

A TRAINING AND NUTRITION TEMPLATE FOR PITCHERS AGES 16+

WRITTEN BY

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(Read closely before performing any exercise in this guide)

By reading this guide, you and those whom you represent acknowledge that participation in these physical activities carries certain inherent risks that can never be fully eliminated regardless of the care taken to avoid injury, and that injuries of all magnitudes are possible.

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Disclaimer

Do NOT attempt any exercise in this guide before getting approval from your physician. This information is not meant to diagnose, treat or cure any medical condition or replace your healthcare professional. These training guidelines and recommendations are for educational purposes only, and are intended for healthy individuals 18 years and older.

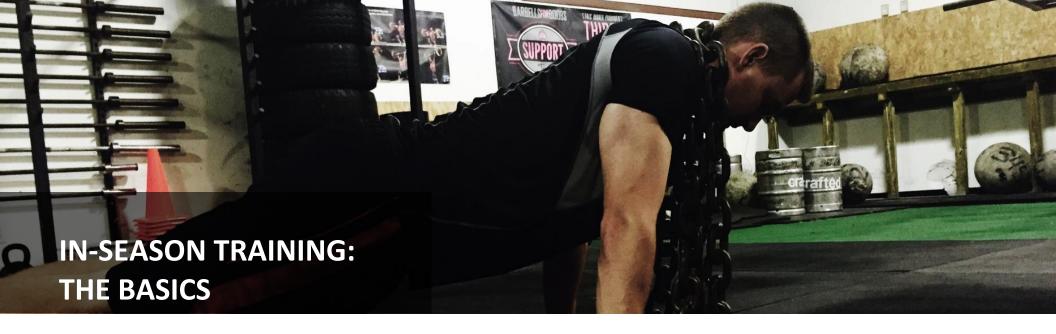
Know your limits, level of training experience and health status before attempting or practicing any exercise in this guide. I am NOT a dietician. These exercises and/or nutritional suggestions/templates are not meant to replace any treatment, exercise or dietary regimen prescribed to you by your physician or registered dietician.

See your physician before starting any new exercise program, and make sure to stop any exercise if you experience abnormal discomfort, dizziness, nausea or shortness of breath. Do not perform any exercise unless you are under the supervision of a certified personal trainer or strength and conditioning specialist.

Be relentless & destroy them. Clap for your own damn self."

his guide will give you some of the tools we use with our athletes to:

- Maintain, and even improve strength and bodyweight in-season, while most players lose 10 or even 20 lbs that they then must spend precious time in the offseason regaining.
- **Avoid** common training mistakes, including red-flag exercises, to help you stay healthy and on the field.
- **Understand** and simplify in-season nutrition, using calorie-dense whole foods to maintain energy levels and bodyweight.
- **Track** daily bodyweight changes to quickly identify (and address) negative changes in body composition.
- Balance the demands of in-season competition with a flexible training schedule, designed to minimize soreness and maximize recovery time prior to the next game appearance.



n-season training is one of the most overlooked and underappreciated components of a pitcher's yearly development. While most arms fizzle out and bodyweights plummet 10 or 15 lbs over the course of spring and summer baseball, it doesn't have to be this way. In this guide, you'll discover how our athletes are able to leverage their training and nutrition in order to stay fresh over the season.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

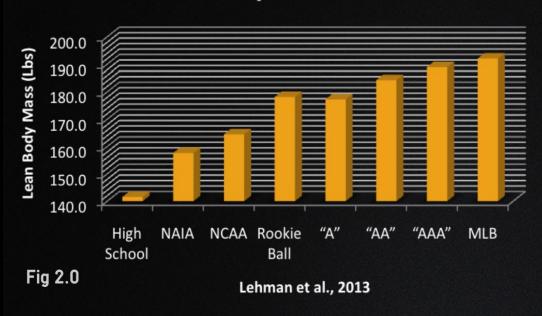
Unless you have been living under a rock, you understand that increased strength and muscularity is linked to fastball velocity. Unsurprisingly, improving the general ability of the involved musculature to produce force (i.e. strength training) also improves the ability of those muscles to apply greater force to the baseball.

Yes, there are some caveats to this statement, but for the sake of this guide, let's acknowledge that strength matters (a lot), and that losing strength and bodyweight over the course of a high school, college or professional season isn't going to be helping performance on the field. The following chart (from <u>Building the 95 MPH Body</u>) illustrates this trend - as level of play increases, so does <u>lean body mass</u> and peak power output of the athletes. Hardly surprising.

