

A PERSONAL HITTING STRENGTH PROGRAM

THE CHART

For those wishing to design their own individual hitting strength program, here is a list of activities useful for that purpose, with a description of each. Exercises should move from the general to the specific as the season approaches. The starting point will depend on present level of conditioning and the time available before the season starts.

This entire program can be done at home with no special equipment required other than a bat or suitable substitute.

PUSH-UPS

These are a good measure of upper body strength. They should be performed with a straight back, bringing your chest down to about 4 inches above the floor. Start with a low workload and increase one or two repetitions each workout.

SIT-UPS

Always have your legs bent to take the pressure off of the lower back. Fold your arms across your chest to increase the degree of difficulty. For variety do some twisting sit-ups by placing your hands at the sides of your head and touching each elbow to the opposite knee on successive repetitions.

PLYOMETRICS

These are bounding or rebounding exercises, usually performed through a variety of hopping or jumping patterns. For the arms, do some jumping push-ups by exploding upwards, clapping hands when they clear the ground, and going back down again. These are extremely effective for building explosive power.

ISOMETRIC

These can be done with a bat at various positions in the swing, or by isolating specific swing muscles (eg. triceps) and developing them individually. Workload is measured in total repetitions. Limit these to Phases 1 & 2 and drop them in the Pre-Competition Phase.

ISOKINETIC

Alternate the isokinetics and isometrics. As with the isometrics, drop these and concentrate on building dynamic strength as you approach the playing season.

SPEED SWINGS

These can be done using a normal bat, or with some type of elastic tubing or theraband. Concentrate on proper form and accelerating the bat through the swing. Workload is measured in total swings.

SNAPBACKS

This exercise uses eccentric and concentric contractions to accelerate the strength gains. Swing the bat at maximum velocity, then reverse the swing back to the start position, again at maximum velocity. Workload is total swings but start with a moderate number (5 or so) and increase gradually to a maximum of 20.

FRONT ARM SWINGS

This exercise will develop strength in the front arm movement. Start in the normal hitting position with two hands on the bat. Then swing using only the bottom or front arm. Take the hand straight to the ball using the wrist, forearm and triceps. Workload is in total swings.

REAR ARM SWINGS

Same exercise as with the front arm, but this time using only the top or rear arm.

WEIGHTED BAT

For this exercise use a bat or similar implement somewhat heavier than your own bat. Be careful that the implement is not so heavy that it distorts your swing. Proper form of execution is important on each repetition.

This chart might be of some help in organizing and recording the exercises and workloads. Players can tailor their own program by adding favourite exercises in the blank spaces.

EXERCISE	WORKOUT NUMBER															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	13	15	16
PUSH-UPS																
SIT-UPS																
PLYOMETRICS																
ISOMETRICS																
ISOKINETICS																
SPEED SWINGS																
SNAP BACKS																
FRONT ARM																
REAR ARM																
WEIGHTED BAT																

DAVE PEARCE
GOLD MEDAL SOFTBALL