

BLANCHARD BAND SUMMER CONDITIONING

Marching band season is right around the corner and it is more important than ever to start getting your body ready for the demands of the upcoming season. Our goals are to address the unique demands that marching band places on the body's muscles and skeletal system and to prepare ahead of time to avoid extreme fatigue and prevent injury. This program has been researched thoroughly and includes tips from sports medicine as well as a variety of exercises to help you get in shape for marching band.

First things first, marching band is an endurance sport and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Endurance, endurance, endurance. This will be the main focus of everything that you do. A recent study by the American College of Sports Medicine concluded that, "The physical challenges and demands of participating in competitive high school marching band are similar to those experienced by athletes who compete in sports." During a typical hour of marching band rehearsal, students will march between 1-2 miles. Now, multiply that by our summer rehearsal schedule and you can be easily marching 4-6 miles a day, everyday, in the sun, and it will be hot out! If you were asked to go outside today and march around for 6 miles in 90+ degree heat, you probably wouldn't feel well. Imagine what it feels like in a uniform! Keep this in mind; this is why you need to get your body ready for long-term muscle usage.

Ideally you will be able to workout 6 days a week, alternating cardio and strength training, with a day of rest. Don't get scared! These workout routines should only take 20-30 minutes. If you're awake for 12 hours a day (and most of us are awake for more) a 30 minute work out is just 1/32 of your day!! You can definitely do this. Workout with a friend, get your family involved-just do whatever it takes to get moving.

This plan will give you the tools to get you ready for Summer Band rehearsals as well as the whole marching season. Everyone is starting in different places, so the most important thing to do is improve every day and don't skip workouts. Remember, this is to help you and to make things easier for you!

STRETCHING

Every exercise session should start with 5-10 minutes of stretching. This is the most important part of your training program because it will help keep you from getting injured. Stretching increases the elasticity or flexibility of muscles, ligaments, and tendons. Instead of tearing or breaking when under strain, a flexible muscle is more likely to stretch and give.

There are numerous stretches that can be done. It is recommended you choose one stretch for each major muscle area. Remember to stretch for 10-30 seconds and to stay relaxed. Focus on the muscle being stretched. Stretch to a point of mild tension and avoid bouncing or rocking. Take regular deep breaths and attempt to stretch slightly further with each exhale. This is also a time to mentally focus on your workout goals, and later to focus on our rehearsal goals. Use this time to clear your mind.

These are all stretches we have gone over in class. Remember the rules of each one so you can get the most out of each stretch and not hurt yourself. Stretches to choose from:

Neck: Neck roll, Side neck stretch

Shoulders: Shoulder roll, Shoulder buddy twist, Reverse diver

Arms: Triceps stretch across, Triceps stretch (behind), Palm stretch (fingers up & down)

Sides & Abs: Body lean, Cobra

Legs: Hamstring hang (center/left/right), Heel to booty quad stretch, Calf stretch, Toe drag, Hamstring reach (center/left/right), Butterfly, Ankle rolls

Booty: Ankle to knee and roll back, Hug leg

Back: Back twist, Body cross, Roll out (cat stretch)

RUNNING

Some people love to run and other people hate to run. Either way, nothing can quite beat running to get your heart, lungs, and legs ready for marching band. We are actually going to start with an interval-training program that combines jogging and walking. We'll work up to running as we progress. If you want the information on this program, it can be found at www.coolrunning.com, then click on the Couch to 5K. I highly recommend checking it out for lots of great information on health and fitness.

Each session should take about 20-30 minutes, just 3 times a week. That just happens to be the same amount of moderate exercise recommended by numerous studies for optimum fitness. This program will get you fit.

Be sure to space out these three days throughout the week to give yourself a chance to rest and recover between efforts. Don't worry about how fast you're going. Running faster can wait until your bones are stronger and your body is fitter.

Below is the recommended workout progression. Remember to precede each session with a brisk five minute warm up walk. End each session with a 3-5 minute cool down walk, taking deep breaths to prevent cramping and to slowly return your body to its normal operation. Be sure to stretch before and after!

Week 1: Warm up, alternate 60 seconds jogging-90 seconds walking for 20 minutes

Week 2: Warm up, alternate 90 seconds jogging-2 minutes walking for 20 minutes

Week 3: Warm up, then do 2 repetitions: jog 90 seconds-walk 90 seconds-jog 3 minutes-walk 3 minutes

Week 4: Warm up, jog 3 minutes-walk 90 seconds-jog 5 minutes-walk 2½ minutes-jog 3 minutes-walk 90 seconds-jog 5 minutes

Week 5: Warm up, jog 5 minutes-walk 3 minutes-jog 5 minutes-walk 3 minutes-jog 5 minutes

Week 6: Warm up, jog 5 minutes-walk 3 minutes-jog 8 minutes-walk 3 minutes-jog 5 minutes

Week 7: Warm up, jog 25 minutes

Week 10 will actually be the first week of Summer Band, so be sure that we'll be doing some running every day.

