Take your head to the left attempting to touch your left ear to your left shoulder. This is count 1.
- ☒ Return to center and slightly dip your head toward the mat. Do not touch the mat. This is count 2.
- ☒ Take your right ear to your right shoulder. This is count 3.
- ☒ Return to center and dip the head. This is count 4.

Neck rock



I've worked neck bridges for many years and have found the full-range exercise described here more beneficial than the static isometric hold. Fighting is not a static game, so let's aim for specificity and work full-range movement more likely to be encountered.

- ☒ Hit the supine position on the mat.
- ☒ With weight on your heels (or toes) rock on to the top of your head. You can rock as far back as your forehead or the bridge of you nose, if you desire. How far you rock is not as important as performing the rocks themselves.
- ☒ At the top of the motion, you will be supporting yourself only by your feet and head.
- ☒ Lower your body to a position where your shoulders are just above the mat, always keeping your weight on your head.
- ☒ Repeat.

Reps for fifth limb

Suggested sequences and repetitions for each class of athlete.

Novice

4-count neck lifts 10
Neck lifts 20
Neck rocks 10

Intermediate

4-count neck lifts 20
Neck lifts 10
Neck rocks 20

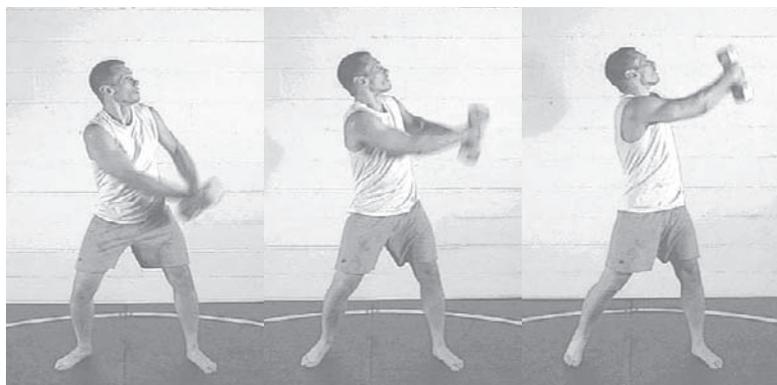
Advanced

4-count neck lifts 10
Neck lifts 10
Neck rocks 25
Repeat sequence

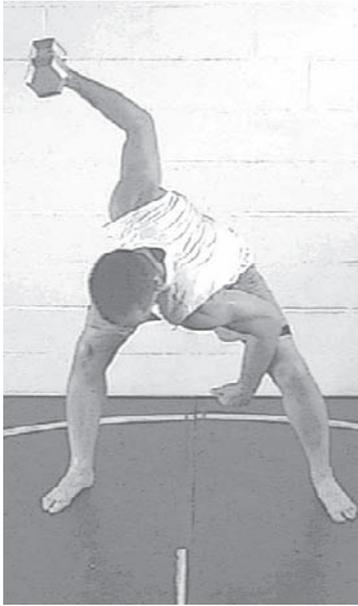
Pro

4-count neck lifts 10
Neck lifts 10
Neck rocks 50
Repeat sequence 4 times

Fifth limb



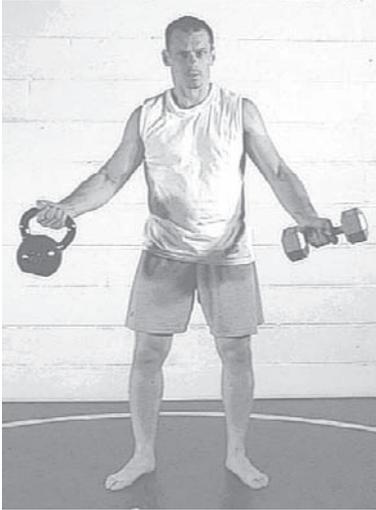
11 *Dumbbell / kettlebell*



This is a circuit weight training complex that requires a single dumbbell or a single kettlebell. The complex works well with either tool. This sequence is designed to condition muscular endurance, build strength in eccentric positions, foster upper body explosiveness and kick-start your cardio — all at the same time. To reap the promises of this encompassing package, there are a few rules to be followed.

The complex is designed to be executed with no rest (none) between repetitions and/or exercises. At first there will be a temptation to grab a heavier weight than you may need. Although the exercises in isolation or with rest are easy, the intensity of the work rate and the sequencing make this complex what it is.

To determine how much weight to grab, use the 30-minute rule. If you are able to complete the complex with perfect form in 30 minutes or less over the course of three separate sessions, it is time to bump the weight up. If your complex session time exceeds 30 minutes or you find yourself having to take rest breaks, decrease the weight.



Remember we are striving for endurance first and strength second (don't worry, strength work is coming up). It's OK to grab a lighter weight than you normally use to execute this complex because of the discipline it requires.

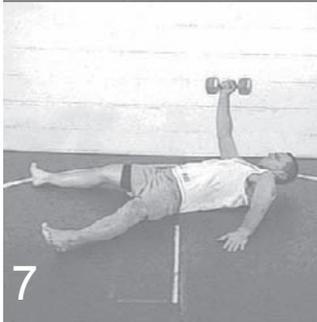
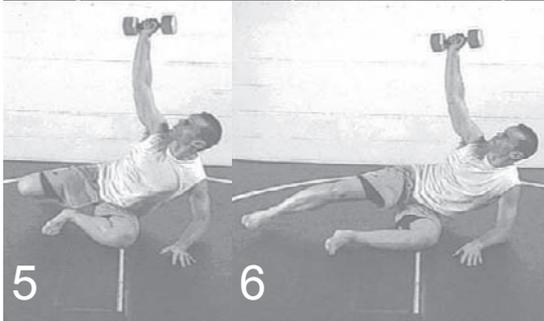
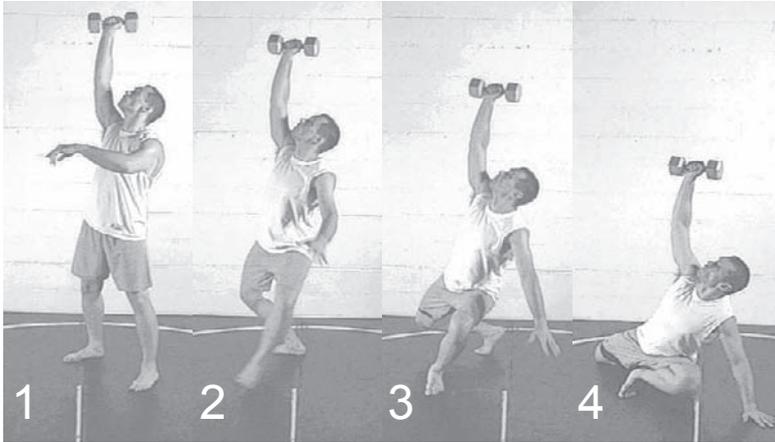
On single-arm exercises, perform all repetitions with one arm before

repeating on the other side. Performing a single repetition with the right and then alternating to the left arm allows too much recovery time. Intensity is your friend.

This final note is more of a preference than a rule. When executing the complex, I prefer smooth handled dumbbells or kettlebells as opposed to knurled or rubberized surfaces. Knurled and/or rubberized surfaces are designed to provide an easier gripping surface. I'm sure you're ahead of me — the smooth surface forces the added benefit of having to squeeze the handles to maintain your grip, particularly once the handles are sweaty and you move into centrifugal work.

Perform 10 repetitions of each exercise. Upon the completion of each exercise, move to the next with zero rest.

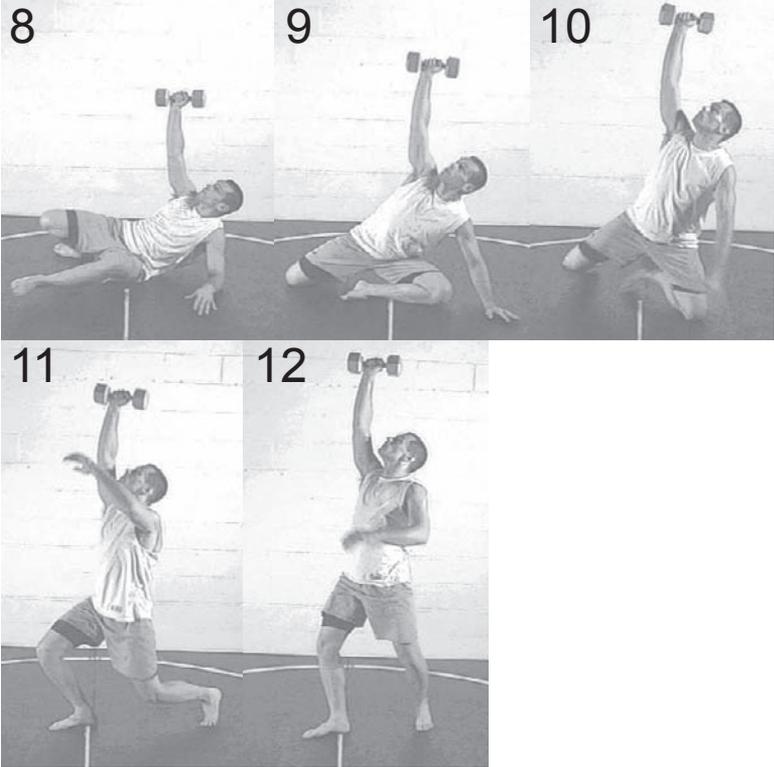
One-arm get-up / Turkish get-up



- ☒ Hold the weight overhead with a straight arm.
- ☒ Keep your arm in this locked position throughout the entire exercise.
- ☒ Squat and reach for the mat with your free hand.
- ☒ Sit on the mat and then lie supine keeping the weight aloft.

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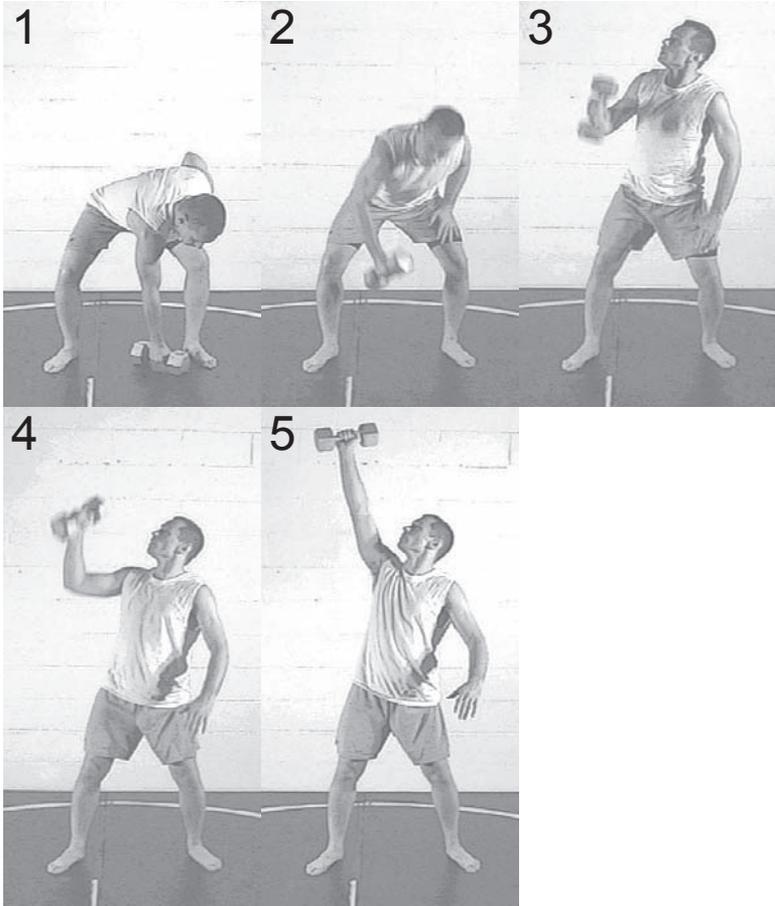
One-arm get-up / Turkish get-up continued



☒ Return to the standing position while never dropping the weight from the overhead position.

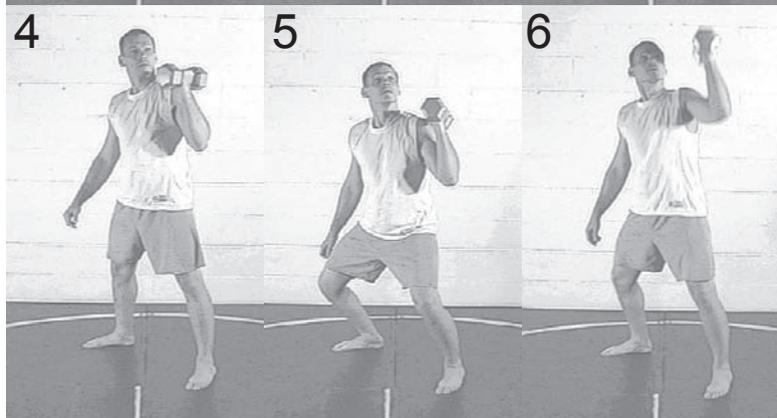
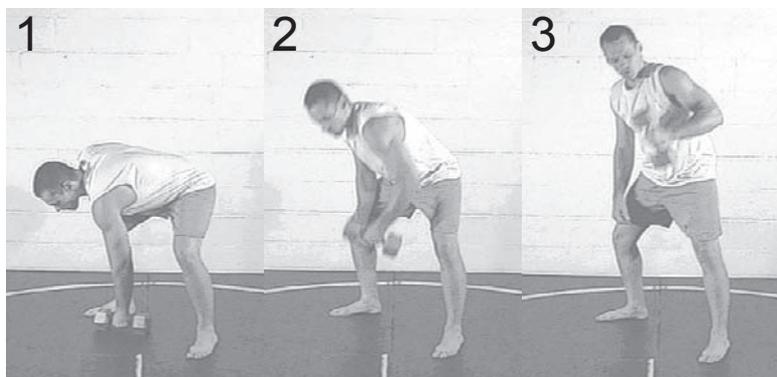
Tip — You will find that keeping your eyes focused on the weight overhead will allow you to better manage the balance necessary for this exercise.

One-arm snatch



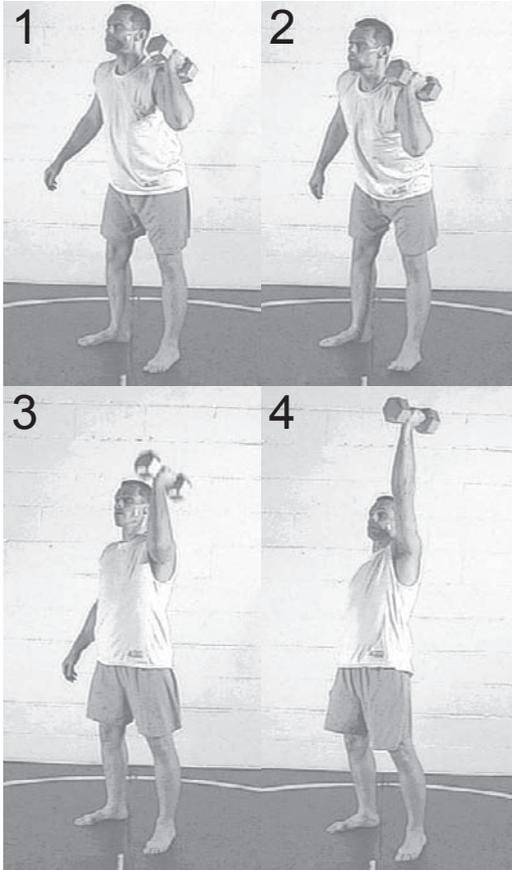
- ☒ Begin with the weight on the floor between your legs.
- ☒ Grip the handle, and in one continuous movement, thrust the weight overhead and hold for a single count.
- ☒ Return the weight to the floor and repeat.

One-arm clean and jerk



- ☒ Begin as in the previous exercise.
- ☒ Here we break the transfer to overhead in two motions.
- ☒ Bring the weight to your shoulder and pause.
- ☒ From the shoulder position, bend your knees slightly, and then burst up with your legs and take the weight overhead at the same time.
- ☒ Hold it aloft for a beat and then repeat.

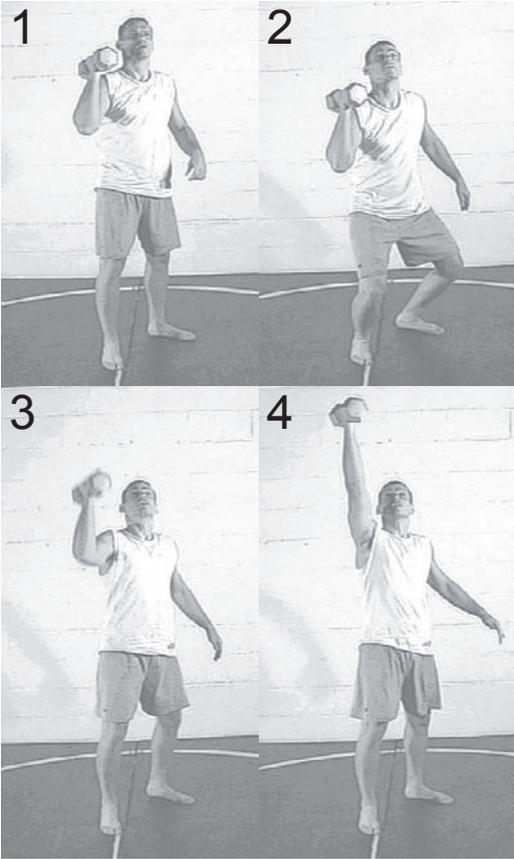
One-arm push press



- ☒ Begin with the weight held at shoulder level.
- ☒ Leaving your knees locked, bend forward slightly at the waist taking your buttocks to, well, the rear.
- ☒ Pop your hips forward as you press the weight overhead.

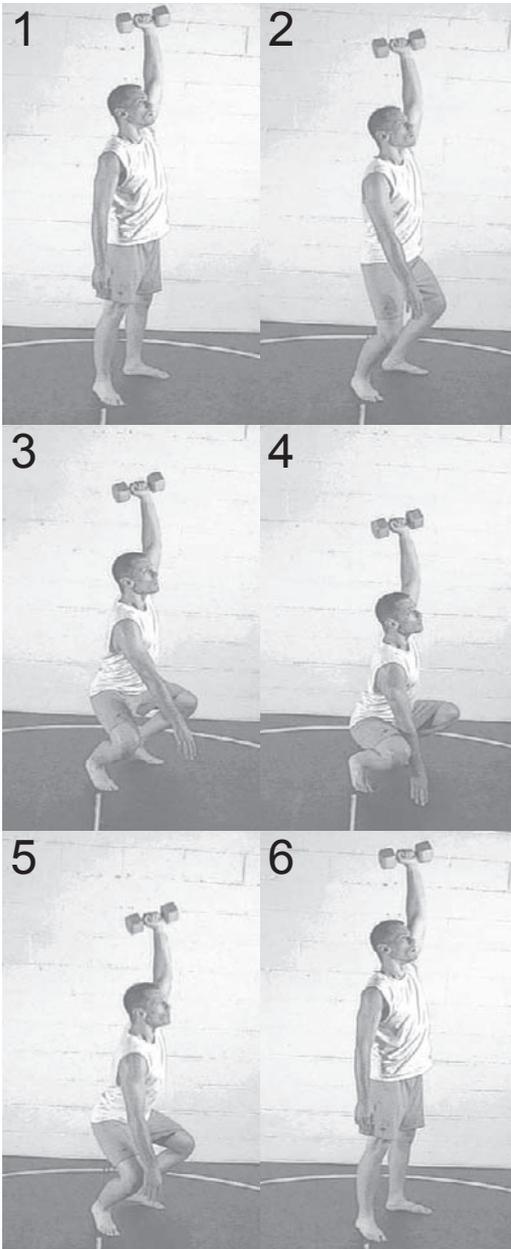
Important note for all exercises in this chapter — We are not merely pressing the weight overhead in a controlled fashion. We use slow and controlled work on our somatotrophics days. Conditioning the body for continuous bursts of motion is the goal here.

One-arm jerk press



- ☒ Begin with the weight at shoulder level again.
- ☒ Here you will bend the knees slightly, then burst with the legs to time your press, as in the one-arm clean and jerk.

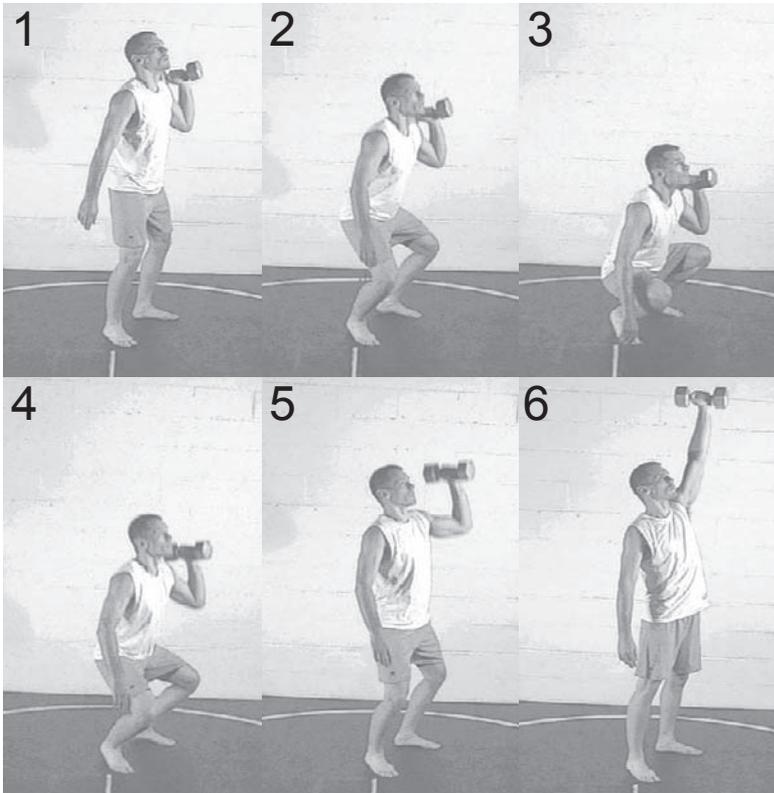
One-arm squat with weight overhead



- ☒ Begin with the weight in the locked overhead position.
- ☒ Squat all the way down, ass to heels, and touch the floor lightly with the fingertips of your free hand. Keep the weight overhead throughout the entire exercise.
- ☒ Return to standing position.

Tip — If you are unable to go all the way down or lose your balance, drop the weight amount until you can perform with perfect form.

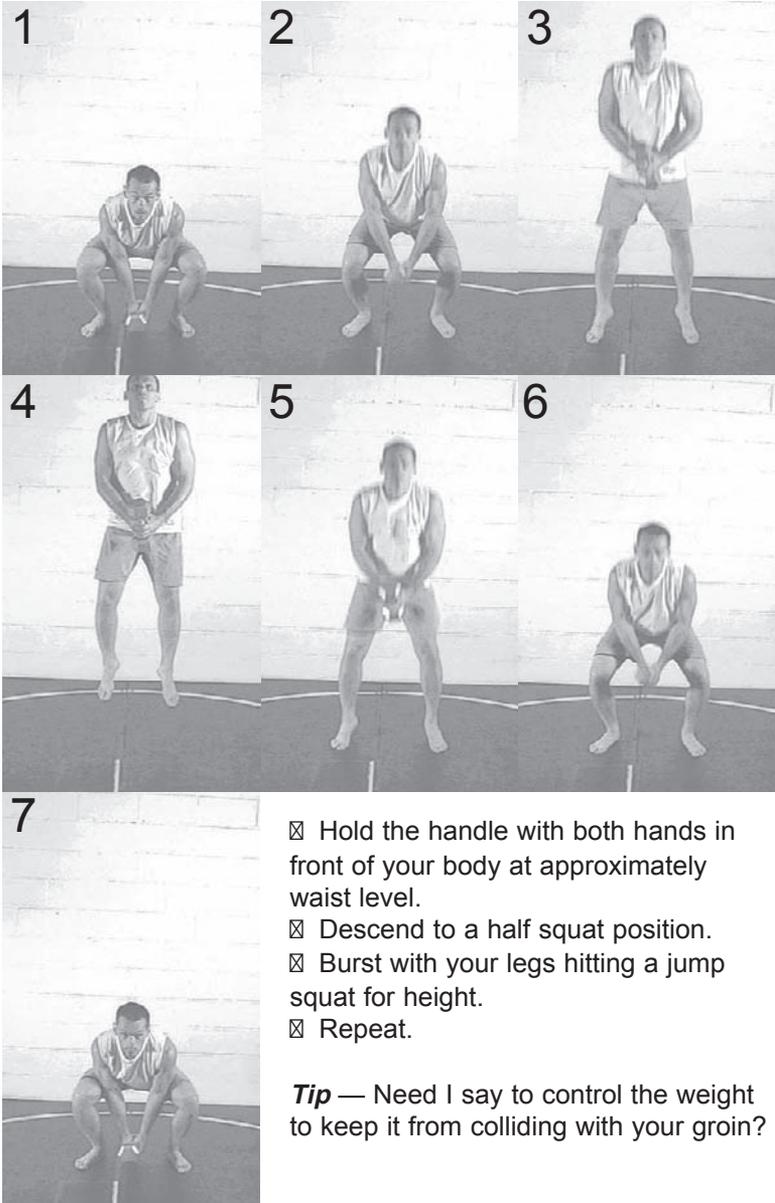
One-arm squat and press



This is similar to the preceding exercise.

- ☒ Here, we begin with the weight at shoulder level.
- ☒ Squat all the way down, touching the floor with the free hand. The free-hand touch on this and the preceding exercise is a check to see if you are at rock bottom.
- ☒ As you return to standing, press the weight overhead.
- ☒ As you squat, bring the weight back to your shoulder.

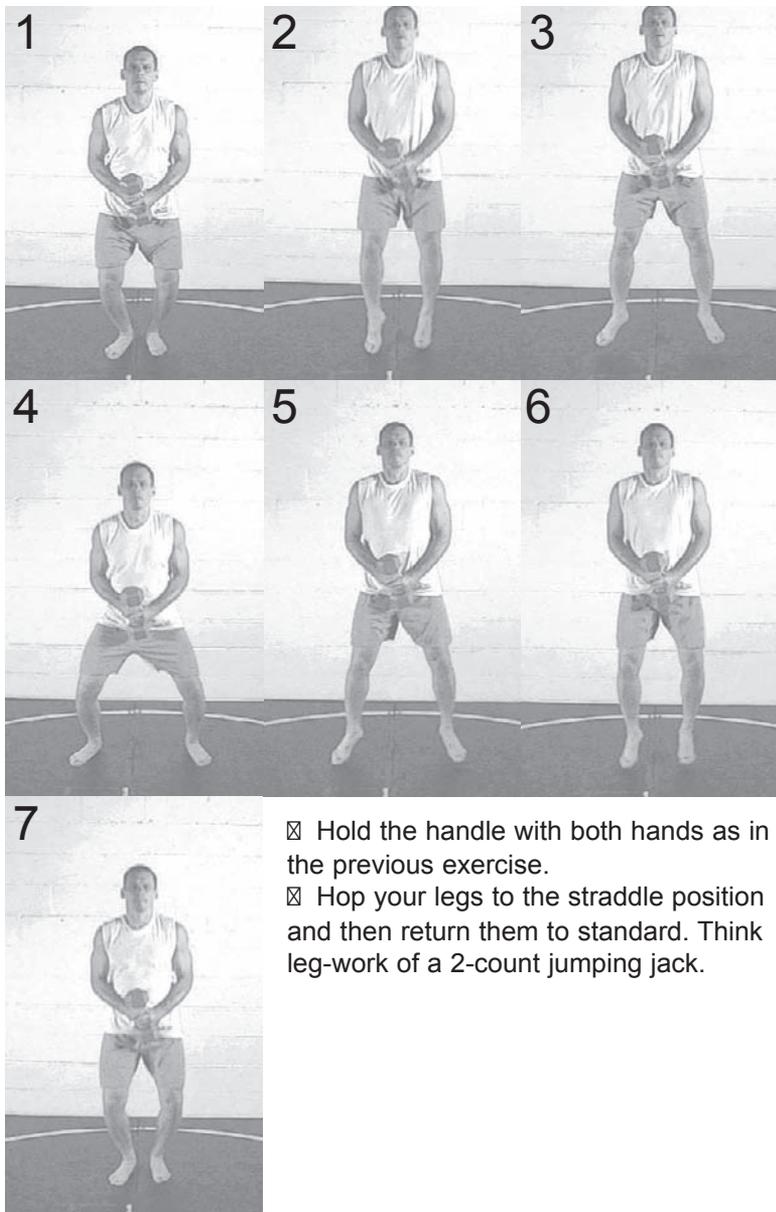
Two-arm jumping squat



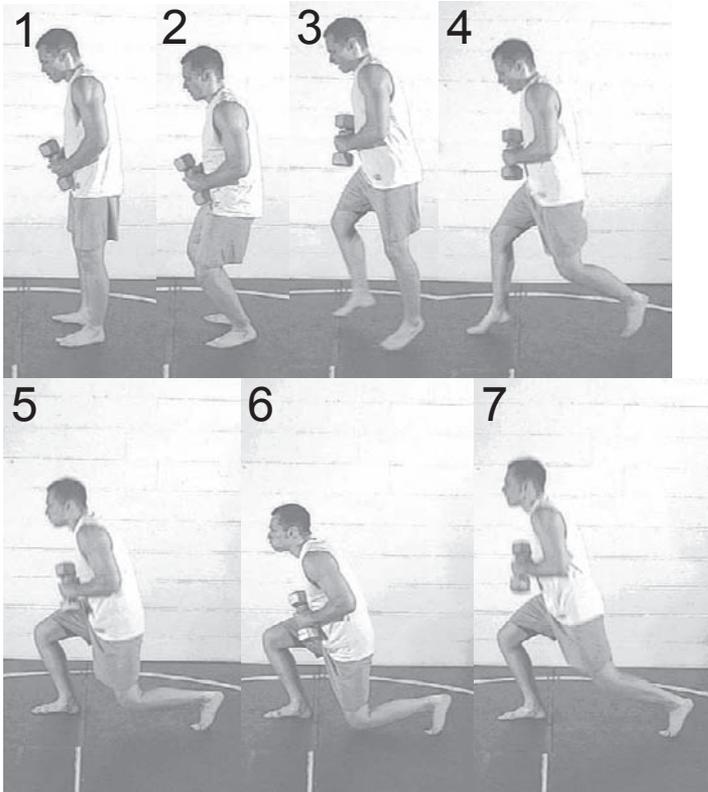
- ☒ Hold the handle with both hands in front of your body at approximately waist level.
- ☒ Descend to a half squat position.
- ☒ Burst with your legs hitting a jump squat for height.
- ☒ Repeat.

Tip — Need I say to control the weight to keep it from colliding with your groin?

