



TESTING

LET'S GET STARTED

FITNESS TESTING...

Two words that stir up some uncomfortable emotions for any footballer. Part of any professional footballer's preseason schedule will involve going through the gruelling process of assessing speed, strength, agility, power and aerobic capacity.

Our bodies are pushed to their limits to determine where our fitness levels are and how much of our off-season programme we've adhered to.

Words like "body fat percentage", "lactate threshold" and "beep test" are the stuff of nightmares for some, but why do we need to put ourselves through such gruelling physical tests and how does it affect your training?

Not too long ago, getting fit for football involved teams running up mountains and along muddy trails. Fortunately, those days are gone and the science behind getting match fit has come a long way.

Being able to assess your current fitness levels means you can tailor your training scientifically to ensure you're improving both physically and mentally.

The football season is broken into three main segments: pre-season, in-season and off-season (with a few short breaks in between). The length of these segments may vary according to your national federation's league, however the progression from one segment to another is always the same.

How can does fitness testing fit into this?

As players move from their in-season period into their off-season, they're generally issued with some form of "maintenance programme" to make sure they stay fit and start to prepare their bodies for the season to follow.

Staying in shape means that you can literally hit the ground running come the start of preseason. However, any club sport scientist worth his salt will want to know just how each player is when they return to pre-season training, and this is where the fitness testing plays a vital role.

Fitness tests are aimed at assessing your strengths, weaknesses and where you need to place additional training blocks to improve on any weaker areas. Modern football requires players to be more athletic in order to compete physically.

It's safe to say that any player that takes his/her game seriously will do their best to stay in shape all year round.

All your hard training needs to pay off, and the best way to see if all those hard sessions have made you fitter and stronger is to test the training process.

WHICH TESTS TO PERFORM

So, while we've mentioned why fitness testing is beneficial to you as a player, we need to touch on a few ways to actually test how fit you are in relation to football.

When testing your fitness levels, it's important to remember a few key rules:

- Never do any fitness testing if you're carrying an injury or you haven't been cleared to do so by a medical professional
- When testing alone, ensure someone is nearby in case of an emergency
- Make sure you do a full and thorough warm up prior to starting all fitness tests
- SAFETY FIRST!

Below is a list of tests you can perform to assess your fitness levels specifically in relation to football performance.

Start with the "lighter" tests and end with the maximal tests to avoid fatigue early on and ensure you're able to achieve the best result possible in each test. It's also advisable to split your tests into separate field testing and gym testing days.

Please note: to test full body mobility and posture, we advise asking a trainer at your gym to video and assess your overhead squat technique.



GYM BASED TESTS

You can perform both lower body tests below if you have access to both pieces of equipment, or just select one. If you opt for doing both, do the trap bar deadlift first and the leg press as the last exercise in the schedule.

Please listen to this podcast explaining how to safely test your 1RM.



Hint: if you're able to complete more than one repetition on a given weight, it's too light and you should increase the weight safely.



1 REP MAX TRAP BAR DEADLIFT

1 REP MAX TRAP BAR DEADLIFT

ASSESSES: MAXIMUM LOWER BODY STRENGTH

Lower body strength is vital in areas such as speed, agility and change of direction. Having a stronger lower body also means a lower risk of injury. The aim of this test is the same as the 1RM leg press test (below), although the hip hinge is a little more dominant, there is less emphasis on the knee bend (flexion), and there's greater activation of the stabilising muscles than in the leg press.

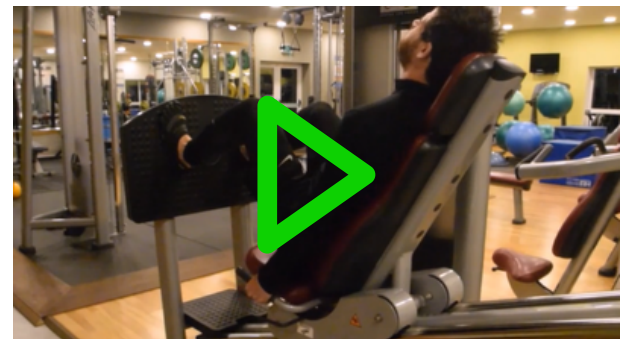
It's testing your lower body strength from a slightly different angle. The trap bar deadlift is seen as a safer option than the traditional barbell deadlift for less experienced lifters. It's also a more comfortable and far more natural, functional position for footballers to use.

