

How much off-season training does a hockey player need?

Training volume is not the same as training quality.

Picture this. You step into the locker room for your training camp or try-outs in August and you see one of your teammates from last summer; you ask how his summer was and he goes on to tell you about the 5 hours per day he spent in the gym, doing cardio, power skating and doing yoga. Your heart sinks a little as you think, “Wow, I did not do enough training – I am not going to be as fit as him”. That is a natural feeling, but do not make the common mistake of confusing training time with training quality.

If that hockey player is spending three hours at the gym every day, then it suggests to me that they do not have a focus for their workout – they are taking a shotgun approach by doing lots of exercises, hoping that they are touching on some of the right ones by chance. To be effective a hockey training program must be completed consistently and with appropriate intensity. Period. Here are a few guidelines that I use with the hockey players I train.

AAA/Jr Players

Activity	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Resistance Training	45-60 min Lower body emphasis	45-60 min Upper body emphasis	OFF	45-60 min Lower body emphasis	45-60 min Upper body emphasis	OFF	OFF
Energy System Training	20-30 min Anaerobic Lactic	20-30 min Speed & Power	OFF	20-30 min Anaerobic Lactic	20-30 min Speed & Power	45 min Hill Run	OFF
Prehab/Mobility Training	15 min	15 min	OFF	15 min	15 min	15 min	OFF

Professional Players

Activity	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Resistance Training	60-75 min Lower body emphasis	60-75 min Upper body emphasis	OFF	60-75 min Lower body emphasis	60-75 min Upper body emphasis	OFF	OFF
Energy System Training	30-40 min Anaerobic Lactic ON ICE	30-40 min Speed & Power	OFF	30-40 min Anaerobic Lactic	30-40 min Speed & Power ON ICE	45 min Hill Run	OFF
Prehab/Mobility Training	20-30 min	20-30 min	20-30 min	20-30 min	20-30 min	20-30 min	OFF

I think I break my training programs down a little differently than some of the other hockey strength and conditioning coaches in that I split up my Energy System Training into Anaerobic Lactic and Speed/Power sessions. I know many who prefer to take a Linear approach for one day and a Lateral approach for the other. The anaerobic lactic days will include interval training that is often done in a multi directional fashion using hurdles, cone drills, agility ladders or shuttle runs. The speed power days are when we work on accelerations and plyometrics. The times given include the active rest intervals.

You will notice that I include on-ice energy system training with the pro players I train when possible. We typically start these in Mid-June giving the player about six weeks on the ice before starting their daily 'pro skates'. For the AAA/Jr. players most of them do some form of power skating once or twice per week, but I leave that to the power skating experts.

There is variation in this structure based on the time of the off-season and the needs of the player. For example an athlete who has unresolved injuries from the season will spend more time on their Prehab/Rehab/Mobility work and may spend less time on their resistance training. Or during the first

few weeks of off-season training with the junior players we will spend a little more time in the weight room working on technique using higher rep ranges. As a result our Energy System workout will be a bit shorter.

I am not suggesting that this is the only way or the best way to train hockey players, I hope to get some good discussion on the forum regarding other training breakdowns, the take-home message I am trying to get across here is to not confuse training volume with training quality. Know what you are trying to train, select the best exercises for the level of your hockey players and train that with great quality and intensity.