

Outside the Box 3

by Rob Bush 06_01_06

Range of Motion (ROM)

Probably the most overlooked and least utilized protocol within many training & athletic routine's is what is known as range of motion work. Range of motion, or ROM for short, is the type of work that will keep the body flexible and flowing smoothly within all its parts. ROM work will greatly improve muscle function, muscle harmony, and reduce overall fatigue. It will also lower the chance of injuries occurring as well as serve as the catalyst toward muscle recovery and rehabilitation. Understanding ROM and how important it is toward overall performance and health is vital for the Renegade athlete as well as anyone seeking to get the most out of their own capabilities. The key to ROM work is realizing the need to maintain mobility and flexibility. The natural result of the ageing process is a loss of both these functions. Muscle loses its elasticity as the body ages, which in turn affects overall mobility and full body movement. ROM work will help fight against this natural process and allow a more youthful vibe to be maintained. Even more important is the fact that ROM eliminates stress and tension from the muscles.

There are 2 types of ROM that should be introduced into your training, static range of motion and dynamic range of motion.

Static range of motion is work performed using long passive stretches, controlled muscular tension, proper breathing patterns and learning to eliminate tension from the body. *

Dynamic range of motion directly impacts upon performance involving ballistic type movements to assist with hip, shoulder and spinal rotation. *(Diamonds by John Davies)

Dynamic flexibility ROM is performed prior to each training session. Dynamic type work consists of hurdles and tumbling. Yes, just like that old gym class. Hurdle work, or hip mobility training, is so important in loosening up the hip joint. It makes use of one or two plastic hurdles set at hip height. If these are not available, you may use anything similar such as a park bench or a fence. There are several important movements to learn which have several variations to them. They are,

Fire hydrants – Get on all fours and lift your leg up like a dog would to relieve itself. Use full range of motion and feel it in the hip joints. Do 2 to 3 sets of five repetitions.

Lead leg over hurdle – like the fire hydrants but standing and walking over hurdles. These can be done one leg at a time, cross over style, and alternating each leg. Again 2 or 3 sets of 5 repetitions will work here.

Duck under – standing beside the hurdle, go into a full squat position. Use your lead leg to reach under the hurdle and plant it on the opposite side of the hurdle.

Proceed to move your body under the hurdle and back into the squat position. Other variations of this are to “pop” up once you clear the hurdle from side to side. Also you can use a twist when clearing the hurdle so you are facing away from it once it has been cleared.

Leg sweeps - Balancing on one leg sweep the other leg up and over the hurdle and back again. Do 5 to 10 reps for each leg. This one really loosens the hips up.

Tumbling drills – These types of movements are excellent for enhancing total body harmony, relative strength, and kinetic awareness. Adding these movements can have great long-term effects on range of motion, balance and overall control. Examples of tumbling drills are,

Forward roll into a standing position. This is also known as a somersault.

Backward roll into a standing position. This would be a reverse somersault.

Spider lunge - Basically in a push up position, crawl along the ground keeping your body as low as possible and your arms and legs spread out as wide as you can. This one is tough but extremely beneficial.

Remember that dynamic ROM work should be done prior to each training session. Choose several movements to do to give your body the opportunity to really loosen up and prepare for GPP work and the coming training session.

Static flexibility ROM should be done to conclude each training session of the day. These movements are very controlled and use deep breathing patterns throughout the routine. It must be noted that the prime example of this kind of work can be found in the Renegade DVD entitled “Pink.” This is a form of yoga training that everyone should own and use. You want to allow yourself to be totally relaxed and in a comfortable environment to perform these stretches. These stretches should be held for 30 to 45 seconds each. Breathe deeply through the nose and exhale from the mouth when performing the routine. Allow yourself time to relax in between each hold. When performed correctly, you will notice immediate results in that your range of motion will be greater and your body will release tension built up within the muscles and joints. Improving your overall flexibility is the by product of static ROM as well as aiding the body in healing nagging injuries and such. It will also help you toward maintaining perfect posture and improve the bodies overall balance. All athletes and trainers should take static ROM work very seriously. Do not underestimate its benefits. Try it and see for yourself. You will want to make it a part of your lifestyle. Examples of static stretches are,

Stand up straight

Reach upward

Standing up and reach to one side

Bend over touching both feet in straddle position

Spread legs and reach down touching both feet

Warrior poses – 3 variations

Bent lunge

Dog – on all fours raising the back high in the middle

Cat – on all fours sweeping the back inward
Prayer – sitting on knees and bowing in front of you
Laying twists
Butterfly

These are just a few of the examples found in Renegade Pink yoga training. Please refer to the DVD or the publication entitled, "The Mark of R" so you can actually see these movements as they are to be performed by Renegade founder John Davies.

In conclusion, understanding the importance of range of motion is vital for the well-rounded athlete. Daily practice of static and dynamic flexibility can only serve to benefit your entire training sessions and allow you to be better both in sport and in all of life in general, especially as you get older and begin to see the signs of aging. Use it wisely to your benefit and take advantage of the wonderful results you will see from making ROM work a part of your lifestyle.

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Rob began training back in the early 80's being drawn to working out by some of the bodybuilding's great names. He is a fitness enthusiast who raced amateur motocross for 3 years in the late 80s. Rob dove into power lifting back the mid 90's and plans to begin recruiting clients to personal train R-Style in the Macon area. Rob is also a well accomplished trumpet player who has performed in various ensembles through the years from grade school thru college and beyond. He studied privately for 6 years. Fitness-wise, Rob has worked in several training centers over the years.