

CIRCUIT TRAINING

Get fit to play, don't play to get fit is a very well known saying and you should all know that doing some fitness work along side your lessons and practise sessions will improve your performance as well as making you less prone to injury.

Well, if you are looking for the perfect way to train all the components of fitness you need to improve your game in the same session, then you need look no further than circuit training.

Circuit training is an exercise format that normally utilises between 6 and 10 exercises that are completed one after another (the circuit!!) for a specified number of repetitions or time period before moving onto the next exercise.

The completion of one exercise and the beginning of the next are separated by brief timed rest intervals and each circuit by a longer rest period. The total number of circuits performed during a training session may vary from two to six depending on your training level (beginner, intermediate, or advanced), your period of training and your training objective.

Planning a Session

You will need to think about the possible exercises that can be performed with the equipment and space you have available. In order to ensure that no two consecutive exercises stress the same muscle group set up the circuit as follows: Total-body, Upper-body, Lower-body, Core/Trunk etc.

It is important to warm up and perform some dynamic stretching exercises and to repeat this as a cool down after the session.

Example No Equipment Circuit Training Session

- Skipping – cardiovascular & coordination
- Press ups - chest, shoulders, arms (esp triceps - serve) and core



Place your hands underneath your shoulders with your arms fully extended, your abdominals drawn in and your fingers facing forwards. Lower your chest towards the floor by bending your arms at the elbows until your arms reach a 90 degree angle before returning to the start position. Avoid sticking your bum in the air and keep your rhythm smooth.

- Squats – quads, glutes, hamstrings, calves and core/lower back



Position your feet slightly wider than hip - width apart with your toes slightly turned out. Hold your hands out in front of you at shoulder height. This will counterbalance your weight and help you keep you balanced. Slowly and under control bend your knees and lower yourself as though you were sitting down. Go as far as you can without lifting your heels off the floor and after a brief pause at the bottom push your weight back up to the starting position.

- Crunch – abdominals esp rectus abdominis



Lie face up on a mat. Flex your knees and bring your heels close to your buttocks. Cross your hands over your chest, draw in your abdominals and tuck your chin into your chest. Slowly curl your upper body towards your knees in a rolling, curling motion until your shoulder blades leave the floor. Concentrate on strongly contracting your abdominal muscles and hold for a moment. Slowly allow your upper body to return back to the floor.

- Star Jumps – leg power, flexibility & endurance

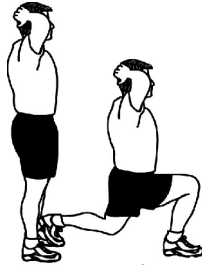
From a squatted down position, jump up taking your hands and legs out to the side (into a star position). On landing, make sure you land on both feet together, lowering down back into the squat position, remembering to sit back and not allowing your knees to pass over your toes.

- Bench Dips – triceps, chest and shoulders



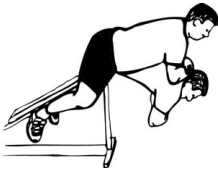
Position your hands shoulder width apart on a secured bench. Move your feet out as far out in front of you as possible. Keep your abdominals braced and straighten out your arms but keep a little bend in your elbows in order to always keep tension on your triceps and off your elbow joints. Slowly lower your upper body down towards the floor and keep your elbows tucked into your sides. Once you reach the bottom of the movement, push yourself back up to the starting position.

- Lunges – hamstrings, glutes and quads



Begin in a standing position with your hands on your hips. Stride forward as far as you comfortably can with one leg until that leg is at right angles. Bring that leg back to the start position and repeat with the opposite leg.

- Back extension – lower back



Lie face down with your arms by your sides, palms facing up and legs extended and relaxed. Hold your head up slightly or rest your forehead on the floor. Relax your shoulders into the floor and keep your abdominals drawn in. Contract the gluteals and use your lower back muscles to slowly lift your shoulders and chest off the floor. Lower and repeat.

- Shuttle runs (sprinting/running continuously between predetermined points) – speed endurance

Duration – start with the following (lower level):

- 20 seconds work on each exercise with a 30 second recovery between each exercise
- 3 sets with a 3 minute recovery between each circuit

Complete the circuit training session twice a week with at least 48 hours between each session. I suggest you base your training on a four week cycle of an easy week, medium week, hard week and test/recovery week. The work load can be varied by changing the number of exercises, duration, sets or repetitions.

Next time I will look at the benefits of doing most of your training without needing access to a gym – all you need is yourself!

Paul Gold has a Masters degree in Sports Sciences and is a Performance Enhancement Specialist and Speed Agility Quickness trainer.

For information about products and services contact via www.tennis-training-central.com

Before starting any exercise program, always be sure to first consult your physician