

Portfolio Handout 17 – Top 10 Health Benefits of Handball

By **Health Fitness Revolution** April 10, 2015

Beginner handball players might develop a few bruises on their hands, but the excitement and competition of the game can be a fun and rewarding experience, both physically and mentally. Here are the Top 10 Health Benefits of Handball:

- **It provides a full body workout:** Apart from the aerobic benefit, the fast paced game of handball helps to build up muscle tone and strength. All of the jumping, turning and slamming means most muscles are getting a vigorous workout.
- **Increases cardiovascular endurance:** The court is 40 meters long and 20 meters wide, so players can run several miles during each 60-minute game. This helps increase the heart rate and boost aerobic endurance.
- **Teaches agility:** Develops agility of hands and feet, with sudden changes of pace and direction required. Accuracy is also crucial. Many people compare handball to golf. Both are extremely challenging to play well, because they involve striking a small ball with a great deal of precision.
- **Keeps you fit as you age:** Hall-of-Fame NFL quarterback George Blanda credits the sport for keeping him fit and effective well into his 40s.
- **Improves mental focus and self-confidence:** Being successful is 95% mental and 5% physical. You have the conditioning and game strategy, now you have to make sure that you stay calm under pressure and keep yourself focused on the right things. You have to believe in yourself and have the self-confidence to play your own game rather than your opponent's when you're under pressure.
- **Heart healthy:** Provides the body with a good cardiovascular workout, feeding more oxygen to the muscles via the bloodstream. The constant running up and down the court ensures that the heart is vigorously pumping throughout the match.

- **Calorie and fat burning:** A University of Utah study showed handball to be superior to racquetball—a sport that’s no stroll in the park—in all four of the fitness indicators that were measured: calories burned per hour (751 vs. 644), average heart rate (164 vs. 137), average oxygen uptake (30.1 vs. 25.8), and average ventilation rate (85.9 vs. 70.9).
- **Develops hand-eye coordination:** Learning to anticipate where the ball will end up isn’t easy. Timing and technique are everything.
- **Teaches you to be balanced and agile on both sides of the body:** Handball develops and sustains muscles on both sides of the body because you use both hands. Developing coordination and power in your non-dominant, or “off,” hand takes time, but if you don’t become semi-ambidextrous, your opponent is certain to exploit your weak side. This is the hardest part of handball to pick up, but also what sets it apart.
- **Unlike many sports, handball can be played and for a lifetime:** It’s a relatively injury-free sport. Most injuries that do occur are muscle strains in the shoulder, elbow and back, but those are avoidable if you follow a basic conditioning, strengthening and stretching program.