

Rope Training for better bodyweight exercise routines

At the BP Wellness Center in Houston Texas, we are a corporate health and fitness facility which serves the 4700 employee office of a large oil and gas company. Our trainees run the gamut in fitness levels, ages and conditions. Our staff uses a multi-faceted training style, incorporating many different systems and disciplines. In this way, we can provide the best program to suit individual trainee needs.

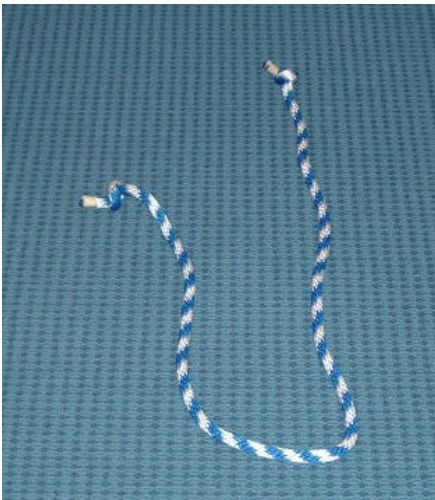
Functional movements and bodyweight exercises have become a staple in the training programs we design. The carryover benefit to athletics and everyday life is great. One of the obstacles many of our trainees have is travel—to other offices, oil platforms, field locations, etc. --all over the world. Often there is no place/facility/equipment to exercise. The challenge is to come up with a productive workout which requires the minimum amount of equipment.

Bodyweight Exercise

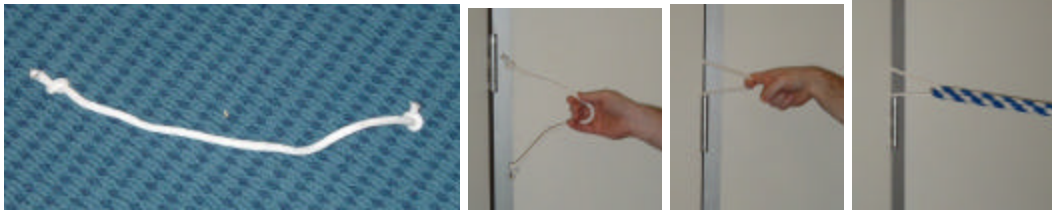
Bodyweight exercise is great functional strength training. Traditionally, lower body exercises are accomplished with squat, lunge and step-up variations. Upper body pressing movements are covered by the different push-up and dipping variations. Upper body pulling exercises, however, have always been a problem--especially if there is nothing available for chin-ups/pull-ups or if the trainee is not strong enough to perform a full chin-up/pull-up.

Enter Rope Exercise

A thick rope is a simple, inexpensive way to integrate pulling movements into a bodyweight exercise routine. Rope can be purchased at any hardware store. Be sure it is at least as thick as your thumb. The softer the rope, the easier it will be to grab. Cut a length of at least 5 ft. and put a knot in each end.



The rope can be wrapped around various sturdy supports. Most accessible to folks would be a doorknob. An adjustable anchor can be made from a smaller, thinner piece of rope and used on a door jam (as illustrated below). The anchor will also allow for variation in height of your rope. It may also provide a sturdier alternative to a cheap hotel door/door knob.

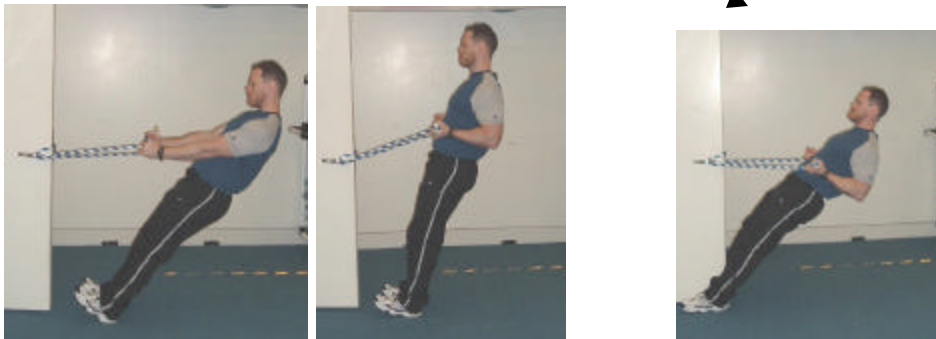


There are almost an infinite number of exercises and variations which can be performed depending on what you have available to wrap the rope around. One of the best features of using the rope is the variable intensity you can create for each exercise.