STRENGTH TRAINING

Strength training for marching band? Yes, I know we won't be tackling the other marching bands or laying blocks on rival drum majors, but strength is very important for being able to control your body in the unique usages required during a show. Marching band is going to have you contorting your body in all sorts of odd ways to perform and it's definitely not your typical everyday activity. To prepare the body for these activities it is most important to strengthen the core of

the body. You will live and die by your abdominal muscles. Your back, shoulders, and legs are also important to a complete marcher. To strengthen these areas you should do your strength training on the days that you are not running. The overall goal is to make marching much less difficult!

These exercises can be done without equipment and can be done almost anywhere, including rehearsals. Here are our recommended strength-training options. You'll want to do a variety that work out different areas of the body. Find the ones you like, or the ones that challenge you the most, and do them:

Push ups- 3 sets of 10 reps (or however many you can do)
Bear crawls- 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Crab walk- 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Crunches- 3 sets of 20 reps OR Bicycle crunches- 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Obliques (crunches with knee up, across the body)- 3 sets of 10 reps
Leg lifts (lay flat, lift legs to 90 degrees w/o bending knees, back down)- 3 sets of 10 reps
Scissors- 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Flutter kicks- 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Squats/Jump Squats- 3 sets of 10 reps /20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Lunges (regular or jump)- 3 sets of 10 reps (each leg)/20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Straight leg dead lift- 3 sets of 10 reps (each leg)
High knees- 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Mountain climbers- 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off; 3 times
Calf raises- 3 sets of 20 reps
Plank around the world - 30 secs each (or as long as you can)

Holding your instrument at horns up- Week 1-One minute; increases by 1 minute/week, 15 seconds a day (this should be done **EVERY DAY**)

Our goal is to get your body to a point that holding the instrument in a good playing position for 10 minutes does not cause your muscles to tighten or get sore. If you can achieve this strength you can concentrate on playing your instrument and moving around on the field rather than on how much it hurts to hold your instrument. Remember that horn angles stand out on the field and if you look good, the judges will give you lots of credit. If you do this part of the workout routine, EVERY DAY, by the end of each week things should be getting easier and easier. Add one minute every week and by the first week of Summer Band you should be able to stand at horns up for 8 minutes without issue. We will continue to work on this until you can hold your instrument easily for 8-9 minutes, the average length of a marching show!

Rest for 30 seconds between sets. Repeat this routine every week and as it gets easier, increase your number of sets or add to your repetitions. Never stop pushing yourself and it will pay off immensely during Summer Band, when the people who didn't work out are suffering from soreness and you came well prepared. Also, don't be afraid to get creative with your routine. Find other exercises that work out the same muscles and swap them out, do a circuit training routine, workout with friends, involve your family!

Remember the key phrase-endurance, endurance, endurance. Keep pushing yourself to do better than your best!

During the season it may be hard to find time to do all of these exercises. We will add things into our rehearsals, section leaders will add things into rehearsals, and hopefully you will inspire people around you to work with you. Whatever you decide to do, don't stop training once the season starts. You can always be a little stronger and in control and this will only help you perform your show better and have better success! Stay motivated and motivate your fellow marchers!

NUTRITION & WATER INTAKE

Marching band is an extremely demanding physical activity, and so is the training required to excel. There are no words to tell you how important that it is for you to eat good, quality foods (protein, fruits, vegetables) and to drink water. How much water to drink varies on you and your diet, but try and drink more as you increase your physical activity to replace the water lose. Soda should be avoided when you're thirsty-drink water! Ways to increase your water intake are to have a bottle or glass of water with you at all times, add lemon or lime to your water, keep a bottle of cold water in the refrigerator, learn to acquire a taste for water, eat fruits that are mostly water (watermelon), and drink water with your meals. Whatever you do, drink more water. The human body works better when it's properly hydrated.

REST

During this training period you will be challenging your body to get in shape. In order for your efforts to be effective you must make sure to allow your body to recover after each workout session. Try to get 8 hours of sleep a night. Skimping on sleep can have a very adverse effect on your progress. Once school begins, sleep will be harder to come by so get good sleep while you can!

Finally, day 7 of your workout week is a day of rest. Use it! Most importantly, listen to your body. If you feel like you've hurt yourself, back off in intensity and let your body heal. Good physical training is a combination of pushing your body's limits but also knowing when you've gone a little too far and allowing yourself to heal.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The benefits of preparing yourself physically for marching band go well beyond just getting your body in shape. The process requires willpower, motivation, dedication, as well as strength and endurance. These mental qualities can be considered more important for band as perfecting a show and music certainly requires mental fortitude. Use this training time as a time to hone your physical body but also to adjust to the demands that will be placed on you mentally. The end result is a body that is in shape, a great feeling of well-being, and a much more enjoyable marching season experience. The body is an amazing machine. It is only fair that we take good care of it and maximize its potential.

“THE MAN WHO BELIEVES HE CAN AND THE MAN WHO BELIEVES HE CAN’T ARE BOTH RIGHT. WHICH ONE ARE YOU?”

-UNKNOWN