



Innovative Rugby Training Concepts & Fitness
Equipment for Players and Coaches



Incorporating Fitness into your
Rugby Training Sessions

Table of contents

1. Disclaimer
2. Introduction
3. Manipulating rugby practices for developing fitness
 - a. The A, B, C Principle
 - b. Team Conditioning Games
 - c. Contact fitness drills
 - d. 6 minute fitness booster - short & sharp interval sessions
4. Top Tips
5. Summary

Disclaimer

1.1 The material provided in this Fitfile is not intended as, and should not be considered to be, medical advice and you should seek medical opinion as to any condition you might have or any course of treatment on which you choose to embark. You should at all times seek appropriate advice from your doctor.

1.2 While the Fitness 4 Rugby (the 'Company') endeavours to ensure that the information in this Fitfile is correct, the Company does not warrant the accuracy and completeness of the material in this Fitfile.

1.3 The material in this Fitfile is provided "as is", without any conditions, warranties or other terms of any kind. Accordingly, to the maximum extent permitted by law, the Company provides you with this Fitfile on the basis that the Company excludes all representations, warranties, conditions and other terms which but for this legal notice might have effect in relation to this Fitfile.

1.4 LIABILITY

1.41 The Company, any other party (whether or not involved in creating, producing, maintaining or delivering this Fitfile), and any of the Company's group companies and the officers, directors, employees, shareholders or agents of any of them, exclude all liability and responsibility for any amount or kind of loss or damage that may result to you or a third party (including without limitation, any direct or consequential loss or damages, or any loss of income, profits, goodwill, data, contracts, or loss or damages arising from or connected in any way to business interruption, and whether in tort (including without limitation negligence), contract or otherwise) in connection with this Fitfile in any way or in connection with the use, inability to use or the results of use of this Fitfile, including but not limited to loss or damage due to viruses that may infect

your computer equipment, software, data or other property on account of your access to, use of, or browsing this Fitfile or your downloading of any material from the Website or any websites linked to this Website.

10.2 Nothing in these Conditions shall however exclude or limit the Company's liability for:

(a) death or personal injury caused by the Company's negligence

(b) fraud; or

(c) any liability which cannot be excluded or limited under applicable law;

10.3 If your use of material on this Website results in the need for servicing, repair or correction of equipment, software or data, you assume all costs thereof.

11. GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

These Conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law.

Introduction

Players will gain a conditioning benefit from virtually all rugby sessions but when your time is limited and your ambitions are high, you need to optimise these sessions to maximise the benefits.

For the typical club, who train twice per week, the necessity to incorporate skills, tactics and technical content often overrides the drive to develop fitness. But if you can manipulate the work and rest time of your drills and incorporate elements of conditioning then there is no reason why you can't get the best of both worlds.



It is important to remember that the most fatiguing aspect of rugby is contact - tackling, rucking, mauling and scrummaging generate high levels of fatigue, much more than running. When players are struggling to run fast it may often be a result of the fatigue generated during previous phases of play when they experienced contact.

Fitness for rugby is not simply being able to run all day - it's also about the unique combination of strength, power, & stability, supported by fuel mix fitness to generate energy and resist fatigue, so players can perform effectively for the duration of the game

Therefore, playing touch rugby for rugby fitness has fuel mix and speed agility benefits but to maximise the session there needs to be contact fitness elements in the session, such as mauling, wrestling, medicine ball and tackle bag drills. For example, a coach could blow a whistle twice during 'touch' and this signals that players on opposing teams have to wrestle each other to the floor for 10 seconds.

Contact fitness exercises do not always have to involve 'bone on bone' drills; tackle pad, tackle bag, medicine ball, car pushing, and individual bodyweight drills are great alternatives and probably reduce the chances of injury during the session.



Statistics tell us that the vast majority of injuries occur during player contact - so consider using medicine balls, speed sleds, tackle pads and bags for contact fitness drills

Based on this information, we will now consider fitness development ideas and drills, essentially for use during your rugby training sessions, although they may also be used in isolation for dedicated fitness training. Please begin by reading the Disclaimer above.

Manipulating rugby practices for developing fitness

The conditioning benefits of rugby-training drills depend on the intensity, type, and volume of exercise. You can manipulate the work and rest times during sessions and drills to manipulate the players' work rate and subsequent conditioning benefits. You can provoke an easy work rate (A), high quality work rate (B - short work time, long rest time) or a tiring match simulation work rate (C). The following sample strategies illustrate this point.

A, B or C Drills

Performing repetitions of a technical rugby skill such as rucking at a high intensity for 25 seconds, followed by 2 minutes' rest, makes it more likely players will perform the drill at speed. This may be classified as a 'B' type drill and encourages dynamic rucking, and will help develop power endurance. Players will develop a tolerance to lactic via B sessions which can significantly improve playing performance.

By limiting rest periods (e.g. 30 seconds) and extending the work time (e.g. 35 seconds) for the drill you will probably lose intensity and technical quality - the rucking style will become 'sloppy' and less effective. This is essentially a 'C' type session which should be used occasionally.

