

POWERLIFTING USA

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Garry Frank Breaks New Ground





Photo 1

LM: Okay, Dick (Hartzell, a.k.a. the Rubberband Man), I've been looking forward to this interview. My shoulder and my back have been bothering me as of late and I am hoping that you can show me how to traction these areas and to avoid future injuries. Let's start with the shoulder and, knowing you, I am sure we will get side-tracked, but that's all right! I am willing to listen to whatever you have to say.

DH: Larry, let's start with some shoulder traction exercises. There are a number of lifters that have problems with shoulder flexibility, which causes them discomfort during the squat. (Editor's note: Several of the exercises shown in this article involve a band that is suspended from or attached to a stabilized pipe arrangement. The hook-up involves wrapping the band around

TRAINING to AVOID INJURY

Stretching with Rubber Bands Dick Hartzell interviewed by Dr. Larry Miller

the bar and through itself to form a slipknot. Make sure that the pipe you are using is secured, not on a machine that could tip over.) Begin by taking the hand up through the band. It is important that the band actually stick on the back of the hand - you don't want it loose. What you want to do is step out, place the feet out

wide, relax the shoulder and lean into the band (Picture #1).

Turn the hand over and stretch down (Picture #2). You want to lean, relax and stretch the joint out. We traction or stretch the joint to get rid of pain that may have been caused by overuse, bursitis, arthritis, a partially-torn rotator cuff or even a



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 6



Photo 9



Photo 12



Photo 4



Photo 7



Photo 10



Photo 13



Photo 5



Photo 8



Photo 11



Photo 14

dislocation in an effort to allow the joint to move and heal and become pain-free, so that it can function normally again. The amount of pressure applied is proportionate to the nature and degree of the injury. You can move and turn in any direction that feels good.

Now, we'll move and face the attached area (Picture #3). Move the shoulder back,

keeping the arm as straight as possible. Next, move the shoulder in a circular manner. This works the back side of the shoulder and the upper back.

As soon as we turn sideways, we are now stretching the upper back area (Picture #4). For taking care of the shoulder, we are going to do a lateral stretch, a forward stretch, and a cross-body

stretch. When you go cross body, you get a great deal of stretch in the upper back. When we bend down, we get shoulder and lower back. Now, if I place my hand on my knee and bend down, I work the shoulder and lower back (Picture #5).

Another thing we do for the shoulder is to loop the band over the elbow (Picture #6). This let's us work the

shoulder in any direction. The important thing is internal and external rotation. We can go from in front (Picture #7) or behind the back (Picture #8) or overhead (Picture #9). This is great for flexibility. We can also drive the band out and up. The pressure is controlled by the left hand (Picture #10 and #11).

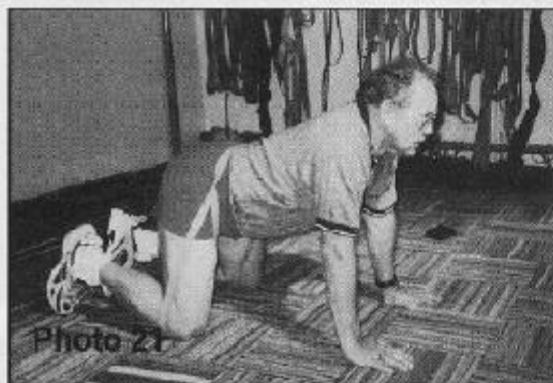
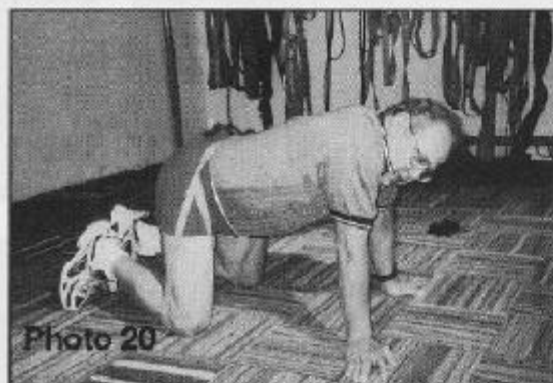
As far as injuries, the big deal is to do some upright

rows with the bands (Picture #12). You want to avoid compression on the AC Joint. We want to pull up and out. This will help the areas adjacent to the rotator cuff. Reverse curls should also be done (Picture #13). You can also do a standing bench press with the bands (Picture #14) as a warm-up exercise. A wide grip works the triceps, while a narrow grip works the pecs.

