



Exercises to Improve Your Performance



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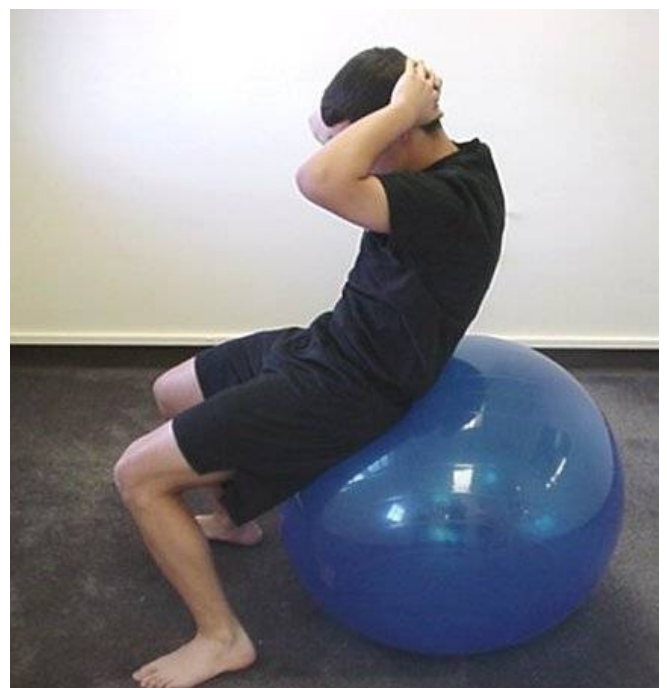
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Abdominal Crunches

This is a very effective activity for your abdominal muscles as the shape of the ball helps to stretch your muscles as you initiate the movement. This allows for a better range of motion, working the entire abdominal area.

Sit on top of the ball and slowly roll forward until your hips move off the ball. Continue until your lower back is supported by the curve of the ball. Place your hands beside your ears. Make sure your ball is the correct size so your head can extend over the top of the ball as you start.

Activate your abdominal muscles as you crunch forward until you are at a 45-degree angle. Keep your neck neutral and do not let it move back and forth. Once you reach the desired angle, roll back to the starting position.



Ball Kneeling

The objective for kneeling on the ball is to teach the body balance and coordination. To achieve this requires all the muscles in your core to work together to help you remain balanced on the ball.

Put the ball in front of you. Position the ball in such a manner that there is something for you to hold on to as you kneel on the ball. Hold on to the object until you feel comfortably centered on the ball. Keep your abdominal muscles tight and keep your body in a straight-up position. Look straight ahead.

You can also use a partner to help you get positioned.

Your goal is to remain motionless on the ball. At first you may not be able to but the goal is to quietly stay positioned for 30-40 seconds.



Ball Push-Up

Objective: This exercise activates all your core muscles and helps to stabilize these muscles as well as all your upper torso muscles. This is a great way to overload your muscles rather than using heavy weights.

Stand directly behind the ball. Put your hands shoulder-width apart on the ball. Move your feet back slowly until your chest is over the ball and your toes are touching the ground.

Slowly bend your elbows to 90-degrees. Lower your chest to the ball and maintain a strong contracted core. Don't let your hips let go and sag. Hold this position for 2 seconds keeping your shoulders and hips square.

Extend your arms to bring your upper body back to the starting position.



Calf Stretch

Objective: To increase flexibility in your calf and lower leg.

You should feel a stretch in your calf and ankles.

Get into a push-up position. Place your left foot over your right heel. Your weight should be on the ball of your right foot.

Pull your right toes up toward your shin while you push your right heel down toward the ground with your left foot. Exhale as you lower your heel. Hold for a one count, raise your right heel again, and repeat

To work your Achilles tendon, bend the knee of your working leg to shift the emphasis to your Achilles.



Drop Lunge

To increase flexibility in your hips and glutes. This exercise will also stretch the thick tendon that stretches from your hips to below your knee on the outside of your leg.

