

A woman with dark hair, wearing a green tank top and a necklace, stands on a grassy field. She is smiling and gesturing with her hands. In the background, there are several orange cones on the grass. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

OFFICIAL TRAINERS HANDBOOK



A photograph of three athletes running across a green field under a clear blue sky. On the left, a man in a blue tank top and black shorts runs with a yellow AFL ball. In the middle, a woman in a pink tank top and black shorts runs with her hands clasped. On the right, a woman in a green tank top and black shorts runs with a yellow AFL ball. The text 'SECTION 1' is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide external providers of the AFL Active program with the concepts surrounding fitness and, more specifically, the fundamental fitness components demonstrated in a game of Australian Football (AFL).

This handbook will serve as a practical guide for external providers to deliver effective AFL Active sessions. What you need to keep in mind is no AFL Active session will be the same and that it provides an opportunity for trainers/coaches to make the session their own by incorporating their own personal style to the delivery.

Trainers are encouraged to ensure they and their fellow instructors maintain their fitness qualifications. This will ensure the program is delivered at the highest possible standard. Mandatory qualifications will allow for occupational health and safety standards to be upheld.

Further details regarding the qualifications required to facilitate an AFL Active training session can be found at fitnessaustralia.com.au.

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS AFL ACTIVE?

The AFL Active program is an introductory group fitness program for anyone who wants to get fit and active.

The program is built around the unique combination of physical and fitness attributes used in an elite AFL match, without the technical skills required. Each session focuses on the fundamental elements of safe exercise such as warm-ups, types of stretching and cool-downs. Additionally, each session reflects the structure of an AFL match utilising four eight-minute quarters of physical challenges.

The AFL Active program not only provides essential knowledge regarding safe exercise prescription but also allows individuals to connect with the AFL community in a non-confronting way.

As a result, there is no pressure to learn the skills of handballing, kicking and marking and it is imperative that each group fitness session is tailored to the physical and mental requirements of the target groups while maximising fitness and enjoyment elements.

Depending on the dynamics of the group and the motivational tactics, AFL-specific activities and the difficulty of each drill will need to be modified to achieve the greatest program adherence.

The AFL Active program can be conducted anywhere at any time. Each program will be made up of group training sessions with the frequency and schedule to be left to the trainer's discretion.



AFL ACTIVE

ROUND 1 8 WEEKS

ROUND 2 8 WEEKS

ROUND 3 8 WEEKS

FINAL ROUND 8 WEEKS

WHAT AFL ACTIVE IS

- A group fitness session that promotes a friendly, social and fun way to improve your health and well-being
- A constantly changing, high-intensity total body workout based on AFL principles and techniques
- A versatile program that can be delivered ANYWHERE
- A program that is accommodating to all levels of fitness

WHAT AFL ACTIVE IS NOT?

- AFL Active is not a standard football training session
- Group Fitness requiring difficult AFL skills (handballing, kicking and marking)
- A competition (the only winner is your fitness)
- AFL Active is not a tedious and regimented workout, but rather based on variety and enjoyment

TARGET MARKET

This program is designed to appeal to anyone who is willing as it accommodates all ages, however the primary target is women aged 20-40. AFL Active is a fitness program designed to provide a fun, social and supportive environment for clients to exercise and gain the benefits of a healthy well-balanced exercise regime. This is achieved by providing an environment that is safe, inviting and fun to participate in a structured fitness program.

OBJECTIVES

The main aim of AFL Active is to provide total body fitness benefits while educating participants on the importance of a healthy, well-balanced lifestyle.

A healthy lifestyle does not stop with regular fitness; AFL Active will provide a social network opportunity encouraging the discussion of external health factors, including nutrition, stress relief and work-life balance.

While AFL Active wants to provide a link between the program and football, it is important to distinguish this is different from a basic football training session. AFL Active programs are designed to reflect the physical characteristics of an AFL game using a football in a variety of different ways.

CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS OF SOCIETY



3/5

Australians are overweight or obese



1/4

children are overweight and obese



60%

of Australians believe they need to be "HEALTHIER"



NHPA

The Australian Government identified obesity in Australia as a national health priority area (NHPA) in 2008





CATERING FOR DIFFERENT CLIENTELE GROUPS

Instructors need to be aware of the personality differences and range of skills within a group of clients. Depending on the level of knowledge of Australian Football and their affinity with the game, the session will need to be tailored to relate to the clientele needs.

A successful instructor will be able select appropriate exercises and the use of a football. Instructors need to ensure, as far as possible, appropriate language and activities are provided for each fitness group.

CATERING FOR DIFFERENCE

IN ORDER TO CATER FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE:

- Exercise selection and resemblance to Australian Football for the clientele must differ from group to group based on fitness
- Language and approach to motivation will need to be tailored to the clientele
- Emphasis should be put on individual progress rather than comparing achievements with those of others
- Competitiveness in each session should be modified on an individual basis
- Progressions and regressions should be applied to exercise selection on a group-to-group basis
- A broad array of exercises should be planned and presented
- Instructors should be able to adapt to meet the needs of each group
- Successive fitness sessions should increase progressively in difficulty and complexity
- Education focus should be modified to meet the needs of the group

MODIFICATIONS

AFL Active has taken elements of an AFL game and placed them within a group-fitness template. However, the program can be modified to suit the client base in terms of equipment, language used and the activities.

FOOTBALL USE

AFL Active will involve the use of modified footballs sized appropriately for the client group. Footballs will not be used in the same manner as an AFL game. Footballs may be held while performing exercises, thrown, rolled and passed between individuals. Handballs and kicking will not be utilised in AFL Active sessions.

CONTACT

AFL Active is a non-contact group exercise. A non-contact format appeals to the female generation and encourages participation for all levels of fitness.

