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BLOCK WORK

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FOR LEG DEVELOPMENT IN
PHYSICAL TRAINING

(Illustrated)

PUBLISHED BY THE
SENIOR CLUB of the ALLEN STEVENSON SCHOOL
NEW YORK CITY

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FOR LEG DEVELOPMENT IN PHYSICAL TRAINING

(Illustrated)

By

ANTON H. MULLER

Director of Physical Activities of the Allen-Stevenson School

Published by

**THE SENIOR CLUB of the ALLEN - STEVENSON SCHOOL
NEW YORK CITY**

1920

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TO OUR
THOMAS WHEWELL
OF
ALLEN - STEVENSON
AND
BOYVILLE

A. H. M.

BLOCK WORK

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THREE IN A ROW

The Senior Club, 1920

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The publication of this booklet was made possible by the sincere efforts of every member of the SENIOR CLUB.

In developing this block work, every member worked faithfully and with a determination that gave me great pleasure and happiness.

Their efforts resulted in an increased physical efficiency of at least fifty per cent.

To Mr. John R. Gardner and his wonderful camera we all give thanks and express our appreciation. I also wish to thank Mr. John Bellows for his conscientious help.

A. H. M.

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INTRODUCTION

The Senior Club of the Allen-Stevenson School was organized ten years ago by Mr. Muller.

Meetings are held on Friday nights from eight until ten o'clock, throughout the school year.

The object of the club is to discuss and try to solve the many little problems that come up in a boy's life before he is of boarding-school or college age. At these meetings, debates are held by the members and informal talks are given by the masters.

The Senior Club takes an active part in the preparation of Prize Day and other school events. Last year the "Climbers" published the book on "Practical Training for Boys" and "Table Work in Physical Training."

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This year Mr. Muller has introduced a new device to assist us in our physical training. He calls it "Block Work." This block work gives special and concentrated exercises for the development of the legs.

I have always enjoyed the table work, in fact all my physical work, but the block work gives me most pleasure. The reason, I believe, is because I can do and practice the block work in my own room at home.

When I first began, I could do very few of the exercises. By practicing at home ten minutes every day I was soon able to increase my leg strength at least 50 per cent.

I have never before been able to win a prize in physical training. The block work, however, made it possible for me this year to capture First Hon-

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ors in Physical Training, and I am sure if others will practice but ten minutes a day they, too, may hope to win first prize.

JAMES R. P. NASON,

President, The Senior Club, 1920.

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WHY THE BLOCK WORK?

The boy in a City Private School is in many ways handicapped in his physical development. Recently I have become much interested in the development of the legs of our boys.

Of late, I have come in contact with many young college men, also many graduates who have or have had, bad knees, torn cartilages or floating cartilages. Upon casual inquiry, I find that our country boys suffer less from bad knees. This is probably because they have the advantage of cross-country tramps, hill climbing, and a daily life which includes much walking and heavy lifting. Our city boys, of course, are denied this life.

It is true that our boys run races, play basket ball, and receive careful

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physical training, but do we give enough special and concentrated attention to their leg development? They need it. During the school year they walk but little. Time is too short. Automobiles and street cars are too convenient.

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CONCENTRATED LEG WORK

To give to a class of from thirty to forty boys concentrated leg work in the form of setting-up exercises is not only laborious but uninteresting, unless the boy is training for a team. Class exercises for the legs are really limited.

I tried to give a class of boys concentrated leg exercises, and after going through the usual "half-knee bends," "deep knee bends," "lunges" and "charges," "running in place," etc., I found my boys soon on the point of exhaustion.

Half of the exercises were improperly performed. An exercise not performed correctly means half results. At the beginning of the exercises, the entire class would begin work on its

toes (ball of the foot), but after a few seconds the majority would work flat-footed.

It is taken for granted that while taking exercises for the development of the legs the best results are obtained when standing on the ball of the foot and elevating the heels.

After experimenting with many objects, it suddenly came to me to use this simple block.

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GOOD LEGS

Well-developed legs are worth their weight in gold.