Two-arm jumping jack



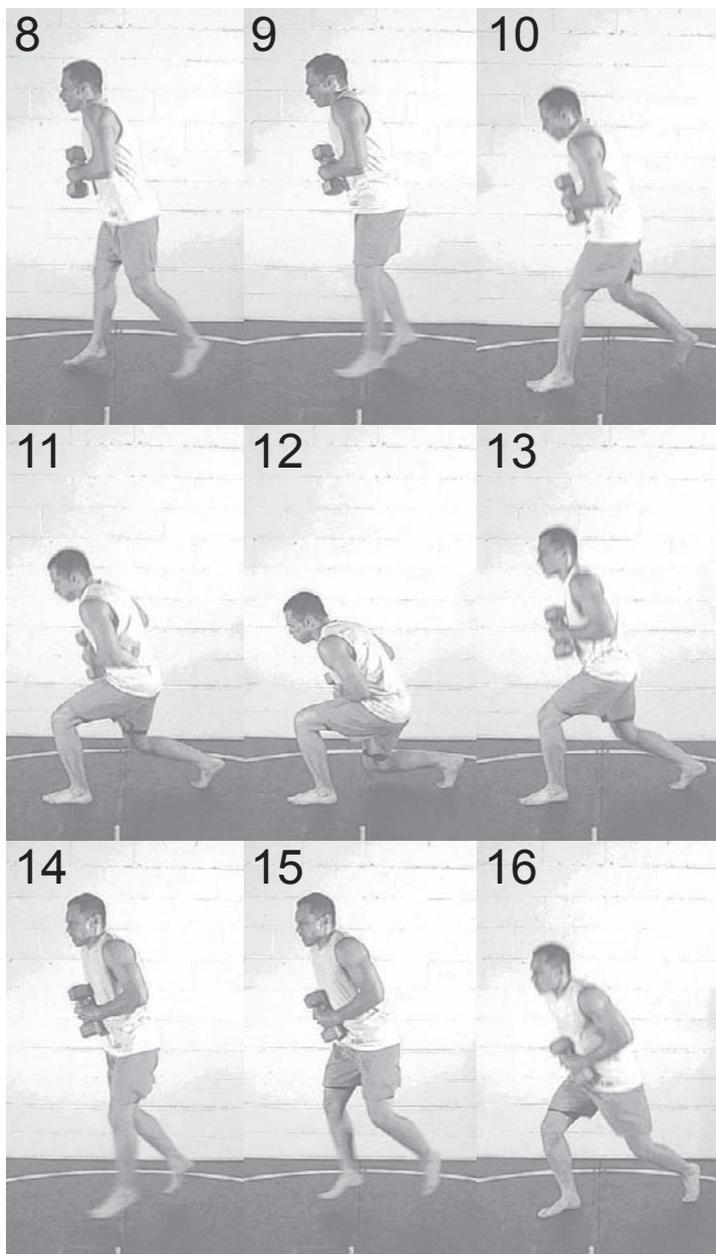
Two-arm bouncing split squat



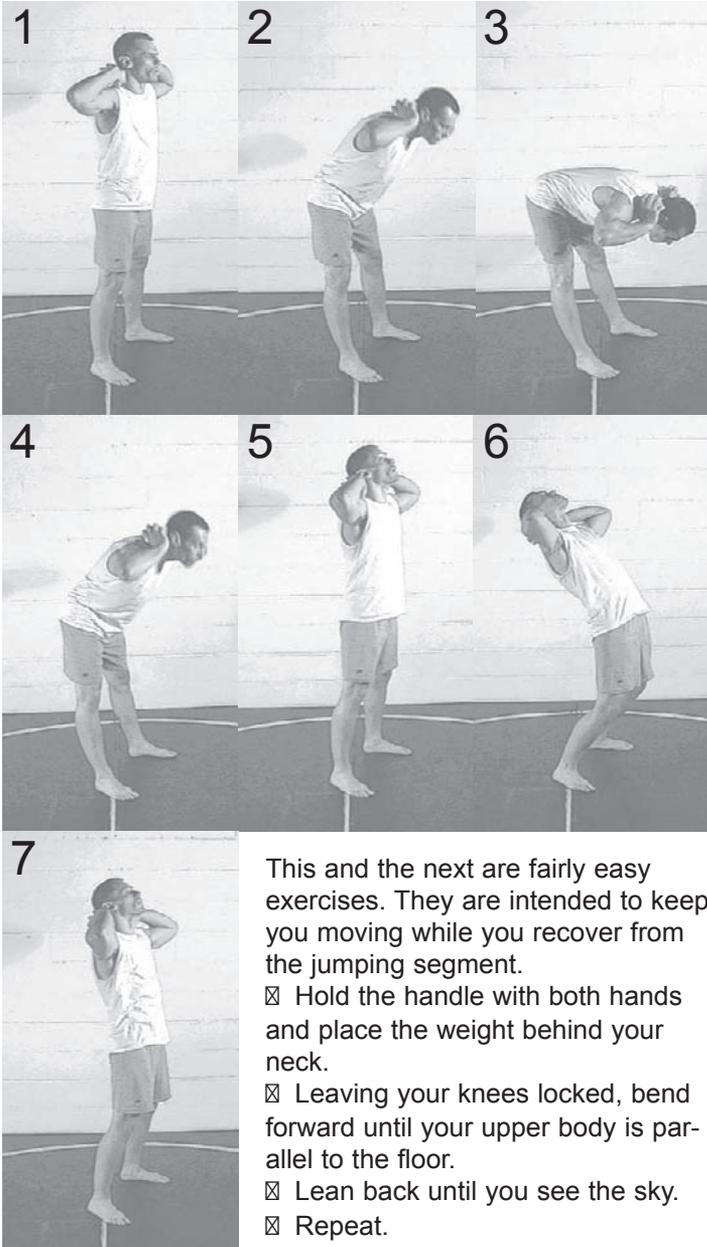
- ☒ Start with the 2-hand grip at the waist.
- ☒ Jump and land in a lunge position with your right leg forward and left leg to the rear. The wider and deeper the stance the better.
- ☒ Jump and reverse leg positions — left to the fore, right to the rear.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

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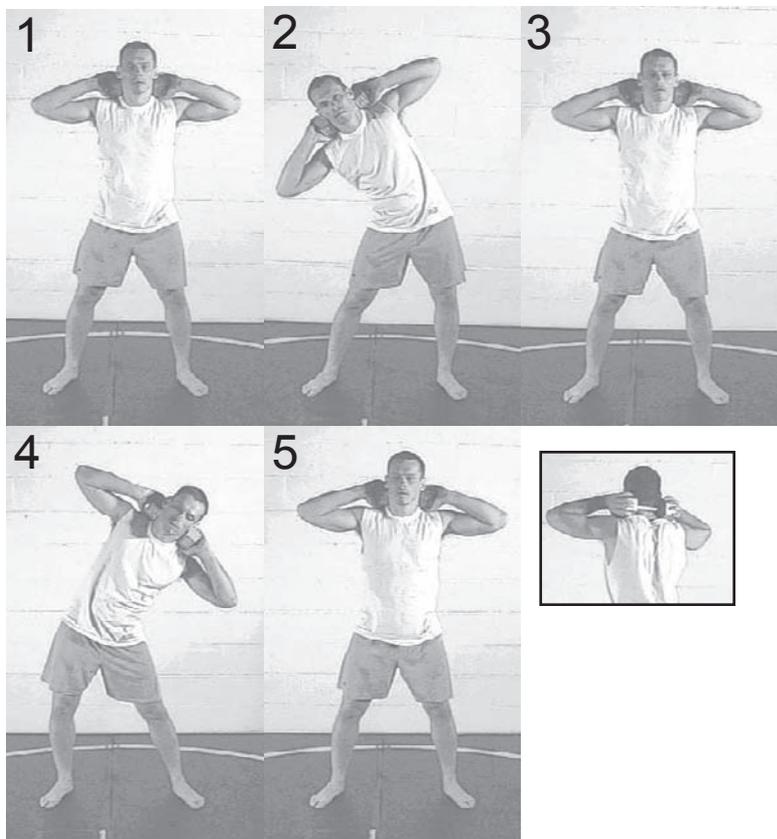
Two-arm bouncing split squat continued



Two-arm forward bend

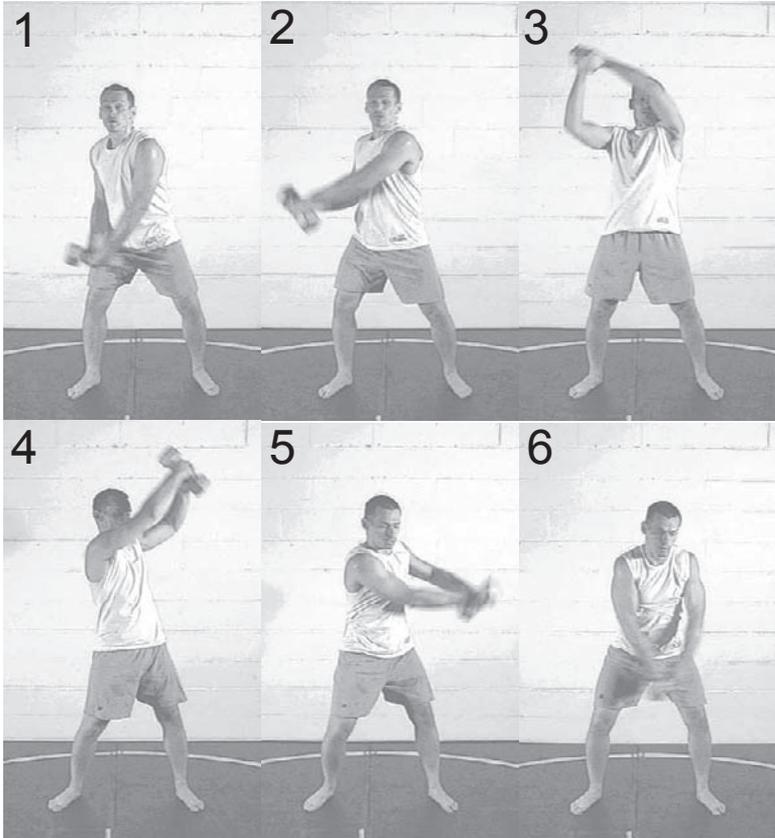


Two-arm side bend



- ☒ With the weight still behind your head, lean as far as you can to the right.
- ☒ Now, to the left.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

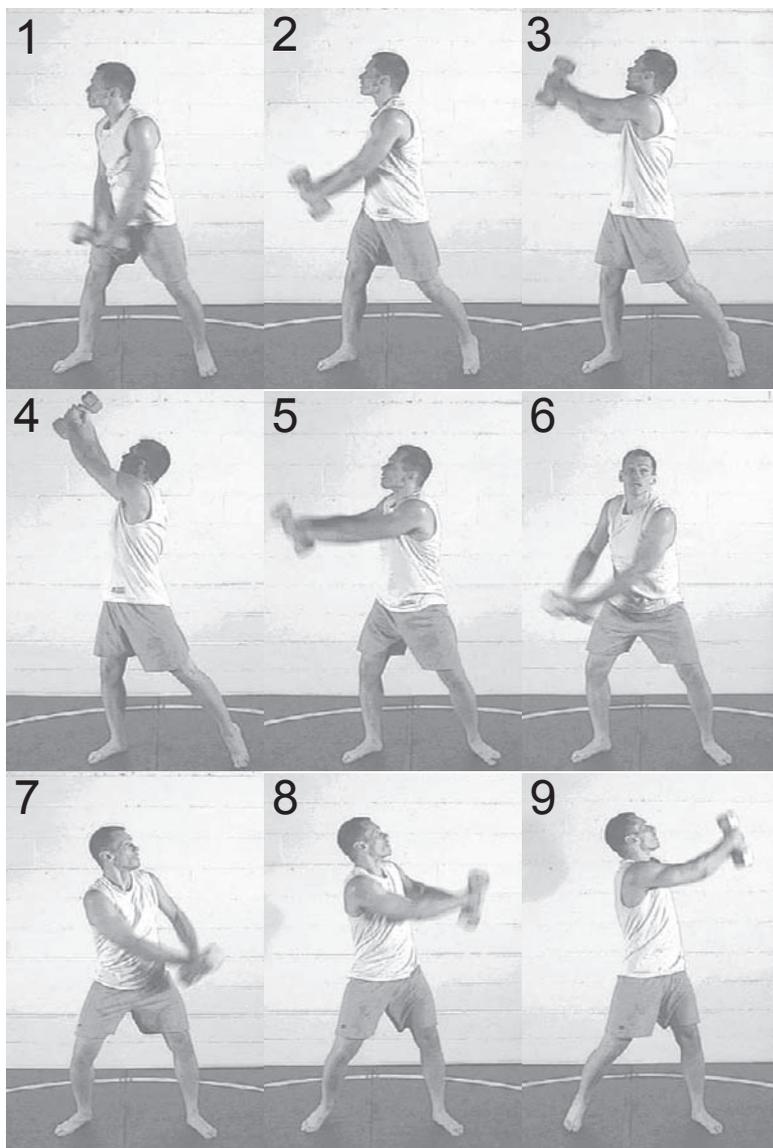
Two-arm clock swing

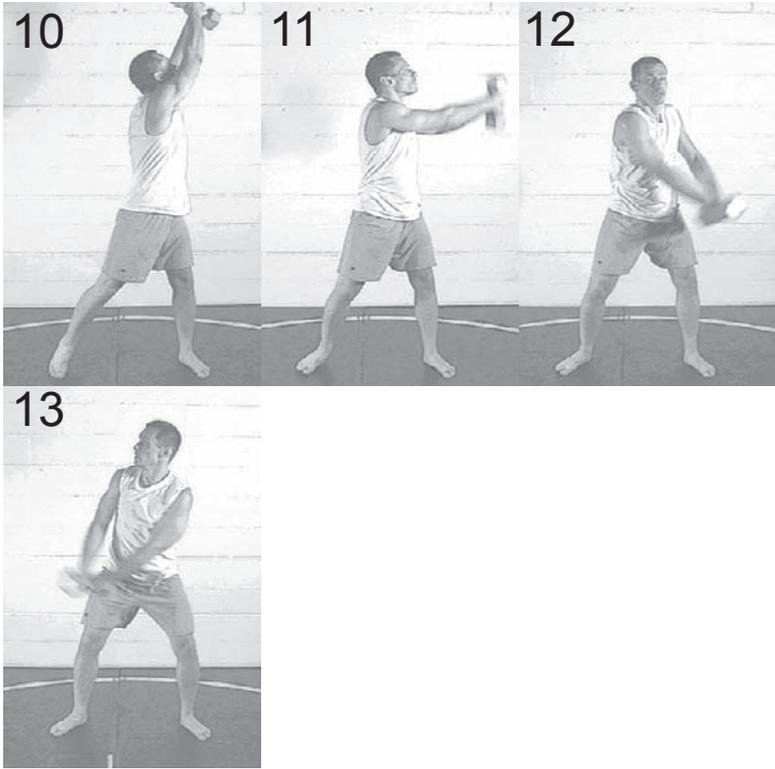


Hang on tight — The next segment calls for swinging the weight in a ballistic manner. Keep in mind the safety of the people and property around you.

- ☒ With both hands on the handle, swing the weight in a wide clockwise fashion in front of your body.
- ☒ Keep your body facing forward throughout.
- ☒ Repeat counterclockwise for the desired repetitions.

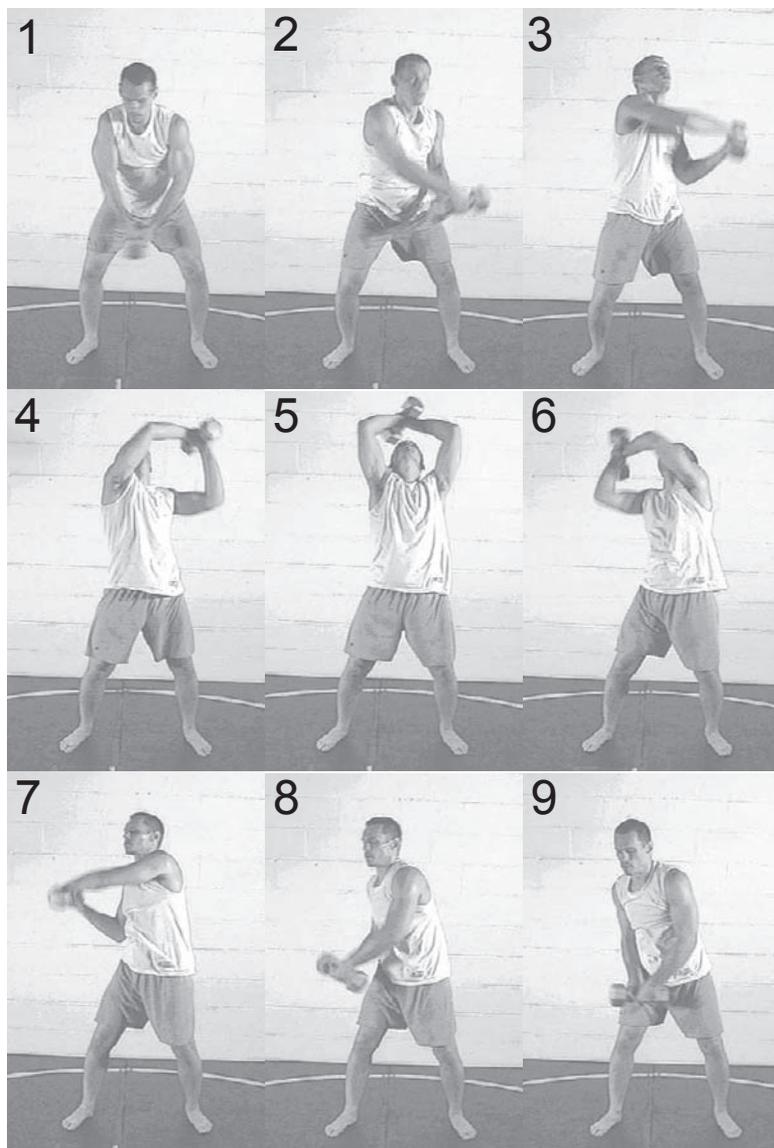
Two-arm turning half-clock swing

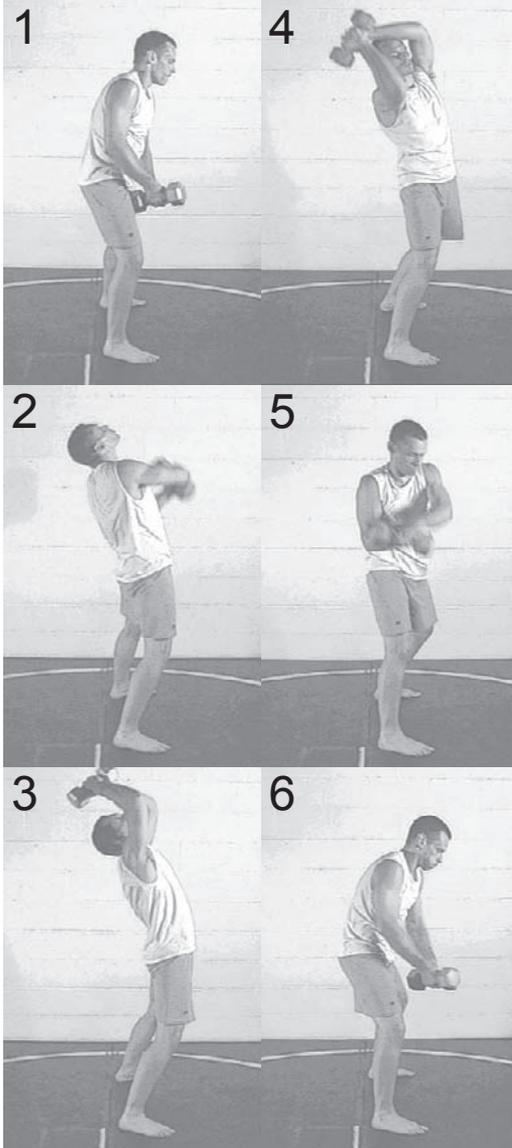




- ☒ With the two-hand grip, pivot on the balls of your feet and turn to your right.
- ☒ Swing the weight high and to your right, stopping the weight at the top of the arc.
- ☒ Pivot to your left and swing the weight in a high arc to your left.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

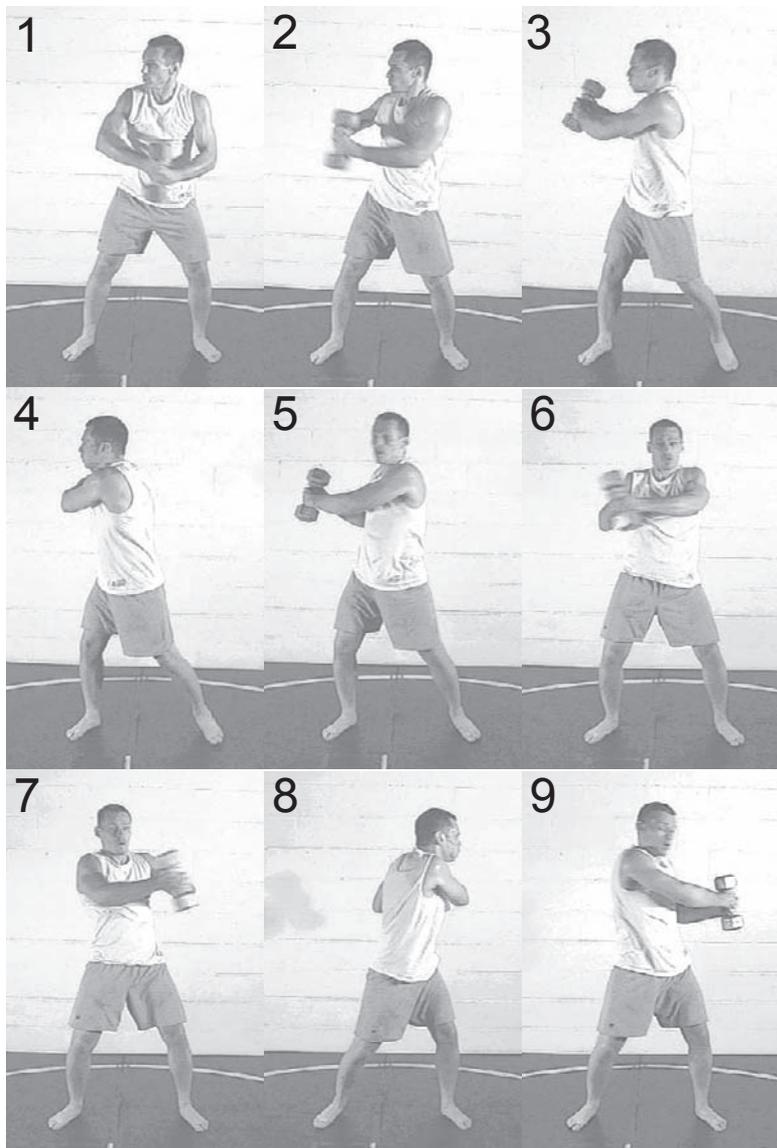
Two-arm overhead clock swing

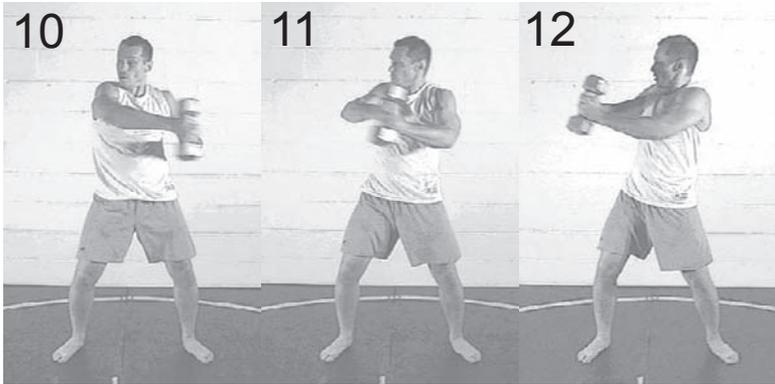


Again in profile

- ☒ With the two-hand grip, swing the weight to your left and over your head and then back in front of you.
- ☒ Continue this overhead sweeping for the desired repetitions and then repeat in the opposite direction.

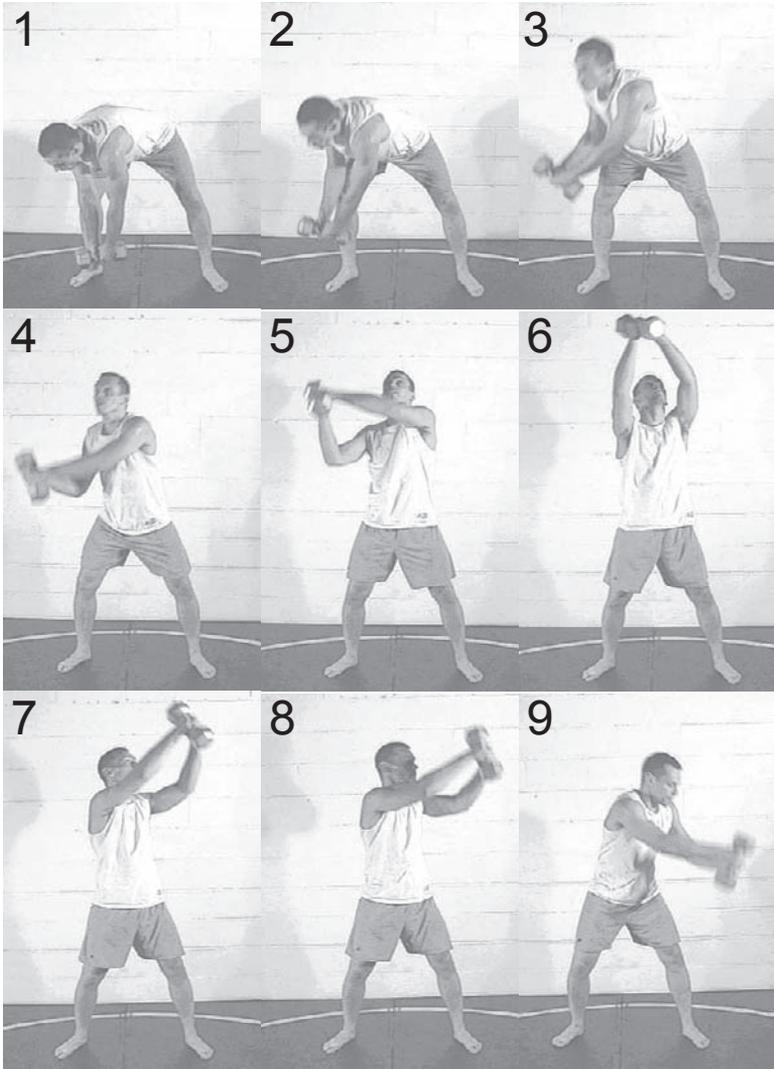
Two-arm horizontal swing



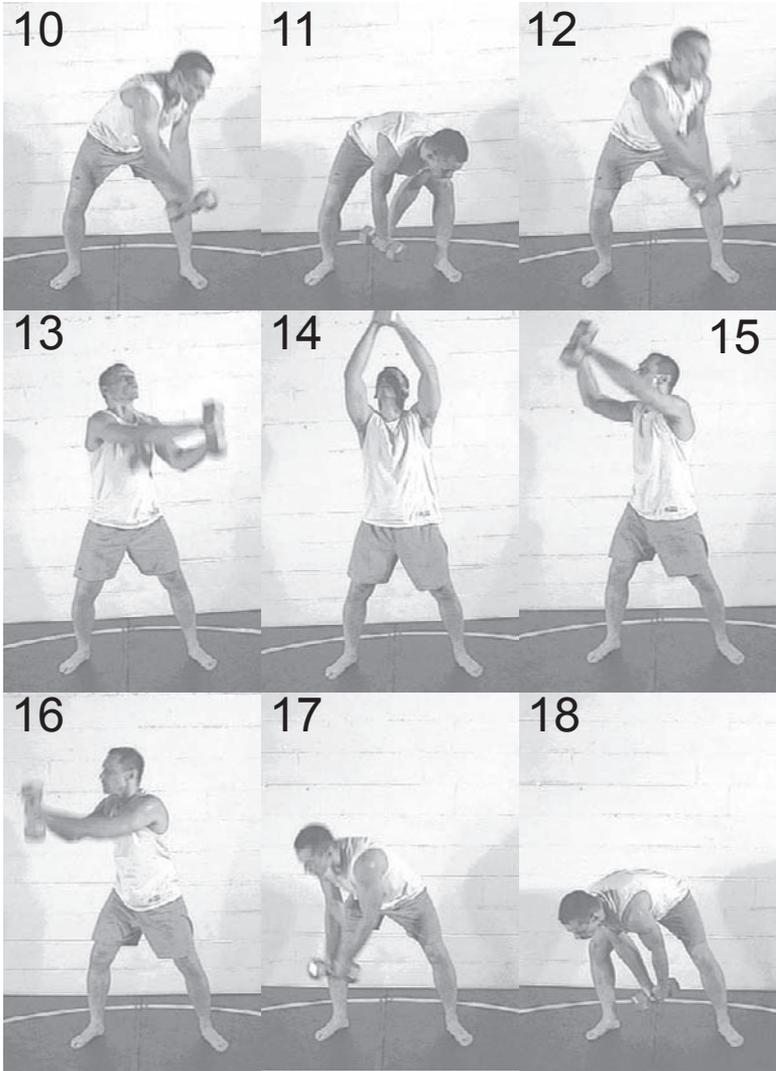


- ☒ With the two-hand grip, swing the weight in horizontal arcs in front of your body.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

Two-arm full body swing

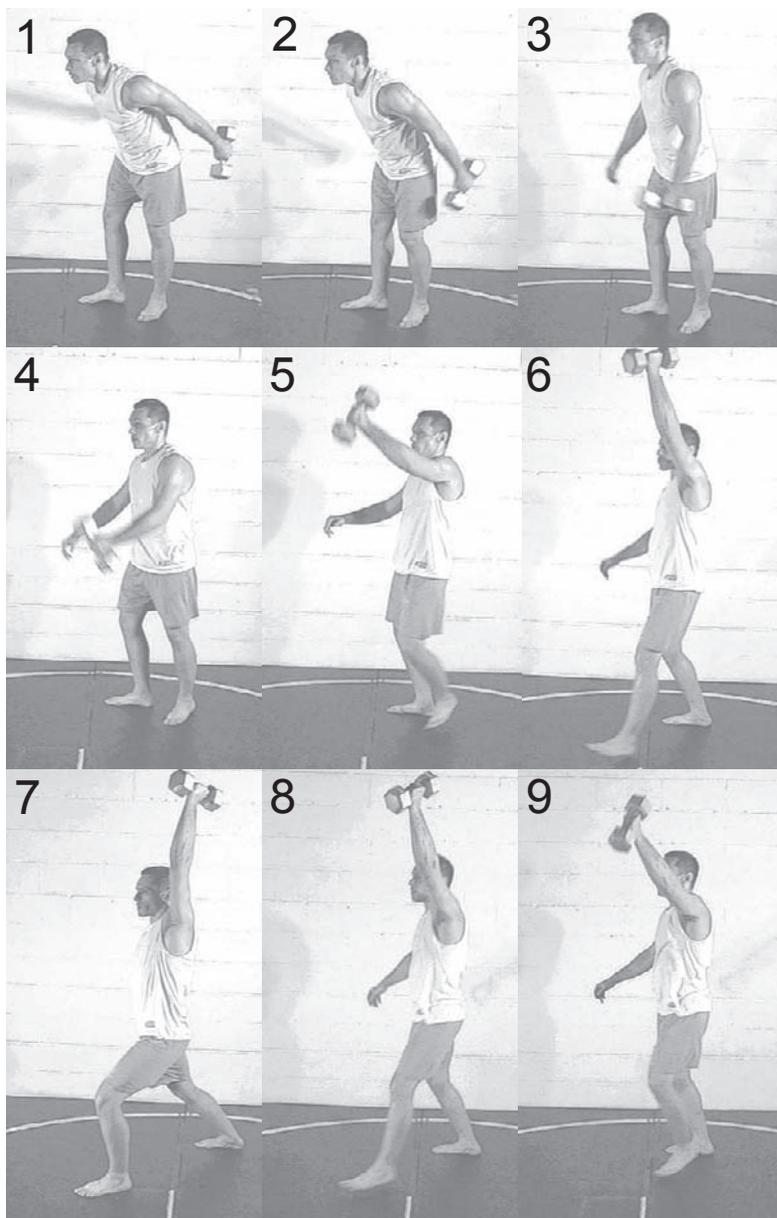


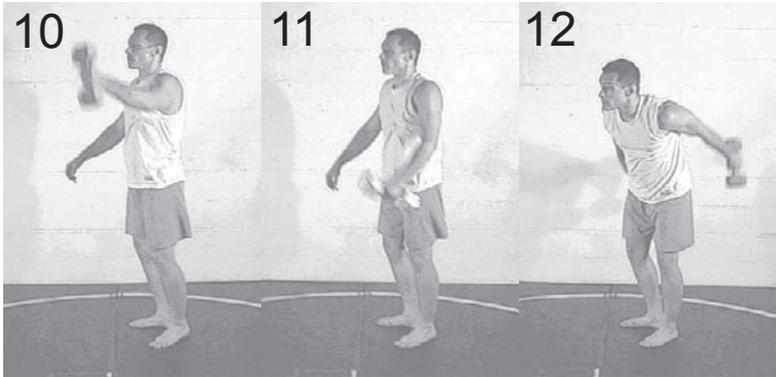
- ☒ With a two-hand grip, start with the weight on the mat to the outside of your right foot.
- ☒ Swing it in a high arc over your head and then place the weight next to your left foot.



- ☒ Reverse the arc bringing the weight back to the right foot.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

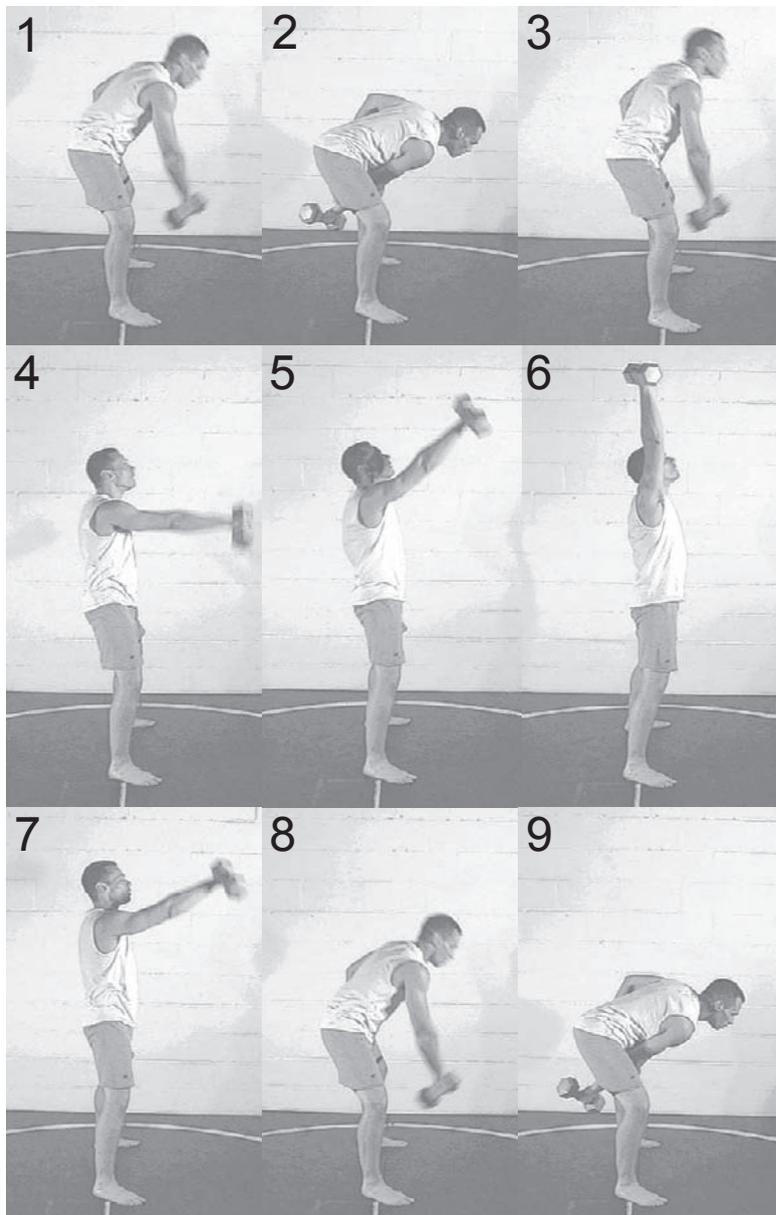
One-arm lunge swing

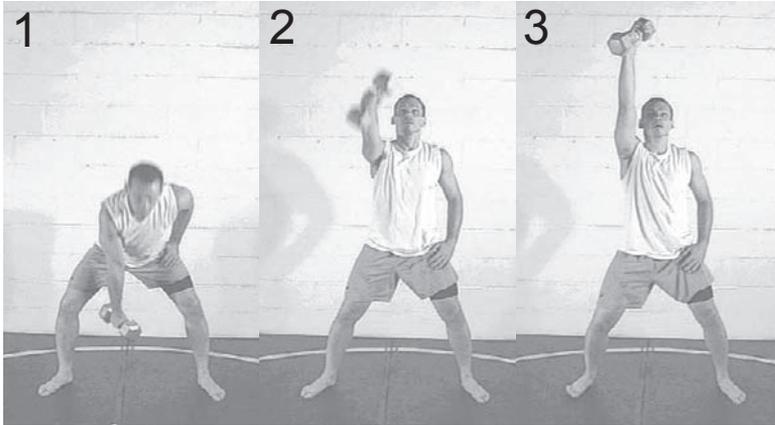




- ☒ Grip the weight in your left hand.
- ☒ Step forward with your left foot while swinging the weight in a stiff-armed manner bringing the weight overhead.
- ☒ Step your left foot back as you swing the weight down.
- ☒ Repeat for the desired repetitions.

