

PERFORMANCE VOLLEYBALL CONDITIONING

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO IMPROVING VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS

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KEEPIN' IT FRESH! Combining Balance Conditioning with Volleyball Skills

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When the kids hear the word, "conditioning" guess what they're thinking? Boring, running (probably to the end of the earth and back) and NO FUN!!!! There are very few athletes that thrive off of practice and conditioning...I think I'm one of the "Last of the Mohicans"...otherwise know as CRAZY!

What if we as coaches can create a fun atmosphere and combine conditioning with volleyball skills? Boy, what a concept of making it painless for all parties involved!

Balance is taken for granted and assumed that we can all do it when called upon. Not so...it takes practice just like any other skill that is essential for optimal performance in your particular sport.

We as volleyball athletes have to be able to play the ball outside our "midline" or center of our body and to complete this feat, we have to be able to be balanced and controlled. Priority number one is...TAKE CARE OF THE BALL! "Better the Ball" to the target or our teammates!

Okay, so let's have fun! Here are some enjoyable "balancing conditioning" exercises incorporated with volleyball skill. By doing this the athletes tend to focus more on the volleyball skill as opposed to the conditioning that is also taking place....what sneaky little devils we are!

SIT UPS SETTING THE BALL BACK TO PARTNER:

One partner will start standing with volleyball in hand. The other will start on the floor in a starting sit up position, knees bent. The standing partner will toss the ball to the working athlete which will in turn set the ball back to the standing athlete at the peak of the sit up. This will be repeated several times. The partner that is standing should challenge the working



Figure 1



Jeanne Colpus

athlete by tossing the ball on each side away from the "midline" of the body, so that he/she must have to over compensate and balance to set the ball back. A good starting point would be 50 reps and then switch (Figure 1).

BOSU PASSING WITH A SQUAT:

Place the bosu ball with the round side down on the floor. One athlete will start standing with bent knees on top of the bosu while the other

will stand a few feet away with a volleyball. The standing athlete will toss the ball so that the athlete on top of the bosu has to forearm pass the volleyball back to the standing athlete. After the pass the athlete will then perform a squat on the bosu ball. Again this exercise will be repeated several times.

A variation of this exercise would be to change the feed from the standing athlete into a "down ball" or a topspin feed instead of a toss with no spin (Figure 2).

BOSU SETTING:

Again one athlete will start standing on top of the bosu ball (round side down) while the other will stand with volleyball in hand a few feet away. The standing athlete will toss the ball so that the working athlete has to set or "over hand pass" the ball back to the standing athlete. This exercise too, will be repeated several times.

A variation may be to add in the squat after the "set". Additionally



Figure 2



Figure 3

2 balls may be used as the standing athlete will start with both balls. As they toss the first ball to be set by the working athlete, the next ball tossed will be passed by the working athlete, so that they have to alternate skills. This creates a different center of gravity each time for the athlete (Figure 3).

ONE LEGGED PASSING WITH PARTNER:

Both athletes will be working in this exercise. They will start a few feet apart from each other, one ball between the two, standing on one leg with a slight bend in the knee. The exercise will start with a toss and the athletes will pass the ball back and forth repeatedly trying to stay balanced on the one leg. A good start may be 25 passes and then the athletes will switch to the other leg and repeat the exercise (Figure 4).



Figure 4

ONE LEGGED SETTING WITH PARTNER:

Again both athletes will be working in this exercise. They will start a few feet apart from each other, one ball between the two, standing on one leg with a slight bend in the knee. The exercise will start with a toss and the athletes will set the ball back and forth repeatedly trying to stay balanced on the one leg. Again maybe start with 25 sets and then the athletes will switch to the other leg and repeat the exercise (Figure 5).



Figure 5

BALANCE EXERCISE MENU BUILDER:

The following exercise can be added to your balance development exercise technique menu. Although they are specific to volleyball techniques they are a good way of improving balance.

PARTNER INCLINE SIT UP WITH MEDICINE BALL THROW:

One athlete will start lying with their back on the incline sit up bench while the other will stand a few feet away. The ball will start with the athlete standing, throwing the ball to the athlete on the bench as they rise up into a sit up position. The working athlete should catch the medicine ball at the peak point of their sit up, bringing the ball back into their "midline" then chest passing the ball back to the standing athlete. This catch and throw will repeat as the standing athlete should challenge the working athlete by throwing the ball to the each side as well as throwing the ball high. Again, for beginners, it may be advisable to start the exercise with just a volleyball, a basketball, a weighted setters volleyball and then work up to a

medicine ball (Figure 6).

STEP UPS WITH DUMBBELL BICEP CURL AND SHOULDER PRESS:

Technique is everything! Starting weight will depend upon each individual, but start light. 5 to 10 lbs. will due. Start with one foot on top of bench, no more than 18 inches high, a dumbbell in each hand down by the athletes side. If the athlete has the right foot on the bench it will remain on the bench for the duration of the exercise. Pushing off the left foot, the athlete will raise themselves on top of the bench curling the weights (bicep curl), then pressing the weights above their head (Shoulder press). The athlete will then return the weights to the curling position and finally to the starting point down by their side. A good introduction would be 20 reps per leg. Again this exercise can be done for time as in a circuit drill or in sets with reps.

A variation of this exercise would be to use only one dumbbell at a time, overloading one side at a time (Figure 7).



Figure 6



Figure 7

STABILITY BALL A-Z:

Here is a fun little balancing exercise for the core! The athlete will place their forearms on top of the stability ball and their feet directly behind. Keeping the abdominals engaged or tight (make sure they still breath) using only the forearms, make the entire alphabet A through Z (Figure 8). It's a killer!!



Figure 8

Demonstrations provided by Jeanne Colpus, Co-Owner of Matchpoint Volleyball Inc.

More Information Please! Contact Jeanne at www.matchpointvolleyball.net