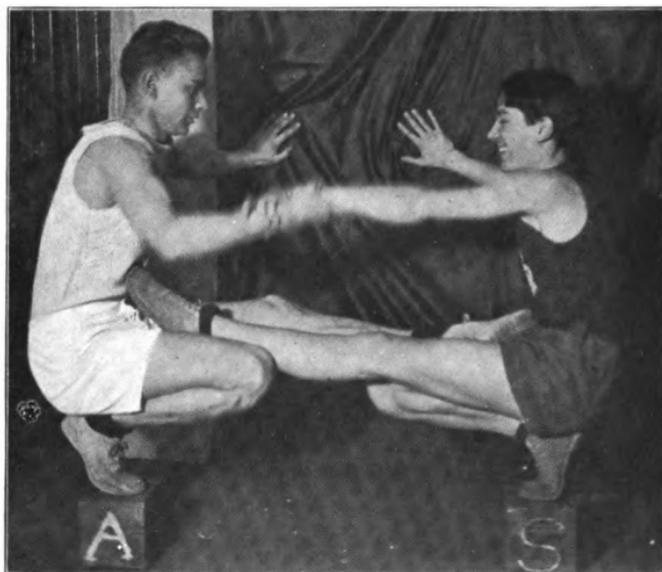
A city boy who goes to boarding school or college with a pair of well-trained legs will be better able to stand the strain of school or college athletics.

I firmly believe that if college football, baseball, and track men, also crew men, would include block work as a part of their training, the risk of bad knees would be lessened, for there is no question in my mind that the muscle attachments of the knee and ankle would be strengthened three-fold.

After two months of block work with my boys the results are all that could be desired.

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BLOCK WORK



EXPERIMENTING

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THE ADVANTAGE OF THE BLOCK

While working on the block always place the ball of the foot (not the heels) on the block. Keep the trunk (upper part of the body) erect, i. e., head up, chin in, shoulders back and down, chest arched, abdomen in, using the arms as a balance. Should it become necessary to bend the trunk in keeping balance, be sure to hold the head, shoulders, and chest in position, but bend from the waist only.

Working on the block necessitates good form. Work is done on the ball of the foot. The heel cannot slump to foundation, therefore the entire weight of the body is dependent for support on all the muscles of the legs.

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In performing an exercise in form, balance must be maintained. This balancing adds an extra strain on the leg muscles and produces an actual effect upon the muscle attachments, especially those about the knee.

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THE BLOCK

The block is six by six inches square and six inches high. To the bottom of the block a rubber button is tacked on each corner to prevent the block from sliding or slipping. A block of smaller or larger dimensions could be used, but I found that the six-inch block suited the feet of boys from six to eighteen years of age.

Occasionally I found a boy whose feet were so large that he required two blocks placed together.

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AN ATTEMPT

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ILLUSTRATIONS OF BLOCK WORK

The illustrations on the following pages show some of the exercises given on the blocks.

FIGURE I

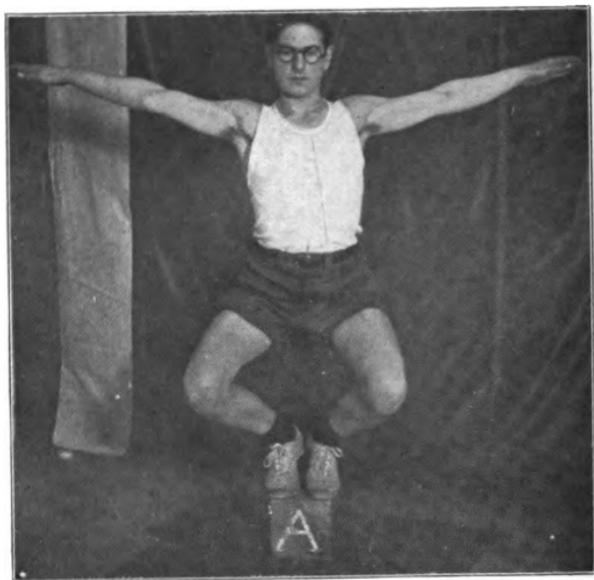


EXERCISE I

Stand on the block, resting on the balls of the feet (heels not to touch block), assume correct standing position, i. e. head up, chin in, shoulders back and down, chest arched and abdomen slightly drawn in. Practice holding this position, raising arms to various positions, such as to the side, forward, and over the head.