Don't be afraid to alternate between 'B' and 'C' type work rates - apply the 'B' principle for the first half of the rucking drill, then finish off with the 'C' approach.

An 'A' session is less tiring and involves running at half pace. The session is essentially 'aerobic' in nature because you don't allow players to run hard for long enough. To manipulate the training intensity you can designate a drill as either A, B or C:-

Drill	Intensity	Average work time	Average rest time	For example....
A	light - aerobic,	45-60s	30-40s	Light jogging through penalty moves or defensive plays, line outs, etc..
B	medium to high intensity - fuel mix	20-30s	30-35s	Running against pad holders for 4-5 phases
C	high intensity - anaerobic	10-20s	60s+	Exploding through two sets of two pad holders followed by a 20m sprint

Aim to vary the intensity of your drills during a training session with the A, B, C principle. This helps to prevent drills from being 'one paced' and helps develop specific elements of fuel mix fitness. It also allows players and coaches to monitor training intensity and reduces the chances of over- or under training the energy systems. It also helps players prepare for training by letting them know what sort of session to expect!

Team Conditioning Games

Team games are excellent fuel mix conditioning drills that work on multidirectional running, passing, catching, attacking, and defensive skills. Teamwork and communication also improve with these drills, and players tend to enjoy the sessions, almost forgetting that there is a strong conditioning benefit.

Factors such as the pitch size, the number of players per team, and the duration of the game affect the energy system contributions and resultant conditioning benefits. Here are a few examples of how to manipulate the game for fitness benefits:-

- **Hard Fitness Touch Rugby** - played by six-person teams across half a rugby pitch for 20 minutes. Every time a ball hits the floor, all players perform 3 push-ups and 3 squat jumps. Team that scores keeps the ball and plays back the other way.
- **Medium Fitness Touch Rugby** - ten-person teams across half a pitch, 2 down-ups for all players every time the ball goes down
- **Light Fitness Touch Rugby** - ten or more players per team across half a pitch, teams allowed to sub players on and off at random intervals.

Contact Fitness Drills

These drills involve a combination of all the elements of rugby fitness - stability, strength, power, agility and fuel mix fitness. These movements are

performed at high intensity and include rugby specific activities such as driving, mauling, tackling and jumping.

Maul ball

In a crouched position, Partner 1 protects a rugby ball, while Partner 2 attempts to 'maul' the ball. Perform the drill for 15 seconds, change roles and repeat.

Forward Drive

Partner 1 holds a Pad in front of Partner 2. Partner 2 drives the Pad back 5m. Partner 1 is encouraged to offer high resistance but allowing Partner 2 to reach the 5m cone within 5 seconds. Immediately back-pedal 5m to the start line and repeat for 4 drives. Rest 10 seconds, change roles and repeat.

Turnover ball

Partner 1 lies on the ground protecting a ball while Partner 2 straddles Partner 1 and attempts to maul the rugby ball. Perform the drill for 15 seconds, change roles and repeat.

Partner wrestle to floor.

In a 3m grid, Partner 1 attempts to wrestle Partner 2 to the floor while Partner 2 protects a rugby ball and attempts to stay on feet. Perform the drill for 15 seconds, change roles and repeat. Note that this is not a tackling drill; contact must be above waist height.

6 minute fitness booster - short and sharp interval sessions

You have an hour to go through your line-outs, penalty moves, attack, and defence tactics so there's no time for fitness. But it only takes 6 minutes!

10-20-10m Partner Shuttle.

Mark out 3 cones, A, B and C, 10m apart. Partner 1 starts on the floor at the centre cone (B), sprints to A, then to C and finishes back at B and performs 5 squat jumps and 5 clap push ups. Partner 2 does the same - so partner 1's rest time is partner 2's work time and vice versa. Repeat for 6 sets each.

20m Partner Push and Go.

Mark out 3 cones, A, B, C, 20m apart. Partner 1 starts on the floor at A, while partner 2 stands in front with a tackle pad. On the whistle partner 1 drives partner 2 to cone B, BUT every time the coach whistles partner 1 hits the ground, then gets up and continues driving. On reaching cone B, partner 1 sprints to C, performs a down and up, sprints back to partner 2 at B and repeats the pad driving drill to A. Rest 15s, change roles and repeat for 5 sets each.

Simple Circuit.

All players on try line - on whistle perform 5 squat jumps, 5 clap push ups, followed by a sprint to half way and back, rest 30s, repeat for 6 sets. Short, simple and competitive!

Top Tips

- Perform foot speed drills during a warm-up while players are 'fresh'
- Finish each rugby session with a 5 minute core stability session (see Core Stability Fitfile for a battery of drills)
- Use medicine balls for wrestling and throwing drills
- Wear a weighted vest during drills to generate more fatigue

Summary

Fitness development is an inherent benefit of most rugby sessions but by manipulating work rest ratios, incorporating contact drills and scheduling a 6 minute interval circuit into all your rugby sessions you will hopefully find that players are continually boosting their fitness. You can also incorporate short elements of foot speed and core stability into warm ups and cool downs.

