



Cathy Freemans (YES, THIS IS THE NAME)

This is a total upper body work-out. You've really got to concentrate on keeping your hips up by keeping your core nice and tight. You don't want to let your hips sag and drop or arch your back. You don't want your backside tilted up to the air – keep a straight plank. You are using muscles you never knew you had to use. A lot of it is balance – as soon as you bring your arm up to touch your shoulder, your instinct is to sway your hips. My trainer used to sit there and hold my hips for me, because my brain was telling me to move them. You have to re-train yourself. At first, I did 20-30 seconds. I've worked my way up to 60 seconds, which is pretty difficult.



Bodyblade

My doctor told me I had a bit of weakness in my right shoulder and had to work on the control there. The first day I picked it up I really struggled to get the movement happening. Now I'm a lot better at it and I can tell that it works. The scapular at the back of my shoulder is stronger, where before it was a bit weak and vulnerable to being injured. At first you want to lock your shoulder blade in and shake the blade without letting go of the shoulder blade, then move the arm without moving the shoulder. I do 60 seconds in each position, then keep doing that until fatigue.

FARAH ON...

INJURY

When you're out there playing you don't really think of the injury. It has more of an effect on your preparation for the game. There were times I couldn't train and times I couldn't do the extra fitness I needed. So instead of being able to go for a 4-5km run, I had to go for a swim. Even though swimming is still good exercise, it's not the same. I was going into games knowing I wasn't preparing to the best of my ability. And if my preparation's a bit off I start to doubt myself.



RECOVERY

"Near death" style exercise in the gym is one of those things you don't really want to do during the season when you're playing games. Recovery is the most important thing – more so than the training load. It's very hard to make sure your body's recovering week in, week out. There are all sorts of things from ice baths to stretching classes and recovery drinks. After a game back in the old days it was straight on the beers; now we're on the Gatorades and supplements to make sure our body's ready for next week. That's why the game has evolved; it's a lot faster these days. Everyone's looking for the edge.

DIET AND NUTRITION

I'm a bit of a natural weight-gainer, but my metabolism's sped up with all the training I've done. Now, if anything, I probably need to eat a bit more. If I'm not doing weights, I lose weight because of the muscle mass. Before and after weights your proteins are important to rebuild the muscles you're damaging and to aid muscle growth.



After a game and after training, we're told it's important to get a big meal of carbs into the system quickly, usually within the first hour to 90 minutes. It's good for your recovery. I'm not too strict with my diet; I have plenty of home cooking and stuff like that. Anything in moderation is OK. I love some hot chips, and I'll have a piece of chocolate every day, after dinner. That's important, but you've got to watch how much of it you eat.

ALTITUDE PROBLEM

Athletes have long trained at altitude to gain an advantage, but now technology is saving on those plane fares to Mexico. For the Wests Tigers boys, that lung-busting session comes in the form of **hypoxic training: a canister containing a high-altitude oxygen mix, and a breathing mask.** "You've got a device that you breathe through, which puts your lungs under more strain," says Farah. "It's absolute torture. We do cardio while using it – inside on the rowers, on the bikes, treadmills. Or we walk up and down the steps in the grandstand while breathing through this device. As much as I hate doing it, the results are there that it does work. You're getting the training effect without running your body into the ground. We do six-minute blocks with a four-minute break in between, and do that between three and six times."

WEDNESDAY

DAY OFF. I like to just relax, take it easy. Get some lunch, go to the beach. But the club tells us not to do absolutely nothing – that's also not good for you. You've got to keep the body moving, even if it's just a walk down the shops to buy a paper or getting in the water for a quick swim, it's good to do something.
12AM BED. I don't go to bed early, but I do like to get at least eight hours. We start training at 10am and I don't live too far away from training, so I'm usually up at 8am, have some breakfast and get myself ready. I find if I sleep too much I get a bit sluggish too.

THURSDAY

SAME AS MONDAY.



FRIDAY

REPLAY OF TUESDAY. More torture just before the weekend.

SATURDAY

Sometimes we train Saturday mornings. It usually starts a bit earlier on a Saturday, maybe an 8am start. It's an hour or two-hour session and we're usually home by 10am. So even though you are training in the morning you still get the two days off. Saturday night, I'm still pretty strict. Even though I might go out for dinner, I'll only have a couple of drinks, nothing overboard.
12AM Bed.

SUNDAY

Go out for a bit. I like to head out for lunch somewhere. Go down the shops for a bit of a stroll. Generally, by Sunday night I just whack a DVD on and have an early night for a good sleep before the beginning of the week.
10.30PM Bed.

