

SPORTS TRAINING

What are a training unit and a training session?

A training unit is a single activity with a set objective (e.g. develop specific endurance). A training session is made up of one or more training units. A training schedule (microcycle) comprises a number of training units that can span from 7 to 30 days.

How to develop a training plan?

The purpose of a training plan is to identify the work to be carried out to achieve agreed objectives. Training plans should be drawn up to identify long term (4 years) objectives as well as short term plans for the forthcoming season.

The process of creating a training program to help develop an individual's level of fitness comprises 6 stages:

Stage 1

The first stage is to gather details about the individual's background.

Stage 2

The second stage is to determine which components of fitness they need to improve. This could depend upon what the individual wants to get fit for. This could be to improve general fitness, get fit enough to play in the Saturday hockey league, run a local 5 km fun run or compete in next year's London Marathon.

Stage 3

The next stage is to identify appropriate tests that can be used to initially determine the individual's level of fitness and then to monitor progress during the training. Identified test should be conducted and the results recorded.

Stage 4

We now know the individual's background, objectives and current level of fitness. We now need to conduct a gap analysis of the current fitness levels (from test results at stage 3) and target fitness levels (identified at stage 2). The results of this process will assist in the design of the training program so that each component of fitness is improved to the desired level.

Stage 5

The next stage is to prepare a training program using the results of the gap analysis and FITT principles.

- F – frequency - how often should the individual exercise?
- I – intensity- how hard should the individual exercise?
- T – time - how long should each session last?

- T – training activity - what exercise or training activity will help achieve the individual's fitness goals?

Stage 6

The program has now been agreed and the individual can undertake the program. Every 4 weeks meet and discuss with the individual how the training has gone, the test results, progress towards target fitness levels and adjustments to the training program.

ANALYSIS OF THE LAST PROGRAM

If this is not the first program you have generated with the athlete then an important activity to conduct is a **SWOT** analysis of the last training program:

Q: Explain what the items in a SWOT analysis mean in training plan development.

ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

As an athlete matures, they are not only developing in terms of their sports but also in terms of education, career, physical maturity and their relationships with those around them. On average an athlete is likely to face up to seven transitions during their full athletic development and perhaps the critical transition occurs around the age of 20 when they may be:

- moving to university/college or commencing in full time employment
- progressing to a high performance level
- maturing through adolescence
- establishing relationships with a partner

Coaches must take into consideration these transitions when planning the annual and long term training programs for their athletes.