COMPETITIVENESS

Competitiveness in AFL Active will be encouraged in a format supplied from the fitness instructor. To encourage participation of all skill level, competitiveness between individual team members will be kept minimal.

SKILL LEVEL

Participants of all skill level are encouraged to participate in AFL Active as there are no physical prerequisites of this group-exercise program. All exercises and activities can be progressed and regressed to meet the needs of differing groups.

SESSION STRUCTURE

AFL Active takes a format of four eight-minute quarters interspersed with two-minute breaks. The group works as a team to complete the assigned exercises for each eight-minute quarter. Each quarter is themed with an AFL position, including forwards, midfielders, defenders and subs. Despite the general assignment of positional-based exercises, the program can be altered and adjusted to suit any requirements.

EXAMPLE



GENERAL FOOTBALL CONCEPTS INTO EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

AFL vocabulary and verbal instruction is a large component of a successful AFL Active session. Although you can select exercises as per the positional difference found in an AFL match, the verbal aspect of the session will increase the impact of the session.

It is important that the session instructor takes on the role of motivator and instructor by using language which can be assimilated to Australian Football. Each quarter will rely on the instructional

techniques used to teach each of the exercises by using language which can be assimilated to AFL.

It is imperative that each quarter is related to the stage of a game of AFL, first quarter, second quarter etc. Additionally, each exercise should be related to the use of this skill in an AFL game, as well as relating the activity back to activities of daily living.

GUIDELINES TO THE USE OF AFL TERMINOLOGY

TERMINOLOGY SHOULD BE USED TO:

- Create an exciting and thrilling experience
- Relate the session to aspects of Australian Football
- Create a fun and challenging session
- Provide motivation
- Provide relevance to the football
- Raise awareness of Australian Football

TERMINOLOGY SHOULD NOT BE USED TO:

- Recreate a football training session
- Intimidate women
- Confuse the true purpose of the session
- Remove the focus from group fitness to football

‘WE ARE ONE GOAL DOWN WITH FIVE MINUTES TO GO IN THE LAST QUARTER – IT’S ALL GUT RUNNING FROM HERE!’

‘BURPEES – YOU’VE JUST BEEN TACKLED, YOU GET UP AGAIN, YOU GET TACKLED AGAIN!’





FITNESS TRAINER STRUCTURE

Each session may include 15-20 participants. Subject to the number of participants, the following trainer structure should be adopted:

- Head trainer (personal trainer)
- Assistant trainers (optional)

ROLE OF AFL ACTIVE TRAINER

- To provide session instruction
- Monitor potential technique problems
- Speed up the transition between quarters/activities
- Ensure all participants are actively involved in all elements of the session
- Vary/modify the session as required
- Facilitate modifications to be made to accommodate different skill fitness levels
- Determine capability levels of participants
- Provide ongoing motivation

FUNDAMENTAL DELIVERY TECHNIQUES

It is important to remember that all participants will be at different ages, skill level and fitness level. To ensure each fitness program achieves maximum fitness results, there are key areas of development that need to be taken into account.

- Technique should be a major focus of the initial weeks of each program
- Compound exercises should be encouraged in all quarters to promote functional movement
- Football use should be implemented only when correct technique can be maintained
- Trainers should use simplistic exercises and drills in the initial program sessions
- Diagrams should be utilised when complex drills are involved
- Motivation should be utilised for all sessions
- Exercise difficulty should be progressed throughout the program

FITNESS TRAINERS/COACHES

AFL Active trainers will be required to run group fitness sessions to make up a fitness regime. It is important to understand the features of groups and how to best reach all group participants.

- A group fitness session must capture the attention of all participants as well as providing clear guidelines for each exercise selected
- Trainers need to position themselves so that all participants can clearly hear and see all exercise directions and demonstrations
- Demonstrations are crucial for explaining the safety elements of each aspect of the session to ensure technique is appropriate. Trainers need to choose appropriate group formations when providing instruction and motivation

A good group formation for group training is one that involves the following:

- The trainer is within eyesight of all participants
- The trainer can be clearly heard by all participants and vice versa
- Minimal external distractions, including noise and other bystanders
- All participants standing within a distance to enable reading of any visual representations





SECTION 2

BENEFITS OF AFL ACTIVE





WHAT THEY WANT

AFL Active is designed to meet the needs of individuals who want the benefits of group fitness without having to compete with their own motivational battles or the competitiveness of other individuals.

All participants should feel comfortable and welcome in the group fitness session, with the session tailored to meet their requirements. Individuals who have an affinity with the AFL either through partners, families or friends tend to encourage the use of skill and environment of a real AFL game.

Those who are unfamiliar with the sport need to be provided with a basic relationship with the game by introducing elements of the game one by one.

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and of developing high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes
- Provides an avenue for socialising
- Helps maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints
- Helps control weight, build lean muscle and reduce body fat
- Body sculpting and toning
- Helps control joint swelling and pain associated with arthritis
- May enhance the effect of oestrogen-replacement therapy in decreasing bone loss after menopause
- Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression and fosters improvements in mood and feelings of well-being
- Can help reduce blood pressure in some women with hypertension

This method of group fitness will promote a healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activity, as well as encouraging an overall healthy lifestyle incorporating nutrition, sleep and work/life balance.

HOW DOES AFL ACTIVE DIFFER TO OTHER GROUP FITNESS PROGRAMS?

AFL Active aims to develop an individual's overall fitness by specifically focusing on the fundamental fitness components required in a game of AFL.

In contrast to regular group fitness sessions, AFL Active utilises a structured approach to session design simulating an AFL match by adopting four quarters and inter-quarter breaks. AFL Active incorporates methods of group exercise that target health and skill-related fitness components relative to AFL players and the wider community.

Each quarter includes exercises specific to different playing positions within a football game, i.e. forwards, backline, centre/rucks. Despite AFL Active not utilising specific football-handling skills, this group fitness method incorporates the "feel" of a team/coach relationship between the participants and the instructor.





