

Sprint Cardio Workouts for Athletes

The sports of soccer and rugby are considered long duration activities where players can often run more than a mile during the 80-90 minute contest. During the contests, athletes run at varying speeds, from light jogging to full-out sprints. Conventional coaching often encourages athletes to improve their VO₂ through long, steady-state runs. In fact, the best way to improve in-sport fitness is by using full sprints, followed by periods of recovery, known as interval training. Here are two workouts that are often used by top performance coaches to help their athletes reach peak fitness in record time:

The 8-12 Method:

60 sets of 8 seconds full sprint, 12 seconds walk (total 20 minutes)

For those recovering from injury or a long-layoff from activity, here's how you can progress;

Workout	#	Total Sets of 8:12	Duration (min)
Week 1	Workout 1	36	12
	Workout 2	39	13
Week 2	Workout 3	42	14
	Workout 4	45	15
Week 3	Workout 5	48	16
	Workout 6	51	17
Week 4	Workout 7	54	18
	Workout 8	57	19
Week 5	Workout 9	60	20
	Workout 10	60	20
Week 6	Workout 11	*35min continuous full effort	

This progression increases the workout by 2min per week, and will allow you to reach full fitness in less than six weeks

Coach Poliquin's Increase Work-Decrease Rest Method (Modified)

World-renowned strength coach Charles Poliquin also promotes sprint intervals for getting his athletes into top physical condition. The program is especially effective for hockey players and involves sprints lasting 45 seconds, followed by a five-minute rest. From there you either increase work or decrease rest to build intensity. Here's a variation of that program that is especially useful for soccer and rugby players:

Workout	#	Work (min)	Rest (min)	Total Sets
Week 1	Workout 1	0:30	2:00	6
	Workout 2	0:30	1:50	6
Week 2	Workout 3	0:30	1:40	6
	Workout 4	0:30	1:30	6
Week 3	Workout 5	0:35	1:30	8
	Workout 6	0:40	1:30	8
Week 4	Workout 7	0:45	1:30	8
	Workout 8	*35min continuous full effort		1
Week 5	Workout 9	0:45	1:30	10
	Workout 10	0:45	1:30	10
Week 6	Workout 11	0:45	1:20	10
	Workout 12	0:45	1:10	12
Week 7	Workout 13	0:45	1:00	12
	Workout 14	0:45	0:55	12
Week 8	Workout 15	0:45	0:50	16
	Workout 16	0:45	0:45	16
Week 9	Workout 17	*35min continuous full effort		1