

Summer Soccer Training Exercises

This summer I want to emphasize core strength and conditioning. I want our team to be the best conditioned on the field come game-day. If you can display discipline and complete these exercises on a regular basis, we should be able to complete this goal when the season begins this fall. When practices start up in August we will be doing these exercises and it will show if you haven't been diligent.

All of these are exercises that can be done on your own and outside of a gym.

Technique is the most important thing when it comes to working out. It will save you from pain and injury, and increase results. **SO SLOW DOWN AND DO IT RIGHT**, it is so much better.

Here is a suggested weekly workout regimen. I am trusting you to switch up exercises on your own and use different ones throughout the week. Have fun with this and remember this is only suggested, you can mix it up however works best for you! Just be sure to stay active as much as possible!

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
Rest!	Run (1-2mi)	Arms (2-3 sets)	Run (1-2mi)	Arms (2-3 sets)	Run (1-3mi)	Run (2-3mi)
	Abs		Abs		Abs	Abs
Spend time with God!						Arms (2-3 sets)

ARMS

The push up may just be the best total body exercise that builds core strength. Done properly, it is a compound exercise that uses muscles in the chest, shoulders, triceps, back, abs and even the legs. You can do these everyday if you feel so inclined!

How to Do a Push Up

- Get on the floor and position your hands slightly wider than your shoulders.
- Raise up onto your toes so you are balanced on your hands and toes.
- Keep your body in a straight line from head to toe without sagging in the middle or arching your back.
- Your feet can be close together or a bit wider depending upon what is most comfortable for you.
- Before you begin any movement, contract your abs and tighten your core by pulling your belly button toward your spine.
- Keep a tight core throughout the entire push up.
- Inhale as you slowly bend your elbows and lower yourself until your elbows are at a 90 degree angle.
- Exhale as you begin pushing back up to the start position

- Don't lock out the elbows; keep them slightly bent.
- Repeat for as many repetitions as your workout routine requires.

Push Up Variations

- **Incline (Table Top) Push Ups**
If a standard push up is too difficult, you can start by doing push ups against a wall, a table or a sturdy chair. Stand several feet away from the object you are using and use the same push up technique as above to lower yourself until the elbows are 90 degrees and then raise back up. Keep your core tight the whole time.
- **Decline Push Ups**
This is a more difficult push up, performed with the feet raised up on a box or bench. You can adjust the box height to increase or decrease the resistance using just your body weight.
- **Clapping Push Up**
This is a plyometric exercise in which you push yourself up with enough power so that your hands come off the floor and you clap in midair. This exercise is not for novice exercisers. You can get injured very easily if you haven't worked up to these one at a time.
- **Diamond Push Up**
The diamond push up is done with your hands close together; with the index fingers and thumbs of one hand touching the other hand and making a diamond shape. You then do push ups with your hands touching the center of your chest and elbows close to your sides during each rep.

Bench Dips

- Position your hands shoulder width apart on a secured bench positioned slightly behind you.
- Move your feet out as far out in front of you on the floor as possible.
- Straighten out your arms and 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, slowly press off with your hands and push yourself back up to the starting position with your triceps.

ABDOMINALS

There's a great YouTube video called "8 minutes abs" that is both funny to watch, and challenging. I suggest giving it a shot, you will be sore afterwards!

Sit-ups, crunches and leg lifts should be standard. Perform several (3-5) abdominal exercises 3-5 times a week. Start with exercises and repetitions that are comfortable for your fitness level and as you

improve increase the number of repetitions. You do not need to do all the exercises; simply select those that work well for you and vary your routine over time.

The basic crunch exercise for the abs targets the rectus abdominis muscle. Although it seems simple, many people don't perform the basic ab crunch properly. Using good form when doing a crunch makes this a much more effective abdominal exercise.

How to Do the Basic Abdominal Crunch

- Lie on your back, bend your knees, placing your hands on the sides of your head.
- Contract your abs and flatten your lower back against the floor.
- Slowly lift your shoulder blades one or two inches off the floor.
- Exhale as you lift, keep your neck straight and chin up.
- Hold for a few seconds (don't hold your breath).
- Slowly lower while keeping your abs contracted.
- Repeat up to 20 reps this perfect form for each rep.

Add these core strengthening exercises to your ab workout for a new way to build strength and stability.

