

PERIODIZATION TRAINING FOR ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS

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Periodization training is a method to organize volume, intensities, and cycles of training for a sport throughout the season. It is a process of training an athlete in an incremental manner from the post season to peak performance in competitions. The purpose of this article is to show how periodization training can be utilized in Acrobatic Gymnastics to develop a highly organized training program. The periodization table and accompanying graph presented here can be of benefit to those athletes competing at the National level.

The macrocycle, as seen in the top row of Figure 1.0, comprises the entire acrobatics season. Mesocycles divide the macrocycle into more specific training periods lasting anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. Figure 1.0 arranges this

particular Acrobatic training program into seven mesocycles, and outlines the appropriate training modules which should occur within those mesocycles. The smallest incremental training period is the microcycle, which breaks down mesocycles into periods ranging from a few days to one or two weeks. Microcycles are used to structure specific daily - weekly workouts which will increase in intensity over the length of the macrocycle. Of course though, microcycle training depends on individual athletes and the coach's preference of training. Microcycles are not included in illustrations due to this level of detail and variability.

When using the periodization table in Figure 1.0, or one produced on your own, it should be noted that it will

Sept 08*		Oct 08*		Nov 08*		Dec 08*		Jan 08*		Feb 08*		March 09*		April 09*		May 09*		June 09*		July 09*		Aug 09*																									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
M A C R O C Y C L E																																															
Pre-season												In-Season										Post Season																									
												First Transition Period												Second Transition Period																							
Mesocycle I		Mesocycle II		Mesocycle III		Mesocycle IV		Mesocycle V				Mesocycle VI		Mesocycle VII																																	
Preparatory Phase 1 7 Week Program		Preparatory Phase 2 6 Week Program		Preparatory Phase 3 7 Week Program		Sport Specific Phase 6 Week Program		Competition Phase 14 Week Program				Competition Phase Nationals 5 Week Program		Post-Season Phase 4 Week Program																																	
Hypertrophy/ Endurance Phase High Volume Low Intensity		Strength Phase Moderate Volume & Intensity		Skill Specific Strength Phase Low Volume High Intensity		Specific Skill Training		Maintenance & Application of Strength to Skills				Recreational Training Not involving Resistance Training																																			
Intense Stretching Phase		Basic Stretching Phase		Skill Specific Stretching Phase		Specific Skill Training		Maintenance & Application of Flexibility to Skills				Moderate Stretching																																			
Introducing New Skills		Practicing Skills for the Season		Training Pair/Group Skills Specific to Routines				Perfecting Pair/Groups Skills in Routines				Partnering Pairs & Groups for the Next Season																																			

FIGURE 1.0: PERIODIZATION TABLE ORGANIZING MAJOR TRAINING COMPONENTS AND FOCUS POINTS. THIS TABLE IS A MODEL OF HOW PERIODIZATION CONCEPTS CAN BE USED TO BRING A HIGHER LEVEL OF STRUCTURE TO TRAINING DURING THE ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS SEASON.

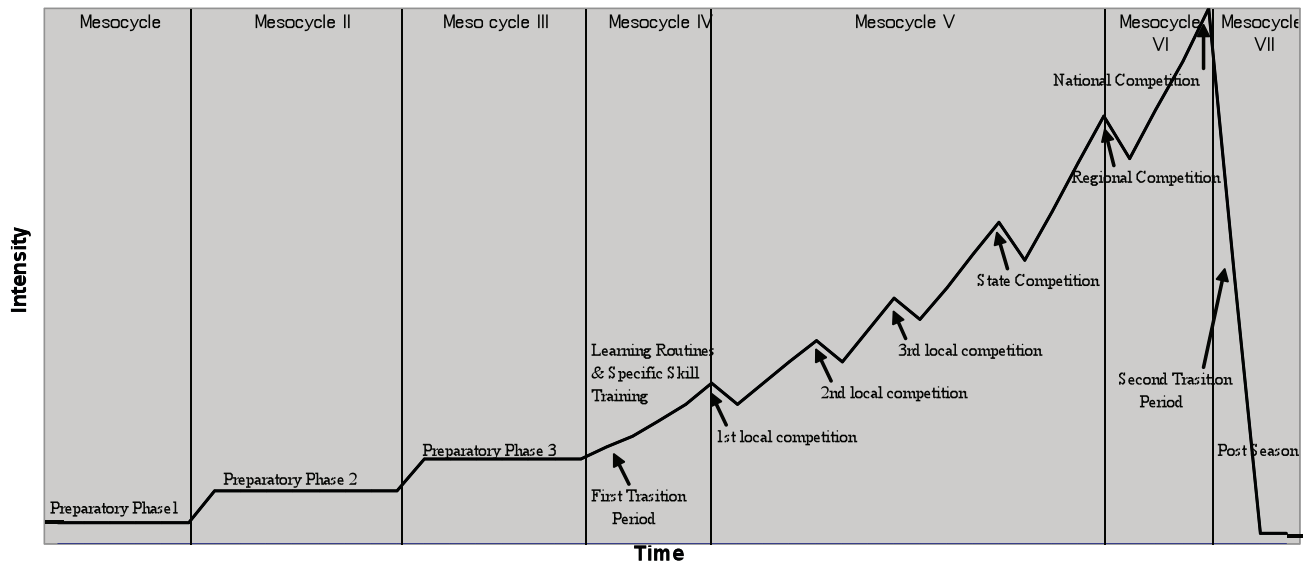


FIGURE 2.0: REPRESENTATION OF TRAINING INTENSITIES DURING THE SEASON. DURING MESOCYCLE V AND VI THE GRAPH REPRESENTS UNDULATING TRAINING. EACH MINOR DECREASE IN INTENSITY DURING THE IN-SEASON PERIOD IS FOLLOWED BY GREATER INCREASES. THIS PATTERN AMOUNTS TO HIGHER INTENSITIES IN TRAINING LEADING UP TO THE HIGHEST PEAK OCCURRING AT THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS.

need to allow for some variations in the training schedule. This is because Acrobatic Gymnastics is a sport with two entirely different types of athletes, bases and flyers/tops. For instance, while bases are aiming for muscular hypertrophy, it is more important that a flyer builds lean muscle mass and increases in flexibility. Therefore when designing a periodization program as a coach for your own team, it is important to acknowledge these differences in the athletes and allow for base specific and top specific training. The periodization outline in Figure 1.0 incorporates this concept with the 6th and 7th rows of the table. For most teams the last row of the table will be the primary focus of their training since it outlines the appropriate progression of acrobatic pair/group skills.

The accompanying line graph, Figure 2.0, is a visual representation of training intensities during the season. Figure 2.0 includes fluctuations in training intensity during

the in-season portion of the graph. This undulating training is beneficial due to the length of the competition season in Acrobatic Gymnastics. Training athletes by this model allows for a peaking of skills right before a competition, followed by a temporary reduction in training intensities after which training intensities will resume to insure a higher peak for successive competitions. It has been shown that incorporating undulating training for sports with longer competition seasons helps to prevent fatigue and overtraining during the season. In addition this method may aid in reducing the occurrence of overuse injuries. By combining the organizational concepts in Figure 1.0 and Figure 2.0 you will be able to build a successful and structured training program for your athletes that will minimize over training and insure them to peak in their technique level at the appropriate time during the competition season. ✕