The keys to the rope exercises are foot position and body angle. Performance cues, in most cases, are to keep your abdominals and glutes tight while pulling. Try to maintain a neutral spine with your head pulled back (don't force your chin forward as you pull). Here are some exercise examples:

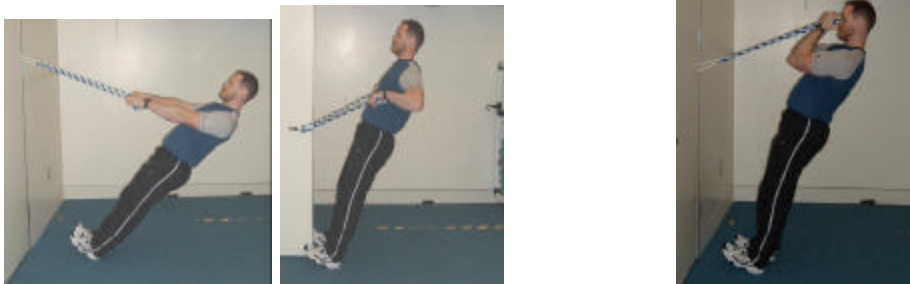
Standing Rows (Lats and biceps)

-With steeper body angle for more difficulty



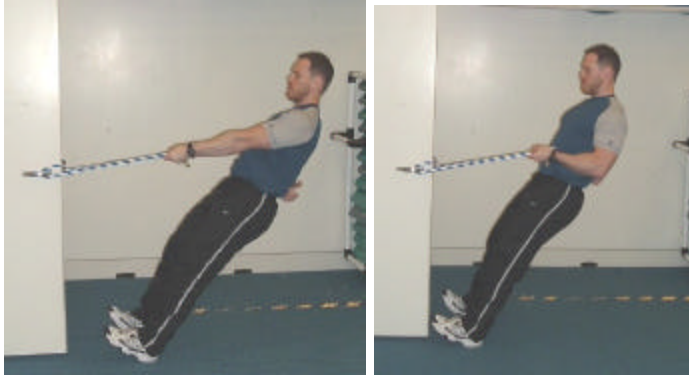
Overhand Grip Row (Lats and rear deltoids)

Rope Curl (biceps)



Single Arm Row

-Grip both ends of the rope with one hand



Side Pulls (for lats and scapular adductors)

-Tuck elbow back behind you as you pull



Shoulder Lateral Pull (great work for the deltoids)

-With a slight bend in the elbows begin with fists together

-Spread hands out and to the side as you pull yourself up



Reverse Push-up (Lats and biceps)

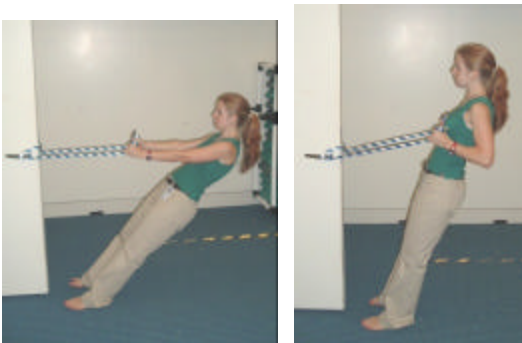


Pull-up (Lats, biceps and great grip work as well)

-Got a tree branch available?



