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## Spring workouts build important habits

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HoopGurlz

Spring workouts are a flat-out grind. The season ends. We get a few weeks off to rest our legs and get re-energized for next season and then workouts start all over again. Next season's games are eight months away and it can be so



Kristi Kingma puts in work at a UW spring workout.

easy for my motivation level to drop. The weather starts to get really nice. Lake Washington warms up for boating season. Mariner and Sounders games start happening and bonfires on the beach are frequent.

After a long and tiring season, spring seems like the perfect time to relax. But that's why they say games in December are won in July, or in this case, May. Spring workouts, and how hard you choose to work in the offseason, define your work ethic and predict how much you will be able to improve in the following season.

Since my team just got a new coach, our incentive to work hard is much higher and much more apparent than normal. This is our chance to make a good first impression and show off our skills. It allows our new coach a chance to see what our strengths and weaknesses are, and assess the skills we need to work on to best fit into the new system. Last season's statistics go out the window and everyone has a chance to reprove themselves and redefine their role.

Spending more time in the weight room, we all have the chance to get stronger, work on healing any injuries we have and get in good shape. We work on foot speed, acceleration, agility and coordination. All of these things help turn me and my teammates into better athletes and basketball players but this, to me, is not the most important part of spring workouts.

Even more important than making a good impression and becoming faster and stronger, I believe spring workouts are more important for the habits they help to form for the rest of the season. Everyone can work hard during the season; games are happening and there is an incentive to bust your tail. In spring, however, not everyone chooses to go the extra mile.

In spring, skill development takes place and this is the time when players work on their individual skill set. Making open gym and extra gym workouts a priority helps form habits that allow these same priorities to happen during summer. Choosing to go hard on the last shooting drill after a long week of spring workouts forms a habit that bleeds over to regular season practices when that same player will be the person who runs all the way through a line during sprints. To me, spring is about developing an attitude of competitiveness, motivation and determination that you carry with you through the summer and into the next season. Not only does it form these attitude habits but spring workouts allow players to work on basketball-related habits, like holding a strong follow through or keeping your head up off dribble moves. These habits built in spring define players for the rest of the year.



Kristi Kingma gets her feet ready in a spring workout shooting drill.

Personally, my spring workouts involve a mix of conditioning, strength-training, individual workouts, open gyms and gym time on my own. Like most college players, the first four obligations are scheduled for me. Extra gym time is the one thing I have to choose to do on my own. Like I mentioned earlier, I do not necessarily spend an extra couple hours shooting in the gym during spring just to improve my game. This is a bonus and I obviously will take any chance I can get to improve, but I schedule this extra time more out of habit than anything else.

Ever since I finished my senior year of high school basketball, I have made going to the gym and getting up extra shots a priority. No matter if it is spring time, summer time, or during season, by spending an extra two to three hours in the gym on my own per week, I am have formed a habit and stuck to it. I have been able to develop an attitude that although I will never be the most athletic tallest or highest jumper on the court, I will be the hardest and most consistent worker. Spring workouts work the same way for me: by forming habits in the spring, I ultimately see improvement when it matters most during the season. This is why when the game is on the line, I have the ball in my hands and a chance to make a game-winning shot, I know there is nothing more I could have done to put myself in a better position to win the game for my team.

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