

A photograph of a baseball player in a ready stance on a field, wearing a dark uniform and a cap. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The player is positioned in the center of the frame, with his left leg forward and arms extended. The background shows a chain-link fence and trees.

In Season Maintenance (Fall/Winter)

Section 2

Period 2: In Season Maintenance (Fall/Winter) — Integrating Mound Work

(Note: Even though this is technically not the beginning of the “Spring, In-Season”, it is considered “In-Season” because bull-pens, and eventually live innings are about to be introduced. Therefore, the format below is set up for the purpose of transitioning from the Build Up Phase of Period 1 into mound work of Period 2, regardless of what time of year it is. Whereas a pitcher may only be building up to 45 pitches in the Fall/Winter, the format and transition into mound work will be the exact same in the Spring -- there is just a couple of extra weeks needed to build up to a higher pitch count.)

Now that the base is in place, for position players, the bottom line is to continue to follow this program until you enter your next Rest Period at the end of the Fall/beginning of Winter. Though, the schedule is set up to Pull Down three days a week, again, we would suggest that you build up to stretching out and pulling down virtually every day.

This doesn't mean that you can't go lighter, or take a day off. The point is that once you get in great shape, and do not have to deal with variables of pitching off a mound, don't be surprised if you find that your arm wants to stretch out completely, and pull down to some degree each day. It's the nature of an arm that's built to throw, and doesn't have to deal with any of the potential effects of throwing off a mound and the unknowns of “when” you may need to throw off of a mound. Without any of these variables that pitchers may have to address, your arm, like any other muscle, is going to probably thrive on throwing every day.

As for pitchers, once they get on a mound, the format doesn't change very much because pitchers will tend to be on a mound twice a week entering Week 7 (either 2 bull-pens or a bull-pen and a “live” situation), and as previously mentioned, can insure that their best Long Toss days are on their mound days (ie Monday & Friday). Again, by Long Tossing on your mound days, the arm is best prepared for the mound work load, and thus, should feel noticeably better the next day.



Along with Wednesday being the other main Long Toss day, this format is also very beneficial because the focus is now on “spacing out” and “counterbalancing” your aggressive and lighter days throughout the week. As you will see, this allows the arm to optimally maintain its conditioning, optimize recovery period and potentially get stronger as mound work is introduced.

Because your recovery period is so good from day to day, though Tuesday follows a heavy workload day of Long Toss and Bull-Pen work, you may be surprised to find out that your wants to stretch out further than you’d expect. Whatever you do on Tuesday, know it is helping you “set up” Wednesday (*and theoretically Thursday, Friday, next week, and so on*). By Wednesday, the arm will probably be in need for a real aggressive Long Toss day, knowing that there isn’t any mound work and there is another day away from the mound the next day. Thursday, will then tend to be more of a combination of Tuesday and Wednesday, and by Friday, the arm is ready for another aggressive Long Toss day plus mound work. As you approach the weekend, you’ll have two days to play with how much time you want to throw or rest in order to best set up Monday again.

Keep in mind that you may want to add an extra day of pull downs to your schedule for the first 2-3 weeks of bull-pens because your arm is in such great shape from the first 6 weeks, and because mound work tends to be so light in these first few weeks.

As always, your arm will dictate what it wants and needs from day to day, but the rule of thumb that will be outlined in the next section is to maintain at least 3 aggressive Long Toss days (*Monday, Wednesday, Friday*).

Until you get a few weeks of the “*In Season Maintenance*” under your belt, you may find that your arm works best when you go lighter on the in between days. Later on, you may find, especially if your pitch counts are still low in bull-pens/live work, that the in between days demand more distance, and even some degree of pulling down.

In Season is as much about maintaining your base and insuring that your Recovery Period is ideal. And as just referenced, the most important factor to maintaining your base and optimizing your recovery period is to Long Toss on your bull-pen and start days. Remember, your arm is trained and conditioned to throw a lot now. Thus, if you are going to throw aggressively, your arm wants to be fully opened up, stretched out and have gone through the pull down phase prior to getting on a mound.

Anything less, and your arm is probably going to not feel as stretched out, extended and freed up as its used to being. And when an arm is tested after it hasn't been fully opened up, it can have the same effect of the feeling that your legs get after sitting on a plane for 4 hours -- they tend to feel tight, short and rigid. Thus, not fully opening your arm up prior to getting on a mound can dramatically effect your recovery period (*which then puts the arm in a vulnerable position going forward, and may begin what we call a negative cycle*).

