

Your Fitness Friend: The Medicine Ball

I love my home gym. It isn't terribly fancy, but it is awesome to have most of my favorite workout gear available at any hour. After a few months of CrossFit training, I realized a medicine ball was a must have.

It is so versatile, and you can get many different benefits from various exercises that incorporate the medicine ball. If you don't have a medicine ball in your home gym, or haven't tried one at your local gym, I strongly suggest you pick one up and try one or more of these impactful exercises.

Slams

This one is great if you are having a particularly stressful day. Start by holding the ball over your head and use all your force to slam it into the ground. Squat to pick it up, raise it over head, and slam it again. Do this for three minutes and then take a 30 second break before doing it another three minutes.

Balancing Burpees

In a traditional burpee, you put your hands on the ground and jump back. Using a medicine ball between your hands and the ground means you have to really be able to balance well. Which means you have to have a strong core. Do circuits of 15-20 of these in a row, with a 30 second break in between for 5 minutes.

High-Low Chops

Start by holding the ball over your head with both hands, arms straight and torso twisted to the right. As you bring the ball down towards the floor to the left of your left foot with your arms extended, come into a squat (be sure your knees don't extend out past your toes). Keeping the medicine ball away

from your center of gravity makes this an intense move, so you may want to start out with a lighter ball. Reach the ball up as you twist back to the right. Do this at least 10 times on each side to start, and work your way up to more repetitions.

Cross-Behind Lunge

To cross-behind means to do a squat like a curtsy – with your right foot coming behind and to the left of your left foot. The medicine ball is held in your arms and as you go down for the lunge, you raise the ball up to shoulder height. Come back to stand bringing the ball back down to hip level. Repeat on the other side by lunging your left foot back and to the right of the right foot and bring the ball up to shoulder height, arms still extended. Do this as many times as you can, and hope to feel the healthy burn tomorrow (as sure sign you are doing it right!).

Twister

This one will strengthen your core, and build up those biceps! Start seated on the ground with your legs in front of you, knees bend about 90 degrees. Hold the medicine ball just above your knees and while keeping your arms straight, move the ball to the left of your hips. Bring the ball back to above your knees and then bring it down to the right of your hips. As you twist, concentrate on making it an effective twist to not only build that core strength, but it also helps with digestion. Start with 30 second intervals and build up to 60 seconds at a time.

This short video by [Popsugar Fitness](#) that shows you 5 more exercises to get your whole body fit with just a medicine ball. Happy balling, and be sure to let me know which is your favorite medicine ball exercise!