Stand with your arms at your side. Turn your hips to the left and reach back with your left foot until it is about 2 feet to the outside of your right foot.

Rotate your hips back so they are facing forward again. Square up your torso. Keep your chest up and your abs tight and most of the weight on your right foot.

Drop into a full squat by pushing your hips back and down, keeping your right heel on the ground. Push hard off your right leg and stand back up, and repeat. Switch to other leg.



Forward Lunge

Objective: To improve flexibility in your hips, hamstrings, lower back, torso, groin, hip flexors and quads.

You should feel a stretch in your groin, your lower back and hip flexors. In the latter part of the exercise, you should feel a stretch in your calf, hamstring, and the muscles on the front of your upper leg.

Stand straight and take a big step forward with your left leg as if you were going to do a lunge. Place your left elbow near your instep on the forward leg while, at the same time, keeping your back knee off the ground. Move your left hand to the outside of your leg and reach forward with right hand as you raise your toes off the ground. Lean forward and place right elbow on the ground. Stand and repeat on the other side.



Foundation Exercises-1

This is the first of several exercises designed to help build strength in your pillar muscle groups - hip, shoulder, and core muscles.

This first exercise will improve shoulder stability and will strengthen your rotator cuff and shoulder blades.

Lie facedown over the ball so that your chest is off the ball. Make sure your back is straight.

While moving your shoulder blades back and down toward your waist, lift your arms above your head to form a Y. Lower your chest and arms and repeat

Keep your thumbs up. You should move from your shoulder blades, lifting your torso, shoulders, and hands. You should have your upper abs at the top of the ball.



Foundation Exercise #2

The objective of this exercise is to improve your shoulder stability and strengthen your rotator cuff muscles,

Lie face down over the ball so that your back is flat and your chest is off the ball.

Squeeze your elbows in toward your ribs. Rotate your thumbs back toward the ceiling, squeezing your shoulder blades together to form a W.

Rotate your thumbs back as far as possible while you keep your elbows close to your side.

Make sure you rotate your thumbs enough so you feel them squeeze, especially blades.



Foundation Exercise #3

This is another exercise to strengthen your shoulder blades by improving strength and stability in your rhomboids and rotator cuff muscles.

Lie face down over the top of the ball so that your back is flat and your chest is off the ball.

Flex your elbows so they make a 90-degree angle with your upper arm. Squeeze your shoulder blades together while at the same time raising your upper arms so they are 90 degrees to your torso.

While keeping this position, rotate your upper arms outward so the backs of your hands reach toward the ceiling.



Front Bridges

Objective: to develop core stability and strength in your shoulders, core, and hips

Lie in a prone pushup position with your forearms on the floor. Your elbows should be bent to 90 degrees and positioned under your shoulders.



Push up using your elbows, supporting your body weight on your elbows. Keep your head in line with your body by tucking in your chin.

Pull your shoulder blades forward while drawing in your navel. Keep your head in line with your spine so your body forms a straight line.



Lift one arm or leg, holding it for 2 or 3 seconds and then switch arm and leg.



Alternate opposites. Lift one arm and the opposite leg and the switch.

Glute Bridge

The objective of this exercise is to develop and improve the firing and utilization of your glute muscles.

Lie face up on the floor, with your knees bent to a 90-degree angle. Place a rolled-up towel or small ball between your legs.

Tighten your belly button and make a bridge, keeping your heels and shoulders on the ground. Contract your hips throughout this exercise. Hold the bridge and then lower to the starting position.



Try this exercise one leg at a time.

Try it with one leg straight and lined up with your chest, and your weight supported on the other leg. Switch legs.

Pull your left knee to your chest, then bridge using the opposite leg.



Gym Ball Push Up

This exercise will improve your core (abdomen) and shoulder stability. It will also increase the strength in your shoulders, chest, and triceps.

Assume the push up position over the ball with your hands pointing outward along the sides of the ball.

