

# Game-Off Conditioning

The Non-League Network

Game-Off Conditioning

# OVERVIEW

No game this week? Use one of these sessions to maintain your fitness, speed and strength.

**Choose ONE session. Don't do all four.**

## OPTION A
### Running Session

## OPTION B
### Gym Sled Session

## OPTION C
### Normal Gym Session

## OPTION D
### Treadmill Running Session

# OPTION A

## Running Session

**Field-based football conditioning**

**Total: 60–70 mins**

Top Tip

**Unsure of what these are?**

Use YouTube to search and help guide you through each activity

## 1. Warm-up | 12–15 mins

- 3–4 mins easy jog – Build your body temperature gradually.
- Mobility – Ankles, hips and groin.
- Dynamic stretches – Leg swings, walking lunges, etc.
- 3–4 progressive runs – Gradually build from 60–80% speed.
- Goal: Get warm, mobile and ready to work.

## 2. Speed & acceleration | 15 mins

**4 × 20m accelerations**

- Build up gradually, don't sprint.
- Slow down smoothly after 20m.
- Walk back recovery.

**3 × 30m runs at 90–95%**

- Accelerate hard for 10m.
- Build to 90–95% speed.
- Stay controlled, don't go all-out.
- 90 sec recovery.

**2 × curve/angle runs**

- Use roughly 20m.
- Start straight, then curve gradually to one side.
- 1 each direction.
- Think curved runs or closing down an opponent.
- Full recovery between efforts.
- Why? Football isn't one long run. You need to repeatedly accelerate, sprint and recover.

# OPTION A

## Running Session

**Field-based football conditioning**

**Total: 60–70 mins**

Top Tip
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## 3. High-intensity efforts | 15–20 mins

**20/40/20 run**

- 6 × Run to 20m → Turn + Run 40m → Turn + Run 20m
- 80m total per rep
- 60 sec recovery

## 4. Football finisher | 10 mins

**4 rounds:**

- **30 sec lateral shuffles** – Stay nice and low, quick controlled steps. You should feel the quads working.
- **30 sec forward/backward runs** – Short, sharp movements. Keep your feet active.
- **30 sec shadow defending** – Stay in a defensive stance and move side-to-side/forward-back as if tracking an opponent.
- **60 sec walk** – Full recovery before the next round.

**Work hard, but keep your movement controlled.**

## 5. Cool-down | 10 mins

- **3–5 mins easy walk** – Bring your heart rate down gradually.
- **Calves, hamstrings, hips/groin** – Gentle stretches, don't force them.
- **Slow breathing** – Relax and let your body come down.

# OPTION B

## Gym Sled Session

Top Tip
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**Total: 55–65 mins**
The aim is to build **football-specific conditioning, power and resilience**.

**Important:** The sled should feel **hard but explosive**. This isn't a maximum-strength sled session. You should be working around **7–8/10 effort** while still moving the sled with powerful, controlled steps.

If you're grinding, taking tiny steps or losing speed, **reduce the weight**.

## 1. Warm-up | 12–15 mins

- 3–4 mins easy bike/jog – Gradually raise your heart rate.
- Hip + groin mobility – Open the hips and adductors.
- Ankle mobility – Get the ankles moving freely.
- Walking lunges – Controlled with good range.
- A-skips/high knees – Get the legs moving quickly.
- 3 × 15m progressive runs – Gradually build from easy to around 80%.

**Goal:** Get warm, mobile and ready to work.

## 2. Sled acceleration | 15 mins

**Sled push: 4 × 15m**

- Moderate weight.
- Powerful, controlled steps.
- 60–75 sec recovery.

**Sled push: 4 × 10m**

- Slightly heavier.
- Short, explosive pushes.
- 75–90 sec recovery.

**Backward sled drag: 3 × 15m**

- Controlled but powerful steps.
- **60 sec recovery..**

# OPTION B

## Gym Sled Session

Top Tip
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**Weight guide:** The sled should challenge you without slowing you to a crawl. the movement explosive.

**How to do the backward sled drag**

You can use a **TRX strap, sled strap or strong resistance band**.

- Attach it securely to the sled.
- Face the sled and hold the handles/strap.
- Walk backwards with strong, controlled steps.
- Keep your chest up and maintain tension.
- Don't let the sled jerk or pull you off balance.
- Drive through each step and keep moving smoothly.
- You should feel your **quads working hard**.

## 3. Repeat efforts | 15–18 mins

**3-4 rounds:**

- 15m sled push – Powerful effort
- Turn sled around
- 15m sled push – Short, explosive effort
- Turn sled around
- 2 mins recovery

**Goal:** Repeat powerful efforts while gradually getting tired, similar to the demands of a game.

Don't turn the weight up so much that your movement becomes slow and sloppy.

