

Stay Fit at Home, Doing Sumo!

A slogan which many have been sharing in Japan on SNS and mainstream media is "Corona ni makeruna!" It roughly translates as "Don't let yourself be beaten by the coronavirus!" In this series, we will be sharing some of the creative ways in which people are fighting these strange times, through heartwarming projects, recipes, sports, and much much more.

How can we stay fit at home? Let me count the ways!

It's probably one of the mantras we have heard the most over the last few months as the world has been fighting COVID-19: this is the one chance to finally get fit.

Enter the yoga-in-30-days routines, Instagram Live workouts, Tabata circuit challenges.

But have you ever thought you could get fit through a sumo wrestling workout?

Recently, sumo online workouts have been gaining attention in Japan — in particular, the exercise called shiko, performed ceremonially before every sumo match.

The exercise is gaining popularity because it requires no equipment. And it can be performed by athletes, as well as by children, women, and the elderly alike.

An expert in sports science spoke to The Sankei Shimbun on the benefits of this exercise, saying: "It's good for your health and building up strength. The point is to try to do it as much as possible, in a relaxed manner."

This trend has somehow been in the works. The Japan Sumo Association (JSA) posted some videos on YouTube showcasing "Sumo Training" in the first part of April.

One video shows sumo coach Oikari Tsuyoshi teaching children in summer 2019 the shiko and splits for leg stretching. Oikari, also known as Kabutoyama Oyakata, is a coach in the Inenoumi Stable. Perceptively, some comments on the video go, "For 'Stay at Home,' this is the best!"

Riding this wave, the JSA on May 8 also posted videos of Wakakoyu Masaya and other coaches introducing sumo exercises in a discussion format.

Shiko requires you to get low in a deep squat position, sometimes even called "sumo squat," pointing your feet outwards. Then you are to alternate putting your weight on one leg while raising your other leg high to the side.

Next, you switch and move your weight onto the leg that had been raised, repeating the exercise again. When you bring your foot to the ground, you sink in a deep squat and stretch your back muscles without leaning forward, thereby reducing the strain on your back.

It is considered the epitome of sumo exercises as it displays strength, flexibility, balance, and a capacity to hold the characteristically low squat.

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Masasuke Kuwamori, a professor of sports and physical education practice at Meiji University in Tokyo who researches body movements and also used to compete in sumo, commented: "To do shiko, you use the front muscles in your thighs, as well as your glutes, among others. It can work as an exercise to shape the glutes, it helps with moving your joints smoothly, and in general is associated with increased sport performance."

Even those who don't have much confidence in sports can enjoy practicing this exercise without too much effort.

For example, try doing 10 repetitions of the movement in one day. If it's tiring, then reduce it to five repetitions, or less. After a day or two of practicing, slowly increase the number.

According to Professor Kuwamori, beginners don't need to forcefully bring their legs up high, even just opening their legs wide and leaning forward trying to do the split leads to similar results.

Professor Kuwamori concluded that the benefit is precisely that it doesn't need to be a military-style exercise: "Middle-aged people shouldn't overdo it, they should just bring their hips down as much as they are capable. The major benefit of shiko is that it's something which people can do in a relaxed manner."

He concluded, "It's a fun way to come into contact with a traditional part of Japanese culture, sumo."

Source: **[Corona ni Makeruna] Stay Fit at Home, Doing Sumo!**
<https://japan-forward.com/corona-ni-makeruna-stay-fit-at-home-doing-sumo/>

相撲の「四股」踏み 自宅で気軽に できる範囲で健康・体力強化 相撲協会が動画アップ

新型コロナウイルスの感染拡大で自宅にいる時間が増える中、室内で簡単にできる相撲の「四股（しこ）運動」が注目を集めている。道具が必要ないため、老若男女を問わず気軽に取り組めるからだ。運動生理学の専門家は「健康という観点でもいいし、体力強化という観点でもいい。できる範囲で楽にやるのがポイント」と勧めている。（浜田慎太郎）

日本相撲協会は4月上旬、動画投稿サイト「ユーチューブ」に「相撲健康体操」の動画をアップした。甲山（かぶとやま）親方（元幕内大碓）が昨年夏に子供たちと四股や股割りなどを行った動画で、視聴者からは「ステイホームに最適」などとコメントが寄せられている。5月8日には不知火親方（元小結若荒雄）ら3親方がウェブ会議システムで解説しながら、四股などの運動を紹介する動画も配信した。

四股は相撲の基本動作で、準備運動や足腰を鍛えるために行う。つま先を外側に向け、肩幅より広く開いた足を左右交互に高く上げる。足を床に下ろすときは同時に腰を深く落とす。背筋を伸ばし、前傾姿勢にならないようにすると、より負荷をかけられる。

明大相撲部出身で、体の動きを研究している明大の桑森真介教授（運動生理学）は「四股で使うのは、ももの前面の筋肉やお尻の筋肉など。お尻のシェイプアップになる。股関節も滑らかに動くようになり、スポーツパフォーマンス向上につながる」と説明する。

四股は体力に自信がない人でも気軽に行える。1日10回程度でよく、疲れる人は1日5回から少しずつ増やすこともできる。桑森教授によると、初心者は、無理に足を上げる必要がなく、足を開いた体勢で腰をかがめる「腰割り」でも同じ効果が得られるという。

魅力について、桑森教授は「中高齢者は無理をしないで、できる範囲で腰を下ろせばいい。柔軟にできるのが四股のいい部分」と解説。さらに「日本の伝統文化である相撲に触れられるというのも楽しいところ」と付け加えた。

出典：相撲の「四股」踏み 自宅で気軽に できる範囲で健康・体力強化 相撲協会が動画アップ
<https://www.sankei.com/sports/news/200512/spo2005120014-n1.html>