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COVID-19: Training Tips for Club and High School Athletes

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What should my focus be on for my training during the quarantine?

Focus on the basics. Planks, pushups, squats, lunge variations, and mobility drills are all good body weight drills excellent for variation to the athlete's training norm. This is not the time to progress your training, but rather maintain. Give attention during this time to the areas that you're deficient in. We all know those exercises we "hate" doing are probably the ones we need the most. This period of forced de-loading will go a long way in letting the athlete's body recuperate.

How do I decide how much and how often to exercise?

Choosing the right amount of exercise is important during this time. Exercise is a good stressor, but a stressor none the less. Moderate exercise seems to improve immune function and lower the risk of colds and viruses, but excessive exercise has the opposite effect and can boost the risk of infection. Scientist refer to this impact of exercise on the immune system as a J-shaped curve.

Choose a variety of exercise plans that target different areas of your body. Build a workout that gives you 4 rounds of 5 exercises for 45-60 seconds of work followed by 15-30 seconds of rest. Design 3-4 plans that you can alternate during the week. Allow yourself 30-45 minutes of training, and perform them 3 x per week.

How do I maintain my sport specific skills with no games or practice?

This is tough because of "social distancing" limiting the ability of athletes to come together and work on "their game". You develop skills for a specific sport by repetitively training them at real time game speed. Your goal here should be training specific deceleration/re-acceleration drills. You can accomplish this with change of direction drills. Have fun with it by placing cones on the ground in any configuration and have a family member call out a color while you race to touch it. Repeat this for 10-15 second bouts with a 20-30 second rest periods. Keep in mind that you're only looking to maintain performance.

A gym hiatus of this nature might be just what you need to get rest and some variation in your training program. Make the most out of this difficult time, and you just may discover who you can be.