

4 Article Series (about 500 words)
By
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PART I

The WHAT of Band training: What it is - what equipment is out there!

Over the last decade, the buzz phrase in fitness has become “Functional Training”. The use of many modalities has been proposed to increase the functional aspect of training. These modalities include medicine balls, stability balls, and the use of bands. Of all these modalities, band training has seen resurgence.

Band training is as old as rubber itself. However, no published works on the subject were comprehensive in nature, until 1999. In 1999, the most comprehensive work on band training was published: The Essence of Band and Pulley Training 2-DVD set and Book. Since then, many band products have been published and designed. In September of 2008, *Men’s Health* featured an 8-page spread on band training products and protocols, marking the first major indication that band training has gone main-stream.

Band training has become popular because of several factors; it is affordable, easy to set up and use, diverse in application, and very effective. High quality band training equipment is in the \$15-50 range, making bands some of the most affordable training tools in fitness. Their set-up is easy; step on them and simply pull, or use a utility strap to attach them to any door or sturdy structure. You can use bands to build muscle or for more functional applications like sport-specific training. Now let’s look at some of the most popular band training equipment.

The two band products featured in *Men’s Health* are the Superband and the JC Band. These are the two most popular band training tools in fitness. The Superband is a simple large band; just like a band that goes around your wrist – but much bigger. The Superband comes in various widths, from ½ inch to 2½ inches, making them versatile and portable. The 1-inch Superband lives in a small pocket in my computer bag; it’s my traveling gym. The models in the JC Band series have handles and built-in utility straps. The JC Sports Band is 4-feet in length, making it an excellent training tool for larger spaces. The JC Traveler is only 2 feet in length and makes an excellent choice for travel or home training. The Predator series (in 2 and 4-foot lengths) incorporates three bands on each side. Each band on the Predator can be removed and re-loaded in a split second, making the Predator the ALL-IN-ONE band product. The JC Quad is another unique design with four separate bands, which is excellent when training 2 to 4 individuals. All other band products are an extension of these basic designs. With these diverse designs, the applications become endless. I believe that this is the main reason for the new popularity of band training.

The following articles in this four-part band training series will deal with more specific applications and protocols. For more information on band training go to www.ihpfit.com and see our various band designs and educational products that will surely take your band training to the next level!

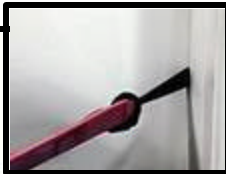
Author by line:

Juan Carlos “JC” Santana is the director of the Institute of Human Performance in Boca Raton, Florida. He will answer all of your band training questions at www.ihpfit.com (email JC link).

Pictures and captions for Part I – use what you like – I can send high res shot over email!



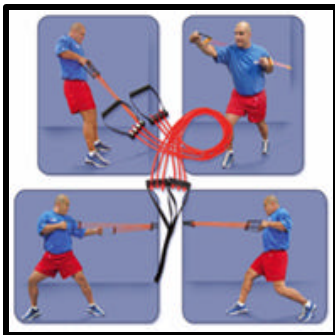
The Superband travels with me everywhere – it is my “gym in a bag.”



Use the utility strap and the Superband to turn any door into a gym.



The JC Sports Band is the most popular band at IHP.



The JC Predator is the ALL-IN-ONE band.



The JC Quad is the perfect group training band product.

PART II

The WHY of Band Training: Applications and Advantages

Of all functional modalities in fitness, it is hard to find a more popular modality than band training. As mentioned in the previous article, “band training is affordable, easy to set up, convenient to use, diverse in application, and very effective”. However, from a technical aspect band training offers even more distinct advantages. Two of the most obvious advantages to band training are its ability to load the body diagonally and horizontally, and the variable resistance that bands offer as they are stretched. These two basic advantages put band training clearly ahead of its competition.

The unique loading ability of band training allows anyone to train and load in any functional direction. Any free-weight equipment (e.g. dumbbells, barbells, medicine balls, etc.) loads the body via gravity. That is, the body is loaded in a vertical manner. Band training is the only modality that can easily offer resistance “outside the pull of gravity”. Many functional movements can be loaded with the use of band training. Functional movements, such as pulling, going down to tie a shoe, or going down to catch a ground ball have a major diagonal force that must be controlled. This force can be easily loaded during functional training using bands. For example, a baseball player catching a ground ball must be able to decelerate a diagonal force in order to catch the ball, stop, turn, and make the throw to first base (Figure 1). Bands are the perfect tool to use to train this movement.

