

Alignment, Bracing and Breathing Fundamentals for Strength

A separate video will be available to fully explain this and is an absolute must-watch for coaches and athletes

These fundamentals must be applied to each exercise and are the key to supercharging your strength training results. The concept is to create tension and rigidity, teaching the body how to recognize positions of optimal power and safety where we can withstand and produce the greatest loads or impacts.

- **Core:** Canister concept: square lower ribs to pelvis, engage muscles 360 degrees around the core cylinder; use pelvic floor and diaphragm muscles to increase the stiffness of your core brace – this is your virtual “weight belt”
- **Shoulders:** broad collarbones, engage lats as though squeezing a sponge in the back of the armpit
- **Head/neck:** long and tall through the crown of the head; maintain slight nod/double-chin
- **Hands and feet:** paw the floor, engage strongly with the environment
- **Breath:** forcefully blow air out through tight lips, sustain core tension, inhale into braced core; inhale during setup for each rep; sustain inhale until past the "sticking point" of each rep; keep core tight and maintain this breathing pattern for the full routine

Implementation Tips For Teams / Clubs

- The primary intended use of this routine is to be executed efficiently, in full as is has been demonstrated in the video, totaling 11 minutes. If you are unable to hold a position for a full 30 seconds that is ok, do it with good quality as long as you can and the strength will come.
- Practicing as a circuit 3x back to back, 3x a week is recommended as a reasonable alternative or compliment to a structured strength and conditioning program. However, a well coached strength training program will always be an asset. If you do participate in strength and conditioning, ask your strength coach if they recommend supplementing it with this as a home program, and how often.
- Some coaches may feel that dedicating 11 minutes of practice time is too much; while we would argue it is difficult to match the level of sport readiness and quality of movement training intended in this program. However, we recognize that groups and training settings may influence what is achievable. As such here are 2 possible ways to configure this into a 2-day program that would result in about a 6 to 8 minute routine on Day 1 and Day 2: The disadvantage of these methods is that further warmup will be required to reach readiness for sport competition; the advantage may be to break it up for younger groups or if alternate warmup plans are in place which you cannot change, yet you would like to coach these positions and use the overall program as a home exercise plan.

Maintaining program flow, weighted heavily to isometrics on day 1 and dynamics on day 2	
DAY 1 Perform exercises 1-9 (requiring bands)	DAY 2 Perform exercises 10-17 (requiring no bands)

Maintaining muscle group distribution and even number of isometric vs dynamic positions	
DAY 1 Perform exercises 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 17	DAY 2 Perform exercises 3, 5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

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Level One Exercises

1



Banded Bearcrawl Isometric Hold

- canister alignment and core brace
- breathe to increase core stiffness
- broad collar bones
- squeeze sponge at back of armpit
- look down between hands
- hands and feet spread the floor
- lift knees 5cm off ground

2



Side Plank Knees, Banded Abduction

- knees bent 90 degrees
- broad collarbones, elbow under shoulder
- squeeze a sponge in back of armpits
- squeeze glutes, drive hips forward
- maintain ribs square to pelvis
- watch out for sagging ribcage
- align head and neck with slight nod
- lift the leg after each inhale, aim for 4-6 reps with 3second holds

3



High Bridge From Hands

- hands under shoulders, broad collarbones
- heel under knees, maintain tension on the band
- double chin, eyes focused on belly
- inhale then drive heels into the floor
- maintain canister connection, ribs square to pelvis
- aim for 4-6 reps, 3s holds

4



Opposite Side Plank Knees

- knees bent 90 degrees
- broad collarbones, elbow under shoulder
- squeeze a sponge in back of armpits
- squeeze glutes, drive hips forward
- maintain ribs square to pelvis
- watch out for sagging ribcage
- align head and neck with slight nod
- lift the leg after each inhale, aim for 4-6 reps with 3second holds

