

# Key Components to a Balanced Training Program

One of the greatest challenges to coaches is to find ways to get their players to work on areas of their game that they are not good at. Players who have a good shot, most likely practice it a lot, and like doing so. Conversely, players have a natural tendency of neglecting, and sometimes avoiding altogether, areas of their game that are weak.

Most off-season training programs developed by teams have at least three primary components: 1) flexibility, 2) cardiovascular training and 3) strength training.

All three components are extremely important to a well-designed training program, and have the most impact on a player's physiological development when they coexist.

The following are some general objectives of a good strength and conditioning program:

1. Injury reduction
2. Enhance performance
3. Gain size and desired body weight
4. Increase flexibility
5. Increase confidence
6. Improve foot quickness
7. Improve speed
8. Conditioning a player to reach optimal performance

## Flexibility

Flexibility, or stretching as it is commonly referred to, is a vital part of a solid conditioning program. Doing a prescribed series of stretching exercises both before and after each workout will not only improve a player's strength through the full range of motion but will also help prevent future injuries through increased flexibility.

Most stretching exercises, unless noted otherwise, should be done with three-10 second intervals. The muscle should not be stretched to the point of tightness, NOT pain! Hold and relax at the maximum point for the full 10 seconds. Don't bounce or tighten the muscles. Always attempt to stretch a little further with each additional repetition. If done properly over an extended period of time (on a daily basis), one should be able to increase their range of motion of the muscles substantially. Remember, stretch daily, do it slowly, and stretch to tightness – not pain.

## Cardiovascular Training

The ability of athletes to reach a high level of performance in sports partially depends upon the supply of oxygen to the muscle tissues, especially the heart. This is provided by the cardiovascular system: heart, lungs, arteries, veins and capillaries. As the workload on the muscle tissues increases during athletic activity, the muscle's need for oxygen increases.

When the oxygen needs are being met during activity, the athlete

is working in aerobic metabolism. If the workload during activity becomes so great that the cardiovascular system is unable to meet the needs of the working muscles, the anaerobic metabolism is activated. Performance soon deteriorates and the athlete will eventually have to stop. Both aerobic and anaerobic metabolism capacities can be increased through training.

Anaerobic training should supplement the aerobic training for hockey players, as hockey is a sport that requires short bursts of energy (anaerobic). For example, a distance runner would concentrate primarily on aerobic training while a sprinter would concentrate primarily on anaerobic training. One type of training carries over to another – as they need to coexist for a hockey player, who needs to build both an aerobic base and a strong anaerobic capacity.

It is important to keep these forms of conditioning in mind during the season as well as your practices should include both aerobic skating activity in addition to the normal anaerobic (stops and starts, board to board sprints, etc...) training that you do.

Note that every individual is different and it is important to always consult a physician prior to any form of training.

### I. Warm-up/Stretching

**II. Aerobic Training** – Running, inline skating, swimming, Stairmaster, etc...

First six weeks – 30-45 minutes aerobic running at comfortable pace four times per week, maintain a target heart rate between 60-75% of your maximum (maximum heart rate is approximately 220 beats minus your age per minute—check with your physician).

### III. Second six weeks

Slow jog.....	10 minutes
¾ full speed .....	30 seconds
Jog .....	1 minute
¾ full speed .....	45 seconds
Jog .....	3 minutes
¾ full speed .....	60 seconds
Jog .....	4 minutes
7/8 full speed .....	30 seconds
Jog .....	3 minutes
7/8 full speed .....	45 seconds
Jog .....	4 minutes
7/8 full speed .....	60 seconds
Jog .....	5 minutes
7/8 full speed .....	75 seconds
Jog .....	15 minutes
	51 minutes total

### IV. Cool down/Stretch

