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ELITE FENCING COACHING

PRIVATE COACHING RESOURCE SERIES

The Fencer's Conditioning

Foundation

Strength, agility, endurance, and flexibility — the athletic base that every fencing skill is built on.

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A Note from Coach Derek

Fencing is an athletic sport. That sounds obvious, but too many fencers train as if blade work and footwork are the only things that matter. They skip conditioning, they ignore flexibility, and then they wonder why their legs give out in the third period of a DE.

This guide builds the general athletic foundation that supports everything you do on the strip. It's not fencing-specific — that comes in the companion guide, The Fencer's Sport-Specific Conditioning. This is about making your body strong, fast, flexible, and durable enough to handle the demands of competitive fencing.

You don't need a gym membership. You don't need expensive equipment. Most of these exercises use body weight only, and all of them can be done at home, in a park, or at the club. What you do need is consistency: 3–4 sessions per week, 30–45 minutes each.

The fencer who is stronger, more flexible, and better conditioned than their opponent has an advantage that shows up in every single bout. This guide gives you that advantage.

— Coach Derek

How This Guide Is Organized

This guide covers five areas of general conditioning, each one critical to fencing performance. Every section includes exercises with fencing-specific context, form notes, and recommended volume.

1. **Lower Body Strength —** The engine of every fencing action. Lunges, squats, and explosive movements.
2. **Core Stability —** The connection between your upper and lower body. Balance, rotation, and posture.
3. **Upper Body Strength —** Arm endurance, shoulder stability, and grip strength for weapon control.
4. **Agility & Quickness —** Reaction time, change of direction, and explosive acceleration.
5. **Cardiovascular Endurance —** The ability to maintain intensity across an 8–10 hour tournament day.

At the end, you'll find sample weekly programs for beginner, intermediate, and advanced fencers.

> **IMPORTANT:** If you're under 14 or new to strength training, start with body weight only. Add resistance gradually. Form is always more important than weight or reps. If an exercise causes pain (not discomfort — pain), stop and consult a coach or medical professional.

Lower Body Strength

Your legs do the most work in fencing. Every advance, retreat, lunge, and recovery is powered by your quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, and calves. Weak legs mean short lunges, slow recovery, and deteriorating footwork in late bouts. Strong legs mean longer lunges, faster movement, and the same quality of footwork at 14–14 as at 0–0.

1. Bodyweight Squat

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds the quad and glute strength that powers your en garde position and every step from it.*

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, toes slightly outward. Lower your hips until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Drive back up through your heels. Keep your chest up and back straight throughout.

Form Notes: Knees track over toes — don't let them collapse inward. Weight stays on heels and midfoot, not toes. Depth is important: full parallel at minimum. If you can't reach parallel with good form, work on ankle and hip flexibility first.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 15. Intermediate: 4 sets of 20. Advanced: 4 sets of 25, or add weight with a backpack or dumbbells.

2. Split Squat (Lunge Position Hold)

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds single-leg strength in the exact position your legs are in during a fencing lunge.*

Step into a lunge position with your front knee at 90 degrees. Lower your back knee toward the ground until it almost touches. Drive back up through the front heel. Keep your torso upright.

Form Notes: Front knee stays directly over the ankle. Back knee drops straight down, not forward. Torso stays vertical — don't lean over the front leg. This is the most fencing-specific lower body exercise in this entire guide.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 10 per leg. Intermediate: 4 sets of 12 per leg. Advanced: 4 sets of 15 per leg, or hold dumbbells.

3. Wall Sit

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds muscular endurance in the quadriceps for maintaining en garde over long bouts.*

Lean your back flat against a wall and slide down until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Your knees should be at 90 degrees, directly over your ankles. Hold the position.

Form Notes: Back must stay flat against the wall. Don't rest your hands on your thighs — hold them in front of you or at your sides. If your quads are shaking, that's the point. Build the endurance to hold en garde when your legs are tired.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 holds of 30 seconds. Intermediate: 4 holds of 45 seconds. Advanced: 4 holds of 60–90 seconds.

4. Calf Raises

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds the calf strength and ankle stability needed for explosive advances and stable landings.*

Stand on the edge of a step or raised surface with your heels hanging off. Rise up onto your toes as high as possible, hold for 1 second, then lower your heels below the level of the step for a full stretch. Repeat.

