



## The Truth about Strength and Conditioning for Young Soccer Players

Did you know that most soccer coach's approach to youth soccer fitness actually teaches their athletes to be slow?

This information looks at youth soccer conditioning in a different perspective.

Youth soccer fitness includes:

- Power
- Strength
- Endurance
- Mobility
- Stability

### **Power:**

Athletes with solid power have the ability to accelerate quicker and jump higher. These qualities are essential for blowing past an opponent and jumping higher to win a 50-50 ball. This is essential for both field players and keepers. Field players need power for solid shots on goal. Keepers need power to accelerate and jump to the opposite side of the net to make a lunging save.

### **Strength:**

Next athletes need a solid base of strength. If they lack this their ability to defend and shield diminishes. Other players will plow straight through to the goal or steal the ball. Athletes need solid strength base from an injury prevention perspective. A stronger athlete absorbs more force with fewer problems in the joints through out the body.

### **Endurance:**

Athletes must have the ability to play a full game with out getting tired. They must have the ability to maintain form and function in the last ten to fifteen minutes of a game. Both the muscles and the mind need the ability to play hard until the final whistle.

### **Mobility:**

Young soccer athletes need to be mobile and have functional range of motion. In other words the athlete must be able to move the way they would in a game. For example, a player needs to have good mobility at the hips to reach for a ball that is just outside their range. They need to make this movement at times as a reflex. Thus it is important for the body to be properly warmed up with the appropriate exercises. Discover a new way to warm up.

### **Stability:**

A young soccer player needs to shoot a ball with out the plant leg giving in. Furthermore players need to be able to land from 50-50 balls without falling to the ground. Players must also have the ability to stop and change direction under control. Exercises for all soccer players need to be 'ground based'.

Fitness and strength training in the off season for young soccer players to get into condition for the "competitive" season may done at home using easily accessible equipment such as body weight, medicine balls and sandbags. Achieve specific benefits of fitness for soccer by incorporating body weight, medicine balls and sandbags into a daily exercise routine. Some benefits of fitness from soccer conditioning may show up in school with better attention and a more willingness to learn.