In essence, mound work is actually just the icing on the cake for the day. Because it was so well prepared and conditioned in the weeks leading up to mound work, the mound work becomes an extension of the work load, and allows the arm to recover better than had someone not "thrown as much in order to save their arm for the mound".

This is also true of starting pitchers on their start day, and relief pitchers in general. We want the starting pitchers getting fully extended, and fully through their Stretch out and Pull Down Phase on game day so they are not only ready to throw deep into the game, but their arm recovers the next day more effectively because of it (*as will be explained later, relief pitchers will fully stretch out most days, but not necessarily pull down on the majority of their days*).

Sample Schedule

Period 1: 5-6 Week Off Season Build Up

(3-4 Weeks of Stretching Out, 2 Weeks of Pull Downs)

Note: Because there are a number of different variables when it comes to creating a throwing program and schedule for the masses (age, arm strength and previous throwing history), all of our throwing plans and schedules are going to be based on the typical characteristics of an above average High School arm, including typical distance and arm strength (approximately 250-300 feet/82-90 mph). By having this as a reference point, you can adjust the recommended volume and distance based on age and/or arm strength.

Week 1

**Stretching Out/Massage/Arc — No Pulling Down*

Monday: 5-10 minutes of throwing (30-75 feet) or ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Tuesday: 5-10 minutes of throwing (30-90 feet) or ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Wednesday: 5-10 minutes of throwing (30-105 feet) or ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Thursday: 5-10 minutes of throwing (30-120 feet) or ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Friday: 5-15 minutes of throwing (30-135 feet) or ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Saturday: Off/Light

Sunday: 5-15 minutes of throwing (30-120 feet) or ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

** Volume supersedes Distance*

Week 2

**Stretching Out/Massage/Arc — No Pulling Down*

Monday: 10-15 minutes of throwing (30-135 feet) ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Tuesday: 10-15 minutes of throwing (30-150 feet) ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Wednesday: 10-20 minutes of throwing (30-165 feet) ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Thursday: 10-20 minutes of throwing (30-180 feet) ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Friday: 10-20 minutes of throwing (30-195 feet) ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

Saturday: Off/Light

Sunday: 10-20 minutes of throwing (30-150 feet) ~ 5 Throws every 5 feet

** Volume supersedes Distance*

Week 3

**Stretching Out/Massage/Arc — **No Pulling Down*

Monday: 10-20+ minutes of throwing (30-195+ feet)

Tuesday: 15-20+ minutes of throwing (30-210+ feet)

Wednesday: 15-20+ minutes of throwing (30-225+ feet)

Thursday: 15-20+ minutes of throwing (30-240+ feet)

Friday: 15-20+ minutes of throwing (30-255+ feet)

Saturday: Light/Off

Sunday: 15-20+ minutes of throwing (30-200+ feet)

** Volume supersedes Distance*

*** If you begin to feel that your distance is maxed out (for at least 2-3 straight days) at any point during Week 3, you can begin the Pull Down Phase at that point*

NOTE: The plus sign (+) doesn't mean you should feel obligated to go beyond the suggested distance, but is there to give you the option of going past this suggested distance if the arm wants more distance (it is also okay if the arm wants less distance on that given day).

Week 4

**Stretching Out/Massage/Arc — **Pull Down Option*

Monday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing (30-255+ feet)

Tuesday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing (30-270+ feet)

Wednesday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing (30-285+ feet)

Thursday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing (30-300+ feet)

Friday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing (30-300+ feet)

Saturday: Light/Off

Sunday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing (30-300+ feet)

** Volume supersedes Distance*

*** If you begin to feel that your distance is maxed out (for at least 2-3 straight days) at any point during Week 4 you can begin the Pull Down Phase at that point (you'll probably be ready to integrate Pull Downs based on even the strongest of arms by the end of Week 4, or entering Week 5).*

NOTE: The plus sign (+) doesn't mean you should feel obligated to go beyond the suggested distance, but is there to give you the option of going past this suggested distance if the arm wants more distance (it is also okay if the arm wants less distance on that given day).

