

Help young athletes keep their competitive edge during pandemic

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a girl stretching on a track

(HealthDay)—There are a number of ways that young athletes can

maintain their conditioning while away from their sports during the coronavirus pandemic, an expert says.

"Although competitive practice or play isn't an option for most right now, athletes should create and stick to a routine, just as if they were with the team. A conditioning routine should incorporate cardiovascular movements, weight and [strength training](#), and core stability," said Dr. Natasha Trentacosta, a sports medicine specialist at Cedars-Sinai Kerlan-Jobe Institute in Santa Monica, Calif.

Teams and coaches can provide athletes "with the tools they need at home, either through virtual workouts or emailed weekly plans to keep up with their training while at home. You also can search the internet for movements that apply to an [athlete](#)'s specific sport," she suggested in an institute news release.

You can practice with your teammates if you follow all the coronavirus safety precautions, including wearing a mask, maintaining [physical distance](#) and working out with a limited number of people who all agree to work out only in that group.

Athletes in warm weather climates have the added benefit of being able to practice outdoors.

Camaraderie can be an important part of keeping up morale. "In general, I think the safest way to work on your conditioning with other people during the pandemic is with your household. Many of us have a built-in team with those living under our same roof," Trentacosta said.

"Parents can make physical activity fun while simultaneously working on skills specific to their child's sport and their mental game," she suggested.

"For example, if your child plays basketball, have a playful challenge to bring in that competitive mental game," Trentacosta said. "Perhaps play a game of 'horse' or, for soccer, have a shootout in the backyard or at a park."

Another at-home option for athletes is to coordinate their own virtual workout with a teammate or a friend, Trentacosta said.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers advice about [playing sports during the pandemic](#).

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