# OPTION B

## Gym Sled Session

Top Tip
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## Conditioning Superset Finisher | 10 mins

**3-5 rounds:**

- **10m explosive sled push** – Hard, powerful drive.
- **Lateral shuffle left + right** – Stay low and shuffle **5m left, then 5m right**, keeping your feet quick and controlled.
- **10m forward sprint** – Accelerate hard but stay controlled.
- **1 min between rounds**

**Aim:** Explosive power → change of direction → acceleration, all under fatigue.

**Goal:** Short bursts of football-style movement when you're already working hard.

## 5. Cool-down | 8–10 mins

- Easy walk – Gradually lower your heart rate.
- Calves, hamstrings, hips + groin – Gentle stretching.
- Slow breathing – Relax and recover.

### Remember

The goal is to finish feeling like you've worked hard, while still being able to move with **speed, power and control**.

**Quality over weight. Quality over quantity.**

# OPTION C

## Normal Gym Session

Top Tip
**Unsure of what these are?**

Use YouTube to search and help guide you through each activity

If you don't fancy running or sled work, use the gym to build your **strength and resilience**.

**Total: 50–60 mins**

**How heavy should you go?**
Choose a weight that feels **challenging but controlled**.

- Aim for around **7–8/10 effort** on your main exercises.
- You should have roughly **2–3 good reps left in the tank** at the end of each set.
- The final reps should feel hard, but your technique should stay good.
- Don't chase maximum weight or train to failure.
- If your form starts breaking down, **reduce the weight**.

The goal is to become **stronger, more powerful and more resilient**, not to destroy your legs.

## 1. Warm-up | 8–10 mins

- 3–5 mins bike – Gradually raise your heart rate.
- Hip/groin mobility – Get the hips moving freely.
- Ankle mobility – Improve range of movement.
- Dynamic movement – Lunges, leg swings, bodyweight squats.

**Goal:** Get warm, mobile and ready to lift.

# OPTION C

## Normal Gym Session

Top Tip

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Use YouTube to search and help guide you through each activity

## 2. Lower body strength

**Bulgarian split squat — 3 × 8 each leg**

- Controlled on the way down.
- Drive up strongly.
- Use a weight that challenges you without losing balance or technique.

**Romanian deadlift — 3 × 8**

- Controlled lowering.
- Hips back and back position strong.
- Drive back up powerfully.
- Don't chase heavy weight at the expense of technique.

**Step-ups — 3 × 8 each leg**

- Use a box/bench around knee height or slightly lower.
- Drive through the working leg.
- Control the way back down.
- Avoid pushing off heavily with the trailing leg.

**Hamstring curl — 3 × 10–12**

- Controlled movement.
- Squeeze the hamstrings.
- Don't swing the weight.

# OPTION C

## Normal Gym Session

Top Tip

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## 3. Football resilience

**Calf raises — 3 × 12–15**

- Full range.
- Controlled down, strong drive up.

**Tibialis raises — 3 × 15**

- Lift the toes towards you.
- Control back down.

**Copenhagen plank — 2–3 × 20–30 sec each side**

- Keep your body straight.
- Build up gradually if these are difficult.

**Single-leg balance — 2 × 30 sec each side**

- Stay controlled.
- Keep the foot stable.
- Make it harder by reaching or closing your eyes if appropriate.

# OPTION C

## Normal Gym Session

Top Tip
**Unsure of what these are?**

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## 4. Core

Choose **2:**

- Dead bugs
- Pallof press
- Side plank
- Cable rotations

**2–3 sets each.**

Focus on **control and stability**, not just getting through the reps.

## 5. Optional Upper Body

If you have time and aren't already doing a separate upper-body session:

- Bench press — 3 × 8
- Seated row — 3 × 10
- Shoulder press — 2–3 × 8
- Lat pulldown — 2–3 × 10

Use the same **7–8/10 effort** guide. Challenging, controlled reps without going to failure.

### Remember

**Strong doesn't mean lifting the heaviest weight possible.**

Move well, control the weight and gradually increase the load as you get stronger.

**Quality reps > heavy reps.**

# OPTION D

## Treadmill Running Session

The aim is to maintain your **football fitness, acceleration and ability to repeat high-intensity efforts**.

**Total: 60–70 mins**

Top Tip
**Unsure of what these are?**

Use YouTube to search and help guide you through each activity

## 1. Warm-up | 12–15 mins

- 3–4 mins easy jog
- Hip + groin mobility
- Ankle mobility
- Dynamic stretches
- 3 × 30 sec progressive runs, gradually building from easy to around 80%

**Goal:** Get warm, mobile and ready to work.

## 2. Speed & acceleration | 15 mins

**4 × 20 sec accelerations**

- Start comfortably.
- Gradually build your speed.
- Don't sprint all-out.
- 60 sec easy walk/jog recovery.

**3 × 30 sec runs at 90–95%**

- Build up during the first 10 sec.
- Hold a strong pace.
- Stay controlled, don't go all-out.
- 90 sec easy recovery.

**2 × 20 sec curve/angle efforts**

- Increase the incline slightly.
- Think about accelerating and changing direction like closing down an opponent.
- 60 sec recovery.

**Treadmill note:** Don't try to replicate sharp changes of direction on a moving treadmill. The aim is to replicate the **effort and intensity**, not literally change direction.

