



The
Ultimate Guide to
**WEIGHT
TRAINING**
for
SOFTBALL

first edition



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Part I



Softball Specific Training

*With Weight Training, Knowledge is the
Key to Success*

INTRODUCTION

Softball is a sport where your overall level of strength and fitness is crucial to performing at the best of your abilities. Softball requires strength, power, speed, quickness, agility, flexibility, balance, muscular endurance, and stamina— each of which can be enhanced through a proper weight-training program. This book focuses on how to develop your body in every area that is most important to softball. It also provides you with daily softball-specific programs designed for the off-season, pre-season, and in-season to maximize your playing potential.

There are two requirements needed to be a good softball player: softball-specific skills and proper conditioning. An important note must be made clear. Weight training will not directly improve your softball skills. However, it will make your entire body stronger and more powerful, which will give you greater bat and arm speed. It will also decrease your vulnerability to injury and increase your muscular endurance. All of these factors will increase your softball playing potential. If you train properly for softball, you will experience all of these benefits without sacrificing your technique on the field. In fact, proper weight training can enhance your technique by improving your flexibility and increasing your range of motion. This book not only contains a year-round softball-specific training program, but also includes over 50 additional 4-week programs so you can find exactly what you need.

Improper Training Training improperly increases the risk of an injury occurring, and it can also set you further away from your goals. The goal of strength training for softball is not to build stiff, bulky muscles; it is to improve your game by increasing your speed, quickness, power, flexibility, muscular endurance, and balance. You want to build your muscles and improve flexibility in areas that are important to improving your performance on the diamond.

Major Benefits from Weight Training Weight training for any sport provides you with two general benefits. It helps enhance your athletic performance and it helps reduce or prevent injury. Weight training also plays a major role in injury rehabilitation. Muscles that are well trained have been shown to recover faster from injuries, which will reduce chronic pain. Softball is an outdoor sport and players are at the mercy of Mother Nature, who can be very unpleasant in the spring. Unfortunately, cold and wet weather elevate the risk of many injuries, including sprains and pulled muscles. With stronger muscles supporting your bones, tendons, and ligaments, you will be much less injury prone in all aspects of your life.

Common Softball Injuries The most common injuries experienced by softball players are in the shoulder and elbow. These injuries negatively affect throwing, fielding, and swinging, which necessitates taking injury-reducing precautions. Always stretch before lifting and playing, and weight train properly. The programs provided in this book are designed to train these and other areas of your body, minimizing your chances of getting injured. The programs strengthen both the internal and external rotators of your rotator cuffs to help maintain an injury-free shoulder. The programs also require performing both arm-extending (triceps) exercises and arm-contracting (biceps) exercises through their entire range of motion during the same training session, thus reducing the chances of elbow injuries by increasing both the strength and flexibility in your elbow joint.

Knee injuries and hamstring pulls are also very common among softball players. They can occur in many activities, including sliding, running, and diving. Similar to strengthening the elbow, training the muscles surrounding the knee is a good way to protect yourself from these injuries. Performing both leg-extending (thighs) and leg-contracting (hamstring) exercises on the same day through their entire range of motion both strengthens and increases the flexibility in the knee and hamstring.

Practice Makes Perfect While weight training for softball, it is crucial to continue practicing your skills. Your neurotransmitters will need to adapt to your new-found strength so you can convert it into power on the diamond. As important as strength and power are, they are not as important as technique. You need to be throwing the ball continuously and practicing your fielding and batting. Practice your throwing on the off days from the gym. Take grounders, go the batting cages, do some long and short throwing, and practice, practice, practice throughout the off-season.

Quickness vs. Speed The programs provided in this book are designed to enhance both your speed and your quickness, placing more emphasis on quickness. During the course of a game, quickness and acceleration are more important than overall speed. The longest runs made during the course of a game last no more than a few seconds: stealing a soft, flagging down a fly, beating out an infield hit, stretching a double into a triple, and so forth. Infielders need to be able to get to balls hit up the middle or on the corners. By following the programs provided, you will increase your quickness and reduce your base path time.

