

Resistance Isn't Futile

Here's a workout that stretches your body and your budget

Photos by Daniel Appitt

Resistance bands have two features that most other fitness equipment does not - affordability and portability. A good set of bands shouldn't cost more than \$20.

And they are small enough to go just about anywhere.

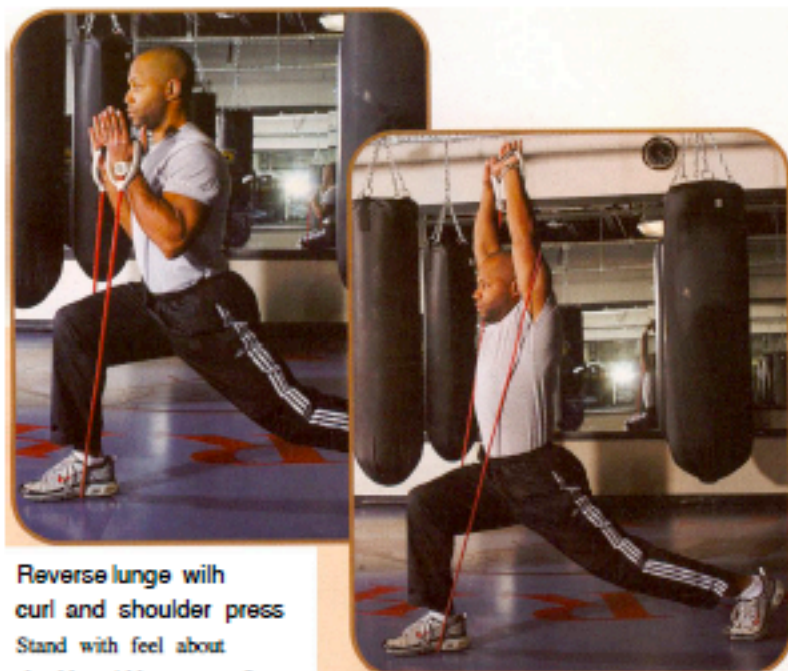
In addition to being portable, the bands offer something else free weights don't:

constant tension during an exercise.

While free weights give increased resistance during one part of a movement, bands keep the resistance at an equal level throughout.

Resistance bands typically come in two forms - tubes with handles on the end, or flat bands without handles. The thicker the tube or band, the more resistance it gives during the exercise. Beginners should start with a thin band, while advanced exercisers can look for a thicker model.

When performing these exercises, remember that the resistance can be increased or decreased by lengthening or shortening the band. You can go through this entire routine two to three times a week, on nonconsecutive days. Rest is important, as it enables your muscles to grow and your body to recuperate. Remember to begin all workouts with a short cardio warm-up, such as jogging or biking, and end all workouts with 5-10 minutes of stretching. **G**



Reverse lunge with curl and shoulder press

Stand with feet about shoulder-width apart. Secure band under right foot, hold handles tightly and step back with left foot, while leaning slightly forward to keep body weight on front leg. Bend knees until left leg is approximately 4 inches from floor, keeping the front knee directly above the ankle. Simultaneously curl hands to shoulders, keeping elbows pinned to sides. Turn palms forward, fully extending arms over the head. Bring arms back to starting position, push off with front heel and return to standing position. Do 2 sets of 8-12 repetitions. (Works buttocks, biceps and shoulders)



