

Figure Skating Training Program

Fitness schedule and strategies improve your skating and overall health.

[http://figurespeedskating.suite101.com/article.cfm/figure skating training program](http://figurespeedskating.suite101.com/article.cfm/figure_skating_training_program)

Ice skating provides an excellent workout for recreational skaters. The benefits include improved muscle strength and definition, balance and coordination, and cardiovascular fitness.

Test and competitive figure skaters find they need to acquire skills that can be acquired through an off ice training program combined with a diet to provide maximum results for the time and funds expended. It is not longer cost effective to attempt to acquire all of the figure skating skills through on ice practice sessions.

[The United States Figure Skating Association Cardio Chart and Periodization Schedule](#) provides a suggested cardio training program designed to help competitive figure skaters peak at important times during the season.

The USFSA gives skaters a useful chart that can help them attain these physical enhancements. Follow their suggestions to avoid training burnout and become the athlete you are meant to be.

All Year

Flexibility should be a focus no matter what time of year you are training. Stretching before and after any exercise is an absolute essential. Additional classes in ballet, yoga or Pilates will help improve your performance. Gentlemen: This goes double for you.

Stretching is not just for the ladies. All professional athletes in every sport recognize the benefits of improved flexibility. Also see the periodization schedule for additional specific activities that will help you achieve your goals in the new figure skating season.

There are different training schedules depending on what a skater's level in different figure skating disciplines. Skaters who are not eligible to enter qualifying events tend to have their training season culminate in various summer and fall open competitions.

Skaters who do not qualify to skate in one of the 3 sectional competitions may prepare to skate in a winter show or start working on their next test.

After the end their competitive season, many skaters cut back on their skating to concentrate on their studies to make up the time missed to participate in competitions.

Post Season

The training schedule for non international elite single, pair, and dance skaters begins in January and February after USA Nationals Championships. This is considered either break time or a period of active rest for those continuing on to Worlds. Take time to have fun with your skating, to play around with new routine ideas and elements.

Editor's Note: Synchronized Team Skating and Theater on Ice Teams have different National and International Competition Schedules.

Keep up with low-level aerobic off-ice training in 15-30 minute sessions. Avoid over-use injuries by allowing yourself to recuperate from the physical and psychological rigors of competition.

Early Off-Season

March and the first half of April are considered the early off-season. This is when many no test through Intermediate skaters begin to develop the strength and aerobic foundation necessary to learn new elements required to move up to the next competitive level.

In general, though, training is only moderate during this time. Put together your show program, and make your new jumps, spins and footwork solid. Only three 20-30 minute cardio sessions per week are recommended.

Late Off-Season

These weeks run from the second half of April through the end of June. April and June are usually competition months too. Finish your new programs during this time. It's not too late to acquire new elements that might up your points during the coming season.

One or two 20-30 minute aerobic sessions are all you'll need during these weeks because you'll be getting a great workout on the ice. In May, you will add two or three anaerobic sessions per week to increase your overall level of strength.

Pre-Season

July through the middle of September is considered the most crucial for the competitive skater. Competitions need to be chosen for July and September, and a preliminary layout of the new season's competitions should be calendared.

Emphasize sport-specific and peak levels in training. You get to drop off-ice aerobic training down to once a week due to the number of routine run-throughs performed during this critical practice time.

Complete three anaerobic sessions per week at 95% of your max. You should see notable gains in strength, power, and aerobic conditioning.

In-Season

The new figure skating season officially kicks off the second half of September. Maintain your top condition throughout the season. The first four weeks of the season, run through each routine completely and back-to-back five to six times each week.

Continue one aerobic and three to four anaerobic off ice weekly sessions, but begin to taper the number of off-ice exercises as on-ice rigorous workouts increase in length and number in your weekly schedule lead up to Regional competitions.

By November, your routine run-throughs should be intense enough for you to dump off-ice aerobic sessions altogether. Keep up two to three anaerobic sessions per week, at 95% of your maximum. Your programs should be completely refined by now.

Continue tapering according to your competition schedule and back-to-back run-throughs. It may seem logical to turn up the heat at this time, but that will be counter-productive.

You are only human, and physical restoration is a key training component. Avoid burnout by sticking to scheduled practices and workouts. More exercise at the rink means less exercise off the ice.

Many skaters feel guilty if they aren't completely exhausted every night during the season. The fact is that you cannot skate your best if you're physically spent.

Rest is an absolute necessity and a very important part of your training program.

Relaxation is equally important. It incorporates down-time where you either visualize perfect run-throughs or don't think of skating at all.

A training regime should be something that you and your coach decide upon together. If you use the USFSA suggested training chart summarized above, be sure to also consult their Interval Training Chart.

Endurance conditioning is a natural and very positive consequence of ice skating. Whether a competitive training schedule directly pertains to you, enjoy becoming physically fit doing something you love to do.

The copyright of the article Figure Skating Training Program in Figure/Speed Skating is owned by © Timbre Beck-Murphy, Jan 1, 2007, Zhangs, Worlds 2006.

Figure/Speed Skating

<http://figurespeedskating.suite101.com/>

Feature Writer: Timbre Beck-Murphy

Author, Timbre Beck-Murphy

This is an information source for Long and Short Track Speed Skating, and Figure Skating (Single and Pairs, Ice Dancing, and Synchronized Team Skating). Keep tabs on your favorite skaters through profiles and interviews, get results for local, national and international competitions and enjoy reviews of figure skating exhibition shows and speed skating races.

Browse the list of Index of Skating Articles or check out articles for definitions of skating terms, organizations, and resources, including official athlete websites at -

<http://figurespeedskating.suite101.com/>