One-arm between-the-legs swing

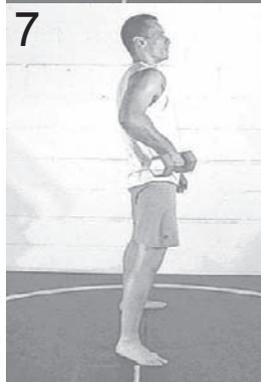
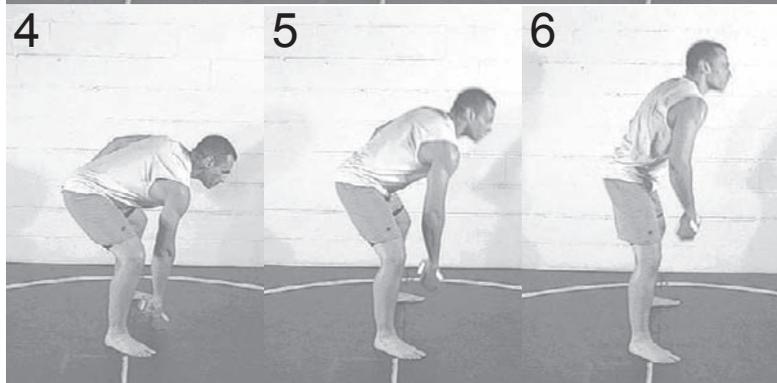
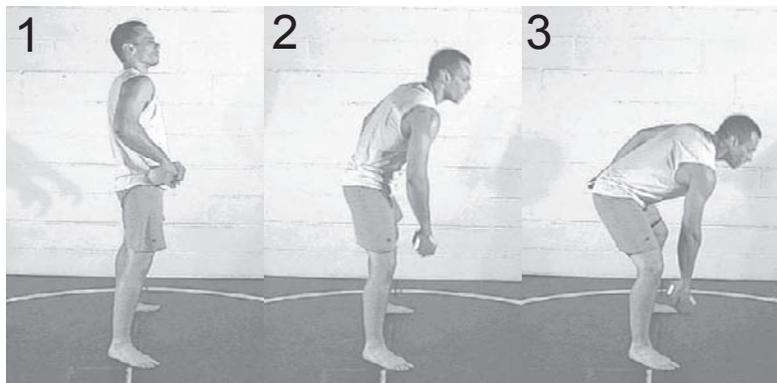


Another view

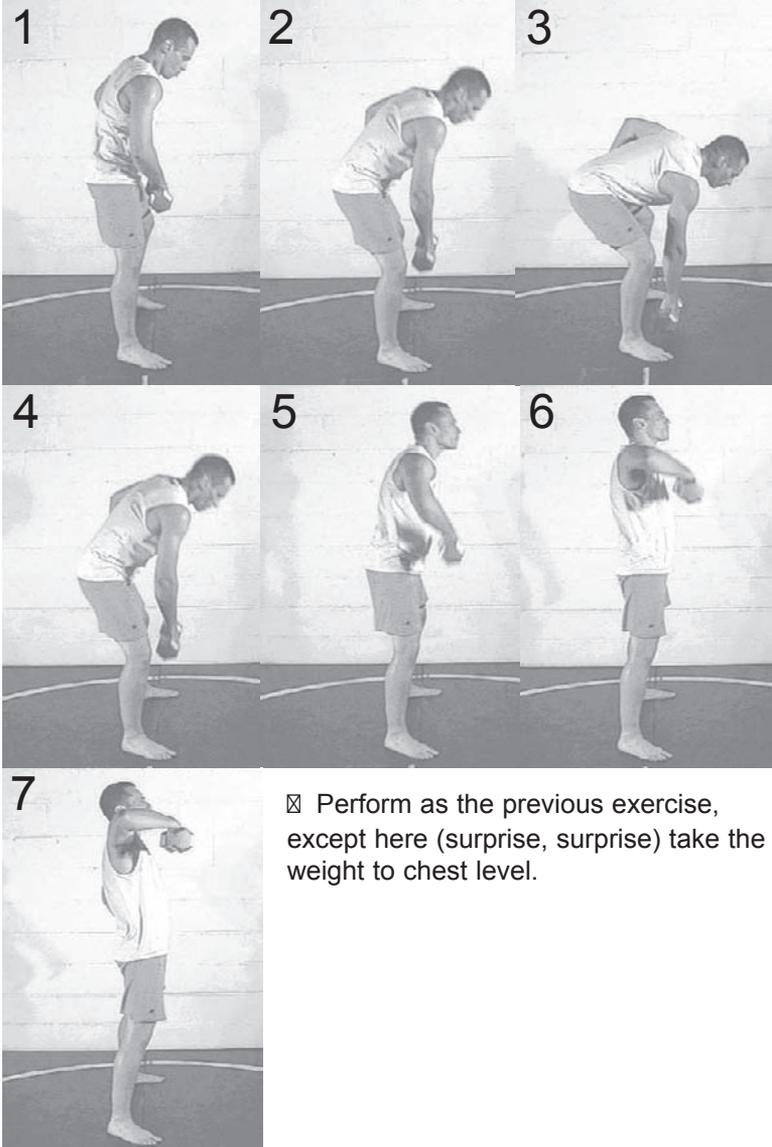
- ☒ Stand in a wide straddle stance (horse stance for the traditionalists) gripping the weight in your right hand.
- ☒ Swing the weight in a stiff-armed manner to the overhead position.
- ☒ Allow the weight to swing back between your legs and then repeat for the desired number of repetitions.

Note — There is no step in this exercise as there was in the one-arm lunge swing.

One-arm pull to waist



- ☒ With a one-arm grip, start with the weight on the floor.
- ☒ Stand and pull the weight to waist level.
- ☒ Repeat.

One-arm pull to chest

One-arm bent pull to chest

1



2



3



4



5



6



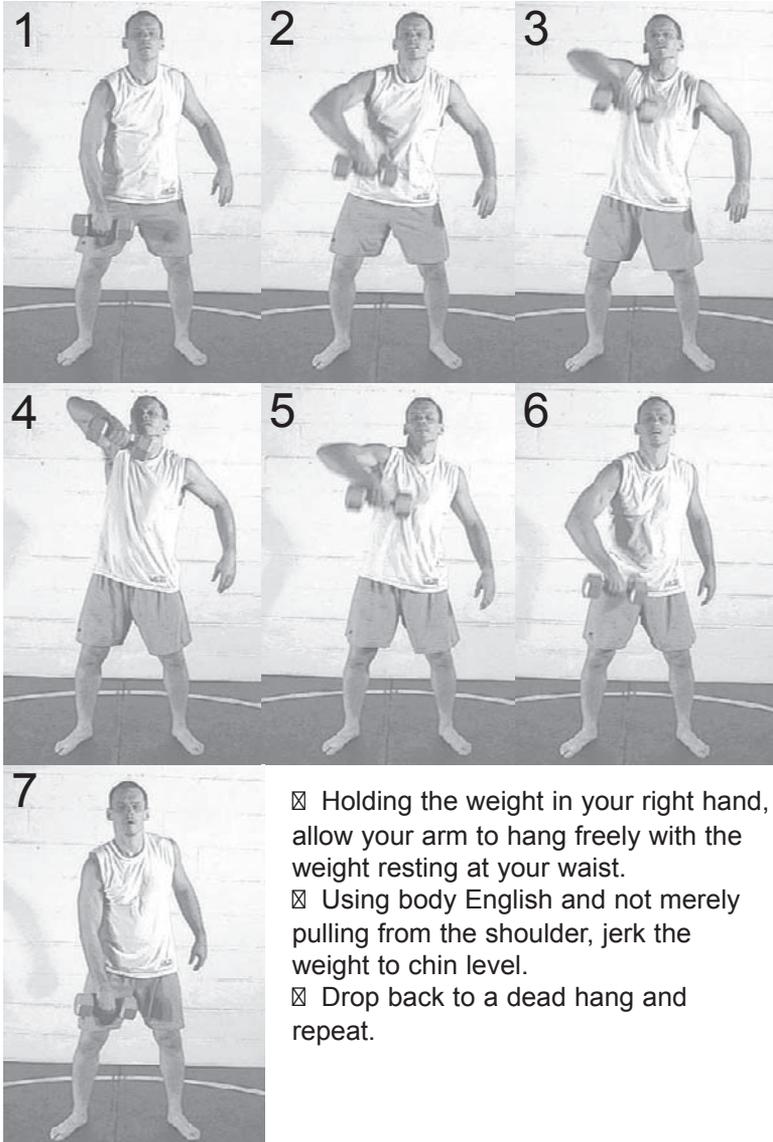
7



☒ Bend over and bring the weight from the floor to your chest.

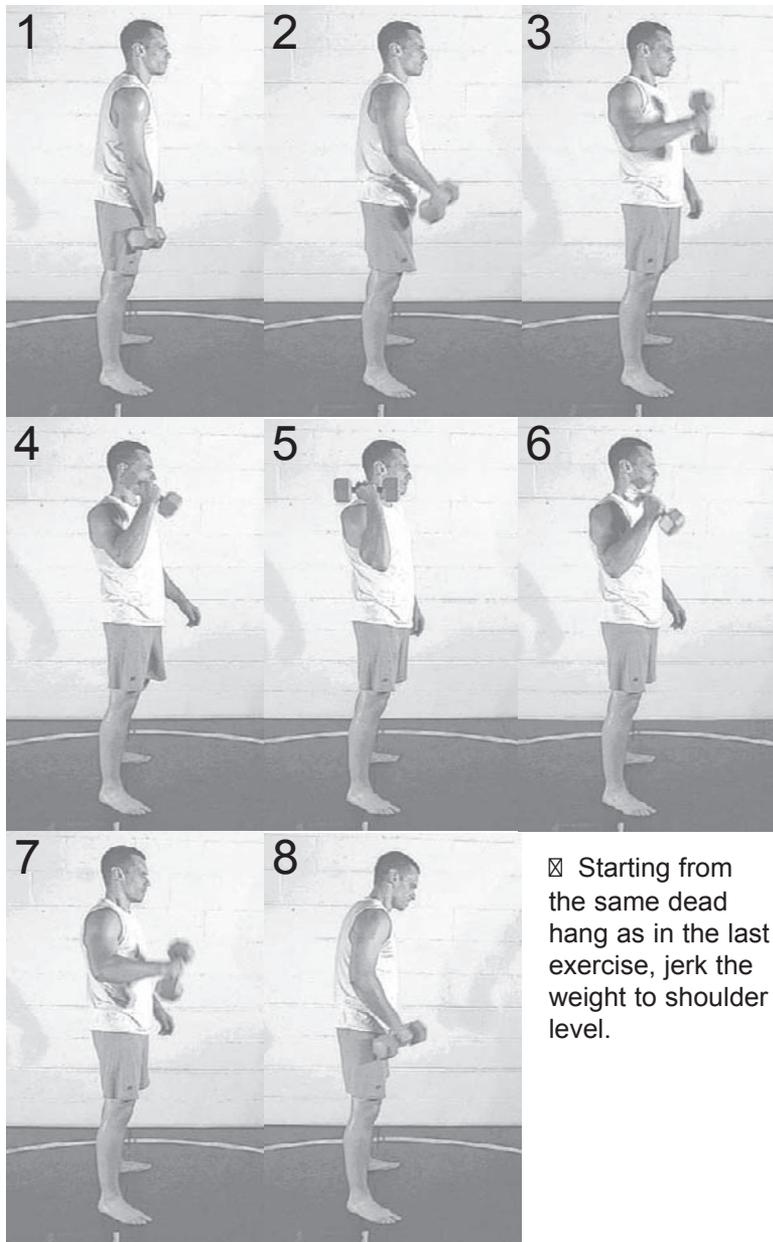
Note — Keep in mind that these pulls are not meant to be done in a slow, controlled manner as we do with somatotrophics. Jerk that weight!

One-arm dead hang high pull



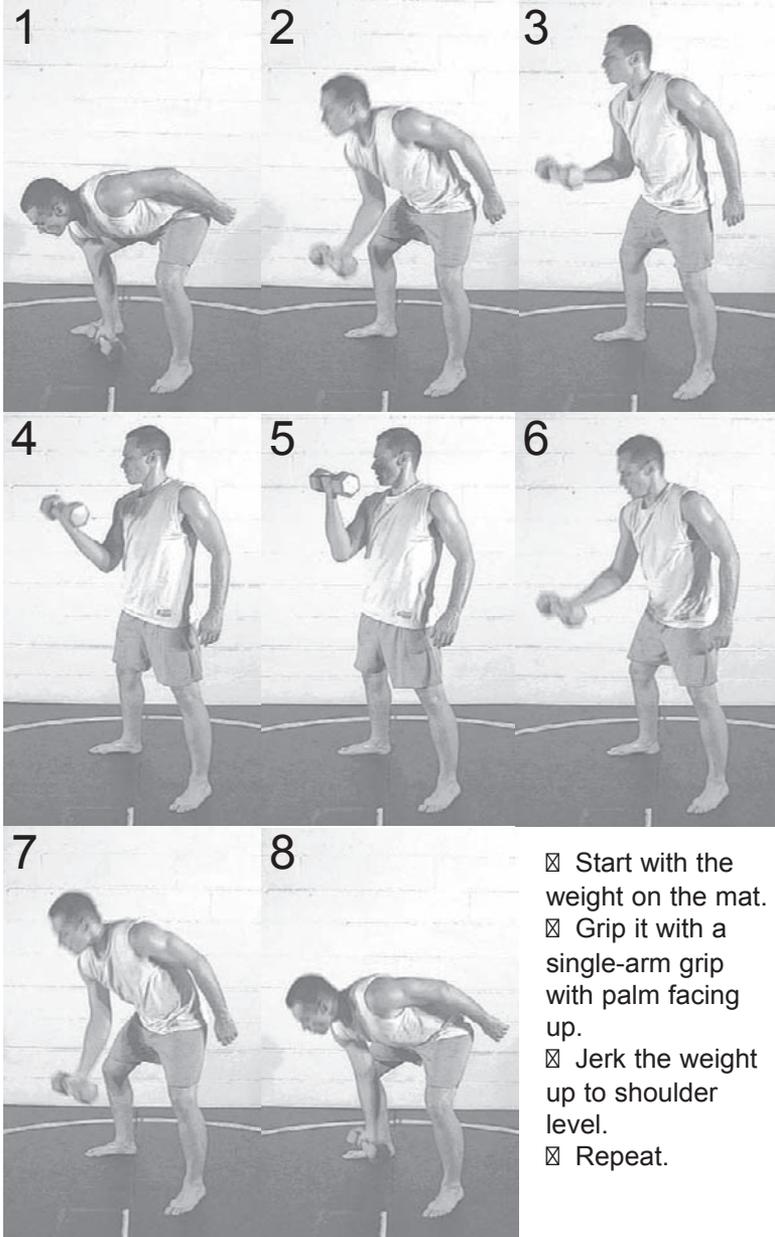
- ☒ Holding the weight in your right hand, allow your arm to hang freely with the weight resting at your waist.
- ☒ Using body English and not merely pulling from the shoulder, jerk the weight to chin level.
- ☒ Drop back to a dead hang and repeat.

One-arm dead hang clean



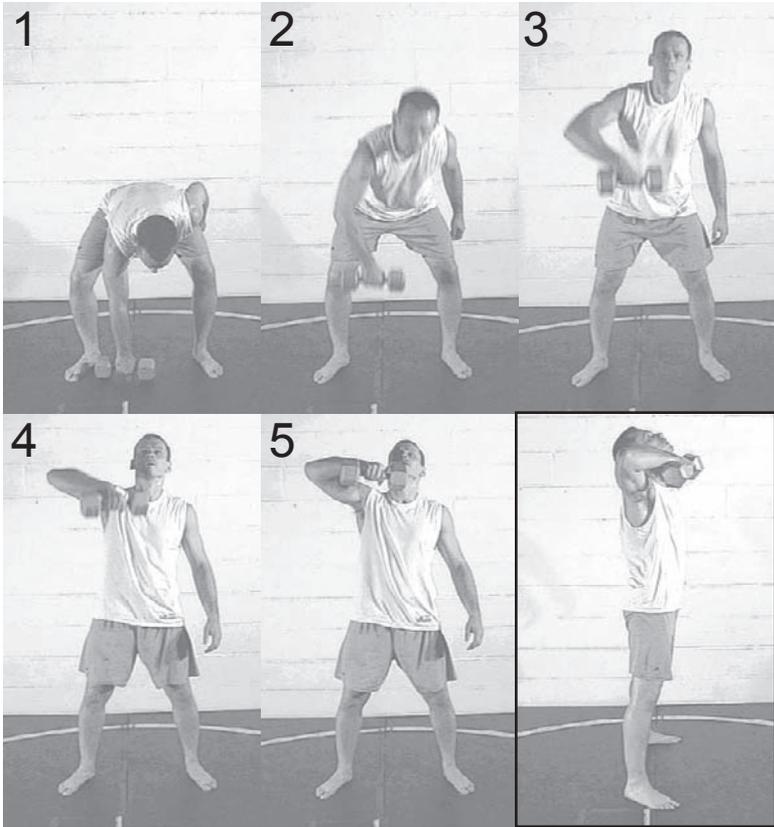
☒ Starting from the same dead hang as in the last exercise, jerk the weight to shoulder level.

One-arm power curl



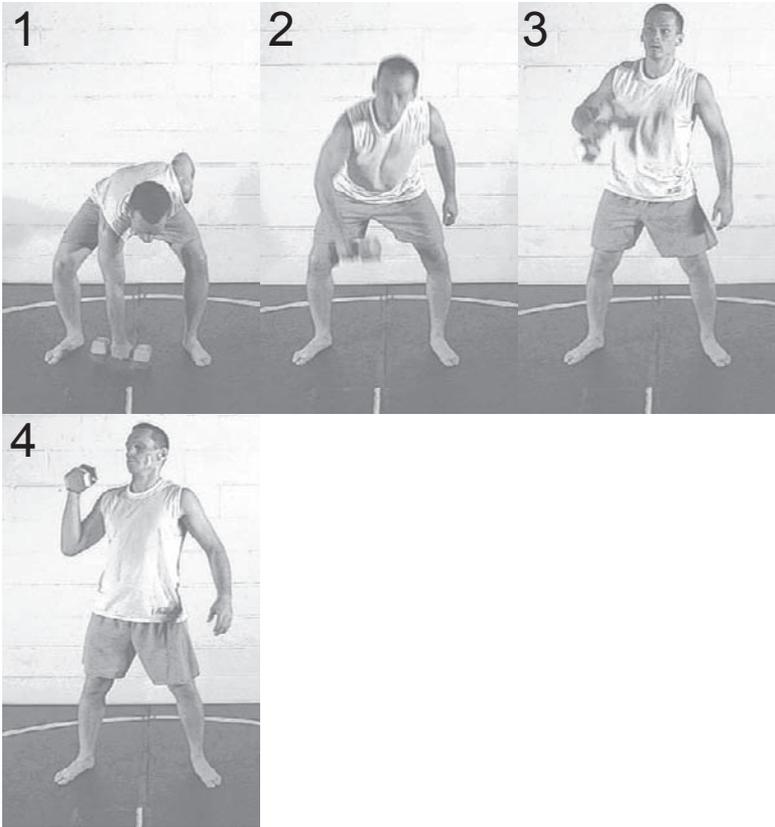
- ☒ Start with the weight on the mat.
- ☒ Grip it with a single-arm grip with palm facing up.
- ☒ Jerk the weight up to shoulder level.
- ☒ Repeat.

One-arm high pull



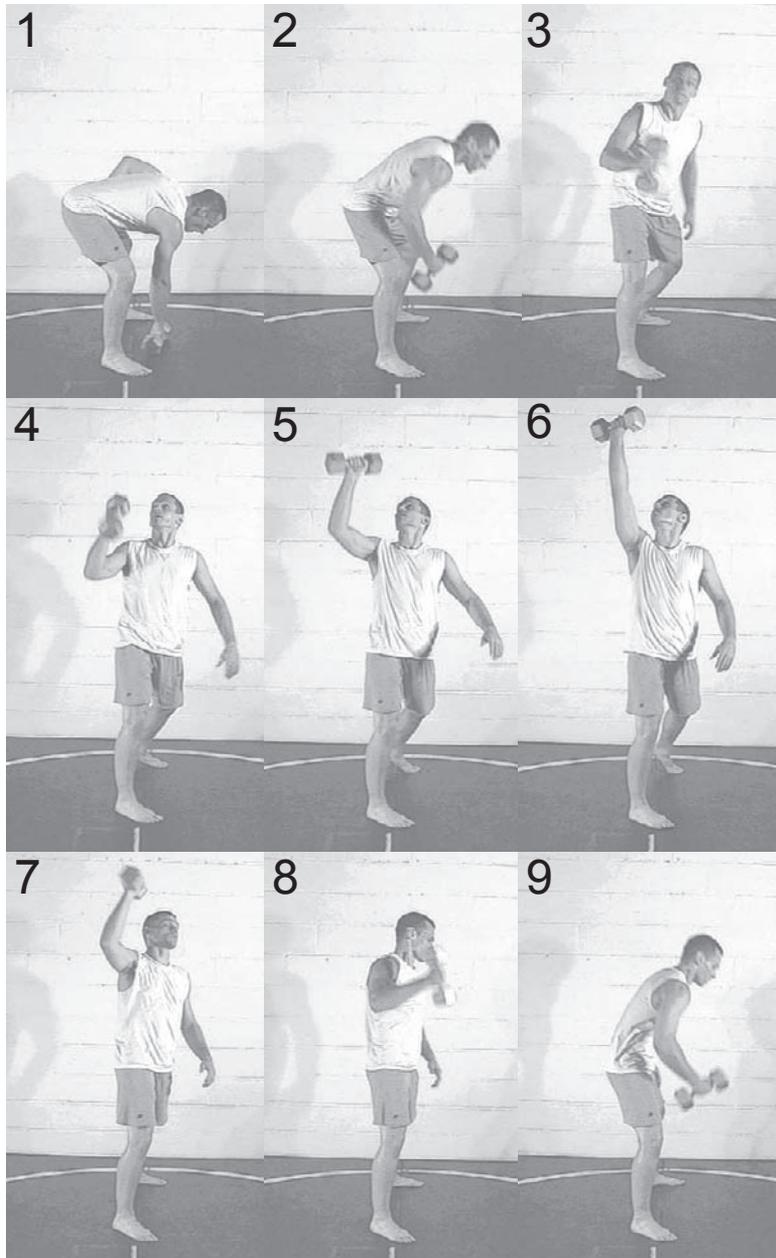
- ☒ Start with the weight on the mat and take a one-arm overgrip with palm facing back.
- ☒ Jerk the weight to shoulder level.
- ☒ Repeat.

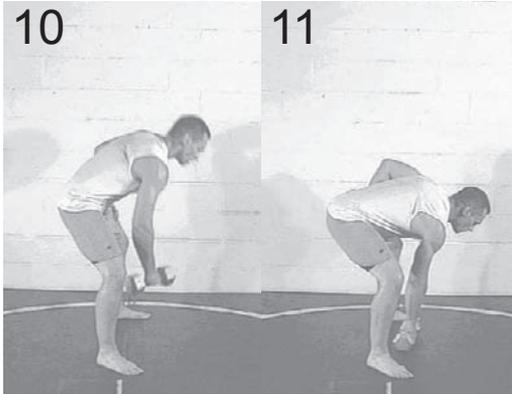
One-arm clean



☒ Same start as in the preceding exercise, but here you bring the weight above shoulder level, as shown.

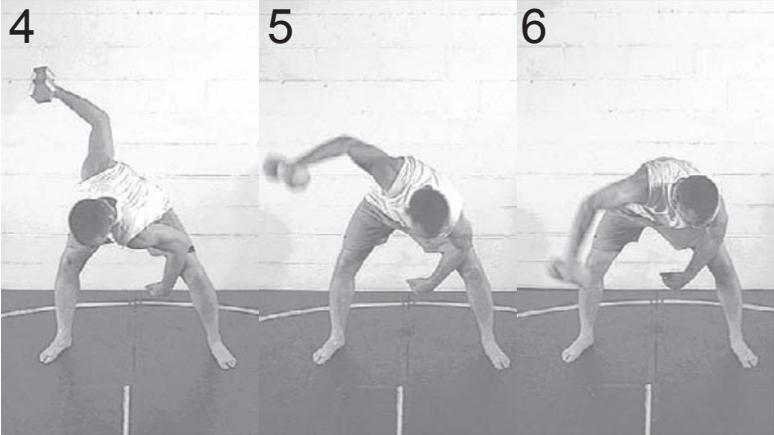
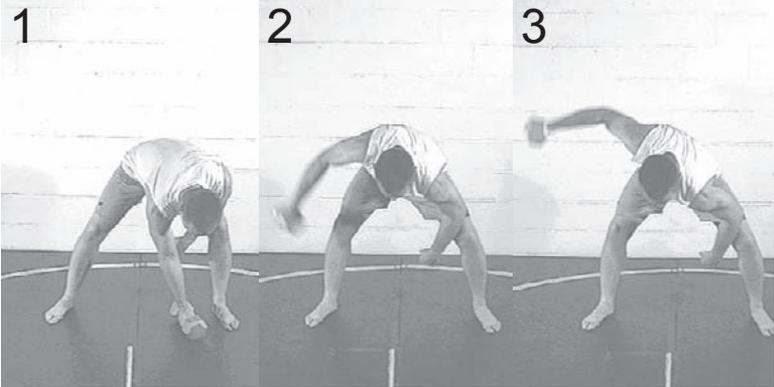
One-arm clean and jerk with rotation





☒ Same start, but as you bring the weight to shoulder level, continue the motion and jerk it overhead while turning toward the right when the weight is in the right hand and to the left when the weight is in the left hand.

One-arm rotational rowing



- ☒ Bend forward at the waist gripping the weight in your right hand.
- ☒ Place your left elbow on your left knee.
- ☒ Swing the weight high and to your right.
- ☒ Swing it back and repeat.

12 Explosiveness / agility



Strength and endurance are not the only factors that need to be addressed by the NHB/MMA athlete. We've got to take into account the twin attributes of explosive movement and agility. For the most part, proper drilling technique in striking and grappling will cultivate these two components, but for those who desire greater gains and/or have lots of solo training time to fill, the following circuit should fill the bill nicely.

Explosive drills are commonly labeled under the rubric "plyometrics," but we have chosen the synonym "explosiveness" to remind you of the manner in which you are to train each of the following drills. As with all other exercises in this book, intensity is the key. If an exercise calls for a jump, you can be assured that that jump is to be as high and explosive as you can manage. In this area of training, half measures aren't much better than no measures at all.

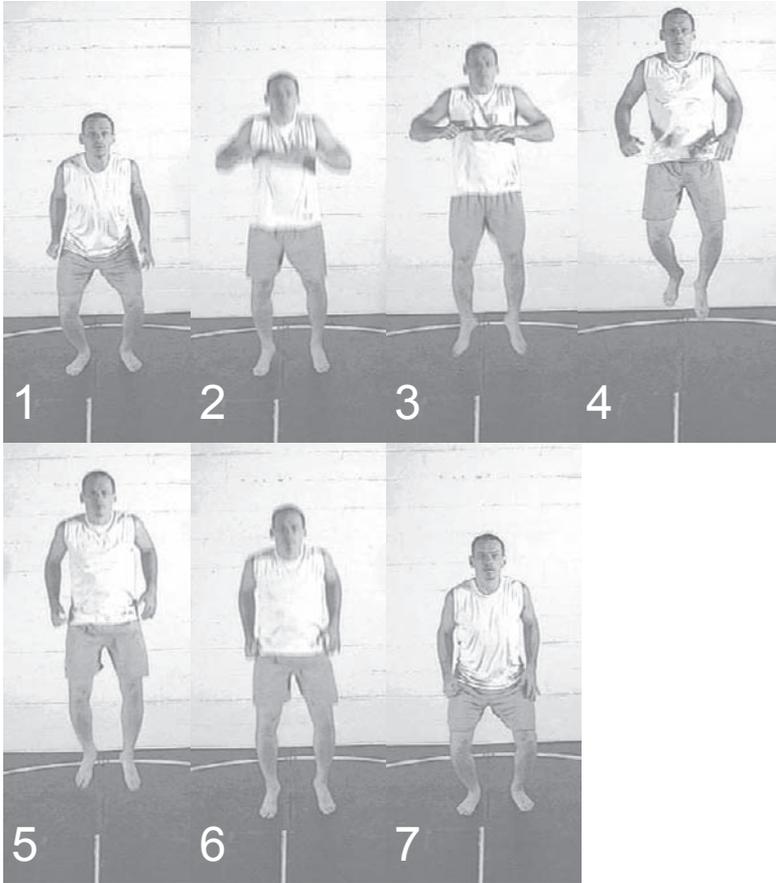
We will approach explosiveness and agility in a synergistic circuit like we did in the dumbbell/kettlebell complex. By training in a circuit fashion, the intensity stays high and we seriously redline the system building our cardio base in a sport-specific manner. Use the following rules when performing this circuit.

Explosiveness / agility

☒ Explode into every exercise, every repetition. If you aren't jumping as high as you can or as far as you can with each repetition, drop to the preceding level.

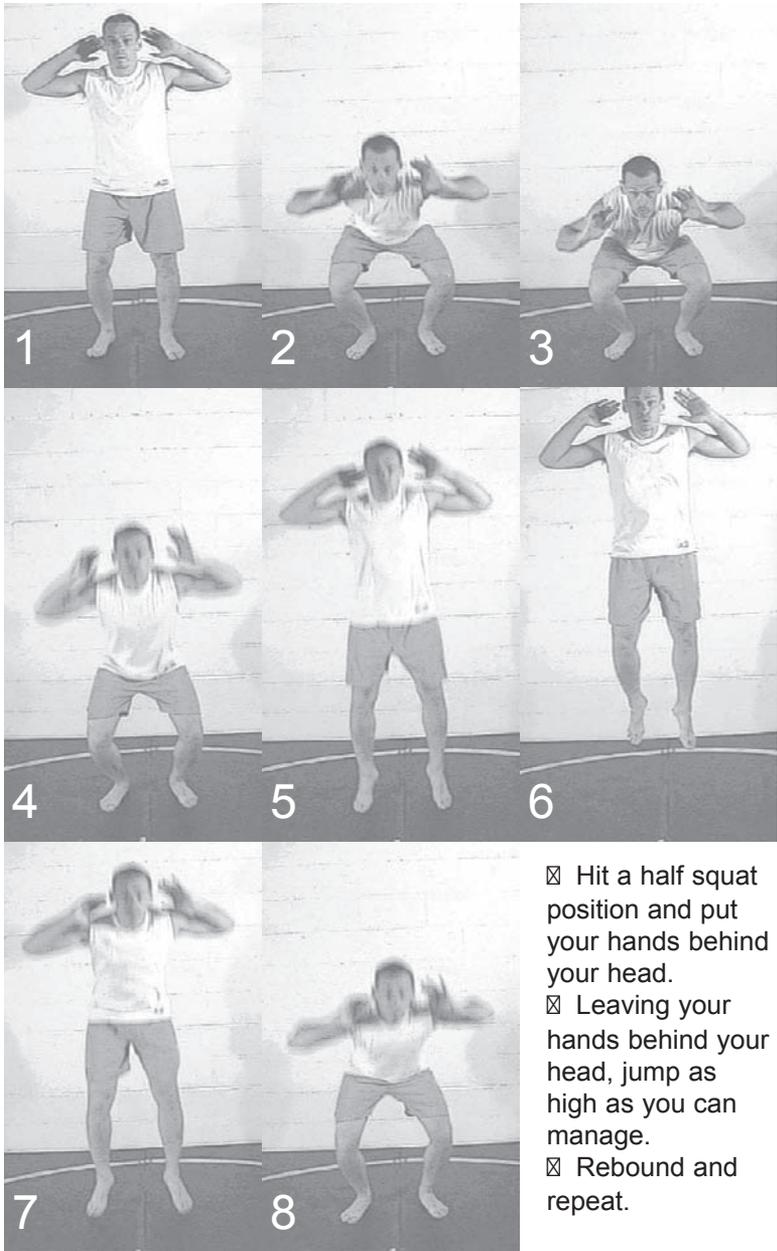
☒ You will not rest between repetitions, but you may take the occasional five deep breaths between individual exercises. You will be huffing and puffing before long, and each of these huffs and puffs count as your five "rest" breaths.

If you are new to explosive training, keep a "relief" bucket handy.

Pogo

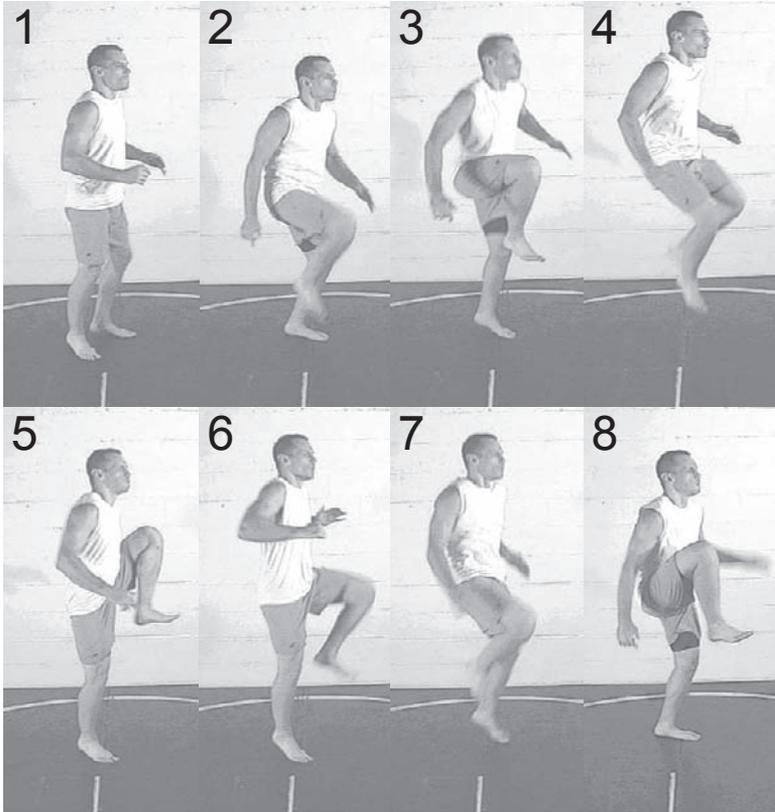
- ☒ With only a slight bend in the knees, jump as high as you can manage.
- ☒ Upon rebound, spend as little time in contact with the mat as possible and spring again. In the pogo, the calves give the majority of the burst with the slightly bent knees assisting.

Squat jump



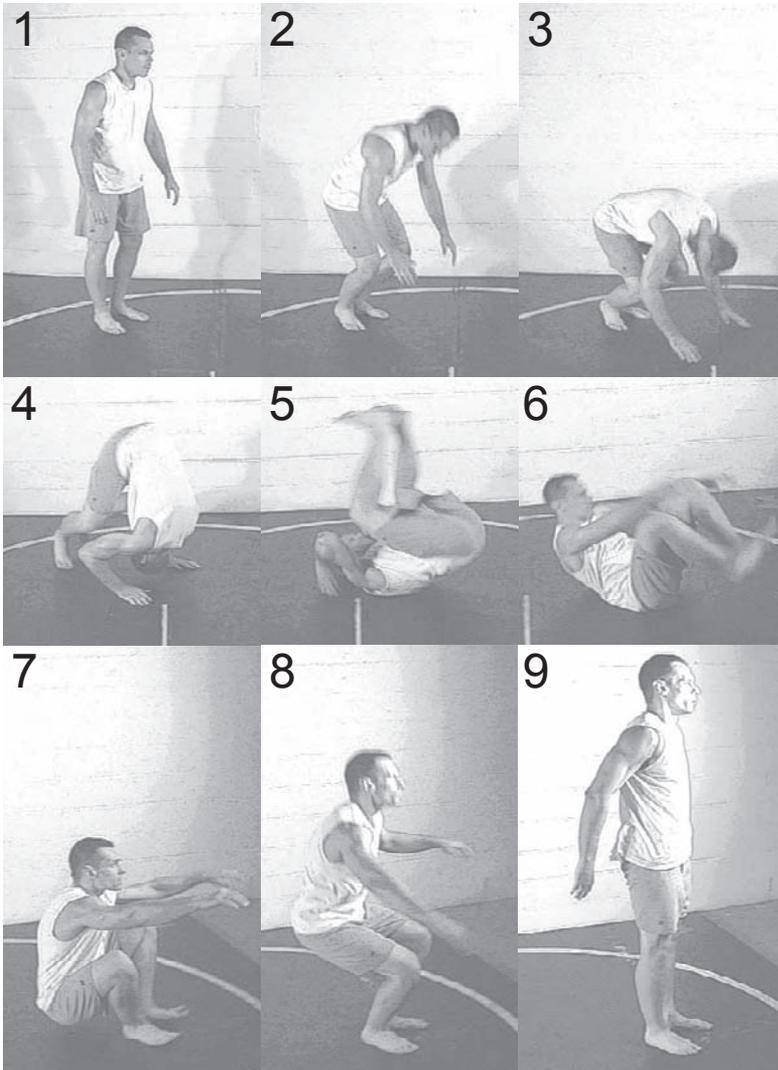
- ☒ Hit a half squat position and put your hands behind your head.
- ☒ Leaving your hands behind your head, jump as high as you can manage.
- ☒ Rebound and repeat.

