

Sports Training WITH A MEDIBALL

by John L Bigatton

Although their respective rules may radically differ, many sports share a common theme in that they require you to be able to sprint, run, jump, twist and turn – in short, they demand speed and agility. Below are seven, do-anywhere exercises using the mediBall that will help condition your body for the agility needed for sports. Some of the exercises may be quite difficult to perform at first. Make sure you maintain strict form, and use an assistant at all times. If you have difficulty, have a certified mediBall instructor assist you in developing correct form. **Caution:** the following exercises are hugely rewarding, but take care and concentrate until you've mastered the technique.

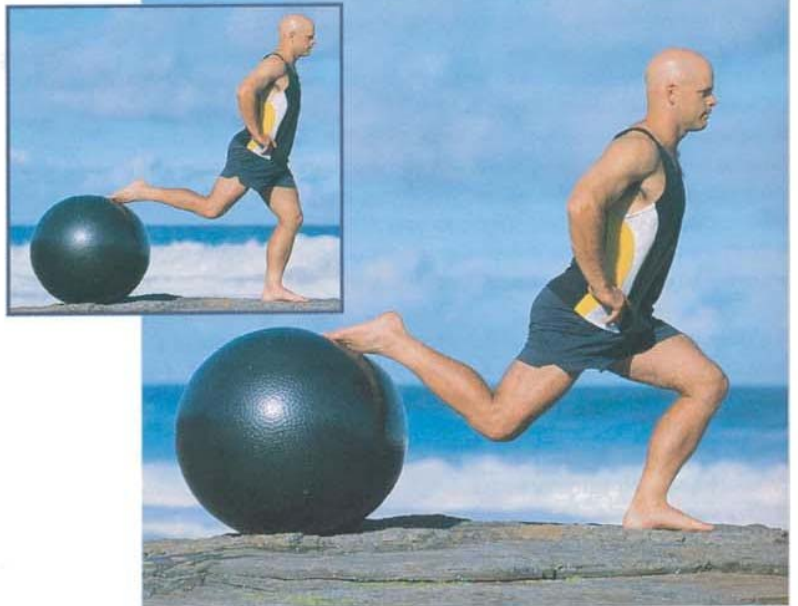
SPLIT SQUAT BACK FOOT

Stabilises and strengthens the ankle, knee, hips and butt.

- Position yourself with your back foot on the mediBall and the front foot far enough in front of you so that you have a good comfortable stance. Keep the knee tracking over the second toe at all times.
- Maintain an upright posture as possible with a slight curve in the lower back and the belly button pulled towards the spine.
- Breathe in and then lower yourself slowly as far as you can go whilst maintaining your form. On the way down you will find your front knee moving forward passing the toes. That is okay, just make sure the knee always tracks over the second toe.
- On the way up breathe out slowly, then reset yourself for the next repetition.

As a start, you may want to try 2-3 sets of 4-6 reps at a tempo of 3sec down, 1sec hold, and 2sec up, no rest, and go again (3-1-2-0).

As this exercise is very demanding on the neuro-muscular system, rest for at least 90sec, but no more than 120sec between sets

