



# Be a Sport

Improving your athletic skills—balance, strength, and agility—gives you a competitive edge *and* scores you a sizzling body.

By *Jayme Moye*

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
RANDI BEREZ

➔ Lazy days of summer? As if! Thanks to company softball leagues, picnic volleyball matches, and beach-resort kite-surfing lessons, this is the time of year you're most likely to break out of your usual exercise routine and flex some athletic muscle.

Even if you're pretty fit from a winter full of spin classes, the endurance you gained may not translate when you're participating in outside-the-gym activities. That's where functional training comes in: It works the entire body as a unit to mimic real-life situations, like hiking a rocky trail or chasing a Frisbee, says conditioning coach Janice Hutton, of Twist Sport Conditioning in Ontario.

Need more of an incentive? Functional training stokes your metabolism. "The more muscle mass you move at once, the more muscle you build, the more total calories you burn, and the more fat you melt," says Hutton. So even if you don't end up playing beach volleyball, you can have the bikini body of a pro.

Do the exercises on the following page as a supplement to your regular routine. They'll help you develop the skills you'll need to play—and look—like a natural on the court, field, or beach. Game on!

Spike your routine with functional training moves.

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**The Skill: Strength**

Muscles that pack a powerful punch allow you to send a softball or kickball into the outfield. And with training, you won't be a one-hit (or one-kick) wonder. You'll have the muscular endurance to crush the next ball too.

**The Move: Split Squat with Overhead Press**

Hold a 15-pound dumbbell in each hand at shoulder level (elbows bent, as shown), step your right foot forward so your legs are in a staggered stance, and squat down (a). Press both weights overhead as you stand up (b). Do five reps, then switch your leg positions and do five more.



**BODY BONUS**  
This move is one of the best all-over toners.



**BODY BONUS**  
You'll strengthen your legs, especially your calves, hamstrings, and glutes.

**The Skill: Agility**

Being able to change positions quickly helps you stay steady as you dodge rocks and roots while trail running or mountain biking.

**The Move: Three-Cone Drill**

Place three cones (or other markers) in a triangle pattern eight feet apart. Sprint from the first cone (a) to the second. Circle that cone (b), then run backward to the first. Circle the first cone, then sprint to the third cone; circle it, then run backward to the first cone. Repeat as quickly as you can three times. Rest for 30 seconds, then repeat three more times.



**BODY BONUS**  
This exercise also sculpts your quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, and core muscles.

**The Skill: Balance**

Your body uses cues from your feet, eyes, and ears to sense which muscles to activate to keep you steady on in-line skates or water skis. Balance training improves that communication chain, so your body can react quickly and spare you from a wipeout.

**The Move: One-Leg Balance**

Stand on your left leg with your arms at your sides (a). Lean forward, push your hips back, and extend your right leg behind you, keeping your back straight. Reach down with your right hand and try to touch the toes of your left foot (b). Return to the starting position without touching your right foot to the floor. Do five reps, then switch sides and repeat.



**The Skill: Core Strength**

Strong muscles in your torso and hips generate force and support the movements of your arms and legs, whether you're swinging a golf club or jumping waves.

**The Move: Torso Resistance**

Attach a resistance band to the knob of a closed door. Hold the band in front of you in both hands, keeping your arms straight. Turn so you're standing with your right side facing the door. Take a few steps to the left until you feel resistance; hold that position for 30 seconds. Engage your core to keep your torso from turning toward the door. Rest for 10 seconds. Do four reps, then turn around and repeat on the other side.

**BODY BONUS**  
This move also improves your posture.



**The Skill: Power**

By boosting your ability to move explosively, you'll gain the skills—and confidence—to pop up on a surfboard or spike a volleyball.

**The Move: Dumbbell Split Jump**

Hold a pair of dumbbells (five to eight pounds) against your sides, palms facing in. Stagger your feet (left foot forward, right foot back) and lower down into a split squat (a). Push up off the ground, getting as much air as you can (b), while simultaneously switching your leg positions. Land with your right foot in front and your left foot back (c). Repeat 10 to 12 times, alternating leg positions with each rep.

**BODY BONUS**  
Jumping moves burn more calories than standing exercises—and fry more fat!



**The Skill: Quickness**

Being able to take off fast enables you to blast off third base and make it to home, or to charge after a tennis ball when your opponent lobs it to the far end of the court.

**The Move: Weaving Sprint**

Line up five cones (or other markers) in a row, about 18 inches apart (a bit less than your average stride). Start at one end and weave through the cones, running as fast as possible without knocking them over. At the end, turn around and jog back. Do four reps, then rest for 30 seconds. Repeat the sequence three times.

**BODY BONUS**  
Short bursts of all-out effort keep your heart rate high and rev your metabolism.



**Ready for Summer?**  
Visit [WomensHealthMag.com/PersonalTrainer](http://WomensHealthMag.com/PersonalTrainer) for bikini-body workouts.

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