

VIBEMOTION LABS · ATHLETE RECOVERY

PHASE 3 OF 5

Strength & *Stability*

\$45

Build functional lower body strength and single-leg stability — the foundation for return to dynamic movement. Timeline: Weeks 4–8 · Pain target: 0/10 during and 24 hrs after

PHASE GOALS

- Achieve limb symmetry index (LSI) \geq 70% on single-leg strength tests
- Perform single-leg squat with controlled knee tracking and no pain
- Develop sufficient hip and ankle stability for dynamic loading
- Build confidence in loading the injured limb progressively
- Establish neuromuscular control as a foundation for Phase 4 plyometrics

PAIN MONITORING RULE

Before each session: record pain score (0–10). Do not exercise if pain $>$ 4/10. During exercise: pain must stay \leq 3/10. Stop if it exceeds this at any point. After session: pain must return to your pre-exercise baseline within 30 minutes.

PHASE 3 EXERCISES — 3 days per week (non-consecutive)

01 Goblet Squat

Quad / Glute / Core

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
4	10–12 reps	Start: 15–25 lb dumbbell or kettlebell · Progress weekly	3 sec down / 1 hold / 2 up	90 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Hold a dumbbell or kettlebell vertically at your chest, gripping it like a goblet.
2. Stand with feet slightly wider than hip-width, toes turned out 15–20°.
3. Take a breath in, brace your core (20–30% contraction), and begin to sit straight down.
4. Lower slowly over 3 seconds — keep your chest tall and elbows inside your knees.
5. Aim for thighs parallel to the floor (90°) or as deep as pain-free range allows.
6. At the bottom, hold for 1 second — ensure your knees track over your second and third toes.
7. Drive through both heels and the balls of your feet to return to standing over 2 seconds.
8. At the top, breathe out and reset your brace before the next rep.

COACHING CUES

- *The weight acts as a counterbalance — let it pull you into depth, not collapse you forward.*
- *Your chest should stay nearly vertical — if it falls forward, the load may be too heavy.*
- *Check knee tracking every single rep: trace an imaginary line from hip → knee → second toe.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When 4x12 with 25 lb is pain-free and form is consistent — increase load by 5 lb.

02 Romanian Deadlift (RDL)

Hamstring / Glute / Posterior Chain

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
3	10 reps per leg	Start: 20–30 lb dumbbell in each hand · Increase 5 lb when criteria met	3 sec hinge / 1 hold / 2 up	90 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart, dumbbells in front of thighs, palms facing you.
2. Push your hips backward (not down) like you are trying to touch a wall behind you.
3. Let the dumbbells slide down the front of your thighs as your torso lowers toward parallel.
4. Keep your back flat and neutral — imagine a broomstick running from your head to your tailbone.
5. Lower until you feel a strong stretch in the back of the thigh — stop before the back rounds.

6. Hold the hinge for 1 second, feeling maximum hamstring tension.
7. Drive your hips forward to return to standing — squeeze glutes firmly at the top.
8. For single-leg (progression): lift the non-working leg behind you, maintaining a neutral spine.

COACHING CUES

- *Hip hinge, not a squat — the knees should have only a slight bend, not be driving forward.*
- *If you cannot feel the hamstrings loading, your hips may not be pushed back far enough.*
- *Keep the dumbbells close to your body throughout — they should nearly brush your legs.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When bilateral 3×10 with 30 lb is pain-free — begin single-leg RDL with 15 lb.

03 Step-Up (Forward)

Quad / Glute /
Single-Leg
Stability

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
3	10 reps per leg	Bodyweight → hold 10–20 lb dumbbells · Step height: 6" → 8" → 12"	Controlled throughout	60 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Stand in front of a sturdy box or step at the prescribed height.
2. Place the entire foot of the injured leg on top of the step.
3. Drive through the heel of the elevated foot to push your entire body upward.
4. Straighten the elevated leg fully at the top — do not push off the trailing foot on the ground.
5. Bring the trailing leg up beside the elevated leg at the top (fully stand on the step).
6. Slowly lower the trailing leg back to the ground, controlling the descent on the injured leg.
7. Do not let the knee collapse inward as you descend — maintain alignment throughout.
8. The injured leg remains on the step for all reps before switching legs.