With your navel drawn in tight, lower yourself to the ball so your chest barely touches the ball. Keep control over the ball as you push back up, still holding your navel in. Keep your whole body in a straight line from head to toe.



Hamstring Pillar

Objective: To improve your hamstring flexibility and balance in your hip.

Stand on your right foot with good posture - belly tucked in, shoulders back and not hunched.

Bend at the waist and, while maintaining good posture, bend forward at the waist and extend your left leg back, forming a "T". Come back to the first position and repeat with other leg.



Hip Abduction/Adduction

This exercise will stabilize your hips



Lie on your side, resting your head on your arm. Keep your legs straight with the top leg slightly behind the bottom one.



Lift your top leg up. Because you are taking your leg away from your body, this is called abduction.

To adduct your hip, cross your top foot over the bottom one. Then lift your bottom leg by squeezing the inner muscles of that leg.



Hip Crossovers

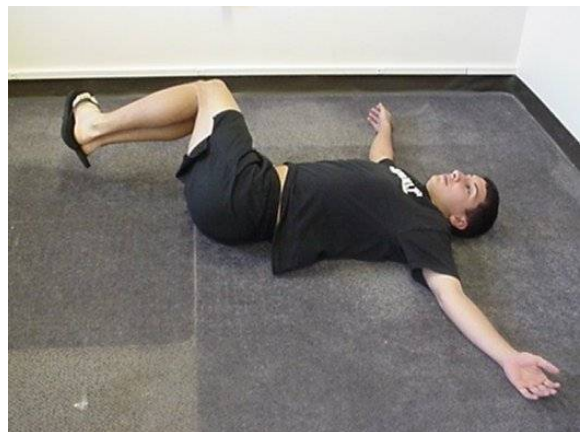
Objective: To build mobility and strength in your torso by disassociating hips and shoulders

You should feel stretching and contracting in your core abdominal muscles.

Lie face up on the floor, arms and shoulders extended out to your sides and with palms down.

Twist your bent legs to the right until they touch the floor, then come back and twist to the left

To make the exercise more difficult and beneficial, try this move with your hips and knees bent 89 degrees and your feet off the floor.



Jackknife

This exercise activates the lower abs and hip muscles. It also requires core stability.

Stand behind your ball, squat down and put your abdomen on top of the ball. Now roll forward so that your hands reach the ground in front of the ball. Walk out until on you your feet are on top of the ball.

Hold this push-up position keeping a strong core. Keep your chest facing the floor. Bend your knees and pull the ball up toward your chest. This is the same as if you were drawing your knees toward your torso. Keep the tempo slow and concise.

Extend your legs to move the back to where you began.

You can also add to this exercise by working one leg at a time. Start with only one leg on the ball.



Kneeling Ball Roll

The objective is to use a natural rolling motion to overload your core muscles through a full range of motion.

Kneel in front of the ball. Create a pelvic tilt by tightening your abs and pushing your glutes forward. Put your hands on top of the ball and lift your feet off the ground so you are being supported by your knees (place a pad under your knees for comfort) Walk your hands out on the ball, moving it away from you at the same time until you feel abs begin to work.

Using your knees, bring your torso and hips forward as the ball rolls away from your knees. Try not to hyperextend your back as your chest gets closer to the ground. If you feel strain in your lower back, check your position on the ball so you are straight ahead.

Hold the position at the far end of your movement and roll back using your knees as pivots.