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FIGURE II

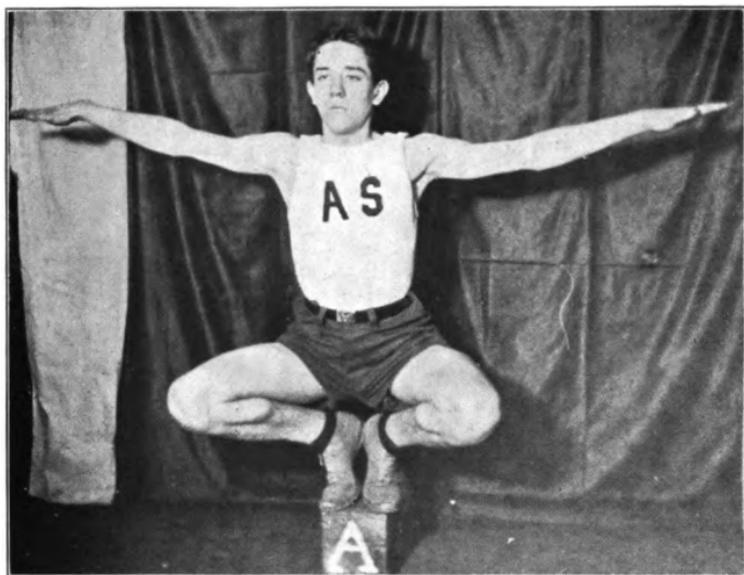


EXERCISE II

Assume position (FIG. I), go to half knee bend as in (FIG. II) return to original position and continue.

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FIGURE III

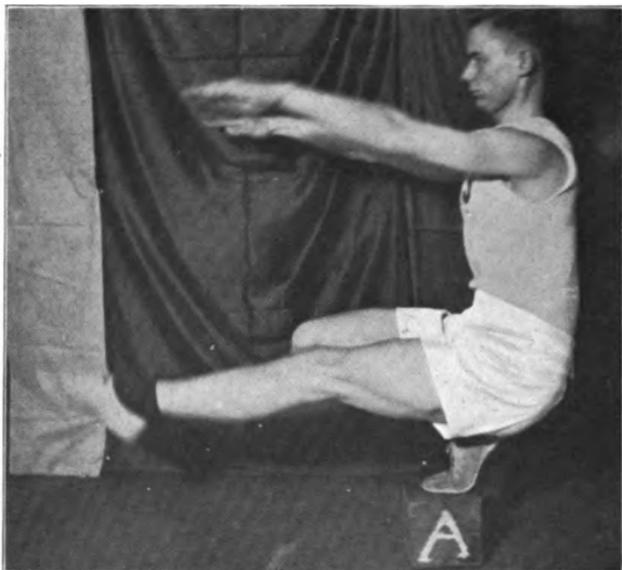


EXERCISE III

Assume position (FIG.I) go to deep knee bend (sitting on heels) as in (FIG. III) return to original position and continue.

