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Log Training

Journey Into the Past for Some Unique Conditioning, Strength Drills

by Dr. Frank E. Sanchez

This article discusses exercises and techniques that medical professionals consider dangerous. Engaging in the techniques and exercises described in this article should be done at your own risk.

In the old days, martial artists faced adversaries who wore armor and heavy clothing. Battle often meant life or death.

To prepare for these bloody

encounters, martial artists conditioned their arms and legs to make them impervious to pain and hard enough so they could penetrate their opponents' garb. To accomplish this,



Photos by Mike A. Sanchez

they used trees and other hard surfaces to practice their techniques on.

And that's exactly what we're going to do. We're going to journey into the past. We're going to train like our martial arts ancestors. There are no gyms. There are no exercise machines. But it doesn't matter. All we need is a log. In *San-jitsu*, the Guamanian art of *jujitsu*, this is a major part of our training.

A Log, Some Partners and A Warm-Up

To do these drills, you're going to need a log. Check at your local hardware store. You should be able to find a variety of sizes for a reasonable price. It's also a good idea to condition the log so you don't have to worry about a handful of splinters.

You'll also need some partners. For some exercises, you'll need two partners. For others, you'll need five.

It's also important to warm up before you begin. Spend 10 to 15 minutes doing a variety of calisthenics. Or jog. Whatever you do, make sure you break a light sweat. When you're done, do some light stretching. The last thing you want to do is pull or strain a muscle. An injury means lost training time.

Finally, start with two sets of eight for each drill. Mix it up, however. Add sets. Add reps. Do a variety of combinations.

San-Jitsu Log Conditioning Drills Hand Conditioning

To do this drill, you need

To do the form practice for throwing drill, you will need an equal number of participants on each side of the log. When you're ready to execute the drill, loop your belt around the log and grab each end with each hand. On command, bring your belt over your shoulders and execute a throwing motion.

someone to hold each end of the log. You should assume a fighting stance about a foot away from the log.

Using a variety of techniques, strike the log with your hands. Be careful, however. Don't strike the log with full force. You only want to generate enough power so you toughen your hands.

The log is going to give a little because your partners are holding it. This is good because it will allow you to follow-through on your techniques.

If you want, strike the log with both hands at once. Or you can do one hand at a time. If the log is long enough, someone can train with you.

Leg Conditioning

Again, have your each of your partners hold one end of the log about waist-high. Assume a fighting stance about two feet away from the log. Strike the log with a variety of kicks.

There are, however, certain points on your foot that should be avoided because they are more prone to injury. One, of course, is the instep. The other is your toes. Therefore, don't throw a direct forward strike.

When conditioning your shins, be sure that your foot is turned inward slightly so your calf cushions the strike.

Form Practice for Throwing

To do this drill, you're going



to need an equal number of participants on each side of the log.

To begin, lay the log on the ground between yourselves. Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart with one foot touching the log. Loop your belt around the log and grab each end with each hand.

On command, turn, bring your belt over your shoulders and execute a throwing motion. Everyone has to exert the same amount of pressure; otherwise, the log will bump the person who is not exerting as much effort.

Foot Sweep Training

In this exercise, lay the log on the ground and have everyone stand on the same side. On the instructor's command, everyone

To do the foot sweep drill (right), sweep the log forward with your foot until your instructor tells you to stop. When performing the leg conditioning drill (below), do not strike the log with your instep or your toes.

should sweep the log forward with their foot, just as if they were executing a foot sweep on an opponent. Make sure you lean back and mimic the movements of the actual maneuver. Continue sweeping the log until your instructor

tells you to stop. Hop over the log and sweep it with your other leg until your instructor tells you to stop.

Log Toss

In this exercise, you'll need an



equal number of people on both sides of the log.

While one group cradles the log between their forearms and biceps, the other group, which should be about two feet away from the first, should prepare to

catch the log.

On the instructor's command, the group with the log will straighten their arms and "toss" the log to the other group. Do not, however, use your hands. You're simply forcing the log to the other

group by straightening your arms and forcing the log to the other side.

The others should catch the log on their forearms and let it roll to their biceps. Like the first group, they should cradle the log between



You'll need an equal number of people on both sides of the log to do the log toss drill. When you toss the log to the others, do not use your hands. Force the log to the others simply by straightening your arms.

their forearms and biceps. Repeat for the desired number of repetitions.

As your arms and back get stronger, you'll be able to toss the log higher.

Reap the Benefits

These are only a few of the exercises you can do. With a little ingenuity, you can certainly come up with several more drills. And you'll reap much more than just physical benefits. Whether you're an instructor with students or training at home with a group of friends, you'll develop a powerful bond that will make your school or friendships that much stronger. **BJJ**

About the author: Dr. Frank E. Sanchez has more than 30 years experience in the martial arts and is the founder of Guam's first internationally recognized system of San-jitsu. He currently resides and teaches in Jacksonville, Florida.