LOCATION

AFL Active is a versatile program that can be delivered across a wide range of locations. External locations such as parks, ovals and open green lands can provide excellent locations for beginner style exercise sessions. External locations with varied surface conditions can provide useful environments to increase challenges where applicable.

AFL Active is not limited to outside fitness sessions, as sessions can be modified to be successfully delivered within indoor environments such as gymnasiums and undercover areas etc.

EQUIPMENT

The variety of the AFL Active fitness program allows for the use of mobile and versatile equipment. Licensees can purchase AFL Active equipment packs to make the delivery of programs much easier.

AFL ACTIVE EQUIPMENT PACK

- 10 AFL Active footballs
- 2 Speed ladders (8 rung)
- 5 Skipping ropes (plastic)
- 20 Cones (multi-coloured)
- 1 Hurdles (pack 10)
- 10 Agility poles

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR USE OF PUBLIC SPACES

It is important to be aware of the regulations that govern the area in which the session will be delivered. Generally a good place to start is the local council to receive guidelines on council restrictions. The environment can be altered to increase and decrease the difficulty of the session by altering the environment surface, terrain and equipment available on site. Trainers will have the ability to think outside the square and create new, exciting and innovative training sessions. AFL Active has no limitations in respect to session design and delivery due the nature of the program. This aspect allows for every training session to be unique, exciting and unexpected and keep clients interested for not only one but multiple training programs.

HOW DOES AFL ACTIVE HELP IN EVERYDAY LIFE?

AFL Active encompasses a holistic view of health, in which fitness along with many other lifestyle factors affect health and well-being.

External factors determining the success of a fitness program and ultimately health improvements include nutritional habits, sleeping schedules and recovery modalities.

NUTRITION

- Nutrition habits should support the energy in versus energy out theory
- Nutritional habits should be monitored when trying to reach body composition goals
- Education regarding fads and fallacies should be encouraged
- Nutrition plans and meal examples for before and after sessions are readily available

SLEEP

- Sleeping regular hours should be encouraged
- Obtaining 7-8 hours of sleep a night is considered beneficial to good health and recovery from exercise
- Uninterrupted sleep is important to daily functional activities

RECOVERY

- Static stretching is recommended post exercise to maintain muscle length
- Temperature-controlled recovery (hot/cold) can speed up muscle recovery time (a large part of being a footballer)

GOAL SETTING

AFL Active encourages a team environment by setting group goals using AFL-style drills and terminology. It is important that individuals are encouraged to work on individual goals as well as be part of a team.

THE SMART PRINCIPLE

SPECIFIC

Goals should be specific in terms of what they are referring to such as specific exercises or a specific movement or result

MEASUREABLE

Goals should have a numerical or measurable value which will allow for easy comparison

ACHIEVABLE/ ATTAINABLE

Goals should be achievable and well within an individual or group's capability

REALISTIC

Goals should be realistic and appropriate in terms of your client's current fitness/ psychological status

TIME BASED

Goals should have a time scheduled to achieve these results by





SESSION AIMS vs PROGRAM AIMS

INDIVIDUAL SESSION AIMS

- Burn more than 600 calories within a single session
- Exercise in a fun, enjoyable and safe environment
- Build social relationships while in an exercise relationship
- Provide basic education on fitness, health and well-being

PROGRAM AIMS

- Develop the fitness components attributable to playing Australian Football
- Educate participants on the structure of warm-ups and cool-downs
- Provide a link for women to increase their affinity with Australian Football
- Provide an opportunity of exercise to be engrained in our lifestyle
- Provide health and well-being benefits for participants
- Promote adoption of a healthy lifestyle