Plank (Hover) Exercise

- Start in the plank position with your forearms and toes on the floor.
- Keep your torso straight and rigid and your body in a straight line from ears to toes with no sagging or bending.
- Your head is relaxed and you should be looking at the floor.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds to start.
- Over time work up to 30, 45 or 60 seconds.

Plank with Leg Lift

Start in the same plank position as above with your forearms and toes on the floor.

- Slowly raise one leg 5-8 inches off the floor
- Count to two and slowly lower your leg to the floor.
- Switch legs and repeat.
- Do about 2-3 sets of 10 reps.

Plank with Arm Lift

- Start in the same plank position as above.
- Carefully shift your weight to your right forearm.
- Extend your left arm straight out in front of you.
- Hold 3 seconds while keeping your core tight.
- Slowly bring your arm back to starting position.
- Switch arms and repeat.
- Do 2-3 sets of 10 reps.

Modified Plank with Leg Lift

To make this exercise a bit easier, you can perform the movement on your hands, rather than your elbows.

Alternating Superman

- Lie face down on a mat with your arms stretched above your head (like superman)
- Raise your right arm and left leg about 5-6 inches off the ground (or as far as you comfortably can).
- Hold for 3 seconds and relax.
- Repeat with the opposite arm and leg.

Vertical Leg Crunch

- Lie on your back and extend the legs up with knees slightly bent.
- Contract your abs and raise up until your shoulder blades leave the floor.
- Keep your chin up; don't pull on your neck.
- Keep your legs in a fixed position.
- Lift your torso toward your knees.
- Lower and repeat for 12-16 reps.

Bicycle Crunch

- Lie flat on the floor with your lower back pressed to the ground.
- Put your hands beside your head.
- Bring your knees up to about a 45-degree angle and slowly go through a bicycle pedal motion.
- Touch your left elbow to your right knee, then your right elbow to your left knee.
- Breathe evenly throughout the exercise.

Crossover Crunch

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Cross your right leg over your left leg so your right ankle is resting on your left knee.
- Place your fingertips to the side of your head just behind your ears.
- Contract your abdominal muscles as though you are doing a crunch
- Slowly twist your torso and touch your left elbow to your right knee.
- Exhale as you lift up
- Slowly lower to the starting position
- Inhale as you lower
- Repeat for the desired number of repetitions and switch legs and do the same number of reps on the other side.

V-Sit

- Begin in a seated position, contract your abdominal muscles and core, and lift your legs up to a 45-degree angle.
- Reach your arms straight forward or reach up toward your shins as you are able.
- Maintain good core posture and a strong spine.
- Hold this "V" position for several seconds to begin. As you get stronger, hold the position longer.
- Return to your starting position slowly.
- Just before you reach the floor, stop and hold the position for a few seconds.
- Repeat this entire movement several times.

Leg Lifts

- Lie flat on the floor with your legs extended.
- Elevate feet 8-10 inches off of the floor.
- Hold position for timed period. Feel the burn.
- Remember to breathe.
- Return to your starting position slowly.

Modified leg lifts included elevating feet to 45 degree angle and holding, and alternating one foot at 45 degree, one at 8-10 inches.

Strengthening the hips may help reduce many common lower-leg pain and knee injuries, especially in runners. Some researchers believe that weakness in the muscles that support the hips may contribute to many overuse injuries in runners. Currently, a large and growing body of research suggests that hip muscle weakness changes lower leg mechanics and increases forces in the leg and foot while running.

Bottom line: Weak hips may be one of the causes of knee pain and lower leg injuries.

The side plank exercise is one simple and effective method to increase hip strength and stability. Here's how to do it correctly.

The Side Plank Exercise

- Begin by laying on your side on the floor.
- Position your elbow on the floor just under your shoulder.
- Lift up on that elbow and keep your body stiff from head to toe.
- Hold this position for a count of 10 and lower your hip to the floor.
- Rest and repeat three times.
- Switch sides and repeat the exercise on the other hip.
- You can increase the effect of this exercise by lifting the top leg up toward the ceiling. Repeat the leg lift 10 times slowly and return to the start position.
- If you prefer, you can do these exercises on a hand rather than an elbow.

Lastly, everyone's favorite!

Wall Sits

- Stand against a wall.
- Slide down to make a 90 degree angle with your legs, keeping your back pressed against the wall.
- Hold for a timed period. (push for 1.5 to 2 minutes at least)