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**Discover How to Maximize Your Strength and Athleticism**

**By Joe Driscoll**

If you want to gain functional strength, muscular endurance and quicker first step reactions, something all athletes and Martial Artists need, you'll start adding lunges into your routine.

There is no other group of exercises that packs as much punch for training as the Lunge Evolution. Nearly all traditional bodyweight and traditional weightlifting exercises are one-dimensional, you are locked in place in a stable atmosphere. With squats you stand in one place, with the bench press you lie on your back, with pushups you are stationary on your hands and feet.

Lunges are the exact opposite. They are multi-dimensional, and as you'll soon discover, the last stage of the evolution packs all the punches of Proprioception, teaching your body where it is in space. When your body has a better understanding of where it is when you're not fully balanced, they benefit are quicker movements, reactions and faster movement patters.

Breaking down the Lunge into several of the movement patterns that take place in the exercise, you can see:

1. A squat
2. Running
3. Throwing a punch
4. Rotational trunk movement
5. Controlling an unbalanced load with one leg in the air, as in a punch or kick
6. And on and on...

The gains of lunging have to be seen and felt to be fully appreciated.

As with any exercise, you should start at the conservative level and gradually up the intensity. When a stage becomes easy, and you'll know when this happens, you move on to the next stage. You'll do yourself no good jumping into the hardest part of the evolution, that will only lead to your frustration and inability to get the very most out of the training.

The Lunge Evolution

The stages of the Lunge Evolution are as follows:

1. Lunge
2. Weighted Lunge
3. Weighted Lunge and Rotate
4. Proprioceptive Weighted Lunge and Rotate

#### The Lunge

The Lunge is done with no weight and begins to get the body use to using its' lunging muscles. When starting out, repetitions should be very conservative, even in the single digits as you begin to get those hamstrings use to the work.

1. From a normal standing position
2. Take a long step with the right leg...
3. As the left knee barely touches the ground...
4. Take your next step with the left leg
5. Keep your torso straight

#### The Weighted Lunge

The Weighted Lunge increases the challenge by forcing a body using forward momentum and stepping to manipulate a weight. This is akin to teaching the moving weight of the body's limbs to stay within the body's balance plane and use efficient movement patters. When the body throws a punch, if the hand gets out of the body's balance plane, all bets are off. This is something that happens when you throw one punch too many on a punching combination.

1. Lift a medicine ball, or weight, only light weight is needed
2. Take a long step with the right leg...
3. As the left knee barely touches the ground...
4. Take your next step with the right leg
5. Keep your torso straight
6. Maintain balance as you continue to hold the weight over your head

#### The Weighted Lunge and Rotate

The Weighted Lunge and Rotate now adds in the rotational movements of the torso. Every strike in the Martial Arts contains rotational movement. This is also true of a jab and front kick, there is just not as much rotational movement in those strikes, but it is there. There is rotational movement in nearly any athletic movement you can think of.

1. Hold a medicine ball or other weight above your head
2. Step with the right foot while bringing the left knee to barely touch the ground

## Discover How to Maximize Your Strength and Athleticism

3. As this is done, rotate the medicine ball to the side of the forward leg, in this case, the right one
4. Step with the left leg forward, right knee barely touching the ground, and medicine ball having traveled up above the head and over to the left side
5. Continue until finished, using distance in place of repetitions for this exercise

### The Proprioceptive Weighted Lunge and Rotate

The last piece of intensity added in is forcing the body to balance itself from the ground up. This is accomplished by wearing Proprioception footwear. I use Jumpsoles with the Proprioceptor Plug inserted in the bottom, it's like walking on two mini stability balls.

When you can do this exercise for 20 yards, you've arrived.

1. Wearing Proprioception footwear, hold a medicine ball above your head
2. Step with the right foot while bringing the left knee to barely touch the ground
3. As this is done, rotate the medicine ball to the side of the forward leg, in this case, the right one
4. Step with the left leg forward, right knee barely touching the ground, and medicine ball having

traveled up above the head and over to the left side

5. Continue until finished

### Increased Athleticism

When I work with athletes, many feel the effects of lunges sometimes after only a couple of training sessions. Their feelings are always the same as they tell me they feel stronger, more athletic and quicker.

The reason for the increased athleticism is the Proprioception training that's taking place. With the Lunge Evolution, the smaller micro-muscles of the spine become engaged, and essentially are woken up by this exercise and told they are needed. I refer to these muscles as the "athleticism muscles".

No matter what sport you play, when you start adding Lunges to your training, you'll be amazed by the gains you produce.

Joe Driscoll is a former Martial Arts world champion and the author of "Conditioning and Beyond" and several other books on fitness, conditioning and Martial Arts Training. Find out more about Joe and his training concepts at

<http://www.FightingShape.com>

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## **The Role Of Repetitions In Your Muscle Building Program**

**By Rick Mitchell**

### **The Role Of Repetitions In Your Muscle Building Program by Rick Mitchell**

Repetitions are the basic building blocks of any strength or muscle building program but it is something that many lifters take for granted. How often do you see people at the gym speed through their reps, breathe haphazardly or fail to complete each rep correctly from a technical perspective? There is much more to the simple rep than meets the eye.

The first thing to note is that a repetition consists of three elements – namely lower, pause and lift. The speed at which this is achieved depends on the desired outcome, but to maximize muscle growth a slow, controlled tempo is required. The process should never be rushed, jerky or bouncy but instead should be controlled and smooth.

The second consideration relates to how many reps need to be performed. Once again, this depends on what you hope to achieve but you can use the following as a basic rule of thumb:

1. A single repetition maximum (1RM) increases muscle strength.
2. A six to eight repetition maximum increases muscle size.
3. A higher number of repetitions will have more effect on muscle endurance and little impact on size or strength.

Your aim therefore should be to complete six to eight reps of a load equivalent to 75–80% of your 1RM. This will maximize your muscle building potential, provided you complete each lift with perfect form in a smooth controlled manner.

Rick Mitchell is the creator of the [bodybuildingadvisor.com](http://bodybuildingadvisor.com) website that provides guidance and information to athletes at all levels of bodybuilding experience. Go to

Bodybuilding Advice

to learn

more about the issues covered in this article.



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