Integrating females into the strength and conditioning program

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Girls have participated in our off-season and summer conditioning programs for several years. They work along with the boys, although much of the time they are involved in their own program. Our experience with the coed facility has been positive. It is helpful for the girls to see the intensity with which many of the boys work. On the other side of the coin, boys are naturally motivated to excel for the girls, and sometimes we get a girl who is very good, which really keeps the guys working for improvement. Girls are sometimes reluctant to try new exercises around the boys, but we find ways to let them help each other.

In the beginning, our girls are taught a modified version of the Dan Gable 12 x 12 program (Figures 1 and 1a). This involves 12 repetitions of 12 basic large muscle exercises following a work, rest, work again routine for each muscle group. Also, by adding rope jumping between each exercise, it becomes an aerobic workout. We get to work on balance, breathing, control of the weight, and a high volume of repetitions. Most girls who have not lifted start with approximately 20 percent of body weight. When the lifter is able to handle the workout correctly in eight minutes, three to five pounds of weight are added. The same weight is used for all exercises except the behind-the-neck press. It is often best to reduce the weight and increase the
Do 12 reps each exercise every other day. Start with approximately 20 percent body weight, increase weight when time is less than eight minutes.

1. Hack squat and heel raise. Step back over bar.
2. Row, touch floor and navel each rep.
3. Squat keep feet flat.
4. Tricep press elbows high, hands together.
5. Twists 12 reps each side.
6. Press Bar to front.
7. Heel raise.
8. Forearm curl.
11. Upright row hands together, lift to chin.
12. Step and knee, 12 reps each leg.

Figure 1. Off-season Strength, Flexibility and Conditioning
Dan Gable 12 x 12 Program
reps to get a good technique workout on this exercise. After three weeks of lifting and instruction, we administer our version of the University of Nebraska Survivor Test for Women using a multi-station weight machine (Figure 2). We ask the girls to try and get a minimum total of 100 repetitions. Rest time is limited to five minutes between exercises. The test is basically a self-inventory, and although we stay with the Gable workout much of the time, we use Survivor results in building a program to fit individual differences. At this point, most girls begin to do much the same workout as the boys. We particularly emphasize the squats, lunges, sit-ups, lat pulldowns and sport-specific exercises.

Based upon physical maturity, strength and lifting experience, our female workout schedule would include some or all of the following: warm-up and flexibility to include three to five minutes of rope jumping followed by a similar time frame of slow stretching exercises.

Monday
Gable
Lat pulls (3 x 10)
Walking lunges (weighted)
Squats (70 percent BW)
Medicine ball (drills)
Sit-ups

Wednesday
Gable with jump rope
Power skips (4 x 100 ft)
Walking lunges (3 x 1/2 court)
Power rack (squats)
Vertical jumps (standing triple jumps)
Roman chair (extensions)

Friday
Gable
Lat pulls (4 x 5)
Walking lunges (weighted)
Squats (75 percent BW)
Medicine ball (drills)
Sit-ups

Cultural differences are usually a factor, but often it takes the girls longer to learn to work hard enough to really see their improvement. In many cases the girls are eager to work, but they get negative feedback from home, especially from mothers. With the guys, once they really get into working diligently, they soon have to get a larger shirt. When the girls really get into diligent workouts, we often hear that their clothes are fitting better as the inches disappear. We are always conscious of body fat with all our students, and the girls

1. Hack squat - Palms back, heels down and hips low with chest high, come up to toes, balance after each rep.

2. Bent-over row - Keep back flat and parallel to floor, move bar from floor to navel with trunk held still.

3. Squat - Feet under armpits with heels down, lower to hips, parallel position while keeping chest high.

4. Tricep press - Most girls will benefit by reducing the weight; keep the elbows high and work the triceps.

5. Twists - Keep hips centered and pushed forward, look to the top end of the bar, bench each way for one rep.

6. Press - Body straight, head level, lift weight straight up and return to sternum.

7. Heel raise - With bar against chest, slowly raise the heels and return, use full range of motion.

8. Forearm curl - Palms back, allow the weight to swing out when lifting; slide elbows back to lower the bar straight down.

9. Back lift - Knees slightly bent, back flat, slower is better.

10. Bicep curl - Same techniques as in number 8.

11. Upright row - Palms back, hands touching, bring elbows high and emphasize deep breathing.

12. Lunges - Place bar on sternum with elbows under bar. Step out with a large step and return the foot to original position. A step with each foot is one repetition.

Figure 1a. Dan Gable 12 x 12 Program Coaching Points
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bench press:</td>
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<td>50% of BW</td>
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<td>2. Squat:</td>
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<td>70% of BW</td>
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<td>3. Lat pulldowns:</td>
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<td>45% of BW</td>
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<td>4. Shoulder press:</td>
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<td>35% of BW</td>
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<td>5. Leg curl:</td>
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<tr>
<td>25% of BW</td>
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**Total:**

**Figure 2. Female Survivor Test**

This test was revised from the following source: Epley, B. 1982. *Husker Power*. Lincoln, NE: UNL Printing and Duplicating. page 77.

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The Hays High school coed class combines free weight exercises with flexibility drills and aerobics for a total conditioning program.

really work to get the percentage down.

For most of the students in the program, total conditioning to enhance athletic performance is the primary goal. More girls than boys work out without being in athletics. We have found strenuous exercise combined with a sound flexibility and aerobic program does wonders for the self-image.

The summer program involves more than 150 students. Many girls are regular in their workouts and also participate in our strength and conditioning classes during the school year. We like our coed program and have seen both boys and girls help each other to become better. We would not want anything else.