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The Importance of Lean Body Mass

Lean Body Mass Data



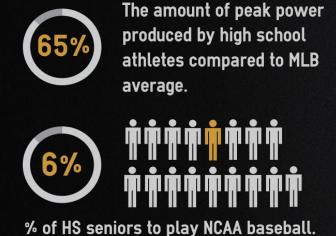
16.7 LBS

Differential between high school and NCAA.

50.5 LBS

Differential between high school and MLB.

Peak Power Output



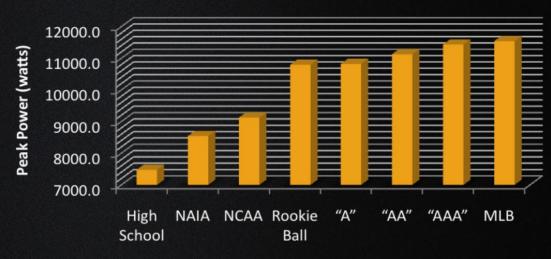


Fig 2.1

Lehman et al., 2013

MAJOR ADJUSTMENTS FROM OFF-SEASON TRAINING

The primary goal of off-season training is to elicit positive adaptations to a pitcher's body – increased strength, improved body composition, etc. To accomplish most of these goals requires exposing the body to an **overload stimulus**, a training stressor that forces the body to adapt. This means progressively more difficult training sessions, which leave the body in a constant state of breakdown/adaptation.

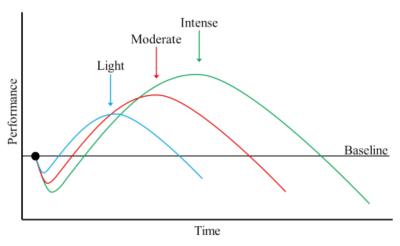


Fig 1.0 The effect of total volume and training stress on adaptation and recovery.

As you can see, lesser training stressors lead to lesser adaptations, but quicker recovery times back to baseline. This is more appropriate for in-season training.

In-season, the goal shifts to optimal in-game performance, which requires the body regularly being in a more fully recovered state. Notice that all of the training stressors above cause a periodic decrease in performance, which is inversely related to the magnitude of adaptation that occurs afterward. As such, it isn't surprising that in-season training uses lesser training stressors than off-season training, geared towards minimizing fatigue, maintaining strength, and maximizing performance.

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Frequency, Intensity and Volume

The most effective way that we have found to maintain strength, minimize soreness and maximize recovery is to maintain training frequency at 3 to 4 training sessions per week, lower intensity to 85-90% of baseline weight within the specified rep range, and reduce total volume by about 40-50%. As an example, if your offseason set/rep scheme for a specific exercise is to do 4 sets of 10 reps at 100 lbs, in-season do 2 sets of 10 at 85-90 lbs. This is a sufficient stimulus to maintain strength, without causing excess soreness or delayed recovery.

Exercise Selection

In general, we program most of the same exercises in-season as we do in the off-season. This prioritizes compound, multi-joint movements over isolation movements, and emphasizes exercises that have smooth, joint-friendly strength curves through a full range of motion. Besides these broad similarities, here are some additional things to be aware of.

- 1. **Avoid eccentric heavy training** the eccentric, or "negative" phase of a lift is largely responsible for the resulting Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS) 24 to 72 hours later. As such, doing frequent "slow negatives" or other forms of eccentric emphasis training is not advised in-season.
- 2. **Avoid excessive forearm training** while the forearm muscles should be strong, the emphasis comes during off-season training. In-season, and during off-season phases of high throwing volume, these muscles are constantly fighting to recover in time for the next outing. Pulverizing them with 18 sets of 6-way forearms, or 120lb farmer's walks will only dig a pitcher deeper into a recovery hole.
- 3. **Continue avoiding exercises with a poor risk/reward** this goes without saying, but in-season training injuries are to be avoided at all costs. Here is a handy chart that lists some of the more common examples, with recommended substitutions.

