



Physical Fitness: What, when, why?

Strength: Start to Maintenance

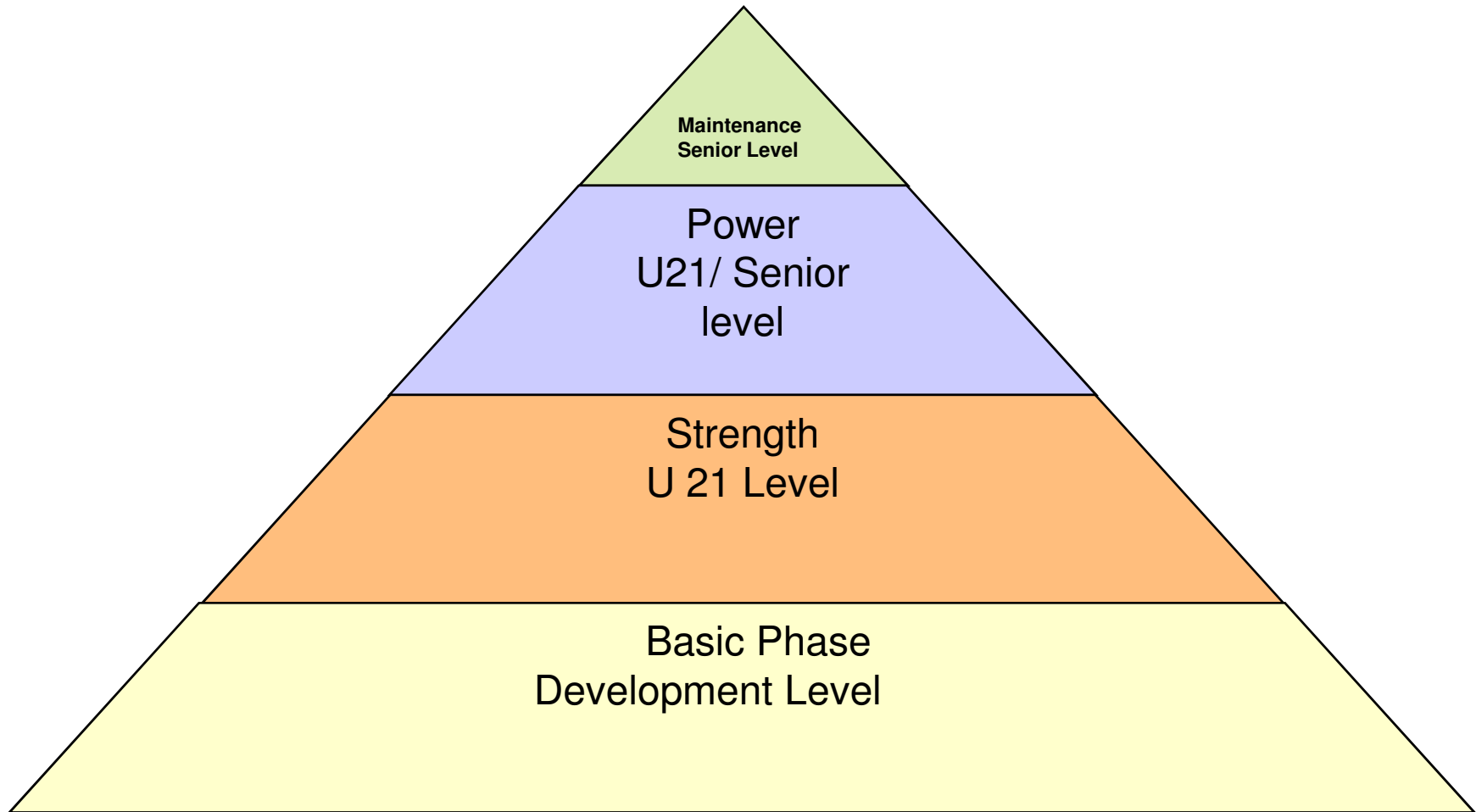
Conditioning: Fit to compete

Planning a yearly programme

- Knowledge and Understanding.
- Strength Training Principles **for GAA.**
- Develop ability to implement an **appropriate** program for GAA players.

- One of the most fatiguing elements of our game is the physical contact.
- Strength gains allow players to move faster, react quicker as well as be more powerful.
- Helps reduce the risk of injury
- Strength contributes to improved skill execution
- Mental Strength gains

The stages of strength training.



Basic Phase

PLAYER TYPE	Complete beginner
AIM	Technique learning, adaptation
SEASON PHASE	Preparation
EXERCISES	Body weight, light weights
RESISTANCE	50-75 % of 1Rep Max
SETS & REPS	2-sets of 8-20 reps. Circuit style.
REST	30 secs- 90 secs between sets

Max Strength

PLAYER TYPE	Experienced, strong enough for heavy lifts
AIM	Strengthen individual muscle fibres
SEASON PHASE	Pre/early season
EXERCISES	free weight lifts, usually compound.
RESISTANCE	65-85 % 1 rep max
SETS & REPS	2- sets of 6-10 reps
REST BETWEEN SETS	3-5 minutes

Conversion/Power Phase

PLAYER TYPE	Experienced, Completed max Strength
AIM	Increased explosiveness.
SEASON PHASE	Mid Season/Competitive (Championship)
EXERCISES	Free Weight lifts, Powerful Dynamic Exercises
RESISTANCE	90 % 1 rep max
SETS & REPS	2-3 sets of 1-3 reps – 2/3 per week
REST BETWEEN SETS	3-5 minutes

Maintenance

PLAYER TYPE	Experienced
AIM	Maintain power gains
SEASON PHASE	Competitive (Championship)
EXERCISES	Free Weight lifts, Powerful Dynamic Exercises
RESISTANCE	85-90 % 1 rep max
SETS & REPS	2-sets of 2-3 reps – 1 per week
REST BETWEEN SETS	3-5 minutes

Maintenance/Recovery Phase

- In order to avoid a detraining effect a level of conditioning is required to maintain the gains made in the preparation phase
- Volume required to maintain strength is less than that required to build it.
- But with the onset of competitive matches and events, emphasis on skill-based training, less time is available for strength training.

