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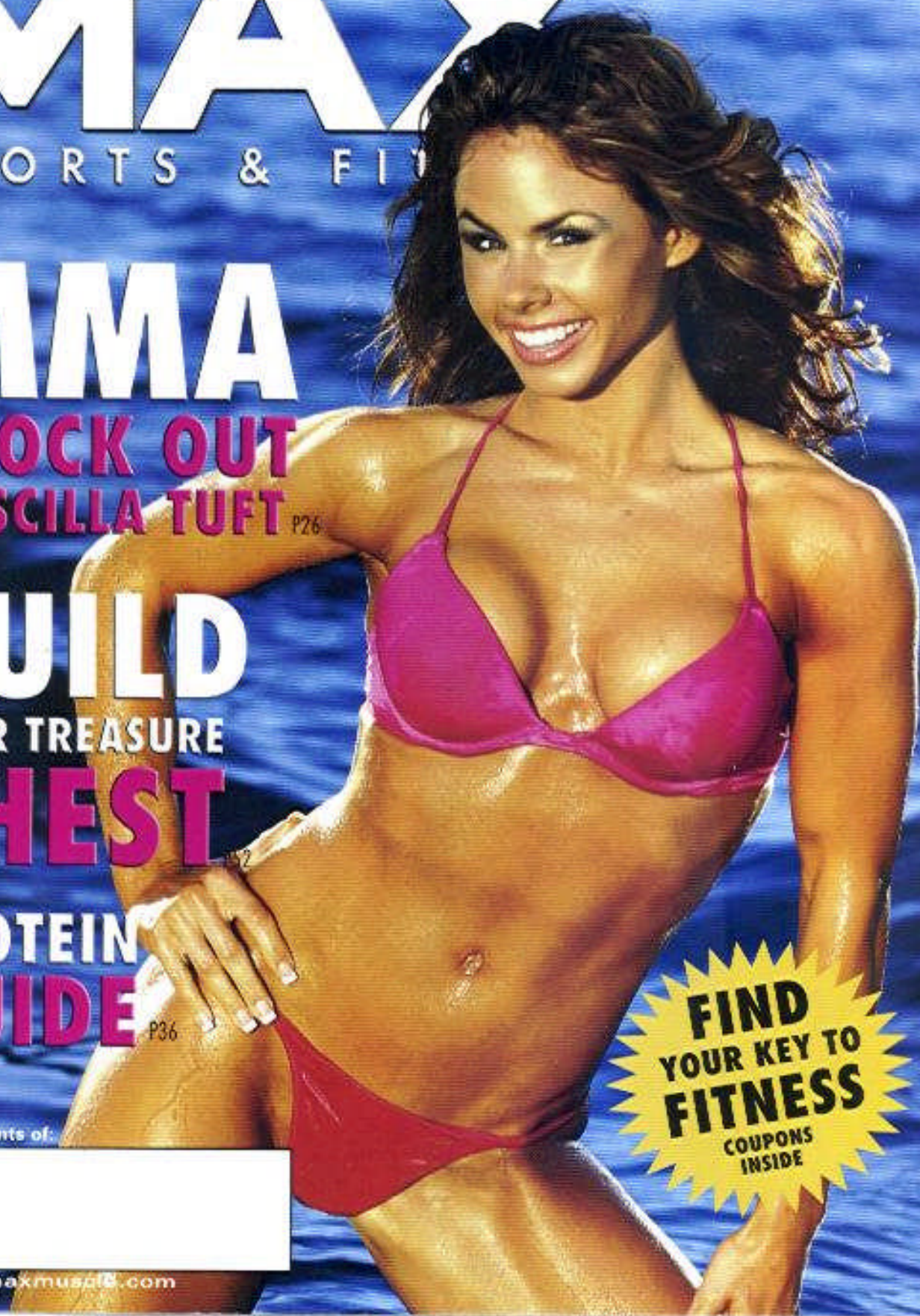
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MAXGIRL WORKOUT

SAVE TIME



WITH MEDICINE BALL TRAINING

by John Fiataro, C.P.T., R.T.S., photos by Alex Ardenti

In the 21st Century, time is probably our most valuable commodity. No one seems to have the time to work out. Medicine ball training can help provide a solution to the lack of time issue most people struggle with in order to stay in shape.

Medicine balls have been around for a very long time. Originally used in hospitals and rehabilitation centers, medicine balls eventually moved into physical education and sports conditioning programs until nearly every school that offered physical education integrated the use of this modality. For some unknown reason this method of training fell out of popularity. However, over the past few years this method of training has reemerged to become more popular as people realize they can use medicine balls nearly anywhere.

