

## Working Out Your Fitness Plan

As a sports official you need to prepare yourself in much the same ways as the players do who you will be officiating. In order to keep up with the play, you've got to be in shape.

So your training needs to be geared towards the sport you officiate, as well as the goals that you want to achieve from your training. There are plenty of resources out there where you can find information on how the players in your sport train, but here's a few tips to keep in mind when creating a fitness plan for yourself.

In general, **cardiovascular training** will improve your cardiovascular fitness (the heart and lungs), burn calories, boost stamina and energy levels, and reduce body fat. (For example: swimming, brisk walking and jogging).

**Resistance training** will make your muscles stronger, firmer (and bigger, if you train in a particular way), will preserve your bone health, make your body more injury resistant and contribute to overall good health. (For example: sit-up, press-up and bicep curl).

**Flexibility training** will enhance your suppleness, maintain or increase your range of motion, contribute to good posture and muscle balance, and aid relaxation. (For example: stretching and yoga).

Finally, **core stability training** – a fairly new concept in fitness – will help you build strength from the inside out by improving the responsiveness and function of the deep muscles of the body. These muscles protect the spine and stabilise the 'core' of the body during movement. (For example: Pilates and stability ball exercises).

For good all-round fitness, experts recommend that we **work on all of these major components**, rather than focusing on just one. It's important to strike the right balance.

### Get FIT!

Once you've decided what activity you want to do, you need to think about the **FIT** principle, FIT is an acronym and stands for:

- Frequency (how often you are going to do it)
- Intensity (how hard you are going to work)
- Time (how long for)

Remember to balance intensity and time, by making shorter sessions more intense and longer sessions more gentle.

### Progressive overload

Whatever level you start at, apply the **principle of progressive overload**. This means slowly but surely increasing the overall volume (frequency, intensity and time) of your sessions as you get fitter, in order to keep making fitness gains.

Why? Because for any type of physical improvement to take place, there needs to be a 'stress' placed on the body, to which it has to adapt. Therefore, the next time that same challenge is laid down, it will be better able to cope.

For example, if you started walking regularly four weeks ago, initially, walking a mile in 15 minutes was a real challenge, but now it feels pretty easy because you have undergone a "training effect".

If you don't either walk faster or further, the fitness benefits you have gained from walking will tail off, because your body is no longer being challenged. It will only adapt when the workload placed upon it

is greater than that which it can already cope with. Focus on one variable at a time rather than trying to increase them all at once, though!

The final **essential principle is reversibility**; in essence if you don't use it, you'll lose it. Exercise must be regular and consistent to maximise the health and fitness benefits. If you go too long between sessions, or don't heed the progressive overload principle, then your fitness will begin to backslide. So that means you don't just stay fit when you're officiating, it's something you need to keep doing all year round.

A summary of recommended exercise guidelines for each component of fitness is shown below:

MODE	FREQUENCY	INTENSITY	TIME
<b>CARDIOVA-SCULAR TRAINING</b>	3-5 workouts per week	55– 90% maximum heart rate (the maximum number of times your heart can beat per minute).	20 - 60 minutes continuous or intermittent
<b>RESISTANCE TRAINING</b>	2-3 workouts per week	Dependent on desired outcome	Dependent on desired outcome
<b>FLEXIBILITY TRAINING</b>	2-3 workouts per week	Stretch to the point of mild discomfort, not pain	15 - 30 seconds per stretch for flexibility maintenance. Up to a minute for remedial postural work
<b>CORE STABILITY TRAINING</b>	5-7 workouts per week	Low intensity, to improve endurance and responsiveness of the postural muscles	10 - 15 minutes per day

Adapted from article by Sam Murphy

Visit [www.activesmart.co.nz](http://www.activesmart.co.nz) and ACC Sportsmart for more information on getting and staying fit so you can have a rewarding sports officiating experience.