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Give your athletic moves a boost

These exercises can hone sport-specific muscles with the use of targeted power

By Elaine Paoloni
amNewYork Features Editor

Whether you're an athlete year-round or just when the weather turns nice, a few targeted exercises can help develop muscular power—and improve your game.

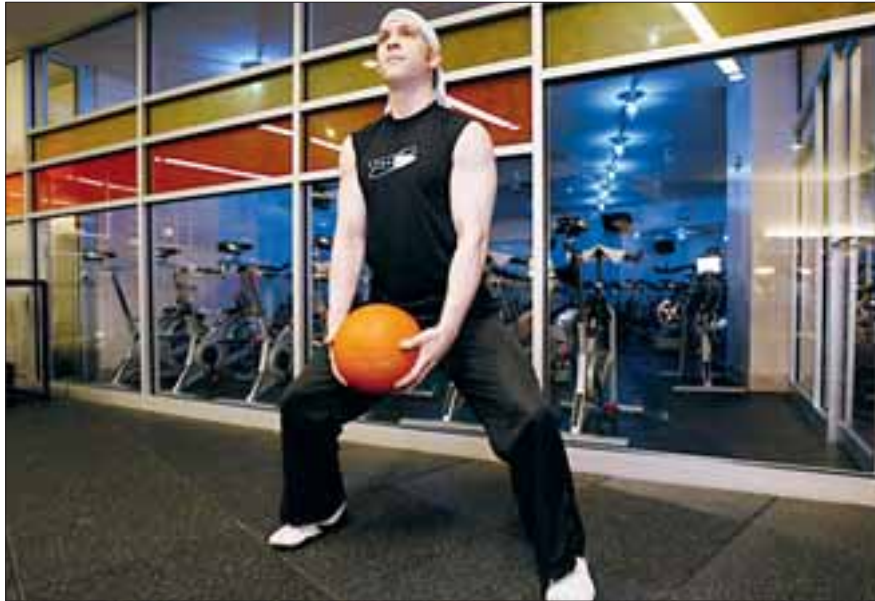
"If you play tennis, basketball, etc., even recreationally, dynamic rotational ability and lateral footwork are must-haves," says Steven Feinberg, group fitness instructor at Equinox Fitness Clubs.

Here, Feinberg suggests two moves from his Speed-ball class that target athletes, specifically tennis, baseball and basketball players.

Lighthouse

Take a medicine ball in your hands and raise it up so that it is parallel with your shoulders. Contract your stomach muscles, creating a corset-like feeling.

With your knees bent, pivot 180 degrees while remaining stationary. Keep your arms straight and neck and shoulder muscles relaxed. Your shoulders should stay directly above your hips so



Equinox group fitness instructor Steven Feinberg uses a medicine ball to improve athletic moves. (Lane Johnson)

that your spine is straight. Pretend the ceiling is low, eliminating any bounce in your movement.

This exercise will increase the strength of a tennis, golf or baseball swing, as well as improve trunk strength and

flexibility with proper posture emphasized for anyone looking to stand up straight when loaded down.

Slide chop

To do this advanced move, set your feet 1.5 times the


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width of your hips, medicine ball in your hands with your arms relaxed so the ball hangs low.

As you move your right foot to the left with a burst of energy, immediately slide your left foot out of the way to regain your starting stance several feet from where you began. At the same time, lift the ball over your head with straight arms.

Repeat the motion in the opposite direction — left foot in, right out — while simultaneously pulling the ball back to your starting position with straight arms.

Repeat the combination of moves several times.

Like a defensive slide in backtrack motion with added resistance and change of directional skills, this movement will increase the lateral performance speed of any athlete.



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