

Off-Season Training

VARIETY IN CONDITIONING

(By John Ruyak, Corporate Fitness Works)

Imagine eating the same meal three times a day, everyday, for a month. Your like of any favorite food would soon change to dislike and probably cause you to never want to eat that food again. For a lot of individuals, a stagnant exercise program can have the same effect on the body, and doing the same workout 3–5 days a week at the same intensity, for the same amount of time, can cause a lack of interest and subsequent failure in that program.

Several different factors can be incorporated into your conditioning program to add variety and keep the exercising fun, as well as provide a higher level of success in burning calories, maintaining muscle tone, and improving cardiovascular benefits.

Mode of Exercise—This is probably one of the most difficult, since most individuals find a mode of exercise they like (or dislike the least) or can afford and are usually forced to stay with that mode. Biking, walking, running, and stationary exercise equipment, all can provide different movement, work different muscle groups, and provide different levels of strength and cardiovascular conditioning. Running the same distance in the same amount of time for the same number of workouts each week will cause your body to acclimatize and stagnate, and the repetitive nature of the same mode can lead to chronic injuries. Running for one workout, then walking or biking for the next, or adding a day of stair climbing or using an elliptical trainer will keep

the body off balance and cause it to continue to find new ways to burn calories and increase your conditioning.

Order of Exercise—Try to alternate which mode of exercise you do first as well as try to occasionally introduce two modes for the same workout. Instead of the consistent running at 30 minutes, try biking for 15 and running for 15, with little rest in between. Lift before you run and switch at the next workout to run then lift. When it comes to strength training, don't always follow the same order of exercises. Start with a different muscle group each time so that each group gets a fresh workout.

Exercise Intensity—Not every workout, whether it be strength or cardiovascular conditioning, should have the exact same intensity, the intensity can be determined by the amount of time, the speed or level at which one exercises or the amount of force or resistance placed upon the body. Try going for a longer slower run one day, then alternate with a shorter distance at a quicker pace for your next workout. The same is true for strength training; try a higher rep/lighter weight workout one day then increase the weight a bit and lower the reps the next workout. This variety in intensity can keep the workout new and allow your body to continue to grow and reap the benefits.

When thinking of your exercise program, think of your nutritional plan, and eat something different at every meal. Never perform the same workout two times in a row. Always look to change something to keep the body guessing and working that much harder to give you the results you need.