

AB BAND—Serious Training for Serious Wrestlers

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As a NCAA wrestling coach and former competitor, I know the value of proper conditioning. Without strength and endurance, even the best moves will be less effective. Over the years, our understanding of strength and conditioning has evolved, and so has the equipment we use in training. In light of these recent advancements, it is ironic that the simplest of tools can be highly effective.

I am specifically referring to the AB Band, which was developed and promoted for wrestling by Andre Brener, a two-time Ukrainian national champion. Brener was looking for a versatile device that was easily portable and appropriate for wrestling. The result is the AB Band, which meets all of these requirements. Most importantly it WORKS.

As an exercise scientist, I look at the demands of wrestling from a physiological perspective. Several elements of conditioning are important: A wrestler must have strength, endurance, and explosiveness. In addition to those elements, the wrestler must be able to use the muscle groups in rotational movements in several different planes.

As one considers all the movements that occur in any sport, it becomes clear that few can be duplicated with one or two exercises in the weight room. Traditional lifts such as bench press, squats and curls are important exercises in a training program, but they do not mimic the movement occurring in a wrestling match.

The AB Band picks up where traditional strength training ends, and it allows the wrestler to go through an unlimited range of motion at every joint. With a little creativity—and following Andre's instructional tape—wrestlers of all ages and sizes can functionally train in a manner specific to wrestling. High crotches, arm drags, snap downs and other wrestling-specific moves are all possible with the AB Band.

Another important strength of the AB Band is that it allows wrestlers to train at match speed. This is a necessary component and provides a carryover into explosive strength in WRESTLING MOVEMENT PATTERNS, which one cannot duplicate as effectively in the weight room.

Finally, the AB Band is appropriate for all ages and strengths. Physicians have counseled against heavy weight lifting for pre-pubescent children, because of the risks of damaging growth plates. Using the AB Band is an excellent alternative to weight training for youngsters, because it can be adapted and used for endurance training with appropriate resistance. The repeated movement patterns enhance the skill training at the same time as the conditioning.

There is unlimited potential for enhanced training as the AB Band “grows” up with the young wrestler. Tension is increased as wrestlers gain strength when the user stretches the band further from the anchor point. As the band is stretched, greater tension enhances the ability to train explosively. Doubling the band can further add resistance. Several sizes and resistances allow for an unlimited potential to fit every user.

Wrestling is one sport in which people generally have less opportunity to train in the summer or after high school and college experiences end. This is different from sports like tennis, jogging and a variety of others, which attract participants for years after their bodies have past their prime. With the AB Band, a wrestler can maintain endurance and skill even when there are few training partners available. Taking the muscles through a wrestling-specific range of motion on a daily basis will also enable a person to push back the clock and lengthen a competitive career.

As a coach and a college educator, I give the AB Band an A+ in the areas of versatility, portability and effectiveness. This small investment can make a BIG difference in fitness and enhance a wrestling career.