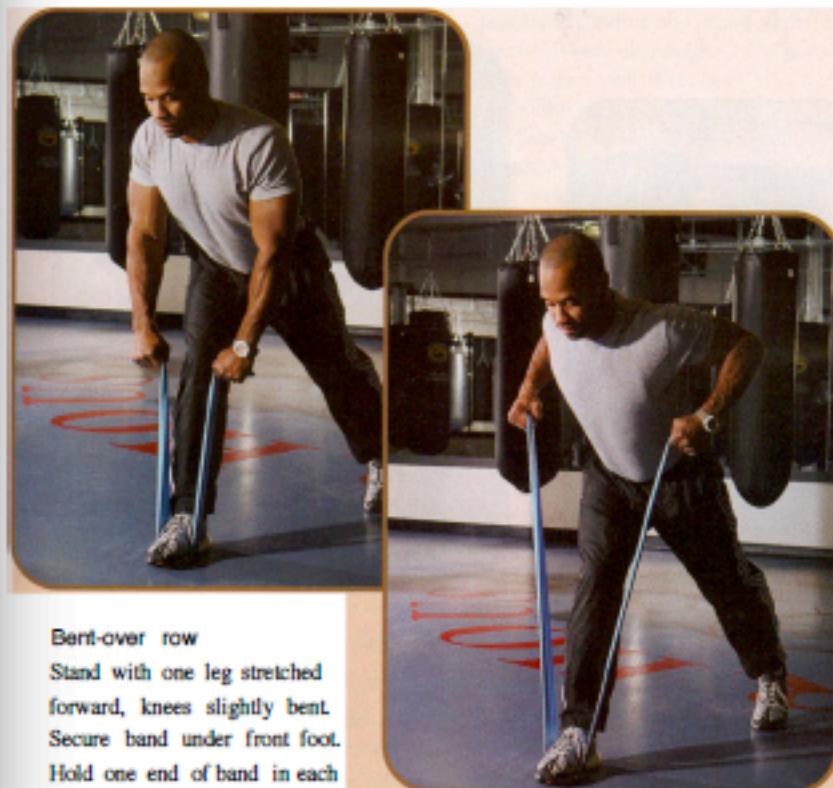
Push-up

Get into starting position with arms under shoulders, knees on floor for beginners, knees off floor for advanced option. Stretch band around the mid-back, holding the handles and securing them between the hands and floor. Keeping back straight, push up lower body, keeping back and legs in a straight line. Push back down and return to starting position. Do 2 sets of 15. (Works chest and triceps)



Lateral squat

Wrap band around ankles. Standing with feet shoulder width apart, step wide with one foot. Bend knees to 90 degrees, keeping knees behind toes, back straight and chest up. Rise and return to starting position. Repeat on opposite side. Do 1 set of 20 on each side. (Works buttocks, hip abductors and thighs)



Bent-over row

Stand with one leg stretched forward, knees slightly bent. Secure band under front foot. Hold one end of band in each hand. Lean forward at waist, keeping back straight and being careful not to bend the spine. Pull band up until hands reach chest, keeping the elbows behind the back. Switch position of feet for second set. Do 3 sets of 8-12 on each side. (Works upper back and biceps)



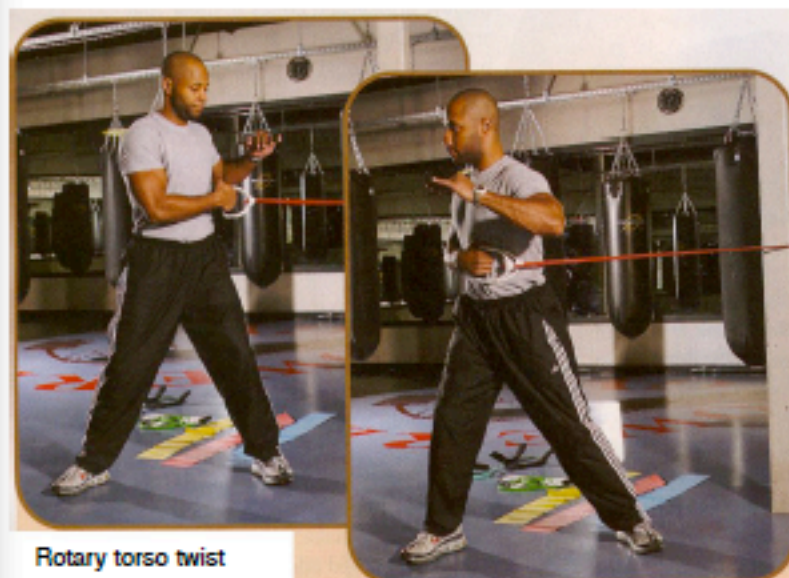
Dead lift

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, holding a band securely underneath the feet. Hold one end of band in each hand. Lean forward at the waist so torso is parallel to the floor, arms bent 90 degrees. Stand straight up. Do 25 repetitions. (Works lower back and hamstrings)



Standing chest press/band

Secure band around a pole, tree or post. Stand with back to post, feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Holding handles of band, extend both arms forward 10 times. Then alternate extensions, doing 10 on each side. Next, bend arms at a 90-degree angle. Move arms forward, passing one arm over the other until the hands reach the elbows. Do 10 repetitions. (Works chest, shoulders and triceps)



Rotary torso twist

Secure band around post. Standing with post to your side, hold band in hand opposite post. Turn upper body away from post by twisting, without moving the legs. Return to starting position. Repeat on opposite side. Do 25 repetitions on each side. (Works obliques)



Crunch

Secure band around post, lie back on an exercise mat with post over your head. Hold one end of band in each hand, just beside the head. Round back, raising the upper back from mat. Lower slowly. Do 25-50 repetitions. (Works abdominals)

Exercises designed and demonstrated by Rasheed Lee, 33, personal trainer and creator of "Body by Rock," a total body transformation regimen focusing on cross training, strength enhancement and stamina-building techniques.

Lee won the World Title in kickboxing in 1999 and is also a professional boxer. He is based at the Powerhouse Gym in West Bloomfield.