# OPTION D

## Treadmill Running Session

Top Tip
**Unsure of what these are?**

Use YouTube to search and help guide you through each activity

## 3. High-intensity efforts | 15–20 mins

**6–8 rounds:**

- **30 sec hard**
- **60–90 sec easy**

The hard effort should feel around **8–9/10**.

Think **football burst**, not a long-distance run.

You should be breathing hard by the end of each effort, but still able to maintain good running mechanics.

**Don't hold the treadmill.**

## 4. Football finisher | 10 mins

**4 rounds:**

- 30 sec faster run
- 30 sec easy jog
- 30 sec faster run
- 30 sec easy jog
- 60 sec walk

Change your speed slightly between the faster efforts to replicate the changes in intensity you get during a game.

# OPTION D

## Treadmill Running Session

Top Tip
**Unsure of what these are?**

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## 5. Cool-down | 10 mins

- 3–5 mins easy walk
- Calves, hamstrings, hips + groin – Gentle stretching
- Slow breathing

**Treadmill intensity guide**

**Easy:** 4–5/10
**Moderate:** 6–7/10
**Hard:** 8–9/10
**Max sprint:** Not required

The aim is to finish feeling like you've had a **proper football conditioning session**, not completely destroy yourself.

**Quality > quantity.**

## Which one should I choose?

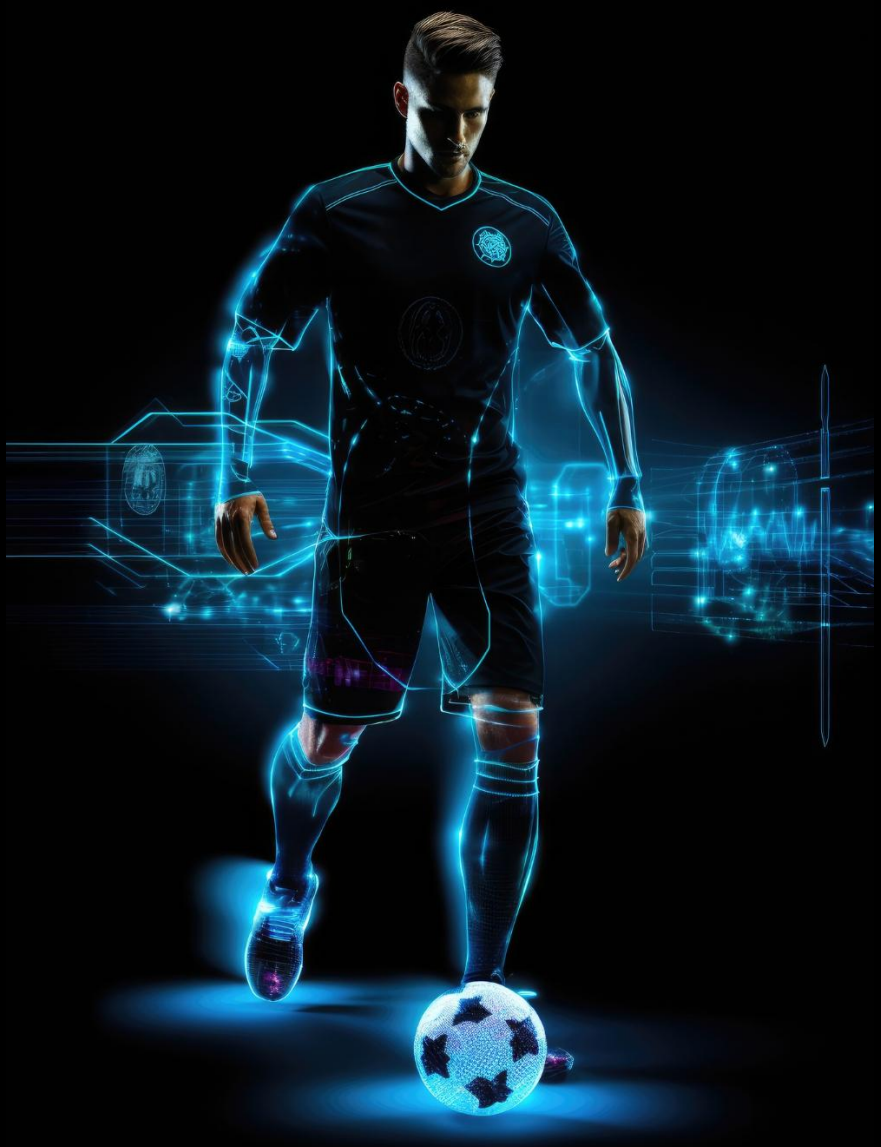
**Want to improve football fitness?** → Option A

**Want conditioning + strength without lots of running?** → Option B

**Want to build strength and injury resilience?** → Option C

**Feeling tired or carrying a niggle?** → Reduce the volume rather than trying to smash the session.

**The aim isn't to leave the gym unable to walk. It's to become a better, fitter and more resilient footballer.**



The Non-League Network

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