

Off-Season Football Workouts, Part 1: How to Begin Your Program

Even before the helmets are collected and the uniforms washed, football players are thinking about the off-season—their opportunity to recover physically and psychologically and to work on improving their performance.

The main goal of an off-season football program is to increase the body's ability to stabilize and remain in a controlled posture. As a season progresses, muscular imbalances can occur from injuries—or even from continually cutting in the same direction. This can lead to weaknesses in underused areas of the body, risking potential injury and raising performance issues.

The Stabilization and Endurance Phase focuses on flexibility, core strength, balance, and reactive & resistance training to correct imbalances and provide the base of strength you need to progress through the program. Think of it as laying the foundation for a house. You must increase functional strength, core stabilization and flexibility to prepare your body for the heavy loads it will be taking on later in the training.

In this initial phase, bodyweight and core engagement exercises will comprise the majority of your training. Intensity (percent of max) will be low and reps will be high. Each workout will feature full body exercises, which are necessary to correct imbalances and prepare you for more advanced lifts.

Phase 1: Stability and Endurance Training Variables

- **Reps:** 12-15
- **Sets:** 1-3
- **Percent of Max:** 50-70 percent
- **Frequency:** 2 to 4 times per week
- **Duration:** 3 weeks

Day 1

- Physioball Dumbbell Press
- Single-Leg Bent-Over Row
- Single-Leg Biceps Curl to Overhead Press
- Assisted Pull-Ups
- Glute Bridge
- Single-Leg Squat With Toe Touch
- Bodyweight Squat
- Plank Kick Throughs
- Knee-to-Elbow Plank
- Tuck Jumps (two-second hold on landing)

Day 2

- Physioball Push-Ups
- Inverted Row
- Dumbbell Step-Ups With Shoulder Press
- Physioball Dumbbell Pullovers
- Dumbbell Single-Leg RDL
- Pistol Squat
- Power Clean
- Standing Resistance Band Core Rotations
- Single-Arm, Single-Leg Plank
- Single-Leg Mini Hurdle Hops

Day 3

- Physioball Dumbbell Incline
- Single-Leg Resistance Band Row (pull for four seconds)
- Seated Physioball Shoulder Press
- Neutral-Grip Pull-Ups (slowly lower for two to three seconds)
- Single-Leg Physioball Hamstring Curl
- Dumbbell Bulgarian Split-Squat
- Dead lift
- Physioball Leg Rotations
- Physioball Back Extensions
- Broad Jumps (two-second hold on landing)

Check out [Off-Season Football Workouts, Part 2](#) when you're ready to move to the strength and endurance phase.

Source: Clark, Micheal, Scott Lucett, and Donald T. Kirkendall. *Nasm's Essentials of Sports Performance Training*. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2010.

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