



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

Office of Corporate Communications  
1300 E Avenue □ Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8524 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 4-8524

FAX: (804) 734-8009 (two pause symbols) 7-8773

or DSN: 687-8009 (two pause symbols) 7-8773

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**Release Number:** 47-09  
**Date:** May 28, 2009  
**Contact:** Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins, DeCA dietitian  
**Tel.:** (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8404  
**E-mail:** [karen.hawkins@deca.mil](mailto:karen.hawkins@deca.mil)

**Editor's Note:** This article is part of the "Eat Healthy and Be Active Your Way" promotional campaign between the Defense Commissary Agency and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that is linked to the "President's Challenge, You're It, Get Fit" initiative. With May being National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, the idea is to provide science-based guidance to help Americans aged 6 and older improve their health through appropriate physical activity.

## Consider exercise bands, balls for home workouts

*By Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins,  
DeCA dietitian*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – It is possible to get a really good workout at home using an exercise ball, exercise bands and a good pair of tennis shoes. Many of us don't have time to go to the gym so we can use this convenient workout equipment to tone and strengthen our muscles, along with regular aerobic activity, such as walking, to help burn calories.

Exercise bands are great for strengthening muscles and increasing endurance. They are also compact and portable so you can use them at your desk during break time at work and when you travel. According to the American Council of Exercise, you can get a whole body workout in 10 to 20 minutes, twice a week. Normally, you need to do about 10 repetitions for each move. Some exercises using bands recommended by ACE include hamstring curls, squats and chest presses. Keep the directions after you buy the band to help you get the technique down.

### Choose a band tip

Exercise bands come in multiple resistance levels from light to heavy. When starting out, choose an exercise band that offers enough resistance to work your muscles without excessive

strain. Once the exercises begin to feel too easy, you may need to graduate to a band with greater resistance.

An exercise ball is great for helping develop balance, stability and strength. Exercise balls are great to use for strengthening your core muscles as you have to work at staying stable when on the ball. You can also use the ball to do weight training, stomach exercises and stretching.

### **Choose a ball tip**

As exercise balls come in different sizes, choose one that is right for your height. When sitting on the ball, your hips should be level or slightly higher than the knees. This will help you maintain comfortable control while using the ball.

What's neat about using a ball or a band is that they are so versatile. You can use them when you are watching TV; or try sitting on the ball instead of using a chair when working on your computer. Your muscles have to work to hold you up so you are toning while typing.

When you first start using the equipment you may want to use a chair or the wall to help support yourself. Perform each exercise using slow and controlled movements and concentrate on what you are doing. This will help you get the most out of your workout.

And after your workout, enjoy a whole grain cookie from your commissary. You've earned it – not to mention the more than 30 percent savings you'll realize by shopping there.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Also Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on <http://www.twitter.com> and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

**- DeCA-**

**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family*

*readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*