To maximize results, try hit your maximum weight in 3-5 attempts. Further attempts may result in muscle fatigue and therefore not achieving your true maximum for this test.

With the same aim in mind, this test involves assessing maximum lower body strength by trying to push the maximum amount of weight possible on a leg press machine.

To maximize results, try to hit your maximum weight in 3-5 attempts. Further attempts may result in muscle fatigue and therefore not achieving your true maximum for this test.

Hint: if you're able to complete more than one repetition on a given weight, it's too light and you should increase the weight safely as outlined in the video at the start of this section.



PUSH UPS TO FAILURE

ASSESSES: UPPER BODY MUSCULAR ENDURANCE

Upper body strength is key in fending off opposition players in a match. Assume the push up position (hands below shoulders, elbows aimed at 45 degrees), and place a small, soft object the size of your fist beneath your breast bone/sternum.

The aim is to perform as many push ups as you can until you cannot perform a complete repetition.

Hint: a complete repetition is only counted if your chest touches the object beneath your breast bone/sternum, and you push yourself up until your arms are in full extension. Non-touch/non-extension reps should not be counted.



MAX PLANK HOLD

ASSESSES: CORE STABILITY AND MUSCULAR ENDURANCE

A strong core is vital in injury prevention and force development. Assume the plank position (forearm at 90 degrees to shoulders, elbows below shoulders, palms flat on the ground, back flat) with a clock/stop watch laid out in front of you.

Attempt to maintain the plank position for as long as possible. Once you reach failure point (i.e. cannot maintain the plank any longer) record the number of seconds/minutes you were able to maintain the plank for.

Hint: Keep your feet shoulder width apart to ensure you're not making the test harder/easier.



PITCH BASED TESTS

BROAD JUMP

ASSESSES: HORIZONTAL LOWER BODY EXPLOSIVE POWER

Place a measuring tape along the ground, position both feet shoulder width apart and line your toes up with the 0-meter mark on the tape measure. In a fast, controlled movement, dip your hips down while swinging your arms backwards – then swing your arms forward while jumping as far forward (horizontally) as you can.

Focus on extending your body as much as possible in the jump. Land with both feet in line and record the distance on the tape measure that corresponds with the line of your heels/back of your boots.

Hint: If you stumble on landing and are forced to take an extra step to regain balance, perform the test again to ensure your landing “sticks”. You can also perform this test with a one-legged jump (left leg jump, left leg landing) to compare explosive power of both legs.



10M SPRINT

ASSESSES: ACCELERATION AND SPEED

Much like explosive power, acceleration is key to moving into an advantageous position and outmanoeuvring opposition players.

With the same measuring tape, mark off a 10-meter distance. With a stop watch in your hand, assume a “staggered start” position at the 0-meter mark and when you’re ready sprint as hard as possible until you reach the 10-meter mark.

Stop the timer once you pass this marker and slowly decelerate (don’t stop on the mark). This will assess your acceleration from a standing start.

Hint: Sprinting mechanics are vital in ensuring an “explosive” start and good acceleration. Aim to drive your arms and legs as hard and fast as possible to generate good power.



FLYING 30M SPRINT

ASSESSES: MAXIMUM/TOP END SPEED

Top speed can be the difference between making a goal line clearance and saving your team or losing a game in the dying seconds. Mark off the 10 meter and 40-meter mark on the measuring tape. From the 0-meter mark, sprint towards the 10-meter cone and start your timer only when you pass this marker.

Continue your sprint until you pass the 40-meter marker, and then stop the timer. This will assess your maximum/top end speed over a 30-meter zone.