EXERCISES WITH POOR RISK VS. REWARD

Exercise	Explanation	Substitute
High box jump	The jump trains powerful knee, hip, and ankle extension. A <i>low</i> box softens the landing with minimal risk. A <i>high</i> box contributes nothing besides a massive <u>risk of falling</u> .	Squat jump or low box jump.
Power clean variations	Cleans are a common way to load up explosive knee/hip/ankle extension. Unfortunately, they take years to master even with great instruction and carry a heavy <u>risk of back, elbow and wrist injury</u> .	Speed deadlift variations, high pulls, banded kettlebell swings.
Barbell snatch	Same as above, although the shoulders are in an even more <u>biomechanically risky position</u> . Not great for a group of athletes who are already known for having general shoulder instability.	Dumbbell snatch or snatch-grip high pull.
Straight bar/ chair dips	<u>Poor anatomical position</u> , especially for taller athletes with longer arms. Unnecessary risk of anterior shoulder issues.	Push-up variations through full range of motion.
Overhead pressing	May be applicable in some cases, but carries a risk of impingement issues depending on the athlete.	Medium / low incline pressing
Barbell bicep curls	Commonly causes wrist pain due to the fully supinated grip and fixed range of motion.	Dumbbell or TRX bicep curls.
Barbell bench press	May be fine for some athletes, but form is generally butchered. High frequency of anterior shoulder problems due to bad technique, insufficient mobility and/or overuse. An open-chain exercise that is less forgiving than its dumbbell or closed-chain counterparts.	Dumbbell bench press, weighted or blast strap push-ups.
Kipping pull-ups	Most athletes performing these don't have the sufficient strength (and joint integrity) to perform true bodyweight pull-ups, and use this as a cheating variation. Unfortunately, violently yanking a weak and unstable joint into hyperflexion isn't the best idea. Nice job, Crossfit.	Chin-ups / inverted rows from rings or TRX handles.

TreadAthletics In-Season Strength Program



THROWING

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BALANCING YOUR THROWING SCHEDULE

Here we lay out throwing/lifting schedules for both starting and relief pitchers. These are designed to maximize recovery time for the next outing while ensuring strength maintenance over the course of a long season. Note that lower and upper body training sessions (each with an A and B day) may be split up OR combined into total body sessions. Ultimately, this comes down to scheduling and preference.

Starter: 7-Day Rotation

	Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Throwing	Pitch	Tolerance	Flat Ground	Tolerance	Bullpen	Tolerance	Light Flat Ground
Lifting	Conditioning A (Post-game)	Lower Body A	Upper Body A	Conditioning B	Lower B OR Lower B+ Upper B (Post-bullpen)	Upper B OR Conditioning A	Off

Starter: 6-Day Rotation

	Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Throwing	Pitch	Tolerance	Light Flat Ground	Bullpen	Tolerance	Light Flat Ground
Lifting	Conditioning A OR Lower A (Post-game)	Lower A + Upper A OR Upper A	Conditioning B	Lower B OR Lower B + Upper B (Post-bullpen)	Upper B OR Conditioning A	Off

Starter: 5-Day Rotation

	Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Throwing	Pitch	Tolerance	Bullpen	Tolerance	Light Flat Ground
Lifting	Conditioning A OR Lower A (Post-game)	Lower A + Upper A OR Upper Body A	Conditioning B (Post-bullpen)	Light Lower B + Light Upper B	Off



THROWING

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Mid-Reliever: sample week

The main goal for mid-relievers is to be ready to pitch roughly every 3rd day and train both the upper body and lower body musculature twice per week each. This can take the form of two total body lifts or four abbreviated upper/lower lifts. Here we lay out the former option. Conditioning will take place post-game on the night of an outing, and again 2 days after an outing.

	Day 0 (HOT)	Pitch +1 (DOWN)	Pitch +2 (DOWN)	Pitch +3 (HOT)	Pitch (HOT)	Pitch +1 (DOWN)	Pitch +2 (DOWN)
Throwing	Tolerance (Pre-game). Pitch 3-4 innings	Tolerance	Flat Ground/Light Bullpen 15p	Tolerance (Pre-game). Did not pitch.	Tolerance (Pre-game). Pitch 1-2 innings	Tolerance	Flat Ground/Light Bullpen 15p
Lifting (pre-game)	Conditioning A (Post-game)	Lower Body A + Upper Body A	Conditioning B (Pre-game)	Off	Conditioning A (Post-game)	Lower Body B + Upper Body B	Conditioning B (Pre-game)

Late-Reliever: sample week

The goal for late relievers is to be hot to pitch roughly every 2nd day and train both the upper body and lower body musculature twice per week each. This generally takes the form of two total body lifts, ideally done the night of an outing, post-game. This option consolidates training stressors and provides maximum recovery time between the training session and next potential outing. Another option is to break it up into 4 lighter lifts, and do them earlier in the days, on a set weekly schedule (i.e. Mon/Tue/Thu/Fri). Conditioning can either be done pre-game on the day after an outing, or on a set weekly schedule (i.e. Wed, Sat, Sun).