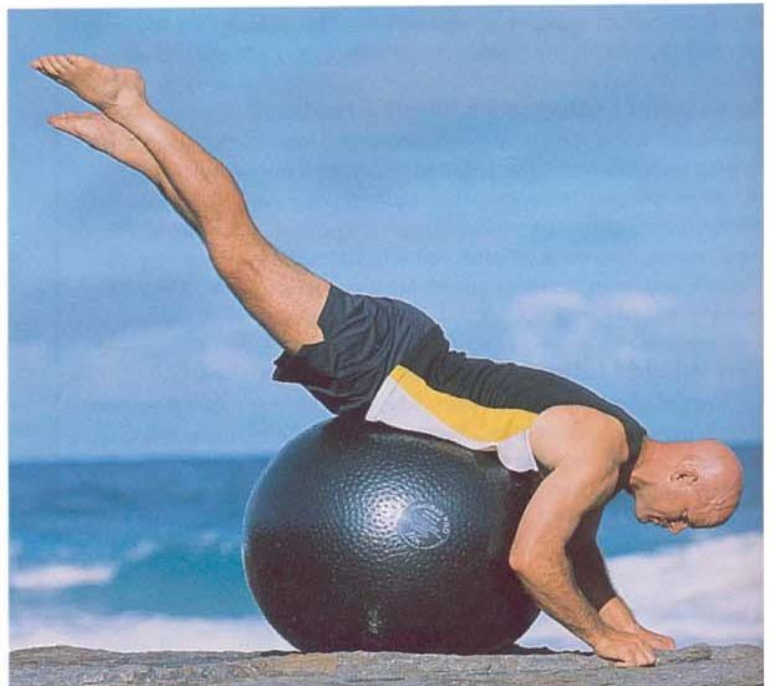


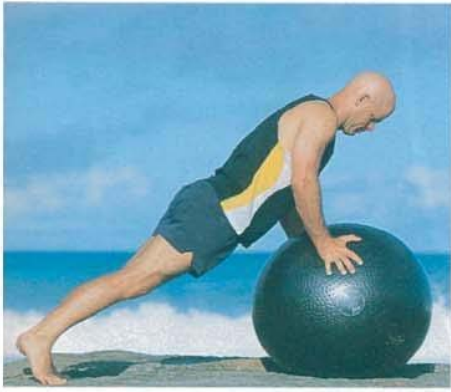
REVERSE HIP EXTENSION

strengthens the hamstrings, hips, butt and lower back.

- Position yourself with your abdominals over the mediBall, hands on the floor in front of the mediBall (as if you are about to perform a push-up). Position your tongue on the roof of the mouth (by swallowing it will go there automatically).
- Now, breathe in, and draw the belly button towards your spine.
- As you start to breathe out, raise both legs up off the floor and turn the feet outwards (this will allow you to really activate the butt). If you start feeling tightness in the lower back, you've taken your legs up too far. With this exercise you want the hamstrings and butt to work hard, so concentrate on these two as you are raising your legs.
- As you start to breathe in, slowly lower the legs back to the floor.

For a beginner look at performing 2-3 sets of 12-15 reps at a tempo of 2sec on the way up, 2sec squeeze at the top, and lower for 3sec and go again (3-2-2-0). Rest for 90sec between sets.





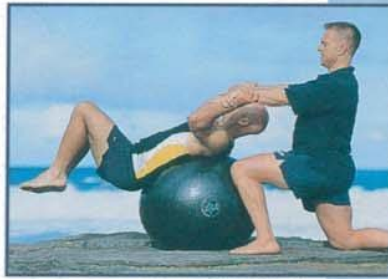
PUSH-UPS

Strengthens the shoulder girdle, forearms and abdominals.

■ Position yourself with your hands on the mediBall, fingers facing the floor. Depending on whether you are strong enough or not, either have your feet, or your knees resting on the floor.

■ Breathe in, head aligned with the body (chin tucked), umbilicus drawn towards the spine, with a neutral lumbar curve. Now lower yourself towards the mediBall as far as you can maintaining your posture.

■ On the way up breathe out slowly and repeat. This exercise really targets the stability of the shoulder girdle. Try 3 sets of 8-10 reps with a tempo of 2-1-2-0 (2sec down, 1sec pause, 2sec up, 0sec break). Repeat with 75sec rest between sets.



REVERSE CRUNCH

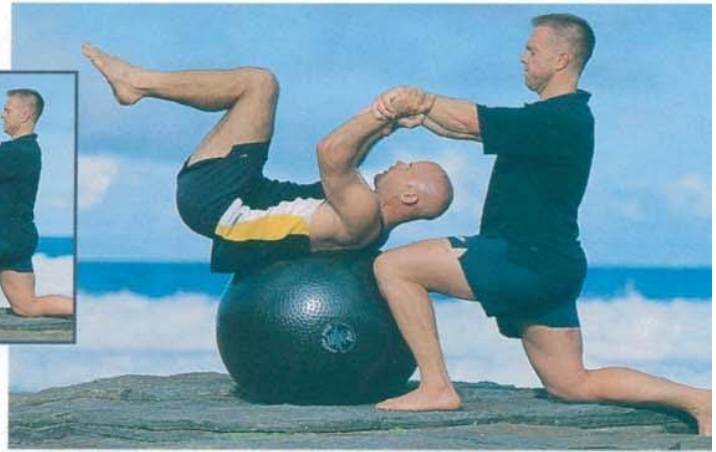
Strengthens the lower abdominals.