As far as back traction goes, we can use a single band or we can do it at a band station with multiple bands. First, we want to fold the band over and place it around the waist and on the knees (Picture #15). My hands go on my thighs and I just push (Picture #16). Move your hips in all directions. This will take pressure off the lower back. Now, pull the knees up toward the chest (Picture #17). Take the legs cross-body, keeping both shoulders on the floor and using the opposite hand to pull the opposite knee cross-body. (Picture #18).

Grasping the bottom of the band with your hands to hold it in place, lift the buttocks up and work the glutes (Picture #19). The stronger your glutes, the better your back will be. The key is movement. Now, turn over on all fours, arch the back, round it, and move the hips every which way (Picture #20 & #21). Move the bands up and down on the back to work different areas (Picture #22).

Another good thing for the low back is to hook two bands up to a vertical pole. Place one band over the right shoulder and under the left arm. Then place the other band over the left shoulder and under the right arm. Hold onto the top of the bands, pulling them apart to keep



pressure off of the neck. As you lean forward, you will get a nice stretch in the low back (Picture #23). When you sit back, you strengthen the low back.

The big mistake with the low back is that we teach people to always lift in straight lines, when nothing in this world is straight. We need to lift in what is classified an "improper" range (Picture #24) to actually keep the back healthy. We live in spiral-diagonal planes, therefore the body needs to be trained and stretched in all of those planes. The only way that you can do this safely is with Flex Bands. For most of these exercises, you want to use either the average (green) or the strong (blue) bands.

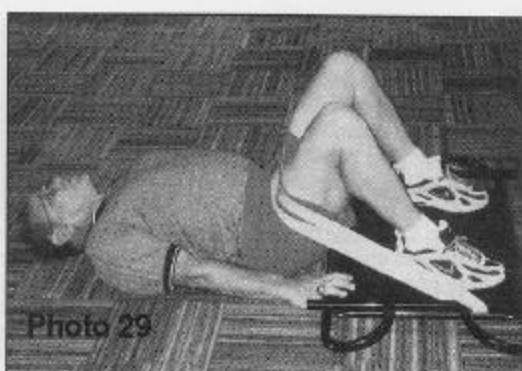
Next, stand up and slide the bands down around your waist. With the band around the waist, you can arch the back, move the hips, turn and move (Picture #25). Position the band wherever it does you the most good. Arch your back and round your back. Spread the feet, sit down, band and move. Any way that you can move is healthy and good. The conventional treatment with back pain is to restrict movement. This actually causes individuals to have more problems in the long run.

Position the one band at waist level on the pole and the other higher up (7-ft. level). The lower band should be positioned around the waist, while the higher band comes down under the arms. (Picture #26). Now just sit back and move the hips.

Now, slide the band that's under the arms down around the lower back. Go down to the floor and lift up the hips (Picture #27). Now, you can bring your feet up and push on the legs to stretch the low back (Picture #28).

Next, we position the bands across the base and slide under the band so it is positioned across the thighs (Picture #29). Push the base with your hands to do a hip extensor and then twist and tilt. Raise the hips up high to work the glutes (Picture #30). The key here is strengthening the glutes. Drive up and down.

With the band still attached across the base, turn over so you can position the band across your waist-line.



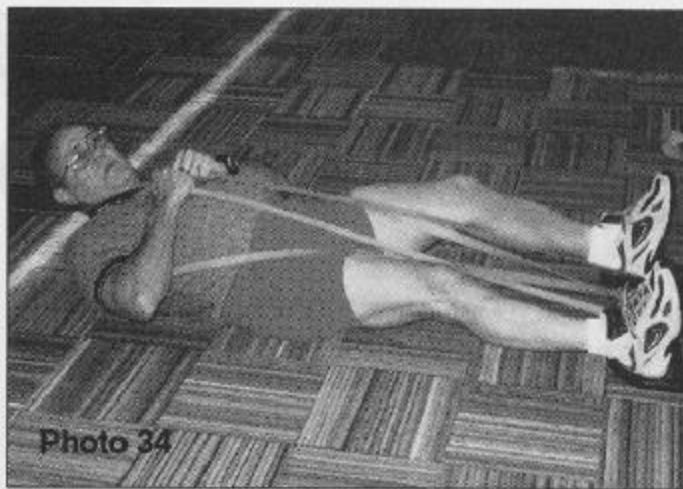


Photo 34

Alternately arch and round the back (Picture #31 & #32).