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FIGURE IV

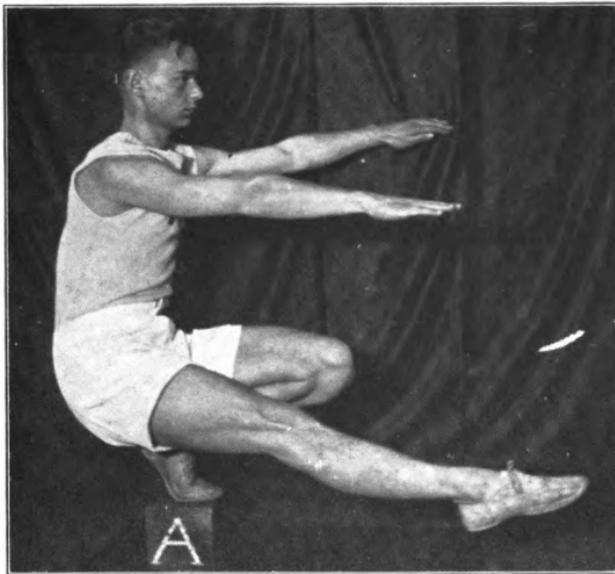


EXERCISE IV

Assume position (FIG. I) with right foot only on center of block. Bring left leg forward not bending knee, now bend right knee to deep knee bend, sitting on heel, do not allow any part of left foot to touch floor (FIG. IV). Return to standing position but do not place left foot on block, continue.

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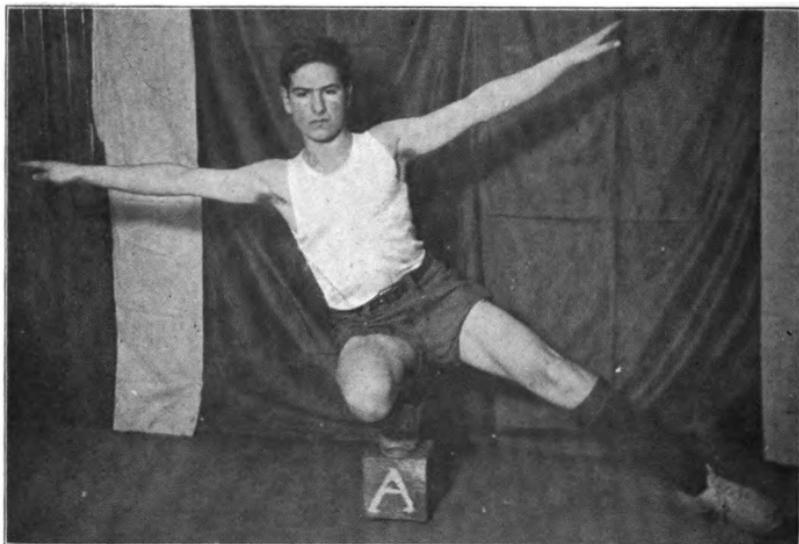
FIGURE V



EXERCISE V

Performed the same as Exercise IV but with the left foot on block.

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FIGURE VI

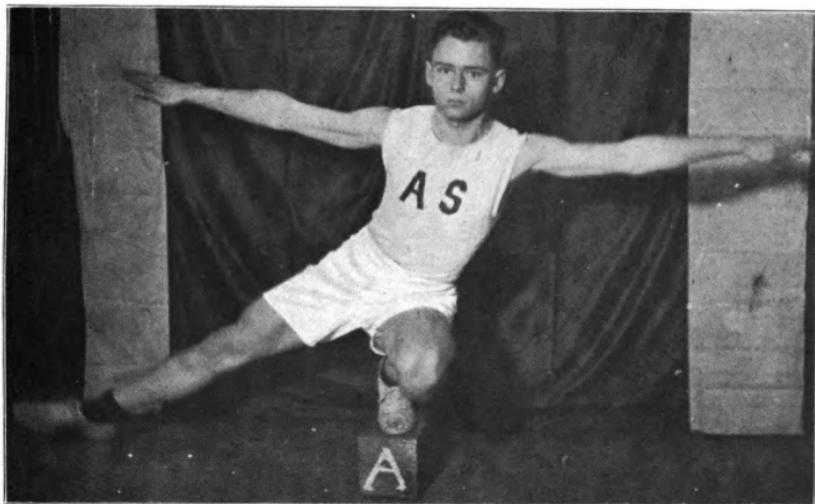


EXERCISE VI

Performed the same as Exercise IV (FIG. IV) but with left leg extended to the side (FIG. VI).