COACHING CUES

- *The knee of the working leg should track over the second toe at all times.*
- *You should be able to tap your trailing toes to the floor at the bottom — not slam them.*
- *If you feel the urge to push off the back foot, the step may be too high — reduce height.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When 3×10 at 12" step with 20 lb each hand is pain-free and controlled.

04 Single-Leg Balance Progression

Proprioception /
Ankle & Knee
Stability

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
3	30–60 sec hold	Bodyweight	Static hold — eyes open → eyes closed → unstable surface	30 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Stage 1: Stand on the injured leg on a flat, firm surface. Soft knee — not locked out.
2. Hold for 30 seconds — focus on keeping the hip level and the knee in neutral alignment.
3. Stage 2 (when Stage 1 is easy): Close your eyes. The absence of visual input forces the ankle and knee to work harder.
4. Stage 3: Perform on a BOSU ball, folded mat, or balance pad.
5. Stage 4: Catch and throw a ball with a partner while balancing — reactive stability.
6. At each stage, start with 3 × 30 sec and build to 3 × 60 sec before advancing.

COACHING CUES

- *Slight wobble is normal and beneficial — it means the stabilisers are working.*
- *If you are completely still, you may be gripping the floor with your toes — relax them.*
- *Focus on a fixed point at eye level (eyes open) or on the sensations in your foot and ankle (eyes closed).*

PROGRESS WHEN

When 3×60 sec on unstable surface with eyes closed is achievable with minimal sway.

05 Nordic Hamstring Curl

Hamstring
Eccentric
Strength

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
3	5–8 reps	Bodyweight (eccentric only) — partner or anchored feet	3–5 sec controlled lowering	120 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Kneel on a padded surface with both knees bent at 90°. Have a partner hold your ankles firmly, or anchor feet under a barbell.
2. Keep your body in a straight line from knees to shoulders — do not break at the hips.
3. Cross your arms over your chest or extend them forward.
4. Begin to lower your body forward toward the floor by slowly straightening your knees.
5. Resist the fall as hard as possible — your hamstrings are working to control the descent.
6. Lower as slowly as you can (target 3–5 seconds) before you can no longer resist.
7. When you can no longer resist, allow yourself to fall and catch yourself on your hands.
8. Push back to the starting kneeling position with your hands — the return is assisted.
9. Begin with 5 reps. The goal is slower descents, not more reps.

COACHING CUES

- *This is one of the highest-evidence injury prevention exercises ever studied — do not skip it.*
- *If you cannot resist the fall at all, start with hip-hinge variations until hamstrings are stronger.*
- *Soreness after the first 2 sessions is expected and normal — it will reduce significantly by session 4.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When you can lower for 5 seconds for 3×8 — begin adding a band or weight vest.

■ *Do not perform within 48 hrs of a heavy RDL session — allow hamstrings to recover.*

06 Lateral Band Walk

Glute Med / Hip
Abductor
Endurance

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
3	15 steps each direction	Light → medium resistance band above knees	Controlled, no bouncing	45 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Loop a resistance band just above both knees. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Adopt a quarter-squat position — slight bend in knees and hips, torso upright.
3. Maintain this athletic stance throughout — do not stand up between steps.
4. Step sideways to the right: move the right foot first, then bring the left foot to follow.
5. Do not bring feet completely together — keep tension in the band at all times.
6. Complete 15 steps to the right, then 15 steps to the left to complete 1 set.
7. The band should have constant tension — never allow it to go slack.

COACHING CUES

- *Stay low in the quarter squat the entire time — this is where the glutes work.*
- *Keep toes pointing forward — do not let them flare outward as fatigue sets in.*
- *Feel the contraction on the outside of the standing hip — that is the target muscle.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When 3×20 steps each direction with medium band is effortless.

PHASE 3 COMPLETION CRITERIA

- Single-leg squat (step-down): 10 reps with controlled knee alignment, zero pain
- Single-leg RDL: 3×10 with 15 lb, pain-free and balanced
- Single-leg balance on unstable surface: 3×45 sec, eyes closed
- LSI \geq 70% on single-leg calf raise (reps to fatigue: injured vs. uninvolved)
- Nordic hamstring curl: controlled lowering over 3+ seconds for 3×6
- Zero pain during or 24 hours after any Phase 3 session