



Cross-Training

“She brought athleticism to a whole new level with her training techniques—particularly cross-training, the idea that you could go to the gym or play basketball to get in shape for tennis. She had everything down to a science ... and that was an inspiration to me. I really think she helped me to be a better athlete.”

—Chris Evert,
American tennis champ
(speaking about her frequent
opponent Martina Navratilova)

Whether you are a competitive athlete, new to exercise, or want to improve your skills in surfing, hiking, or even throwing a Frisbee, this badge will help you customize a cross-training fitness program that’s effective and, most importantly, fun! The idea of cross-training is to incorporate a variety of cardio, strength, and conditioning exercises into a routine that trains your whole body. Ready? Grab your sweatband, and create a plan that’s perfect for your body, mind, and goals.

Steps

1. Set your cross-training goal
2. Start a stretching and flexibility program
3. Add a cardio element
4. Add a toning or strengthening element
5. Stay motivated to reach your goal

Purpose

When I’ve earned this badge, I’ll have developed a great cross-training routine that keeps my workouts interesting and fun.

What's Your Goal?

Your cross-training program could help you:

- Improve a specific skill in your sport
- Play a new team position
- Learn a new sport
- Be able to run a 10K or marathon, or participate in a triathlon
- Strengthen and tone specific body parts
- Prepare for a sports trip such as snow skiing, water skiing, hiking, and more
- Release stress
- Keep your heart healthy
- Maintain or achieve a healthy weight

Why Cross-train?

Because cross-training:

- Conditions your entire body
- Alleviates boredom by mixing up your routine
- Helps you develop new workout skills
- Reduces risk of injury from repeated use
- Allows you more flexibility with your exercise choices
- Improves your skill, agility, and balance

Tips Before Takeoff

- ▶ **After you've completed step 1, you'll need to decide how to start your cross-training program—it should last for at least two months.** You could begin the program in step 2 with one week of stretching, then add cardio the second week, then add strengthening the third, and spend the last five weeks doing the whole routine. Or you could create your entire program before you begin your two months, and settle on a weekly schedule that includes all three. (This doesn't have to mean all three in one day, but at least schedule all three in your week!)
- ▶ **Remember that your plan can always change** as you turn your program into exactly what's right for you.
- ▶ **Some of the steps have choices that suggest working with an expert.** If you do that choice more than once, pick a different expert each time, so you can build your network and get a variety of perspectives.

Every step has three choices. Do **ONE** choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

STEP 1 Set your cross-training goal

A cross-training plan you'll stick to needs a firm goal—one you can keep in mind as you work up a sweat and flex your muscles. Develop yours in this step. Check out the sidebar for ideas as you're getting started.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Get advice from a professional.** Interview a coach, personal trainer, professional athlete, or physical education teacher. (If you already play a sport, you could discuss possible goals with your coach.) Talk about your strengths, weaknesses, and skills you might like to improve. Then set your goal.
OR -----
- ☐ **Get evaluated.** Some fitness centers offer fitness evaluations for free, or you might find a program online you could do yourself, such as the President's Fitness Test. Record your results, and use them to develop your fitness goal.
OR -----
- ☐ **Create a fitness statement.** Chat with friends and family, reflect on your own ideas, and then write a statement that sets out your goal. You could get creative and find ways to post it in places that will inspire you, such as on your bathroom mirror or as wallpaper on a computer or cell phone you use.

FOR MORE FUN: Is there a photograph of something or someone that inspires you—an athlete you admire or a mountain you hope to climb someday? Add this visual to your fitness statement.

Cross-training = Success —for Pros, Too!

For years, cross-training has been in vogue, and slightly undercover, in professional sports. In the early 1990s, sports journalists reported that Denver Broncos wide receiver Vance Johnson studied ballet to improve his agility and balance. Soon after, many college football coaches admitted they regularly used dance in their players' training regimen. Today, training methods for NFL stars include martial arts, yoga, Pilates (a strengthening routine), and dance. Here are some other cross-training success stories.



CANDACE PARKER

The Women's

National Basketball champion and MVP is known for her lower-body power and strength, which she develops off-season with a routine that includes sprinting, lunges and balancing exercises, repeatedly jumping on and off a box, and more.