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FIGURE VII

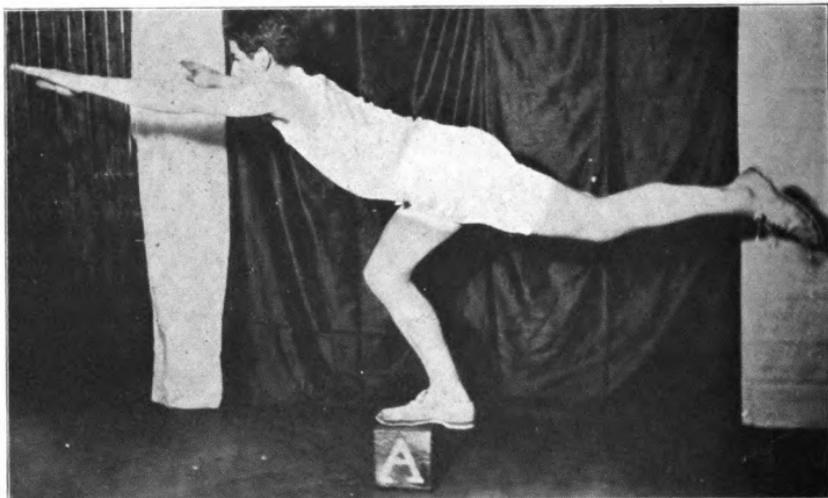


EXERCISE VII

Performed the same as Exercise V (FIG. V) but with right leg extended to the side (FIG. VII).

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FIGURE VIII

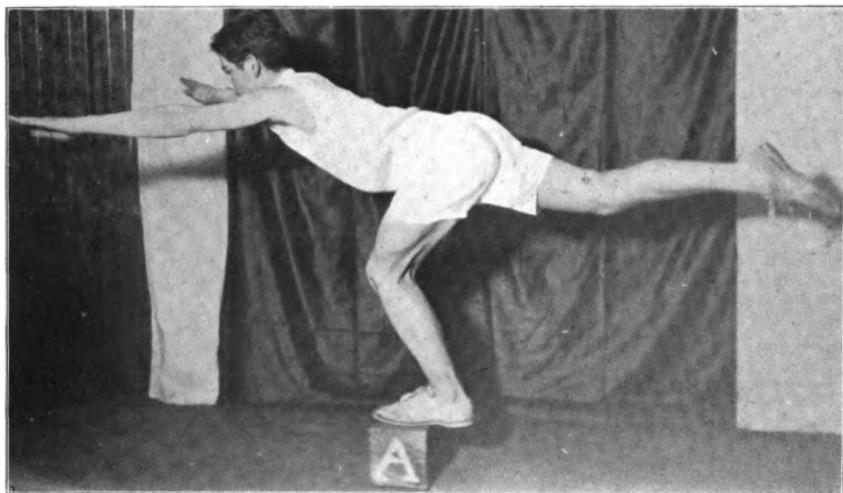


EXERCISE VIII

Assume position (FIG. I) with right foot on center of block. Bend right knee, extend left leg to rear and raise, bending body forward (FIG. VIII). Return to original position, left leg not touching block and continue.

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FIGURE IX



EXERCISE IX

Performed the same as Exercise VIII (FIG. VIII) but with left foot on block.

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FIGURE X



EXERCISE X

Stand on block (FIG. I), bring arms over head, bend body forward and down, not bending knees, touching fingers to block.