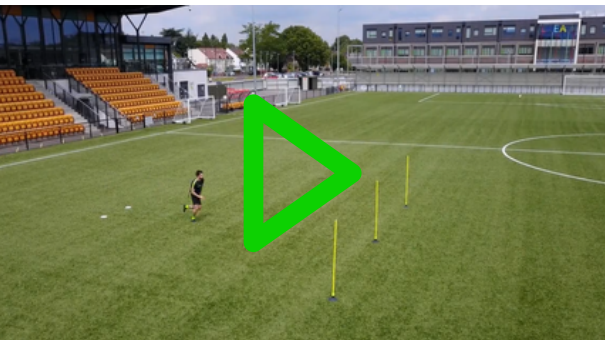
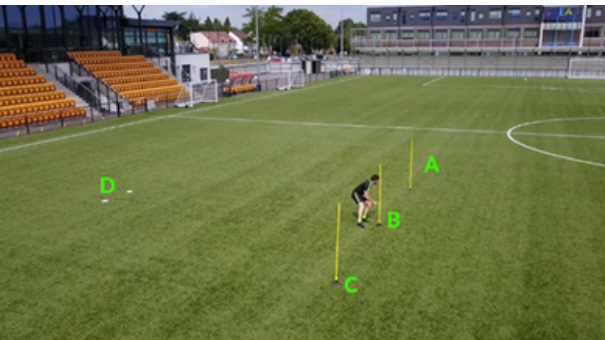
Hint: ensure you’re travelling at a full sprint at the 10-meter marker as this will ensure the best possible test result.



T TEST

ASSESSES: AGILITY

Agility in football means being able to move in multiple directions at speed (such as pressing the opposition in a congested area). Set up four markers in the shape of a "T" (shown below). At the start marker ("D"), sprint 10 meters to the "B" marker, then side shuffle 5 meters to "A", and side shuffle again, all the way across to "C".



5-0-5 AGILITY TEST

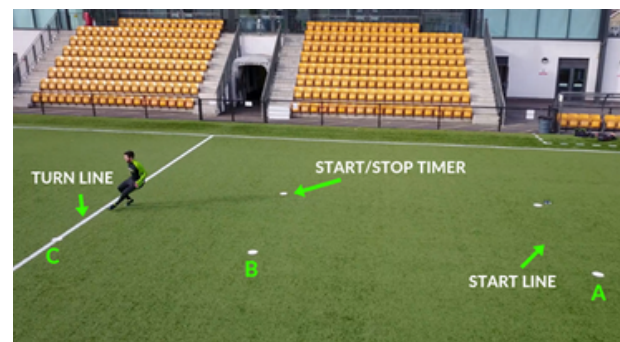
ASSESSES: AGILITY AND SPEED OF TURNING

The ability to turn quickly enables you to lose a tight marker, move into free space quickly and become more mobile on the pitch. Starting From "A", sprint the 10 meters to the "B" line. Once here, start your timer and continue your sprint to "C" (turn line).

Turn sideways and push off this line and sprint back to "B". Once across the "B" line, stop your timer and record.

Repeat this test after 2-3 minutes and be sure to also push off the opposite leg.

Hint: Compare the time for the Left and Right turn to determine which side your turn is stronger on. Address your weaker side by performing single-leg strength training.



YO-YO INTERMITTENT RECOVERY TEST LEVEL 2 (YO-YO IRTL2)

ASSESSES: AEROBIC FITNESS/ MAXIMAL AEROBIC SPEED

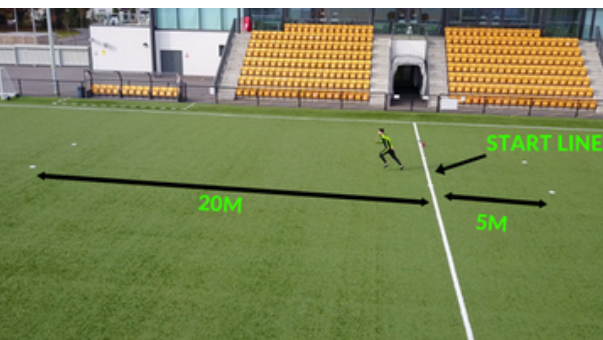
Stamina is the cornerstone of football fitness. It allows you to cover more ground without feeling fatigued, as well as improving your recovery time between sprints and matches. Using the Yo-Yo IR Level 2 Test audio track, on the 1st audio trigger begin running from the start line to the turnaround line.

