

Functional “Core” Workout

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Craig Liebenson

In order for your health-care provider to successfully help you return to a more functional lifestyle, it is important for you to train certain basic movements which you use in your daily life. Pushing and pulling activities are familiar to all of us. For instance, pushing a car door closed

or pulling a heavy box out of a closet.

Here are a few simple exercises which you can perform that closely mimic and therefore prepare you for common activities in your home, work and sport. The only equipment required is an elastic band or tubing (3–4 feet in length) and door or

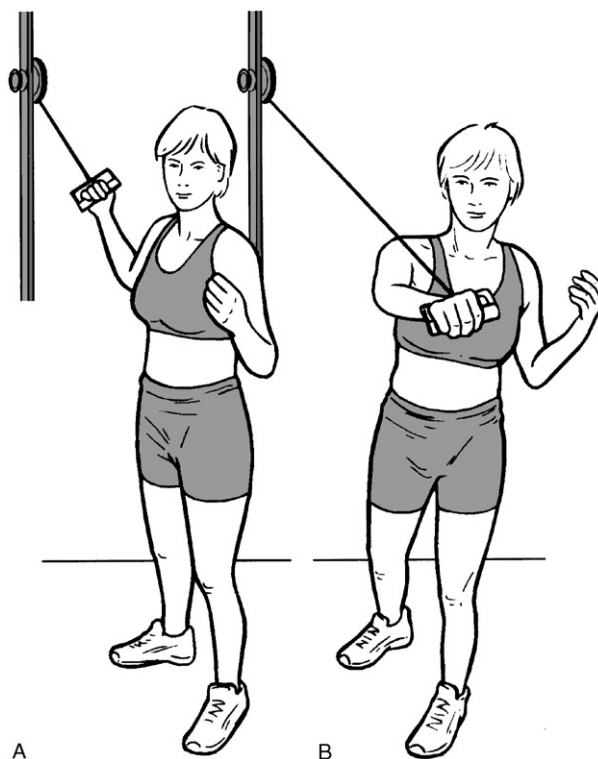


Fig.1 (A and B) Punches.

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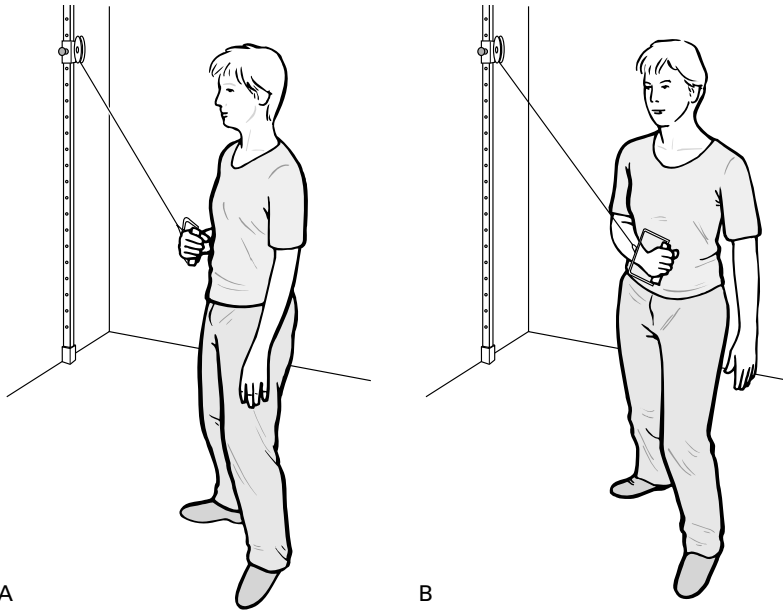


Fig. 2 Punches.

furniture handle, which is readily available from your health-care professional or sporting good store.

Reaching and punching

Function:

This exercise is highly functional since it is part of daily activities such as pushing boxes or furniture, hitting a tennis or golf ball, throwing a ball, or getting out of bed or up from the floor.

(A) First anchor the elastic band to an object at shoulder level or above.

Your starting position:

- Grasp the elastic band or handle in one hand.
- Move your hand to a point behind your ear and step away until you feel slight tension in the band.
- Turn your body sideways so that the hand holding the tubing is nearest to its anchor.

The exercise:

- Slowly reach your arm across your body and then all the way forward until you cannot reach anymore (this should feel like you are punching something).
- Your elbow should be straight.
- Control the band as you return your arm to the start position.

