

So, you want to be a baseball player?

Ten Offseason Tips from Former Major Leaguer to Have the Best Season of Your Life and Just Maybe, Help You Make it to the Big Leagues

"Oh, if I could do it all over again, I would have done these" - Former major leaguer Jack Perconte

1.



PUT YOURSELF ON THE INACTIVE LIST?

They say that "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" and that is true. Take a two to three month break away from doing any baseball practice because year round playing often dulls the mind and motivation. When players resume workouts they will notice the "Eye of the tiger" has resumed; but that does not mean ball players should do nothing during the baseball break.

2.



JOIN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT?

The days of baseball players not being great athletes has long passed. Go ahead and blast your favorite music and get bigger, stronger, faster, which allows one to reach their athletic potential. Ballplayers should work with a conditioning coach or do baseball specific strengthening exercises in the comfort of their own home. Even five minutes a day can help prepare for next baseball season. Playing other sports is one form of conditioning, of course.

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3.



FIND TED WILLIAMS, DUSTY BAKER, DON MATTINGLY OR JACK PERCONTE?

You may not think that Jack Perconte belongs in that company but he also has a terrific book on hitting that helps hitters learn and apply the fundamentals, which are crucial to baseball success. Offseason is a great time to read up on the fundamentals and strategy of baseball, even if it is just reading "How to" articles and videos on line.

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4.



PLAY TEE BALL?

Hitting off a batting tee is not just for 5 and 6 year olds. A huge amount of space is not necessary as long as a little caution is used. Hitters can perfect their baseball swing with a tee and enjoy doing it with a variety of batting drills. Many drills are doable without a batting tee too.

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5.



PUT ANOTHER BRICK ON YOUR "WALL" TO SUCCESS?

Find a safe wall to throw and field off. Players who throw and field at least nine months out of the year are the ones who develop the most arm strength and the necessary glove work to advance up the baseball ladder. Basement, garage, school gym wall, whatever, using any type ball (softer ball) works just as well. Simply can't find one? Throw snowballs to build up arm strength but throw, throw, throw, within reason of course.

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6.



FIND A "FIELD OF DREAMS" NEAR YOU?

Most communities have indoor baseball training facilities. Players should use them to stay sharp and especially to ease back into training before first official team practices or tryouts begin.

7.



GO CAMPING?

Offseason camps, clinics, and showcases are great ways to learn, stay sharp, and have fun. Of course, some research is necessary to find reputable camps that stress the fundamentals and fun. Be careful of camps and showcases that are just money grabs.

8.



REMEMBER HOW TO GET TO CARNEGIE HALL?

Practice and more practice, with the belief that all your hard work will pay off next season or someday, whether it is the big leagues or not, and with the understanding that ten minutes of practice done correctly is better than thirty minutes done with bad habits. The adage that "Practice makes perfect" is not true, of course, as only "perfect practice makes perfect." Players, who adhere to this, succeed. Quantity without quality is not beneficial.

9.



CLIMB A MOUNTAIN?

It is difficult to score without going from first base - setting goals, to second base - great fundamentals, to third base - learning from failure, to home plate - dreaming big with a never say die attitude. If all the current major leaguers stopped playing just because others told them they were not good enough, there would be a whole set of different major leaguers.

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10.



GEAR UP

The offseason is a great time to take stock of your baseball equipment to see if you are in need of a new bat, glove, etc... Especially with the Holidays coming, it is a great time to ask for that special piece of baseball equipment. Players should research brands and sizes of equipment to look for so it fits league regulations and is the best fit for the player. Remember, once used, baseball gear is not returnable.

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