

DEVELOPING A CONDITIONING PROGRAM FOR THE

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When developing an athlete conditioning program, the Xcel coach, unlike the Junior Olympic coach, may have to consider some unique circumstances, challenging situations, and some program specific restrictions. The Xcel program serves a large variety of athletes, with varying ages, sizes, abilities and limitations. However, the importance of the physical conditioning of these athletes remains just as, if not more, important than that of their counterparts.

When developing a conditioning program, establishing your goals while considering your limitations will serve as your foundation to a productive and successful program.

It's safe to assume that, in terms of creating a conditioning program, Xcel coaches across the country may have similar goals (quick, productive, easy to monitor) while possibly facing similar challenges (limited amount of time & space, large groups, varying levels & abilities).

As the number of hours spent training reduces, a

well thought out conditioning program, designed for overall physical strength and injury prevention, becomes that much more important. How do you keep these athletes fit, injury free, in a limited space and



ATHLETE

still have time for event training? Setting your goals, understanding your challenges, creating your plan and making it a priority. Need help getting started? Here's what we've done!

In our gym, coaches at all levels are required to make strength conditioning and injury prevention a priority. Our program goals are: cardio intense, plyometric-based, major muscle oriented, with an attention to acute muscle injury prevention exercise. Our limitation is: a busy gym! Our solutions are: scheduling, communication, and teamwork! We have assigned each day of the week a conditioning focus, and we have created a number of conditioning workouts within the focus.

The following example is a workout we call CONES. It does require the entire floor carpet but can easily service 50+ athletes. From each corner of the floor, four cones or markers are placed at approximately five-foot increments. This will create four lanes and one square in the center of the floor. Each lane has a cardio or plyometric assignment, the middle square is injury prevention, and major muscle strength is performed around the perimeter before repeated.

SAMPLE CONES WORKOUT

Lane 1: 5 laps sprinting (cardio)/1 lap frog jump (plyo)/5 laps sprinting (cardio)



Lane 2: 5 laps high-knee running (cardio)/1 lap tuck jump (plyo)/5 laps high-knee running

Lane 3: 8 laps moving jumping jacks (cardio)

Lane 4: 4 laps squatted bounces (plyo)

Middle Square: 1-minute single leg balance on pit block (ankle injury prevention)/10 fingertip push-ups (wrist injury prevention)

Perimeter: 10 clapping push ups/5 press handstands/40 flutter kicks

Use your imagination and CONES can get pretty interesting and pretty challenging. CONES can be done for repetition or for a set amount of time.

SOME HELPFUL CONDITIONING TIPS

- **Write down your conditioning workouts.** This is extremely helpful for those last-minute schedule changes in the gym.
- **Create your plan,** believe in your plan, and see your plan to the end! It's the only way to know if it worked.
- **Look for ways to combine exercises** or target two areas with one exercise to save time.
- **Conditioning does NOT have to be fun,** but if you want the best results, it needs to be positive.