High-knee

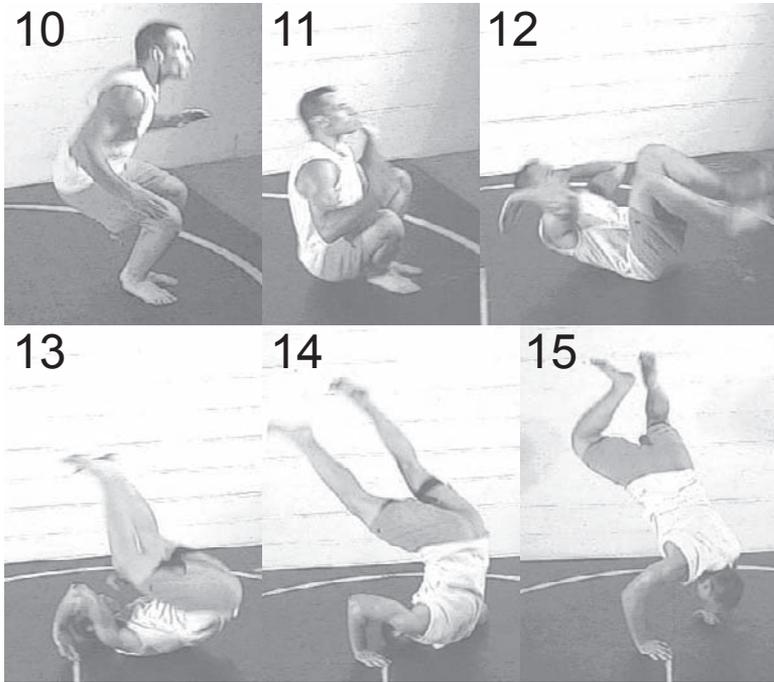


- ☒ Explosively bring your right knee to your chest, taking it as high as you can.
- ☒ At the same time, attempt to have the heel of your raised foot make contact with the back of your hamstring or buttocks.
- ☒ Drive the right leg back to the mat. Perform same with the left leg.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

Forward roll/backward roll w/handstand shoot combo



- ☒ Squat to the mat and place your hands in front of you a shoulder-width apart.
- ☒ Tuck your chin and roll forward.
- ☒ At the end of the roll, come immediately to standing position.



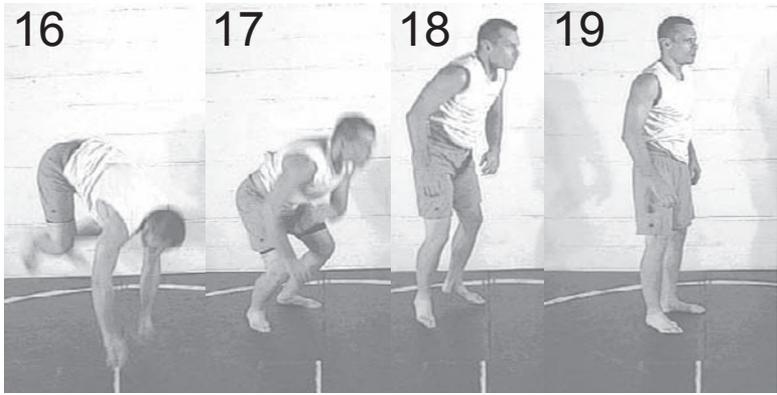
- ☒ Squat again, tuck your chin and roll backward, placing your hands on the mat beside your head.
- ☒ As you reach the middle of the backward roll, drive your feet toward the sky and attempt to press your body into a momentary handstand position before returning to your feet.

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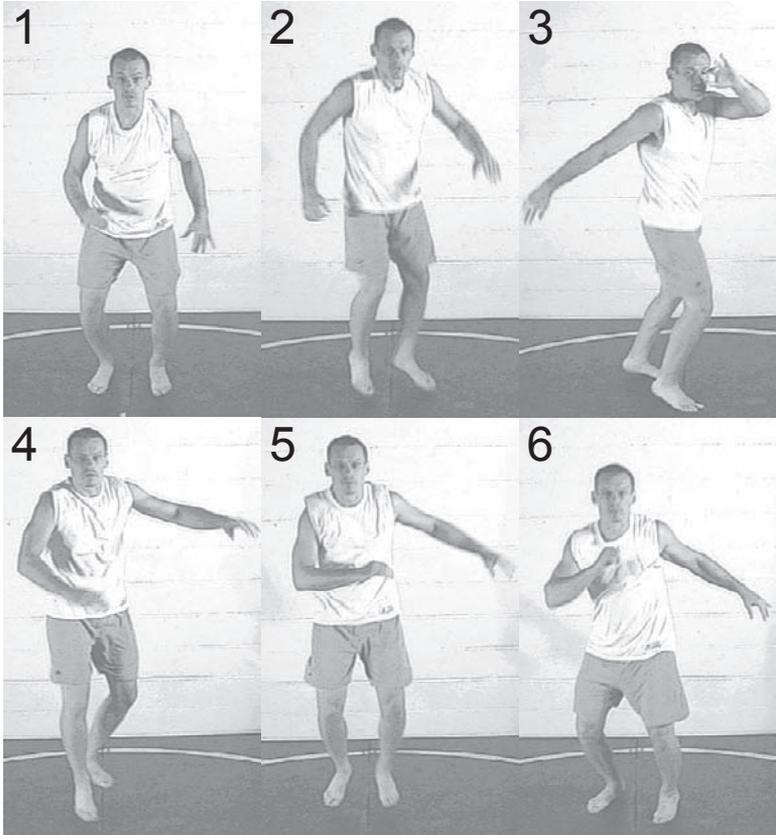
You can choose from three levels of backward roll difficulty to fit your abilities.

1. Perform the backward roll without the handstand shoot.
2. Perform the handstand shoot as described above.
3. Perform the handstand shoot and attempt to drive your body from the mat before your feet meet the mat. There will be a momentary airborne phase in this variation.

Forward roll/backward roll continued

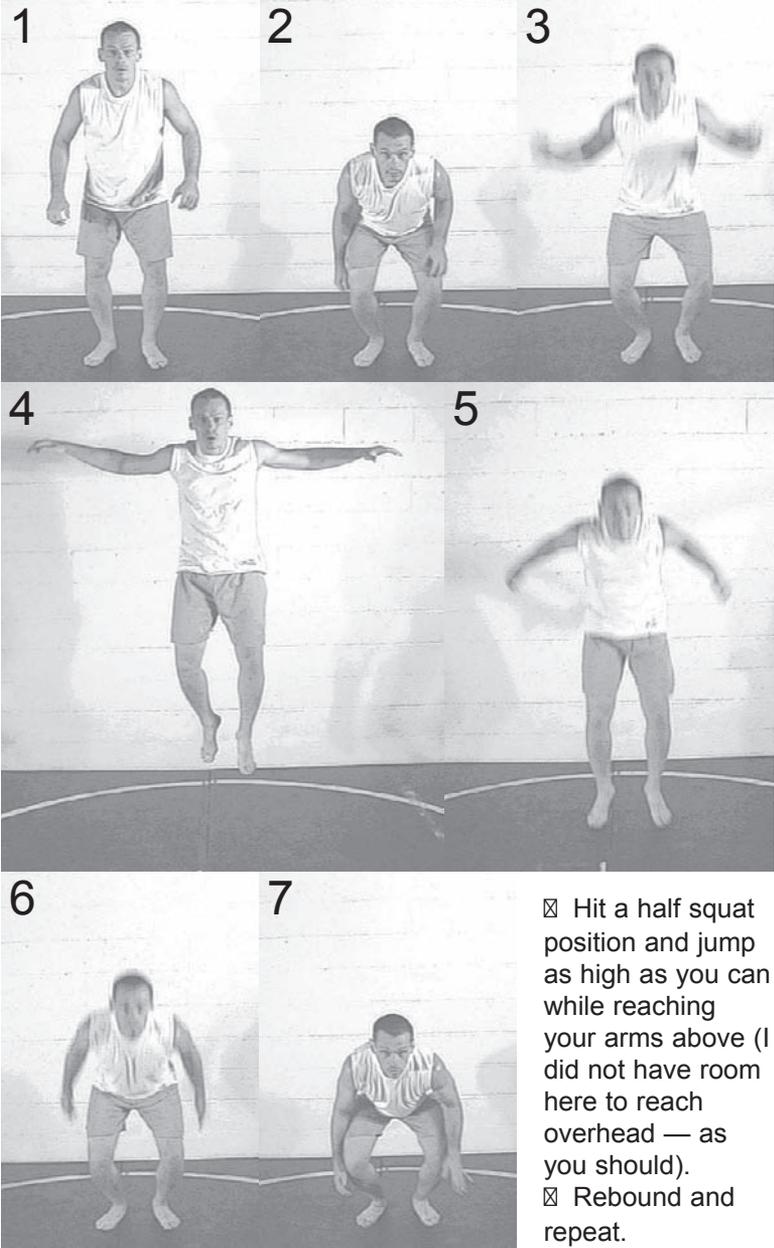


Quarter turn jump

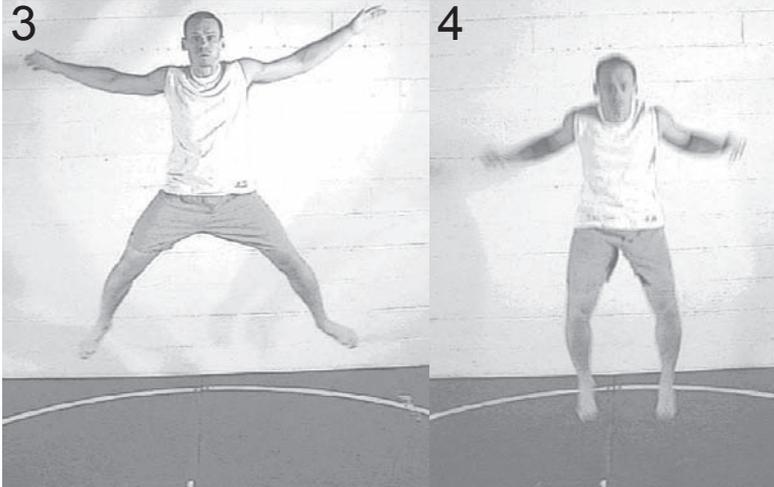
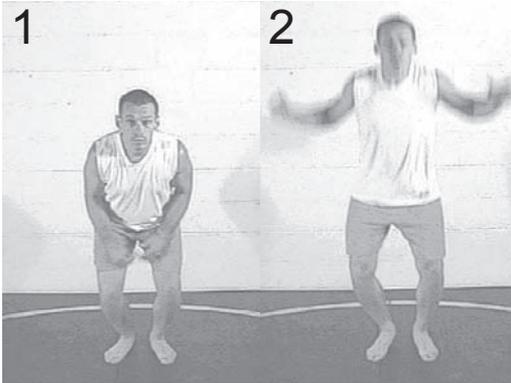


- ☒ Jump from both feet making a quarter turn to your left.
- ☒ Rebound immediately making a quarter turn jump to your right.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

Rocket jump

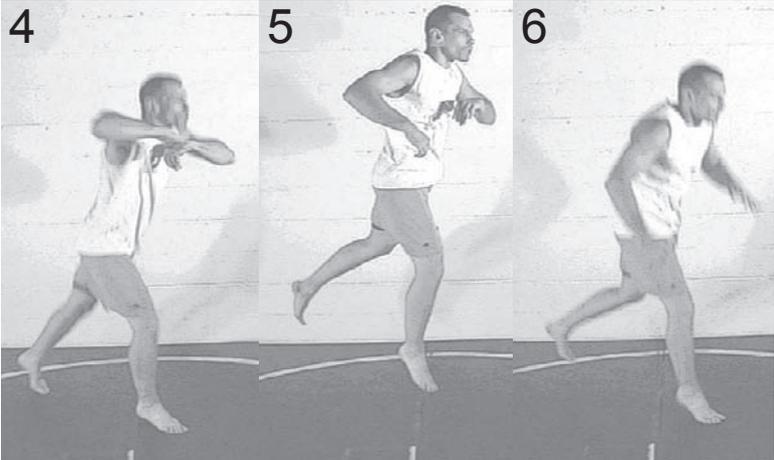
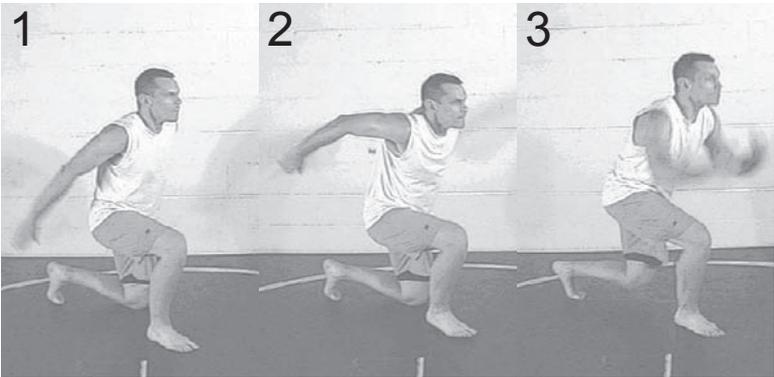


Star jump



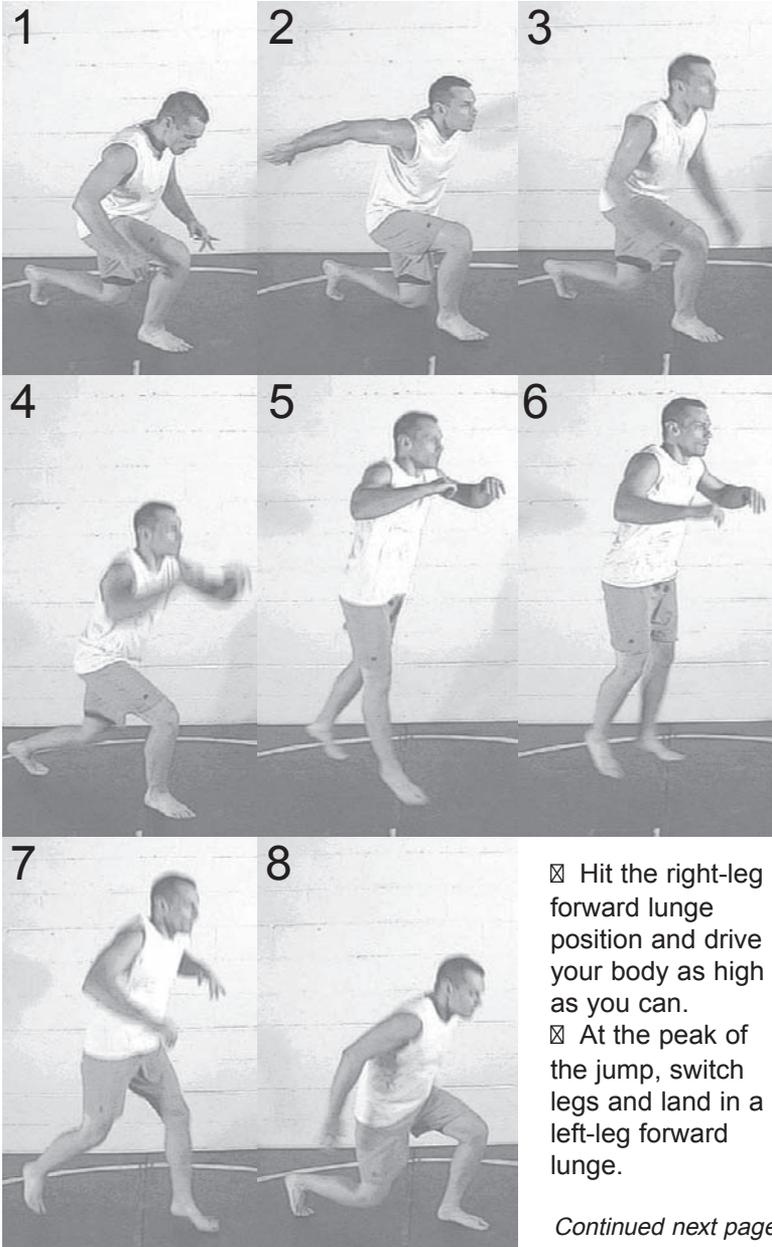
- ☒ Hit the half squat position and jump as high as you can like in the rocket jump. At the peak of the jump, spread your arms and legs wide like in an airborne jumping jack. This forms a star.
- ☒ Return your limbs to standard position to hit the mat and rebound for the next repetition.

Half scissors launch



- ☒ Step your right leg forward into lunge position placing your left knee on the mat.
- ☒ From this bottomed-out position, drive your arms up hard and attempt to launch yourself as high as you can.
- ☒ Return to the right-leg forward lunge position.
- ☒ Perform all repetitions on the right before moving to the left.

Full scissors jump

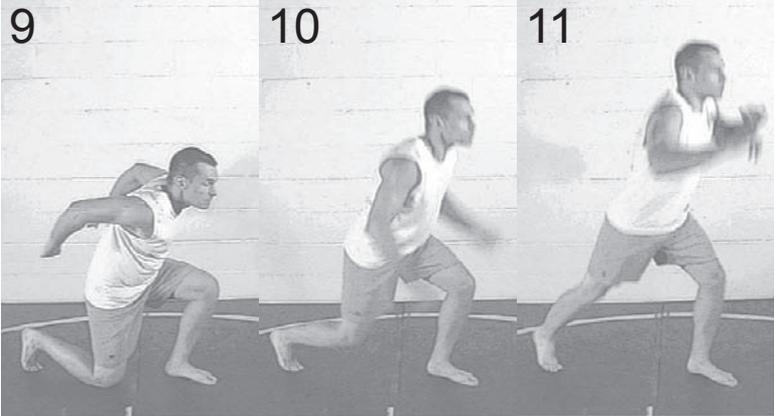


☒ Hit the right-leg forward lunge position and drive your body as high as you can.

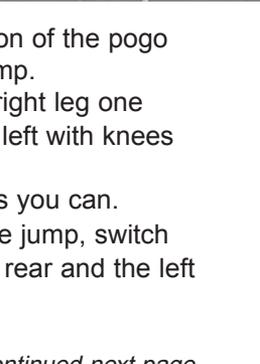
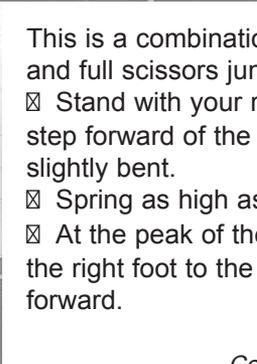
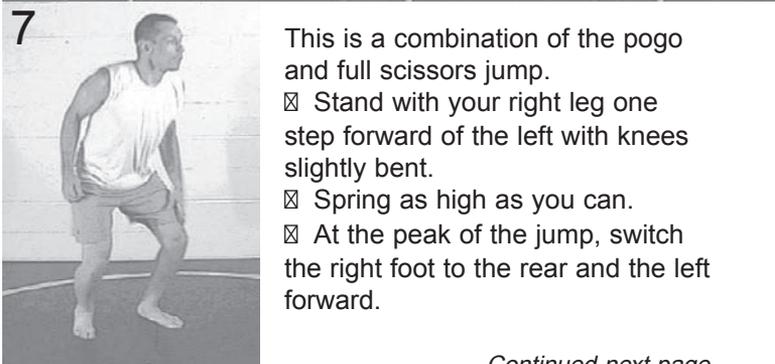
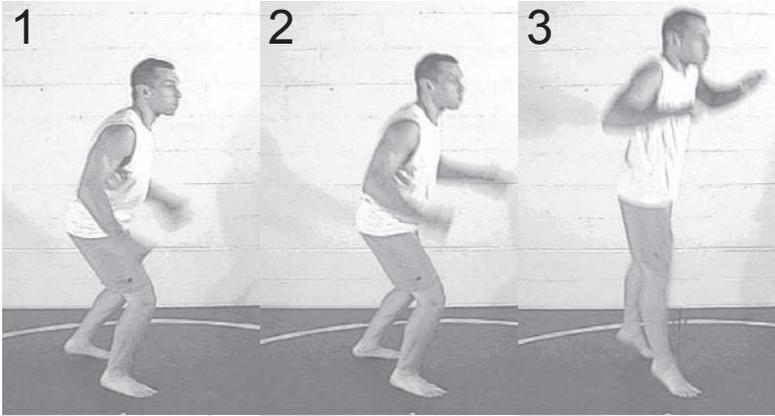
☒ At the peak of the jump, switch legs and land in a left-leg forward lunge.

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Full scissors jump continued



- ☒ Drive and jump again.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

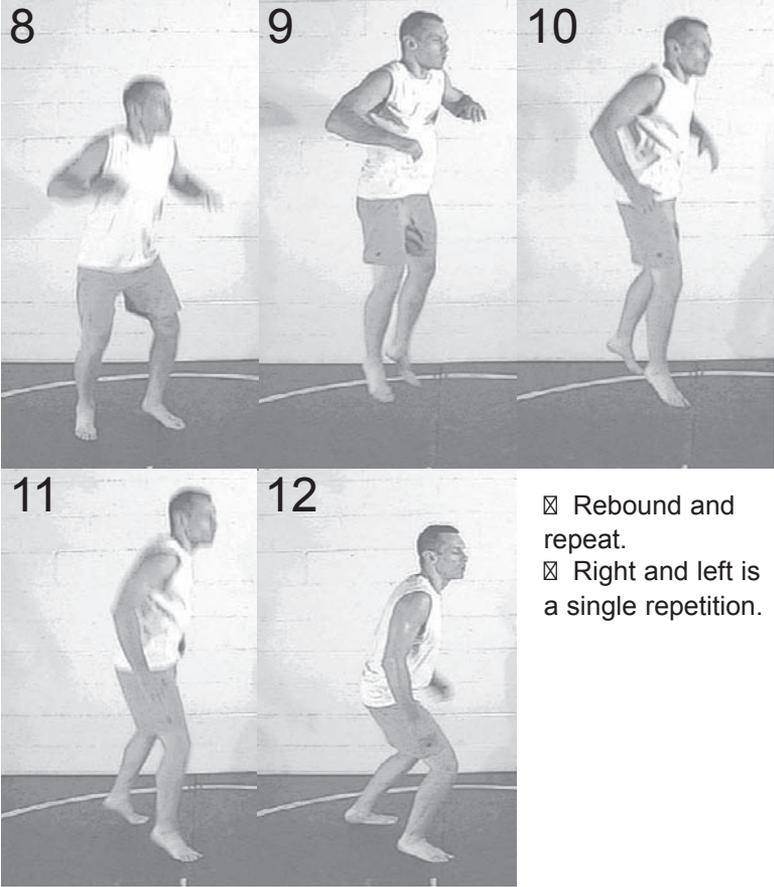
Pogo switch

This is a combination of the pogo and full scissors jump.

- ☒ Stand with your right leg one step forward of the left with knees slightly bent.
- ☒ Spring as high as you can.
- ☒ At the peak of the jump, switch the right foot to the rear and the left forward.

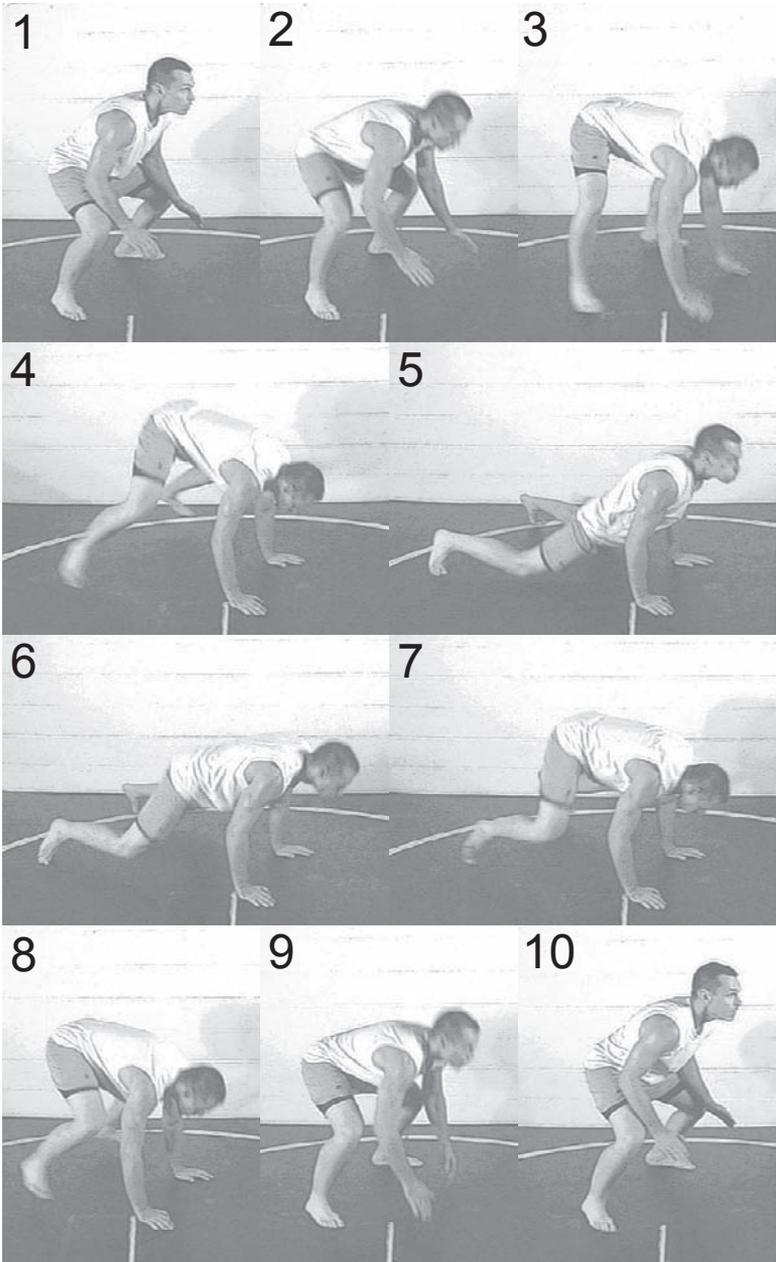
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Pogo switch continued

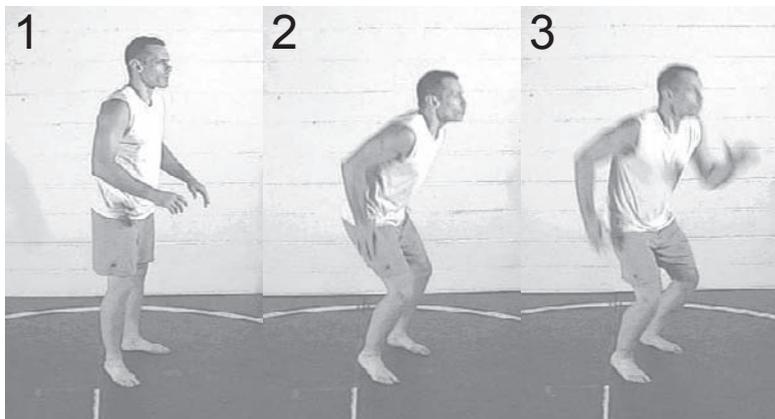


Speed sprawl to stand-up →

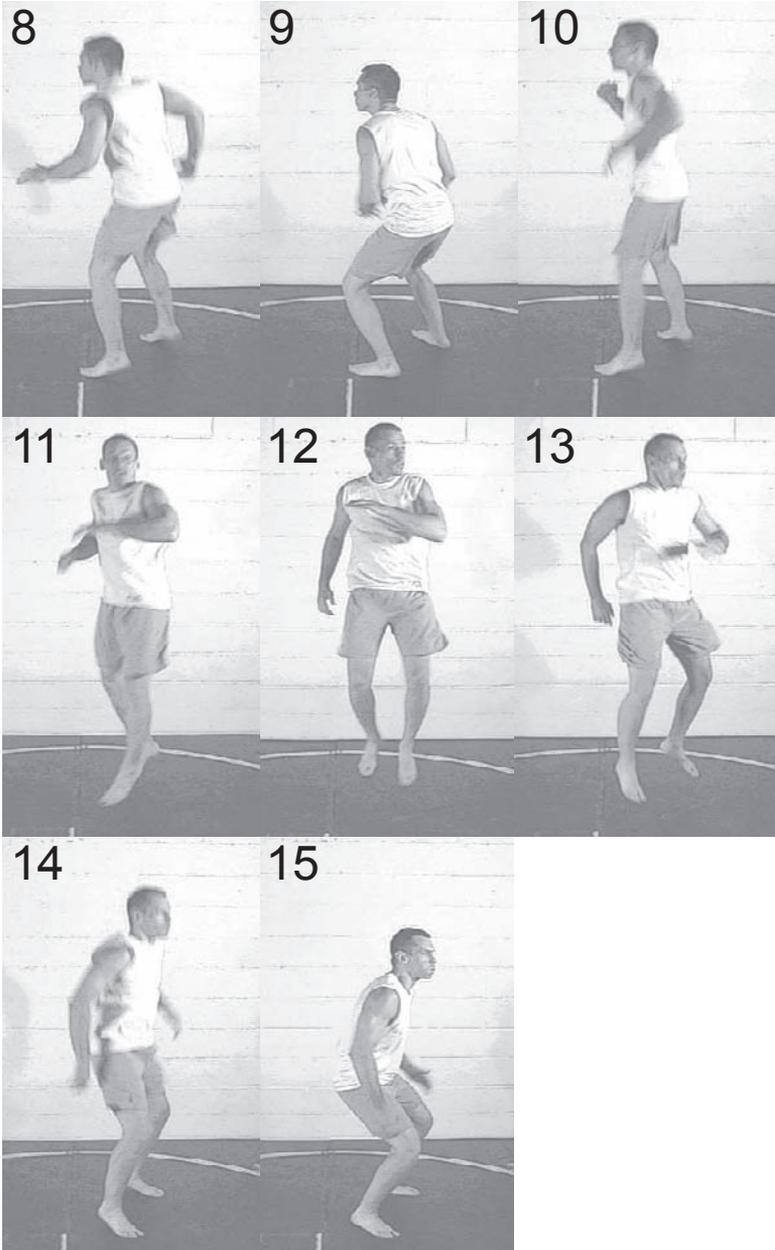
- ☒ Stand in a square stance (elbows to knees).
- ☒ With all the speed and gravity-assist you can manage, hit a sprawl (hips downward and chest up).
- ☒ Attempt to match your descent speed and pop up immediately to standing.



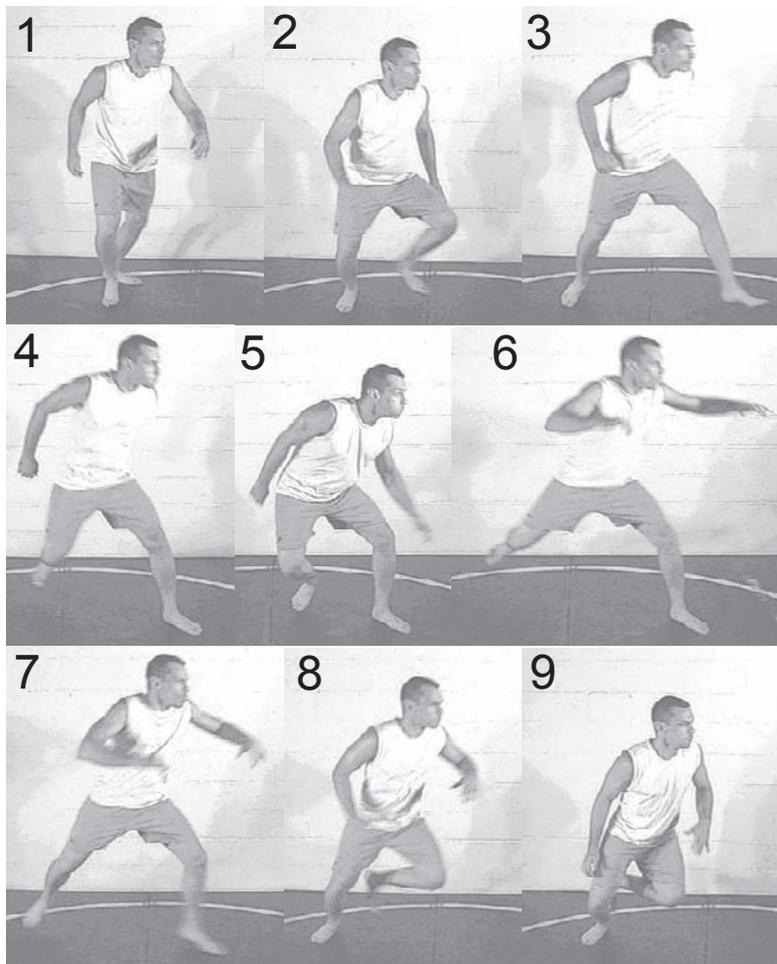
Half turn jump



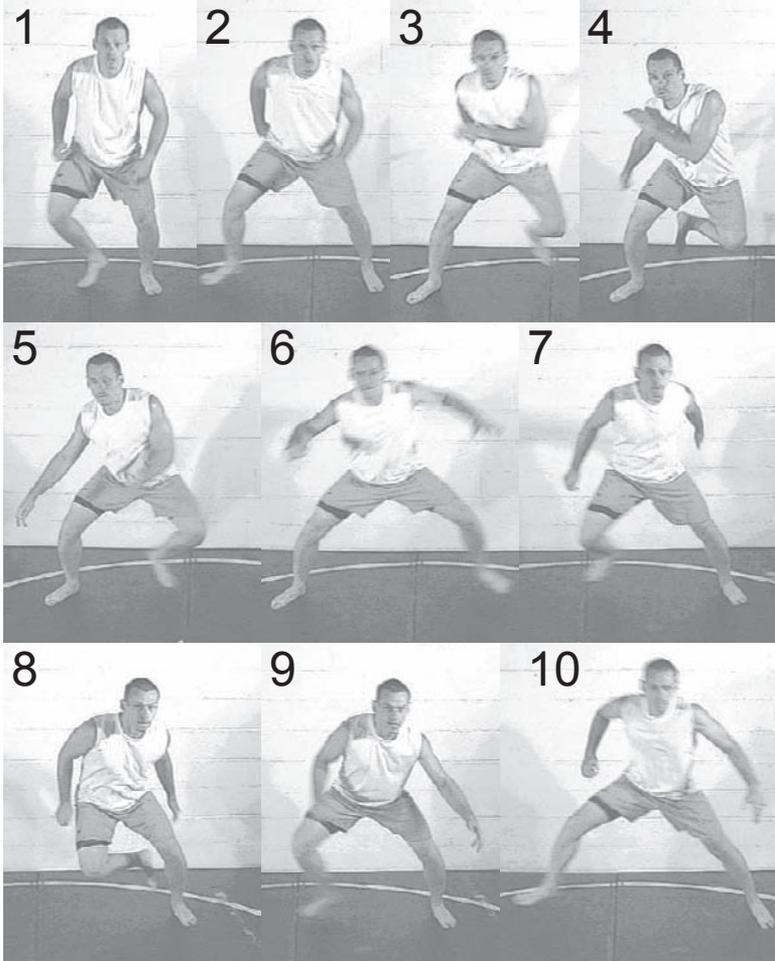
- ☒ Perform as in the quarter turn jumps, but with alternating half turns.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.