6 BURN 600-700 CALORIES IN 42 MINUTES!

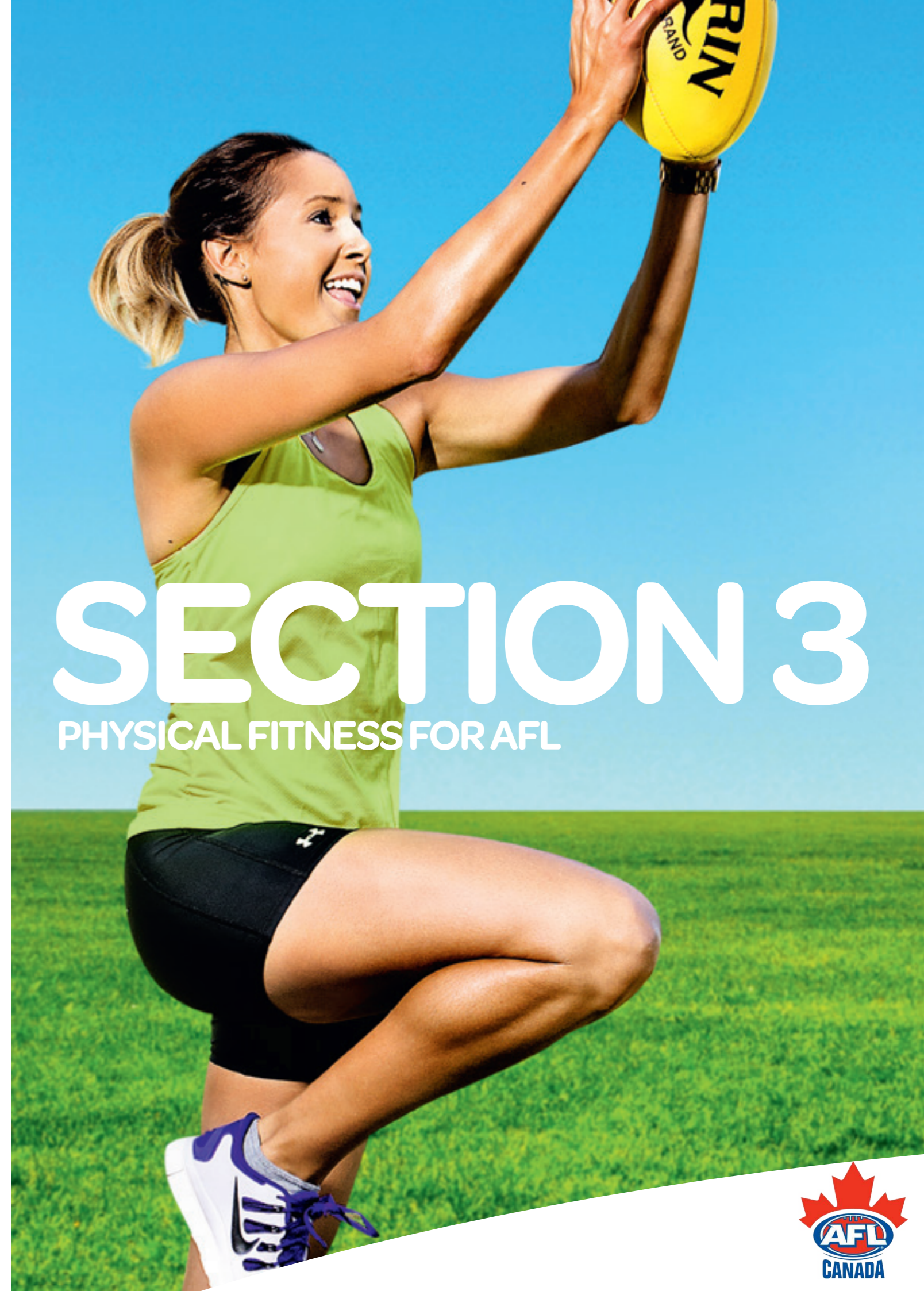
MEASURING SUCCESS OF A PROGRAM

In order to maintain adherence to AFL Active, ongoing fitness regimes can be monitored for individuals and client groups. Fitness testing can be implemented to determine strengths and weaknesses, ascertain the fitness improvements incurred and determine the effectiveness of the program.

There are many testing protocols which can be adopted to track physical progress throughout an AFL Active round, however these are NOT required to measure success.

FITNESS COMPONENTS	FITNESS TESTS
ANAEROBIC CAPACITY	10 or 30 sec cycle/sprint
AEROBIC CAPACITY	Beep Test (shuttle run/MSFT)/ 2-3km time trial
MUSCULAR ENDURANCE	Push-ups/chin-ups/dips/sit-ups
MUSCULAR STRENGTH	1 RM bench press/leg press
FLEXIBILITY	Sit and reach/shoulder elevation
SPEED/AGILITY/POWER	20m sprint/AFL agility test/standing vertical leap
WEIGHT/CALORIES	Body mass/skin folds

Pre/post testing in AFL Active programs may only be required for those training for specific events or those with a high affiliation with success and achievement. Testing should be an option for participants and not a requirement. Tests should be selected based upon the skill and fitness levels of the clientele group. Fitness tests can be used to provide a baseline fitness level for groups as well as individuals.



SECTION 3

PHYSICAL FITNESS FOR AFL





PHYSICAL FITNESS FOR AFL

AFL is one of the most multi-dimensional sports in the world, comprising of challenging physical feats with elements of determination and courage. Many Australians strive to redeem the physical attributes of elite AFL players. AFL players often represent peak physical condition, including physique, aerobic capabilities and muscular strength.

An AFL match requires a variety of physical strengths that can be broken down into health-related and skill-related fitness components. These elements that are highlighted in an AFL match will be used to design the AFL Active session to provide a multi-dimensional group fitness session.

ELEMENTS OF PHYSICAL FITNESS

SKILL-RELATED COMPONENTS

- Speed
- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination
- Reaction time
- Power

HEALTH-RELATED COMPONENTS

- Body composition
- Cardiovascular endurance
- Flexibility
- Muscular strength
- Muscular endurance

Traditional programming focus

Functional training for performance or activities of daily living

COMPONENTS OF FITNESS - AUSTRALIA FOOTBALL (AFL)

CARDIOVASCULAR ENDURANCE	FLEXIBILITY	MUSCULAR STRENGTH	MUSCULAR ENDURANCE	SPEED	AGILITY	BALANCE	POWER
Used to provide prolonged run for the entire AFL game – often referred to as GUT running	Used to effectively pick up the ball and kick the ball accurately	Used to maintain position against opponents	Used to repetitively get tackled and get back up and do it all over again	Used to beat your opponent to the ball and chase down opponents	Used to react, change direction and avoid opponents	Used to allow dynamic change of direction	Used to accelerate off the mark and jump to mark and spoil