- So when should we start and what should we do?
- In order for players to achieve their full physical potential it is advised that strength training start during early teenage years.
- This will involve basic movement preparation, core strengthening, flexibility work and instruction of proper technique.
- What are the risks and benefits involved?

If we start strength training at development level, players will be stronger, fitter and better conditioned by the time they reach Minor/U21 level rather than achieving this level at 23 or 24 years old.

Youth – Adult level

- **Drill**
 - Front barbell squats
 - 2
 - 8
 - Step ups holding dumbbells
 - 2
 - 8
 - Barbell bench press
 - 2
 - 8
 - Chin ups - initially using a close grip.
 - 2
 - 8
 - Back extensions – with a 2 s pause at top
 - 2
 - 8
 - Lunges
 - 2
 - 8
 - DB seated overhead press
 - 2
 - 8
 - Bench dips if not sufficiently strong to perform 8 reps full dips
 - 2
 - 8
 - Plank – Circuit
 - 2
 - 60 sec 2 arms to front and 30 sec 1 arm each side (side plank)
 - 1-2min
- **Drill**
 - Chins (weighted)
 - 4
 - To failure
 - Dips (weighted)
 - 5
 - To failure
 - One arm press
 - 3
 - 8
 - Dumb bell high swing
 - 3
 - 10
 - Front squats
 - 4
 - 8
 - Dead lifts
 - 4
 - 10
 - Plyometric press ups
 - 4
 - 12
 - Single leg squats
 - 4
 - 5 each leg
 - Bar bell roll out
 - 4
 - 10

“I would rather have strong, physical and athletic players than work with elephants who can’t move”, Conor Counihan.

What is conditioning and fitness and what are the requirements and demands for modern day football?

The rate at which players are gaining in strength, power and speed is huge and these physical attributes are becoming a pivotal part of any player's training programme.

It's no longer acceptable just to rely on getting fit from playing games. Although match time will help improve fitness, with the demands of the game as they are now, it's simply not enough.

As athletes, we need to be in the best possible condition for our sport. So, when analysing player needs, it's clear that a well-implemented strength and conditioning programme will be of massive benefit. By maintaining good levels of strength, power, speed, agility and endurance a player will:

- improve post-match recovery time, allowing them to train more and play more
- maintain performance, if not increase it, across the season
 - reduce the risk of injury
- sustain high levels of performance during a game.

The components of fitness are:

1. Cardiovascular fitness.
2. Muscular strength.
3. Muscular endurance.
4. Flexibility.
5. Body composition.

Conditioning involves the development of all aspects of fitness with a view to player development, injury prevention and welfare.

What are the demands of Gaelic Football and when should we start fitness and conditioning work?

Below are the average distances covered by various positions during the 2012 All-Ireland Championship.

Knowledge of the work done during a game should be reflected in your training and preparation.

Ball in play time	Distance	Distance of intense work
Midfield	10,000m	4,800m
Half Back	9,000m	4,400m
Half forward	8,500m	4,300m
Full forward	7,000m	2,700m

What other movements do we see in football?

Can we replicate these movements during our training sessions?

What other exercises/ types of training can we use?

Twisting	Falling	Stopping
Lunging	Balance	Accelerating
Turning	Coordination	Running

Pre- season work?

Competitive stage – League?

Championship phase?

Pre-season is an ideal time to begin conditioning and fitness work for the season ahead. This should form the basis of fitness, strength and injury prevention work throughout the year.

This work should relate to the specific needs of your players and the team – history of injury, fitness levels, team goals etc.

Fitness testing is an ideal resource to use for this time of year as long as it is re-visited and that players are given realistic and achievable targets to meet throughout the year.

The main components that should be considered for testing include:

Cardiovascular endurance: Bleep or Yo Yo test
speed: 5m or 20m sprint test.

Flexibility: Functional Movement Screen.

Muscular Endurance: Push Test.

Muscular Power: Med ball throw or jump mat test.

Goals should be set for individual players and a team goal outlined.

The work done in pre-season will make the difference between a player getting a full year of football or spending time being injured on the sidelines.

When do we peak? When do we do our tough sessions? When do we taper our training?

Look at the following scenarios

1. You are involved as part of the management team of your club minor side. The season starts at on 30th March and you are making preparations for the forthcoming year. You aim to peak at the start of the league.

What will you do? What may impact upon this?

Scenario 2.

You are a selector with your club senior side. The team were relegated to division 2 last year for the 1st time and you need to perform well in the league this year to regain senior status. What are your plans for the year in terms of training and preparation?

Scenario 3

You are involved with a senior club team and have performed well in the league for the past 2 years but haven't been able to maintain this come championship time.

The team want to focus on winning the championship this year which will be held in August/ September. How will you plan for the year ahead?

Feedback from group work





Conclusion

1. Conditioning and strength work should be incorporated into every team programme.
2. Teams undertaking this work will be fitter, stronger, quicker and less prone to injury.
3. This is not a quick fix and should be considered for a lengthy period of time.
4. Ensure that the programme you follow is specific to the needs of your team and individual players.