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FIGURE XI

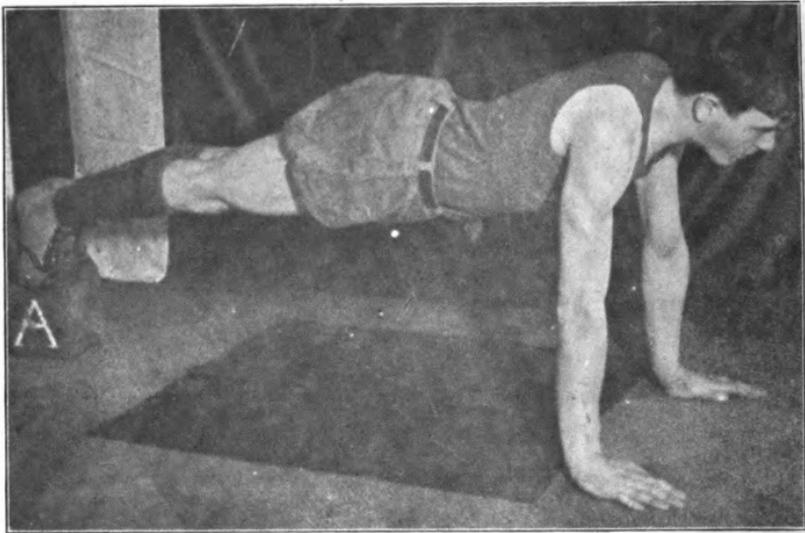


EXERCISE XI

Stand on block (FIG. I), come to deep knee bend, fall forward to position as shown in FIG. XI, then push up, keeping back straight, to position shown in FIG. XII, bend arms, touching chin to floor. Continue pushing up until tired.

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FIGURE XII

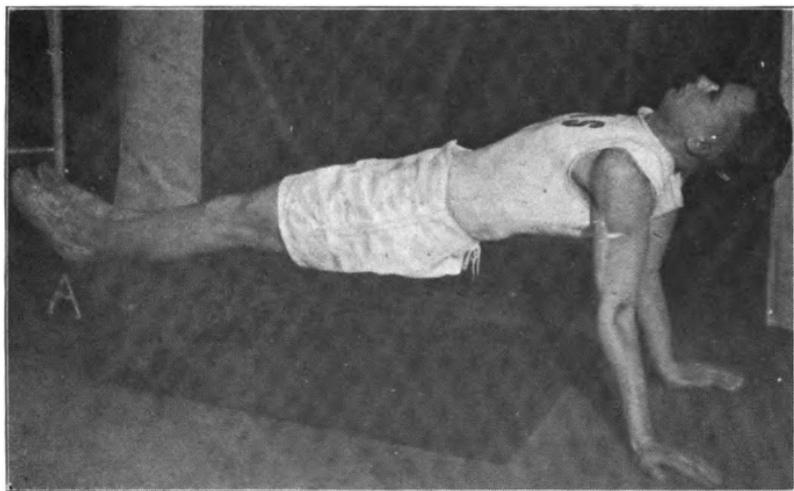


EXERCISE XI

Push up, with feet on block.

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FIGURE XIII



EXERCISE XII

Sit on floor, place both heels on block then raise body to position shown in FIG. XIII, return to original position and continue.

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DOUBLE BLOCK WORK

FIGURE XIV

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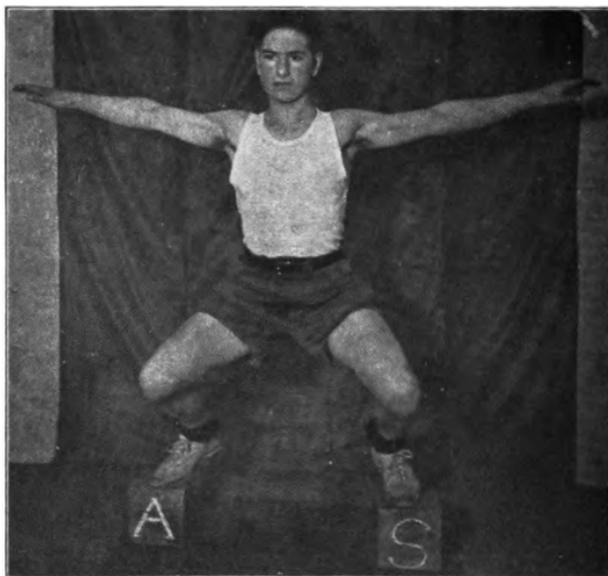


EXERCISE XIII

Assume position as shown in FIG. XIV, practice balance by bending body forward also to the side right and left.

