



Soccer Workouts for Ultimate Fitness

"We lost because we didn't win." –Ronaldo (Brazilian soccer player)

The World Cup is here!

The World Cup is by far my favorite event of all time. Not just my favorite sporting event, but my favorite event. It only comes around once every four years, so when it arrives, it's truly a spectacle. The whole world (except maybe the US) stops for a month to celebrate the very best the game has to offer. Now that it's underway, I thought it would be fitting to write a post about soccer workouts.



The words "soccer" and "fitness" might as well be interchangeable.

Everyone knows that soccer players are some of the fittest athletes on the planet. Why? Soccer conditioning is among the most rigorous of any sport. The entire game consists of doing hard sprints, kicking, jumping, sliding, and shielding off opponents using both upper and lower body strength. Any of these exercises by itself will get you ripped. When you combine them all, the results are phenomenal. At the highest level, soccer players do all of this at full speed for 90 minutes. It's not uncommon for a soccer player to cover a distance of 6 to 8 miles in a single match.

When I played competitive soccer on a regular basis, I was in the best shape of my life.

Unfortunately, that was back in middle school and high school before I started lifting weights, so I never achieved the ideal physique that results from combining a low body fat and plenty of high-intensity cardio with resistance training. Now that I have added in that third piece of the puzzle, I am seeing some of the best results I have ever seen. I don't play nearly as much soccer as I used to, but I have been getting back into it more lately. Also my diet is much cleaner than it was before.

In middle school, I would play up to five hours a day: an hour of pickup at lunch, two hours of school team practice after classes, and two hours of club team practice after that. Then I'd have several games each weekend. These days, I don't have the luxury of playing five hours a day, but I do play in an adult city league and company intramural league at different points during the year. I also play in pickup games whenever possible.

Pickup sports are a great way to stay in shape and have fun at the same time!

I love playing pickup soccer for several reasons. It doesn't cost any money (except after the game when you go to the bar). There's no pressure. You get to hang out with your friends and get great exercise at the same time. I think everyone could benefit from playing more pickup sports. It doesn't even have to be soccer. I have a few friends who play Ultimate Frisbee, which is another great sport for getting lean.



[Click Here](#)

Get the Lean
"Hollywood" Look

Muscle Building
...for Guys Who
Get It.

I thought a fun way to end the post would be to talk about the different training and lifestyle habits of some of my favorite professional soccer players (as you can tell, I'm a little biased towards American players).



Oguchi Onyewu looks more like a lineman than a soccer player. The guy is a beast and the rock of the American defense. He is very muscular without a doubt, but not too bulky. In fact, for someone with his frame, I'd say he is pretty much the ideal. One of the strength exercises Onyewu performs regularly is single-leg squats. You can do these either balancing on a bench or a box on one leg squatting down until your other foot almost touches the floor. This exercise hits all the large leg muscles as well as the core. Beginners should try them without any weight first. Gooch does three sets of 15 reps while holding two 30 pound dumbbells. Yeah, like I said... beast.

Landon Donovan has a much smaller frame than Onyewu but is still very fit and deceptively quick. As an attacking player, he relies more on his speed and acceleration than a central defender like Gooch who is more "brawn." Donovan is the all-time leader in goals and assists for the US national team and arguably the best player this country has ever produced. As the current poster boy for American soccer, he faces a lot of pressure on the field, so off the field when he's not shooting commercials or appearing on late night shows, he likes to relax in his Southern California home whenever possible. After training sessions, he enjoys lounging around with his dogs, taking a nap, or going for a stroll on the beach.



Cristiano Ronaldo is the ultimate soccer superstar. Not only is he one of the best, if not the best, player in the world, but he is also a physical specimen. He boasts the exact type of look that I am pushing on this site. He's got the six-pack and is very lean, toned, and muscular without going over the top. This is the body type that women fantasize over so it's no coincidence that he is one of the most popular players in the game on and off the field. Some of his training techniques are a little unconventional and maybe more a tribute to his vanity than anything else. A source at his club team Real Madrid has reported that he will do as many as three thousand sit ups per day while watching television. In training, he also dribbles the ball with ankle weights strapped to his feet (probably why he is so good at blowing past defenders).

Frankie Hejduk may be a relative unknown to most of the soccer world, but American soccer fans love him. He is not on the 2010 World Cup squad, but he is a two-time World Cup participant and a two-time Olympian. Hejduk is known for his boundless energy on and off the field. At the age of 35, he is still playing professionally and loving every minute of it. His stamina and endurance can be attributed to his active lifestyle off the field. When he's not grinding out soccer workouts, the guy is a big-time surfer. In fact, he was a national champion in high school. Also, he is a huge Bob Marley fan and drinks about six cups of coffee every day. Just goes to show that soccer players come from all walks of life.



P.S. I will be very distracted over the next month with the World Cup going on. I am going to attempt to watch as many of the matches as I can (thanks to my DVR). That's a few hours of soccer each day on top of my full-time job. So if I start slacking on the posts a little, that's probably why.