

## The Judo Circuit

This circuit was devised in 1994 when I was national representative in the U60kg division leading up to the Atlanta Olympics. The emphasis in my training program was on maintaining a high power-to-weight ratio, which was essential for international competition, and, from my experience, gave me a distinct advantage in my weight category at national level in Australia (I foot-swept my way into my first national title final all with upper body strength!). As a lightweight, the development and maintenance of high speed is an essential component of competition, so speed is emphasised in this circuit. This circuit was also substituted for a regular weights program, which seemed at the time to be the only physical training anyone else was doing outside a morning jog and judo training (I believe weight training is unnecessary for light- and middleweight judo. Weights make heavyweight judoka play the boring judo that they do. Boring heavyweight judo makes lightweight judo look even more exciting, so I say let them do it! Any heavyweight who replaced his/her weights training with this circuit would be phenomenal). After doing this circuit for several months, I never once encountered a stronger opponent (I also combined it with The Water Circuit and Deep Water Running). I was able to maintain high strength and incredible speed, which made me a very powerful player. Shame about my technique though.

The judo circuit is set around the times involved in a judo competition – repetitive sets of 5 minutes to get that bronze medal (longest day possible). I eventually trained repetitive sets of 7 minutes, so I had the edge to go beyond the end of a fight before severe fatigue set in. The first 5-10 weeks of the circuit should start from 3 or 4 minutes, until your circuit technique (skipping and manipulation of each of the exercises) improves. Otherwise you will give it away early on as ‘just too hard’. Then build it up over time to 5 minutes. After a year of this circuit you should then push for 1 minute further, to 6 minutes. I have put ‘5 minutes’ in the circuit as an arbitrary number (referred to as ‘allocated time’):

- A. 5 minutes skipping
- B. 5 minutes abdominal
- C. 5 minutes skipping
- D. 5 minutes legs
- E. 5 minutes skipping (sets of 10s)
- F. 5 minutes upper body
- G. 5 minutes skipping (speed/cool down)
- H. 5 minutes erg

- A. Use this skipping session to get warm. Skip with a fast rope, keeping abdominal muscles and buttocks tight, head up, back straight and chest out. Maintain a low and fast skip.
- B. Continuous abdominal work on a sponge mat, doing sets of 20-30 of 7 types of sit-up (crunch, cross-legged, side, ankle outer, ankle inner, pelvis lift, leg extension). When fatigued, do the ‘forearm rest’ until your time is up. If you finish the sets early start the round of sit ups from the beginning, or enjoy an even longer ‘forearm rest’.
- C. Skipping gets easier the more you do it, so we need to keep the technical

level high to keep minds alert. You will need to master the crossover for this skip. Start with 10 counts/skips followed by 1 crossover, then 10 counts/skips followed by 2 consecutive crossovers, then all the way up to 10 straight crossovers. Then come back down to 1 crossover! If you mess up a series of crossovers (e.g. if you stumble on the 6th cross over when you're going for 7) then start that set (7 crossovers) again until you get it!

D. Use a step-up bench. Start with 50 full step-ups at speed on each leg (one leg at a time), then 50 knee-pulls on each leg, followed by 50 crossovers, all at speed. You will probably be able to fit two rounds of these into the given time.

E. Skipping to counts of ten skips, varying the style and side for each set. For instance, left leg hops for ten, followed by right leg hops for ten, then heel tap for ten, then double skip for ten, crossover for ten, side taps for ten, star-jump for ten, cross country ski for ten etc. Set up your own repertoire and repeat it a few times.

F. Upper body is perhaps the most challenging to keep going for the allocated time. Start with 25 tricep dips on the bench followed by 25 cross leg left, 25 straight leg left, then 25 cross leg right, 25 straight leg right. Then 25 inclined push-ups on the bench left leg off, 25 right leg off. Then two sets of ten power push-ups on bench with a walk around of ten seconds in between each set.

Then to the dip bar: start with 75% of your maximum number, 10-20 second walk around, 50% your max number, 10-20 second walk around, the 25% max number. Then, if you are still able to feel your arms, do the same for chin-ups on the chin-up bar (i.e. if I can do 20 chin-ups or dips, I will do 15 (rest for 10 sec), 10 (-10sec), 5(-10 sec)). Resting between each activity (but not within each type of exercise – i.e. resting between dips and push-ups, but not resting in the middle of a set - is allowed (even for Olympians)). You may choose to widen the rest period between the chin-ups and dips.

G. You may decide to finish the circuit here (only because that's what you aimed for when you started!), in which case take an easy few minutes to cool down on the rope. If you still have another set, max out on speed on the rope. Any style is appropriate, just go fast. Keep moving if the rope gets caught, never let the legs stop.

H. If an erg is in sight, max out on it. Concentrate on good posture and remember to use your legs! If not the allocated time can be spent on a boxing bag for the same effect!