Fitness Forum: Ball brings new challenge to an old move

by CNS

The moves: A push-up with an exercise ball.

PUSH-UP UPGRADE - Firefighter Robert Logan adds intensity to the traditional push-up by performing the exercise on a stability ball. CNS Photo courtesy of Peggy Peattie. Works on: Upper extremity, chest and core strength. Defines and lifts the lower portion of the pectorals.

Setup: Prepare an area free of obstructions. Kneel in front of an exercise ball and lay your torso on top of it. Push with the legs and roll forward on the ball until the hands touch the ground and the pelvis and upper thighs are supported by the ball. Continue to "walk" out with the hands until half of the torso is unsupported. Spread the legs slightly to help with stability.

The moves: Position the hands slightly wider than, and just below shoulder height. Keep the elbows close to the body (upper arms a maximum of 45 degrees from the torso). Perform a slow and controlled push-up, keeping the torso and legs rigid. Move with slow and controlled movement, because adding the instability of the ball makes this more challenging.

Repetitions: 2-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions.

Precautions: Clear the area! It is easy to roll off the ball. This exercise can be deceiving, so progress slowly!

Options: Walk out farther, bring the legs closer together, or combine the two for more core work. A larger ball, because it is taller, will increase the challenge to the pectorals.