Sledge Hammer Training

The Ultimate in Grip Work and Conditioning!

As always, we are going to get right into it here. No jabbering about some BS techniques here, only talking about what works! Get yourself a sledge hammer, preferably a 20 lb hammer but you can also find specialty hammers (maces) at web sites such as www.atomicathletic.com and www.torqueathletic.com

I prefer to hit the hammer against a tire, the softer surface send less of a shock back to the body, but, use what ever you can in a safe manner. Speaking of safety, make sure noone is hanging around while you perform sledge hammer work. Wait until after Aunt Cindy has her picnic to start swinging that bad boy around OK?!

Sledge hammer work can be done with two hands or one hand at a time. You can swing from overhead, across your body, from left and from right. I am sure there are plenty more variations and we hope the readers here will post about them on our forum and let us know!

I have used sledge hammer training for grip & conditioning. The heavy breathing that takes place after swinging for one minute will give you a big wake up call. This really first hit home to me when I had to clean up the back yard of my new home. We had this old fence and I had to break down the wood to fit in someone’s truck. I took it as an
excuse to work out and I was breathing like a race horse when I was hammering away! The next day my abs were also sore as all heck!

Watch someone chop wood or use a sledge hammer, they lift the hammer overhead or across the shoulder, then on the way down they forcefully explode downward using upper and lower body. You’ll notice the legs bending on the way if done correctly.

Here are a few workouts or ways you can incorporate sledge hammers into your overall program, preferably at the end of a workout.

**Workout 1:**
Overhead swings x 20
Over left shoulder x 20
Over right shoulder x 20
Sideways left x 20
Sideways right x 20
After a few workouts like this, repeat for one more set and eventually another set for three total sets!

**Workout 2:**
Over left / right shoulder (alternate each rep) x 2 minutes
Side swings left x 1 minute
Side swings right x 1 minute

Repeat for 2 or 3 more sets
**Workout 3:**
Overhead swings x 1 minute
Left swings x 2 minutes
Right swings x 2 minutes
Overhead swings x 1 minute

Repeat above 2 or 3 more sets
We use the tire to hit our sledge hammer on, but you can also travel through the local woods and find something to hit your hammer on. In future articles we will experiment with using the sledge hammer in replace of clubbells for some interesting exercises.

In the photo above and below I simply used a log to hammer away on. As I mentioned previously, the tire gives a slight bounce back and allows you to move faster while avoiding the force it sends back to your hands and joints. Keep longevity in your mind and always analyze the risk – benefit ratio of an exercise. If it bothers you and doesn’t feel right on the joints, there should be an alternative or this might be a reason to avoid an exercise in particular.
Zach Even – Esh is a Strength & Performance Coach in NJ. To learn more about how old school strength training can take your performance to the next level visit

www.UndergroundStrengthCoach.com