	Day 0 (HOT)	Pitch +1 (DOWN)	Pitch +2 (HOT)	Pitch (HOT)	Pitch +1 (DOWN)	Pitch (HOT)	Pitch +1 (DOWN)
Throwing	Tolerance (Pre-game), Pitch 1-2 innings	Tolerance	Tolerance (Pre-game). Did not pitch.	Tolerance (Pre-game). Pitch 1 inning	Tolerance	Tolerance (Pre-game). Pitch 1 inning	Tolerance
Lifting	Lower A + Upper A (Post-Game)	Conditioning A	Off	Lower Body B (Post-game)	Conditioning B	Upper Body B (Post-game)	Conditioning A

NOTES

• Listen to your arm. If you aren't able to throw a scheduled light bullpen because your arm isn't ready for it, don't. If you need to cut your training session a few sets short, do so. This is not a cop-out, this is being smart and understanding your body. It becomes a fine balancing act of knowing when to push and when to back off in-season, but often less is more.



NUTRITION

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IN-SEASON NUTRITION

The biggest priority in-season is keeping a positive caloric balance to maintain bodyweight. Determining this requires some experimentation, and depends on factors such as size, metabolism and activity levels. Each meal should feature whole food sources of protein, carbohydrate and fat, with fruits/veggies at most meals. Snacks should be carb and protein-rich. Supplements are optional.

SAMPLE DAY A (3,600-4,300 calories)

BREAKFAST - 1,000-1,300 CALS

- Blend 2 peeled, frozen bananas
- Add 1 cup almond/coconut milk
- Add 2 scoops chocolate whey protein
- Add 1 tsp of creatine
- Blend to desired consistency (should resemble soft-serve ice cream)
- Eat 4 slices whole grain bread
- With 2 tbsp favorite nut butter

Also drink 12oz water or fruit juice with 3,000-5,000 IU of Vitamin D3

LUNCH - 800-950 CALS

- 8 oz of any lean meat
- 1 cup of veggies
- 2 cups of white rice
- 12 oz. water or fruit juice

PRE-WORKOUT - 120 CALS

Mix 1 scoop whey with 12 oz. water and take favorite pre-workout (optional)

ANYTIME SNACK - 450-500 CALS

Mix ½ cup granola into 2 cups plain greek yogurt. Add 2-3 tbsp honey to taste.

DINNER - 1,200-1,500 CALS

- 8 oz of any fattier meat
- 1 cup of veggies
- 6 oz. of whole wheat pasta
- With 1 cup of favorite sauce
- 12 oz. water or fruit juice

BEFORE BED

- 1 serving fish oil supplement.
- 1 serving zinc + magnesium supplement.
- 12 oz. of water

SAMPLE DAY B (3,000-3,600 calories)

BREAKFAST - 1.000-1.300 CALS

- 5-egg omelette with ½ cup cheese, 6 oz. chicken, handful of spinach or peppers and favorite salsa.
- 2 large sweet potatoes (microwaved 10 min) with 1 tbsp butter

Also drink 12oz water or fruit juice with 3,000-5,000 IU of Vitamin D3

LUNCH - 800-900 CALS

- Make large sandwich wraps with
- 8 oz of any lean meat
- 1 cup of favorite veggies
- 1 handful spinach/lettuce
- ¼ cup cheese or favorite sauce
- 2 large whole wheat tortillas
- 12 oz. water

PRE-WORKOUT - 120 CALS

Mix 1 scoop whey with 12 oz. water and take favorite pre-workout (optional)

ANYTIME SNACK - 300-400 CALS

2 handfuls trail mix or mixed nuts.

DINNER - 850-950 CALS

- 10 oz of any lean meat, cooked, seasoned and served with 1 cup of veggies over 2 cups white rice.
- 12 oz. water

BEFORE BED

- 1 serving fish oil supplement.
- 1 serving zinc + magnesium supplement.
- 12 oz. of water

NOTES

• **Disclaimer:** these are just guidelines, and are meant to represent two sample days of my own personal nutritional habits as a professional pitcher and strength coach. **I am not a dietician** and this is not intended to be an individualized meal plan, or to treat any health condition. This is here as a useful reference only.



BODYWEIGHT CHART

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BODYWEIGHT TRACKING

Monitoring bodyweight is an important in-season habit to be able to identify changes in body composition. 2 or 3 pound daily fluctuations are normal, but weekly trends will reveal whether changes need to be made to caloric intake. Make sure to measure bodyweight under the same daily conditions (same scale, time of day, fed/fasted state, etc.) for maximum reliability.

