

## ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

One in a series of articles by Jim Pedro, Sr.  
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For many years, our program in Massachusetts has used training cycles to help athletes achieve their goals. We have set up three, four month training cycles, or PERIODIZATION. They are: *In Season*, *Out of Season*, and *Before Season Training*. The overall weightlifting and conditioning programs enable you to improve flexibility, improve strength and endurance, improve explosiveness, improve aerobic and anaerobic conditioning, develop the capacity to train harder, and have a year round structured program. Of course we include a lot of judo in our training, but the next few weeks newsletters are focused on strength and conditioning as it appears to be relatively unaddressed in many programs.

### HOW THESE PROGRAMS DIFFER FROM OTHER STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PROGRAMS:

Although many features of conditioning programs are similar (exercises, sets, repetitions, etc.) the difference here is the approach. Each training session should be made a little more difficult than the previous one. You can do this by:

- increasing the weight in some exercises,
- adding repetitions,
- and/or resting less between sets.

This is a key point. Your workouts should be on an upward trend over time.

If you are not able to continue increasing the difficulty of each workout or are unable to accomplish what you have previously done, than you are probably training too hard. If this should occur, you should cut back on the intensity until the muscles recover enough for you to pick up the pace again. If you feel physically low, it is better to do a light workout than to skip a training day completely. However, if you feel burnt out, taking a couple days off will help you more than training.

A bit of advice:

1. Be realistic. Stick with these programs. An easier or less structured approach will make it harder for you to achieve your goals.
2. Rest when you need to. This is the other side of being realistic. If you feel tired, cut back on each exercise by one set or drop back on repetitions and amount of weight.
3. Zero in. Mentally focus on the workout. When you are doing an exercise, mentally concentrate on that exercise and try to get as much out of it as you can.
4. Work on weaknesses. Too many people only work on their strengths and don't try to make improvements. The best athletes work on their weak areas in order to achieve overall balance.
5. Do your cardiovascular training. If you run out of energy during a match, you will not perform up to your full potential.

## KEEP RECORDS!

Keep a running record, charting each day and date with the type of running, and each set, with its overall time.

Keep a weightlifting record charting each day with its exercise, weight, and number of reps for 6 sets.

Keep a plyometrics record , charting the date, exercise, and number of reps for eight weeks.

Keep a circuits record, charting each day with its time for eight weeks.

If you are serious about winning, you need to be able to take an honest look at how much you have really trained. Records are essential in this. You may think you have been training really hard, but when you look back at your records you see that actually you only trained an average of four days a week over the last weight weeks. Was that enough to meet the goals you have set for yourself? Maybe if your goal is to win a regional tournament this year, that is enough. If your goal is to win a local or state championships, four days a week is very good, especially if you have been training at the right things.

Records may keep you from being discouraged. Sometimes an athlete is getting burnt out and doesn't feel like anything is working. A look at your records over the past few months can document that you are making improvement towards your goals.

Next week, I'll talk a little about running – some judo players love it, some hate it, but you all have to do it.

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Editor's Note: For those of you in the East who are interested in learning more about his methods for teaching judo as well as conditioning, Jim Pedro, Sr. will be offering a judo clinic September 10 in Naugatuck, CT, co-sponsored by the USJA Grass Roots Development Committee.