

Isometric Strength Secrets of the Shaolin Monks



**The No Equipment, No Excuses Guide
to Strength & Health**

Anywhere, Anytime

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Disclaimer

The exercises in this book may be dangerous or too strenuous for some people. Particularly those with high blood pressure.

Ensure you get a permission from a a medical professional before beginning this or any other exercise program.

Dave Hedges and Wild Geese Martial Arts & Fitness take no responsibility for any injuries that may result from following the instructions within this book.

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A brief history

The story goes that a small group of Shaolin Monks had been imprisoned in a tiny cell.

And yet they managed to keep themselves fit, strong and healthy enough so that when the time came, they could fight their way to freedom.

This manual contains the exercises that those monks apparently used in that tiny, cramped cell.

As you can imagine, there was absolutely nothing in the cell that could be used as either training equipment or a weapon for escape, it was left to the monks ingenuity and discipline to find ways to maintain and even improve their physical condition to ensure they would be ready for even the smallest opportunity to escape.

The story goes that a guard came too close to the bars and the monks were able to disable him with finger strikes to exposed nerve sites on the guards body.

Whether or not the legend is true is up to you to decide for yourself, I'm a bit of a romantic at heart so I'd like to believe it.

Regardless of the monks fighting skills, how could they train their bodies in such cramped space?

With the ultimate No Equipment, No Excuses workout method.

Isometrics.

While there are people out there showing isometric training methods utilising equipment, in fact a fellow trainer and friend does just that with clients all the time and gets them freakishly strong. I want to show you how to do it the monks did. With these drills you can train quite literally anywhere you choose.

I've personally employed some of these drills in the car waiting at traffic lights, on long bus journeys and sometimes to keep me warm during the cold winter nights while when I used to work as a Door Supervisor.

I've also used them as active rest between sets of regular exercise. For example if I'm practicing Deadlifts I may do Isometrics for the chest in between sets.

How you use them is up to you. There are suggestions in the final chapter on page

How to perform Isometric exercises

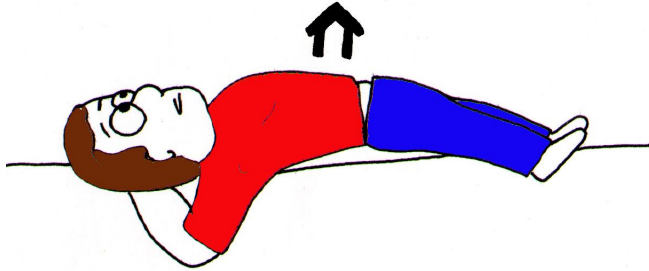
An isometric contraction is simply the muscle contracting but with no movement at the joints. Usually by pushing or pulling against an immovable object, or in this case , another muscle.

With all the drills the following guidelines should be followed:

- The first time you try any new exercise start slowly and gently until you get the hang of it
- Gradually increase the amount of force used over the duration of the drill. Maximum force should be reached after around 2-3 seconds.
- Gradually release the tension in the last 2-3 seconds of each drill
- Take a deep breath prior to building tension. Exhale slowly through pursed lips, feel the abdominals tighten as you attempt to force the air out slowly
- As you begin to exhale, begin the drill. The drill ends as you reach the end of the breath.
- Build the time each drill is held for. Start with only a few seconds (4-6) and build to as long as 20 seconds.
- Perform each exercise 2-4 times ensuring to take a complete breath (in and out) between each “set”

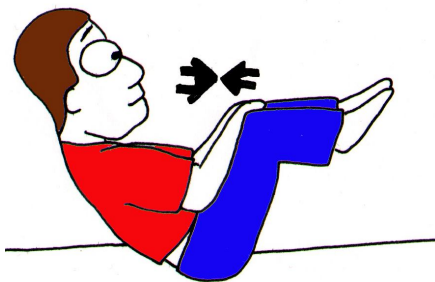
Back (Posterior chain)

- Lie on your back, with the hands behind the head.
- Take a big breath and tense up the body.
- As you squeeze the air out press the elbows and heels into the floor.
- Increase the pressure to a maximum for the count of 7 seconds and gradually allow it to dissipate.
- The hips should raise as the body begins to arch into a bridge position.



Abdominals, Chest (Anterior chain)

- Set up with the hands pressed against the top of the knees
- Take a deep breath
- As you squeeze the air out, press the hands against the knees.
- Gradually increase the pressure of the hands pressing the knees and the knees pressing the hands .

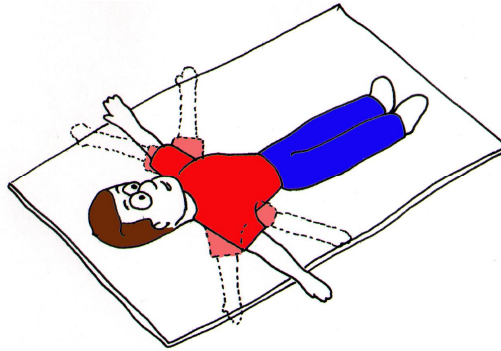


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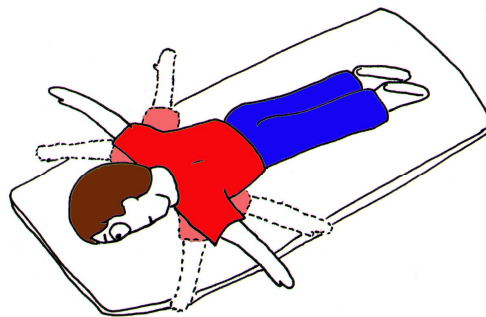
Upper Back and Rear Deltoids

- Lie on back with arms out to side, palm up.
- Take a deep breath and press the back of the arm against the floor
- Work a different angle each time this is trained.
The monks would do the drill 3 times per workout, using each of the illustrated positions.



