

**The A.S.A.P. Training Style:
Getting in a Quick, Focused Workout
For Sports Performance**

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In the spring of 2007, I was running my own fitness & sports performance training business, and needed a new name for my summer sports performance camp. My 'theme' of my training style was "Xpress Exercise For Every Body", with a focus on workouts accomplished in 30 minutes or less. I wanted to keep with that kind of theme for the name, and I already had a previous name of "All-Star Athlete" for my sports performance workout packages. I was reading a training professional magazine for fitness trainers and an article on setting up an "Academy" for your business struck me. I thought, "I could call this summer program the All-Star Academy, if I add Performance at the end, I'll have A.S.A.P.: The All-Star Academy of Performance!". Hence, the ASAP Training System was born, out of my All-Star Athlete protocols, and my recently new S.T.A.R. System for fitness training (Simple Training Achieves Results). I seem to be big on acronyms, but acronyms have always made me remember things better.

The ASAP Training System had 2 components, a strength training one (The STAR System), and a conditioning one (My Xpress Athlete protocol).

The STAR System, in a nutshell, is simply recording your total work done in a set unit of time. 2 exercises are chosen per circuit, with each circuit being timed for 7 minutes. Each exercise is done with 5-8 reps per set, alternating the 2 exercises at your own pace. Generally a weight that you can lift to slight exhaustion for 10 times is used for your sets of 5-8. For exercises that are tougher and require only a small number of reps to exhaustion, such as chin-ups, they can be done in sets of 1-3 reps. Six Movements are chosen to pair up into 3 circuits: Squatting & Upper Body Pushing, Lunging & Upper Body Pulling, finishing off with Bending (forward/back) & Twisting (side to side movements).

Squatting actions are pretty self-explanatory. Upper Body Pushing exercises should focus on vertical (like shoulder presses) or horizontal (bench press type) actions. Lunges are lunges, pick your choice according to your ability. The easiest one I've seen people be able to do right away is the Tactical Lunge, it seems most natural with the kettlebell. An Upper Body Pulling action should target the back muscles, such as a Lat Pulldown for a vertical pull, or a Bent Over Row for a horizontal pull. Bending actions may include exercises like ab crunches or single leg deadlifts, while Twisting actions may be Med Ball or KB Seated Twists, or my favorite, the Kettlebell Windmill.

Some basic information that is related to my former STAR System workouts can be found at my free guide, the Mini-Max Method, at <http://speeddialcoach.com/minimax.pdf>. This breaks it down to just a few simple exercises to be done with a kettlebell, or use a dumbbell as a substitute.

The “Xpress Athlete” conditioning workouts are the ‘end-cap’ of the entire workout session. I have based most of my conditioning workouts around the commonly known High Intensity Interval Training protocol that is widely known as the “Tabata Protocol”. This workout format is based on 4 minute intervals that offer 20 seconds of high intensity work, followed by 10 seconds of rest, repeated as such for 8 times, totaling up to a 4 minute exercise bout.

I would vary these workout periods with 2, 4, or 8 stations to cycle through.

For 2 stations, I’d pick the Kettlebell Swing & the Jump Rope.

For 4 stations, I’d cycle through the Swing, the Jump Rope, a hurdle ladder drill (like the hurdle ladder you can make, by getting the Rocket Speed Training On A Budget guides, at <http://rst.speeddialcoach.com>), and a shuffling cone drill.

For up to 8 stations, I’d use 2 kettlebells, 2 jump ropes, 2 hula hoops for shuffling drills in & out of them, plus 2 hurdles. I’d have two different kettlebell weights to use for swings. For the order, I would start with a Kettlebell Swing (25#), a jump rope, a hula hoop side to side shuffle, in & out, and a side to side hurdle shuffle. Then I’d go with a heavier kettlebell (35#), another jump rope, another hula hoop for a forward & back shuffle, then another hurdle for side to side shuffles again.

Since I conducted these workouts inside a racquetball court, there was enough workout room to create 8 stations on the outer edge of the court.

Most of the workout routines would go in this order of increasing & decreasing intensity periods of work to rest:

1st 4 minutes: 10 seconds work, then 20 seconds rest x 8 times

2nd 4 minutes: 15 seconds work, then 15 seconds rest x 8 times

3rd 4 minutes: 20 seconds work, then 10 seconds rest x 8 times

4th 4 minutes: 15 seconds work, then 15 seconds rest x 8 times

5th 4 minutes: 10 seconds work, then 20 seconds rest x 8 times

This format would workout well for the athletes I trained due to some simple reasons:

1. It focused on correlating work to rest ratio’s that most athletes are demanded upon in athletics, such as 1:2 and 1:1 work to rest ratio periods. Since I had many multi-sport athletes, there was no need for ‘specializing’ exercises & drills for an individual sport. The simple Swing, jump rope, hurdle & hula-hoop shuffle drills focused on moving the body quickly & precisely for short bursts of time. I have seen some program outlines call for 40-60 seconds of work for a speed/agility drill, causing the quality of the work to become poor, slow, and more damaging than

beneficial. Short burst, high intensity efforts need to be SHORT to be beneficial.