The rope works for varying strength levels



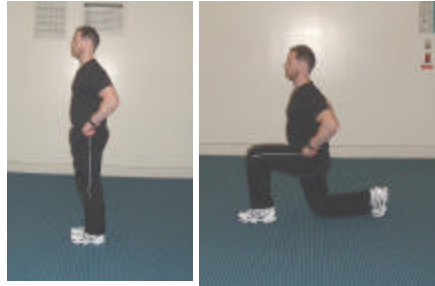
Some other favorite bodyweight exercise examples:

Squat



Stationary Lunge

-Tough



Bulgarian Squat

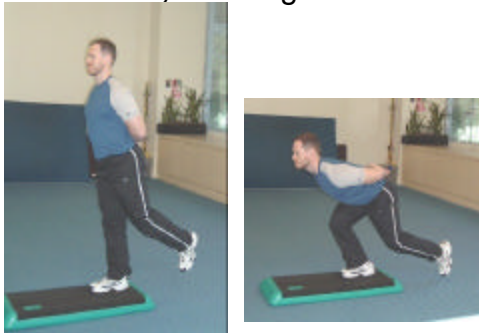
-Even tougher



Skier squat

-Tougher still

-As low as you can go



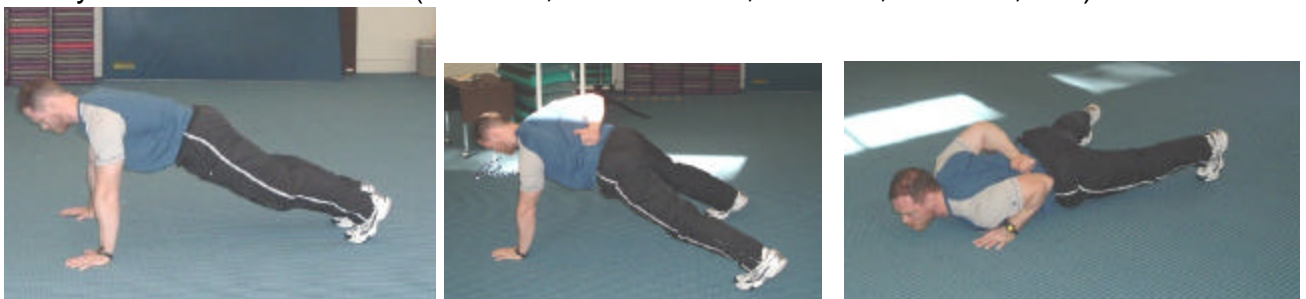
Single leg squat

-Toughest!



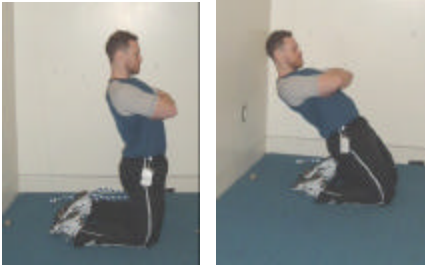
Push-up or Single Arm Push-up

-Many variations for this one (modified, feet elevated, one foot, one arm, etc.)



Floor Quad Raise

- Abs and glutes tight
- Lower legs parallel



Glute-ham Raise

- Lower as sloooowwwly as possible
- Abs and glutes tight
- Push off only as much as you need to as you come up
- Pull with your hamstrings



Tent Push-up

- Feet on the floor is easier
- Handstand against the wall is more fun



Single Leg Calfraise

- Use only finger tips for balance
- Both hands behind back is even more challenging



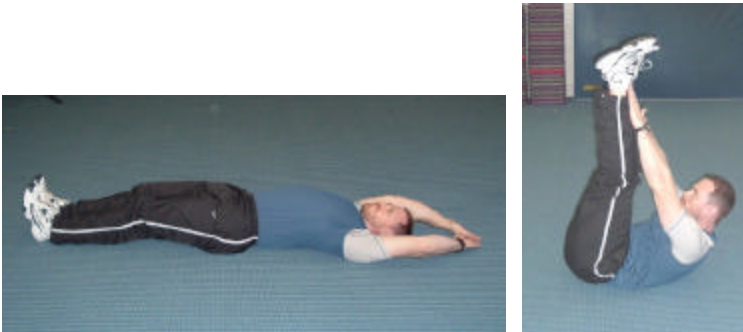
Bench/Chair Dips

- The more bend in you knees and closer your feet-- the easier it is
- Elevate feet to make tougher (add weight to your lap as well?)



