

We are going to go over the RIGHT way to use conditioning to improve the speed and performances of your athletes. Many coaches are going about conditioning their athletes the wrong way.

When it comes to conditioning your athletes, workouts are going to fall into the 65-89% intensity range.

First we have to look at why we actually do 'conditioning' workouts in the first place. Somewhere along the way we got the idea that by doing these workouts we are going to improve the speed of our athletes.

The **bottom line** is this: **YOU CAN'T GET FAST BY RUNNING SLOW**

We have certain **goals** with our conditioning work, but they aren't necessarily what you think...

1. Improve aerobic capacity

In a nutshell this means 'get athletes in shape'. But the purpose of an aerobic capacity workout is to improve the athletes' ability to handle a higher volume of speed and power work by increasing capillary density, improving soft tissue strength, flushing metabolic waste out of the muscles and increasing blood flow to the muscles.

Put simply, it is a supplement to your speed, strength and power work, not the foundation of your training program. At least not the way you may be accustomed to thinking about it.

2. Help aid in recovery from high intensity speed and strength work

After a speed workout, athletes **must** recover fully before they engage in more speed training. Often times athletes are going to be sore and tight following a speed day. They need to do something to alleviate that soreness so that they can continue their training without getting injured or burnt out.

Here your low volume conditioning work is going to loosen them up, get their heart rate up, flush the junk out of their legs and get them ready to get back to business.

When it comes to conditioning, **you have to look at the demands of the sport that you coach**. If you coach a sport that is speed and power based, how applicable to your sport is slow running for long distances or for a high number of repeats?

Train slow to run slow.

OK so what do you do then?

If it's not a speed day then you're going to be doing some type of low volume conditioning/recovery workout using low to moderate intensity training.

Now let's take a look at the types of conditioning work that you should be using with your athletes.

1. Tempo Runs

Tempo runs are runs that are between 65-79% intensity. This is fast enough where athletes have to put some effort into running, but not so fast that they're going to begin to fatigue and accumulate a lactic acid burn in their legs.

2. Bodyweight Circuits

Circuit training is, without question, my favorite method of doing conditioning work. Why?

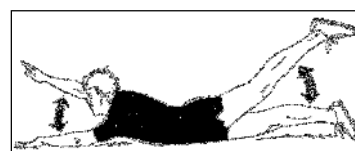
It accomplishes the same things as tempo runs do, but also improves physical strength (great for athletes too young for the weight room), improves flexibility, coordination, core strength and can be done in only a few minutes.

I know you have a lot to do at each and every practice so being able to quickly and easily accomplish your conditioning goals in a short time period has huge benefits to you and your team.

When using circuits, we follow many of the same rules I discussed when going over the warm up:

1. Frequently change the exercises you use and the exercise order.

I rarely do the same circuit in consecutive workouts. There are so many great circuit exercises you can use that there's no need to let your circuits get stale.



In fact, the *Complete Speed Training Program* contains over 75 different drills and exercises that are great for this type of training. That ensures that your workouts never get stale and you'll always be able to think of something innovative to do at your next practice.

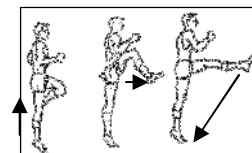
Just as importantly, they're progressed from 'easy' to 'hard'.



2. Insist that your athletes use perfect form.

Look, circuits can get tough. If an athlete will cheat during this workout and let their form fall apart simply because they choose not to be mentally strong, how can you expect them to be mentally tough in a critical moment during a game or race?

You compete like you practice, end of story.



3. Make it a full body workout

Make sure that your circuits hit all areas of the body. Most of the time you don't want to overload one muscle group because then form will fall apart and the workout will be less effective. Don't put 4 leg exercises in a row then give 5 different push up variations.

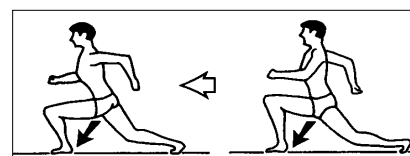
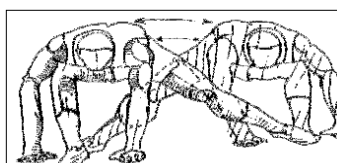
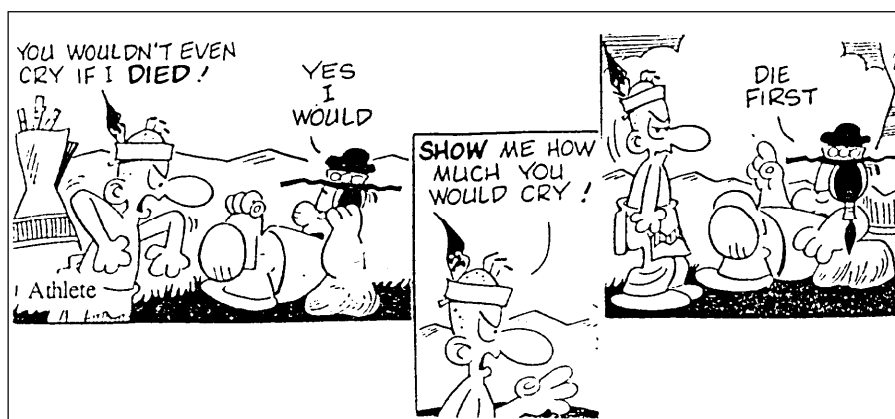
4. Vary the reps and distances

Some exercises are harder than others. 25 prisoner squats for a senior is going to feel like 50 to a freshman. Keep that in mind. Between exercises I have athletes jog for a specific distance then start the next exercise.

I hope that all makes sense and gives you some ideas on how to adjust your conditioning work for better results.

Before your next session, come up with 3 or 4 different body weight circuit workouts that you can begin to rotate into your workouts.

Make sure you consider the order of the exercises and how difficult that order will make the workout. Remember, **the circuit shouldn't be extremely difficult**.



There are an almost unlimited number of conditioning circuits and activities.

Conditioning should be athlete-specific, i.e. each athlete identifying and planning **a program to meet their needs** .. there are activities that can be incorporated that are common to all, but *every athlete is an experiment of one*.

e.g. www.nwaswimaths.com PROGRAMS: Core Body—Abs; Bar Circuit; ...
PRESENTATIONS: Swiss Ball Training, ... just a few