

Summer: Indoor Cross Training

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This summer, don't let thundershowers or high temperatures thwart your training program—take your training indoors. Gyms offer a multitude of benefits and are an appealing and safe alternative to exercising in excessive heat. Best, bringing your workout indoors may actually help you realize training goals faster, with a mix of cross training that keeps workouts interesting, safe and fun.

Heat and Exercise

Although most periodization schedules slate intense training and competition for long days and comfortable weather associated with summer, training in excessive heat and humidity can be extremely taxing on the body. In fact, studies on endurance training have proven that one of the biggest factors contributing to fatigue during exercise is heat. And it's not only detrimental to performance—exercising in high heat and for extended periods can be dangerous to your health.

During exercise, the body sweats to dissipate heat. In turn, sweat causes evaporation, which cools the skin, releases heat and lowers core body temperature. However, in hot, humid weather, the body isn't able to release heat because the surrounding environment is already saturated. By training in comfortable, low humidity temperatures, you'll be better able to maintain energy stores and allow your body's thermoregulatory system to function at its best.

Benefits of Indoor Cross Training

If you haven't already mapped out a periodization schedule, why not begin to gradually incorporate indoor cross training into your training program? By adding a new sport or training method to your schedule, you'll add variety to your workouts, balance the natural work and rest cycles of the body and help prevent overuse injuries, burnout and exercise plateaus.

Along with all of these benefits, there is also cutting edge research supporting the benefits of cross training—using two or more disciplines to strengthen the whole body (for the primary benefit of one discipline). Although there are a number of theories about fitness progression, including the rule of specificity that says to improve at a sport, you need to do more of it (or mimic the movements and demands as closely as possible); it's also true that training embodies mastery, progression and change. Cross training not only embraces all of these; it offers an opportunity to master new ground.

Cross Training Options

Running, cycling and swimming can all be done indoors and are some of the best choices for cross training. All of these sports focus on different muscle groups and vary in intensity; when combined, they help lend much-needed balance to any training program.



- Running -

Let's look at the bright side of a 2 foot by 5 foot revolving belt. Convenient, consistent and accessible anytime, treadmills are a great tool to track progress and apply training techniques objectively. Because they are indoors, treadmills eliminate environmental factors and distractions like traffic and allow you to completely focus on your training objectives. Last, treadmills are designed to be gentler on the joints than road surfaces, reducing the impact forces and reducing the risk of injury. Just like being on the Spinner® bike, remember the road is as far as the mind can see. If you're a cyclist, try running on the treadmill for a change. Running offers a high calorie burn, is weight bearing, requires minimal gear and is nearly always accessible.

- Spinning® -

Low-impact, non-weight bearing activities like Spinning are invaluable for cross training and improving fitness. Because Spinning provides both high intensity workouts and active recovery, without stress to the joints often associated with running, students can experience a personalized ride every class. By focusing on specific training objectives during each class, you can help your students map out a training plan to maximize results.

- Swimming -

Non-impact and generally low intensity, swimming builds strength while lengthening muscles throughout the body to improve overall conditioning. By requiring the body to move in more than one plane (planes of movement being frontal, transverse, and saggital) whereas running and cycling provide movement primarily in one plane, swimming demands core strength and can also be therapeutic exercise to reduce inflammation or recover from injury.

- Strength & Core Training -

Group exercise schedules are packed with yoga, Pilates, core and mat classes, offering movement and intensity variations that improve whole body conditioning, strengthen supporting muscles and develop flexibility. Equally important, they can help reduce stress and relax the body and mind. There are even new fusion classes that combine the cardio benefits of Spinning with core training programs such as yoga—encourage your students to try a SPIN® Yoga or SPIN® Core class for a complete mind/body experience.

Similarly, strength training allows you to target specific muscles as well as mimic part of or all of the movement sequences used in your sport. Use dumbbells to equalize strength in a weaker limb or incorporate instability into your training via the use of a Swiss ball, BOSU or Pilates Reformer training to improve balance, agility and coordination. Although the specific sets and weight will vary depending on your specific training goals and your level of conditioning, strength training can be incorporated into a periodized schedule to facilitate peak performance.

Putting it all Together: Specialty Events, Training Programs & Rides

This summer, encourage your students to make indoor cross training part of their routine. With a variety of programs and classes to choose from, routine is really anything but boring. Develop an indoor summer training program for an indoor triathlon or duathlon (run-bike-run). You can also create an ongoing summer fitness challenge by creating your own training program leading up to a specialty ride like the Tour de Spinning® or Everest Ride. Or simply offer incentives to your students who complete a combination of classes for cross training benefits.



Crossing over into another discipline or two builds the body and mind for your main discipline and keeps you actively pursuing it with a fresh outlet for energy. Once you find something fun that facilitates your overall training goals, you'll be on your way to mastering new horizons and making indoor training part of a complete training program.

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