TABLE 1.0 FITNESS COMPONENTS APPLICABLE TO AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF THEIR RELEVANCE





SECTION 4

SESSION PREPARATION





SESSION OUTLINE DETAILS THE KEY ASPECTS OF AN AFL ACTIVE SESSION

TYPE OF CLASS / WORKOUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choreographed group fitness class
LENGTH OF CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 minutes total (including a 5-minute warm-up and cool down)
FOCUS OF WORKOUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High intensity cardiovascular fitness • Agility and dynamic movement • Fat burning and weight loss • Toning through muscle endurance activities
FITNESS OUTCOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average of 600-700 calories burnt
INSTRUCTION / COACHING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered/trained instructor
SETTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor or indoor area of at least ____ square metres • Mixed terrain/urban settings with hills, steps, benches etc. are also appropriate
EQUIPMENT	<p>BASIC EQUIPMENT INCLUDES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footballs (AFL 9s balls) • Cones <p>ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT MAY INCLUDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed ladders • Skipping ropes • Hoops • Ropes • Environmental equipment including (fences, benches, monkey bars)
SESSION STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The session is divided into 4 quarters of activity which includes 8 minutes of continuous high intensity activity followed by 2 minutes of recovery • The session is bookended by a 5-minute warm-up and 5-minute cool down
EXERCISE FORMAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WARM-UP • Slow to mid-pace mixed running (e.g. forwards, backwards, sideways, high knees) • Dynamic stretches of major muscle groups • QUARTERS (4 x 8-minute periods of activity followed by 2-minute recovery periods) • Each quarter is themed to reflect the type of movement, athletic capability and fitness required by a forward, midfielder and defender, with the final quarter always themed to reflect the all-round characteristics of a substitute • The order of the forward, midfielder, defender is up to the trainer • Each quarter will have a mix of fitness elements cardio, muscle endurance, agility and core elements • Trainers will choose from a range of exercise options, including standalone exercises, circuits and games to meet the balance of fitness elements and the relevant theme of the quarter • COOL DOWN • Static stretching of major muscle groups
PARTICIPANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target market – females (20-40 years) • Compatible for males and females of all ages
INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group exercise program for between 5 and 20 participants

SESSION PLAN DESIGN

OVERVIEW OF 8-WEEK PROGRAM PROGRESSION

This section provides an overview of the variables which can be manipulated across any 8-week AFL Active program. Each of these variables should progress independently with the ability and skill of the client group. Remember that depending on your client group, each group may progress through these variables at appropriate rates.

When planning an individual session or an entire 8-week program trainers should address the following elements

- Environment available
- Skill level of participants
- Fitness level of participants
- Goals of participants
- Which goals are feasible and achievable within 8 weeks
- Variety & innovation
- A fun and enthusiastic environment
- Short simple drills for introductory sessions
- Appropriate progressive overload
- Personality differences
- Confidence differences
- Resources & equipment available
- Participant affinity to AFL
- Previous exercise history
- Previous injury history

Sessions should avoid utilising the following

- Long transition times in between exercises
- Minimal football use
- Football training specific drills
- Complex drills which require lengthy explanations
- Little variety
- Long queues for limited equipment

It is imperative that when designing a training session or a variety of scheduled sessions, sessions must not be rigid and inflexible. When delivering a training session that does not satisfy the needs of the participants that the session is flexible and can be modified to better meet the fitness requirements.

Although it is recommended to enter each session with a structured plan in place with predetermined exercises, if a trainer follows this plan too closely they may provide a session that is too difficult or too easy for the participants.

Elements that trainers may need to adapt in a session can include the use of footballs, the difficulty of exercises, the positioning of participants and the timing of session elements.





STRUCTURE OF A SESSION

AFL Active sessions run for 50 minutes including 4 x 8-minute quarters bookended by a 5-minute warm-up and cool down.

1. WARM-UP

The purpose of including a warm-up is to ensure that all participants have a slightly increased heart and respiratory rate to increase delivery of oxygen to the working muscles. Performing dynamic stretches is believed to gradually warm the muscles and lengthen the muscles to prevent injuries.

2. QUARTERS 1-4

Each 8-minute quarter is designed to replicate certain elements of a typical AFL game. Quarters should reflect the physical demands on major player positions within an AFL game.

Although each quarter has a positional influence there is no specific order that each quarter should be introduced.

Quarter order can be shuffled around to influence intensity and rest periods. They can also be intertwined to create a holistic position where all elements need to be worked at the same time.

Examples that may provide session structure incentive include:

- Unforeseen injury – you have had to head to the backline and cover the loss
- You have been subbed in – you have to cover the whole field for one quarter
- One man down – everyone has to lift an extra 10%
- You may have just made a mistake and you need to get the ball back to rectify the situation
- You have 1 minute left and slowing the game down – focus is on technique and delivery
- It has started to rain – tactics have changed: “Let’s get defensive”

3. COOL DOWN

The purpose of a cool down is to allow the body return to regular body temperature and for the body’s systems to return to their regular state.

A cool down often consists of the use of static stretching to lengthen the muscles in a safe way while the muscles are still warm.

PROGRAM PROGRESSION

It is important for trainers to be able to adapt the structure of each session to meet the progression of participants throughout the 6-week program.

Session progression may include the use of simple circuit rotations for the first 1-2 sessions. This may progress to more complex circuits encompassing the use of both cardiovascular elements and resistance exercise within a single quarter. This complexity should be introduced gradually so as to allow the participants to focus on technique in the introductory sessions and develop further when technique is natural.

In subsequent weeks trainers should incorporate more complex session structures rotating between cardiovascular exercises and smaller circuits. This will provide increase mental stimulation in turn improving concentration.

DESIGNING AN AFL ACTIVE SESSION

When designing a training session exercises should be selected after analysing three positional areas in an AFL game including: forwards, midfielders and backs. Selection should be based on the muscle groups used, fitness components and energy systems utilised in a typical AFL game.

Many exercises can be used to reflect multiple fitness components at any given time as well as each quarter can focus on training multiple fitness components.

When choosing exercises it is critical to apply the correct fitness principles to achieve the right outcome. Many strength exercises can be used to also improve muscular endurance, however the application of these exercises varies significantly.

APPLICATION OF TRAINING PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE DIFFERING FITNESS GOALS

AFL Active sessions will often focus on the power and endurance elements of training encouraging repetitive movements when the body is fatigued. This complements the delivery of AFL Active sessions focusing on the need for gut running and continual effort when fatigued.

DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE AFL ACTIVE SESSION

Putting together sessions with a variety of different exercises is the responsibility of the fitness trainer.

Each session will need to be different from the last; this may be represented by a change in the individual exercises chosen, the order of positional quarters, the order of the exercises or being delivered in a slightly different way reflecting the personality and traits of the trainer.

