



# A COACH'S INFLUENCE

AAO BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A BETTER TEAM AND LIFE

## CONDITIONING

"SUCCESS TAKES PHYSICAL, MENTAL, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CONDITIONING," Coach John Wooden

At AAO, we define conditioning as physical, mental, moral and spiritual fitness. There is no question that basketball requires a great amount of conditioning to perform well. Becoming a well-conditioned team demands that each player have the ability to put forth and sustain the effort, focus and energy needed to accomplish the task at hand.

As coaches, most of you only have 2-3 days a week to practice. That's not a lot of time to get your players in great shape. So what can you do to help your players become better conditioned athletes?

1. Demand that every player give a maximum effort and go at game speed in every drill. This will teach them great practice habits, develop mental toughness and improve their conditioning level.
2. Do your conditioning while playing or working on skills. Do fast break drills, full court press defense/offense, full court lay-up or shooting drills, and scrimmage etc. The players will enjoy it more and their skills will improve.
3. Stress to them that as their coach, you are responsible for the practices and getting them in the best possible shape to compete. Their responsibility is between the practices. Their improvement as players, in terms of skill development and conditioning, will largely be determined by how much time and effort they put in away from the practice court!
4. Stress the importance of eating nutritious food, drinking lots of water and getting at least 8 hours of sleep each night. This is great life training in how to care for yourself properly.

Remember, there is a vast difference between "better" and "best". It is human nature for young athletes to survey their teammates or opponents and determine that they are better than them, and therefore, don't need to work as hard. Remind them that they will never be a success until they make the effort to be the best they can be!

That's the goal for every player... to work to be the "best" they can be. And that effort should be extended to every area of their lives. They should be mentally fit with their school work, morally fit by making good decisions, and spiritually fit by growing in their faith. In basketball, physical conditioning is important. But in life, a failure to address mental, moral and spiritual fitness will limit even the best of well-conditioned athletes!

"Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual fitness is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next." (1Timothy 4:8)