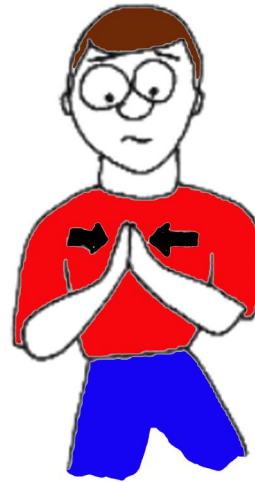
Chest and Shoulder

- Lie face down with the arms outstretched, palms down
- Take a deep breathe and squeeze the straight arms down into the floor
- Work a different angle each time this is trained.
The monks would do the drill 3 times per workout, using each of the illustrated positions.



Chest

- Put the hands together into a prayer position
- Take a deep breath and begin to press the palms together
- Build the force to a maximum, and gradually reduce the pressure at the end of the breath.



Back and Grip.

- Link your hands in front of your navel.
- Hook the hands, one palm up, the other palm down
 - As you force the air out attempt to pull the hands apart.
 - Switch positions of the hands each time the drill is repeated.



Outer Thigh and Chest



- Sit with the hands placed against the outside of the knee
- Attempt to open the legs while pressing in with the hands.
- Gradually increase the pressure as you force the breath out.

Inner Thigh

- Find something that you can put between your knees. A rolled up jumper, cushion or football.
- Take a deep breath and hold the object between knees
- As you force the air out attempt to crush the object by squeezing the knees together.



Biceps & Triceps

- Bend one arm to approx 90°, palm up, keeping the elbow tucked against the body.
- Grab it with the other arm, palm down.
- As you force the air out attempt to bend the elbow towards the shoulder while resisting with the top hand.
- Repeat on the opposite side.



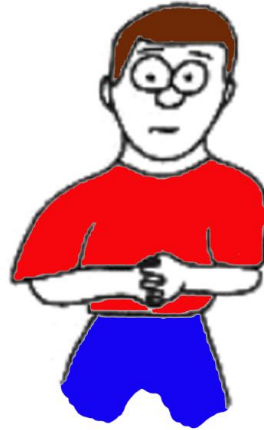
Thighs, front & back

- Sit on the edges of a bench and cross the ankles
- Take a deep breath and Try to straighten the bottom leg while attempting to bend the uppermost leg
- Switch sides and repeat to ensure balance..



Forearms, Shoulder & Elbow

- Make a fist and place the other hand over it
- Hold the hands in front of the navel
- Press the fist outwards while pressing the palm inwards.
- Change hands to repeat.



Arms

- Place one fist on top of the other
- Squeeze the fists against each other, attempting to lift one and lower the other.
- Change the hands over and repeat.



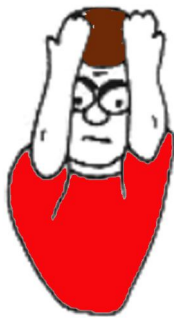
Neck



- Take your right hand right over the head to the left side.
- Now attempt to pull the head to the right with the hand while leaning the head to the left.
- Repeat on the opposite side

Neck 2

- Place the hands onto the forehead
- Take a deep breath and press hard against the forehead.
- Resist as hard as possible with the neck musculature.
- Repeat with the hands on the back of the head.



Grip



- Take a hold of your own forearms.
- Apply a crush grip to your arms attempting to squeeze hard with the fingers
- Reverse the grip and repeat.

Forearm & Fingers

- Interlink the fingers tightly.
- Attempt to rotate the hands on opposite directions
- Change the grip and repeat by attempting to rotate in the other direction.



Isometric Training Protocols

You may utilise Isometric exercises just as you would any other form of resistance training.

Either pick the drills that apply to the area you wish to work on that day as you would on any other body part split.

Alternatively try the following:

1. Begin with the first drill on page 6, perform 2-4 sets of that and each subsequent drill until your allotted training time is over (I suggest no more than 45 minutes).
The next day, pick up where you left off.
Continue to cycle through the drills in this manner until you feel ready for a rest day.
2. Implement some Isometric work into your usual training routine.
Insert an Isometric drill as active rest in between sets of your regular drills.
Just ensure it's for a body part that's not being trained that day.
3. Use as a warm up for lifting heavy iron.
A couple of sets of the chest Iso on page 8 immediately before bench pressing will prime the CNS for major lifting.
4. Use for impromptu training, great for busy people.
Simply perform a set or two of a drill as and when you get the opportunity.
These may be discrete in public or if at home, go all out.

Eg The traffic cue on the way to work in the morning is a great time to work pages 8 & 11. Your desk in the office allows for pages 9, 10 & 13

Use the imagination and have fun.

About The Author



Dave Hedges is a fitness coach, martial arts instructor and Security consultant.

He spends much of his time looking for better methods to improve martial artists strength, mobility and longevity.

From training himself and other to reach peak performance in a fight, he has since consulted for www.specialist-security.com to show bodyguard self defence and to ensure they remain in operational fitness at all times.

From this, he has developed a knowledge of minimalistic, time efficient and equipment free training, as shown in this book and also in [No Equipment, No Excuses - Bodyweight training for home, the office or on the road.](#)

He is also involved with the All Ireland Kettlebell Lifting Federation (www.AIQLF.eu).

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