Another advantage of band training is the variable resistance that bands naturally offer once stretched. Every movement has what we call a biomechanical curve. This curve simply depicts where the biomechanical advantages and disadvantages are within the range of motion of a movement. For example, in a standing band press, the mechanical advantage appears at the end range of the press. This means that as your arms extend in a press you become stronger due to better leverage. In a band press, the band naturally provides more resistance as you get stronger, providing variable resistance. Equipment lines, such as Nautilus and Universal, spent millions of dollars trying to provide what band training naturally provides; variable resistance. A little knowledge and creativity is all that is needed to make band’s variable resistance work in your favor during band training.

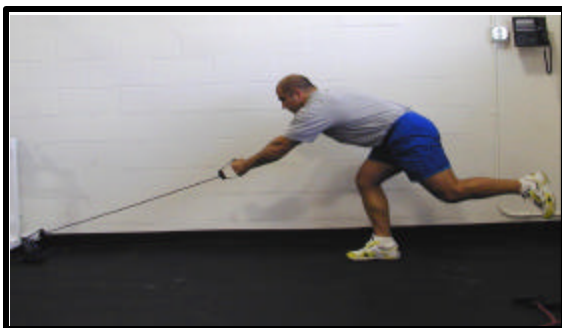
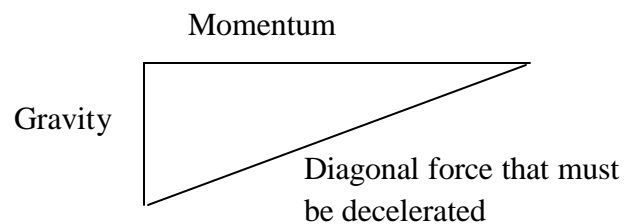
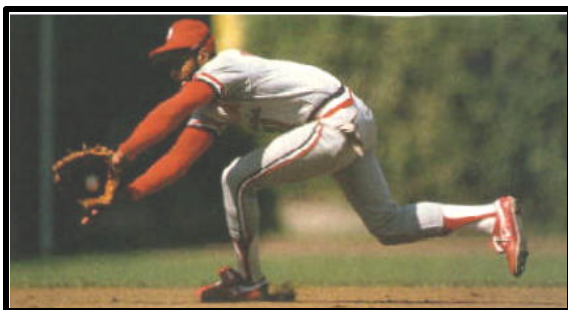
Other applications of band training include their use in developing traditional strength. Many squat racks and benches now provide attachment points so that bands can be used to add variable resistance to traditional exercises, such as the squat and bench press. This application has proven to increase strength in power lifters and is now a well accepted training approach within the periodization of strength athletes.

Future articles in this four-part band training series will deal with specific protocols we have used at the Institute of Human Performance to take our clients to higher levels of physical conditioning. For more information on band training go to www.ihpfit.com and see our various band designs and educational products that will surely take your band training to the next level!

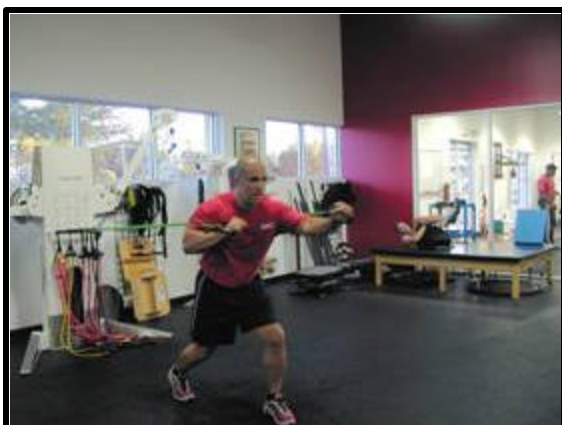
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Training the diagonal deceleration force with bands



Band pressing provides the perfect variable resistance needed to optimize functional pressing strength.



The Superbands can be used to add variable resistance to traditional lifts such as the dumbbell bench press.