Form Notes: Do these slowly and with full range of motion. The negative (lowering) phase is just as important as the raise. Don't bounce. For single-leg calf raises, hold a wall for balance.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 15 (both legs). Intermediate: 3 sets of 15 per leg. Advanced: 4 sets of 20 per leg, or hold weight.

5. Squat Jumps

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds explosive leg power for lunges and fast direction changes.*

Start in a squat position. Explode upward, jumping as high as possible. Land softly in a squat and immediately jump again. Each jump should be maximum effort.

Form Notes: Land softly — absorb the impact through your legs, not your joints. If your landings are loud, you're not absorbing properly. Keep your chest up throughout. Don't let your knees collapse inward on landing.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 8. Intermediate: 4 sets of 10. Advanced: 4 sets of 12, or add a tuck (knees to chest) at the top.

6. Single-Leg Romanian Deadlift

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds hamstring strength and single-leg balance for stable, controlled footwork.*

Stand on one leg. Hinge forward at the hips, extending the other leg behind you while reaching your hands toward the ground. Keep your back flat. Return to standing. Your standing leg should have a slight bend in the knee.

Form Notes: This is as much a balance exercise as a strength exercise. Move slowly and with control. If you wobble, slow down. Keep your hips level — don't let the hip of the raised leg rotate open.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 8 per leg (body weight). Intermediate: 3 sets of 10 per leg. Advanced: 4 sets of 12 per leg with dumbbells.

> **COACH'S TIP:** The split squat is the single most important exercise in this section for fencers. If you only do one lower body exercise, make it the split squat. It directly strengthens the muscles you use in your lunge and recovery.

Core Stability

Your core connects your legs to your arms. It's what keeps your torso stable when your legs are moving, what transfers power from your legs into your lunge, and what keeps you balanced when you're changing direction at speed. A weak core means wasted energy, poor balance, and a tendency to lean or fall out of position.

7. Plank

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds the deep core stability that keeps your torso quiet while your feet are moving.*

Start in a push-up position on your forearms. Your body should form a straight line from head to heels. Hold the position without sagging or piking your hips.

Form Notes: Don't let your hips drop — that's your lower back taking over. Don't pike your hips up — that's avoiding the work. Squeeze your glutes and brace your core as if someone is about to tap your stomach. Breathe normally.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 holds of 20 seconds. Intermediate: 3 holds of 45 seconds. Advanced: 3 holds of 60–90 seconds.

8. Side Plank

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds lateral core stability for maintaining balance during lateral movements and lunges.*

Lie on one side with your forearm on the ground, elbow directly under your shoulder. Lift your hips so your body forms a straight line. Hold. Your top arm can rest on your hip or extend toward the ceiling.

Form Notes: Keep your hips stacked — don't let the top hip roll forward or backward. If this is too hard, start with your bottom knee on the ground. The goal is a straight line from head to feet.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 holds of 15 seconds per side. Intermediate: 3 holds of 30 seconds per side. Advanced: 3 holds of 45–60 seconds per side.

9. Dead Bug

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Trains core stabilization while the arms and legs move independently — exactly what happens during fencing.*

Lie on your back with arms extended toward the ceiling and knees bent at 90 degrees. Slowly extend one arm overhead and the opposite leg toward the ground. Return to start and switch sides. Keep your lower back pressed flat against the floor throughout.

Form Notes: This looks easy. It's not. If your lower back arches off the floor, you've lost the exercise. Slow down and focus on keeping the back flat. The movement should be controlled, not fast. Breathe out as you extend.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 8 per side. Intermediate: 3 sets of 12 per side. Advanced: 4 sets of 15 per side.

10. Russian Twist

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds rotational core strength for the twisting motion involved in attacks and parries.*

Sit on the floor with knees bent and feet slightly off the ground. Lean back to about 45 degrees. Rotate your torso to touch the ground on each side, alternating left and right. Keep your feet off the ground throughout.

Form Notes: The rotation comes from the torso, not from swinging the arms. Keep your core tight and your back straight — don't round your spine. If your feet drop, the exercise becomes too easy.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 10 per side (no weight). Intermediate: 3 sets of 15 per side. Advanced: 4 sets of 15 per side holding a medicine ball or weight.

11. Mountain Climbers

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds core endurance under dynamic movement — simulates the sustained core engagement of a long bout.*

Start in a push-up position. Drive one knee toward your chest, then quickly switch legs. Continue alternating at a fast pace while maintaining a strong plank position.