MARTINA NAVRATILOVA

When she decided she wanted to

be tops in tennis, Navratilova took up weightlifting to improve her upper-body strength. She became known for her single-handed backhand and impressive volleys, and retired with a record of 167 singles championships.



TATYANA MCFADDEN

Paralympic athlete Tatyana McFadden is a runner and wheelchair basketball player. She lifts weights to stay strong for both sports. Wheelchair basketball players must hit the hoop from a sitting position—weightlifting helps keep her back and arms strong enough to do it.



MARIA SHARAPOVA

In 2008, Sharapova's shoulder injury prevented her from playing in the U.S. Open and on the Olympics tennis team. To get back into competition, the tennis pro walked hills, biked outdoors, and took yoga classes.



MARIEL ZAGUNIS

The fencing champion who won Olympic gold medals in 2004 and 2008 says she likes tennis "because the quick feet movement and the hand-eye coordination and the reaction time is kind of the same [as fencing]. I play it to also condition, but have fun while I'm doing it."

“Fitness to me isn’t about a crunch or a push-up, it’s about taking your power back.”

—Jillian Michaels,
personal trainer

STEP

2 Start a stretching and flexibility program

Stretching provides you greater flexibility and mobility. Your program should include a stretching routine of at least 15 minutes specific to your goals. Do one of these choices to create your routine.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Ask an expert.** This might be an athlete in your sport, a physical education teacher, personal trainer or coach, physical therapist, or sports doctor. Discuss your goal, and ask for safe stretches targeted to your goal.

OR

- ☐ **Take a yoga or Pilates class.** There might be one at your local fitness or community center, perhaps even for free. Sign up for one, and make the class a regular part of your workout plan. Or take the class once and ask to chat with the teacher afterward. Tell them your goal, and ask which of the poses you did would be appropriate to do on your own. (The teacher may point you to additional resources to make sure you do the poses safely and correctly.)

OR

- ☐ **Research and develop your own program.** At the library, in books, or online, find stretches to warm up and safely stretch out your body in preparation for your goals.

Stretching Tips

Stretch until you feel a tug, not pain. Don’t bounce. Stretching is about doing it slowly and easily. Breathe normally—don’t hold your breath. Hold each stretch for 10–20 seconds. Relax and repeat.

If you tear, bruise, or over-stretch a muscle or ligament, don’t keep working out through the pain. If it continues to hurt, let an adult know, and have a doctor check it out. Either way, take a few days off from your workout.

“The hardest thing about exercise is to start doing it. Once you are doing exercise regularly, the hardest thing is to stop it.”

—Erin Gray,
American actress



Upward
facing dog



Downward
facing dog



Plow



Tree

**Yoga is a
great way to
stretch!**

STEP 3 Add a cardio element

Cardio is probably the most fun part of cross-training because it's about getting your body moving. It increases your heart rate and trains your muscles to use oxygen more efficiently. Anything that gets your heart pumping can be cardio exercise: running, dancing, or even walking at a brisk pace. Add a cardio component of at least 30 minutes to your routine.

CHOICES — DO ONE:

- ☐ **Head outdoors.** You could go jogging, ride a bike, take a power walk, bounce on a trampoline, twirl around in a Hula-Hoop, snowshoe through the woods, or hike up a hill. Whatever you choose, get your heart rate up to a level that gives you cardio benefits. See the box for more heart rate information.

OR

- ☐ **Try the gym.** You might find free courses in your community for a class in step aerobics, spinning, Zumba, water aerobics, or kickboxing. If you can access a pool, try swimming laps!

OR

- ☐ **Mix it up.** Mix swimming with biking, running, playing basketball, climbing stairs, or even jumping rope—you might switch up for each week of the badge.

Tip: If you're doing this badge to improve a cardio sport, be true to the spirit of cross-training and choose a different cardio activity for your program.

Overtraining

If you find you're having problems with sleep, appetite loss, or fatigue, you may be overtraining. You can prevent overtraining by cutting back on the intensity. Keep training for the same amount of time, but train more lightly. For instance, walk on a treadmill instead of run. You can gradually increase the intensity as your body recovers.