V-ups

- Keep abs tight throughout the movement



Low ab/Reverse crunch

- Stomach tight, low back flattened to floor in bottom position
- Pull knees to chest, hips raise off the floor



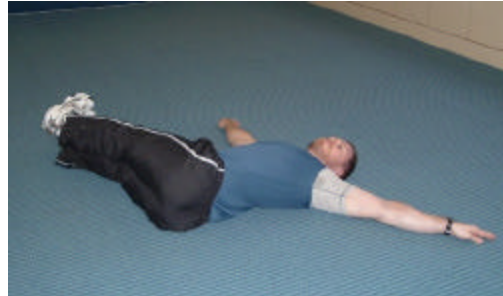
Side Bridge(dynamic)

- Static and bent elbow is easier



Russian Twist

-Bend knees to make easier



Routine Ideas:

Perform on non-consecutive days. Letter sequence means you perform those exercises together—ie. a set of A1, followed by A2, then A3. Round two has you repeat the sequence over A1, A2, A3.

<u>Exercise</u>		<u>Sets/ reps</u>	<u>performance comments</u>
Single leg squat or skiers squat	A1	1-2x10-15	
Push-up variation	A2	1-2x ?	? = Perform as many as possible, stop 1 or 2 reps short of failure.
Rope row	A3	1-2 x 10	
Floor Quad Lift	B1	1-2 x 12	
Glute Ham Raise	B2	1-2 x 12	Use bed to anchor heels w/pillow under knees.
Tent Push-up	B3	1-2 x 10	
Rope Curl	C1	1-2 x 10	
Chair Dip	C2	1-2 x ?	
V-up	D1	1-2 x ?	
Russian Twist	D1	1-2 x ?	

Total Body (less intense)

Exercise		Sets/ reps	performance comments
Lunge variation, Bulgarian Squat or Step-up	A1	1-2 x 15-20	
Push-up	A2	1-2 x ?	? = Perform as many as possible, stop 1 or 2 reps short of failure
Rope row	A3	1-2 x 10	
Floor Quad Lift	B1	1-2 x 12	
Glute Ham Raise	B2	1-2 x 12	Use bed to anchor heels w/pillow under knees.
Rope Shoulder Lateral	B3	1-2 x 12	
Rope Curl	C1	1-2 x 10	
Chair Dip	C2	1-2 x ?	
Floor Crunch	D1	1-2 x ?	
Side Bridge	D2	1-2 x ?	

Upper/Lower Body Split

• Upper

Exercise		Sets/ reps	performance comments
Push-up variation	A1	2-3x ?	? = Perform as many as possible, stop 1 or 2 reps short of failure.
Rope row (single) or pull-up	A2	2-3x 8	
Tent push-up or hand Stand push-up	B1	2-3x ?	
Rope Shoulder Lateral	B2	2-3x 10	
Rope Curl (single)	C2	2-3X8	
Chair Dip (feet elevated)	C2	2-3x ?	

V-up	D1	2-3x ?
Reverse Crunch	D2	2-3x ?

• **Lower**

Exercise		Sets/ reps	performance comments
Single Leg Squat/ Skier Squat	A1	2-3x ?	
Single Calfraise	A2	2-3x ?	
Glute Ham Raise	B1	2-3x 10	
Floor Quad Raise	B2	2-3x 10	
Lunge variation	B3	2-3x ?	
Russian Twist	C1	2-3x ?	
Side Bridge	C2	2-3x ?	

There you have it! A trainee, a rope and a great workout had anywhere. The rope and anchor can be easily carried in a suitcase or bag. If you forget the rope, make due with a hotel towel and a doorknob. What a cheap and effective workout option! Try one of the workouts above next time your on the road-- you'll never look at a door the same way again.