Control your running speed to ensure you turn precisely on the 2nd audio trigger, and ensure you cross the finish line by the 3rd trigger. Take 10 seconds to slowly walk the 5-meter recovery distance and back (10 meters total) and return to the start line for the next trigger (start from a static position).

Keep running until you cannot make the required line in time and miss an audio trigger, then record which level you successfully reached.

Hint: Remember to interchange the legs you turn on to prevent fatigue.

Tip: You can find this test on the 'Bleep Test Solo' app for IOS and 'YoYo Test' app on Android.



WHEN TO TEST

Now that we've outlined the tests, let's discuss when you should be performing testing. As we mentioned earlier, most fitness testing happens in the pre-season period.

This will allow you/the coaching staff to gauge how hard to push you in the coming weeks of training, as well as what areas you/they should focus on improving. However, this isn't the only time to test your fitness levels.

You should aim to test yourself multiple times within the football calendar to establish where your fitness levels truly are. The pre-season testing will establish your starting status, but you need to assess whether your training is effective in improving your physical capabilities or not. Therefore, it's important to do follow up testing.

This is done for three main reasons:

1. Ensure your training program is working (improving weak areas, maintaining strengths etc)
2. Gauge new areas of focus (switch training focus to improve on new areas)
3. To have data to refer back to when returning from injury to match fitness

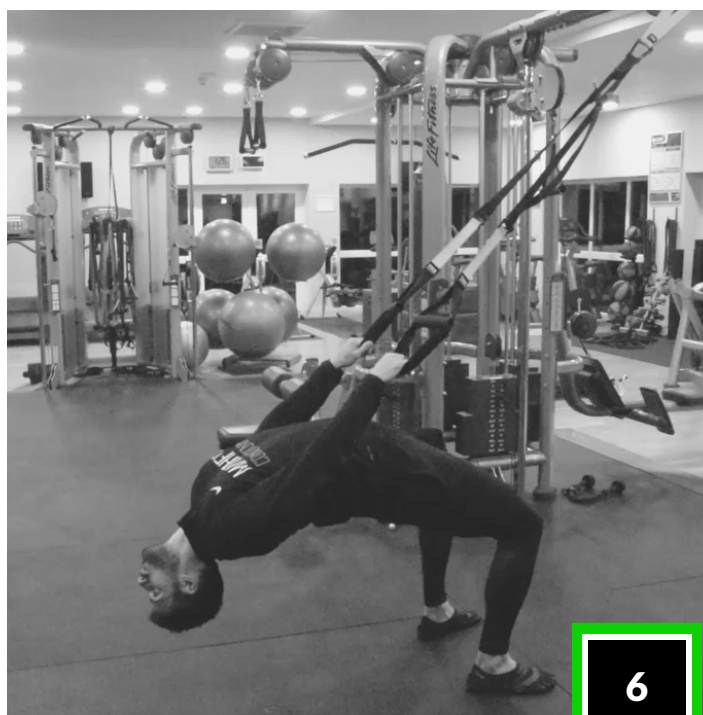
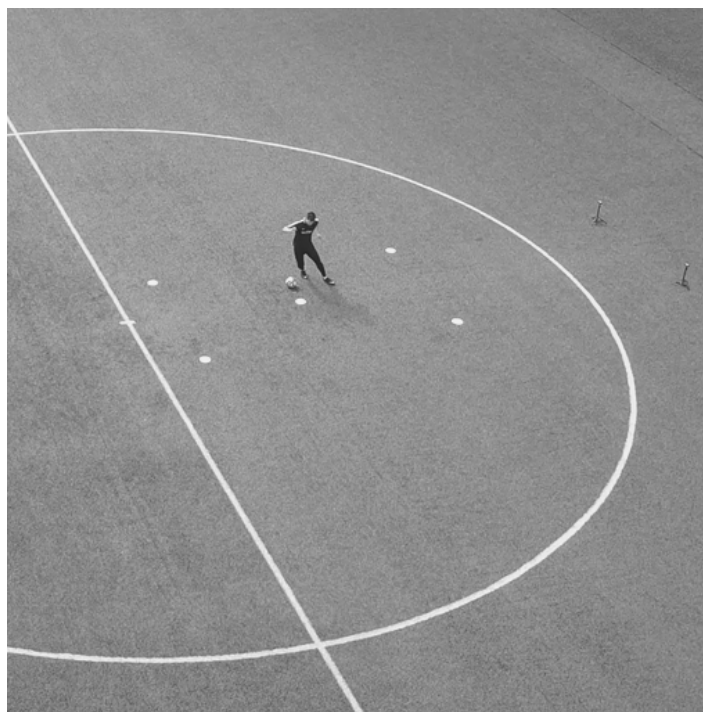
You should complete a follow up test just before the start of season (roughly 6 weeks after the start of the team preseason), as well as during the mid-season break to see where your fitness levels are.