INSTRUCTING AN AFL ACTIVE SESSION

Due to the fast pace of each session and the short break time included, the need for clear and concise instructions/drills is imperative.

It is advised that during each quarter break the subsequent quarter is explained clearly and concisely so that all drills, techniques and instructions are known. It is then the responsibility of the trainer to prompt and activity change and providing motivation throughout each quarter.



	WEEK 1	WEEK 2
PURPOSE	To provide individuals with a fun and productive group fitness session where they can feel comfortable and motivated to achieve health-related goals.	To introduce participants to a physical workout emphasising the important physical elements of AFL. The connection to AFL will be an underlying component of the fitness sessions.
EDUCATION	To provide basic information on the importance of fitness, healthy eating, sleep and recovery – health is a holistic concept.	
EQUIPMENT	Equipment should be simple to use and common equipment that does not require excessive skill/coordination. Footballs should be emphasised in these early stages of AFL Active	
CONTACT	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
COMPETITIVENESS	The level of competitiveness should be adapted to suit the requirements of individual groups.	The level of competitiveness should be adapted to suit the requirements of individual groups.
FORWARDS	To provide a foundational level of fitness in the areas including speed, power, strength and endurance. A base level of fitness including aerobic capacity and muscular strength should be established before training power and speed independently. Exercise technique is crucial in initial exercise sequences. Static core exercises should be introduced to focus on internal core stabilisers activation for effective stability.	
BACKS	To provide a foundational level of fitness in the areas including speed, power, strength and endurance & balance. A base level of fitness including aerobic capacity and muscular strength should be established before training power and speed independently. Exercise technique is crucial in initial exercise sequences. Static core exercises should be introduced to focus on internal core stabilisers activation for effective stability.	
MIDFIELDERS	To provide a foundational level of fitness in the areas including cardiovascular endurance, endurance & agility. Foundational training should focus on lower intensity and higher volume of training. Exercise technique is crucial in initial exercise sequences. Agility exercises may be completed individually. Static core exercises should be introduced to focus on internal core stabilisers activation for effective stability.	
SUBS	Can be used to provide a link with AFL game terminology and to increase session intensity in the final quarter. Can be used to change the exercise being completed in the session. Subs can be used to change the dynamics of a quarter by introducing, changing or increasing exercises and fitness targets.	
INTENSITY	AFL Active aims to maintain a high intensity for 8-minute periods without resting. The intensity should be related to intensity of an AFL game, when intensity decreases the group should work together to rectify the loss.	AFL Active aims to maintain a high intensity for 8-minute periods without resting. The intensity should be related to intensity of an AFL game, when intensity decreases the group should work together to rectify the loss.
ENVIRONMENT	To allow for clients of all fitness levels and skills to participate safely. The environment involves flat surfaces, no environmental obstacles and with each activity clearly marked. The physical environment should be located away from heavy public areas to avoid issues with self-esteem and confidence.	To allow for clients of all fitness levels and skills to participate safely. The environment involves flat surfaces, no environmental obstacles and with each activity clearly marked. The physical environment should be located away from heavy public areas to avoid issues with self-esteem and confidence.

WEEKS 3, 4, 5		WEEKS 6, 7, 8	
To encourage program adherence and maintenance of fitness achievements.		The program should emphasise maintenance and regular training to encourage adherence to the next 8 week program.	
To increase focus on appropriate warm-up and cool down practices, including the use of active and passive stretching including dynamic and PNF stretches.		To increase knowledge of exercise progression and variety of group training methods. Focus should remain on education on good training practice including warm-up and cool down features.	
Use of equipment should increase to increase coordination and concentration whilst exercising.	Variety of equipment should be increased to offer variety and more challenging exercises to allow for fitness adaptations to occur.	To further develop AFL Fitness components by increasing the relationship between exercise and the football (if applicable). Football use should be determined by client affinity to AFL.	Exercises should adopt more complex equipment and progress through more challenging exercises either utilising similar equipment or introducing innovative exercises with new equipment.
Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
The level of competitiveness should be adapted to suit the requirements of individual groups.	The level of competitiveness should be adapted to suit the requirements of individual groups.	The level of competitiveness should be adapted to suit the requirements of individual groups.	The level of competitiveness should be adapted to suit the requirements of individual groups.
Training should shift to a higher intensity by increasing the velocity of activities as well as resistance and repetitions where applicable. Exercises should focus more on developing speed as well as developing increased strength by utilising slower and more forceful movements. Large muscle groups should be used to complete functional and multi-jointed exercises. Core exercises should progress to more challenging dynamic exercises focusing on global muscle groups.		To develop power and acceleration skills through fast paced and explosive movements. The focus should be both upper and lower body exercises specifically focusing on specific AFL movements including jumping, leaping, rebounding. Core exercises should progress to AFL specific multifunctional exercises replicating the need to dynamic stability against a resistance. *If suitable competitive challenges to replicate the positional specific movements can be incorporated.	
Training should shift to a higher intensity by increasing the velocity of activities as well as resistance and repetitions where applicable. Exercises should focus more on developing speed as well as developing increased strength by utilising slower and more forceful movements. Large muscle groups should be used to complete functional and multi-jointed exercises Core exercises should progress to more challenging dynamic exercises focusing on global muscle groups.		To develop power and acceleration skills through fast-paced and explosive movements. The focus should be both upper and lower body exercises specifically focusing on specific AFL movements including jumping, leaping, rebounding. Core exercises should progress to AFL specific multifunctional exercises replicating the need to dynamic stability against a resistance. *If suitable competitive challenges to replicate the positional specific movements can be incorporated.	
To provide an aerobic challenge by increasing the complexity of aerobic activities and incorporating both upper and lower body repetitive exercises to reflect the importance of muscular endurance. Repetitions should be increased OR rest intervals decreased to allow endurance adaptations to occur. Agility exercises may be completed intermittently between endurance activities to create a higher intensity workload. Core exercises should progress to more challenging dynamic exercises focusing on global muscle groups.		To develop sustained endurance through a variety of dynamic multifunctional exercises. Agility exercises should incorporate increased football use and intermittent endurance exercises. Core exercises should progress to AFL specific multifunctional exercises replicating the need for dynamic stability at high speeds and change of direction.	
Can be used to provide a link with AFL game terminology and to increase session intensity in the final quarter. Can be used to change the exercise being completed in the session. Subs can be used to change the dynamics of a quarter by introducing, changing or increasing exercises and fitness targets.		Can be used to provide a link with AFL game terminology and to increase session intensity in the final quarter. Can be used to change the exercise being completed in the session. Subs can be used to change the dynamics of a quarter by introducing, changing or increasing exercises and fitness targets.	
AFL Active aims to maintain a high intensity for 8-minute periods without resting. The intensity should be related to intensity of an AFL game, when intensity decreases the group should work together to rectify the loss.	AFL Active aims to maintain a high intensity for 8-minute periods without resting. The intensity should be related to intensity of an AFL game, when intensity decreases the group should work together to rectify the loss.	AFL Active aims to maintain a high intensity for 8-minute periods without resting. The intensity should be related to intensity of an AFL game, when intensity decreases the group should work together to rectify the loss.	AFL Active aims to maintain a high intensity for 8-minute periods without resting. The intensity should be related to intensity of an AFL game, when intensity decreases the group should work together to rectify the loss.
To allow for clients to progressively increase fitness levels and skills by incorporating uneven surfaces and different ground coverage. The physical environment should be located away from heavy public areas to avoid issues with self-esteem and confidence.	To allow for clients to progressively increase fitness levels and skills by incorporating uneven surfaces and different ground coverage. The physical environment should be located away from heavy public areas to avoid issues with self-esteem and confidence.	To allow for clients to progressively increase fitness levels and skills by incorporating uneven surfaces and different ground coverage. The physical environment should be located away from heavy public areas to avoid issues with self-esteem and confidence.	To allow for clients to progressively increase fitness levels and skills by incorporating uneven surfaces and different ground coverage. The physical environment should be located away from heavy public areas to avoid issues with self-esteem and confidence.