Monitor Your Heart Rate

To get the most out of your exercise, find out what your target training heart rate is for your age:

$$220 - \text{YOUR AGE} = \text{MAXIMUM HEART RATE}$$

Your heart rate while exercising should be at 50% to 75% of that maximum number. You can use a heart rate monitor to stay at that level, or pause every so often to measure yourself:

$$\text{COUNT PULSE BEATS FOR 10 SEC.} \times 6 = \text{BPM}$$

Do the math to find the range of bpm (estimated beats per minute) that's between 50% and 75% for you.



National Strength and Conditioning Association

Visit the National Strength and Conditioning Association's website (nsca-lift.org) to locate a certified conditioning specialist by state and city. The website provides names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. If you can't locate someone near you, call or e-mail the closest person to get a referral. (The site also has great videos with tips and exercises!)

STEP 4 Add a toning or strengthening element

Toning exercises condition and strengthen muscles and can raise your metabolism (the way you burn food energy) and release stress from your body. There are many ways to strengthen: You can use free weights (barbells), fitness machines, or do body-weight exercises (pull-ups or lunges). Use one of these choices to create a strength routine that's at least 15 minutes long.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Get expert help.** Seek out a certified strength and conditioning specialist to help design a strengthening program that will meet your goals. You can also talk to a personal trainer, coach, or gym teacher.