Form Notes: Your hips should stay level — don't bounce them up and down. Core stays tight. Hands stay directly under shoulders. If you can't maintain plank form at speed, slow down until you can.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 20 seconds. Intermediate: 3 sets of 30 seconds. Advanced: 4 sets of 45 seconds.

12. Bird Dog

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Trains anti-rotation stability and coordination between opposite limbs.*

Start on hands and knees. Extend your right arm forward and left leg backward simultaneously until both are parallel with the floor. Hold for 2 seconds. Return and switch sides.

Form Notes: Keep your hips level — don't rotate or shift. Move slowly. The hold at the top is important for building stability. If you wobble, slow down further. This exercise looks simple but reveals core weakness immediately.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 8 per side with 2-second holds. Intermediate: 3 sets of 12 per side. Advanced: 4 sets of 12 per side with 3-second holds.

> **COACH'S TIP:** A strong core doesn't mean visible abs. It means stability under movement. The fencer with the best core is the one whose upper body stays perfectly still while their legs are exploding into a lunge. That's what these exercises build.

Upper Body Strength

Fencing is a lower-body-dominant sport, but your upper body matters more than most fencers realize. Your weapon arm needs endurance to hold the blade steady for 8–10 hours. Your shoulder needs stability to absorb the impact of parries and attacks. Your grip needs strength to maintain control when your hand is fatigued. And your posture needs the back strength to stay upright all day.

13. Push-Ups

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds chest, shoulder, and tricep strength for weapon arm stability and endurance.*

Standard push-up: hands slightly wider than shoulder width, body in a straight line, lower your chest to the ground and push back up. If you can't do a full push-up, start with hands on a bench or wall (incline push-up) and progress to the floor.

Form Notes: Don't let your hips sag or pike. Full range of motion: chest to the ground, arms fully extended at the top. Elbows at about 45 degrees to your body, not flared out to 90.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 8–10 (incline if needed). Intermediate: 3 sets of 15–20. Advanced: 4 sets of 25, or add clapping push-ups for explosive power.

14. Resistance Band Rows

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds upper back and rear shoulder strength for posture and shoulder stability.*

Anchor a resistance band at chest height (a door handle works). Hold both ends and step back until there's tension. Pull the band toward your chest, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Return slowly.

Form Notes: Squeeze the shoulder blades at the end of each rep — this is the most important moment. Don't shrug your shoulders up. Keep elbows close to your body. This exercise directly counteracts the forward-rounded posture that fencers develop.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 12. Intermediate: 3 sets of 15. Advanced: 4 sets of 15 with heavier band or add a pause at the squeeze.

15. Wrist Curls and Reverse Wrist Curls

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds grip strength and forearm endurance for maintaining weapon control across a tournament.*

Sit with your forearm resting on your thigh, wrist hanging off the edge. With a light weight (2–5 lbs) or a water bottle, curl your wrist up (wrist curl) and then flip your hand and curl the back of your hand up (reverse wrist curl).

Form Notes: Use light weight and high reps. This is an endurance exercise, not a power exercise. If your grip fatigues during long training sessions or tournaments, this is your fix. Do both directions every session — the forearm has muscles on both sides.

Sets/Reps: Both versions: 3 sets of 20 per direction. Use the lightest weight that makes the last 5 reps challenging.

16. Shoulder Y-T-W Raises

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds rotator cuff strength and shoulder stability to prevent the most common fencing injury.*

Lie face down on the floor or lean over at 45 degrees. With light weights or no weight, raise your arms into three positions: a Y shape (arms 45 degrees from your head), a T shape (arms straight out), and a W shape (elbows bent, squeeze shoulder blades). Hold each position for 2 seconds.

Form Notes: Use very light weight or body weight only. These are small stabilizer muscles, not big power muscles. If you feel this in your upper traps (neck area), the weight is too heavy. You should feel it in the back of your shoulders and between your shoulder blades.

Sets/Reps: 3 sets of 8 in each position (Y, T, W = 1 set). Rest 30 seconds between sets.

17. Arm Endurance Hold

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Trains the ability to hold your weapon arm extended without fatigue — directly applicable to long bouts.*

Hold your weapon (or a weight of similar weight, about 500–750 grams) in your fencing hand. Extend your arm to full fencing position and hold. Time yourself. When your arm drops, that's your current endurance limit.