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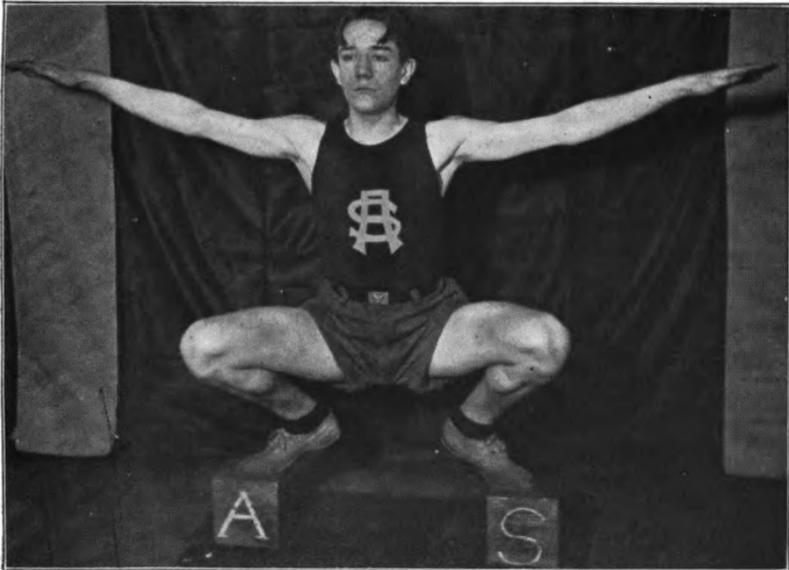
FIGURE XV



EXERCISE XIV

Assume position (FIG. XIV), go to half knee bend as shown in FIG. XV, return to original position and continue.

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FIGURE XVI

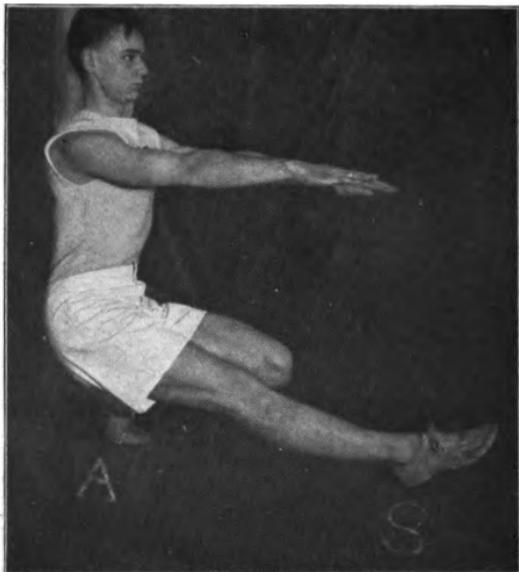


EXERCISE XV

Assume position (FIG. XIV), go to deep knee bend as shown in FIG. XVI, return to original position and continue.

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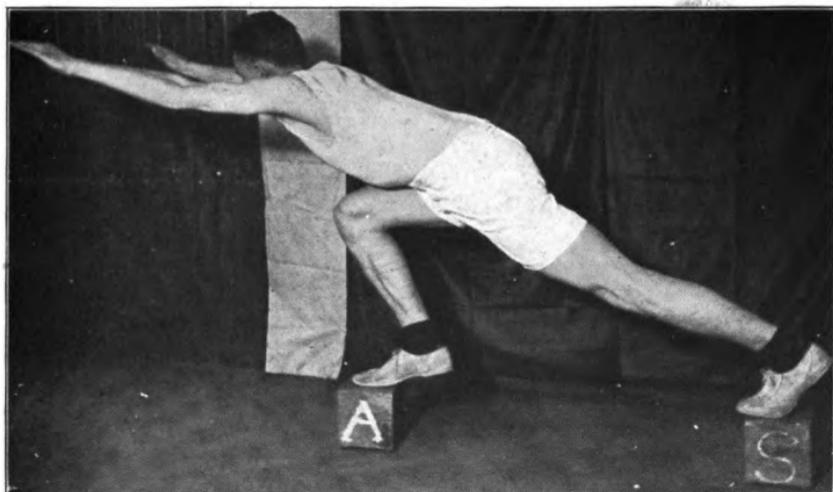
FIGURE XVII



EXERCISE XVI

On block A assume position (FIG. I), go to deep knee bend, now withdraw right foot, extend leg forward and place heel of right foot on block S (FIG. XVII), return right foot to block A. Alternate with other leg and continue.