Date	Bodyweight								



STRENGTH TRAINING

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UPPER BODY A

LOWER BODY A

A1. MAIN PULL - PERFORM 2 SETS OF 6-10 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- <u>Dumbbell Chest-Supported Row</u>
- Blast Strap Inverted Row
- Single Arm TRX Row

A2. MAIN PUSH - PERFORM 2 SETS OF 5-8 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Neutral Grip DB Bench Press
- Dynamic Effort DB Bench Press
- Neutral Grip Weighted Push-Up

B1. PUSH ACCESSORY - 2 SETS OF 8-10 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- 1 Arm Incline DB Bench Press
- Half-Kneeling Landmine Press
- Alternating Incline DB Bench Press

B2. PULL ACCESSORY - 2 SETS OF 10-12 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Half-Kneeling 1 Arm Lat Pulldown
- 1 Arm Face Pull with External **Rotation**

C. UPPER BACK/SCAP - 2-3 SETS OF 15 TOTAL REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Incline YTL Shoulder Raise
- 1 Arm Prone YTL Raise

D. CUFF STRENGTH/STABILITY - 2-3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Supine Band No-Money
- Band Wall Walks
- Bottoms Up KB Waiter Walk

A. MAIN LIFT - WORK UP TO 2 SETS OF 5-8 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Front Squatnt Dumbbell Row
- Buffalo Bar Box Squat
- SafetyBartBoxSquaterted Row
- Belt Squat

B. LATERAL WORK - 2 SETS OF 6-8 REPS/SIDE

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Sideways Sled Drag (x10-15 yds)
- Goblet Lateral Lunge

Crossover Step Up

C. POSTERIOR CHAIN - 2 SETS OF 6-8 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Barbell Romanian Deadlift
- Reverse Hyper (x15-20 reps)
- Natural Glute Ham Raise

D. HIP/GLUTE - 2 SETS OF 12-15 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Band Monster Walks (x10 yds)
- Seated Band Clamshells
- Cable Pull-Throughs

E. ANTERIOR CORE - 2 SETS OF 8-12 REPS OR 30 SEC

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Weighted Front Plank
- Valslide Bodysaw

F. LATERAL CORE - 2 SETS OF 8-12 REPS OR 30 SEC

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Side Plank Variations
- Dumbbell Side Bends

NOTES

 Movement Prep: make sure to begin the session with soft tissue work/foam rolling, dynamic warm-up and any prehab/correctives specific to the athlete. We individually program these, in addition to specific plyometric/medball work here depending on the athlete.



STRENGTH TRAINING **UPPER BODY B**

LOWER BODY B

A1. MAIN PULL - PERFORM 2-3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Single Arm Dumbbell Row
- Half-Kneeling 1 Arm Cable Row
- Single Arm Cable Compound Row

A2. MAIN PUSH - PERFORM 2-3 SETS OF 6-8 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Neutral Grip Band Push-Up
- 1 Arm Dumbbell Bench Press

B1. PUSH ACCESSORY - 2 SETS OF 8-12 TOTAL REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Offset Medball Push-Up with Tap
 - Yoga Push-Up
- Push-Up to 1 Arm Support

B2. PULL ACCESSORY - 2 SETS OF 10-12 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Kneeling Straight Arm Pulldown
- Supine Band Pullover

C. UPPER BACK/SCAP - 2 SETS OF 15 TOTAL REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

TRX Y Raise

3-Way Reverse Fly

D. CUFF WORK - 2-3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS OR 15 SEC

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Wall Windshield Wipers
- Rhythmic Stabilizations
- Bottoms Up KB Overhead Carry

A. MAIN LIFT - WORK UP TO 2-3 SETS OF 5-8 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

• Trap Bar Deadlift

- Snatch Grip Rack Pull
- Barbell Deadlift (double overhand grip)
- <u>Barbell Hip Thrust with ISO</u> Hold

B. UNILATERAL - 2 SETS OF 5-8 REPS/SIDE

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Barbell Reverse Lunge w/ Front Rack Grip
- <u>Barbell Bulgarian Split Squat</u>
 w/ Front Rack Grip
- Step-Ups to Parallel Box

C. POSTERIOR CHAIN - 2- SETS OF 8-12 REPS/SIDE

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Physioball Hamstring Curl
- Single Leg RDL

• Valslide Leg Curl

D. HIR GLIGTE aig 2 SETS OF 15,20 REPS

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Band Monster Walks (x10 yds)
- Seated Band Clamshells

