Exercises for Two

Couples who sweat together stick to their fitness regimens. Here's how to do it

February 16, 2006 By Alicia Villarosa

If you really want to rev up the romance—and your heart rate—try working out with your mate. Studies show that spouses who begin a fitness program together are more likely to stick with it. Generally, men don't spend enough time stretching, while women need more strength training. Women can encourage men to breathe—men often hold their breath—and stay in stretches longer. Men can help women on the last three or four reps, when they would normally stop. These exercises can help pairs get started.

Medicine Ball Throw and Catch
(works chest, triceps and shoulders)
Stand facing your partner, about five feet apart with feet shoulder-width apart and one foot slightly in front. Hold ball at chest level, and throw to your partner. Catch ball with arms fully extended in front, and pull the ball into your chest. Then throw ball back, fully extending arms on release. Keep torso tight while throwing and catching. Repeat two sets of ten reps.

Couples Squats
(works core and entire lower body)
Stand facing each other, about three feet apart, arms extended in front, grasping wrists. Hold on to your partner and squat until you reach a 90-degree angle. Squeeze buttocks and rise slowly keeping back straight and stomach tight. Do two sets of ten reps.

Medicine Ball Twist
(works arms, shoulders and trunk)
Stand back-to-back, two to three feet apart, with feet shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. Hold the ball at chest level and twist torso toward your partner, who twists to receive ball. Your partner passes the ball back by twisting in the other direction. Start slowly, and keep torso tight and abs pulled in. Do two sets of ten reps, then reverse direction.

Straddle Stretch
(works inner thighs and hips)
Sit on floor facing each other with legs in a V shape and feet touching. Grasp hands and gently pull your partner forward. Your partner's back should remain flat during the stretch; do not bounce. Take two breaths and gradually increase intensity. Then switch.

Equipment needed:
8–10 lb. medicine ball,
$35 and up at sports stores, mass merchandisers and online retailers

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