Forward and back bounds

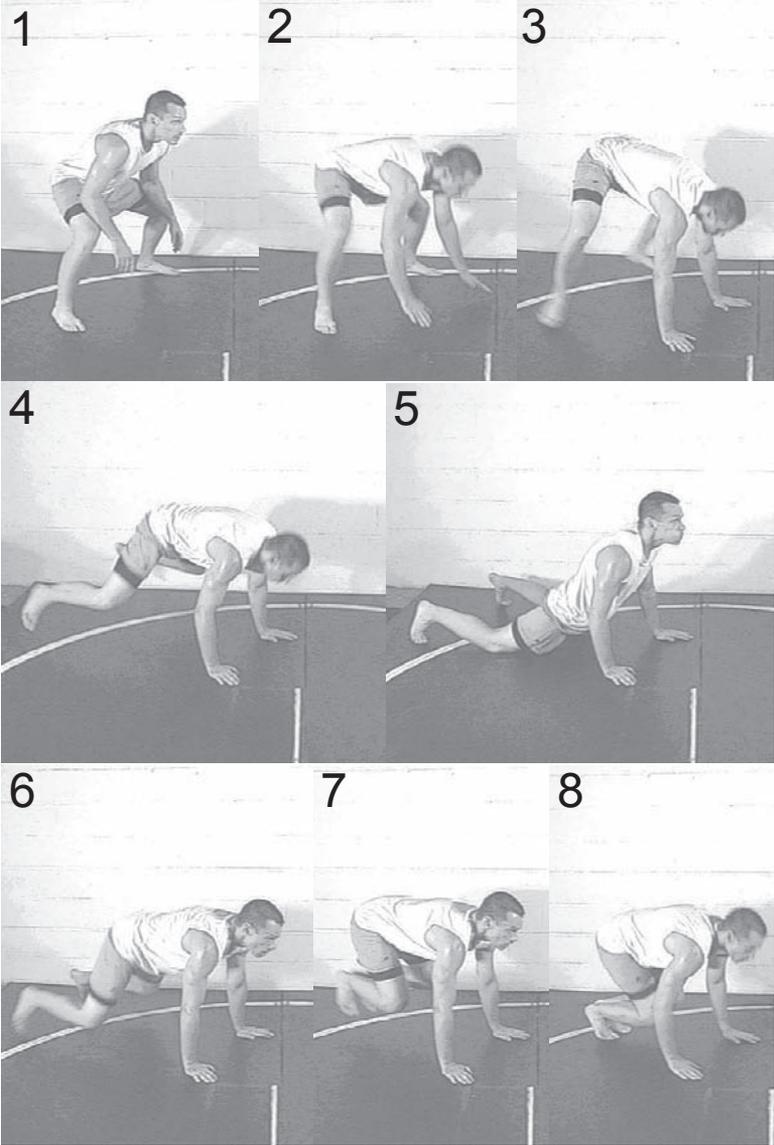


- ☒ Stand on your right foot and drive forward as far as you can landing on only the left foot.
- ☒ Immediately drive off the left foot to the rear, landing on the right foot.
- ☒ That is a single repetition.
- ☒ Perform all with the left leg forward and then repeat on the other side.

Lateral bound

- ☒ Crouch and place all of your weight on your left foot.
- ☒ Drive off the left foot hard and to the right.
- ☒ Land on your right foot, then drive hard and to the left, back onto your left foot.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

Speed sprawl "forward roll" stand-up



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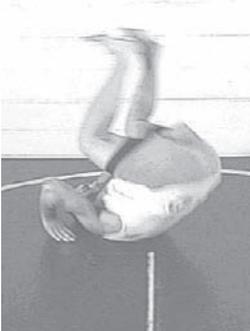
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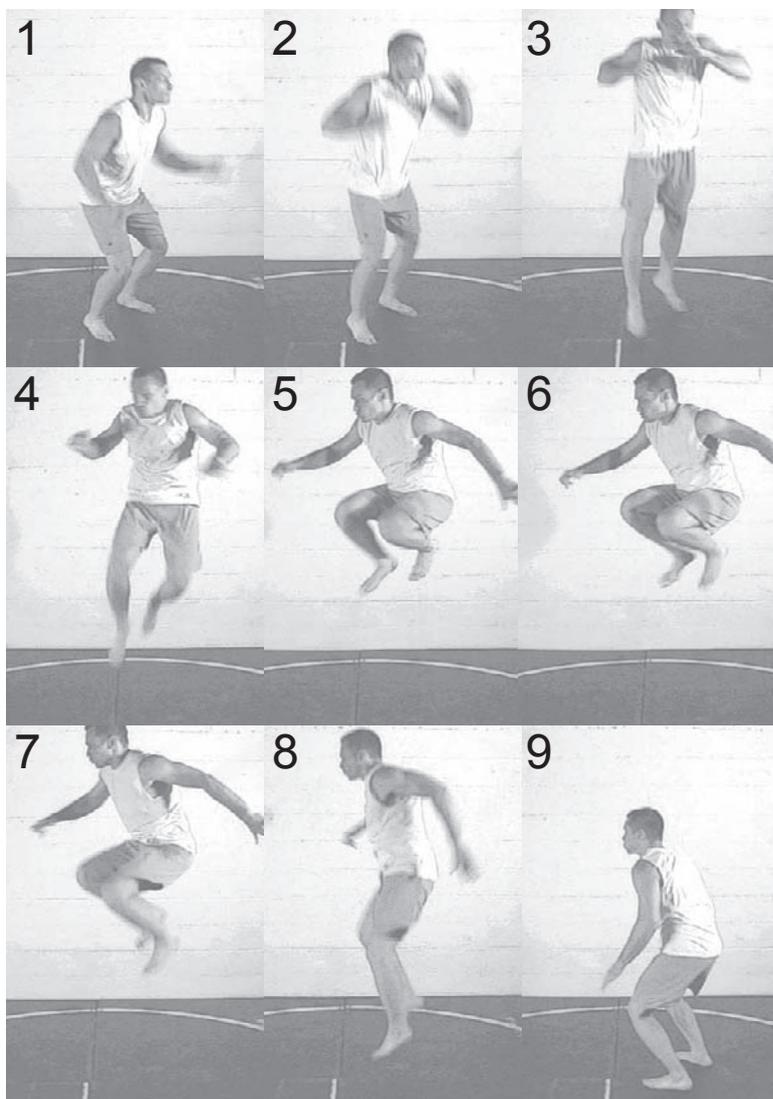


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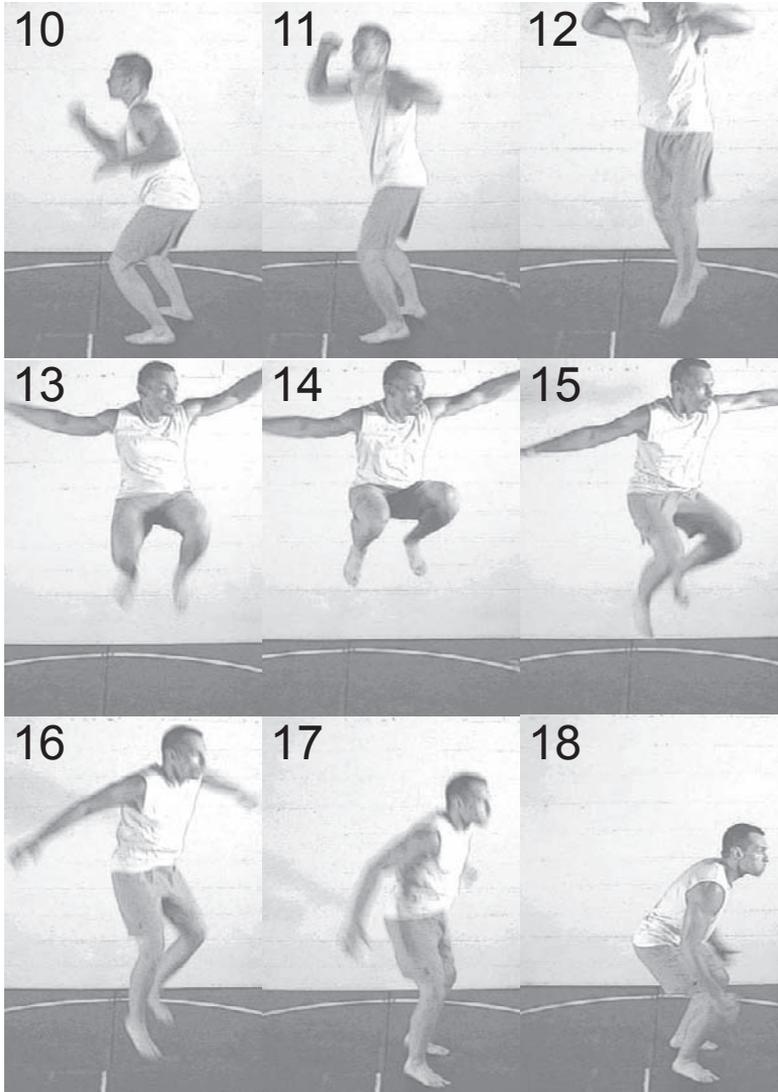


- ☒ Assume a square stance.
- ☒ Hit the speed sprawl and then immediately launch yourself into a forward roll.
- ☒ Stand up as quickly as you can.
- ☒ Repeat.

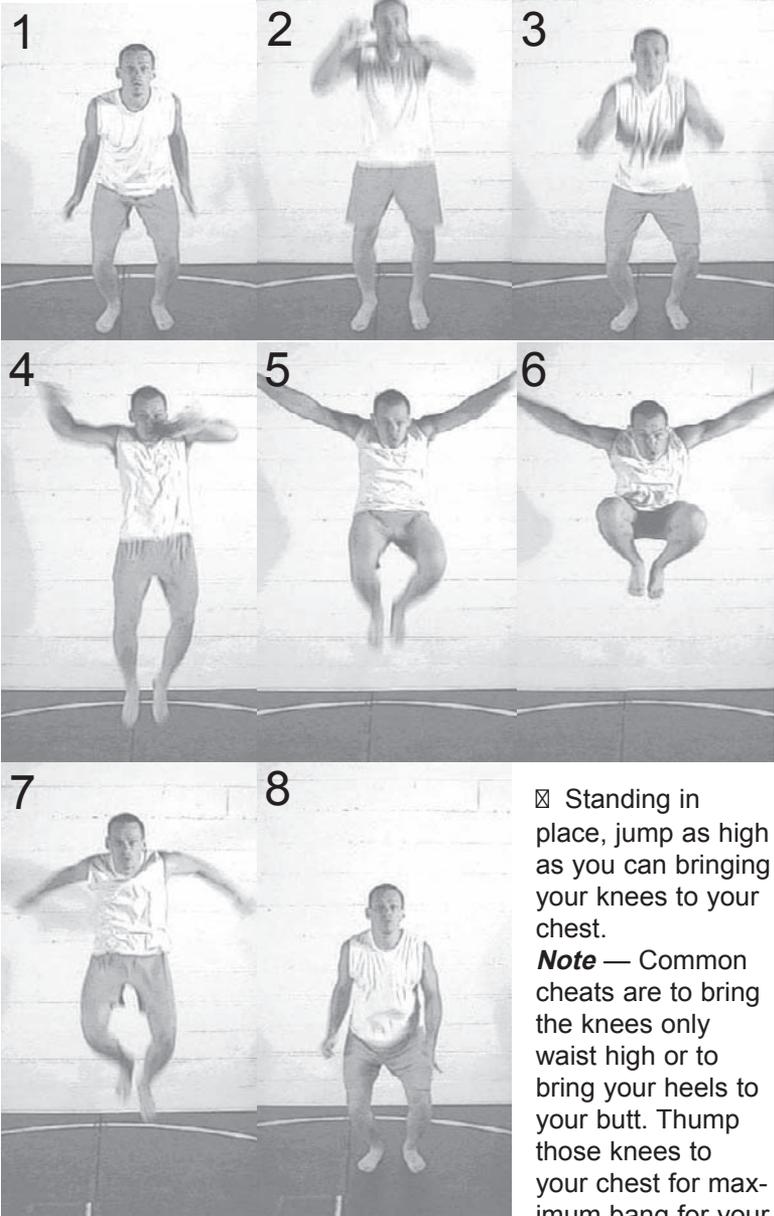
Half turn tuck jump



- ☒ Perform like the standard half turn jumps, except jump as high as you can bringing your knees to your chest with each repetition.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition

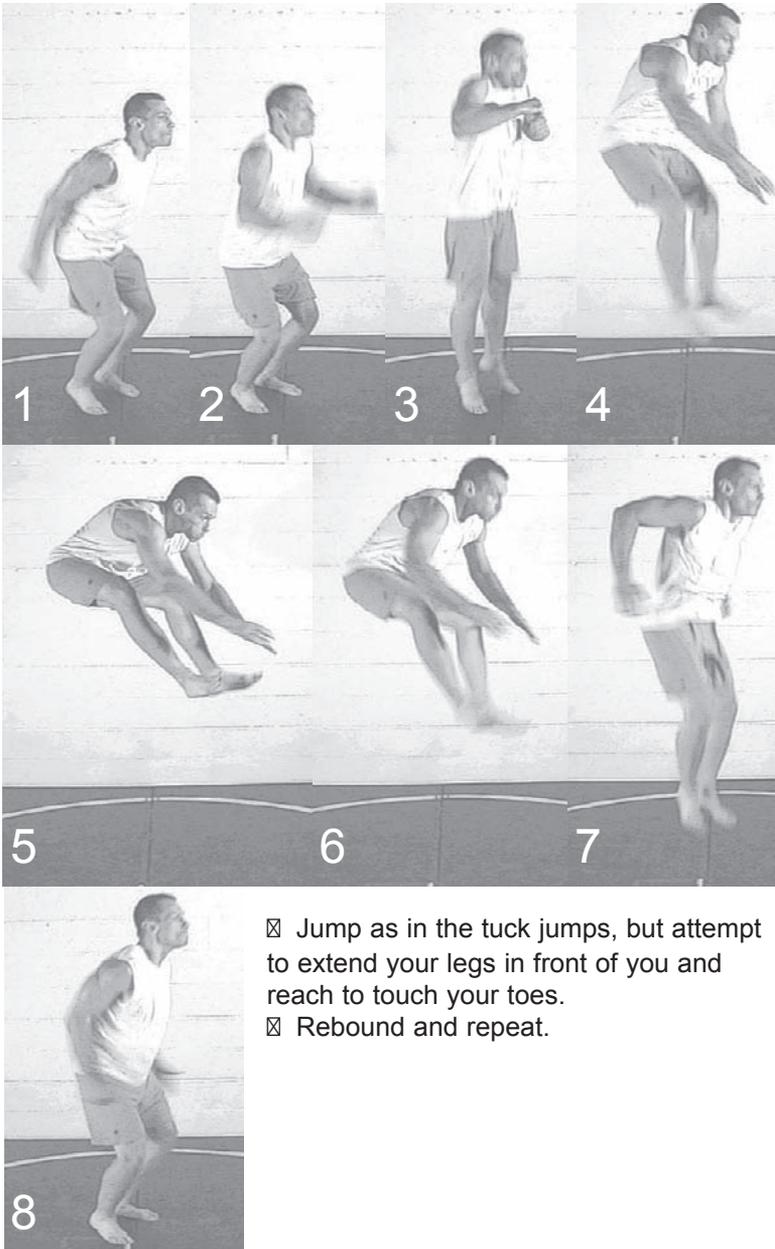


Tuck jump



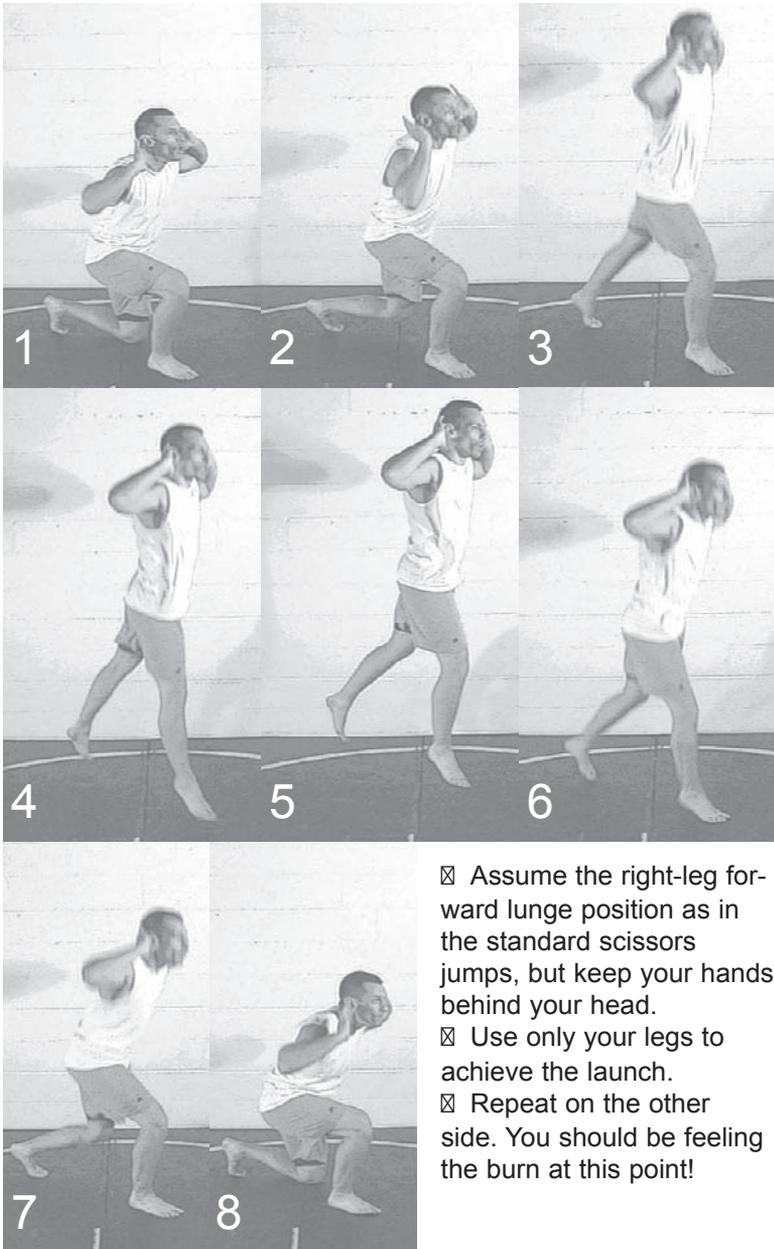
☒ Standing in place, jump as high as you can bringing your knees to your chest.

Note — Common cheats are to bring the knees only waist high or to bring your heels to your butt. Thump those knees to your chest for maximum bang for your buck.

Pike jump

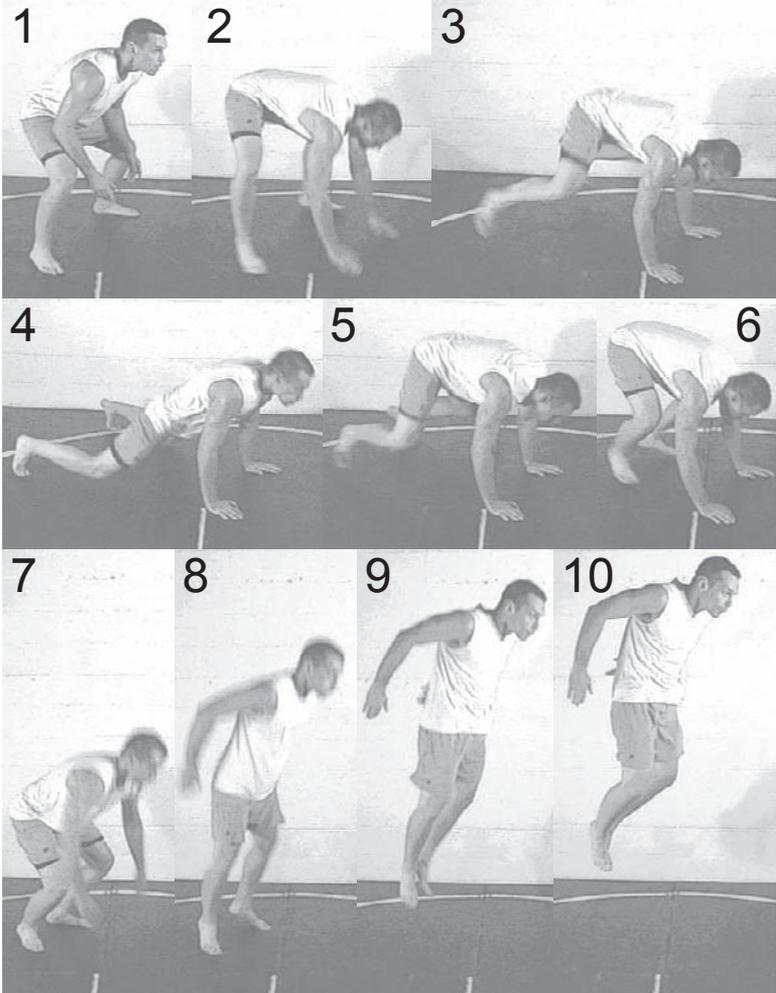
- ☒ Jump as in the tuck jumps, but attempt to extend your legs in front of you and reach to touch your toes.
- ☒ Rebound and repeat.

Hands-behind-head half scissors launch



- ☒ Assume the right-leg forward lunge position as in the standard scissors jumps, but keep your hands behind your head.
- ☒ Use only your legs to achieve the launch.
- ☒ Repeat on the other side. You should be feeling the burn at this point!

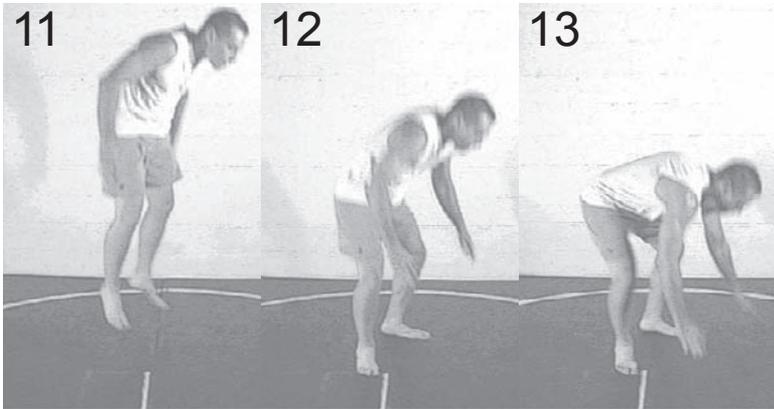
Speed sprawls “stand-up” rocket jump



- ☒ Hit your square stance.
- ☒ Bang the sprawl and stand up.
- ☒ Immediately move directly into a rocket jump.
- ☒ Remember to jump as high as you can reaching for the stars.

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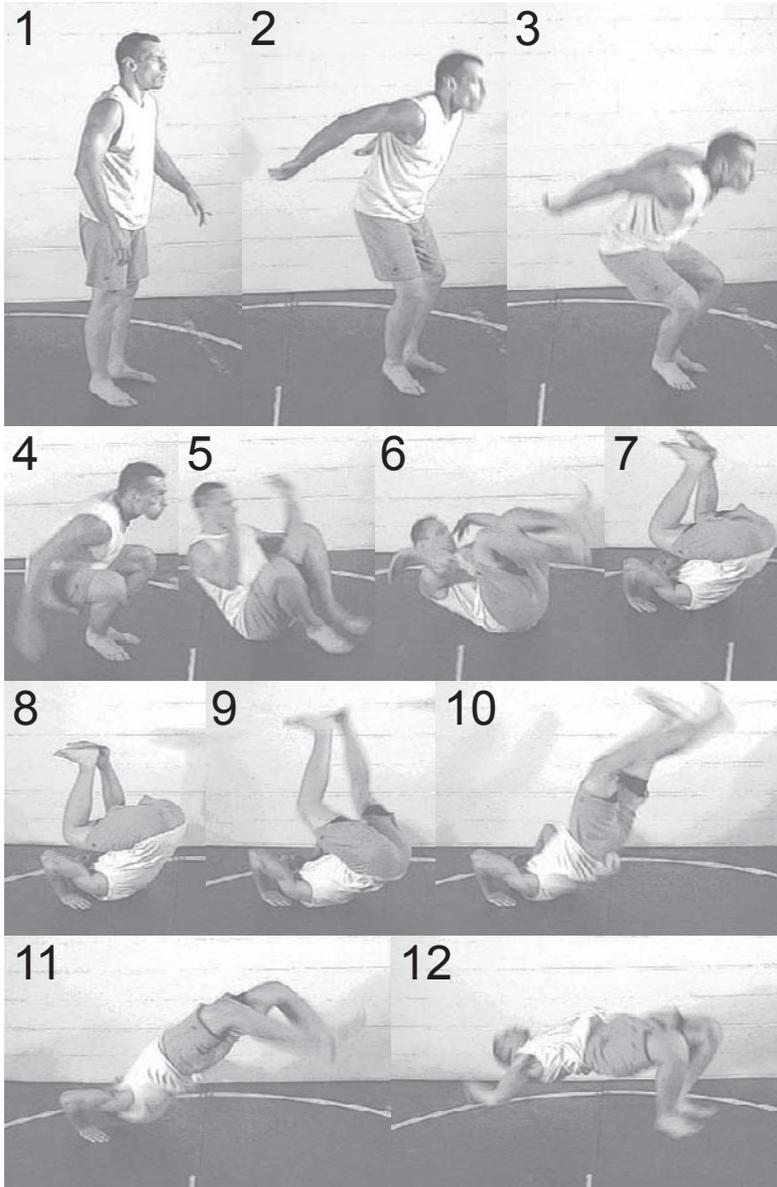
Speed sprawls “stand-up” rocket jumps continued



Kip-ups →

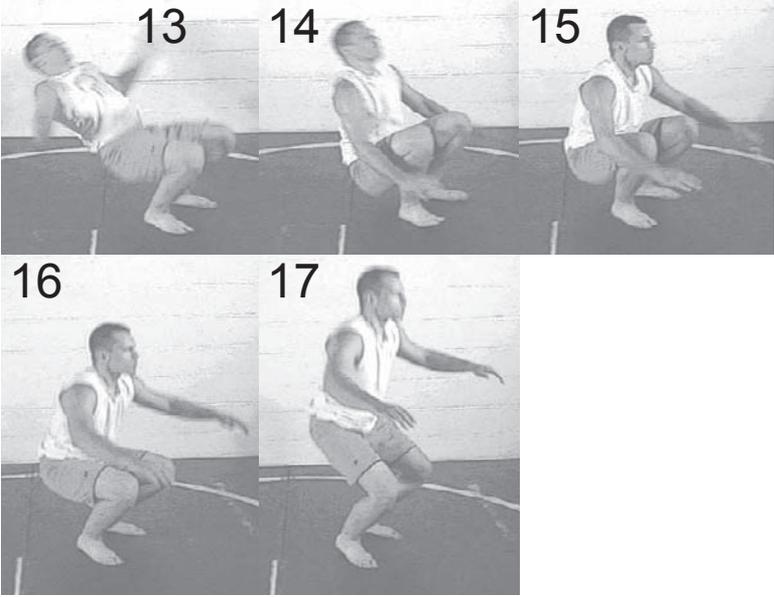
Note — If you have difficulty performing this exercise, substitute backward rolls to stand-up.

- ☒ From a standing position, squat and roll backward placing your hands on the mat like in a standard backward roll.
- ☒ At the top of the roll, explode your hips and legs and snap them forward to the mat. Drive off the mat with your hands, as in a forceful reverse push-up.
- ☒ Return to standing position. Have fun!

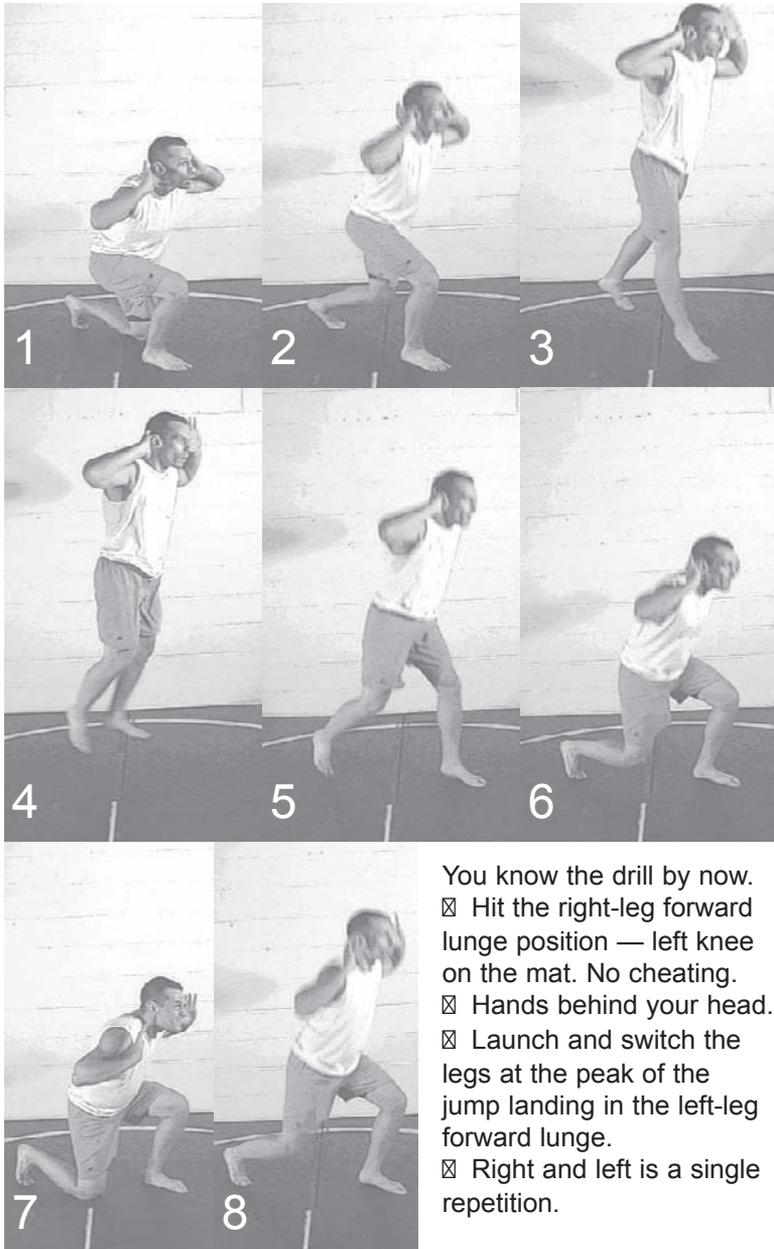


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Kip-ups continued



Hands-behind-head full scissors launch

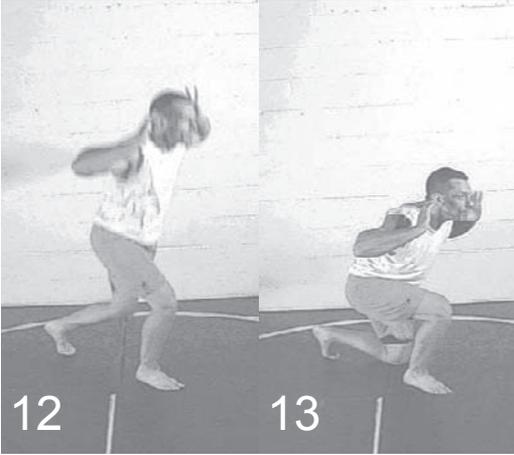
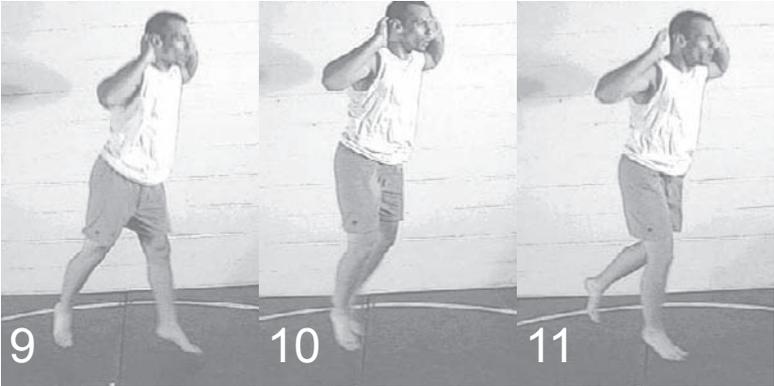


You know the drill by now.

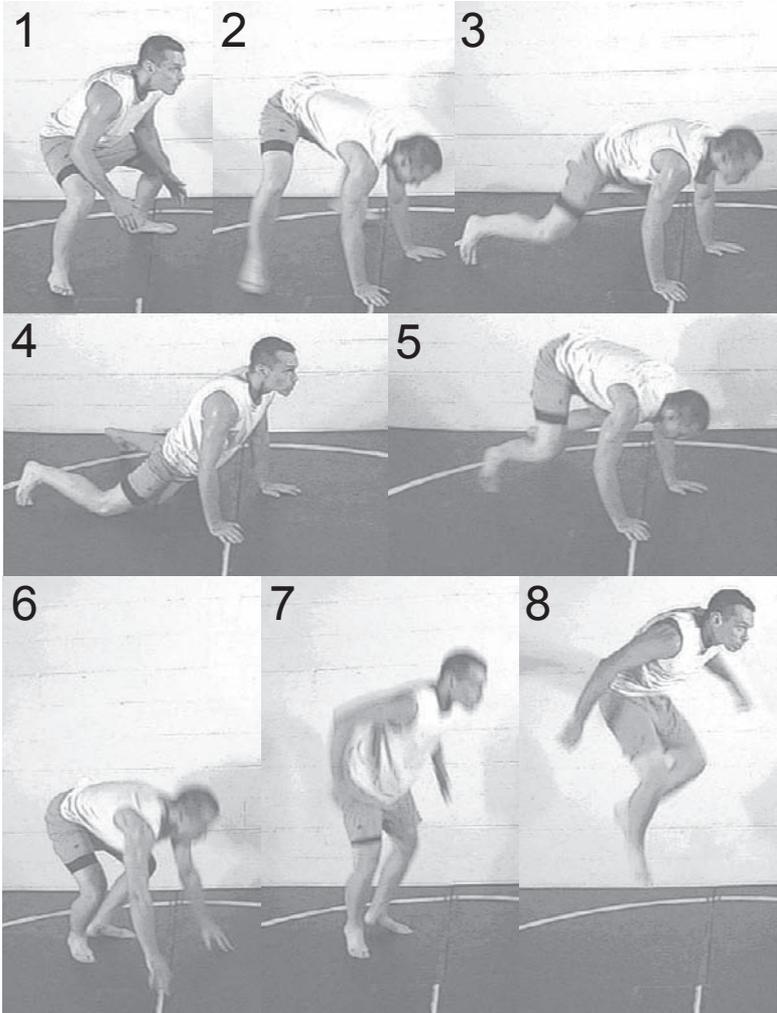
- ☒ Hit the right-leg forward lunge position — left knee on the mat. No cheating.
- ☒ Hands behind your head.
- ☒ Launch and switch the legs at the peak of the jump landing in the left-leg forward lunge.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

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Hands-behind-head full scissors launch continued



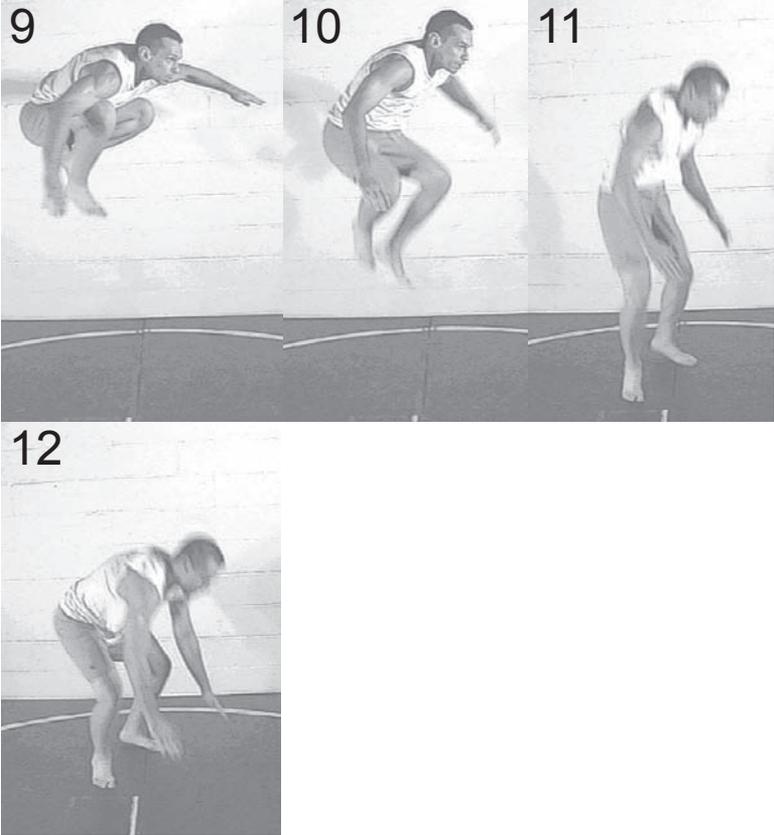
Speed sprawl “stand-up” tuck jump



- ☒ Square stance to sprawl.
- ☒ Stand up and hit a tuck jump (knees to chest) exploding as high as you can manage. How are those lungs doing?

