

# How to get better physical conditioning to play the game of basketball

Basketball requires better physical conditioning than any other team sport. That is because there is continuous action throughout a game. Players are running, passing, dribbling, shooting, jumping for a rebound, stopping quickly, and changing direction during the course of every game. Such action certainly calls for top physical conditioning.

For this reason, both parents and coaches should insist on a complete medical checkup for every player before the start of training. If there should be something wrong, it's best to find out early and take steps to correct any physical limitations. A physically healthy child will find out that the hard exercise provided by basketball makes the body even stronger.

Once a youngster is in good condition, he should strive to stay that way. That takes a lot of self-discipline. They should get to bed early and get a good night's rest during the season. Youngsters from nine to thirteen need at least ten to twelve hours every night.

Using tobacco in any form is one of the worst habits any athlete could have. If you haven't started, then don't, and if you have, quit right now.

Proper diet is basic. Let me shoot it to you straight:

- Mothers know more about food than you do; therefore, eat what Mom puts before you - meats, vegetables, salads, cereals, etc.
- Avoid between-meal snacks as much as possible. Youngsters need lots of food, but mealtime is the time to get it.
- Eat sensibly and don't stuff yourselves.

Once you are in condition, staying there requires plenty of exercise. If basketball is your sport, you should practice the fundamentals at every opportunity. But there are other activities which keep the muscles toned and provide a good workout, such as tennis, swimming, hiking, skiing, hockey, baseball, etc. In other words, all sports are good. Each help keep a youngster in shape.

Any time you see a youngster at the top of his game, you can bet he didn't simply land there. He made up his mind to climb that mountain, and did it. The world of sports is filled with stories of young men and women who overcame tremendous obstacles, and even physical handicaps, to become successful in their chosen sport. For example, Monte Stratton, Chicago White Sox pitcher, lost a leg, yet returned to pitch for the Sox again. In sports, that is what we coaches call desire or determination.

Basketball is regarded as a noncontact sport; however, we all know that when the action is under the basket, the player with the greater determination gets most of the rebounds, regardless of contact. In my mind, this is a youngster who will do well, later in life.

To you youngsters just beginning a life in sports, my advice is to never give up. You will never become a star overnight. At times you will become discouraged, but never give up. As you grow up, it might mean you have no coordination and seem to trip over your own feet. That will pass, and all your hard work begins to pay dividends.