■ Lie with your back over the mediBall. With your hands, grab onto an object – it may be your partner's knees, or their hands as in the photo, or a tree pole, or bench. Tongue at the roof of the mouth. Lower back arched over the mediBall.

■ All the way through the movement the hips are held at 90 degrees. Breathe in and then, as you initiate the movement by bringing the knees towards your head, breathe out and draw the umbilicus towards the spine.

■ As you lower your legs, breathe in on the way down and arch your back over the mediBall (maintaining the hips at 90 degrees). Repeat

Try 2 sets of 10-12 reps at a tempo of 3-1-3-0. Rest 75sec between sets.



In all these exercises, if you notice yourself losing form, then stop. Take your time to obtain good form, then enjoy the challenge these exercises will introduce to your training.

SINGLE-LEGGED SUPINE HIP EXTENSION

Ankles, quads, hamstrings and balance.

■ Position yourself as for the twist crunch pike, but with your head resting on the mediBall.

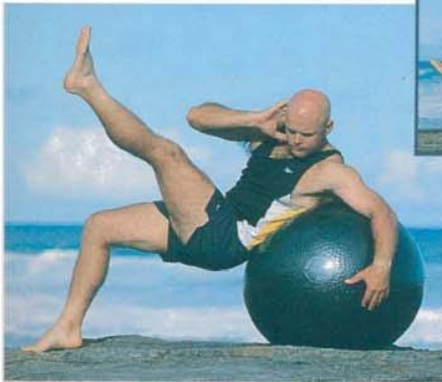
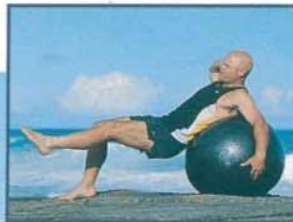
■ Breathe in, lifting one leg so it is parallel to the ground. Maintain balance and lower your butt to the floor. During this movement the mediBall will roll slightly forward.

■ As you lower, make sure that the knee does not go past the toes, and maintain the knee aligned over the second toe.

■ On the way up, breathe out and squeeze the butt. Again make sure that you go straight up, not up and forwards or backwards.

■ Once you have completed one side, do the same with the opposite side.

Start with 2 x 8-10 well-controlled reps at 3-2-2-0 tempo. Rest 120sec between sets.



MEDIBALL TWIST CRUNCH PIKE

Strengthens the obliques.

NOTE: This is an advanced exercise that requires a lot of balance and co-ordination.

■ Lie over the mediBall as you would for a standard crunch.

■ Slowly roll to one side of the ball and grab the ball with one arm for support. With the other hand, touch your ear lobe with your fingertips. Do not grab your head. Position your tongue at the roof of the mouth.

■ As you crunch up, make sure you draw your umbilicus towards the spine and rotate your shoulder towards the opposite knee as you simultaneously raise that leg.

■ Once the two points make contact, return to the starting position.

■ Once you have completed one side, do the same with the opposite side.

Start with 2 sets of 8-10 well-controlled reps at 2-1-2-0 tempo. Rest 75sec between sets.

PRONE JACK KNIFE WITH A PUSH-UP

Arms, shoulder girdle, chest, abdominals.

■ Position yourself with your shins on the mediBall, hands on floor.

Chin tucked, breathe in and draw umbilicus towards the spine maintaining a neutral curve in the lower back.

■ As you roll the ball towards your head, breathe out (stop rolling as you start to lose the curve in your lower back).

■ Roll back out to the starting position breathing in at the same time. At this point you should perform a standard push-up, breathing out on the way up.

■ Before starting the next rep, breathe in and go through the whole process again.

Try 3 sets of 8-10 reps with a tempo of 2-1-2-0 for the Prone Jack Knife, and 2-1-2-0 for the push-up.

Rest 120sec between sets.

