

## P.E. SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

# CROSS-TRAINING



*“There is no shortcut. It takes time to create a better, stronger version of yourself.”*

[acefitness.org](http://acefitness.org), American Council on Exercise website

## INTRODUCTION

Cross-training is the action of engaging in multiple sports or types of exercise in order to improve fitness and performance in one’s main sport. Cross-training allows for better overall fitness by helping prevent injury and by exercising muscles that are neglected when focusing on one routine.

Doing the same workout each day can cause a loss of interest, can place limits on workout results and potentially lead to injuries. Cross-training may keep you from getting stuck in a fitness rut, improve overall physical fitness and reduce the chances of injury.

## BASIC CONCEPTS

It’s common to focus training on the individual sport(s) or workout routines you’re active in. Runners love to hit the pavement, swimmers love to be in the water, etc. This repetition can lead to overuse injuries. One way to minimize risk and to be active is to vary your workout practices thru cross-training.

Most workouts target a limited number of basic fitness areas. For example, running and swimming are good for cardiovascular and endurance. However, these activities provide a lesser impact on overall muscular strength and flexibility. The variation of activity in cross-training seeks to provide a balance among cardiovascular activity, muscle strength, endurance training and flexibility.

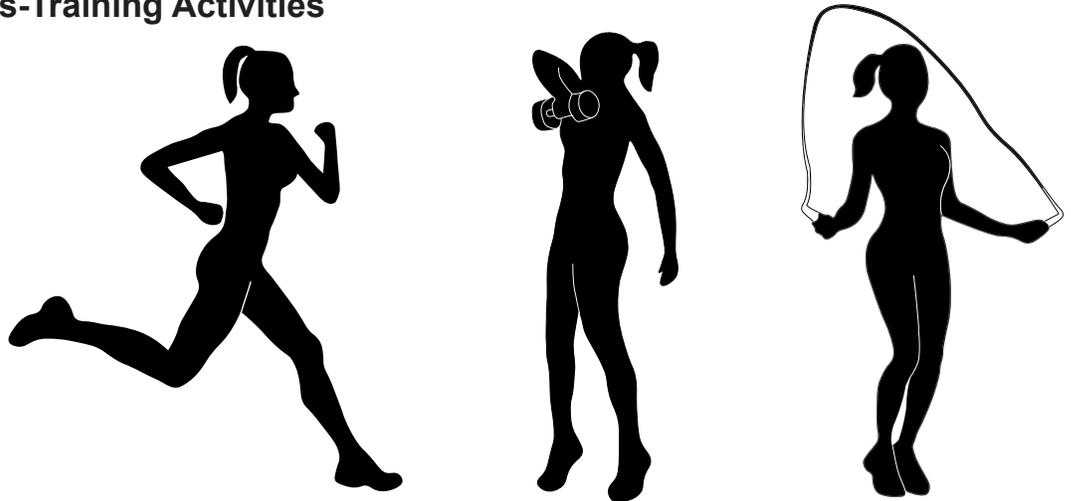
With cross-training, you’re adding a practice that targets a fitness component that’s not typically included in your normal routine. For example, if you play a lot of baseball or softball, stretching and staying loose are important. Tight shoulders, biceps, and glutes may limit your ability to execute a good throw and leave you at risk for a number of muscle-related injuries. You may want to include something that focuses on flexibility, such as yoga.



Many cross-training plans include a component of flexibility training. Flexibility is needed not only for athletic performance, but also to perform everyday activities with relative ease. Genetics, gender, age, body shape and level of physical activity influence one's flexibility. The benefits of flexibility training include greater freedom of movement and improved posture; increased physical and mental relaxation and resulting ability to focus; release of muscle tension and soreness; reduced risk of injury.

### Examples of Cross-Training Activities

Barre  
Biking  
Hiking  
Weight Training  
Martial Arts  
Swimming  
Yoga  
Elliptical  
Walking  
Zumba  
Soccer



### Impact

When planning for your overall cross-fitness routine, considering the variation of different impact exercises as well. High impact activities, such as running and jumping, are essential for developing lower-body power and building strong bones. These activities can also help with balance, coordination, agility, and speed. Low impact activities such as walking and strength training are key to building strong bones, particularly in the lower body. Zero impact activities, such as swimming and cycling, take the pressure off your bones and joints, which reduce the chance of an overuse injury to your lower body.

### Direction

Changing the direction you're moving in with your workouts is also a key strategy of cross-training, as you will develop different muscle groups. If you're always moving in one direction, you're neglecting the actions and muscles required to move in other directions. Over time, this can lead to muscle imbalances that may contribute to injuries. Choose cross-training workouts that interrupt your regular movement patterns.

The sagittal plane of motion cuts an invisible path through the center of your body, dividing you into left and right part. Running, cycling, and biceps curls are just a few examples of this type of motion.