• Cable Pull-Throughs

E. ANTERIOR CORE - 2 SETS OF 8-12 REPS OR 30 SEC

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Weighted Front Plank
- Valslide Bodysaw
- Physioball Rollout Variation

F. ROTARY CORE - 2 SETS OF 8-12 REPS/SIDE

Choose one of the following exercises:

- Landmines with Hip Rotation
- Half-Kneeling Cable Chops

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NOTES

• Selecting weights: You should NOT fail reps in-season. The focus is less on progression and more on maintenance. Use roughly 85-90% of what you might normally use for the specific rep range. Ex: instead of 3x5 w/ 100 lbs do 3x5 w/ 85-90 lbs in-season.

• Recovery matters: Sleeping 8-10 hours and hitting your calories are 90% of the battle. Everything else is the last 10%.



SPEED AND CONDITIONING

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CONDITIONING A

MODERATE INTENSITY INTERVALS - 12-16 REPS OF 20 SEC ON/20 SEC OFF

Choose one of the following:

- Tempo runs
 - Run 100 meters @70% effort, walk to 20-yard line and back. Repeat 12-16 times.
- Slideboard skaters
 - At 70% effort, perform alternating skaters for 20 seconds on, 20 seconds off. Repeat 12-16 times.
- Bike Intervals
 - On a stationary bike, cycle @70% effort for 20 seconds on, 20 seconds off at low intensity. Repeat 12-16 times.
- Other Cardio Machines
 - Rowers, Ellipticals and Treadmills will all work as well.
 Keep the intensity to ~70% of max.

CONDITIONING B

HIGH INTENSITY SPEED/POWER

Choose one of the following:

- Sled Drags
 - Load up a heavy sled. Push for 8 seconds at max effort. Rest 52 seconds. Repeat 8 times. Add 1 set per week until 12 reps, then cycle back down and start over. You may use a harness for sideways or reverse sled drags for variety.
- Hill Sprints
 - Find a low incline hill. Sprint for 8 seconds at max effort. Rest 52 seconds. Repeat 8 times. Add 1 set per week until 12 reps, then cycle back down and start over.

- Explosive Repeats
 - A1) Weighted Jumps: holding dumbbells (equal to 15-20% of bodyweight), perform 5 sets of 8 reps, resting for 60 seconds between sets. Add one set per week until 8 total sets, then cycle back down and start over.
 - A2) Alternating Lateral Bounds: perform 5 sets of 10 reps, resting 60 seconds between sets. Add one set per week until 8 total sets, then cycle back down and start over.
- Other Cardio Machines
 - Rowers, Ellipticals and Treadmills will work in a pinch. Do 8 seconds on with 52 seconds rest for 8-12 total reps.

NOTES

- Team conflicts: if you are already doing multiple days per week of conditioning with your team, do NOT try to be a hero and add in this work as well. Stick to what your team is doing (even if it is less than ideal). Remember, the last thing you want in-season is to dig yourself into a recovery deficit. Conditioning plays a significant but minor role in performance, so understand your priorities.
- **Know your body:** some days you simply won't have it. Sickness, poor sleep and other reasons may be to blame, but there is a fine line between pushing through some adversity and trying to be a hero. If something doesn't feel right, lower the volume as needed.



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS - TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CAREER

Chase after and tackle your dreams, don't passively follow the status quo. That is the fastest route to mediocrity.

I have been in your shoes, and I have navigated through the maze of high school, college and (currently) professional baseball. I urge you to take the road less traveled, to continue doing those things that your teammates are not willing to do.

The game doesn't lie – if baseball is your number 3 or 4 priority, it will be exposed as such before long. More than anything, I urge you to refuse to accept mediocrity for yourself. Pour your heart and soul into the game and it will reward you - on the field and off.

Remember, you don't have to have the most talent – I sure didn't. But what I did have was a fierce and unbreakable desire to see just how far I could push myself. If a skinny lefty throwing 73 miles per hour can do it, what's your excuse?

It's time to get to work and take what's yours.

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INDIVIDUALIZED PERFORMANCE COACHING

If you liked what you learned here and want to take the next step, we offer individualized coaching to a select number of athletes. We take all of the guesswork out of the training process so you can focus on what's most important – crushing your goals. For more information, and to stay up to date on our latest free content, please visit us at www.treadathletics.com or email us at contact@treadathletics.com.

Here's to reaching your potential,

Bi-But

Ben Brewster, BSc, CSCS

Pro Pitcher & Founder of TreadAthletics