WEEK 1 EXAMPLE SESSION OUTLINE

AFL ACTIVE GROUP EXERCISE PROGRAM – SESSION

WARM-UP

1 minute light jog to warm up the muscles

1 minute dynamic stretching – progress from slow to fast

Run throughs (20m)

- Walking lunges
- High knees – head up, knee up, run tall
- Butt kicks
- Build up – sprint 10 metres, hold speed for 20m x 2
- Fast feet – sprint
- Sprint & dodge at mid-way mark

QUARTER 1 – Repeat any station of 1-3- followed by Sprinting drill (Repeat 1-3 3 times) 8 min

10 Pogo jumps + 3 push-ups (REPEAT)	40 second station	Focus on high intensity exercise to increase calories burned. Simulation the burn of an hour long bike ride – legs should be burning and body fatiguing.
Lay down – 20m sprint	40 second station	
Push up tuck jumps	40 second station	
Sprinting agility drill + star jumps	2 minute station	

QUARTER 2 – Repeat circuit twice 8 min

Skipping (double leg)	1 minute station	High aerobic component focusing on repeat effort, team work should be emphasised to encourage workload. Focus should be on consistent work – earn your rest in 4 minutes – prepare for next station with 15 sec left.
Core prone side stabilisation	1 minute station	
Speed ladder (fast feet – feet OR sidestep)	1 minute station	
Punching bag	1 minute station	

QUARTER 3

Dumbbell deep squat	30 second station	Focus should be on maintaining technique when fatigued and keeping good posture. Increase intensity with last 2 minutes comparing to final moments of a game. Concentration tests – this is where mistakes are made – concentrate on each minute at a time.
Burpee acceleration	30 second station	
Pull up horizontal	30 second station	
Prone stabilisation	30 second station	

QUARTER 4 – Split group in 2. Half = circuit/half = game 1

Rotation 1	Football sit up with partner	1 minute station	Focus should be on maintaining technique when fatigued and keeping good posture. Increase intensity with last 2 minutes comparing to final moments of a game. Concentration tests – this is where mistakes are made – concentrate on each minute at a time.
	Step up/Step down	1 minute station	
	Bench dips	1 minute station	
	Minute run with football (as far as you can) at own pace	1 minute station	
Rotation 2	Game – keepings off	4 minute game	

COOL DOWN 5 min

- 1 minute slow walk
- 3-4 minutes static stretching

Muscle groups to target

- Quadriceps
 - Hamstrings
 - Back
 - Biceps
 - Triceps
- Example exercise**
- Calf stretch
 - Hamstring, gluteal stretch
 - Groin lat dorsi stretch
 - Quadriceps stretch
 - Anterior bicep stretch
 - Posterior shoulder stretch

SUMMARY OF WORKOUT	Minutes	% of workout
Cardio	15	35.5%
Strength/Endurance	12	28.0%
Power	0	0%
Agility	8	19.5%
Flexibility	7	16.5%
TOTAL	42	100%

WEEK 2 EXAMPLE SESSION OUTLINE

AFL ACTIVE GROUP EXERCISE PROGRAM – SESSION

WARM-UP – 5 mins – (INSERT TRAINER NAME)

Script

- 1 Mixed running (forwards, side-to-side, backwards, high knees)
 - Balls should be encouraged here – focus should be introducing the feel of the football and using the ball for balance and extra support if needed
- 2 Dynamic stretching (lunges, leg swings etc.)