Form Notes: Keep your shoulder down and relaxed. Don't shrug. The hold should be in your fencing position, not just arm straight forward. Build up 10 seconds per week. Your goal is 90 seconds without your arm dropping.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 holds of 20 seconds. Intermediate: 3 holds of 45 seconds. Advanced: 3 holds of 60–90 seconds.

> **COACH'S TIP:** Fencers who neglect upper body conditioning develop shoulder injuries, grip fatigue, and poor late-tournament performance. You don't need to be bulky. You need endurance in your weapon arm, stability in your shoulders, and enough grip strength to maintain control of your weapon in bout number 12 of a long tournament day.

Agility & Quickness

Fencing requires constant changes of direction, explosive starts and stops, and the ability to react faster than your opponent. These exercises build the neuromuscular qualities that make those demands possible — the speed of the signal from your brain to your muscles.

18. Lateral Shuffle

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds lateral quickness and hip stability for maintaining en garde position during rapid movement.*

Stand in an athletic stance (similar to en garde but facing forward). Shuffle laterally for 10 meters, then shuffle back. Stay low — don't stand up during the shuffle. Push off the trailing foot, don't cross your feet.

Form Notes: Stay low throughout. Your feet should never cross or come together. The push comes from the outside foot. Touch the ground with your hand at each end to force you to stay low. This directly translates to the low, explosive lateral movement fencing demands.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 6 lengths (3 per direction). Intermediate: 8 lengths. Advanced: 10 lengths at maximum speed, or add a resistance band around your ankles.

19. T-Drill

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds multi-directional agility and the ability to transition between forward, lateral, and backward movement.*

Set up a T shape with cones or markers: one at the start, one 10 meters forward, one 5 meters to each side. Sprint forward to the center, shuffle left to the cone, shuffle right past center to the far cone, shuffle back to center, then backpedal to the start. Time yourself.

Form Notes: Sprint the forward portion, shuffle the lateral portions (don't cross your feet), and use controlled backpedaling for the return. Touch each cone. This drill replicates the multi-directional demands of fencing: forward pressure, lateral adjustment, and controlled retreat.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 4 repetitions with 60-second rest. Intermediate: 6 repetitions with 45-second rest. Advanced: 8 repetitions with 30-second rest. Track your time.

20. Reaction Ball Drill

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Trains reaction time and hand-eye coordination for responding to unpredictable stimuli.*

Bounce a reaction ball (a small ball with irregular surfaces that bounces unpredictably) against a wall and catch it. If you don't have a reaction ball, have a partner throw a tennis ball at varying angles and speeds from 10 feet away. Catch with your fencing hand only.

Form Notes: Stay in an athletic ready position. React to the ball, don't anticipate. This trains the fast-twitch response that you need for parrying, counterattacking, and responding to your opponent's actions. Use your weapon hand to build hand-eye coordination specific to fencing.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 30 seconds. Intermediate: 4 sets of 45 seconds. Advanced: 4 sets of 60 seconds, or increase throwing speed and unpredictability.

21. Box Jump or Step Jump

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds explosive vertical power and fast-twitch muscle recruitment.*

Stand facing a sturdy box, bench, or step (start at 12–18 inches). Jump onto it with both feet, landing softly in a squat position. Step back down. Repeat. Each jump should be a full effort.

Form Notes: Land softly on the box — if it's loud, you're not absorbing the landing. Step down (don't jump down) to protect your knees. If you don't have a box, do tuck jumps: jump as high as possible and pull your knees to your chest at the peak.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 6 (low box). Intermediate: 4 sets of 8. Advanced: 4 sets of 10 on a higher box, or add a 180-degree turn at the top.

22. Sprint Intervals

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds explosive acceleration and recovery — the same energy system used in pool bout fencing.*

Mark 20 meters. Sprint the full distance at maximum effort. Walk back to the start. Sprint again. The work-to-rest ratio should be approximately 1:3 — a 4-second sprint gets 12 seconds of walking recovery.

Form Notes: Every sprint is maximum effort. Not 80%. Not 90%. 100%. If you're not faster on sprint 1 than sprint 8, you're going too hard on the early sprints or not recovering enough. The quality of each sprint matters more than the total number.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 6 sprints. Intermediate: 8 sprints. Advanced: 10–12 sprints.

> **COACH'S TIP:** Agility training is about quality, not quantity. Each repetition should be maximum effort with full recovery between. Sloppy agility drills done while fatigued build sloppy movement patterns. Do these exercises when you're fresh, early in your training session.

