



4 SIMPLE WAYS TO BECOME A BETTER ATHLETE

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CTS Strength & Conditioning

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In order to continue the progress that we have made during the last 3 weeks and ensure a smooth transition into our training in January and February, it would be ideal to see as many of you as possible over the break at least once a week so we don't take steps backwards. (Contact your coaches for our winter break hours - I would like to delegate a certain day and time slot for you girls only).

With that said, I also understand it's Winter break and many of you are on vacation. BUT, if you are in town, and you are truly serious about becoming a better athlete, dedicate at least a minimum of 1 hour a week to some sort of physical/intensive exercise. It would even be beneficial for you to do things on days you are NOT with us at CTS. The little things you do add up over time, so I thought I would share some ways that anyone can follow immediately. Here are 4 simple ways to ensure you are on your way to becoming a better athlete over the break.

- **Stretching:** Focus on hip flexors, quadriceps (front of thighs), hamstrings (back of thighs), groin (if you have ever had a groin pull you would know this is very painful), and calves. Most of us have had a little bit of tightness, and it's especially noticeable during exercises such as squats, lunges, etc. Doing these little things WILL make you a better athlete if you take a little bit of time out of your day to do them. It doesn't take long, just do it!
- **Drinking Water:** It amazes me how little water most teenage athletes drink. We're talking "maybe" a small bottle of water at lunch and maybe during practice. I recommend 1/2 your bodyweight in ounces per day. So, for example, if you weigh 135 lbs, you would want to shoot for around 65-70 oz of water per day. It sounds like a lot, but if you are training hard, you will need this to ensure you are hydrated at all times. Without sufficient water, your athletic performance suffers greatly, as well as academics. This usually leads to some sort of sickness/illness too. Not good! So keep that in mind.
- **Get some sleep!** This is another one that boggles my mind - many of my athletes complain they are always tired. I ask them what time they usually go to bed, and the common answer is midnight or later. Why? Because they were up late either: on Facebook, playing video games, texting, watching pointless TV, on the phone, or all of the above. I understand that you are in middle school and/or high school and it's important to be social, but if you value your athletic career (which goes by like a blink of an eye, trust me!), then you need to get quality sleep, and that means minimum 7 hours. Ideally in bed and lights out before 11 PM. Again, it's your choice here, but I highly recommend it. Nothing important is happening on Facebook anyways.
- **Eat Breakfast:** Lack of food is probably the #1 common trend with young athletes, especially breakfast. I am always asking if they are eating in the mornings, and if so, what are they eating. Some usually say "don't have time" which is a lame excuse (wake up 20 minutes earlier). Or if they do, it's some form of sugary cereal. Eating in the mornings sets the tone for the day, and food choices matter. Think foods such as eggs, oatmeal, fruit, juice, milk, toast, bagel w/ peanut butter, etc. Just try to avoid processed junk at all costs.

Remember, the little things add up. You are all old enough to start making smart choices and it starts with these little things. I guarantee that if you consistently follow these steps, along with continuing to train hard in the gym, on the field, and in the classroom, you will be FAR ahead of your competitors.

From CTS Strength & Conditioning to the entire Napa Xtreme Softball Organization, Parents, Coaches, and Athletes, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

John Cortese, CSCS

Owner, CTS Strength & Conditioning