Another good exercise is to position the band up high on the pole and loop it around the foot (Picture #33). Lie on the floor and move the hips around in all directions. (You would repeat this exercise attaching the band to your other foot.)

For back extensions, attach the bands onto the short end of the base. Criss-cross the bands so that each side goes over the opposite shoulder and position your feet inside the end-loops of the base (Picture #34). Lie back and then sit up. The assistance of the bands allows you to move in positions that you normally wouldn't

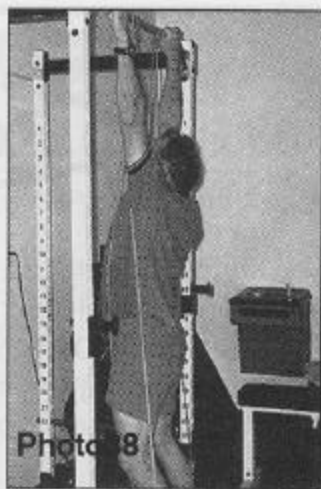


Photo 8



Photo 35



Photo 39



Photo 36

be able to.

Last year when I decided to go into a professional boxing show at age 60, I was concerned with two areas: my neck and my abdominals. To strengthen the neck, I position the band on the back of the neck (Picture #35). By gently pulling and tilting in all directions, you can give yourself a neck adjustment similar to what a chiropractor would do for you.

Another way to do traction for the neck is to attach the band at the 42" level and lie down on the floor with the band under the neck (Picture #36). Move the head up and down in all directions to strengthen and traction the neck muscles. For additional pressure, you can add an extra band.

For my abdominals, the thing that works best for me is to take a 45-lb. plate, hold it up at arm's length and drop it onto my flexed abs (Picture #37). (If you are just starting out, use a smaller plate and drop it from a shorter distance.)

Another important thing for the shoulders is that people be able to handle their own body weight. What I recommend is to attach two mini bands over the top of the power rack and do assisted chin-ups (Picture #38). This is good for people with dislocations or who have had shoul-



Photo 40

der surgery. It is also helpful for younger kids who may be overweight. You can add bands if necessary.

Another thing for the shoulders is to do my wheelbarrow exercise (Picture #39). What I do is hook one mini band around the arch of each foot and over the axle of an abdominal wheel. As you roll the wheel out and back, you get great shoulder and ab work.

You can also do shoulder shrugs with a single band (Picture #40).

[For info on Flex Bands, you can reach Dick Hartzell at Jump Stretch, Inc. by calling 1-800-344-3539.]

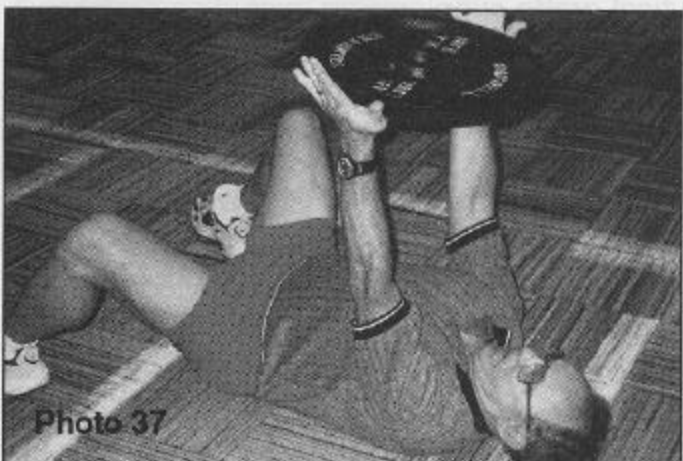


Photo 37