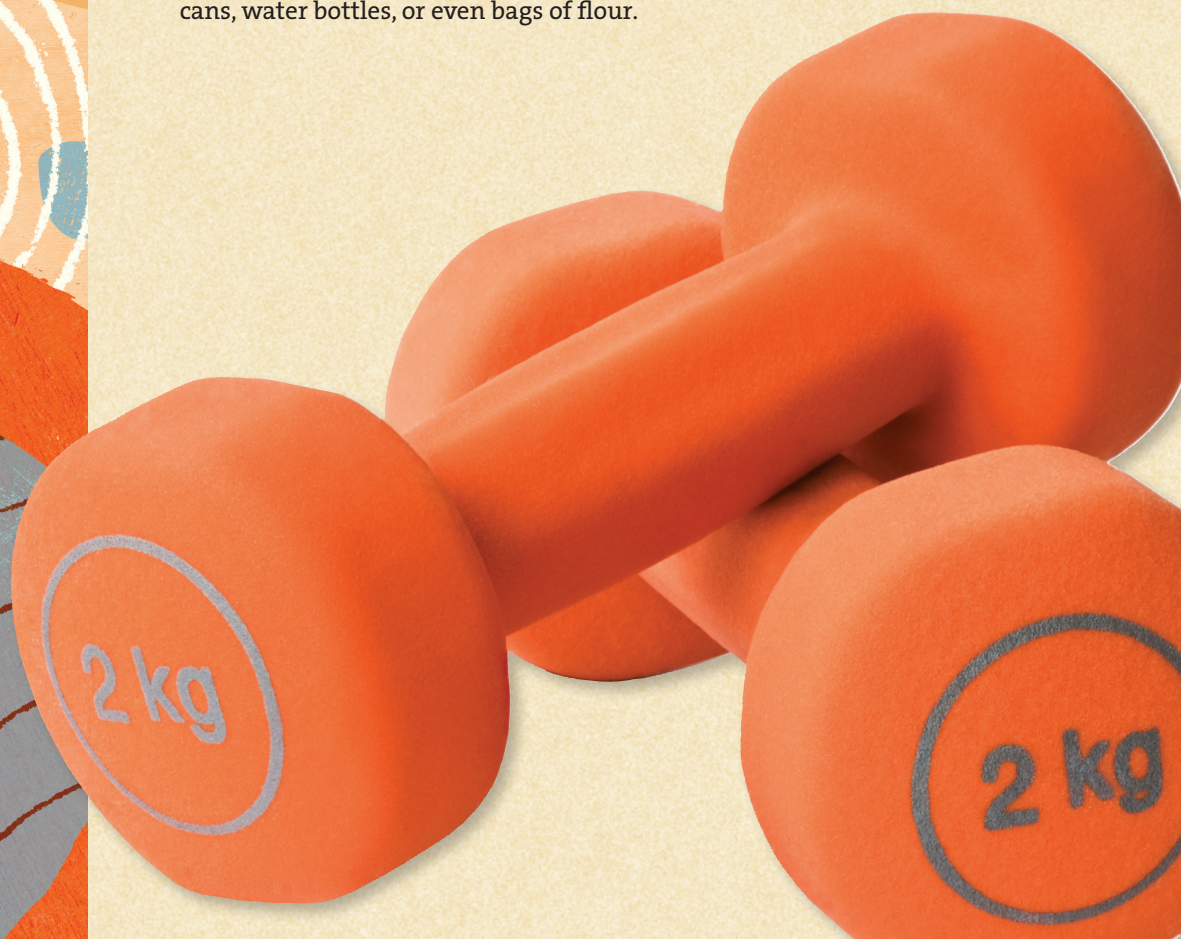
OR

- ☐ **Circuit train.** Many gyms or workout rooms set up their machines in a circuit, meaning that you can move from machine to machine to work out different body parts.

OR

- ☐ **Set up a free-weight plan.** This is especially helpful if you don't have access to a workout room or gym. Research five body-weight exercises, such as lunges and push-ups, and five free-weight exercises that will help you meet your goal.

Tip: Don't have access to barbells? Get creative: Consider lifting soup cans, water bottles, or even bags of flour.



STEP 5 Stay motivated to reach your goal

Now that you've established your workout goal and developed your program, put it into action! (See **Tips Before Takeoff** for more about the two-month requirement.) Do one of these choices to help you stay on track, stay motivated, and reach your goal.

CHOICES — DO ONE:

- ☐ **My Before and After.** Chart your progress in a journal—fill it with words, photos, and sketches that motivate you. At the end of every workout, record what you did, for how long, and how you feel. Whether or not you reach your goal in two months, it will be a fantastic reference as you grow as an athlete!

FOR MORE FUN: Ask someone to take video of you doing your skill at the beginning of the two months and again at the end.

OR

- ☐ **Find inspiration in numbers!** Find a workout partner, fitness mentor, or friend or family member who's interested in helping you. Let them know about your training goals and what you hope to accomplish. Then make a plan to work together to achieve it.

OR

- ☐ **Learn it to teach it.** Sometimes the best way to find out if you truly have a skill is to try and teach it to someone else. Who could benefit from the skills you develop here? Keep that person or group in mind, and when you've completed the badge, teach them something you learned to do. (If you plan to do the Coaching badge as a Girl Scout Ambassador, this might be a great choice for you.)

More to Explore

Keep a running list of challenges you face and how you handle them.

After you complete the badge, review your record, and share some real-life anecdotes and advice with other Girl Scouts working on their Athlete badges.

Keep At It!

There are many ways to find the boost you need to get your workouts going. Here are a few ideas:

- Schedule a weekly routine, and write it down so you'll stick to it.
- Make a compilation of workout tunes.
- Coordinate your workout wardrobe. Sometimes it's easier to be at your best when you look your best.

CAREERS TO EXPLORE

Physiologist
Aerobics instructor
Physical/occupational therapist
Dietitian/sports nutritionist
Sports rehabilitation therapist
Strength and conditioning coach

Medical researcher
Sports and health writer
Sports psychologist
Sports physician
Gear and athletic equipment designer
Group fitness instructor

Gym manager
Fitness travel guide
Athletic program development director
Sports massage therapist
Physical education teacher



Add the Badge to Your Journeys

National Leadership Journeys encourage you to think about taking care of yourself as you learn to be a leader in the world around you. As you set your fitness goal in step 1, take a little time to think about why it's important for leaders to make time for physical exercise. Maybe you can even talk to a coach or fitness expert about some similarities between athletes and leaders.

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Helping Girl Scout volunteers incorporate exercise into Girl Scout activities
- Assisting younger girls in developing healthy exercise plans
- Sharing my routine with other athletes who have similar goals



I'm inspired to: