Circle C Select Swim Strength and Conditioning Exercises

Week 2 of the S&C with Water Challenge

**Agility Balls:** Using small agility balls, tennis balls, small playground ball bounce them either to a partner or against a wall. Because the ball will bounce in varying directions, use a safe space where you won’t run into anything or anyone. Practice catching the ball with two hands, then with your dominant hand only, and then, move to catching it with your non-dominant hand. Hand-eye coordination activities help increase mental stimulation and chasing this tiny tool around is great for the heart and legs. I dare you to not smile while doing this one!

**Balloon Drills:** Using two different colored balloons pick an order in which you will contact them (e.g., yellow then blue). Either alone or with a partner, hit the balloons in their selected order while keeping them in the air. Challenge #1: perform one squat in between each balloon contact, and then hit the next balloon. Challenge #2: do a burpee in between each balloon contact. Remember, hit the balloons in the same order and don’t let them touch the ground.

**Cone Drills:** Set seven cones, erasers, shoes, flower pots, anything that you can use as an obstacle course in an H pattern. We will be creating the letters M, N, I, T, Y, with your pattern of moving through the cones. Touch each cone that creates the letter as you move through each pattern at a pace that is appropriate to you. You will start with a walk, working up to skip, jog, sprint or shuffle. Challenge #1: complete each letter with your movement pattern, change the order of the letters and repeat. Challenge #2: cardiovascular challenge, try facing the same direction as you create each letter and move the cones farther apart. If you’re working with a partner and like a little competition, time yourselves going through the pattern, or trade off turns for each letter.

**Hammer Curl:** Step 1: Starting Position: Stand holding dumbbells in your hands with a closed, neutral grip (thumbs around the handles with your palms facing your body). Position the dumbbells alongside your thighs with your elbows fully extended. Assume a split-stance position to stabilize your body, stiffen your torso by contracting your abdominal/core muscles ("bracing"), and depress and retract your scapulae (pull your shoulders down and back), maintaining these positions throughout the exercise. Your head and neck should be aligned with your spine. Step 2: Upward Phase: Exhale and slowly flex (bend) one or both elbows in unison until the dumbbell(s) near(s) the front of your shoulder. It performing alternating arm curls, the opposite arm should remain in the starting position. Perform the curl while keeping your torso erect (no arching your low back) or without moving your elbows forward. Maintain a neutral wrist position (wrist straight without any bend with your palms facing your body) and avoid shrugging your shoulders throughout the movement. Step 3: Downward Phase: Inhale and gently lower the dumbbells back towards your starting position until the elbow(s) is/are fully extended, keeping the dumbbell in the neutral position. Maintain your split-stance, torso and shoulder position and if performing alternating arm curls, repeat to the opposite side.

As some of us show structural differences at the elbow, we may not be able to hold the dumbbells against our sides in the lowered position unless we force a bend at our wrists. The dumbbell position selected should be one that is most comfortable for you and keeps the wrists aligned straight with the forearm.

**Hurdle Drills:** Using either4, 6- or 12-inch hurdles (these can be cones, yoga blocks or whatever you have on hand), set five to 10 hurdles up in a row, parallel to each other. Moving laterally, start by going over the first hurdle with a high step and pausing in a stork stance before moving back to the starting position. Then move over the first two hurdles, pause and go back to the start. Continue this until all five to 10 hurdles have been traveled (1, 1 2, 1 2 3, 1 2 3 4, etc.). Count your hurdles out loud (both ascending and descending numbers) and remember to pause on one leg before moving back to the beginning. Also, don’t forget to switch directions. When you become more advanced, speed up the hurdle steps and take out the pause.

**Ladder Drills:** Using an agility ladder, you can draw this on the driveway, sidewalk or deck using sidewalk chalk. Select a method of moving through the ladder. All groups will start with a high-knee march forward through each box, and PrSr and Srs will progress to a lateral scissor (grapevine). To target your upper body, move through the ladder with your hands in push-up position at your shoulders. Once you have mastered going through, speed it up and sing/say the words to your favorite song, the alphabet or the pledge of allegiance as you move through the ladder. This move will get your heart rate up and your brain working.

**Lateral Lunge:** If you do not have dumbbells for this exercise use 2 water bottles full of water (1-2 pounds each). Stand with the feet hip-width apart holding one dumbbell in each hand with the palms facing each other. Step directly to the right, keeping the right foot parallel to the left as it hits the ground, and push the right hip back while reaching for the right foot with both hands on either side of the right leg. To stand up, push the right foot into the floor while pulling the body back to the center with the inside of the left leg.

**Medicine Ball Pass:** Using a moderately sized medicine ball (a weight that is appropriately sized for your fitness level), you can use a basketball, playground ball or any weighted ball that is appropriate for your level. You will stand facing a concrete (or otherwise stable) wall about 2 to 5 feet away, depending on the length of your arms. Throw the ball in a chest pass toward the wall as you move laterally 10 to 20 feet. Reverse directions and move laterally back to the starting position as you do the medicine ball chest passes against the wall. Make sure to do one chest pass for each sideways step. Challenge #1: move quickly in a shuffle and squat down to an athletic stance. Quickly change direction at the end and return to the starting position. Challenge #2: double clap between throw and catch. Keeping your feet from crossing each other as you concentrate on catching an object will increase your cognitive activity as well as improve your cardiovascular health.

