

Fit Facts™

FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE®

SLIDE INTO FITNESS

Is your fitness routine getting a little, well, routine? How about trying a fitness activity that's been around no less than one hundred years? That's right — slide training has been around since the days when speed skaters would take an old barn door, wax it down, and slide back and forth during the warmer months to stay in shape for the Olympics.

Thanks to new technology developed in the '80s and '90s, you can leave that barn door on its hinges. A well-made slide can be purchased at your local sporting goods store for around \$80. (Cheaper models are available, but you really get what you pay for.) With a little practice, you can be the next Eric Heiden or Bonnie Blair, skating your way to an Olympic medal.

LATERAL MOVES

Okay, so slide training won't turn you into an Olympian, but it will train your muscles in a whole new way. Most fitness activities, such as walking and cycling, train your muscles in a forward and backward or up and down motion. Many of our recreational activities, however, such as basketball and tennis require us to move in a side-to-side motion. Slide training develops and conditions those muscles of the legs and hips that make lateral motion possible.

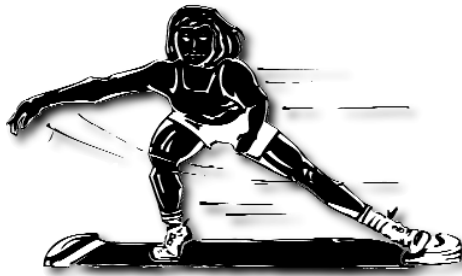
CONDITIONING YOUR LOWER HALF

Sliding is an extremely low-impact activity. It conditions not only the major muscle groups of the lower body but the connective tissue

between the knees, hips and ankles. This helps reduce the risk of injury to those joints during recreational activities. Sliding also targets those hard to reach areas of the inner and outer thighs and the buttocks.

LEARNING THE BASICS

It is best to use the slide on a hard flat surface, away from sharp-edged furniture, like coffee tables or chairs. (Even the most accomplished sliders may occasionally lose their balance.)



Remember to warm up and stretch before beginning your slide workout.

To begin your workout place the slide socks over your shoes; it is best to use flat-soled athletic shoes. Enter the board from the rear (if your board has a toe out, the wide part should face toward the front). First place your foot on the end ramp, then bring your other foot on the board. Bend your knees slightly, relax your neck and shoulders, keeping your back straight. Slide the inside foot back and forth on the slide surface to become familiar with how slick the surface is. Keep your hips in alignment with your torso and shoulders.

START SLIDING SLOWLY

Begin the slide motion by using the muscles of the outer hip and leg, pushing down and away with the entire leg, not just the foot or ankle. Do not bring your legs together until your lead leg has reached the end ramp. Always keep your knees in alignment with your toes. You can control the speed of your slide by dragging your trail leg. Come to rest and catch your balance before initiating your next slide. Take it slowly at first, making sure you are comfortable with the basic slide before you move onto other movements.

SLIDE YOUR WAY TO FITNESS

Sliding is an intense activity using seldom-used muscle groups. Begin with only one slide session per week, limiting your first few sessions to 10 minutes. You may increase the frequency and duration as your body adapts to sliding. As with any new activity you may experience some delayed-onset muscle soreness. This soreness will diminish as your body becomes conditioned to sliding.

Compliments of:

Put your name and logo in this area, then make handout copies.



Reprinted with permission from the American Council on Exercise.

If you are interested in information on other health and fitness topics, contact: American Council on Exercise, 4851 Paramount Drive, San Diego, CA 92123, 800-825-3636; or, go online at <http://www.acefitness.org> and access the complete list of ACE Fit Facts.