

HOLIDAY REST -

"The off-season has been going very well. I have spent most of the time at the ranch in Texas. I've been back up to Atlanta a few times to take care of some stuff, too. We spent Thanksgiving and Christmas down at the ranch. The whole family was there. It is always great around the Holidays, because it is really the only time that we all get to spend quality time together. During the season, it is really tough sometimes because we are always going, going, going. The off-season just lets us enjoy each other. Our Christmas is no different than anyone else's. We did the present openings, dinner and sleeping on the couch after watching football. Same stuff as most of you, I imagine.

My parents are all settled at the ranch and have gotten everything running very well. It was hard for me to imagine how much work needed to be done on the ranch. There is just so much to do. I'm really glad we found Jeremy, who is helping me and my parents on the ranch. He has just been great. Can't imagine what we would have done without him. For that matter, my mom and dad, too. I wouldn't have made it. We've gotten the chance to do some hunting down here, and I've had friends out for some hunts and just "hanging out." It is good to just relax and kick back every once in a while. This ranch has been a real good source for that (even though the work keeps you busy, too).

The work-outs are going great. We got that batting cage installed in one of the big barns out here, so I get a chance to hit constantly. My dad is a great batting practice pitcher (he's probably thrown over a million pitches in this life between me and coaching), so I have been getting in some quality swings. I moved my weight equipment down from Atlanta, so I work out about 4 times a week. If I am in Atlanta, I go to this local gym and work-out with our Strength and Conditioning Coach. I can feel the strength really coming back. You'd be surprised how the season takes a toll on you, physically. It feels good to not wake up with those aches and pains, and to feel strong again.

The elbow is feeling great. I had an MRI and x-ray at the end of the year and the doctors saw that the spurs had almost healed themselves, and the chips were nowhere to be found. At that point, if they had gone in to scope it, or tried to clean it out, they would have probably done more damage looking in the soft tissue for the chips, so they decided to "wait and see." It hasn't given me one bit of trouble thus far. I'm keeping my fingers crossed on that one. There is nothing there to make me think that it will be anything but great this season. That is a huge relief, because it was constantly reminding me of who was the boss this past season.

I will definitely be ready, physically and mentally, when spring training rolls around in less than 1 1/2 months. I should come in very strong, pretty tuned on the offensive side, and really ready to work extremely hard on the defensive side. In early February, I will begin to refocus my attention to defense. I am going to take more fungoes this year, really focus on my approach to that part of my game, retool my concentration level and preparation, and get back to the fundamentals. I am looking forward to having a great season defensively.

I'll check back in before spring training. Keep enjoying the site.

- Chipper Jones