Repetitions: 8–10 slowly.

Frequency: Twice a day ().

(B) For the next variation you will perform a similar motion, but with little or no arm motion. You will be mainly twisting your trunk to activate your abdominal muscles.

Repetitions: 8–10 slowly.

Frequency: Twice a day ().

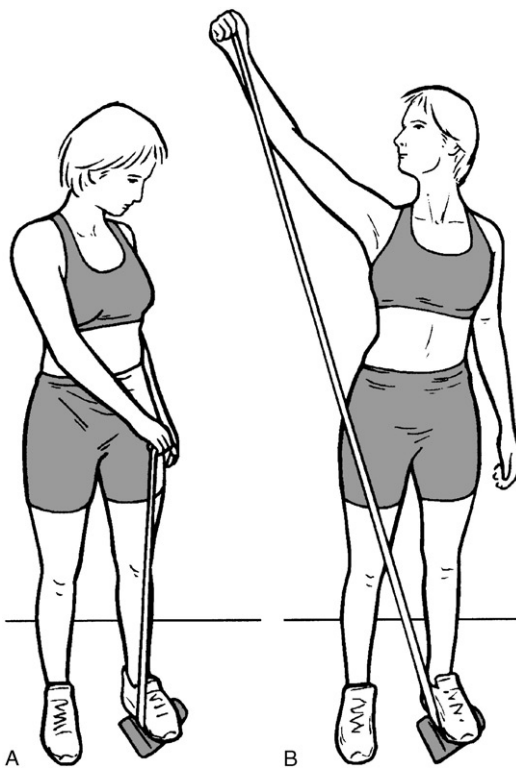


Fig. 3 Sword (Reproduced with permission from DeFranca C, Liebenson C. The Upper Body Book, 2002, The Gym Ball Store, San Diego, www.gymball.com)

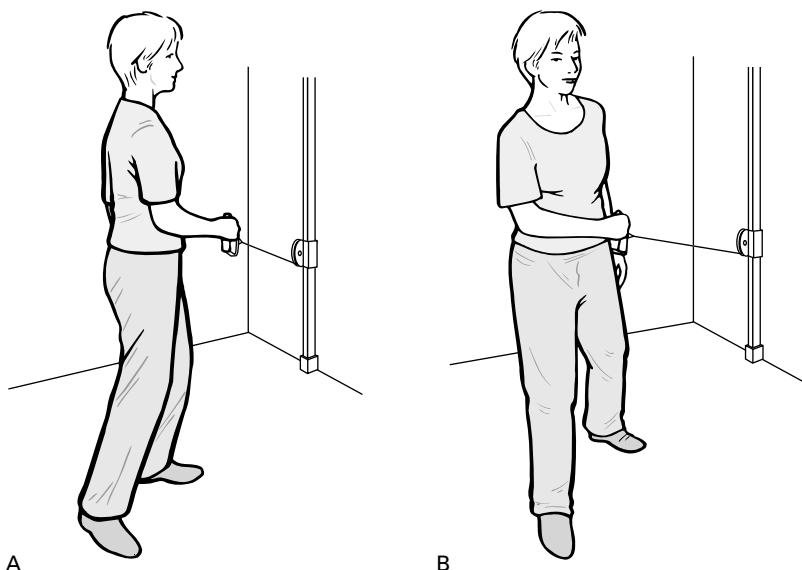


Fig. 4 Pulling.

Pulling

Function:

This exercise is highly functional since it is part of daily activities such as pulling boxes or furniture, starting a lawn mower, and picking up a child or grocery bag.

(A) First anchor the elastic band to an object near your ankles, or simply step on one end of the band.

Your starting position:

- Grasp the elastic band or handle in one hand.
- Move your hand to a point near your front pants pocket and step away until you feel slight tension in the band.
- Turn your body sideways so that the hand holding the tubing is nearest to its anchor.

The exercise:

- Slowly pull your arm across your body and then all the way forward and up until you can't reach anymore.
- Your elbow should be nearly straight.
- Control the band as you return your arm to the start position.

Repetitions: 8–10 slowly.

Frequency: Twice a day ().

(B) For the next variation, you will perform a similar motion, but with little or no arm motion. You will be mainly twisting your trunk to activate your abdominal muscles.

Repetitions: 8–10 slowly.

Frequency: Twice a day ().