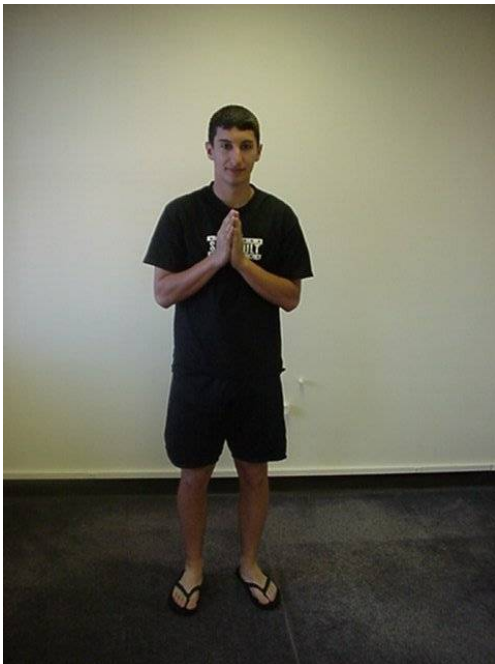
Lateral Lunge

Objective: To lengthen your groin muscles and open your hips.

You should feel a good stretch in your groin muscles all the way to the inside of your knee.

Stand straight, with legs slightly apart and shoulders down. Step out to the right, keeping your toes pointed straight ahead and your feet firmly on the ground.

Squat, by sitting back on your right leg, your elbow on thigh. Keep your other leg straight. Put your weight on your right leg. Squat down as low as possible without pain. Hold this position for a couple of seconds and return. Switch to the other side.



Pillar Bridge

To create strength in your shoulders, core and hips

Lie on your side so your forearm is on the ground and your elbow is in line with your shoulder. Keep your body in a straight line and remember to keep your toes pointed toward your shins. Your other hand should be on the top hip.

Push up using your elbow. This should create a straight line from your shoulders to your ankles.

Make sure your hips are off the floor; your toes pointed up with no other part of your body touching the floor. Keep your hips forward and try not to sag.

You should feel the exercise in your hips, core, shoulders and your oblique abdominal muscles (the ones on the sides)

Make the exercise harder by lifting your top leg. You can also try tucking your bottom leg into your chest. This one you should feel in your groin.



Quad Circles

the objective of this exercise is to stabilize your spine and improve mobility and strength in your hips.

Get into position on your hands and knees. Pull in your belly button and extend your shoulders so that they are pushed away from each other.

Bring your right knee to your chest. Lift your leg out to the side of your hip, using your glutes to do so. Rotate your leg in a circle so that your leg is tucked back into your chest. Reverse the motion and the repeat with the other leg.

Keep your pelvis in one place and your abdominal muscles sucked in so the focus is on your hips not your pelvis.



Scorpion

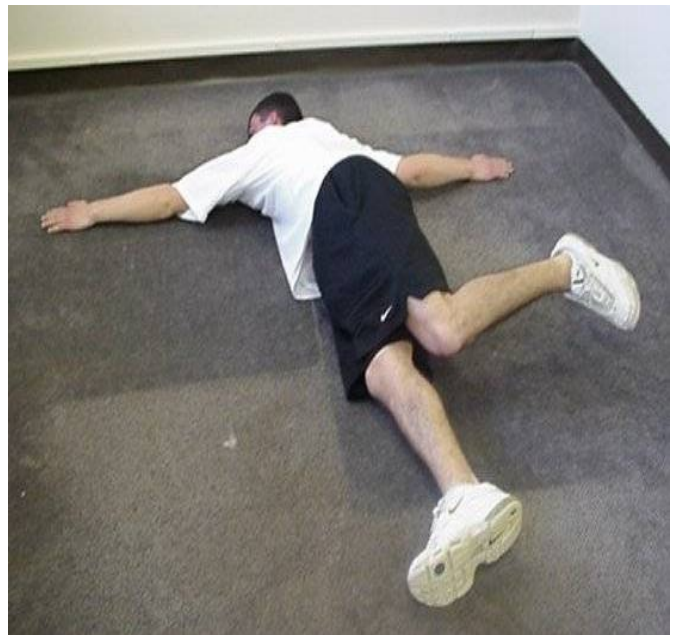
Objective: To lengthen and strengthen the muscles of your core; stretch your chest, quads, hips, and abs; and work your glutes.

You should feel a stretch in your quads and hip flexors, along with working your glute muscles.