2. The workout was taxing, but not wasteful of time. A shorter workout allows for a longer recovery time overall, especially if you are an athlete who is undergoing a lot of team training & conditioning workouts throughout a summer. I once did a survey with high school athletes during the summertime conditioning period at a sports performance franchise I worked for. I discovered that a majority of athletes were committing 15-20 hours of workouts, open gyms, and summer league games, per week, during the months of June & July. If I added more excruciating workout durations to this schedule, my workouts I provide won't be productive. Going with a 'less is more' approach, and factoring in all these other sports' variables for summer training devotion, I felt the 30 minute workout format was a beneficial format for the athletes.
3. The workouts were simple in function & form: Just the kettlebell swing alone is becoming a widely used tool for all types of conditioning demands, from martial arts competitors to youth athletes. Jump rope training has been a staple for years in the circles of boxing & wrestling, and still continues to be a staple today for many other sports as part of their general preparation. Using hurdle drills & a hula hoop as a jumping formation on the ground will help benefit the athlete in basic movement awareness of their lower body. Others term this as 'plyo training' or plyometric training, I see it as being more beneficial for body awareness training, otherwise termed as proprioception. Returning to the kettlebell swing, I have tested this exercise with a calorimeter clipped to my hip, and doing continuous swings with just a 25# kettlebell registered 20 calories/minute being burned. At my bodyweight, that's equal to the metabolic rate I use if I run a 7-minute mile pace. Bottom line: the basics can tax you well enough if you do it right.
4. These types of workouts aren't pulled out of thin air: I've seen some speed training workouts that tell an athlete to do things like endless sprints of 20 yards, up to 100 yards, or 200m/400m efforts on a track. And, admittedly, I used to prescribe such workouts because that's all I saw that as ever prescribed: just a bunch of randomized distances & suggestions to 'sprint'. Now, if I were to prescribe such a workout, it would be based on sprint & rest/jog efforts for a conditioning purpose. Like my "Mini-Max for the Track" (<http://speeddialcoach.com/minimaxtrack.pdf>) workout addendum for my Mini-Max Method guide has, they are distance-based and prescribed in an increasing manner. What bugged me as a former full-time sports trainer is when I would see some 'sample workouts' on a website, and all it would be is 3 sets of 10 yard sprints, 3 sets of 20 yard sprints, and 6 sets of 40 yard sprints. Sure, this is speed training, but for most athletes, they need overall CONDITIONING, not just speed alone. The 20 minute format of Tabata interval fluctuations every 4 minutes gives that conditioning edge to the workout. I truly believe that overall conditioning, & strength training, gives you speed in reserve, for most athletic encounters.

5. Even by offering a 30 minute conditioning-only workout, it allowed some athletes to come in for a basic conditioning workout, and keep right along with their school's strength training summer workouts. This was a main reason I wanted this option available, so I could have 2 separate types of workouts to choose from for all athletes. If the potential athlete was already doing an hour long workout at the school for 3 days a week, why not just come & see me for a quick 30-minute time period? It would eliminate adding another strength routine to the entire landscape of training. If you are a trainer reading this, keep this little workout option in mind as an idea for a small group atmosphere of training.

The ASAP Training style of 20-30 minute workout times for strength training & conditioning isn't everyone's cup of tea when it comes to training, but then, I don't like tea a whole lot, either. If I want caffeine, I go straight to some black coffee: something simple, fast, and to the point. Sometimes you need good old-fashioned "coffee" to get the essential task done. I think Pavel Tsastouline of Russian Kettlebell fame said it best in one of his videos: Coffee, or No Coffee. In Russia's communist times, you either got coffee, or no coffee, in the store. There was a story of a Russian immigrant that had a nervous breakdown in an American grocery store, after seeing an aisle full of various brands of coffee. The poor guy didn't know what to do, or what to pick, because of too many choices of coffee. Come to think of it, this almost happens with the average athlete who gets bombarded with this camp, that summertime league, plus his/her team's conditioning program for the summertime, too. Toss in a little peer pressure to try some new protein shake that a buddy is taking to gain weight, and you have a lot of roadblocks in the way.

As for me, keep the crème, sugar, & milk away from my coffee, please.

I like to keep it simple & train with the basics. Squat, Lunge, Push, Pull, Bend, Twist. Work in simple, easy-to-do conditioning formats that will focus on the simple demands of a given sport. Swing, jump, hop, skip. Drive with power by doing swings, jump lightly & quickly on your feet with the other drills. It doesn't have to be that complicated. No need for too many types of coffee, if all you need is the plain-old black coffee to get the simple stuff done.

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