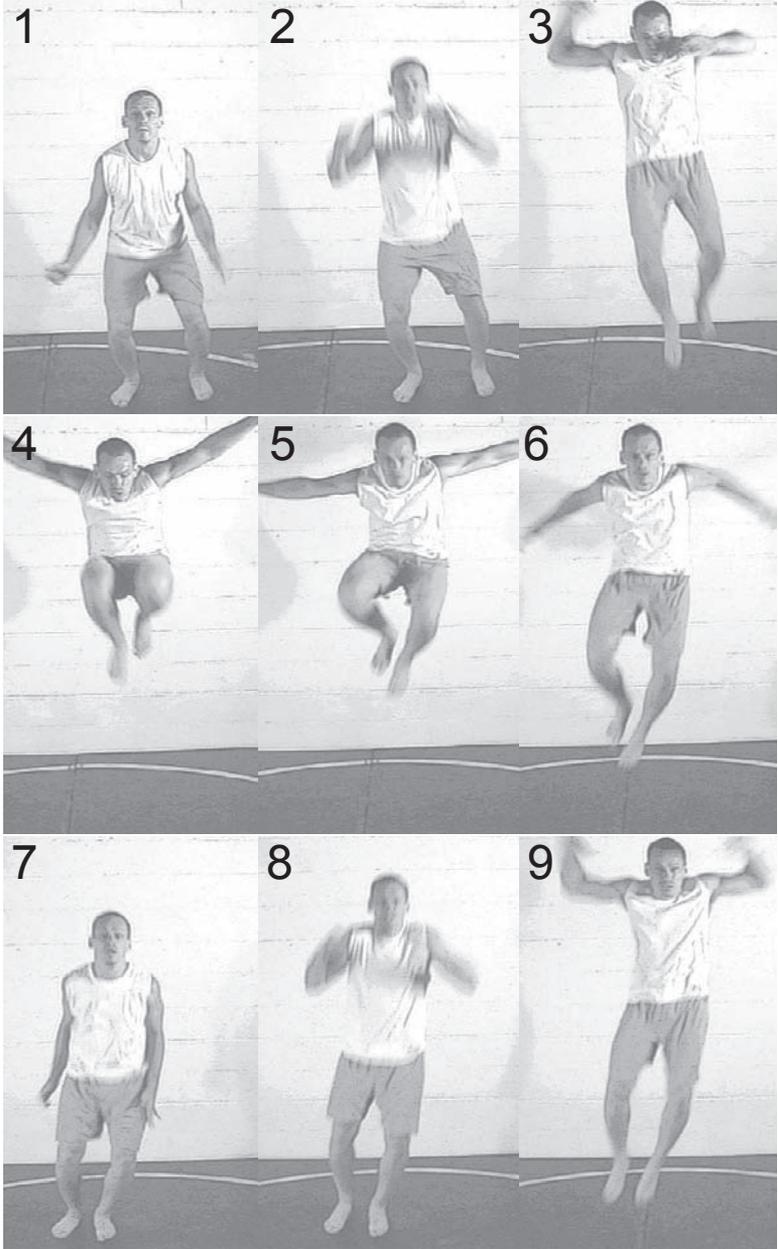
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Speed sprawl “stand-up” tuck jump continued



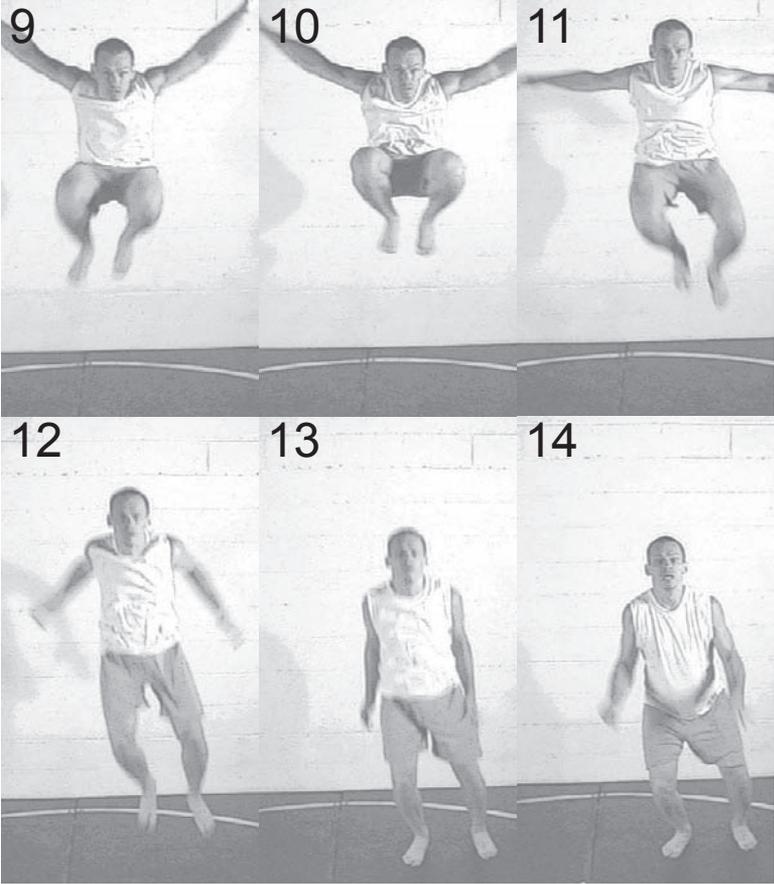
Side-tuck jump →

- ☒ Hit a quarter squat position and explode into a tuck jump taking yourself laterally to your right.
- ☒ Rebound and explode to the left.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.

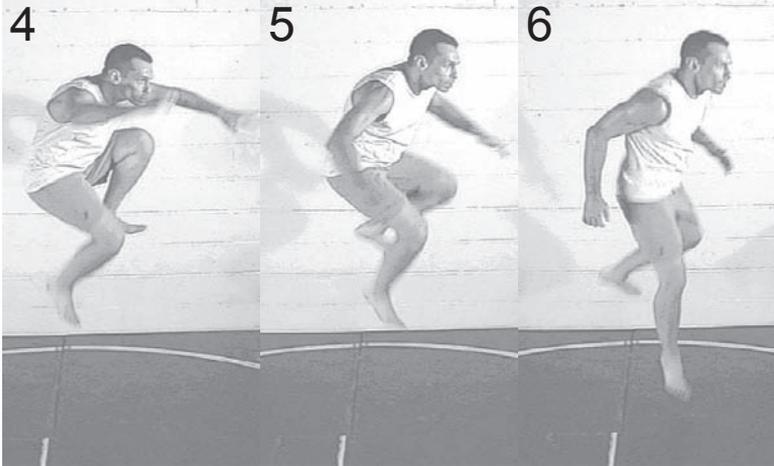
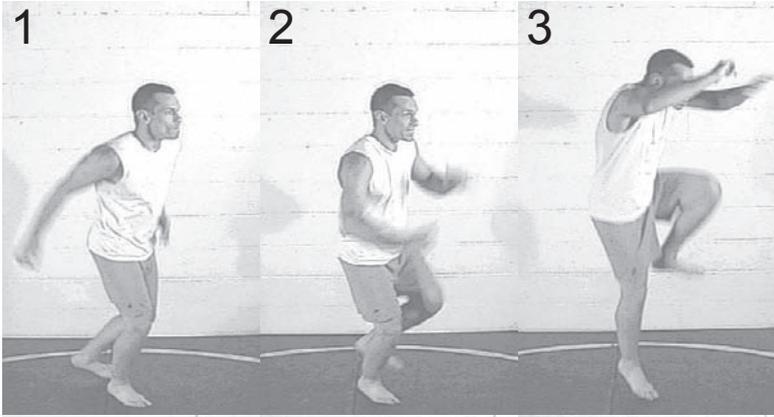


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Side-tuck jump continued

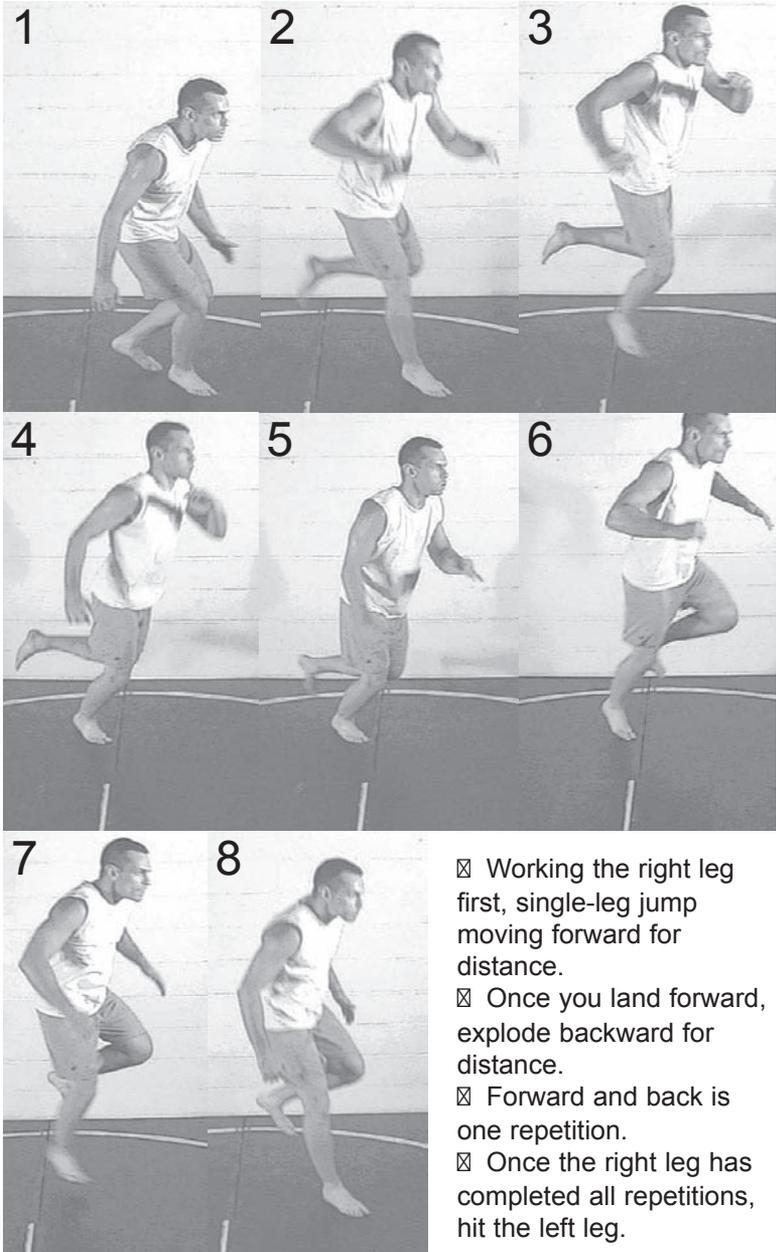


Single-leg jump for height



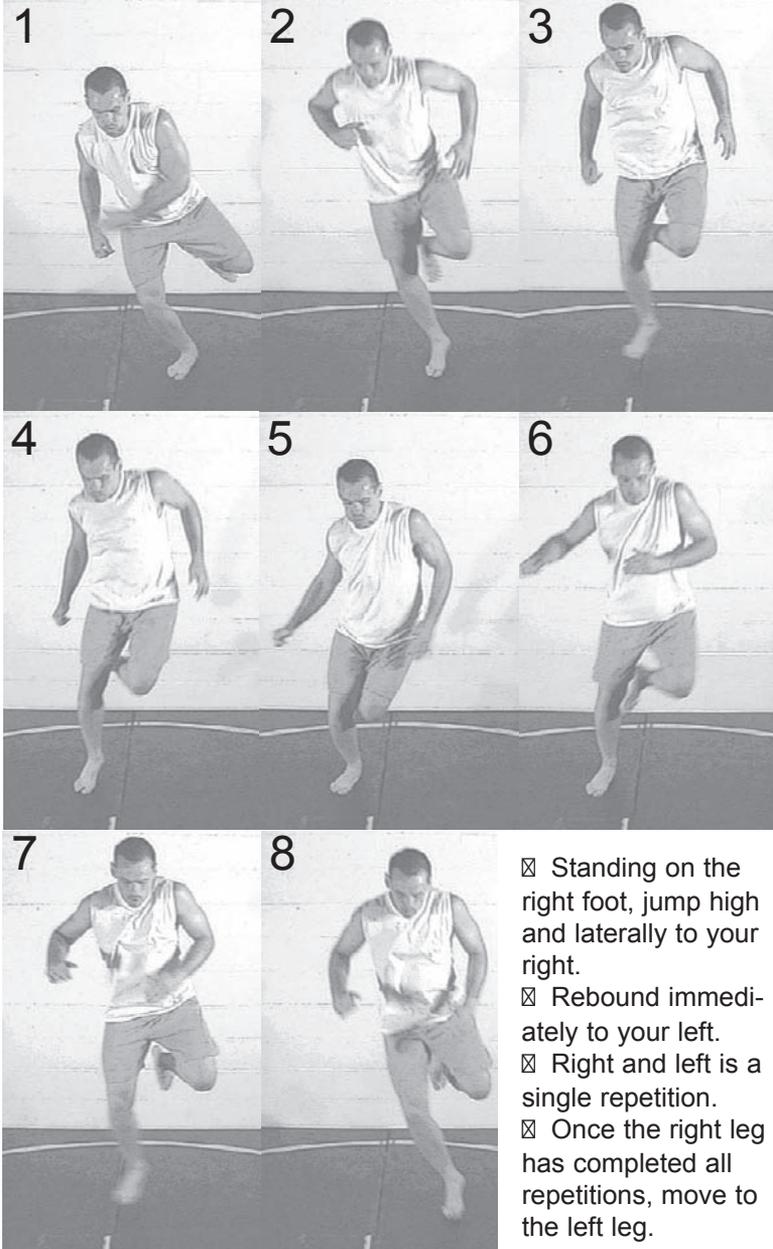
- ☒ Lift your left foot so you are standing only on your right.
- ☒ Explode as high as you can with a single-leg launch.
- ☒ Once the right leg repetitions are completed, go left.

Single-leg jump forward and back



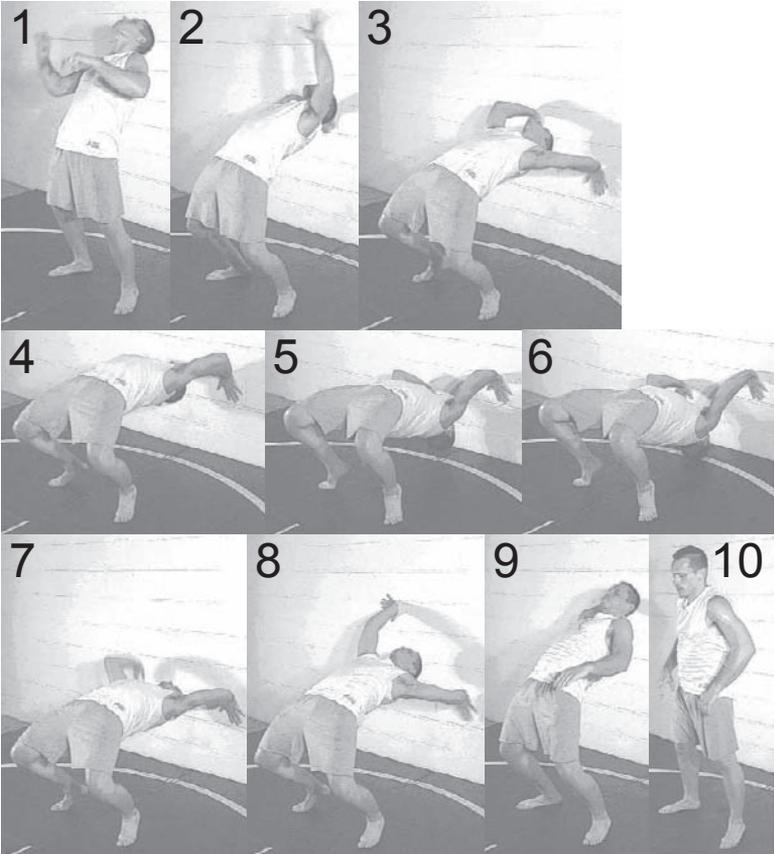
- ☒ Working the right leg first, single-leg jump moving forward for distance.
- ☒ Once you land forward, explode backward for distance.
- ☒ Forward and back is one repetition.
- ☒ Once the right leg has completed all repetitions, hit the left leg.

Single-leg jump to the side



- ☒ Standing on the right foot, jump high and laterally to your right.
- ☒ Rebound immediately to your left.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.
- ☒ Once the right leg has completed all repetitions, move to the left leg.

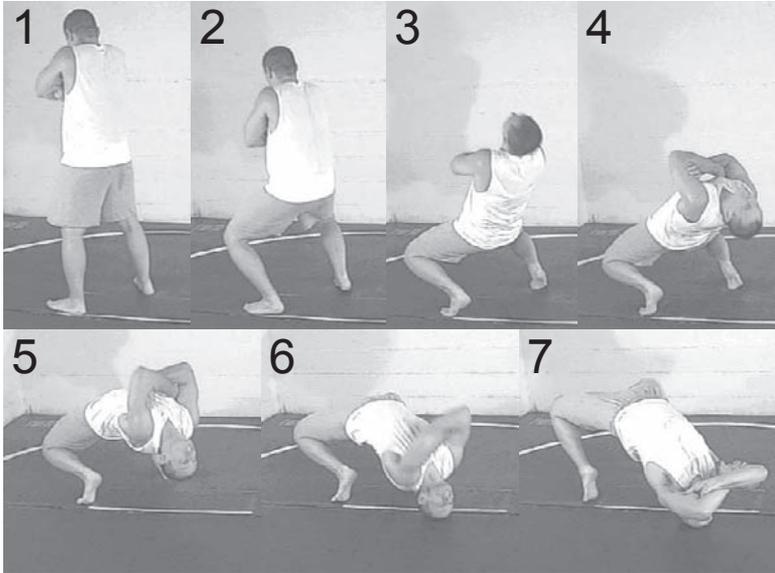
Wall-walk



This is an easy exercise for many experienced players. Placing it at the end of the circuit puts the “S” back in Suck!

- ☒ Stand with your back to the wall.
- ☒ Take one big step and place your feet shoulder-width apart.
- ☒ Bend over backward touching the wall with your hands.
- ☒ Walk down the wall with your hands until the top of your head touches the mat.
- ☒ Walk back up and return to standing position.
- ☒ That’s one.

Falling into a neck bridge



If you would like to take it a step beyond the final exercise of the wall-walk in this complex and you have mastered the suplex sequence we presented in *The Clinch*, then you can replace wall-walks with the above sequence, falling into a neck bridge.

Note — Only use this substitution if you have progressed through the steps presented in *The Clinch*. This is a dangerous move without prep work. Be careful!

- ☒ Stand with your feet slightly more than shoulder width apart.
- ☒ Cross your arms over your chest.
- ☒ Arch back and control your descent by driving your knees in front of your toes.
- ☒ Fall onto the top of your head or your forehead.

Reps for explosiveness / agility

Novice

Four reps of each exercise

Intermediate

Six reps of each exercise

Advanced

Eight reps of each exercise

Pro

10 reps of each exercise

These rep numbers are not low when you keep in mind the intensity and the little to no rest factor. At the top end, you will be hitting more than 400 repetitions of jump varieties, and that doesn't include sprawls and rolling work. Trust me, this will do the trick.

13 Barbell

Thus far we have emphasized endurance (cardio and musculature) allowing whatever strength gains we make to be corollaries of the somatotrophic, dumbbell/kettlebell and explosiveness / agility circuits. You should be quite pleased with the strength gains even if you do not add the barbell complex that follows.

To add the barbell complex is your choice. But I recommend that you build up a good tolerance to the previous circuits before moving to this complex. As stated before, if you can't move your own body weight with ease, there is no sense in picking up even more weight.



You will notice that the exercises are “all strength” exercises as the great Otto Arco called them. Arco knew more than a little about strength. This means the

exercises are designed to recruit as much of the body's musculature as we can manage. NHB/MMA grappling calls for whole body movement in unison or all-strength movement. So strength work should reflect this reality as opposed to training isolated muscle groups.

Very seldom in this sport are single muscle groups called upon. More often, your goal as an NHB/MMA



grappler is to get as much of your body into the effort as you can. Approach this complex with that idea in mind.

There are two ways to utilize the barbell complex.

Endurance circuit

If you choose to forego heavy weights, but want to supplement the workouts already described, you can merely use an unloaded or moderately loaded Olympic bar and crank this set out in the same manner as the dumbbell/kettlebell circuit. That is 10 repetitions of each exercise. No rest and constant work rate are necessary to keep the intensity high. Use the 30-minute rule to gauge your appropriate poundage.

Strength circuit

If you want to build pure OD (overdose) strength, then read on. The strength complex rules follow.

- ☒ Perform only one set of each exercise.
- ☒ Perform the exercises in the given order.
- ☒ Perform no more than six repetitions of each exercise.
- ☒ If you can hit more than six reps on a given exercise, it's time to increase the weight.
- ☒ If you can lift only four reps on a given exercise, it's

time to drop the weight.

☒ You must lift explosively because NHB/MMA calls for that kind of strength.

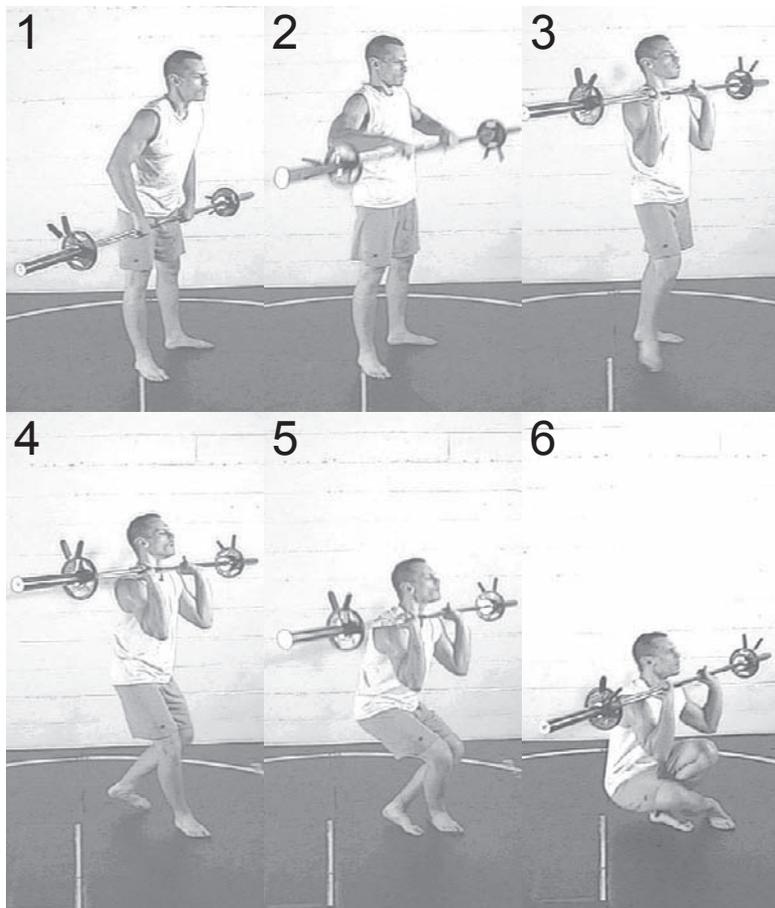
☒ Limit the sets to one because I urge you to:

☒ Lift heavy.

☒ Lift heavy.

☒ Lift heavy.

Two-arm get-up / Turkish get-up



- ☒ Clear the bar to shoulder level.
- ☒ Squat to the mat and then lie down on the mat.
- ☒ Sit up and work yourself back to the squat position.
- ☒ Stand up and then clean the weight (take it to your shoulder).
- ☒ Jerk the weight (take the weight overhead).
- ☒ Repeat the sequence.

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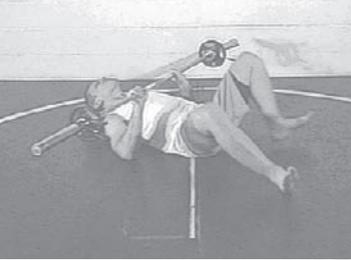
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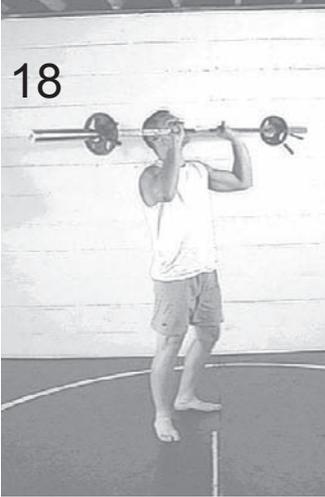


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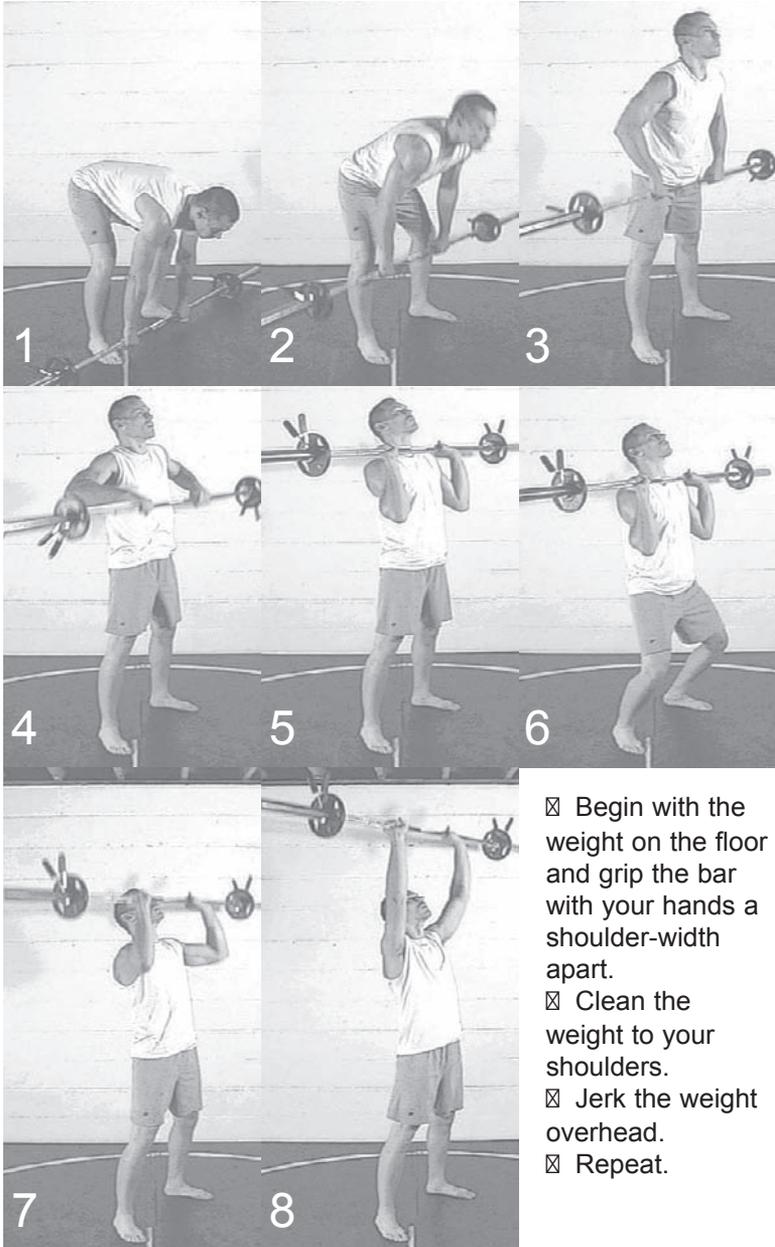


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Two-arm get-up / Turkish get-up continued

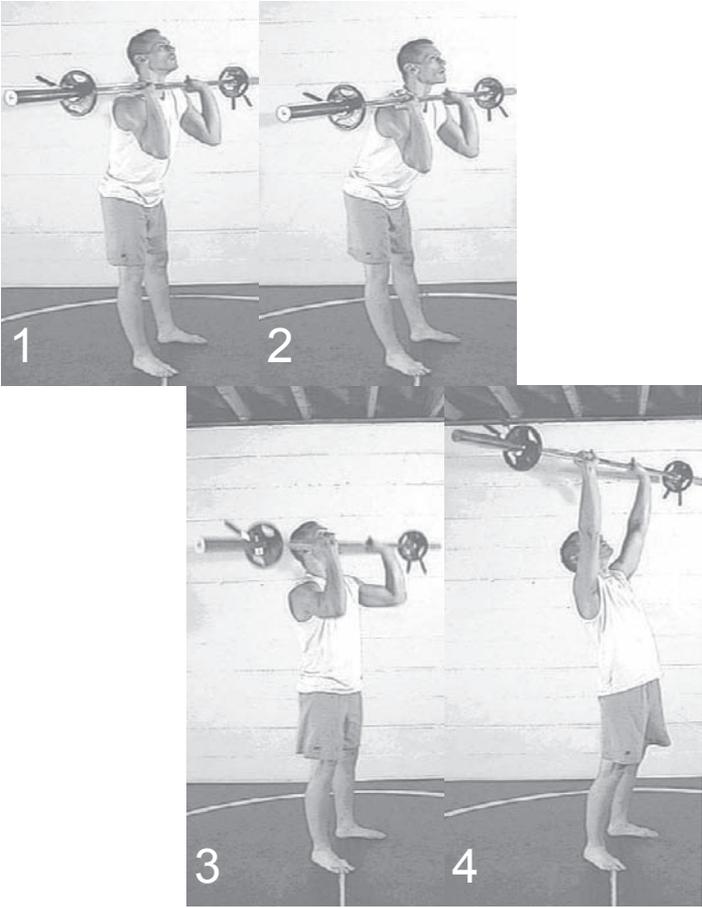


Clean and jerk



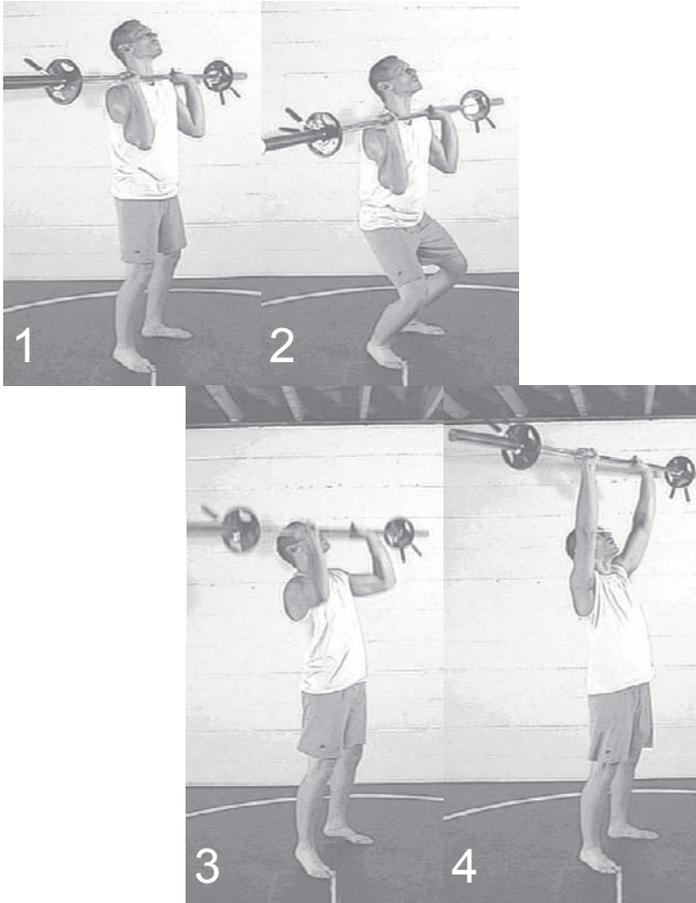
- ☒ Begin with the weight on the floor and grip the bar with your hands a shoulder-width apart.
- ☒ Clean the weight to your shoulders.
- ☒ Jerk the weight overhead.
- ☒ Repeat.

Push press



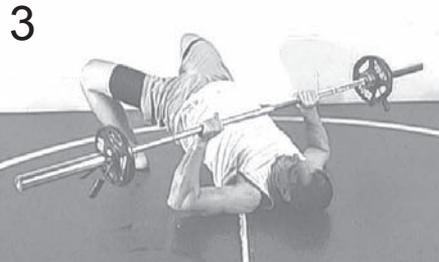
- ☒ Begin with the weight in clean position.
- ☒ Leaving your legs locked, bend slightly forward at the waist taking your butt to the rear.
- ☒ Forcefully pop your hips forward while you extend the weight overhead.
- ☒ Repeat.

Jerk press



- ☒ Begin with the weight in clean position.
- ☒ Bend your knees to a quarter squat position.
- ☒ Forcefully extend your legs and jerk the weight overhead.