FIRST QUARTER – FORWARDS – 8 mins – (INSERT TRAINER NAME)

Script

- 1 Repeat effort sprints (10, 20, 30m) spliced with 12 x lunges – 2min continuous circuit (SWAP & REPEAT)
 - High intensity work builds cardio/endurance capacity
 - Working your anaerobic system, which burns calories and accesses your energy stores
 - 3-4x more effective than tempo aerobic work for fat burning/building fitness

Instruct group to get into push up position ASAP after time is up

2 Muscle toning circuit – 2 mins continuous- (SWAP & REPEAT)

Script

- Push-ups 30sec (knees or feet option)
 - ...instruct next exercise with 15 secs to go
 - Standing rotations in pairs
 - Box jumps 30sec (jumping high & clean more important than speed)
- Muscle endurance is critical to a lean/functional physique
 - Toning result from multiple repetitions at low resistance (body weight or less)
 - Time periods vs. reps helps build endurance rather than outright strength/size
 - Box jumps great for toned legs/butt

SECOND QUARTER – MIDFIELDERS – (INSERT TRAINER NAME)

Script

1 Possession Game x 3 games

- Game 1 – 2min
- Game 2 – 3min
- Game 3 – 2min (red zone)

- Anaerobic workout focused on agility and dynamic, full body movement
- Also about mental awareness and teamwork

2 Muscle endurance splits – used between each game

- Partner sit-ups 30sec (feet together beginner, 30cm apart for advanced)
- Dips 30sec (hold half way down if struggling, ball under feet for advanced)

- Red zone training is about maintaining focus and control when fatigued... this is when good footballers make good decisions and when you can get the most out of your training by maintaining good technique and high level of effort
- This will help you stay strong during other exercise & day-to-day activities including getting up and down off the ground & grocery shopping

THIRD QUARTER SUB INCLUDED (UNFORSEEN) – 8 mins – (INSERT TRAINER NAME)

Script

1 2min time trial with footy, touching ball to ground/varied speeds x 3 reps

- Working up to your maximum capacity, chance to really burn off your last energy stores

Mixed plank work between each time trial – set up with a footy 30cm in front

- 15 secs in walking plank
- 15 secs rolling footy to and from chest with each hand
- 30 secs reaching to the sky with each arm

- Challenging different core strength and muscle endurance, especially under cardio fatigue
- Technique is really important – maintain straight back (not sagging or arching)
- Slow movements are fine – be aware of the stress it is causing, it is a good thing!
- Need to listen to instructions – touching the ball, speed variations

FOURTH QUARTER – BACKS – 8 mins – (INSERT TRAINER NAME)

Script

1 2 min square agility drill (focus backwards running – acceleration from backward phase)

- Rapid steps 30 sec x 2
- Squat jumps 30 sec x 2

- High intensity power workout with high level of cardio... this will require constant bursts of effort
- Focus on team support during the agility running... plenty of talk
- Getting a lot of burst speed training in this workout, which will help us work at higher intensity levels on our own... will help when you do interval running or spin classes

COOL DOWN – 5 mins – (INSERT TRAINER NAME)

Script

1 Static stretching (calves, hamstrings, quads, glutes, shoulders etc.)





WEEK 3 EXAMPLE SESSION OUTLINE

AFL ACTIVE GROUP EXERCISE PROGRAM – SESSION

WARM-UP

1 minute light jog to warm up the muscles

1 minute dynamic stretching – progress from slow to fast

Run throughs (20m)

- Walking lunges
- High knees – head up, knee up, run tall
- Butt kicks
- Build up – sprint 10 metres, hold speed for 20m x 2
- Fast feet – sprint
- Sprint & Dodge at mid-way mark

QUARTER 1 – LEADING FORWARDS

8 min

Zig-zag forward (sprint) around 4 cones and backward (moderate) run around cones – with ball

4 minutes

Focus on short burst of high intensity exercise. The main aim for these exercises is to complete the exercises as fast as possible while trying to jump as high as possible.

High marking circuit – 4 stations – REPEAT

4 minutes

Single leg box drives

30 seconds

Squats + Double leg jumping mark (partner)

30 seconds

20 m shuttle run with leap

30 seconds

A skips

30 seconds

QUARTER 2 – SUB ZONE – REPEAT STATIONS 1-4

8 min

Station 1 – Suicide running (10m, 20m, 30m)

1 minute

High aerobic component focusing on repeat efforts. Sub activated early means that you have to be able to play any position. Muscles start burning and the necessity to continually work is intensified.

Station 2 – Jumping split lunges

1 minute

Station 3 – Fence pull ups

1 minute

Station 4 – Burpees

1 minute

QUARTER 3 – ACTIVE MIDFIELDERS – REPEAT

8 min

200m Fartlek drill with ball

1 repetition

This is all about working together and encouraging teammates to continue working. This simulates a fast-paced game in the midfield.

Tug of war – Team based

1 minute

QUARTER 4 – DEFENDING BACK MEN (TEAM WORK)

8 min

Defender chase around random circuit & star jumps

3 minutes

1 minute station

Focus should be on muscular endurance of both the upper body. Challenge should be on keeping up with your partner to simulate the partnership between a forward and a defender.

Partner supine cycling (count together)

1 minute seconds

1 minute station

Push up (rolling ball between hands)

30 seconds

1 minute station

V sits with football

30 seconds

1 minute station

COOL DOWN

5 min

- 1 minute slow walk
- 3-4 minutes static stretching

Muscle groups to target

- Quadriceps
- Hamstrings
- Back
- Chest

Example exercise

- Calf stretch
- Hamstring, gluteal stretch
- Groin lat dorsi stretch
- Quadriceps stretch
- Anterior bicep stretch
- Posterior shoulder stretch

SUMMARY OF WORKOUT

	Minutes	% of workout
Cardio	12	28.5%
Strength/Endurance	10	23.80%
Power	4	9.5%
Agility	9	21.42%
Flexibility	7	16.5%
TOTAL	42	100%

