

## **Strength Training in the off season**

**By Sue Welker RN**

**Certified personal trainer, Certified swim & triathlon coach**

**September 2004**

**Take advantage of your time out of the water and gain an advantage over your competition. Every year (now going on 6 for the Naperville WAVES) I get the same questions....what do we do while we have a break from the water? As a coach of many different levels of athletes I feel strongly that you have to plan or periodize your year & training goals. The surest way to attain personal success is to set yearly & season goals and then to break your focus & training into 3 simple & distinct phases of training.**

**The first phase is the recovery or off season. This is what I want to discuss & provide ideas for you to prepare to train later in the year. The other 2 phases are the base building and peak performance phases.**

**If you are smart, relaxed, and move out of your routine during the off season you will be ready to rock & roll when group swimming starts up again in November. I like to plan for an 8 week break in the fall between our summer and winter seasons. Some of our swimmers are so lost at this time with out the structured workouts and on deck coaching. This year I have offered several options for our swimmers to build some strength on land that will help in the water.**

**How about trying a Pilates class? I have opened a couple of Pilates with props classes for our swimmers to focus on core strength and stabilization. Pilates is a very old form of simple exercise developed by Joseph Pilates to work on lengthening & strengthening your “powerhouse”. Your powerhouse muscles are the ones of your abdominals, lower back, hips and butt. The band of muscles that circles just under your waist is referred as your powerhouse. This is great stuff for swimmers and can really help with your body position in the water, pelvic stabilization and core power while swimming. Some of the exercises are: shoulder bridge, spine twist, leg pull up, plank & side plank, roll up, push ups, the hundred & leg pull ups. Go to [www.powerhousepilates.com](http://www.powerhousepilates.com) , [www.stottpilates.com](http://www.stottpilates.com), pick up one of the many books out, or sign up for a class at your local Y or gym.**

**Maintaining your aerobic fitness is important and can be done by cycling, running the elliptical or any other way that you can get your heart rate up to about 75% of your max. For more info on heart rate monitoring go to [www.heartzones.com](http://www.heartzones.com) Tradition strength training has it benefits to gain muscle & power. But, getting on a stability ball or Bosu adds a whole new dimension of functional & core strength to your routine. Hook up with a trainer for a few sessions during your break from the pool and tell them you are a swimmer and want to work on shoulder & pelvic stabilization and core strength. Stay wet a couple times a week and focus on technique and stroke mechanics, and I think you will be surprised come swim season the results you see! Happy laps, Coach Sue ☺**