Cutting an invisible line through the center of your body dividing you into front and back halves is the frontal plane. Cartwheels, side lunges, swimming the breast stroke and inline skating takes place in the frontal plane.

Finally, the transverse plane cuts an invisible line through the center of your body, dividing you into top and bottom halves. Swinging a golf club or a baseball bat are clear examples of moving in the transverse plane, boxing, dancing and yoga also can involve rotation and twisting.



## **CROSS-TRAINING BENEFITS**

### **Improved Motivation**

You're less likely to lose interest if you add new and different workouts to your training program. In addition, your overall fitness level should improve. For example, cycling is a great way to give your leg muscles an aerobic workout without the impact that comes with running. Adding tai chi or yoga into your cardio-heavy routine may be a way to challenge yourself on another platform. Cross-training can offer new physical and mental challenges.

### **Reducing Overuse Injuries**

Cross-training gives overworked body parts the opportunity to rest and repair before being put to work again.

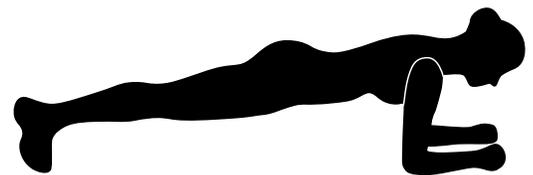
### **Avoiding Fitness Plateaus**

The more you do a single workout your body becomes more efficient, you burn fewer calories and experience fewer changes, resulting in a fitness plateau.

When you introduce new exercises and new routines into your schedule, you're telling your brain and your body that you haven't mastered these skills and that your body needs to work harder to learn them. These change-ups ultimately improve your level of fitness.

### **Providing Schedule Flexibility**

By doing cross-training exercises you have timing or weather flexibility. For instance, if you typically run three days a week and cross-train two days a week by doing strength training, the next time rain prevents you from getting your run in, you can simply hit the gym for some strength training.



Overall, cross-training provides an opportunity for well-rounded health and muscular development.

## **GETTING STARTED**

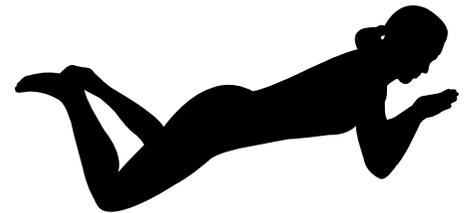
Check with your doctor if you're new to exercise. Once you get the approval, cross-training is a good place to start. Cross-training allows you to experience the benefit of different activities. If you're not sure where to start, talk with your physical education teacher.

Research shows that a total of two and a half hours each week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, improves both physical and mental health. An easy way to achieve that goal is to break it down into 30 minutes at least 5 days a week. Breaking down the activity into three 10-minute periods of activity is just as beneficial too!

Before planning your cross-training routine, think about your fitness weaknesses, then choose a cross-training workout that will address these deficiencies.

### **Make a Schedule**

There's no need to completely change your current workout routine to start cross-training. Look at your regular workout plan and ask yourself how to incorporate cross-training into the mix. A good rule of thumb is to include one or two cross-training routines each week.



### **Try New Things**

Even when it comes to cross-training, it's easy to get stuck in a routine. Plan to switch up your cross-training workout roughly once a month.

### **Think About Impact**

Another way to think about incorporating cross-training is to consider the level of impact your current workout has so you can select a cross-training routine to counterbalance that impact. If your routine consists heavily of high-impact activities like running and jumping, it's a good idea to cross-train with lower-impact activities like swimming or cycling. The reverse is true too. If your primary workout is lower-impact, it's a good idea to incorporate weight lifting or higher-impact exercises into your cross-training routine.



With all types of exercises make sure you use the correct techniques and pace yourself and when changing intensity or duration do so gradually.

### SHOES, CLOTHING

New shoes and clothes certainly aren't necessary to expanded your workout range. But of course, there are shoes and clothing specially designed for those interested and that have the money. They include: multi-faceted shoes which are designed to provide basic comfort and stability for a variety of activities. They have outsoles especially designed for lateral movements. Socks with light padding and moisture-wicking fibers. Shorts or sweat pants with a stretch fabric allow for a complete range of motion. Lightweight, and breathable tank tops and t-shirts are recommended.

Remember, hydration is key for any cross-training workout, so don't forget a water bottle.



### CROSS-TRAINING NOTES

Cross-training has been around for a long time, and is continually increasing in popularity. The military and professional athletes are turning to cross-training methods. There's an increased realization that an improved workload and variety can lead to overall enhanced capability. Cross-training is also becoming popular as a method of recovery. This is a practice of using an alternative type of workout to help recover from muscle overuse or injury by a primary training method.

Check out your local YMCA or park district, many facilities offer classes that combine movements such as sprinting, rowing, jumping rope, climbing rope, weightlifting and use of kettlebells and medicine balls. Or you can simply ask your physical education teacher or coach for help in developing a cross-training plan for you.

Check out this website for more information about cross-training:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-training>