Cardiovascular Endurance

A tournament day can last 8–10 hours. Pool bouts come in rapid succession. DE bouts can go three full periods. If your cardiovascular system can't keep up, your footwork deteriorates, your decision-making gets worse, and you lose bouts you should win. Cardiovascular conditioning is not about running long distances — it's about maintaining high-intensity performance over an extended period.

23. Steady-State Running

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds the aerobic base that supports recovery between bouts and sustained energy across a tournament day.*

Run at a conversational pace (you should be able to talk in full sentences) for 20–30 minutes. This is not a sprint and not a jog — it's a moderate, sustainable pace that builds your cardiovascular foundation.

Form Notes: If you hate running, cycling, swimming, rowing, or jump rope at a moderate pace work equally well. The goal is 20–30 minutes of continuous moderate-intensity work. Your heart rate should be elevated but not maximal.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 20 minutes, 2–3 times per week. Intermediate: 25 minutes, 3 times per week. Advanced: 30 minutes, 3 times per week.

24. High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Replicates the energy demands of competitive fencing: short bursts of maximum effort with brief recovery.*

Choose any cardio modality (running, bike, jump rope, rowing). Perform 30 seconds at maximum effort followed by 60 seconds of easy recovery. Repeat for 10–15 rounds.

Form Notes: The work intervals must be genuine maximum effort. If you can maintain the same pace for all rounds, you're not going hard enough during the work phase. The goal is to train your body to recover quickly between high-intensity bursts — exactly what fencing demands.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 8 rounds of 20-second work / 60-second rest. Intermediate: 10 rounds of 30-second work / 60-second rest. Advanced: 12–15 rounds of 30-second work / 45-second rest.

25. Jump Rope

Why It Matters for Fencing: *Builds calf endurance, coordination, footwork timing, and cardiovascular fitness simultaneously.*

Jump rope with both feet at a steady pace. Stay on the balls of your feet. Keep your jumps small — just enough to clear the rope. Once you can do 2 minutes continuously, add variations: single leg, double unders, alternating feet, high knees.

Form Notes: Jump rope is one of the best conditioning exercises for fencers because it trains the calves, improves footwork rhythm, and builds cardio all at once. Start slow and build. If you trip, restart immediately — don't stop for long breaks.

Sets/Reps: Beginner: 3 sets of 1 minute. Intermediate: 3 sets of 2 minutes with variations. Advanced: 5 sets of 3 minutes, or continuous 10–15 minutes with mixed techniques.

> **COACH'S TIP:** HIIT is more important for fencers than steady-state cardio. Fencing is not a marathon — it's repeated sprints with short recovery periods. But you need both: steady-state builds the aerobic base, HIIT builds the ability to perform at high intensity and recover quickly. Do both.

Flexibility & Recovery

Flexibility is the most neglected area of fencing conditioning. Tight hips limit your lunge depth. Tight shoulders cause arm fatigue. Tight hamstrings restrict your footwork range. And insufficient recovery leads to injuries that can sideline you for weeks or months.

Essential Stretches (Hold Each for 30–60 Seconds)

Hip Flexor Stretch: Kneel on one knee in a lunge position. Push your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the front of the back-leg hip. This is critical for fencers — tight hip flexors are the most common cause of limited lunge depth.

Hamstring Stretch: Sit on the floor with one leg extended. Reach toward your toes, keeping your back straight. Don't round your spine. Feel the stretch behind the knee and up the back of the thigh.

Quad Stretch: Stand on one leg, pull the other foot toward your glute. Keep your knees together and your standing leg slightly bent. Hold a wall for balance if needed.

Calf Stretch: Stand facing a wall. Place one foot behind you with the heel flat on the ground. Lean into the wall until you feel the stretch in the back calf. Keep the back knee straight for the gastrocnemius, then bend it slightly for the soleus.

Groin Stretch: Sit with the soles of your feet together and knees out to the sides. Gently press your knees toward the floor. Don't bounce. Fencers need groin flexibility for the wide en garde stance.

Shoulder Cross-Body Stretch: Pull one arm across your chest with the other hand. Hold at the point of mild tension. This helps with the range of motion needed for blade work and prevents the shoulder tightness common in weapon-arm-dominant athletes.

Thoracic Spine Rotation: Lie on your side with knees bent at 90 degrees. Rotate your top arm and upper back toward the opposite side, opening your chest toward the ceiling. This improves the rotational mobility that fencers need for turning the torso during attacks.

