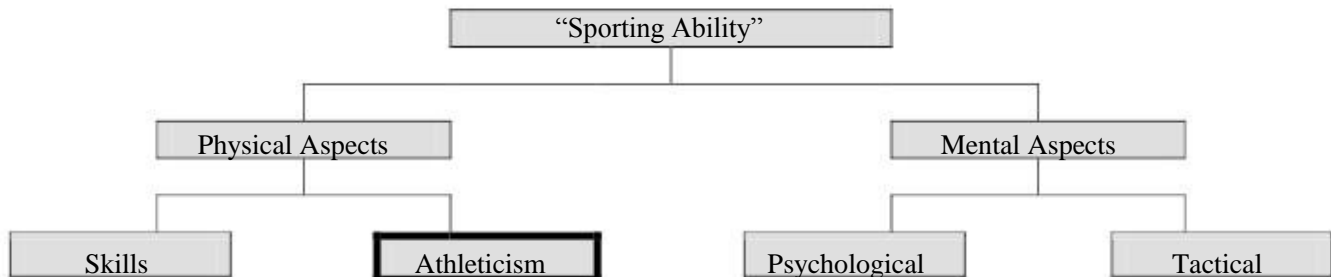


Coach Resource Manual

# On-Field Conditioning

## Conditioning is about becoming a better athlete

Excellence in sport, any sport, is dependent on a number of factors. There is a huge amount of overlap, but for the sake of simplification, it is worth splitting these factors into two major areas: mental and physical. The mental aspects can be broadly split again into psychological factors and tactical knowledge. The physical can also be split into two: technique (or skills), and athletic ability.



Conditioning is the science of developing greater athleticism: it is about becoming a better athlete. It is therefore a means to a very valuable end. As coaches we have to develop in ourselves and our athletes a very positive attitude toward the process, as the level of athletic ability is often the deciding factor in performance and selection. There is no substitute for skill, for mental toughness, for knowing the percentages etc, but it is equally true that, in many situations, there is no substitute for athletic ability.

### Athleticism in baseball

The perfect athlete would have a high level of:

Strength	Speed	Acceleration	Agility
Balance	Coordination	Control	Power
Flexibility	Quickness	Endurance	Durability

The perfect conditioning program would therefore develop all of these qualities. Undeniably though, the foundation of most of these is Strength. Excellence in most of the others is impossible without at least an adequate strength levels, and several (power and acceleration, for example) are so closely linked as to be almost inseparable. Even technique is often greatly hampered because of a player's inability to move various body segments into place in time. Unfortunately, it is the considered opinion of impartial observers that our young players do not have the same level of strength as athletes in other major sports.

The crucial priority of conditioning for baseball, even at a club level, must be the attainment of suitable levels of fundamental strength. This of course is a huge field, and you could easily spend a lifetime developing your knowledge in this area alone.

At some stage, the athlete will have to get in to a gym if they want to take their strength and athleticism to the higher levels. But many of the exercises on the following pages can be done on a baseball field, at club training, and in many cases with very little equipment.

### Major areas addressed:

- 1Shoulder stability & control (tubing exercises)
- 2Leg strength and power (leg circuit)
- 3Abdominal strength (swiss ball, medicine ball, bodyweight)

These can be done as part of a structured post-game routine (as outlined), or incorporated into training.

Running programs are not included, as they are readily available elsewhere, and certainly should be included in any thorough conditioning program. Stretching, also a crucial component of any conditioning program, is covered in another section of this manual.

## **Post-game Routine**

The exact format may vary according to position and work completed that day. The intention is to provide some basic conditioning effect and accelerate your recovery for your next session. Some of these elements will be retained during competition.

### **Suggested routine (during leadup period); Total time approx. 45 mins**

- 1 Rubber tubing shoulder work
- 2 Leg circuit
- 3 Abdominal conditioning (one series each day)
- 4 Running
- 5 Stretch

Some of these are outlined in more detail below (and illustrated later).

## **2. Leg Circuit**

- 1 Fast Squats
- 2 Walking lunges
- 3 Skater jumps
- 4 Skater jumps with hand touch
- 5 Jump-squats
- 6 Stepups with knee raise
- 7 Jump stepups
- 8 Supported one-leg squats
- 9 One-leg balance squats
- 10 Flat ground one-leg squats (other foot behind)
- 11 Flat ground one-leg squats (other foot in front)

## **3. Abdominal Conditioning**

### **A. Bodyweight Series**

1. Hand-slides
2. Figure-4 crunches
3. Toe-elbow hold
4. Bridge
5. Side hold

### **B. Medicine Ball Series**

1. Seated side catch & throw
2. Figure-4 throw & follow
3. Side catch & overhead return
4. Jump throws

### **C. Swiss Ball Series**

1. Russian twist
2. Crucifix roll
3. Heel drag
4. Toe drag

## **5. Stretching (20 mins)** (see appropriate section of Manual)

1. Calf: straight then bent
2. Seated Hamstring
3. Glute (foot to opposite shoulder)
4. Seated long nerve stretch
5. Slump
6. Forward slump
7. Upper back (slide hands along outside of legs)
8. Lying knee to chest
9. Lying twist
10. Figure 4 glute
11. Knee flop
12. Internal hip rotation
13. Seated twist
14. Seated straight-leg groin stretch
15. Seated bent-leg groin stretch
16. Seated twists
17. Kneeling ITB
18. Kneeling hip flexor sequence
19. Scapula retractors
20. Triceps
21. Rear shoulder: straight arm
22. Rear shoulder: bent arm
23. Internal rotation
24. External rotation
25. Forearms

