

READY TO GO: Entering the Australian summer in peak form is a goal for Bernard Tomic.

PREPARE TO PEAK

Achieving the right balance between off-court training, practice, match play and recovery is vital. **NATHAN & GISELLE MARTIN** explain how embracing variety is a key to on-court success.



When it comes to exercise and preparing your body to play your best tennis, it is important to do the right things at the right time. That includes resting and changing what you do, even if you feel your current routine works.

Training variety is often overlooked. Some people prefer consistency, so do the same things all the time then often wonder why they are not improving. Others jump from one routine to another without allowing the body time to adapt.

Whatever your "training personality", it is vital for long-term development (at any age) and performance to phase the training you do. Often known as periodisation, phase training is as important as your actual exercises. This is how it works ...

PREPARATION

General: High training volume and low intensity. Focus is on endurance and strength. Training can be general and non-tennis specific at the start (cross-training). This is a good time to work on tennis technique.

Ratio: 30 per cent on court, 70 per cent off-court training;
Phase length: 4-6 weeks

Specific: Low volume and high intensity. Focus on more specific tennis training variables (anaerobic endurance, speed and power endurance). This is a good time to work on fine-tuning technique and match strategy.

Ratio: 50 per cent on court, 50 per cent off-court training;
Phase length: 3-6 weeks

COMPETITION

Pre-competition: Low volume and high intensity. Focus is on power, agility and speed, match play and individualised fine-tuning of technique and mental preparation. During this phase the focus shifts from off-court training to predominately on-court training.

Ratio: 70 per cent on court, 30 per cent off-court training;
Phase length: 2-4 weeks

Competition: This phase is all about physically peaking, so involves very low volume and high intensity. Focus is to maintain tennis fitness level and fine-tune physical capabilities. On-court sessions should be match specific. Off-court sessions should consist of footspeed, power, agility and reaction. Phase length is dependent on the level of the player and their tournament schedule.

TRANSITION

This is a time for players to rest and recover, with little-to-no time on court. Players can engage in other sports at a moderate level. During this phase players often feel guilty about not hitting, but the rest and recovery helps them prepare for the workload ahead and provides the opportunity to assess, set goals and plan for the future. It's all about achieving the right balance.

Phase length: 1-3 weeks

BENEFITS

How does a periodisation plan benefit your game?

- >> Reduces the risk of overtraining (burnout)
- >> Injury prevention
- >> Encourages performance peaking
- >> Motivates players
- >> Alleviates boredom
- >> Educates players on what and when to do certain training.

IMPLEMENTATION

Some important steps to consider when planning a periodisation plan.

1. Decide when you want to peak (goal setting). As tournaments run almost year round, it is important to target your peak period. It is not realistic to peak year-round. Planning training

around ideal peak times will keep you motivated, have you better physically prepared and help keep you injury free.

2. Focus on quality not quantity, especially during pre-competition phases.
3. Conduct fitness testing (annually as a minimum). Ideally do so prior to the preparation phase and then re-test.

Continually adding variety to training is a key to overall success. Combined with mixing up volume, intensity, frequency and specific focuses, it will help produce better results. **ATM**



STAR TRAINERS

NATHAN AND GISELLE MARTIN, of Tennis Fitness, have been in the health and fitness industry for 20 years. They travelled on the WTA Tour for numerous years and also worked at the Sanchez Casal Tennis Academy in Barcelona, Spain. They've worked with Sam Stosur, Svetlana Kuznetsova, Jennifer Capriati, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Monica Seles, Martina Navratilova, Casey Dellacqua and Lleyton Hewitt. For further information and for previous articles, visit tennisfitness.com.