

Fitness Forum: Exercise improves shoulder and hip strength

by CNS

The moves: Extending an arm and leg while on your hands and knees.

Works on: Shoulder and hip strength, core stability and balance.

ARM EXERCISE - Firefighter/paramedic Kurtis Bennett demonstrates an arm and leg extension. CNS Photo by Peggy Peattie. Setup: Assume a hands and knees position. The arms and legs should be 90 degrees to the torso with the head in line with the spine (eyes looking toward the floor).

Steps: Using the abdominal muscles, begin by drawing up the belly button toward the spine (belly draw) and holding it there throughout the exercise. Slowly and simultaneously raise the right arm and the left leg until they are parallel with the floor. Pause for a two-count; then slowly return. Repeat with the left arm and right leg. The goal is to do the move with minimal trunk movement.

Repetitions: Progress as tolerated to up to three sets of 10 on each side.

Precautions: A firm belly draw is critical to the move. Do not allow the low back to curve toward the ground at the top of the arm and leg movement. Prevent curving of the back by decreasing how high you raise the extremities combined with a firmer belly draw. Keep the head aligned with the spine (always be looking straight down).

Options: If balance is a problem, just raise one extremity until comfortable and then slowly add the other.