



BAND IT LIKE BECKHAM

Non-descript in design, the elastic band is often looked upon as just another strip of latex. Cindy Ng, senior physiotherapist, Singapore General Hospital, waxes lyrical about this simple yet very useful piece of exercise equipment and shows you how to use it.

Photo : Phil Date

The beauty of the elastic band lies in the simple fact that it is cheap, light, easy to use and makes for an excellent travelling companion because it does not require much space. Pack it in your office, or in your suitcase if you travel a lot, or in your handbag if you are a busy mum on the go. It is just so handy, and you can whip it out anytime, anywhere, in the car, in the hotel room or in the office.

These elastic bands are widely used for rehabilitation from muscle and joint injuries and for aerobics and general conditioning. Both aerobic exercise and resistance exercise can be done using an adequately long elastic band (one that is 2m long would be good).

Because of its elasticity, it provides resistance during one's exercise, such as the aerobic workout below:

1. Hold onto the band and reaching upwards with alternate arms.
2. Hold onto the band and stepping onto the middle of the band and moving sideways.

The elastic band can be used to train both the upper and lower body as well as the abdominal, to tone up the muscles.

The band is available in different colours; each colour is distinguished by a different thickness. A thicker band means more resistance. More resistance means harder work but translates into bigger muscles.

With proper guidance on the usage of the band, simple resistance training can be done anywhere without expensive equipment and heavy dumb bells. Since it does not require very strenuous activity, it is safe for both young and old, and the handicapped or obese can participate in the exercise regime.

Studies have shown that if the band is used properly, the tension in the band is equivalent to a fixed resistance. For example, extending the green band to double its length is equivalent to approximately 2kg. Extending it to 200% of its length is approximately 3.6kg.

When using the elastic band, always do all exercises in a slow and controlled manner, breathing normally throughout. Avoid letting the band control your movements.

Exercise Guidelines

When exercising with the elastic band, keep in mind the following do's and don'ts:

Do

- Warm up the muscle groups before exercising.
- Maintain good posture. Keep your wrists straight and in line with your elbows.
- Breathe normally. Exhale during the most difficult phase and inhale during the easiest.
- Use controlled movements.
- Maintain the natural width of the band to keep it from digging into your hands or sliding up your legs.
- Stretch after you have completed the workout.

Don't

- Don't use body oil.
- Don't bend your wrists. Stop and reposition yourself if you are losing your posture.
- Don't continue exercising if you feel any pain

Tip: Make a handle by tying a loop in the band or tying two bands together.

MARCH TO THE BAND

1

hip abduction

Tie the band around the lower legs and lift one leg sideways, keeping body upright.



3

hip flexion

Tie the band around the lower legs and lift one leg forward, keeping body upright.



2

hip extension

Tie the band around the lower legs and lift one leg backwards, keeping body upright.



4

knee extension

Seated, tie the green band around the lower legs and straighten one knee.