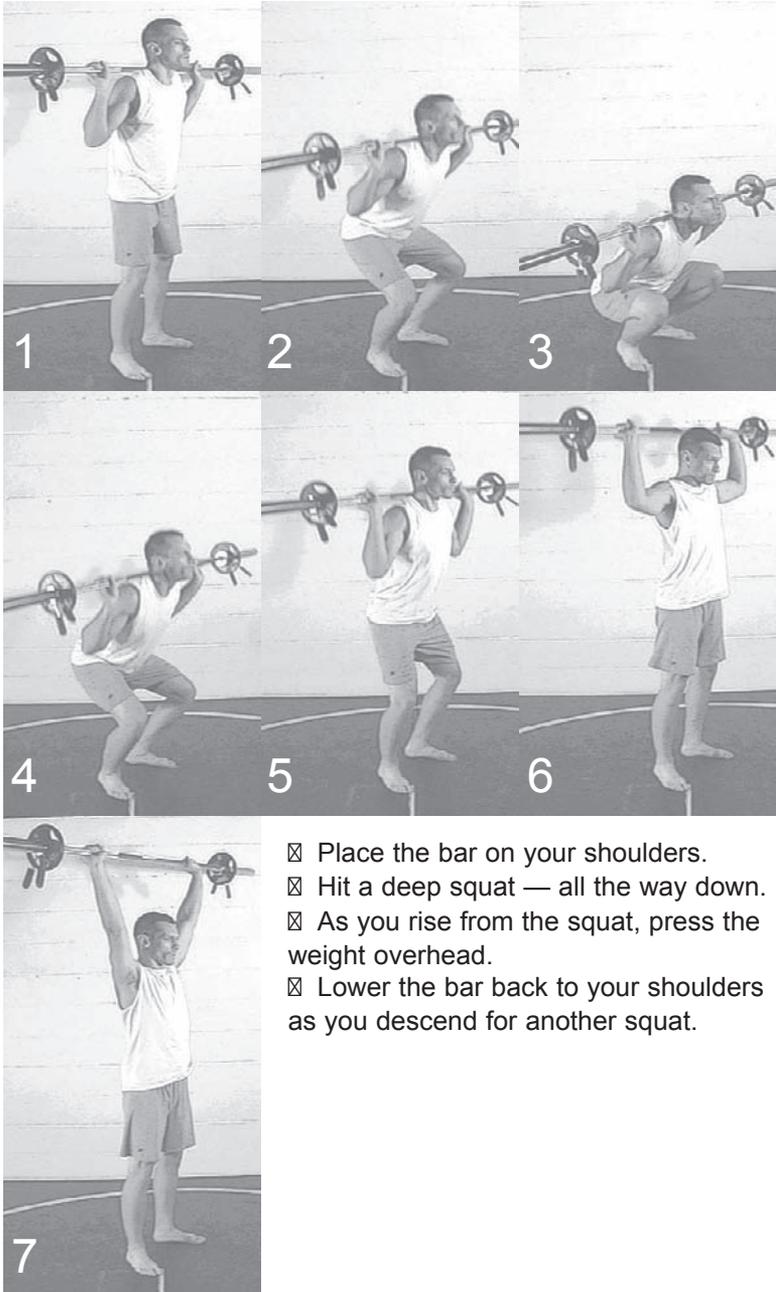
Shoulder bridge press / bench press



There are some very good minds in wrestling who think the bench press should be eliminated from the roster of training exercises. I'm not ready to go that far, but I agree that it has been overemphasized. The bench press is well understood, so I offer this variant in its stead. You can use the bench press or the shoulder bridge press at this point in the complex.

- ☒ Lie on the mat with the bar placed above your head.
- ☒ Grip the bar and pull it over your head getting it to a bench press position. You will not be able to take the bar as deeply as a standard bench since your elbows are blocked by the mat.
- ☒ Place the soles of your feet on the mat and lift your hips to the sky supporting your weight on your upper shoulders and your feet.
- ☒ Press the weight from your chest to full extension.

Squat and press behind neck



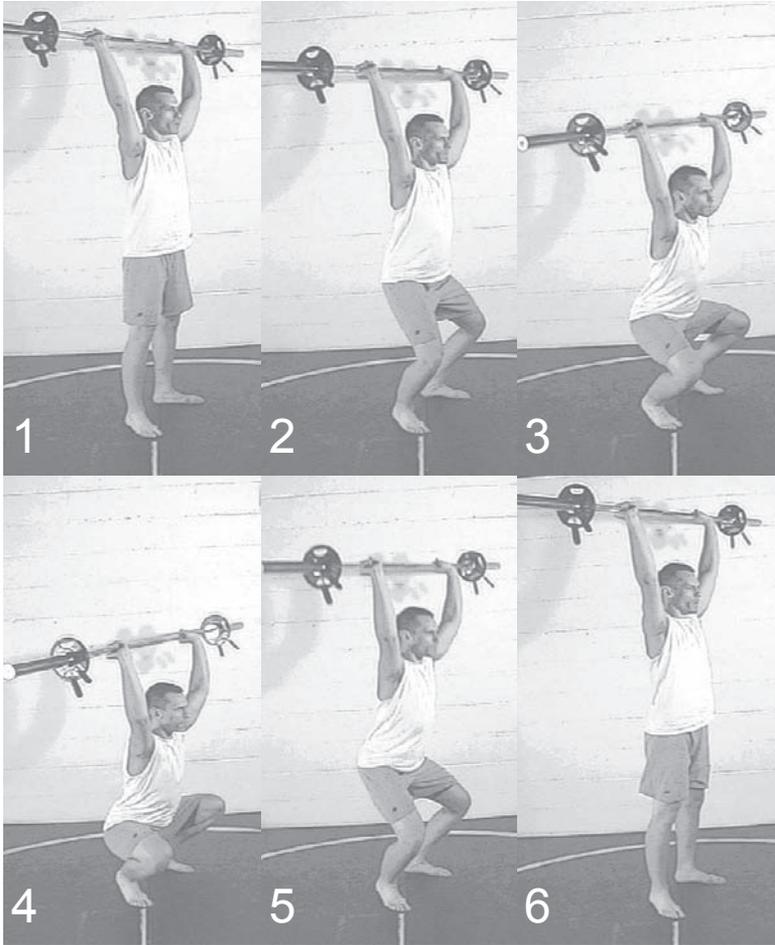
- ☒ Place the bar on your shoulders.
- ☒ Hit a deep squat — all the way down.
- ☒ As you rise from the squat, press the weight overhead.
- ☒ Lower the bar back to your shoulders as you descend for another squat.

A quick lecture on weighted squats

It is considered bad form by some to squat beyond parallel. That is excellent advice when you are dealing with more weight than you can manage. Once you are comfortable with body weight squats, use the law of incremental improvement. Load the bar in only two and a half to five pound increments until you reach the point of bad form in your exercise. Then it's time to back the weight down.

Safe strength training is about patience and preparation. If this deep squat advice scares you, then stop your squat at parallel. But keep in mind, if you can't squat all the way down with light to moderate weight, then you should stick to body weight squats until the condition is rectified.

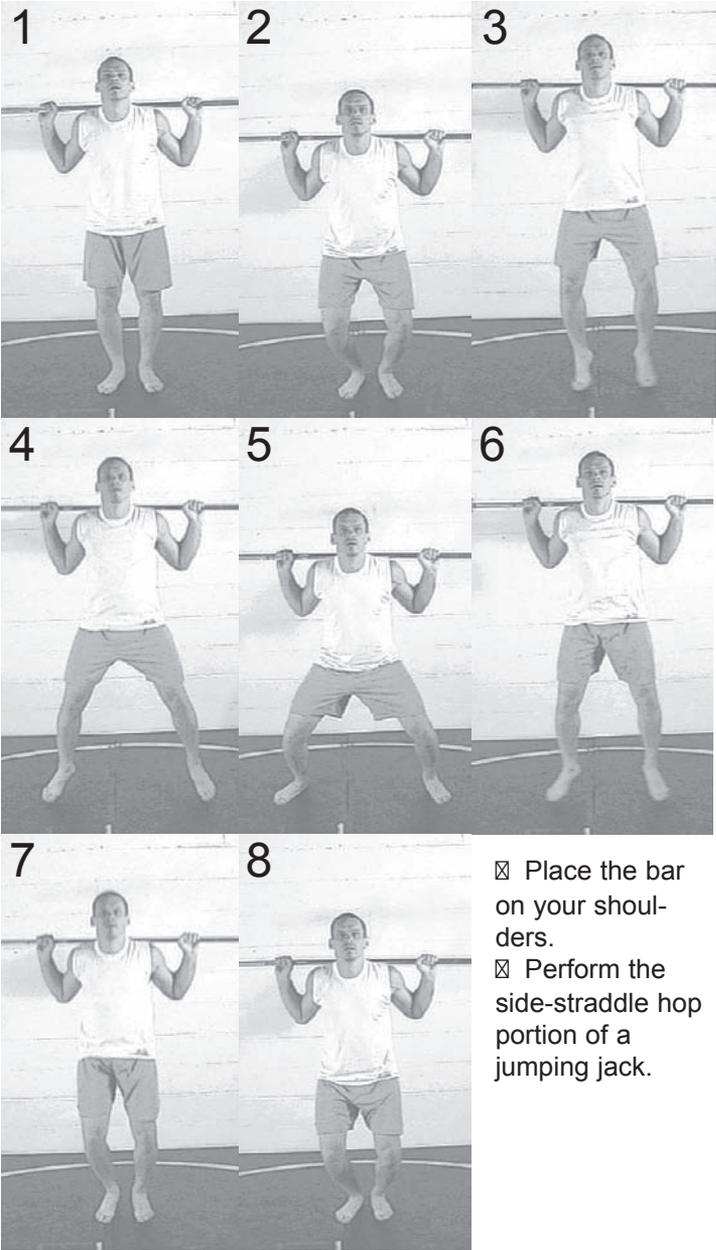
Squat with weight overhead



This one tests your balance.

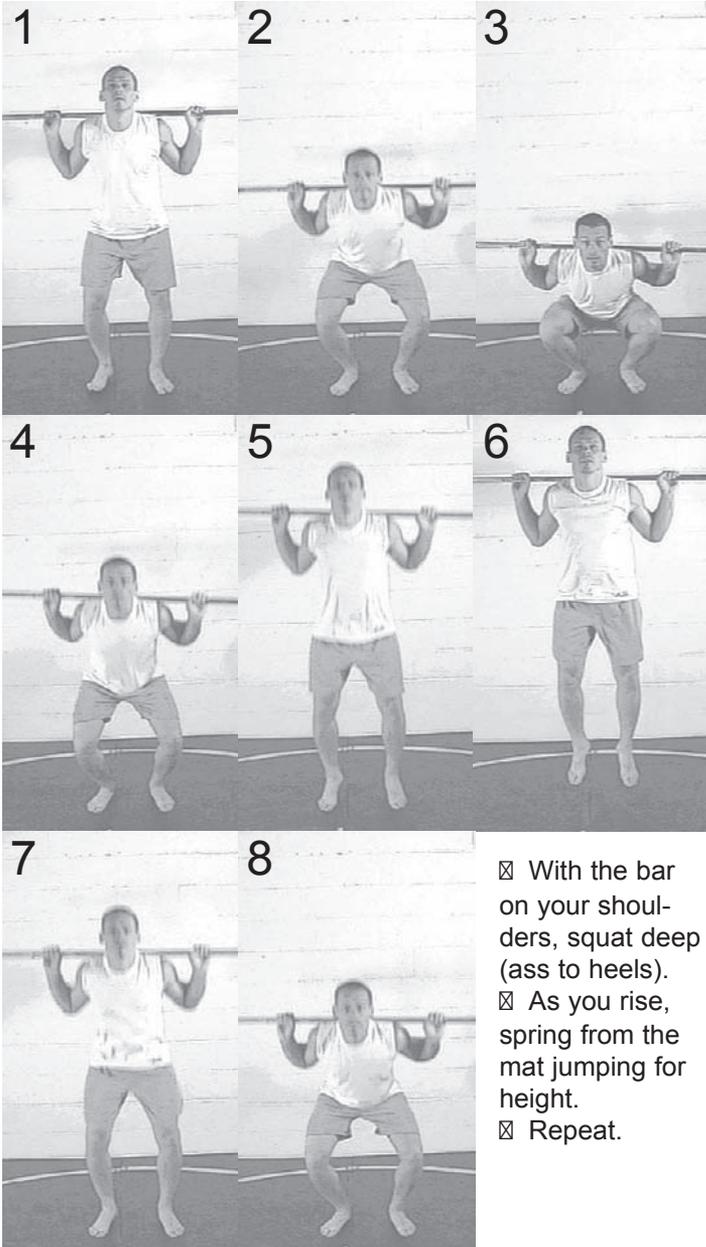
- ☒ Begin from a standing position with the weight pressed overhead.
- ☒ Leaving the weight pressed overhead throughout, squat all the way down (ass to heels).
- ☒ Return to standing.
- ☒ Repeat.

Jumping jack



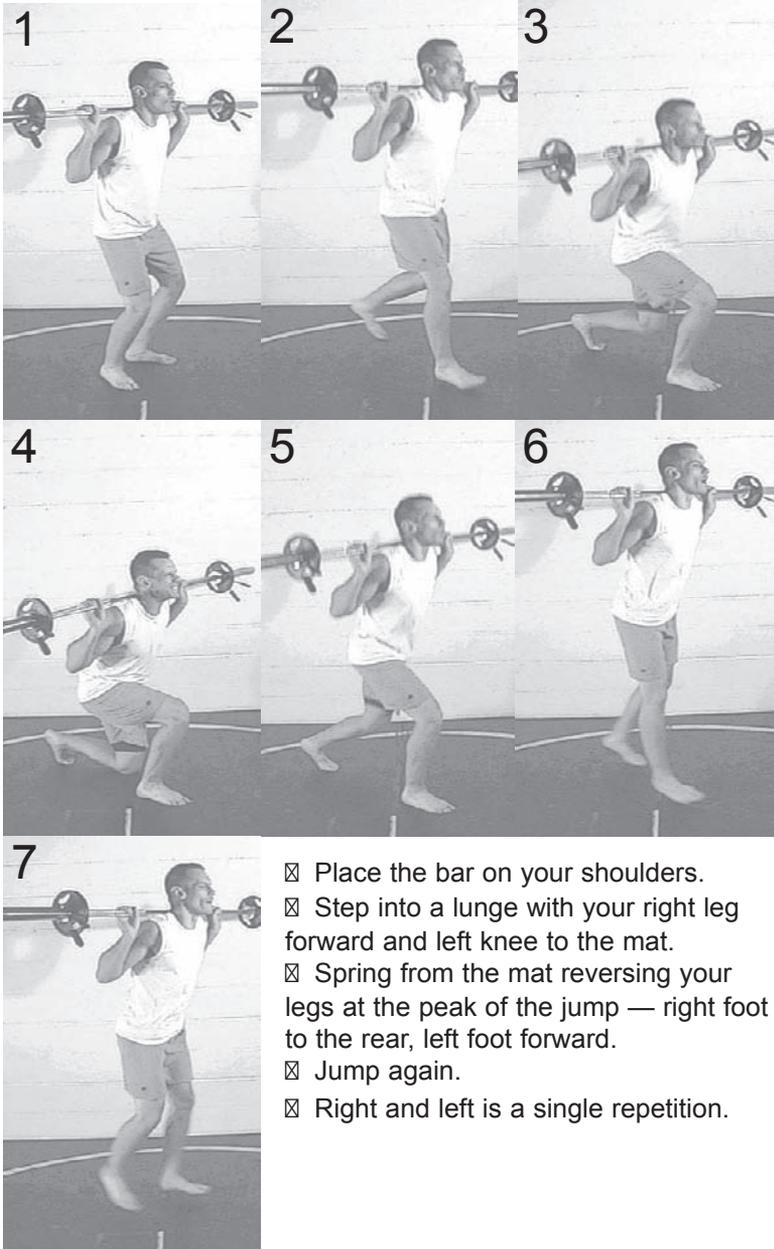
- ☒ Place the bar on your shoulders.
- ☒ Perform the side-straddle hop portion of a jumping jack.

Jump squat

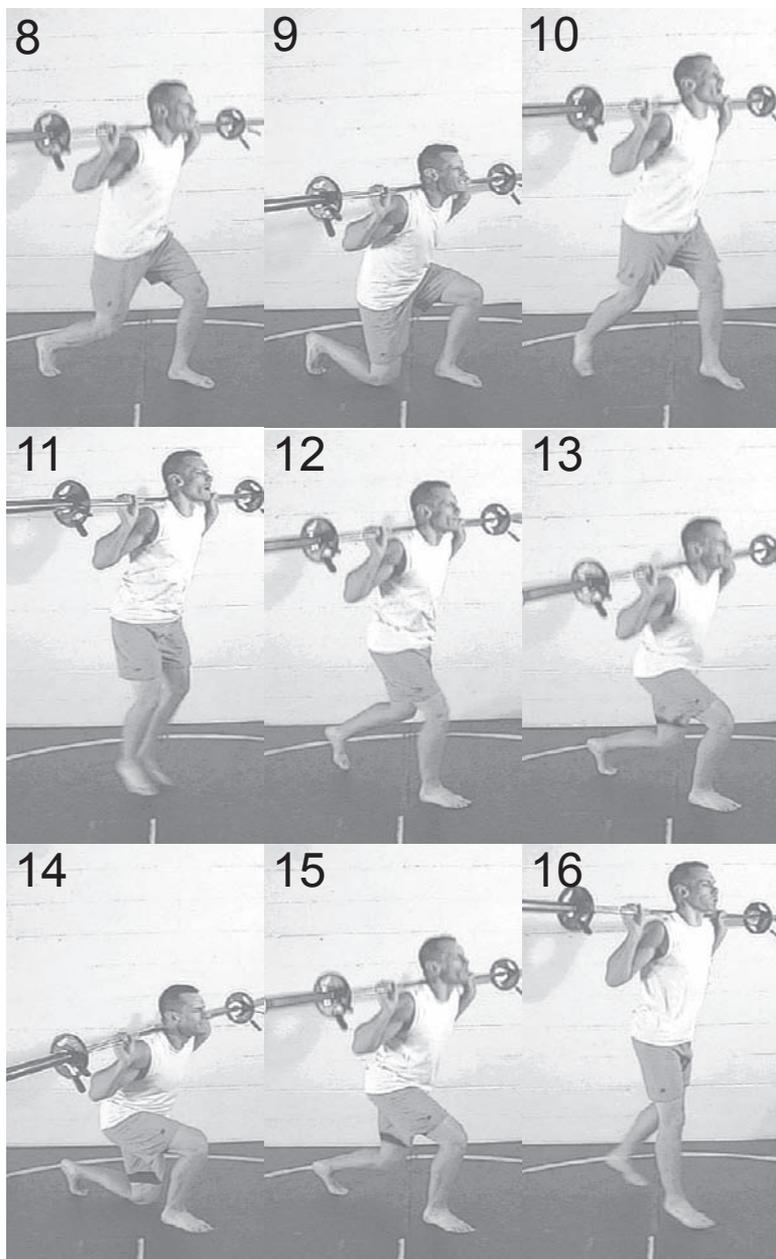


- ☒ With the bar on your shoulders, squat deep (ass to heels).
- ☒ As you rise, spring from the mat jumping for height.
- ☒ Repeat.

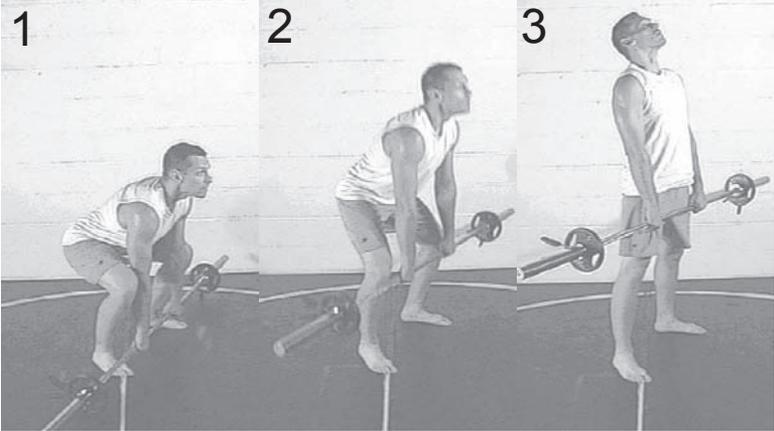
Jump split squat



- ☒ Place the bar on your shoulders.
- ☒ Step into a lunge with your right leg forward and left knee to the mat.
- ☒ Spring from the mat reversing your legs at the peak of the jump — right foot to the rear, left foot forward.
- ☒ Jump again.
- ☒ Right and left is a single repetition.



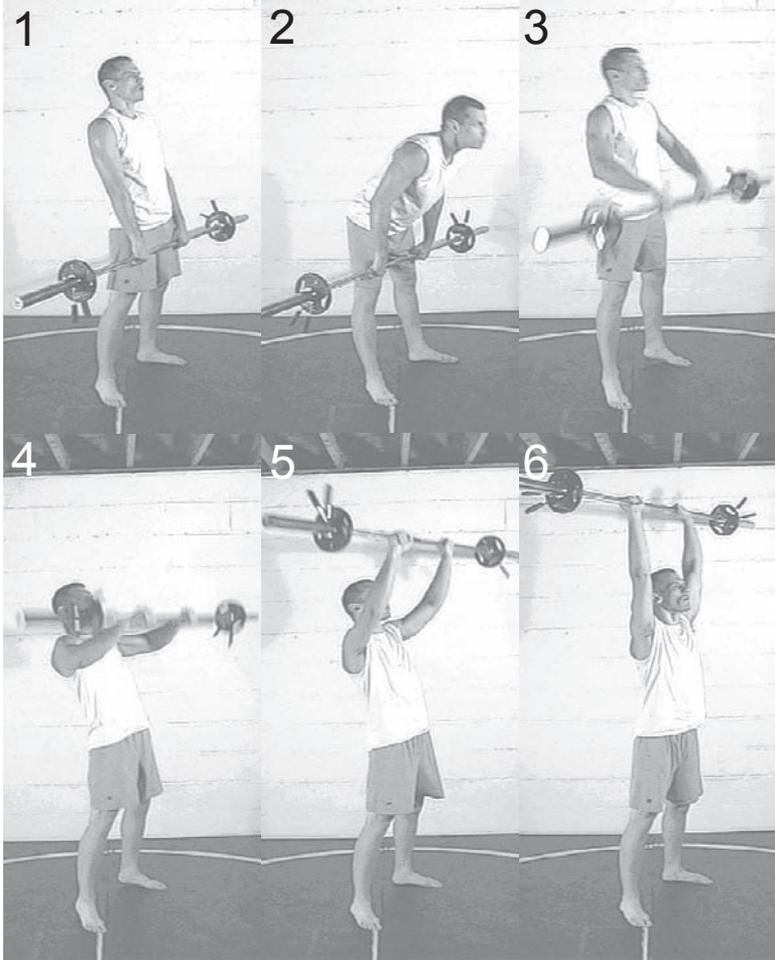
Dead lift



If you are using the strength version of this complex, this is the exercise where you load the bar with all you've got.

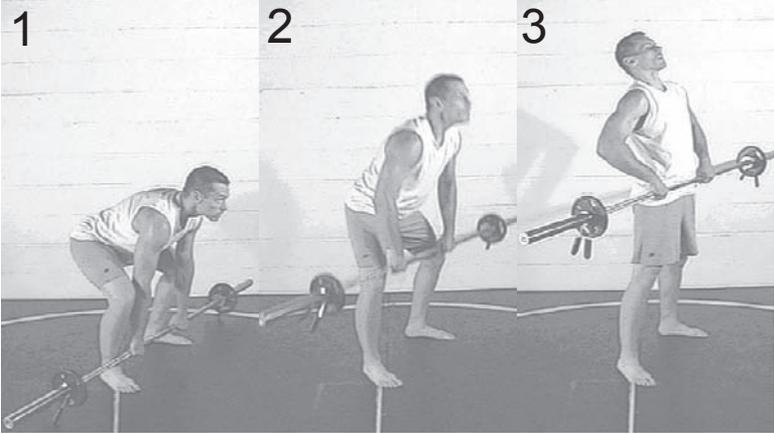
- ☒ Start with the bar on the floor.
- ☒ Keeping your back straight, bend your knees and grip the bar.
- ☒ Stand and lift the bar.
- ☒ Lift the bar to the dead hang position (arms at full extension).

Straight arm swing



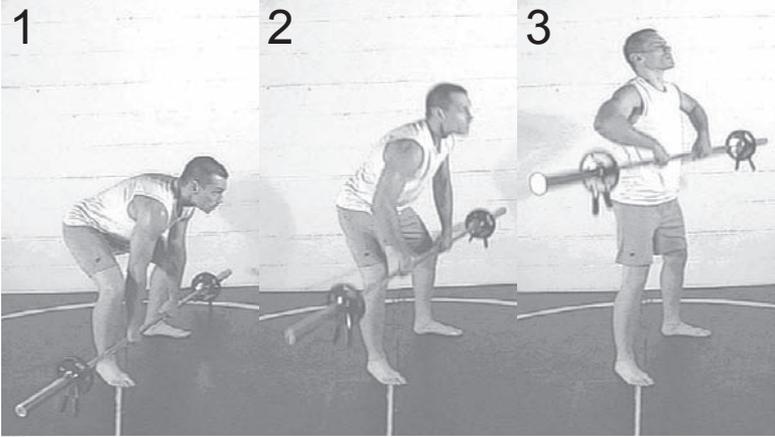
- ☒ Start with the bar in a dead hang position.
- ☒ Keeping your arms straight, pop the hips to start the bar traveling forward.
- ☒ Swing the bar to the overhead position keeping the elbows locked throughout.
- ☒ Repeat.

Pull to waist



- ☒ Start with the bar on the floor.
- ☒ Grip the bar at shoulder width.
- ☒ Bend the knees and jerk the bar to waist level.

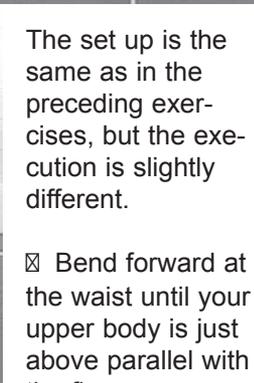
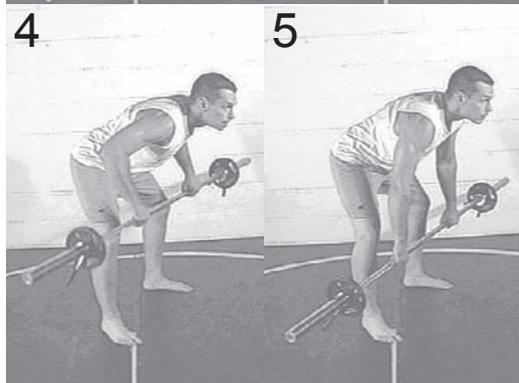
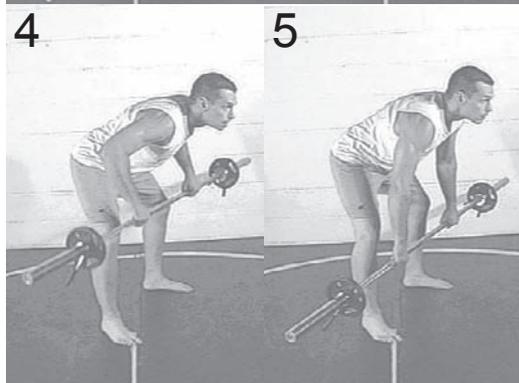
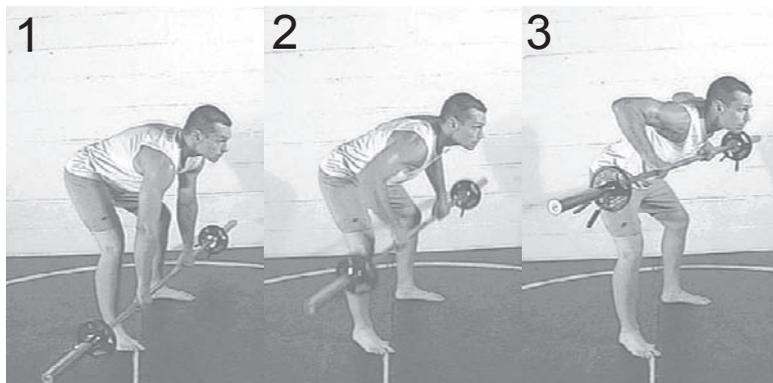
Pull to chest



4 The preparation is the same as in the pull to waist.

- ☒ Jerk the bar to chest level.

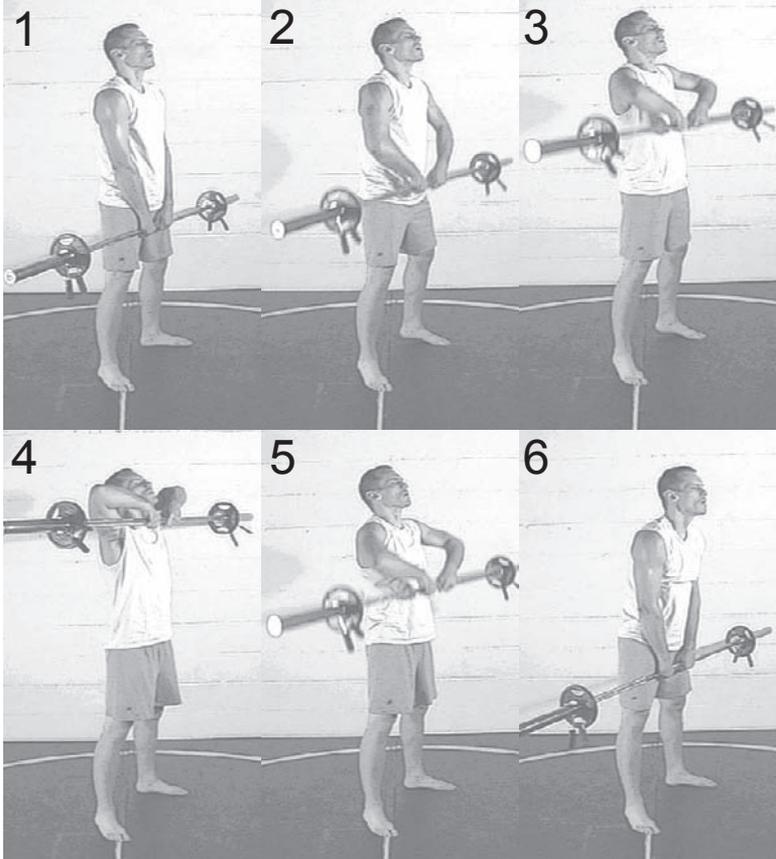
Bent-over pull to chest



The set up is the same as in the preceding exercises, but the execution is slightly different.

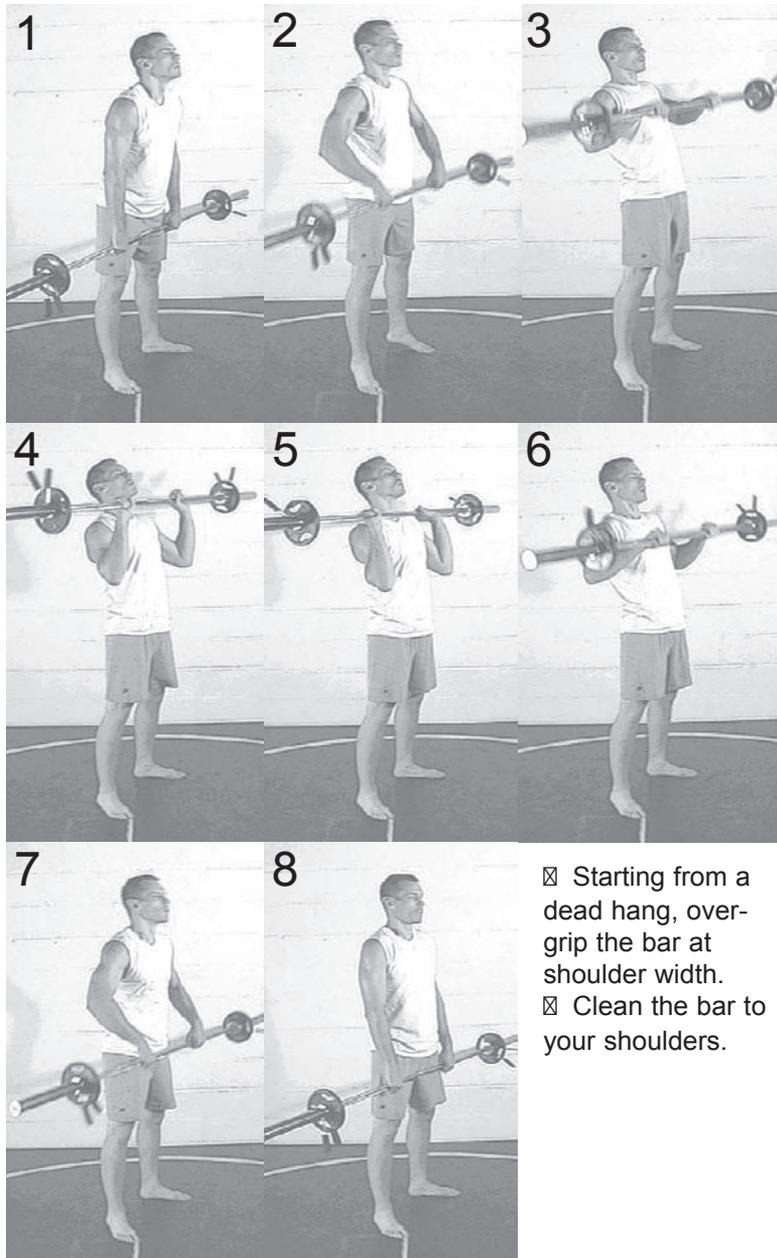
- ☒ Bend forward at the waist until your upper body is just above parallel with the floor.
- ☒ Jerk the bar to your chest.

Dead hang high upright row

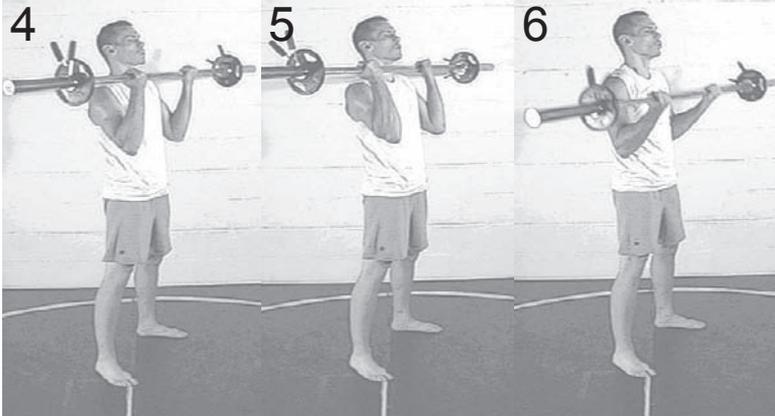
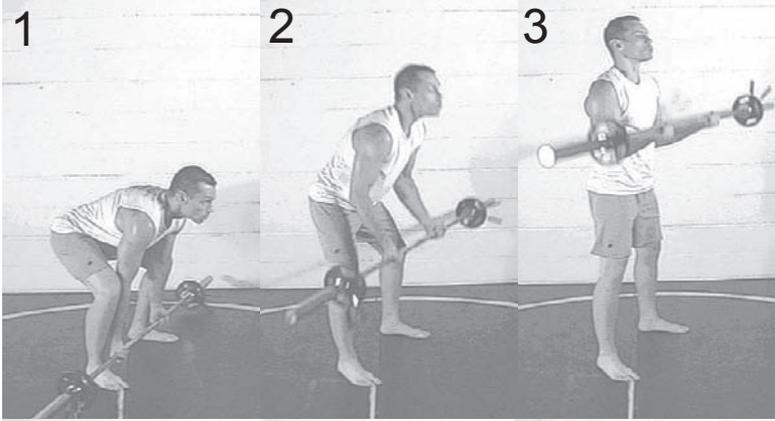


- ☒ Grip the bar with your hands approximately six inches apart.
- ☒ Begin from a dead hang and jerk the bar to chin level.
- ☒ Always start from a dead hang on each repetition.

Dead hang clean



- ☒ Starting from a dead hang, overgrip the bar at shoulder width.
- ☒ Clean the bar to your shoulders.