5



High Plank From Hands

- canister, broad collar bones
- develop tension from head to toe
- engage quads, pull kneecap up
- squeeze the glutes like rocks
- lower abs pull pelvis toward the ribs
- cycle up core tension with each exhale and inhale
- lats engaged, squeezing sponge in back of armpit

6



ISO External Rotation Monster Walk

- elbows at side, high tension vs band
- broad collarbones, packed lats
- feet slightly wider than shoulder width
- "spread the ground" with each step
- shins vertical, knees drive out vs band
- maintain canister alignment
- tall through top of head, slight nod
- use breath to enhance core tension

7



Slingshot Squat

- hands 30 degrees outside the shoulder
- high tension on band
- heels slightly wider than shoulder width
- feet slightly turned out, spread the floor
- brief "standing plank" before each rep:
 - maintain nod, tall through top of head;
 - broad collarbones, rib tuck, packed lats;
- -fire the quads, glutes, core then inhale before descending in the squat
- as you lower, pull the knees up and out
- pursed-lip exhale as you are halfway back up

8



Iso ER90 Standing Plank Calf Raise

- hold band eye level, elbow bent 90 deg.
- heels slightly wider than shoulder width
- feet slightly turned out, spread the floor
- "standing plank" through each rep:
 - maintain nod, tall through top of head;
 - broad collarbones, rib tuck, packed lats;
 - fire the quads, glutes, core
- inhale then calf raise:
 - up toward big toe rather than pinky
 - maintain balance for 2 seconds
 - exhale and lower for 2 seconds

9



Pullapart in Hip Hinge (Palms Down)

- deep hip hinge, high hips with flat back
- shins vertical, weight toward heels
- canister and brace enhanced with breath
- keep ribs down tight in front
- broad collarbones, straight elbows
- inhale then shoulder blades lead pull-apart
- shoulder blades together as band remains 1" away from chest
- pursed lip exhale on return keeps core tight

10



Concentric Single Leg RDL (Alternating)

- narrow stance hip hinge position
- canister, broad collarbones, packed lats
- inhale to enhance your brace
- push heel of the up leg back, fire glute, achieving straight line foot-hip-head
- maintain powerful foot engagement in down leg
- paw the ground and drive to stand as you exhale
- finish position is a single leg standing plank with glute and quad fired

11



Hip Circles (Right) in Single Leg Balance

- 2 reps leading with knee up:
- begin with standing plank form
- stance glute, quad and foot strong
- inhale to enhance brace prior to repetition
- raise knee, scour knee up then out
- as thigh moves to side, transition to foot high; initiate pursed lip exhale
- finish with knees side by side, heel high
- maintain tall posture, avoid pelvic tilt
- repeat with 2 reps in opposite direction

12



Hip Circles (Left) in Single Leg Balance

- as above

13



Reverse Lunge to High Knee (Right)

- setup in 90/90 position with high arm opposite high knee
- broad collarbones, canister, lats packed
- engage hamstring of front foot, as though pulling the ground toward your rear foot
- inhale to enhance core brace
- paw the foot back as you drive the opposite knee up
- mimics normal sprinting mechanics
- hold your end position 2s

14



Reverse Lunge to High Knee (Left)

- as above

15



Eccentric Nordic Hamstring Curl

- use padding under the knee/shin
- dorsiflex the ankle
- partner holds securely holds at the ankle with straight arms (push hard)
- engage core and glutes, brace lats
- inhale, lower slowly
- perform a 1s pause at last available position you can control
- continue to lower with hips stright
- catch yourself in a pushup position, hands and shoulders strong

16



Eccentric Nordic Curl (opposite partner)

- as above

17



Hip Driven Jump & Land

- "SET" in standing plank form
- "LOAD" into an athletic position with maximal hip flexion, forearms beside hips
- "GO" explosively jump, noting full knee and hip extension in the air with overhead reach
- "CATCH" into deeply hinged hip with straight arms by hips
- keep knees separated and back flat as you land