Following this, you should perform a final test at the end of the season for three reasons:

1. Gauge where you are physically
2. Establish an off-season training program from to maintain your fitness levels

Ultimately fitness testing is designed to determine how fit you are in multiple areas of football performance. Modern football requires players to be fast, agile, explosive and have great work capacity.

In order to be the best, you need to perform like the best. Test yourself and seek constant improvement.



TESTING ON OUR PROGRAMME

If you are following our full season programme (The MESSI-N Formula), you should schedule your testing throughout the season as we have outlined above. However, if you are using one of our individual training programmes, below we have outlined which tests you should perform at the start and end of each programme.

BODYWEIGHT CONDITIONING & FAT BURN PROGRAMME

- MAX PUSH UPS
- MAX PLANK HOLD
- BROAD JUMP

STAMINA PROGRAMME

- YO-YO INTERMITTENT RECOVERY TEST LEVEL 2

SPEED PROGRAMME

- 10M SPRINT
- FLYING 30M SPRINT
- T TEST
- 5-0-5 TEST

INJURY PREVENTTION PROGRAMME

- 1RM TRAP BAR DEADLIFT
- 1RM LEG PRESS
- MAX PLANK HOLD

PRE-SEASON & IN-SEASON PROGRAMMES

- 1RM TRAP BAR DEADLIFT
- 1RM LEG PRESS
- MAX PUSH UPS
- MAX PLANK HOLD
- BROAD JUMP
- 10M SPRINT
- FLYING 30M SPRINT
- T TEST
- 5-0-5 TEST
- YO-YO INTERMITTENT RECOVERY TEST LEVEL 2



TRACKING YOUR WORKLOAD

So now that you know why and when to test (and what tests to do), it's important to also have a way of monitoring your training (or workload) throughout the season.

Doing this will enable you to not only track your progress, but also identify when you may need to:

- schedule more rest
- Are at a higher risk of injury
- Are overtraining
- Need to add in some variation to avoid burnout

Below we have outlined two very simple yet affective methods which will provide you with an overall

METHOD 1: TRACK YOUR UNITS & RPE

STEP 1: RECORD YOUR TRAINING MINUTES

This is pretty straight forward. If on a Monday you did a 45-minute gym session and a 60-minute team training session, then your score for that day would be: $45 + 60 = 105$ minutes. Make a note of this every single day on the printable table provided at the end of this guide. Below we have provided an example.

TRAINING MINUTES								
DATE	14TH	15TH	16TH	17TH	18TH	19TH	20TH	WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	670 MINUTES
SESSION 1	30	60	15	45	60	110	20	
SESSION 2	60	60	90	45				
SESSION 3	60			15				
DAILY TOTAL	150	120	105	105	60	110	20	

STEP 2: RPE SCALE SYSTEM (RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION)

Use this scaling system after every training session (including gym workouts) and match.

Select the number which you think best describes the intensity of the session you have just done, referring to the scale shown below.

If you've done multiple sessions in one day, at the end of the day add together your separate RPE scores and then divide this number by the number of sessions for that day. This will give you an average RPE score for that day.