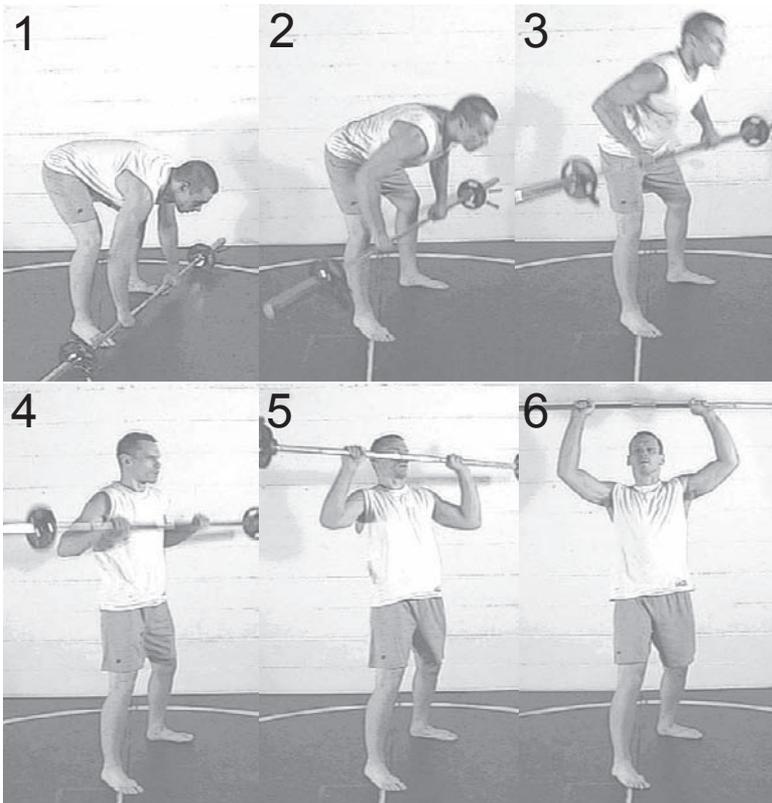
Power curl

- 7
- ☒ Start with the bar on the floor.
- ☒ Take an undergrip (palms facing up) on the bar.
- ☒ In one smooth motion, jerk the bar from the floor up to the top of a biceps curl position.
- ☒ Repeat.

A brief pause for rotational strength

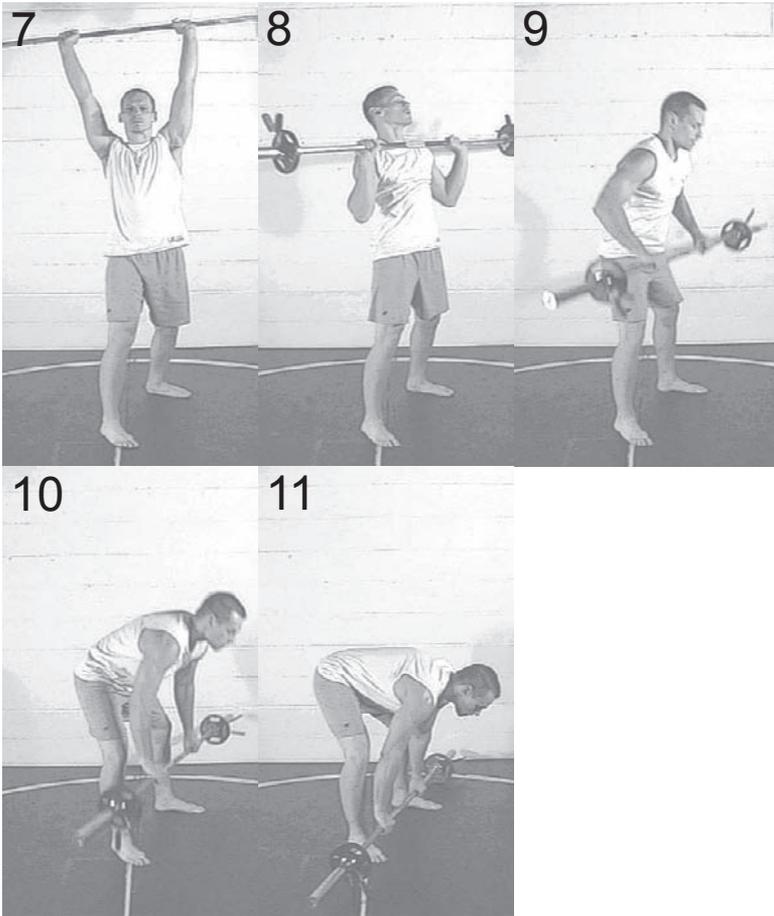
Rotational strength is crucial to the NHB/MMA athlete. We seldom encounter situations in which movement is strictly linear or strictly lateral. Don't let the inertia of taking the bar in a circular motion surprise you. I suggest loading the bar lightly until you get a feel for the inertial pull on your body.

Clean and jerk with overhead rotation



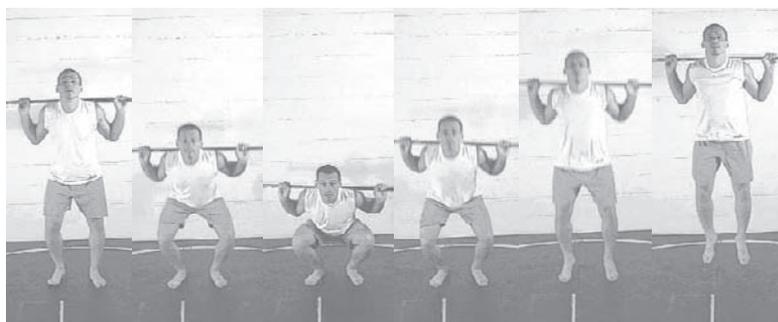
Perform the standard clean and jerk, but add a rotation from the waist.

- ☒ Clean the bar from the floor.
- ☒ During the jerk, turn your upper body to the right.



- ☒ Return the bar to the floor.
- ☒ Complete all repetitions to the right before moving to the left.

Barbell



14 Grip

Grip strength/endurance is another key component of the NHB/MMA game. Sometimes all that separates you from finishing a move or holding off a bad situation is



your tolerance for lactic acid build-up in the fore-arms. If you are using the dumbbell/kettlebell complex on a regular basis, you already will have made grip improvements and may not need supplementation.

If you wish to build phenomenal grip strength in the great Danny Hodge class, you will need to supplement your grip

training even more. This routine adheres to our underlying rules of efficiency, effectiveness, synergy and intensity, and puts you well on the way to a formidable grip.

Use these grip exercises at the very end of your workout (feel free to skip it on dumbbell/kettlebell complex days). At this point, I think we know why the grip is the last thing we work.

A good grade hand grip is important. Most standard grippers found in retail stores are either not challenging enough or exhaust their challenge after less than a

Grip

month of work. Most grippers are constructed in the shape of a V. We refer to the standard V as the coil facing the top of your fist (thumb) and the inverted V with the coil facing down (toward your little finger).

The following routine is offered to give you supplement activity for grip work. Perform this grip set in one continuous sequence.

Inverted V repetitions

Close the grippers as rapidly as you can for the prescribed reps.

Inverted V holds

Close the gripper and keep it closed for the prescribed time.

Standard V repetitions

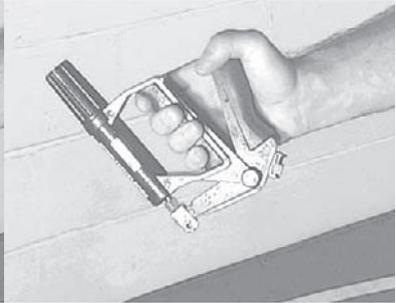
You know what to do.

Standard V holds

Ditto.



Standard V



Inverted V

Reps for grip

Suggested repetitions for each class of athlete.

Novice

25 repetitions

30-seconds hold

Intermediate

50 repetitions

45-seconds hold

Advanced

75 repetitions

60-seconds hold

Pro

100 repetitions

90-seconds hold

If you've selected a good gripper, the forearms and hands should be jelly at the end of this routine. If they aren't, move to the next level or invest in better grippers.

15 Cardio grinders



If you're using this manual, you've no doubt found your cardiovascular system challenged and may see no need to supplement with even more huff and puff work. But as noted earlier, novelty can provide the bump that the system needs. The following grinders are supplements to the preceding material. More to come on packaging.

First, the term grinder comes from the U.S. Navy SEALs. It refers to their exceptionally grueling Friday morning PT session on asphalt. Since the following Grinders/Max O2 packages are calisthenics/ somatotrophics based and give the body a nice ground down feeling, I borrowed the term.

Second, you will find four different cardio grinders in this section. They are ideal for when you are short on time, before or after a tough technique drilling or sparring session and when you don't have the gas/time to do one of the more in-depth menu choices. For the serious athlete, I recommend a two-tier workout with a

Cardio grinders

grinder session in one half of the day and another menu selection for a separate session. Whether the grinder is the morning or the evening choice doesn't matter. The novice or athlete who is not prepping for a fight has no need for dual session days.

Each grinder utilizes specific exercise choices that have been described previously. They are specific whole-body movements of value to the NHB/MMA athlete and fulfill the specificity requirement of our training needs, but feel free to substitute exercises. The grinders are meant to be cardio sessions. If you'd rather run hills, skip rope, mountain bike or swim, then substitute the activity of choice. Keep in mind the more specific the activity is to your athletic goal, the better the training effect will be.

Whether you use the exercises provided or go with substitutions, the key is that you do not deviate from the prescribed time intervals and dictated intensity levels. Got that? Substitute exercises if you wish, but do not dicker with any of the other parameters.

OK, those are the ground rules. On to the grinders.

Long slow distance (LSD) grinder

- ☒ 25 squats (pace should be approximately one squat every 2 seconds)
- ☒ 10 4-count jumping jacks
- ☒ 10 squat thrusts
- ☒ 10 4-count jumping jacks
- ☒ 10 dive bomber push-ups (approximately one every 3 seconds)

Intensity level: Low. Use the talk test. If you find yourself breathing hard or unable to talk, back off. If you're wondering why I'm saying to take it easy, remember we've got to cycle our intensity levels to keep the body from hitting the listless, over-training wall.

Time: Run the circuit for 20 minutes with no rest periods.

Lactate threshold training (LTT) grinder

- ☒ 10 squats (one per second)
- ☒ 10 2-count jumping jacks
- ☒ 10 rip squats
- ☒ 10 2-count jumping jacks
- ☒ 10 squat thrusts with leap (hit a rocket jump at the top of every stand-up).
- ☒ 10 2-count jumping jacks
- ☒ 10 Hindu push-ups (one every 2 seconds)
- ☒ 10 2-count jumping jacks

Intensity level: You should be breathing hard in the talk test, but still able to speak.

Time: Six sets of 3 minutes with 90 seconds rest between sets.

Cardio grinders

Interval grinder

- ☒ 10 rip squats
- ☒ 10 squat thrusts with leap
- ☒ 10 Hindu push-ups (one per second)

Intensity level: F-A-S-T! You should not be able to speak a word during your talk test.

Time: Five sets of 30 seconds to begin. Build toward 45 and 60 seconds as you become acclimated. You may rest a minimum of 2 minutes, but no more than 4 minutes between sets.

Peaking threshold grinder

This grinder combines aspects of the LTT and interval grinder for a single intense session.

- ☒ Perform one interval set
- ☒ Follow immediately with one LTT set.
- ☒ Repeat this sequence twice more for a total of three sets.

Intensity level: High. There is zero rest.

Time: Use the times prescribed in the interval and LTT grinder sections.

For more on which grinders to use and how often, see “Menus,” page 235.

16 Flexibility

This section on flexibility is near the end of the book. This does not mean that it's not an important facet of the overall conditioning regimen. Of course not. Improving and/or maintaining flexibility is paramount in NHB/MMA, particularly for grappling. Grappling twists, pulls and contorts the body into positions one does not encounter in everyday life. It is wise to prepare your body for the potential of forced yoga.

Most flexibility regimens focus on the lower body with the carrot concept of the split (both side and front) being the ultimate goal. The fact is that splits are highly improbable for many of us, since as with most attributes, there seems to be a genetic component to the limits of our flexibility gifts. If you can hit a split, good for you. If you can't, don't sweat it. Our goal is to build a modicum of overall body flexibility without excessive focus on any single body part.

There is some debate whether to stretch before or after your workout. I leave the decision up to you because you know your body and what it does or does not need before or after a conditioning session. I will offer this: I hit the flexibility session after. I do so for the following reasons.

1. Perhaps idiosyncratic to my physiology, the flexibility session feels more productive afterward. Stretching afterward seems to eliminate or reduce post-training soreness.

2. I use the regimented flexibility session as a post workout review in which I run through a mental checklist of skills or goals that have been met or need to be improved upon.

3. The prescribed breathing pattern for the flexibility routine is rather calming. That makes it perfect for cool down. But this calming effect is less than ideal for the mental place you (perhaps just I) have to be to work with the intensity necessary for the contained conditioning programs or the sport you are seeking to improve.

4. Cold stretching (flexibility before a workout or warm-up session) is noted in many studies (the evidence is contradictory) to be a contributor to injury.

5. A few rather interesting studies have been done regarding flexibility and peak performance. Many of these studies have asked Olympic-class athletes in several different sports as to when (or even if) they stretched before or after a record-breaking performance. The vast majority admitted they did no stretching prior to the award-winning performance, and many copped to the fact that they don't stretch at all. Thought provoking revelations. To give it a place of prominence before session seems less than rock solid dogma, but I'm not ready to throw stretching away in total.

Grappler's "dozen"

There are actually 13 flexibility exercises in this dozen because this routine is a newly engineered version of one that did contain only a dozen exercises. As with all

other aspects of conditioning, we want to take advantage of efficiency, effectiveness and synergy to make our training session as productive as it can be. To assist that goal in regard to your flexibility, please observe the following rules.

1. If you decide to stretch before your conditioning session, I highly recommend that you perform the basic warm-up first to prevent possible injury.

2. You can use this routine for flexibility maintenance if you are happy with your current state of limberness or you can use the grappler's dozen 2.0 to increase your flexibility. If you use 2.0, place it after your workout as it requires an exceptionally warmed-up musculature.

3. Follow the flexibility exercises in the prescribed order. The body is approached as a chain working from the feet up. By working in a chain fashion, we are able to make gains in the primary target musculature by addressing secondary and tertiary musculature immediately preceding and following the primary.

4. Do not stretch through pain. Stop at discomfort and hold it there. Flexibility is the one area where we throw intensity out of the matrix.

5. Do not bounce or aggressively stretch. Again, no intensity in the flexibility sessions, please. Use the 10-breath cycle in each stretch. A slow, controlled inhalation/exhalation is a one-count. The 10-breath cycle allows enough time in each stretch and enforces a relaxation protocol for the process. Relaxed muscles respond better to flexibility demands than tensed

muscles. The 10-breath cycle also will assist those who currently find discomfort in stacked positions. By training for relaxation in the stack you can better survive it in combat.

Foot stretch



- ☒ Kneel on the mat with the balls of your feet in contact with the floor.
- ☒ Place your hands on the mat in front of you and push your weight down and into the balls of your feet to stretch the entire arch.

Note — This is an often overlooked part of the body. Yet I encounter people who get recurring foot cramps and or lack the foot flexibility to settle into the “live feet” position for any length of time.

Calf stretch



- ☒ Place your palms on the mat and raise your hips.
- ☒ Press the sole of your left foot into the mat. The right foot is out of the picture at this point; you can lift it or let it rest lightly on the mat.

- ☒ The entire surface of the sole of the left foot must be in contact with the mat.
- ☒ Attempt to lower your body to place a greater stretch on the calf musculature. ☒ Repeat with the right leg.

Hamstring stretch



- ☒ Have a seat on the mat and extend your left leg.
- ☒ Place the sole of the right foot along the inside of the left thigh.
- ☒ With the toes of the left foot pointed toward the sky, lean forward at the waist reaching for your left ankle (or sole if

your flexibility allows) with both hands.

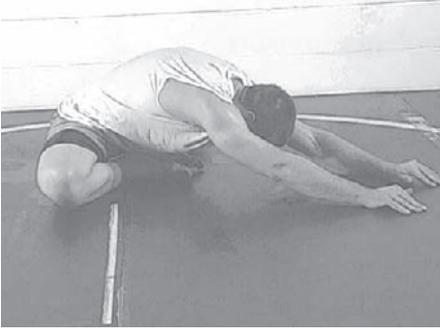
- ☒ Do not bend your knee as you conduct this stretch.
- ☒ Repeat with the right leg.

Straddle stretch



- ☒ Remain seated and extend your legs.
- ☒ Spread them as wide as you can manage.
- ☒ Point the toes of both feet toward the sky and then slightly behind you.
- ☒ Bend forward at the waist attempting to place your chest on the mat.

Butterfly stretch



Note — This stretch is paramount for rubber guard enthusiasts.

- ☒ Remain seated and bend your knees so that you place the soles of your feet together.
- ☒ Use a hand on each knee and attempt to press your knees to the mat.

☒ If both knees meet the mat easily, bend forward at the waist attempting to touch your chest to the floor.

Quadriceps stretch



- ☒ Kneel on the mat with your insteps in contact with the mat.
- ☒ Bend back until you feel a comfortable stretch in the tops of your thighs.
- ☒ If you can lie all the way back, please obey the following rules:



1. Do not allow your knees to lift from the mat.
2. Do not arch your pelvis toward the sky.

Spinal stretch



- ☒ Sit on the mat and extend your left leg.
- ☒ Step the right leg over the left touching the sole of your foot flat on the mat.
- ☒ Turn your upper body to your right and place the back of your left arm along the outside of the right thigh.

- ☒ Use this upper-arm leverage to apply a comfortable stretch to the spine.
- ☒ Repeat on the other side.

Stacked straddle



- ☒ Roll backward onto your upper shoulders.
- ☒ Your chin should be tucked into your chest.
- ☒ Keeping your knees locked, spread your legs and attempt to touch the balls of your feet to the mat.

Note — Do not bend the legs yet. We are using the

extended legs as weights to stretch primarily the lumbar and thoracic portions of the spine.

Tucked stack



Now we get to bend the legs.

- ☒ From the same stacked position, bend your knees attempting to bring them on either side of your head toward your ears. Unseemly, ain't it?

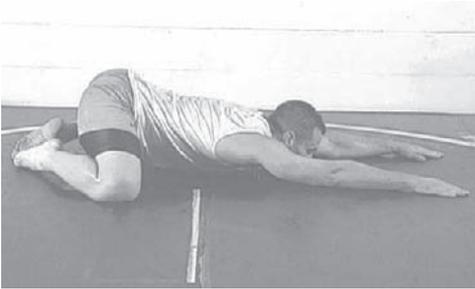
The previous exercise emphasized the back. Here we are concentrating on the neck.

Shoulder stretch



- ☒ Roll out of the stack and remain seated.
- ☒ Place your palms on the mat behind you with your fingertips pointing to the rear.
- ☒ Leaving your elbows locked, place your weight on your feet and slowly slide your hips away from your hands.

Praise stretch



- ☒ Kneel on the mat.
- ☒ Lean forward and place your chest in contact with the mat.
- ☒ Reach your arms forward along the mat, as well.
- ☒ Keeping your hips high, adjust your posture so that as much

of your chest is in contact with the mat as possible.

Note — This exercise emphasizes the thoracic spine and rib cage, another often overlooked area.

Pectoral stretch



- ☒ Using a horizontal surface, fold your arms and place them along the surface.
- ☒ Drop your hips back to allow your head to drop below the level of your supported arms.

Triceps stretch



- ☒ Bend your right arm and point the right elbow toward the sky.
- ☒ Run your right hand along your back as if you were attempting to scratch an elusive itch.
- ☒ Reach over the top of your head with your left hand and grip your right elbow.
- ☒ Pull the elbow down and to the left.
- ☒ Repeat on the opposite side.

Grappler's dozen 2.0

If you are comfortable with your flexibility and merely want to maintain what you've got, the preceding routine will do the trick. If you want to improve flexibility, 2.0 is for you. We will use the exact same exercises in the exact same sequence (ignoring secondary and tertiary groups will hinder your progress) but with an added element. That element is known as proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF).

In a nutshell, PNF utilizes the fact that a warm muscle, one recently engorged with blood due to effort (starting to see why stretching afterward is the key maybe?), responds better to flexibility gains. But simply warming up a muscle will not make it more flexible. We've got to make demands of the warmed-up muscle in the range of motion we wish to improve. Here's how it's done.

Ease into each given flexibility exercise. For this example we use the butterfly stretch.



☒ With both hands on the tops of your knees, apply downward pressure with your hands while you attempt to close your legs.

☒ Struggle against this hand pressure for a 10-

breath cycle and then relax into a 10-breath cycle passive version of the same stretch.

☒ Repeat this effort/passive circuit two more times for a total of three stretches.

Flexibility

In most cases you will experience moderate gains with this technique. You can use version 2.0 on each and every exercise or you can emphasize the desired area as you approach it in the standard routine. Either way do not make short shrift of the secondary and tertiary musculature along the way. Often it is the flexibility gains we make in an off area that improves the targeted area.

17 Menus

Each section of this book provides conditioning level guidelines that break down how much we train. How often we train is addressed here. As a general rule, the following can be your templates.

Novice

Three times per week on non-sequential days. Example: Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Intermediate

Four sessions per week. Example: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Advanced

Five to six days per week. Monday through Friday or Monday through Saturday.

Pro

Remember, this is for those who have top-of-the-food-chain aspirations. It is not necessary for most athletes. Six dual training sessions per week. This means running a cardio grinder Monday through Saturday in the morning and then hitting a separate training session in the afternoon. You may, of course, flip the grinder to the afternoon and the other training session to the morning. What does matter is the two sessions per day prescription.

Daily

Regardless of what routine you are using or how many sessions you train per week, open each session with the basic warm-up and close with the grappler's dozen.

Somatotrophics complex

If you are new to training or merely wish to stick with body weight (somatotrophics conditioning), I recommend that you package this work into a single somatotrophics complex assembled and performed in the following order. Somatotrophics conditioning is recommended until you are completely acclimated to hoisting your own body weight about.

1. Hinge group
2. Fifth limb
3. Power group
4. Push group
5. Pulling group
6. Grip group

Strict body weight enthusiasts may alternate somatotrophics complex days with the explosiveness and agility complex days and/or cardio grinder days.

Examples are:

Day 1 Somatotrophics complex
Day 2 Explosiveness and agility complex
Repeat this cycle.

Day 1 Somatotrophics complex
Day 2 Explosiveness and agility complex
Day 3 LSD grinder
Repeat this cycle.

Somatotrophics plus resistance schedules

Once you desire to add weight work to your training, I suggest the following approach:

- Day 1 Somatotrophics complex
 - Day 2 Dumbbell complex
 - Day 3 Explosiveness and agility complex
 - Day 4 Barbell complex
- Repeat this cycle.

Revolving grinder schedule

If you desire to use only the grinders as your workout, or for dual sessions at the pro level, use the grinder menu below.

- Day 1 LSD
- Day 2 LSD
- Day 3 LTT
- Day 4 LSD
- Day 5 LSD
- Day 6 Intervals
- Day 7 LSD
- Day 8 LSD
- Day 9 PT

Example of grinder-only calendar:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Monday | LSD |
| Tuesday | LSD |
| Wednesday | LTT |
| Thursday | LSD |
| Friday | LSD |
| Saturday | Intervals |
| Sunday | Off |
| Monday | LSD |
| Tuesday | LSD |
| Wednesday | PT |
- Begin cycle again.

Example of pro dual session calendar

Monday

A.M. session LSD

P.M. session Somatotrophics complex

Tuesday

A.M. session LSD

P.M. session Dumbbell complex

Wednesday

A.M. session LTT

P.M. session Explosiveness and agility complex

Thursday

A.M. session LSD

P.M. session Barbell complex

Friday

A.M. session LSD

P.M. session Somatotrophics complex

Saturday

A.M. session Intervals

P.M. session Dumbbell complex

Sunday

Off

At this point, you see the dual training session pattern. Simply use the revolving grinder schedule and layer the four complex sessions on top.

Improvise

If you recall, the crux of this manual is to provide economical, efficient training routines for a specific class of sport. We are aiming for reduced exercise time so we can increase sport mechanics time. With those goals in mind, feel free to adjust the menu options to best fit your individual needs and aspirations.

18 *R and R*



Intensity has been the mantra throughout this manual. The fact is that the body needs a little recuperative time, particularly if you are working **HARD**. The body needs rest and recreation as much as it needs to work toward a goal. The necessity for *R and R* does not mean that you can manufacture any excuse not to work — not if you want to reach the goals in the sport you've chosen.

Results require work. The harder you work, the more likely your results will materialize quickly. Hard work also means that the body can experience overtraining if we aren't careful. We can stay on a steady diet of conditioning menus if we are wise not to bump up to a level we aren't ready for. Bumping yourself up too soon can lead to sloppy training and/or skipping training altogether. We can use the levels in a temporary downgrade fashion to "make it through" less motivated times. Let's face it, there will be days that you don't feel like

pushing it. If you are at a level above novice, it's better to drop down a level and do some work rather than manufacture an excuse to do no work at all.

OK, you get the idea. If you want results, tuck that shirt in and read the shoe — just do it! But what about scheduled rest? The menus allow at least one day off per week for the upper levels. I chose Sunday arbitrarily, but you can choose any day off that best fits your schedule. Working seven days straight 52 weeks a year is a recipe for injury. The lower levels have even more time off. There must be scheduled rest each and every week no matter what level of athlete you are. These scheduled breaks are when we should focus on our slacking tendencies. If you feel like skipping a day, well, that's what Sundays are for.

I also suggest mapping out other rest days in advance so that you have something to look forward to. This creates a work ethic akin to a job. I recommend foregoing your conditioning on holidays (the ones you actually celebrate — no tossing Arbor Day in there unless you're a practicing Druid). I've also found value in choosing two dates per month ahead of time (the 1st and 15th, for example) and blocking them out on the calendar as rest days. If one or both fall on a Sunday, well that's the luck of the draw. When they fall on any other day, that's an off-day bonus. You don't have to take these suggestions, of course, but I think you will find that these scheduled rests keep excuse-making to a minimum.

The second "R" stands for recreation. Rest days don't mean couch-potato/pig-out days. Recreation may mean

mountain biking, a day at the lake or beach, volleyball or any activity you enjoy. You don't have to do anything active, but as your conditioning improves, you will find that the body revels in activity. Physical changes of pace can do wonders for the system.

Should you work out when you are sick or injured? Check the front cover of this book. Do you see the word "doctor" in front of my name? I leave the sick or injured call to the two people who best know that answer — you and your doctor. I've seen fighters train like maniacs, working around sprained ankles and the like. They take care of these injuries and focus their attention elsewhere. I've also seen folks who skip workouts because they woke up and thought it might be a bad allergy day. Each class of athlete makes his best call.

A final thought on R and R. Do you train while on vacation? That's up to you. If you've got a week or two off at the beach, maybe swimming is enough to recharge your batteries. Maybe you feel like you need to be cranking it out even while hiking the Appalachian Trail. If you are using the menus in this manual, you are training with a great deal of intensity the majority of the year. I say take the time off, you've earned it. And if you haven't earned it, maybe a few hundred squats on the beach are just what the doctor ordered.

R and R



19 Fuel

You are what you eat. Really? Well then, you are reading a book written by a mound of tacos, peanut butter sandwiches and 10,000 milligrams of caffeine. If it seems that I am making light of nutrition, that's because I am. Which of the following diets will make you a champion?

Diet A

For breakfast eat one slice of dry toast, two medium-boiled eggs with no salt and one saucer of rhubarb. Dinner must include bread and butter and calf's foot jelly.

Diet B

Each day consume copious amounts of raw almonds and several quarts of buttermilk.

We are led to believe that nutrition is akin to alchemy, that certain foods possess quasi-magical transformative properties that can produce champions and certain other evil foods will destroy us. Which of the two diets above will produce a champion?

Boxing legend Gentleman Jim Corbett swore by the first one, and the phenomenal wrestler, The Great Gama, used the second. Are you ready to follow in their culinary footsteps?

Anyone who has spent any time poring over the dietary recommendations professed by champions will find two running themes.

1. A remarkable diversity of consumption habits have fueled the best and brightest.

2. These champion dieters swear by their idiosyncratic choices with an ardor that borders on the religious.

These diets range from the outré (calf's foot jelly, quarts of buttermilk), the pseudo-scientific (engineered foods and supplements), vegetarianism (lacto, ovo, ovo-lacto and whatever other prefix you can think of), food combinations (never eat acids with starches or always eat acids with starches) to standard American staples like burgers and fries. A remarkable variety of foods and eating philosophies and superstitions have gone into "making" some mighty fine athletes. Since we have such a variety contributing to the same end result (peak performance in the given sport) how can we be sure which tack is the best? Those of us grounded in empiricism and the parameters of blind and double-blind studies, control groups and the like are probably already on the same page — we can't be certain with the information we have today.

In the 21st century we are making great strides in many of the sciences, nutritional science included. But many of the discoveries in nutritional science are distorted or misunderstood by some, and that leads to confusion, wasted time, wasted money and even harm to the physical self. As I write this, a story is making its rounds in the news debunking lycopene. Lycopene is a substance found in tomatoes that was touted as a deterrent to prostate cancer. We then started seeing lycopene supplements on the market, and any standard food product that contained lycopene mentioned it in

bold print. Ketchup bottles now tout the miraculous property within.

The better information released at the time of this writing mentions that lycopene actually seems to do nothing to stave off prostate cancer and may in fact aid its onset. Whoops! A brief look at other cures and miracle foods will produce more of the same. Beta carotene is a cancer fighter! Not really. Multi-vitamins are terrific ideas! Ooops! Creatine! Don't think so. And so on and so on.

So, champions have consumed inconsistent fuel sources and have reaped superlative results. This does not mean that we have no way of knowing how they do what they do. The dietary intake may vary, but there is one (and only one) unvarying constant. That constant is W-O-R-K. All champions exhibit a superlative work ethic in regard to training. That is the unvarying variable. Rather than looking for alchemical shortcuts, play the odds, buckle down and do the work.

For those who would like more resources on the silliness and charlatanry goings-on in the realm of nutritional science, I've provided a few titles in the Resources section.

Illegal supplements

There are a few supplements that do deliver big. These are illegal, and in some cases, they are prohibited due to health concerns. I consider these substances outside this discussion.

Weight Control

Since my opinion of dietary intake as an indicator of performance is rather low, does this mean that diet is of zero value? No. Diet is important. What we do know about fuel is this: To lose weight, consume fewer calories than you expend. To gain weight, consume more calories than you expend.

That's it. That's the sum total of what we can say with absolute certainty about weight control. Caloric intake and expenditure are simple mathematics and a far cry from the alchemy of magic foods. I know some will have a gut reaction that some foods are better than others (fruits and veggies, for example) and my gut reaction goes with you. But keep in mind that you and I may be responding to personal preferences or conditioned responses and propaganda. Simply recall what has been accomplished on calf's foot jelly, almonds and buttermilk, and then marvel at the human body's astounding ability to perform on an extreme variety of food.

For support of this seemingly contrarian perspective, I urge you to read the research from bona fide peer-reviewed scientific journals instead of results offered by subsidiaries of companies in the supplement or diet book business. If a supplement or diet is legit, it will stand up to peer review.

Cutting weight

Fighters are often in the position of having to drop one or two pounds (or even 22) in a short amount of time to make weight. I offer no nuts and bolts advice in this area since it can be found elsewhere and because the

practice of weight cutting is not necessarily good for either the fighter's performance or his health. Instead, I strongly suggest that fighters train to find their natural weight class, maintain that weight class year-round and forego drastic weight-cutting practices altogether.

Resources

BEST CHOICES

First, please visit my Web site at www.extremeselfprotection.com You will find even more training material as well as updates and other resources.

Amazon.com

The place to browse for books such as this one and other similar titles.

Paladin Press

www.paladin-press.com Paladin carries many training resources as well as some of my videos, which allow you to see much of what is covered in my NHB books.

Ringside Boxing

www.ringside.com Best choice for primo equipment.

Sherdog.com

Best resource for MMA news, event results and NHB happenings.

Threat Response Solutions

www.trsdirect.com They also offer many training resources along with some of my products.

Tracks Publishing

www.startupsports.com Tracks publishes this book and its prequel and has other fine books including a couple of boxing titles.

www.humankinetics.com

Training and conditioning info.

www.matsmatsmats.com

Best resource for quality mats at good prices.

Books / conditioning

Combat Conditioning
by Matt Furey
Love him or hate him, many owe a debt to Matt for bringing the utility of calisthenics back into the foreground.

The Gospel of Food: Everything You Think You Know about Eating is Wrong
by Barry Glassner
A sociologist tackles the wisdom of nutritional sciences. A fun, revealing, well-documented, contrarian read.

The Human Fuel Handbook: Health for Life
A no-nonsense primer on the nuts and bolts of nutritional chemistry.

The Navy Seal Nutrition Guide
by Patricia A. Duester
Another good nuts and bolts guide. I admit a preference for the first title, but both are quite good.

Rethinking Thin: The New Science of Weight Loss and the Myths and Realities of Dieting
by Gina Kolata
Kolata demolishes much of the “common knowledge” regarding nutrition.

Ultimate Fitness: The Quest for Truth About Exercise and Health
by Gina Kolata
A New York Times science reporter’s exposé on some of the dubious “science” behind many exercise ideologies. A little heavy on her own exercise experience in places, but still well worth the read.

Wrestling Physical Conditioning
Encyclopedia
by John Jesse

An excellent all-around guide. Some of the information is dated, but there is far more good than bad. It's out of print, but well worth a search.

Books / fighting

Boxer's Start-Up:
A Beginner's Guide to Boxing
by Doug Werner

Boxing Mastery
by Mark Hatmaker

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by Doug Werner
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More No Holds Barred Fighting:
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by Mark Hatmaker

No Holds Barred Fighting:
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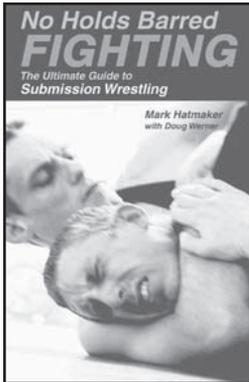
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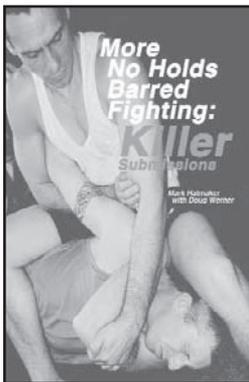
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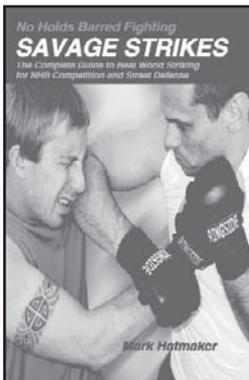
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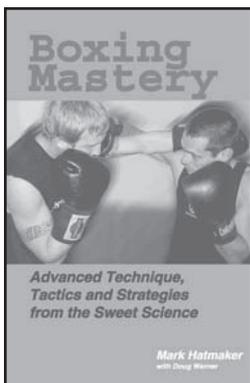


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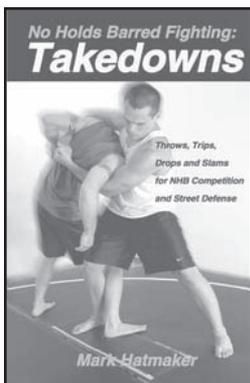
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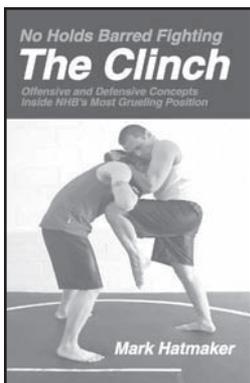
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