

CONDITIONING PREPARATION: EXERCISING WITH A PARTNER



by Helen Chernoff

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There are many ways to condition basketball players, and having them exercise with a partner certainly has an important role.

There's nothing you can do in the gym that you can't duplicate with a partner workout. Partner workouts work each muscle group without weights by using your partner's resistance and gravity. As a rule, partner exercises are used in warm-ups as well as in the training session itself.

Exercising with a partner has several advantages over doing them by yourself.

First, your partner can provide increased resistance over solo exercises. Another advantage is that your partner can encourage you as well as comment on your technique. Finally, working with a training partner in general can be motivating.

Below, you will see several partner exercises that will benefit basketball players. These exercises can be adapted or modified to suit your needs. It's best to work with a partner who is the same height.

EXERCISES FOR LEG MUSCLES

The Squat

1. Stand at arms' distance from your partner, your feet facing forward, hip-width apart. Keep your back straight and your weight firmly over your heels.



Extend your arms and grasp your partner's hands for balance.

Together, slowly squat down as if you were going to sit in a chair, lowering yourself until the tops of your thighs are parallel to the floor. Pause for one second. Pulling on your partner's hands for leverage, slowly rise up to standing position and repeat. This exercise will strengthen your buttocks, hamstrings, and quadriceps.

Single-Leg Squat

2. Stand facing your partner with legs hip-width apart. Grasp your partner's hands and extend your right knee, raising your lower leg to a horizontal position in front of you. Keep your back straight and your weight firmly over your left heel. Together, slowly squat down as if you were going to sit in a chair, lowering yourself until the tops of your thighs are parallel to the floor. Pause for one second. Pulling against your partner's arms for balance, slowly rise up to standing position and repeat with the opposite leg. This exercise will will strengthen your buttocks, hamstrings, and quadriceps.

Leg Press

3. Lie on your back on the floor with your arms spread out at your sides. Roll your legs up so your upper thighs are resting on your abdomen and your feet facing the ceiling. Have your partner place his hands on the soles of your feet and extend his legs back so he now leans with his full weight on the soles of your feet. Extend and flex your hips and knees, raising your partner until your knees are just short of complete extension. Slowly return to the starting position. Repeat.

Back Hyperextension

4. Kneel on the floor, facing away from your partner. Have your partner firmly hold your shins. Arms folded across your chest or at your sides, keep your back straight, and slowly lower yourself to a 45-degree angle. Pause for one second and raise yourself back to the starting position and repeat.

The hyperextension is unsurpassed for development of the lower back, buttock, hamstrings, and abdominal muscles.

Walking with your partner

5. This classic exercise mainly works the legs, but also strengthens the whole body since you must support your partner's weight from your shoulders down to your feet. There are several variations you can try with your partner:

- a) on your shoulders;
- b) on your back;
- c) walking forward,
- d) walking backward,
- e) walking sideways,
- f) half-squatting.

EXERCISES INVOLVING PARTNER RESISTANCE

Squat

1. Squat down until your quadriceps are parallel to the floor, feet facing forward, hip-width apart. Have your partner stand behind you and place his hands on your shoulders. As he applies gentle resistance, begin to rise up, reaching a standing position at the count of 5. Repeat.

Leg Extensions

2. Sit on the floor facing your partner with your knees up against your chest. Place the soles of your feet against the soles of your partner's feet. Place your hands on the floor for support. As your partner supplies gentle resistance, push out against your partner's feet until your legs are fully extended. You then supply gentle resistance as your partner then pushes against the soles of your feet until your knees are back against your chest. Repeat.

Single leg hamstring curl

3. Lie flat on your chest on the floor, arms folded, and chin resting on your forearms. Raise your right leg to 90 degrees. Your partner kneels behind you and holds your right ankle and left heel. As he applies gentle resistance to your right leg, lower your right leg to the floor. As your partner continues with the pressure, raise your leg back to the starting position. Repeat with the other leg. Strengthens the hamstring muscles on the back of the thigh.

Double leg hamstring curl

4. Lie flat on the floor on your chest, arms directly out in front of your shoulders. Raise your lower legs to 90 degrees. Your partner kneels behind you and holds the soles of your feet. As he applies gentle resistance to your feet, lower your legs to the floor. As your partner continues with the pressure, raise your legs back to the starting position. This exercise strengthens the hamstring muscles on the back of the thigh.

The following partner exercises are performed with gymnastic equipment.

Squats while holding onto a bar

1. With your partner on your back or shoulders, stand in front of gymnastic wall bars and hold onto them for support. Make sure your back is straight and your weight firmly over your heels. Slowly squat down as if you were going to sit in a chair, lowering yourself until the tops of your thighs are parallel to the floor. Pause for one second. Pulling on the bar for leverage, slowly rise up to standing position and repeat. This exercise will will strengthen your buttocks, hamstrings, and quadriceps.

Groin strengthener

2. Sit on a bench, face to face with your partner. Raise your right leg as your partner raises his left leg and places his foot against your inside ankle. As your partner supplies gentle pressure, resist as he pushes your leg to the side. Pause for one second, push back against your partner's leg, and return to the starting position. Repeat several times and then switch legs. Strengthens the groin muscles on the inside of the thigh.

Quadriceps Strengtheners

3. Sit on a bench, face to face with your partner. Raise your right leg as your partner raises his right leg and place the sole of your foot against his foot. Holding onto the bench for support, push against your partner's foot until your leg is fully extended. Supplying resistance, allow your partner to push your leg until his leg is fully extended. Repeat and then switch legs.