Lie down on your stomach with your arms and shoulders in the "spread-eagled" position.

Thrust your left heel toward your right hand by squeezing your left glute while keeping your right hip glued to the ground.

Switch to the other leg.



Standing Ball Hug

Objective: This exercise activates your core from the standing position. Most sports require this position.

Place your feet shoulder-width apart, with your hips back and your shoulders forward over your knees. This is one of the basic athletic positions and you should keep this position at all times during the exercise. Hug the ball at your chest level.

Your partner will begin to hit the ball attempting to push it in all different positions. Your job is to maintain your original position using your core to keep you balanced and in good form.



T-Bridge

Objective: This is a basic exercise to activate the deep abdominal wall muscles as well as all your core muscles.

Sit on top of the ball. Slowly roll forward and lean back at the same time so that your hips move off the ball. Roll until your upper back is supported by the ball.

Place your feet flat; your shoulder blades should be at the top of the ball, shoulder width apart. Make sure your hips are aligned with your shoulders. Place your arms out to the side so they form a T-with your body.

Slowly shift to one side, rolling onto your triceps (back of your upper arm). Keep your hips straight. Do not let them roll to the side. Keep both feet flat on the ground.

Use your core muscles in your abdomen to pull your body back across the ball to the starting position so your body re-forms the T and then move to the other side and back.



Twisting Back Lunge

Objective: To lengthen your hip flexors, quads and core muscles. Your whole body gets stretched in this exercise.

Place feet together and step back with your right leg into a lunge position.

Arch your back a little while twisting your upper body over your left leg and while reaching your right hand to the sky. Push back and out of that position into the next lunge.

As you lean back and rotate your body, tighten your glutes. This will stretch your hip flexors.



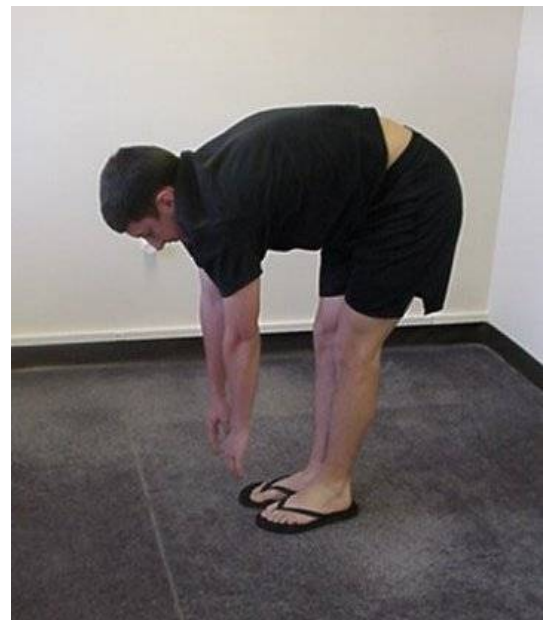
Walking on Hands

Objective: To develop stability in your shoulders and core muscles and to lengthen your lower back muscles as well as your hamstrings and calves.

You should feel a good stretch in your lower back muscles around your hips especially as well as your hamstrings. You may also feel a burning sensation in your shins, which is ok.

Stand straight and bend over slowly with your hands as close to the floor as possible. Don't bounce.

Keep your legs straight and your abs tucked in. Walk your hands out. Keeping your legs straight walk your feet backward. Take very small steps back using your ankles. Don't use your knees or hips or thighs.



Wall Hamstring Stretch

The objective of this exercise is to help loosen your hamstrings which tend to be among the tightest muscle groups in your body. This exercise provides a good opportunity for a safe static and dynamic stretch for the hamstrings.

Lie on the floor and place a ball between your feet and the wall. If your hamstrings are very tight, position yourself farther from the wall.

Keep your pelvis on the floor and begin to roll the ball up the wall by extending your legs. Hold the position at the top for 20 seconds and return to the starting position. To further stretch your hamstrings, try starting closer to the wall.

