

Exercise From Home with Exercise Bands



Workout

NATIONAL CENTER ON HEALTH, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & DISABILITY

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Stuck at Home

If you are like most folks right now, you find yourself at home and binge watching your favorite series on Netflix (maybe for the second or third time). Perhaps you have started to think about your home gym... or lack thereof. If you aren't ready to drop a couple hundred or even thousands of dollars on a piece of equipment like a concepts 2 rower, ski erg, or arm ergometer, then exercise resistance bands might be the perfect inexpensive option for you. Resistance bands have additional use outside of a rehab and therapy setting. Available at Amazon, Walmart, and other online retailers for under \$20, these super versatile bands cannot only help you get a great workout in but they are also small enough to take with you wherever you go. So, what exercises can you do at home with an exercise band? I'm glad you asked.

Let's Start with Cardio

Cross country ski: Place the band around an immovable object (such as a pole, door, or fence post) slightly higher than your head. Alternate your arms by pulling them down by your sides and keeping your elbows straight.



To make this a cardio exercise, do this movement in intervals. Make your interval ratios something that you are able to sustain but is also challenging. For example, perform a 1:1 ratio of 30 seconds on and 30 seconds of rest. If that is too hard, change the ratio to less work and more rest. If a 1:1 ratio is too easy, shrink your rest time and increase your work time. Another way to work intervals is to complete a Tabata. Tabata is a high intensity interval of 20 seconds of work then 10 seconds of rest repeated for four minutes. Experiment with what works best for you.

Straight arm pulls

There are additional moves to the cross country ski that incorporate cardio. Perform straight arm pull-downs by pulling both arms down together at the same time while not bending your elbows and keeping them straight.



Punches

Another move to get that heart rate up is to turn around and face away from the anchor point. Begin cardio punches by holding one end of the band in each hand. Then punch forward, alternating arms again using any of the intervals mentioned above.



The recommended amount of cardio is 150 minutes of moderate activity a week. Break that up into 30 minutes a day. You can also break that 30 minutes up into smaller chunks of time throughout the day to make it more manageable.

Exercise Intensity



20 sec. work - 40 sec. rest

Light



30 sec. work - 30 sec. rest

Moderate



20 sec. work - 20 sec. rest

High Intensity

Strength Routine

As a piece of strength training equipment, an exercise band is probably one of the most versatile pieces of equipment there is. You name the muscle group and there is probably a way to work it. Here is a general workout routine including the major muscle groups in the upper body. For each group of exercises, start with 3 rounds of 10 repetitions (reps). Complete a group of exercises before moving to the next. Exercise bands can be low resistance. If that's the case, consider significantly increasing the sets and reps. Just make sure to increase slowly so that you do not accidentally overdo it. Depending on the length of the band that you are using, some of these exercises may need to be adjusted to be performed one side at a time.

Start with this group of 3

Chest Press

Attach the band behind you on an immovable object at chest height. With one end of the band in each hand, start your hands at shoulder height with elbows bent and behind you but also at shoulder height. Your arms should be parallel to the ground. Extend your arms out straight and return to starting position.



Rowing

With the same attachment spot as the previous chest press exercise, turn and face the band attachment. Start with your arms fully extended at chest height and one end of the band in each hand. With palms facing down, bend your elbows and pull your hands back till they are even with your chest, pinching your shoulder blades together. Slowly return to starting position.



Crunches

Using the same attachment spot or moving it up higher, turn around and face away from the attachment site. With one end of the band in each hand, start with your hands near your collar bone while bending your elbows and resting your arms against your torso. Perform a crunch motion by moving your shoulders towards your knees. Return to starting position.



Strength Routine

Second group of 3

Shoulder Press

For this exercise, the band needs to be below you. Some may choose to sit on the band, run it under their chair, or use another attachment site. With an end of the band in each hand, start with your hands at shoulder height, elbows facing down. Extend both arms up over head to full extension and return to starting position.



Lateral Raises

Place the band below you or you may prefer to move it to attach it at floor height. With an end of the band in each hand, start with both arms down by your side and elbows straight. Keeping your elbows straight, bring both arms up in a V position to shoulder height. Slowly lower your arms down by your side.



Crossover Crunches

Use the same attachment site as you did for the crunches. Grab both ends of the band in each hand, and rest on your left shoulder. While keeping your hands at your shoulder, crunch down by bringing your shoulder down towards your opposite right knee and return to starting position. Perform all the reps on that side before switching to complete the exercise on the other side (right shoulder crunching to left knee).



4 sets of 5 reps.

Light



3 sets of 10 reps.

Moderate



4 sets of 20 reps.

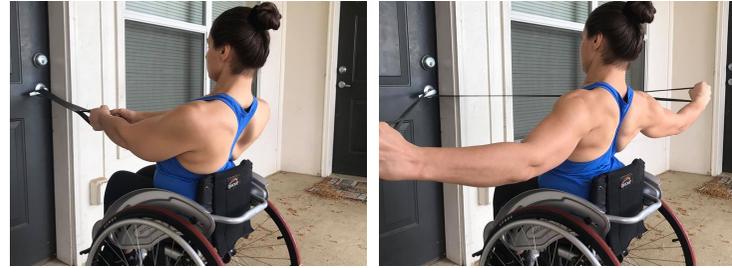
High

Strength Routine

Third group of 3

Reverse Fly

Using the same attachment sites as chest press or rowing, start with one end of the band in each hand and arms extended out in front of you at chest height with elbows straight. Pull your arms out to the sides, making a T and pinching your shoulder blades together. Slowly bring your arms back to the starting position.



Biceps Curl

The band should be below you, similar to how you placed it for the lateral raises. With an end of the band in each hand, start with your arms down by your side. Curl your hand straight up to shoulder height by bending only at the elbows. Slowly lower your hand back down by your side.



Triceps Extension

This exercise is usually best done one hand at a time. Hold one end of the band in your right hand behind your back at waist level. Grab the other end of the band with your left hand, starting with it behind your head with elbow bent and pointing up towards the ceiling or sky. Keeping your left elbow tucked in close to your ear, extend the left hand up towards the ceiling until your elbow is fully extended and then slowly lower it back down. The right hand is maintaining the tension on the band. After completing the reps on this side, switch hand positions to complete the exercise reps with the right triceps.



Finish Strong

Finish the workout with a quick round of internal and external rotations. You definitely don't want to over-stress these muscles groups. Keep the resistance light and do 3 sets of 10.

Internal Rotation

Start with the band attached at waist height. Place a rolled up towel under your arm pit of the active arm. This will keep your arm in the right position and not let your elbow float away. Start with your arm bent at 90 degrees. Your body should be perpendicular to the band. Your right shoulder should be furthest away from the attachment site. Starting with your right arm directly in front of you across your torso, pull the band out by pulling your right hand away from your torso and rotating your arm out.



External Rotation

To move to an internal rotation, stay in the same position and switch the band to the left hand and perform the exact opposite movement as the external rotation. Make sure to switch the towel to the other arm pit. Your hand starts away from your body pulling in toward your torso. After performing all the reps, switch to the other side.



It is important that we all stay active and healthy during this time. If you have any questions about how you can stay active, please send NCHPAD a message at email@NCHPAD.org or connect with us on social media @NCHPAD.



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