

Title: Individual Pre-Season Fitness Tests

Date:	Venue: Playing Field	Duration: 3 Sessions	No of Players: 1+	Ability / Level: Intermediate - Advanced
Equipment: Balls, Stopwatch, Sticks and lots of Water		Purpose: Fitness training at this point in the season used to consist of running around a pitch continuously until you couldn't keep going. This has changed. Pre season fitness work should be more specific to hockey - that is why we recommend using both SAQ (Speed, Agility, Quickness) training as well as interval sessions. This helps replicate the type of movements and fitness you will need for the season. Below you will find a few examples of interval sessions that you can do		

Time	Task / Activity / Session Content
------	-----------------------------------

The Technical Stuff: Why we need aerobic endurance for hockey

Aerobic fitness is your body's ability to use oxygen from the atmosphere via the lungs to absorb into the blood. The oxygen is then pumped via the heart and circulatory system to various muscles and undergoes the process of oxidization (the break down fat and carbohydrate to produce energy). Hockey is usually played for 70 minutes and during this time your body will constantly need oxygen for your muscles to work.

A lack of oxygen causes anaerobic respiration of the muscle tissue. This is illustrated by working the legs very hard, such as down making a series of jab tackles, working low with passing exercises, and dribbling. This produces lactic acid and causes the burning sensation in the muscles and the resulting 'heavy legged' feeling.

A lot of the running in hockey is constant, with a series of short sprints followed by a recover jog/walk. If played properly, you're probably jogging most of the time. This uses the aerobic system, so you need a good level of aerobic fitness. However as hockey often involves periods of hard muscle work, you need aerobic endurance and anaerobic fitness as well.

As you start to regularly engage in fitness a bit more as the season starts, you should find you can last a lot longer. Now, here are a few examples of pre-season training programs that will suit those ranging from the totally unfit to those who have kept up a bit of fitness throughout the summer through to the Duracell bunnies of the team.



Simple Training Programme - Session 1

4-6 Mile Run

A 4-6 mile run at a steady pace, but don't forget to start off with a good warm up as this will make the run itself easier.

Simple Training Programme - Session 2

Circuit Training

Circuit training with a hockey component - try incorporating fitness with some hockey skills. This should be fun as well as increasing fitness. For example, set up five stations as a circuit as follows (groups of 4):

- Pushing in pairs over a short distance (approx 7m, depending on ability levels). See how many you can do in specified time;
- Sprinting between 25 yard line and backline;
- Dragging through cones to the left or right or Indian dribble;
- Hitting over a medium distance;
- Angle running with forestick and reverse stick tackle simulation;
- Running between half way and base line, doing skills for half and then passing to partner on the baseline.

You want each station to be set up relatively far apart (approx 30m or more) so that you can use this length as an extra fitness component within your circuit. Each station should last for approximately 30-60 seconds, depending on what you want to achieve with your team. You can complete the circuit once and have a rest after each completed circuit or you can use the circuits as sets and have a rest after 3 sets. If you're very sadistic you can have your team running for the entire session. It's good to have people pair off so they have a small element of competition or encouragement.

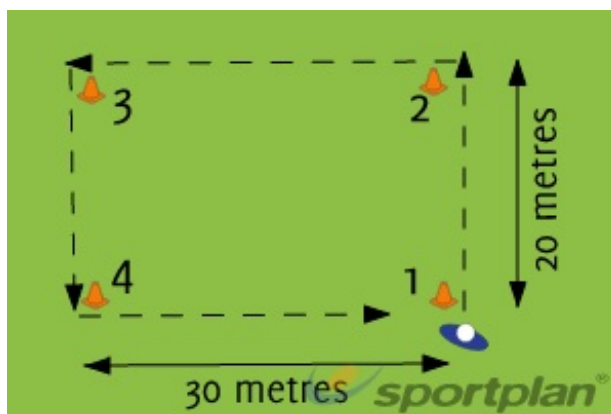
Simple Training Programme - Session 3

Pre-Season Running

Set up as shown with four cones or poles in a rectangular shape.

Get players jogging around the outside of the square once before making it a bit more difficult.

- On the second run round, have the players run at 3/4 pace between cones 1 and 2 before returning to a jog for rest of the rectangle.
- On the third run, have the players run at 3/4 pace between cones 1 and 3.
- Keep building this up until the players are running at 3/4 pace around all 4 cones, before reversing the order, i.e. 3/4 pace between cones 1 and 4, then next run 3/4 order between cones 1 and 3 all the way down until the players jog around the rectangle.



Higher Intensity Fitness Sessions - Session 1

For those players that have done no conditioning over the off season it will be hard work to say the least. The most important aspect of starting preseason fitness work is to increase your work load over the course of six weeks.

This should prevent injuries occurring and you'll peak for the beginning of the season.

Interval Training 1

- 10 seconds Sprint
- 50 seconds jog recovery
- 20 seconds Sprint
- 40 seconds jog recovery
- 30 seconds Sprint
- 30 seconds jog recovery
- 40 seconds Sprint
- 20 seconds jog recovery

Repeat 8 times



Higher Intensity Fitness Sessions - Session 2

Interval Training 2

- 60 Seconds Slow Jog
- 60 Seconds Run
- 30 Second Sprint

Repeat 10 times



Higher Intensity Fitness Sessions - Session 3

Interval Training 3

- Full length pitch Sprint
- Full length pitch slow jog recovery
- Half pitch Sprint
- Half pitch slow jog recovery

Repeat 8 times



Coaching Tips

All these session can be adapted depending on the starting fitness levels of the players. Don't forget to warm up and cool down too.

Testing Fitness

It is also important to test your levels of fitness, so you have a way of seeing a progression of how you are improving. For too long teams have used the Bleep Test to test their players. Although this is an easy way to test a whole squad in a short time period, as hockey is not a continuous running game, the test is not effective. Hockey is about maximal effort followed by a recovery period and the ability to repeat the effort. The test that I use with the players I work with replicates this.



Notes

Test should be done after a full warm up and stretch, and requires a training partner and a stop watch as well as a full hockey pitch. The test is done on a continuous clock so it is never stopped until the end. It is also important that corners are not cut so cones should be placed in each corner of the pitch and on the side lines at the half way line. Mark a starting point on the base line near the short corner injection mark. Each of the efforts are maximal so should be done as hard as the body will let you and the recovery is walking on the spot or in a small circle.



Coaching Tips

Testing is important but no where near as important as retesting. Performing this "test" once provides data which is meaningless. It can only be quantified after a period of training and then performing the same test again to calculate improvement (or lack there of).

The Test

- 25 yard line and back 60 seconds recovery
- Half way line and back 60 seconds recovery
- 75 yard line and back 60 seconds recovery
- Full Length pitch and back 60 seconds recovery
- Half pitch lap and 60 seconds recovery
- Full pitch lap and 60 seconds recovery
- Half pitch lap and 60 seconds recovery
- Full length pitch and back, then 60 seconds recovery
- 75 yard line and back, then 60 seconds recovery
- 50 yard line and back, then 60 second recovery
- 25 yard line and back.

Stop clock as they pass the base line (10 minutes recovery is subtracted from the time)

Results

Men's Times

- Less than 11 min 25 seconds - **Excellent**
- 11 min 40 - **Good**
- 12 min - **Average**
- 12 mins 15 - **Poor**

Women's Times

- Less than 11 mins 35 seconds - **Excellent**
- 12 mins - **Good**
- 12 mins 20 seconds - **Average**
- 12 mins 45 seconds - **Poor**