



NEW SOUTH WALES JUNIOR BASEBALL LEAGUE

For the advancement of Junior Baseball within the State of New South Wales

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CIRCUIT TRAINING

The end of the summer season is no reason for the serious baseballer to stop training. Now is the time that players should undertake those activities that will prepare them to be better players in the next summer season.

Coaches may have been reluctant to ask you for changes during the playing season and finding the time in your busy schedule of training and games may have prevented you from working on problems or sustaining your long-toss program.

So winter is a good time to develop an improvement in arm strength by undertaking a regular long-toss program and it is the best time to work on any changes necessary to throwing or batting mechanics. The off-season is the optimum time to effect real changes because they are easier to achieve away from the 'stress' of competition. Serious changes are difficult to make particularly during the playing season because players will *always* fall back to habit when under pressure.

A key factor in the success of all teams is the physical fitness and running speed of their players. In this article we will concentrate on the physical fitness aspect of player preparation.

An easy way is to undertake regular circuit training – most local fitness centres conduct circuit training courses.

To be Baseball specific your course should include:

- a **stretching** program. Remember stretching is important for long term flexibility as well as prevention of injury in the short term.

- **running drills** – a variety of: endurance (shuttle run); sprint training (interval with some recovery but also working on sprint form); agility work (quick side to side) and power (hill climbs). This program can also include any or all of the following: lunges, push-ups, burpees, star jumps, abdominal work etc. This aspect should take approximately 20 minutes and must be intense.

- **circuit training** - Assuming that there are light weights available some examples of exercise stations are:

- Shoulder press
- Upright Row
- Squats
- Bicep curls *
- Bent over row
- Lat raises
- Front raises
- Chest flys
- Tricep Kickbacks

Bicep strength and size is not particularly encouraged in baseball players but does need to be included to balance the tricep exercises.

All exercises are to be performed with a light weights (the bar without any weights attached is fine) and with correct form so as to prevent injuries.

If weights are not available some simple body weights exercises can be included, these can be:

- Tricep dips off bench
- Push-ups, straight or off bench
- Chin Ups
- Vertical Jumps
- Alternate lunges
- Abdominal exercises
- Step ups
- Skipping
- Standing calf raises
- Plyometric hops
- Cone jumps

The circuit should include around 10 to 15 stations with each activity being performed for 45 seconds. The aim is to improve muscular endurance by doing the maximum amount of repetitions at each station but using correct form and good control whilst doing it.

Abdominal exercises should be done after the circuit training and are important for core stability. Some of the exercises to be included are:

- Elbow to knee
- Sit Ups
- Crunches
- Reverse crunches
- Leg cycling
- Core contraction
- Oblique twists

At the completion of all of these activities be sure to stretch thoroughly.