

# UMPIRE FITNESS

NCAA softball athletes are getting faster and stronger each year and as umpires we must be able to respond to the improved level of play. With college softball the athletes never get older, but the umpires do, so we must commit to a level of personal fitness that is befitting the game that we have chosen to work. We do this with respect for the game and all of those involved in making it the great game it is.

The players have made a commitment to be the best they can be and so must the officials that work the game. This commitment to our health and fitness should be a lifestyle commitment, not a seasonal endeavor. After all, the athletes prepare all year long for their season and so should the umpires. Making a lifetime commitment will assure that we are prepared when the season begins, with only a few adjustments needed to be ready for that first pitch and game.

Many umpires spend hours readying their equipment, studying the rules and mechanics of the game, but how much time do we spend preparing our physical selves for the game? The physical preparation for the season must equal the mental preparation that we put forth. After all, if we are not physically able to perform our responsibilities the mental preparation is all for naught. If we are tired or sore we are not able to focus on our game as we should.

We also need to consider what our physical presence says to the other participants of the game. If we are overweight and out of shape, are we not showing a lack of respect for the game? When the extra pounds slow us down or being fatigued for the last few innings takes away our focus and we are not able to be at the top of our game, we are compromising the game and that is not fair to your partners or the teams.

***If a sprint to second winds us or by the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning our legs are tiring we have work to do. Some thoughts...***

As we age the body changes and that means if we are to maintain an optimal weight we must adapt our lifestyle. It may mean that we eat less, exercise more or most likely both. But it is something that we will need to work at and be conscious of, not just during the season. As we age it becomes apparent that the weight comes on more quickly and leaves more slowly, so deciding to “get-in-shape” at the beginning of the new year probably is not going to work, at least not for all of us. So we need to make the commitment to a healthy lifestyle for the entire year, hence the term “LIFESTYLE”.

Most umpires have been involved in athletics in some way prior to becoming an umpire so the concept of working out is probably not a foreign one, but we may need some guidance as to how to get started with a workout routine now that we are older.

## ***Quick Tips to Getting Started...***

1. Get clearance from your personal physician to start a fitness program.
2. **Determine** your short term and long-term **goals**.
3. **Commit** to your program by designating a period of time each day to yourself and your workout. Even if it is only for 30 minutes.
4. **Determine** what your **strengths** and **weaknesses** are, so you know what you need to focus on and what you may need help in accomplishing.
5. Understand that **nutrition** is a very **important** component of any fitness program and commit to that part of the program as much as you do the workouts.
6. Find something that you **ENJOY** doing. If you don't like to run, don't force yourself to do that. There are plenty of other cardio options, so find one or two or three that you do **ENJOY**, or can tolerate and get moving. Actually doing a variety of cardio activities will boost your metabolism as well as help to prevent overuse injuries and help to prevent boredom.

### **Your weekly workouts should include:**

Cardio Training – minimum of 30 minutes, 5 days

Strength Training – minimum of 30 minutes, 2-3 days

Flexibility – minimum of 20 minutes, 5 days

There are many websites that you can access for information, but one that is very user friendly and reputable is: [mayoclinic.com/health/fitness/MY00396](http://mayoclinic.com/health/fitness/MY00396).

NCAA umpires, lets all do our part in protecting the integrity of our game, by preparing ourselves physically and mentally for our season. That means a commitment to our physical fitness on a year round basis. Be conscious of our nutrition and stay active!

See you on the field!!!