

Do you have a yearly training plan?

Are you following the plan?

Planning is the key to successful performance. A well organized yearly plan enables you, the skater, to make the best possible use of the available resources, facilities and practice time to meet the identified short and long term goals. Planning leads you to feel organized and confident that you are prepared for up and coming competitions. Producing a personal best performance at the time of the competition is the ultimate goal of the yearly plan.

The following factors should be considered in your plan and are listed here to assist you in completing the corresponding chart:

1) Goals and Objectives

- Have you selected 3 technical goals and 3 performance goals?
Technical goals – required elements for competition - e.g. double axel
Performance goals - e.g. top half placement at the Challenge

2) Competition, Tests, Seminars

- Consider timing and spacing of events to maximize progress and performance results
- Do you have a list of events which you plan to enter?
- Do you have exact locations and dates?
- Which events do you consider major and which, minor?
- What are your objectives and goals for these competitions?
- When do you plan to take your next test in your competitive discipline?
- When do you plan other tests not related to your competitive discipline?
- What seminars are you going to attend this year? When? Where?
- What adjustments to your daily/weekly training plan must you make to attend?

3) Equipment Checklist

- Do you keep your skates and blades in good shape?
- When do you order new skates and blades?
- Do you have extra laces, tights, etc.?
- When do you schedule sharpening?
- When do you schedule new costumes? design, color, fabric, finishes, purchase, construction
- Schedule the first wearing of the costume – in simulation, in non-major event

4) Skill Development

- Organize the learning and training in an orderly manner
- Practice Schedule - Number of training hours per week
Be specific – identify the number of practices over the number of lessons for each area of training identified. e.g. Jumps – double axel 5/3 would indicate the skater works on the double axel jump during 5 (45 minute) sessions per week and the coach gives 3 (30 minute) lessons per week on the double axel.
Identify proportion of hours spent on free skating, skating skills, stroking, dance, etc.
- When is your scheduled rest periods or active rest periods?
*A **rest period** is any time 3 days to a month with no training activity.*
***Active rest** is any time 3 days to a month with no on-ice training but still carrying out off-ice training or other physical activity.*
- Identify activity levels during holidays like Christmas, spring break or perhaps an entire month during spring

- Identify the training phases in your year

Preparatory Phase

- Learning new skills
- Developing new programs

Pre-Competitive Phase

- Practicing new skills
- Training new programs
- Simulations
- Minor competitions

Main Competitive Phase

- Refining new skills e.g. consistency in correct double axel
- No changes in program
- Working very hard but for shorter times to concentrate energy and focus into the single run-throughs of the program(s)

Tapering Off Period

- One week to ten days prior to very important competition
- Training sessions focus on quality
- One single run-through during a session simulates competition

Transition Period

- Can be as long as a month or as short as a week
- Wrapping up last year, preparing for next year
- Evaluation of achievements
- Meetings with coaches, parents, officials, support staff

Active Rest Period

- Time away from skating as defined above

5) General Fitness and Health

- Have you scheduled physical and medical check-ups?
- Have you scheduled physiotherapy or other treatment for acute or chronic injuries?
- Have you scheduled preventative therapy e.g. massage after intense training session?
- Have you scheduled off-ice and on-ice testing for the strength, flexibility, endurance and cardiovascular components of conditioning?
- Identify on the chart your off-ice training programs - frequency and type - e.g. 1.5 hr. weekly dance class, daily one mile run, twice weekly weight training

6) Mental Skills

- Learning to train and perform
- Concentration and emotional control
- Practice strategies - e.g. relaxation and visualization
- What are your competitive strategies to allow you to perform your program at its best?

7) Program Development

- Indicate on the chart specifically short or long programs, original or free dance
- When do you listen to possible new music?

Developing a Yearly Training Plan

- When do you and your coach/choreographer start to put new programs together - e.g. early in season or late in season after new skill strengths have been identified and consolidated?
- Indicate specific choreography sequence during the year -
When are programs being created – theme, blocking?
When are programs being refined – connecting steps, artistic statements?
When are programs being evaluated – tests, simulations, competitions?
- Planning the readiness of the program – when are you going to skate the program in chain linking sections, run-throughs without all the high risk elements, complete run-throughs?
- Evaluation sessions/ goal setting/ monitoring -
When are simulations done on clear ice?
When are simulations done with monitors present? Monitors may include judges, technical specialists and/ or technical controllers who will determine the levels and legality of elements.

8) **School and Social**

- Enter dates of important activities e.g. exams, prom, etc.
- When do you study – during the day or evening and approximate number of hours per day?

9) **Achievements**

- Did you achieve some or all of your goals for season?
- List some major accomplishments

Evaluate and revise your yearly training plan on a regular basis to ensure that everything is on track for VIP dates. Many factors will influence your progress and some may even require a change in goals. The key point to keep in mind is that planning is an ongoing process that needs to be started before the season starts and carried on throughout the year.

Your plan is unique since it is tailored to you, the athlete – to your individual strengths and weaknesses. Your unique plan is necessary to keep you on track as you journey toward your technical and performance goals in the upcoming competitive season.

GOOD LUCK!