*Make a note of your number as soon after completing the session as possible, recording it on the printable table provided at the end of this guide. *

PRE SCALE SYSTEM		
SCORE	DESCRIPTION	HOW TO RECORD
0	REST	A SCORE OF 10 IS THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE EFFORT THAT YOU COULD GIVE.
1	VERY EASY	
2	EASY	
3	MODERATE	
4	SOMEWHAT HARD	
5	HARD	
6		
7	VERY HARD	
8		
9		
10	MATCH	

DAILY RPE SCORES								
DATE	14TH	15TH	16TH	17TH	18TH	19TH	20TH	WEEK AVERAGE
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1	5	4	8	2	3	10	3	5.64
SESSION 2	5	7	6	8				
SESSION 3	8							
DAILY TOTAL	18	11	14	10	3	10	3	
DAILY AVERAGE	6	5.5	7	5	3	10	3	

WEEKLY WORKLOADS (TOTAL TRAINING UNITS)					
MONTH	OCTOBER				
WEEK	1	2	3	4	MONTHLY TOTAL
TOTAL UNITS	4160	3840	4907	4569	17476

METHOD 2: POMS

(PROFILE OF MOOD STATE)

In addition to method 1, you can also use method 2 – the POMS system. As soon as you wake up every morning you must answer each of the questions in the table below using this 1-5 scale:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Agree strongly

For the muscle soreness question, answering with a 5 would mean that you have no soreness at all. See our example below:

TRAINING UNITS (MINUTES X RPE)								
DATE	14TH	15TH	16TH	17TH	18TH	19TH	20TH	WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
TOTAL MINUTES	150	120	105	105	60	110	20	4160
RPE SCORE	6	5.5	7	5	3	10	3	
DAILY TOTAL	900	660	735	525	180	1100	60	

POMS QUESTIONS								
DATE	14TH	15TH	16TH	17TH	18TH	19TH	20TH	WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
I SLEPT WELL LAST NIGHT	5	4	4	3	5	5	2	142
I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO TODAY'S SESSION	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	
I FEEL VIGOROUS & ENERGETIC	4	4	5	3	4	5	2	
I HAVE VERY LITTLE MUSCLE SORENESS	3	5	3	3	5	5	1	
MY APPETITE IS GREAT	5	4	3	4	5	4	4	
TOTAL	22	21	19	18	24	24	14	

You can see from the scoring system that for each day the maximal/optimal score is 25. The higher the score, the better. A low score may indicate overtraining, that you need to make a change, or you need to schedule more recovery time.



COMBINING THE TWO METHODS

You can use both methods as a way of estimating when you are likely to become fatigued (and possibly at a high risk of injury) and also seeing how your level of physical and mental fitness changes over time.

For example, if your workload score (from method 1) was particularly high this week and your POMS score (method 2) was very low, that would be a good indicator that you need to schedule some rest time, focus more on recovery, or vary your training. You can find all printable tables at the end of this guide.

BELOW YOU WILL SEE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO COMBINE ALL OF YOUR RESULTS INTO ONE TABLE.

AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE WE HAVE PROVIDED ALL OF THE TEMPLATES ABOVE FOR YOU TO PRINT OUT AND FILL IN, SO THAT YOU CAN MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS AND RECORD YOUR RESULTS.

YEARLY TRACKER EXAMPLE

TESTING AND MONITORING RESULTS												
MONTH	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	PCT	NOV	DEC
DATE				20TH			1ST	29TH				28TH
THTRAP BAR DEADLIFT 1RM				200KG			215 KG	220 KG				215 KG
LEG PRESS 1RM				220 KG			230 KG	235KG				230 KG
PUSH UPS MAX				60			63	70				66
PLANK MAX				240 SECS			249 SECS	250 SECS				260 SECS
BROAD JUMP				160 CM			162 CM	164 CM				167 CM
10M SPRINT				1.1 SECS			1.3 SECS	1.1 SECS				1.1 SECS
FLYING 30M SPRINT				3.9 SECS			4.2 SECS	3.8 SECS				3.6 SECS
T-TEST				6 SECS			6.3 SECS	6.1 SECS				5.7 SECS
505 TEST				2.1 SECS			2.4 SECS	2.0 SECS				1.9 SECS
YOYO IRTL2				18			16.1	17.5				18
MONTHLY WORKLOAD (UNITS)	17576	16476	17676	17443	14434	14398	16672	17671	19456	17476	18473	15493
MONTHLY POMS	522	526	517	548	594	595	591	560	550	519	515	508