The Benefits of Medicine Ball Training

- Safe
- Inexpensive
- Appropriate for all levels of ability
- Suitable for all training environments
- Can be used in a group or solo
- Portable
- Targets the core
- Helps transfer force from the legs to the arms
- Limited only by the imagination of the user

Before we get started with your training program, I need you to consider a few concepts.

Your muscles are slaves to your joints. All muscles cross a joint. A muscle's job is to move or stabilize a joint. Any time a muscle contracts or shortens, calories are burned. The more joints that move, the more muscles have to contract, resulting in more calories burned. Also, whenever you sit, stand or lie down to exercise on a piece of equipment that guides your motion, less calories will be burned because the body is being supported by this external mechanism.

Medicine ball training is a multi-joint activity that can develop dynamic, explosive properties needed in athletic activities and life in general. The exercises or motions in this article will work every joint in your body from your head to your toes.

This warmup is challenging. I suggest you begin on a treadmill or elliptical machine for 5 minutes before you start this warm-up. If you have certain back problems such as herniated discs, stenosis or spondylolisthesis, it's best to restrict these motions and slow it down. If you're healthy, then you can speed up these movements. Try and be fluid and rhythmic so there is a continuum to the motion. These movements shouldn't be jerky.

Your Workout

Wood chop

This exercise will target the muscles at the ankles, knees, hips, pelvis, shoulders, elbows, wrists, neck and spine! Think joints not muscles. The more joints that move, the more muscles work, the more calories you burn! This is a great exercise to start your workout with.

Begin slowly at first, and then increase the speed. Be fluid and move in rhythm. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart or even a little wider. Get into what I call a linebacker stance. This means knees bent, butt out, shoulders and hips squared and level towards the mirror. Hold a 2kg to 5kg medicine ball in your hands at chest height with knees bent. Inhale and raise the ball over your head as if you were going to chop wood. As you do this, your knees should straighten, your thoracic (middle) spine will extend, your pelvis will move forward (anterior pelvic tilt). Now reverse everything. Exhale on the way down, bending your knees, curling at the waist, thrusting the ball between

your legs. Don't forget to tuck your head as well. Perform 25 repetitions.

Squat

This exercise will target the muscles of the ankles, knees, hips, pelvis, elbows, shoulders, wrists and spine. Start in the same linebacker stance with the ball at chest height. Squat down and extend your arms forward as if you were going to set the ball down on an expensive piece of glass. Perform 25 repetitions. Continue to squat, but instead extend the ball with the right hand for 25 reps then the left hand for 25 reps. Continue squatting for 25 more reps with the ball in both hands, extending forward as you squat. That's 100 repetitions!

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Side bends

This exercise will target muscles of the knees, hips, pelvis, elbows, shoulders, wrists and spine. Start in the same stance with both hands holding the ball over your head. Inhale as you lean to the side, transfer the ball to one hand, extending the ball out to the side. With the empty hand reach towards the same side. Exhale as you reverse it to the other side. You should be teetering side to side like a pendulum. Perform 25 repetitions to each side.

Twists

This exercise will target the muscles of the ankles, knees, hips, pelvis, elbows, shoulders and spine. Start in the same stance with the ball in both hands at chest height, and twist from side to side like a washing machine. Inhale on one side and exhale on the other. If you have knee problems — specifically ACL injuries — allow your feet to swivel or turn from side to side. That will take the pressure off of your knees. Perform 25 repetitions to each side.

45-degree swipe

Start with your arms extended behind your right shoulder. You can point your left foot, allowing your left heel to come off the ground. Your head should be looking at the ball so your spine is wound up towards the ball. This is a great exercise for the spine and the pelvis, however it moves all your joints. Keeping your arms fairly straight, bring the ball down across your body at a 45-degree angle towards your left foot as if you were bending down to catch a baseball with your glove. Inhale on the way up and exhale on the way down. Now just reverse sides. Perform 25 repetitions to each side.

Torso circles

Start in the same stance. Imagine the ball is in the middle of a giant clock and your hands attached to the ball are going to travel from 12 o'clock, which is directly over your head, moving around the clock and integrating the pelvis, knees and ankles as the ball moves towards 6 o'clock, which is towards the ground. At 6 o'clock you should feel like you're scooping water out of a river with a bucket. Don't forget to bend your knees as you move towards 6 o'clock, turning your pelvis towards the direction of the ball as it travels around the clock. Inhale on the way up and exhale on the way down. Perform 25 repetitions to each side.

This entire warm-up should last 6 to 8 minutes. If you work continuously you will find yourself out of breath, warmed up and ready to work any part of your body with weights. Have fun!

For more information or to contact the author visit www.NCCPT.com.