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FIGURE XVIII



EXERCISE XVII

On block S assume position (FIG. I), step forward with right foot to block A. Now assume position FIG. XVIII, draw left foot to block A, assume deep knee bend position (FIG. III), now go to standing position (FIG. I), alternate and continue.

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RAPID FOOT WORK

After practicing block work indulge in some form of rapid foot work.

Draw an eighteen-inch circle on the floor. Stand in center of circle—draw right knee up (Fig. 19), return right foot to floor; alternate with left leg; continue, increasing speed until you find yourself rapidly running in place.

Do not let the heels strike the floor and keep within the circle.

Do not allow the position of the head, shoulders, or chest to collapse during action. Finish by taking several slow deep-breathing exercises.

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FIGURE XIX



EXERCISE XVIII
Running in place.

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RECORDS

After two months practice on the blocks, every boy in school (seven to seventeen years of age) had a test.

During the test if either foot of the contestant touched the floor he was not allowed to continue. On pages 46 and 47 will be found some of the records established.

NOTE

Fifteen boys did two hundred and three deep knee bends; all were stopped at that number in order to avoid any possibility of exhaustion.

At present we are using the blocks in reproducing ancient Greek and Roman athletic postures, also modern athletic attitudes.

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Records

Deep knee bend both legs			Deep knee bend with right leg, left leg ex- tended to the front			Deep knee bend with left leg, right leg ex- tended to the front		
Boy No.	Age	No. of Times	Boy No.	Age	No. of Times	Boy No.	Age	No. of Times
1	17	203	1	17	50	1	17	37
2	15	203	2	14	45	2	15	36
3	13	203	3	10	24	3	14	23
4	14	203	4	12	21	4	12	23
5	14	203	5	12	17	5	12	23
6	12	203	6	12	14	6	10	21
7	11	203	7	10	13	7	9	21
8	12	203	8	9	11	8	12	20
9	12	203	9	9	11	9	11	18
10	12	203	10	8	10	10	13	19
11	11	203	11	8	10	11	12	15
12	13	203				12	9	13
13	10	203				13	15	12
14	10	203				14	14	12
15	9	203				15	9	11
16	17	180				16	14	10
17	9	175				17	15	10
18	9	173						
19	15	170						
20	15	147						
21	11	143						
22	16	140						
23	12	137						
24	9	136						
25	12	132						

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Records

Deep knee bend with right leg, left leg ex- tended to side			Deep knee bend with left leg, right leg ex- tended to side			Push up from floor with toes on block		
Boy No.	Age	No. of Times	Boy No.	Age	No. of Times	Boy No.	Age	No. of Times
1	15	33	1	17	50	1	17	40
2	12	26	2	15	30	2	13	35
3	12	21	3	14	27	3	15	32
4	10	21	4	12	21	4	16	30
5	11	19	5	9	19	5	14	28
6	17	13	6	10	18	6	14	26
7	12	13	7	15	16	7	14	25
8	9	13	8	12	13	8	12	23
9	6	12	9	9	13	9	17	22
10	14	12	11	11	12	11	14	21
10	14	12	10	13	12	10	12	22
11	11	10	11	11	12	11	14	21
12	9	10	12	12	12	12	10	21
			13	16	11	13	11	21
			14	9	11	14	13	20
			15	10	10	15	11	20
						16	9	20
						17	13	20

CONCLUSION

I want to add that during my twenty years' work with boys I know of no piece of apparatus, if the block can be termed as such, that has given my boys more pleasure, keener competition, and quicker results.

We had fifty blocks made. Often the entire fifty were in use in various parts of the school building.

The members of the Senior Club join me in conclusion, in saying that our efforts to produce this booklet will be amply repaid if they result in a keener interest in body development on the part of even a few boys.

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