TRAINING MINUTES PRINTOUT

TRAINING MINUTES								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1								
SESSION 2								
SESSION 3								
DAILY TOTAL								

TRAINING MINUTES								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1								
SESSION 2								
SESSION 3								
DAILY TOTAL								

TRAINING MINUTES								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1								
SESSION 2								
SESSION 3								
DAILY TOTAL								

TRAINING MINUTES								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1								
SESSION 2								
SESSION 3								
DAILY TOTAL								

RPE PRINTOUT

DAILY RPE SCORES								
DATE								WEEK AVERAGE
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1								
SESSION 2								
SESSION 3								
DAILY AVERAGE								

DAILY RPE SCORES								
DATE								WEEK AVERAGE
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1								
SESSION 2								
SESSION 3								
DAILY AVERAGE								

DAILY RPE SCORES								
DATE								WEEK AVERAGE
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1								
SESSION 2								
SESSION 3								
DAILY AVERAGE								

DAILY RPE SCORES								
DATE								WEEK AVERAGE
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
SESSION 1								
SESSION 2								
SESSION 3								
DAILY AVERAGE								

TRAINING UNITS PRINTOUT

TRAINING UNITS (MINUTES X RPE)								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
TOTAL MINUTES								
RPE SCORE								
DAILY TOTAL								

TRAINING UNITS (MINUTES X RPE)								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
TOTAL MINUTES								
RPE SCORE								
DAILY TOTAL								

TRAINING UNITS (MINUTES X RPE)								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
TOTAL MINUTES								
RPE SCORE								
DAILY TOTAL								

TRAINING UNITS (MINUTES X RPE)								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
TOTAL MINUTES								
RPE SCORE								
DAILY TOTAL								

POMS SCORES PRINTOUT

As soon as you wake up every morning you must answer each of the questions in the table below using this 1-5 scale:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Agree strongly

Please note: A '5' means that you're feeling excellent, highly energetic and in your best mood.

For the muscle soreness question, answering with a 5 would mean that you have no soreness at all.

POMS QUESTIONS								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
I SLEPT WELL LAST NIGHT								
I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO TODAY'S SESSION								
I FEEL VIGOROUS & ENERGETIC								
I HAVE VERY LITTLE MUSCLE SORENESS								
MY APPETITE IS GREAT								
TOTAL								

POMS QUESTIONS								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
I SLEPT WELL LAST NIGHT								
I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO TODAY'S SESSION								
I FEEL VIGOROUS & ENERGETIC								
I HAVE VERY LITTLE MUSCLE SORENESS								
MY APPETITE IS GREAT								
TOTAL								

POMS QUESTIONS								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
I SLEPT WELL LAST NIGHT								
I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO TODAY'S SESSION								
I FEEL VIGOROUS & ENERGETIC								
I HAVE VERY LITTLE MUSCLE SORENESS								
MY APPETITE IS GREAT								
TOTAL								

POMS QUESTIONS								
DATE								WEEK TOTAL
DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
I SLEPT WELL LAST NIGHT								
I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO TODAY'S SESSION								
I FEEL VIGOROUS & ENERGETIC								
I HAVE VERY LITTLE MUSCLE SORENESS								
MY APPETITE IS GREAT								
TOTAL								

YEARLY TRACKER PRINTOUT

TESTING AND MONITORING RESULTS

MONTH	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	PCT	NOV	DEC
DATE												
THTRAP BAR DEADLIFT 1RM												
LEG PRESS 1RM												
PUSH UPS MAX												
PLANK MAX												
BROAD JUMP												
10M SPRINT												
FLYING 30M SPRINT												
T-TEST												
505 TEST												
YOYO IRTL2												
MONTHLY WORKLOAD (UNITS)												
MONTHLY POMS												

SEND US YOUR RESULTS!

We would love for you to keep us up to date with your progress!

Take a photo of your completed progress sheets and email them to info@matchfitconditioning.com

Thank you
FOR TRAINING

WITH

MATCHFITTM
F O O T B A L L