## Shoulder Stability Exercises: Tubing/Cords



### Bi-Lateral External Rotations

- Grasp a short piece of cord between the hands
- Keep elbows at the side
- Pull hands apart by rotation upper arms outwards



### Reverse Throws

- Attach cord at shoulder height
- Keep elbow & stationary at shoulder height throughout movement
- Pull hand back by rotating upper arm backwards



### Retractions

- Attach cord about waist height
- Extend arm to side, slightly bent, palm up, thumb back
- Move hand back 15-20cm by squeezing shoulder blades together



### Elevations

- Attach cord about waist height
- Position yourself so that there is some tension on the cord with arms extended
- Squeeze shoulder blades back
- Then pull elbows as far back as possible



### **Elevations**

- Stand on middle of cord, length adjust so that there is some tension in lowest position
- Shrug shoulders so as to develop control of the muscles which elevate the shoulder blade



### **Scaptions**

- Stand on middle of cord, length adjust so that there is some tension in lowest position
- Arms remain extended with elbow slightly bent
- Raise hands to side and front of body
- Thumbs lower than palm ("empty can" position)

## On-field Leg Circuit

### 1. Fast Squats (10-30 reps)



(side view)



### 2. Walking Lunges (with knee lift) (10-30 steps each leg)



### 3. Skater jumps (10-30 each side)





**4. Skater jumps with hand touch (10-30 each side)**



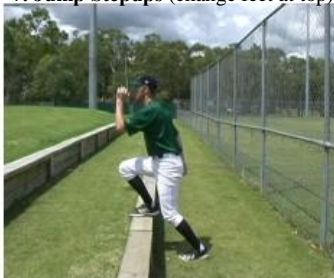
**5. Jump Squats (10-30 reps)**



**6. Stepups with knee raise (10-30 each side)**



**7. Jump Stepups (change feet at top) (10-30 each side)**





**8. Supported one-leg squats**



**9. One-leg balance squats**



**10. Flat ground one-leg squats (other leg behind)**



**11. Flat ground one-leg squats (other leg in front)**



## Abdominal Conditioning

Do one series each day. (There are many other exercises if you are keen!)

### A. Body weight Series

#### 1. Hand-slides (20-50 reps)



#### 2. Figure-4 Crunches (10-30 reps each side)



#### 3. Toe-elbow hold (30-180 secs)



#### 4. Bridge (30-180 secs)



#### 5. Side hold (30-180 secs each side)



## B. Medicine Ball Series

### 1. Seated side catch & throw (10-30 each side)



### 2. Figure-4 Throw & Follow (10-30 each side)



### 3. Side catch & overhead return (10-30 each side)





**4. Jump throw (10-30 reps) NB Allow ball to bounce**



### C. Swiss Ball Series (NB Balance and control are crucial with these exercises)

#### 1. Russian Twist (10-30 each side)



#### 2. Crucifix Roll (10-30 each side) Resist any twisting



#### 3. Heel Drag (10-30 reps)



#### 4. Toe Drag (10-30 reps)



Additional suitable exercises are illustrated below; there are many others.

## Static Holds



**Side-hold**



**Toe-elbow hold**



**One-legged bridge**

- Hold position shown without trembling
- Be strong & stable
- Stop when tremors begin (two minutes in each is very good)

## Swiss Ball

- Maintain solid abdominal control throughout

- Slow movements develop more strength

- No trembling!

### Back Extension



### Crucifix Roll



## Mecca Roll



## Bridge





### Slow Crunch



### Single Leg Lift



### Toe Drag



### Med Ball

These should be done vigorously (while maintaining good form)

#### Seated Reverse Catch & Return



- Turn to side to catch
- Return straight back overhead
- 10 each side

### Side Catch & Return



- Rapid fire
- Touch to ground and return quickly

### Crunch Throw & Follow



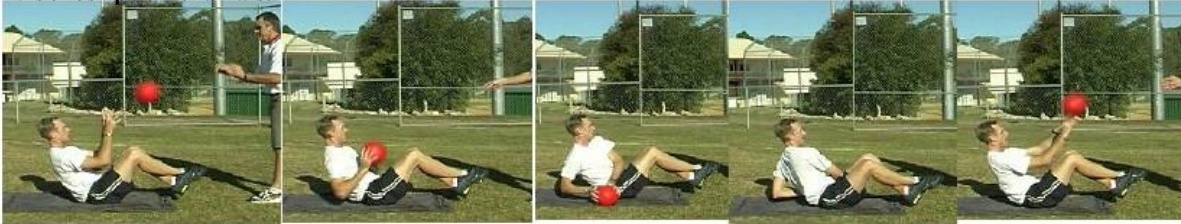
- Ball is thrown back overhead, just within reach
- Touch it to ground
- Throw back to partner and follow it into situp position

### Crunch Push-Pass & Follow



- Receive ball at chest
- Touch it to ground
- Return it to chest
- Pass it back while sitting up

### V-sit Push-pass with a Twist



- Hold V-sit position
- Catch ball, touch to ground once on each side
- Return to partner

### Explosive Bounce Pass



### Walking Lunges with twist