Recovery Practices

Foam Rolling: Spend 5–10 minutes after training rolling your quads, hamstrings, calves, IT band, and upper back. Focus on tender areas for 30–60 seconds each. Foam rolling reduces muscle soreness and improves recovery between sessions.

Active Recovery: On rest days, do 15–20 minutes of light movement: walking, easy cycling, or gentle stretching. Complete rest is less effective than active recovery for most athletes.

Sleep: Sleep is the single most important recovery tool. Aim for 8–9 hours per night, especially during heavy training blocks and competition weeks. Growth hormone is released during deep sleep — this is when your muscles actually rebuild and get stronger.

Hydration: Drink water consistently throughout the day, not just during training. A good target is half your body weight in ounces per day. Dehydration reduces reaction time, endurance, and cognitive function — all critical for fencing.

> **COACH'S TIP:** Stretch after training, not before. Before training, use dynamic warm-ups (leg swings, arm circles, light footwork). After training, use static stretches. Stretching cold muscles before exercise can reduce power output and increase injury risk.

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Sample Weekly Programs

Beginner Program (3 Days Per Week, 25–30 Minutes)

Day 1 — Lower Body + Core: Bodyweight Squat (3×15), Split Squat (3×10 per leg), Wall Sit (3×30 sec), Plank (3×20 sec), Dead Bug (3×8 per side). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 2 — Upper Body + Agility: Push-Ups (3×10), Resistance Band Rows (3×12), Wrist Curls (3×20), Lateral Shuffle (6 lengths), Sprint Intervals (6 sprints). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 3 — Cardio + Flexibility: Steady-State Run (20 min) or Jump Rope (3×1 min), Mountain Climbers (3×20 sec), Full stretching routine (10 min).

Intermediate Program (4 Days Per Week, 35–40 Minutes)

Day 1 — Lower Body Strength: Squat (4×20), Split Squat (4×12 per leg), Single-Leg RDL (3×10 per leg), Calf Raises (3×15 per leg), Wall Sit (4×45 sec). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 2 — Core + Upper Body: Plank (3×45 sec), Side Plank (3×30 sec per side), Russian Twist (3×15 per side), Push-Ups (3×20), Band Rows (3×15), Y-T-W Raises (3×8), Arm Endurance Hold (3×45 sec). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 3 — Agility + Power: Squat Jumps (4×10), Box Jumps (4×8), T-Drill (6 reps), Lateral Shuffle (8 lengths), Reaction Ball (4×45 sec). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 4 — Cardio + Recovery: HIIT (10 rounds of 30/60), Jump Rope (3×2 min), Full stretching routine (10 min), Foam Rolling (10 min).

Advanced Program (5 Days Per Week, 40–45 Minutes)

Day 1 — Lower Body Power: Squat (4×25 weighted), Split Squat (4×15 per leg weighted), Squat Jumps (4×12), Calf Raises (4×20 per leg), Single-Leg RDL (4×12 per leg weighted). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 2 — Core + Upper Body: Plank (3×90 sec), Side Plank (3×60 sec per side), Dead Bug (4×15 per side), Mountain Climbers (4×45 sec), Push-Ups (4×25), Band Rows (4×15), Y-T-W (3×8), Wrist Curls (3×20), Arm Hold (3×90 sec). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 3 — Agility + Speed: Sprint Intervals (12 sprints), T-Drill (8 reps), Box Jumps (4×10), Lateral Shuffle with band (10 lengths), Reaction Ball (4×60 sec). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 4 — Cardio Endurance: Steady-State Run (30 min), Jump Rope (5×3 min), HIIT (12 rounds of 30/45). Stretch 5 minutes.

Day 5 — Active Recovery: Light jog or walk (15 min), Full stretching routine (15 min), Foam Rolling (15 min).

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Final Coach's Note

Conditioning is not glamorous. Nobody wins a tournament and credits their wall sits. But conditioning is the invisible foundation that makes everything else possible. The fencer who lunges deeper, recovers faster, stays balanced longer, and maintains intensity in the last bout of the day — that fencer didn't get lucky. They got conditioned.

You don't need to be the strongest person in the gym. You need to be strong enough, flexible enough, and conditioned enough that your body never limits your fencing. That's the standard. These exercises get you there.

Be consistent. Three sessions a week for six months will change your fencing more than any single lesson, clinic, or camp. Build the engine. The technique has somewhere to live when the body is ready.

— Coach Derek