

Dynamic Sledge Warm Up

By Jim Smith, CSCS

Sledgehammer training is a great means for supplemental general conditioning. In training, they are typically used to strike objects (stumps, tires, kneecaps) or are levered through various wrist postures.

Some benefits of typical sledgehammer training include:

- improving general conditioning and endurance
- potential vibration training adaptations
- promoting endurance of engaged musculature
- promoting co-contraction, i.e. creating full body tension and muscular coordination in an effort to absorb impact or generate speed
- improved neural efficiency
- can be utilized for many sport specific movement patterns
- lower arm tendinosis rehabilitation and strengthening
- dynamic grip strength and endurance is developed when trying to maintain control of an object whose *center of gravity* or *center of mass* is located distal to the contact point



But what few know is that sledgehammers are also a great tool for warming up for your upper body days.

Dynamic Upper Body Warm Up

A new approach to a dynamic upper body warm up could include any or all of the following:

Standing patterns/postures

Clubbell type movements: Targets mobility and activation of upper kinetic (coordination of muscular, myofascial, articular, neurological systems) segments (i.e. shoulder circles, armpit casts)

Grip specific movements: Targets strength, endurance, activation, and rehabilitation of the fingers, wrists, and elbows (i.e. finger walking, supination, pronation)

Supine patterns/postures

Shoulder movements: Targets mobility and activation of upper kinetic segments (i.e. shoulder flexion/extension and horizontal shoulder adduction/abduction)

All movements will be hit for multiple sets and multiple reps with limited rest periods (e.g. 2–3 sets, 12–15 reps, 30 seconds rest).

Benefits of a dynamic sledgehammer warm-up:

- promotes stability and mobility of engaged kinetic segments (i.e. thoracic spine, cervical spine, wrists, elbows, and shoulders) in greater articulations (joint angles)
- works in conjunction with current upper body or shoulder dynamic warm-up, activation, or rehab protocols
- increases neurological excitement
- improves mental focus
- promotes fun

Standing Patterns/Postures

Clubbell patterns, shoulder circles, two arms





Clubbell patterns, shoulder circles, one arm



Clubbell patterns, reverse circles, one arm



Clubbell patterns, armpit casts



Grip Specific Movements

Finger walking

Finger walking improves dexterity, strength, and finger flexor activation.



Grip Specific Movements

Supination/pronation

These are great movements for engaging the lower arm musculature that crosses and stabilizes the elbows and wrists. As strength and proficiency improves, the center of mass can move further from the contact point.



Supine Patterns/Postures

Supine shoulder horizontal abduction/abduction



Supine shoulder flexion/extension





There are many more possibilities so get creative.

Jim Smith, CSCS

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