Week 5

Stretching Out with Arc + Pull Down Phase

Monday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw on the way back in)

Tuesday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light on way back in)

Wednesday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw on the way back in)

Thursday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light on way back in)

Friday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw on the way back in)

Saturday: Off/Light

Sunday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light on way back in)

Week 6:

Stretching Out with Arc + Pull Down Phase

Monday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw on the way back in)

Tuesday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light on the way back in)

Wednesday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw on the way back in)

Thursday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light on the way back in)

Friday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw on the way back in)

Saturday: Off/Light

Sunday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light on way back in)

NOTE: Keep in mind that on your "light days" (Tuesday/Thursday), you may want to go beyond 180 feet depending upon your arm strength, or possibly, less than 180 feet (or possibly even take the day off). There are many variables to consider, so as always, listen to your arm. This is the end of Period 1, the Off Season Build Up/Conditioning period.

Week 7:

In Season (Fall/Winter) *The Introduction of Mound Work*

- Monday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-300+ ft Stretch Out, Pull Down Phase 10 feet per throw, Bull-Pen 15-20 pitches)
- Tuesday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)
- Wednesday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw)
- Thursday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)
- Friday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-300+ ft Stretch Out, Pull Down Phase 10 feet per throw, Bull-Pen 15-25 pitches)
- Saturday:** Off/Light
- Sunday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)

Week 8:

In Season — *The Introduction of Mound Work*

- Monday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-300+ ft Stretch Out, Pull Down Phase 10 feet per throw, Bull-Pen 15-25 pitches)
- Tuesday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)
- Wednesday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw)
- Thursday:** 15-25+ minutes of throwing
(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)

Friday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft Stretch Out, Pull Down Phase 10 feet per throw, Bull-Pen 20-30 pitches)

Saturday: Off/Light

Sunday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)

Week 9:

In Season -- *The Introduction of Mound Work*

Monday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft Stretch Out, Pull Down Phase 10 feet per throw, Bull-Pen 20-30+ pitches)

Tuesday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)

Wednesday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft & Pull Down Phase, 10 feet per throw)

Thursday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)

Friday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-300+ ft Stretch Out, Pull Down Phase 10 feet per throw, Bull-Pen 25-30+ pitches, Live Inning 15 pitches)

Saturday: Off/Light

Sunday: 15-25+ minutes of throwing

(30-180+ ft & Stretching Out Phase only, light to no Pull Downs)



At this point, the format would continue as “live” innings are introduced. In this scenario, Monday would be the bull-pen day and Friday would be the day that “live innings” are introduced, and game situation pitch counts could be increased (*in a perfect world, we’d actually recommend a Tuesday bull-pen and Saturday bull-pen/live inning schedule so that you would have Monday as an extra day to build up to Tuesday in the event that a pitcher didn’t throw on Sunday for a number of reasons. In this scenario, Thursday would be the other key Stretch Out and Pull Down day and Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday would be the 3 aggressive Pull Down days*). In all scenarios, the key is to have your 3 most aggressive Long Toss days spread out evenly over any 7 day period.

With this format of 6 weeks of conditioning, 2 weeks of bull-pens (*4 bull-pens total*), week 9 marks the beginning of the build up for pitch count and game innings. By theoretically adding 15 pitches a week, it would only take an additional 3 weeks to build up to 60 pitches (*12 weeks total from the onset*).

Though, we strongly recommend players always err on the side of spending more, rather than less time getting in shape, some players may simply get into throwing shape and mound shape faster than others. The good news is that regardless of how many weeks it takes to properly build up the pre-mound base, again, the first 2 weeks of bull-pens are also great conditioning weeks for the arm because the effect of 15 pitches on a mound, twice a week, will have essentially little effect on the arm as far as recovery period goes.

For starting pitchers and relief pitchers, this format just continues all the way through the Fall/Winter, where even a starting pitcher will probably not be asked to throw more than 45-60 pitches on any given day. And this format will run itself -- the only adjustments you will need to make is based on your mound days versus the days “in between”.

Again, everyone is different -- but the main thing we want you to focus on is that if you are going to throw off the mound in the Fall/Winter, be sure you have a full, Stretching out and Pulling Down, Long Toss session prior to any day you get on the mound. What you do the other 5 days or so is based on your level of conditioning, recovery period and what your arm demands. And you can ride this wave all the way through your break in the late Fall/Winter.