

ORIGIN OF THE MEDICINE BALL

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What is the origin of the "medicine Ball"?

A medicine ball is a weighted, leather ball, which weighs approx. 5 kilograms. The ball's diameter is typically 0.6 meters (2 feet). In old film clips, of high school gym classes in the 1950s, medicine balls can often be seen being passed around. Thus it is a device used in weight training and general exercise.

While similar devices have been used since ancient times, the medicine ball, in the form it is today, was first patented in the 1890's. However, the term "medicine ball" was not coined until World War I - the name was from Navy medics who would fill a leather casing with kapok and rags, and then have the seamen toss it around in an attempt to combat seasickness and boredom.

Naval ships continued to use medicine balls as a form of entertainment. In 1928, while travelling aboard the USS Utah, on a tour of South America, President-elect Herbert Hoover witnessed the crewmen playing a game of bull in the ring, a type of activity where the players formed a circle around a centre player, or bull, and toss a medicine ball around in an attempt to keep the bull from getting it. Herbert Hoover played it, took a liking to it, and brought it back with him to the White House. This game became commonly known as Hoover Ball.

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