**Renegade Row:** If you do not have dumbbells, then do the movement without the weight. Hold one dumbbell in each hand, place the dumbbells on the floor with one hand directly under each shoulder and the legs straight out behind about shoulder-width apart. Start with the elbows bent and the chest down at the dumbbells. Keep the body straight and flat while pushing the arms into the dumbbells to straighten them into the top of the push up position. At the top of the push-up, press the feet into the ground and pull the right hand up to bring weight the chest. Keep the elbow close to the rib cage. Slowly lower the weight to the floor before pulling the left hand up toward the side of the trunk. After doing a row with each arm, slowly lower the body to the floor for the next push up.

**Reverse Lunge with Rotation:** If you do not have dumbbells then for this exercise you can use a large jar of peanut butter (2-3 pounds), a can of fruit (usually 1 pound) or a full water bottle.

Stand with the feet about hip-width apart, and hold a dumbbell in a vertical position directly in front of the chest. Keep the elbows close to the rib cage and the back straight while stepping backwards with the left foot and lowering the left knee almost to the ground. At the bottom of the movement keep the back tall and twist the dumbbell over the right leg. Turn back to the center, press the right foot into the ground, and step the left leg forward to return to the original starting position.

**Rotational Shoulder Press:** If you do not have dumbbells then for this exercise you can use a large jar of peanut butter (2-3 pounds), a can of fruit (usually 1 pound) or a full water bottle.

Stand with the feet hip-width apart, hold one dumbbell in each hand with the palms facing each other and the weights in front of the shoulders. Keep the back straight and turn to the right, and when facing the 3 o’clock position press the right hand straight into the air. To lower the weight, pull the elbow back down and keep the back straight while turning to the left. When facing the 9 o’clock position on the left side, press the left hand straight into the air.

**Rotational Upper Cut:** If you do not have dumbbells for this exercise use 2 water bottles full of water (1-2 pounds each). Stand with the feet hip-width apart, hold one dumbbell in each hand with the palms facing up, and the elbows close to the rib cage. Sink back into the hips and press the left foot into the ground to turn to the right, keep the left elbow bent and perform an uppercut with the left arm, bringing the left elbow to shoulder-height. Slowly lower the left arm and turn back to the center. Push the right foot into the ground to turn the left hip while swinging the right arm up in an uppercut.

**Squat to Overhead Raise:** If you do not have dumbbells then for this exercise you can use a large jar of peanut butter (2-3 pounds), a can of fruit (usually 1 pound) or a full water bottle. Hold one dumbbell lengthwise in both hands so that each hand is holding a weighted end, and place the feet about shoulder-width apart. With the arms straight down, slowly bend at the hips and keep the back straight while lowering into a squat keeping the weight between both legs. At the bottom of the squat push both feet into the ground to return to standing, and keep the arms straight while swinging the weight straight in front of the body to finish with it over the head. Lower the dumbbell back down in front of the body to return to the starting position.

**Transverse Lunge:** If you do not have dumbbells for this exercise use 2 water bottles full of water (1-2 pounds each). Stand with the feet hip-width apart holding one dumbbell in each hand with the palms facing each other and the arms straight down by the sides. Keep the left foot pointed straight ahead (the 12 o’clock direction) while stepping back and out to the right side with the right foot and place it facing in the 4 o’clock direction. As the right foot hits the ground, push back into the right hip while reaching for the right foot with both hands. To return to standing, push off the ground with the right foot and press the left foot into the ground to pull the body back to the center and the feet back together.

**Triceps Kickback:** If you do not have dumbbells for this exercise use 2 water bottles full of water (1-2 pounds each). Step 1: Starting Position: Hold a dumbbell in your left hand and assume a split-stance position placing your right leg forward, but keeping your weight evenly distributed through the heels of both feet. Stiffen your torso by contracting your abdominal and core muscles ("bracing"). Place your right hand on your right thigh or knee and slowly lean forward, transferring most of your upper extremity body weight into that right side. Depress and retract your left scapula (pull your shoulder down and back) and maintain this position throughout the exercise. Your head should be aligned with your spine. Step 2: Position the your left upper arm parallel to, and close to, your torso. Bend your elbow to 90 degrees or at least to a point where your forearm hangs vertical to the floor. Step 3: Upward Phase: Exhale and slowly extend (straighten) your elbow by contracting your triceps muscles until your elbow is fully extended. Your upper arm should remain stationary next to your torso and not raised during the movement. Avoid any arching (sagging) in your low back or any rotation in your torso. Step 4: Downward Phase: Inhale and slowly return your arm to your starting position, without changing your torso position. Maintain your upper arm parallel and close to your torso.

Proper form in performing this exercise is important to target triceps activity and for safety reasons to prevent additional loading on your spine.

We are using agility and dumbbell exercise definitions from *Ace Fitness* for part of our S&C workouts this week. Agility is the ability to move quickly and change direction with ease. This describes both physical and mental agility. As we age, or just become complacent in our daily routines, both our mental and physical agility suffers. The exercises that I have chosen will help you to be quick on your toes and sharp as a tack. Dumbbell work will help the total-body muscular strength and cardiorespiratory fitness.