

Simple Skill Sessions

You have a large group of eager youngsters, a band of willing helpers ..
What to do ???

Have a Flexible Plan .. remember, if you are working with a group, and doing an activity / drill that only one or a small numbers can try at any given time .. in other words, lots of spectators ..
YOU are doing the wrong drill .. or, at least applying it inefficiently.

Drills ... A Basic Series

Consistent Cues are important (vital): *“Toe Up, Heel Up, Knee Up; Step over the knee of the support leg”*

1. Carefully demonstrate (slow motion; part method) each drill (video and/or direct demonstration).
2. Provide an opportunity for the athlete to “have-a-go”.
3. Offer positive, corrective feedback; including further demonstration.
4. Further athlete practice.
5. Group / Individual Assessment (Tags, Certificates and/or Homework Sheets).

(Skill Reward tags are available .. e.g. www.nwaswimaths.com ▶ Programs ▶ NWA—Start Tags)

Example Series (10 minutes at each station)

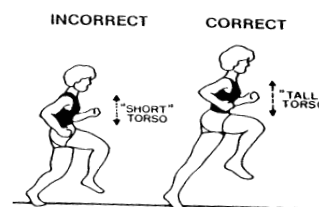
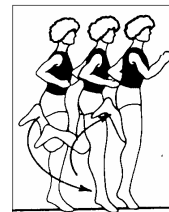
STATION 1: A-Skip; Seated Arm Drill; Fast Claw

STATION 2: Running-the-Boards; A▶Skip▶RTB; Butt Kicks - R / L / Alternating

STATION 3: Fast Claw; Fast Leg - R / L / Alternating

STATION 4: Double A’s; Alternating Combinations (BK-FL)

STATION 5: Coach Command Drills



Some of the Extension Drills should be preceded by **several sessions** of practice; but, you as the coach-leader, select what is achievable by your group .. be in control .. lead

Extension Drills .. can be done together as one group; select from .. don’t try to do them all; youngsters like to do things together.

1. A-Skip ▶ Running-the-Boards ▶ Alt. Butt Kicks ▶ Seated Arm Drill ▶ A-Skip ▶ Double A’s .. Jog ..
2. A-Skip — BK - Left — BK - Right — Alt. BK .. Jog ..
3. A-Skip — Double A’s — Alt. Butt Kicks — Alt. Fast Leg — Combinations (BK / FL) .. Jog ..
4. Ankling
5. B-Skip ... Three (3) phase movement: the crucial phases are ... (be patient .. a complex drill; lots of practice)
“Heel up / Toe up ... Extension ... Pull to the Ground (negative foot speed - project the hips)”
Relate to Fast Claw: practice first in slow motion; walk through; (DVD or direct demonstration)
“feel” the movement (video / mirror).
6. Continuous B-Skip: Left (8) .. Jog .. Right (8) .. Jog ..
7. A & C Drill ... hips square on to the front throughout.
8. A & C Variations: A-Double C; Continuous C (10); ...
9. A—B—C.
7. Straight Leg Shuffle; Straight Leg Bounding
8. Straight Leg Bounding—Fast Leg ... R / L / Alternating

Example Drills Only
Be flexible.
Respond to the needs
and progress of
YOUR group.

ALL Lessons / Sessions

Be sure ALL are Watching and Listening.

Include Drills in the Warm-Up (not just jogging).

Vary the drills (a new challenge) .. **be patient.**

Relate drills to the aim of the session .. *Why am I doing this drill?* Have an answer.

Stress the Speed Rules (*Short Levers Move Faster / Shortest Distance—straight line*)

Do not compromise on quality: set and pursue high standards.

Be consistent in what you say (cue) and what you do.

Reinforce (reward) frequently (certificates / video feedback / verbal / by gesture).

STARTS and ACCELERATION DRILLS

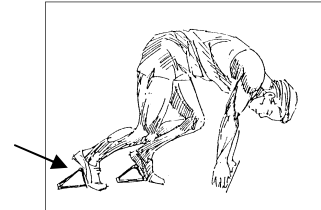
One Approach

There is little the coach can do to assist an athlete after the race / game has commenced;
However, there is much you can do to assist and prepare the athlete before the start.

Consistent Cues are VITAL .. repeat over and over again in practice sessions

“On Your Marks”

Back foot **firmly** against the back block (wall);
Front foot level (approx.) with the back knee;
Fingers bridged, just behind the line;
Leave enough space to **explode** through;
Head in natural alignment with the body;
Eyes focused down, just in front of the line.



“Set”

Raise hips above shoulders;
Load yourself into the blocks **maintaining firm back foot contact**;
Maintain eye focus downwards (just in front of the start line);
Focus on reacting to the “gun” with a powerful co-ordinated arm drive.

“GUN”

Explode .. led by a powerful arm drive;
Back foot will react first (do not emphasise as a coaching point, but note the importance of the back foot being firmly on the back block);
Head down for the first 4-8 strides to maximise acceleration.

ONLY Plenty of PERFECT PRACTICE Produces PERFECT PERFORMANCES

STATION 1: Standing Starts; Prone (reaction) Starts - variations.

STATION 2: 3-Point Starts; Four Point (Medium) Starts.

STATION 3: Assisted Starts; Resisted Starts.

STATION 4: Acceleration Ladder.

STATION 5: Acceleration Drills: e.g. 3 and 5-Step Wall Sprint.



(Some) Other Speed / Power Enhancement Variations

Contrast Training .. Weighted ankles / belts / partner drills
Plyometric Drills; e.g. Jumps / Throws Quadathlons
Specific Drills: e.g. Face-Chase-Race; Belly-Roll-Go
Ultra Speed Pacer

Be sure to take account of the “*training age*” (readiness) of the athlete.

Variations: help maintain interest; stimulate explosive responses.

Most drills and activities can be applied to the development of efficient and improved hurdling.
(There are hundreds of extension running form, sprint and hurdle drills .. all youngsters can drill
and gain the self-esteem success offers .. only a few will (or want to) run really fast.
Drill mastery can help them appreciate .. **Good for them** .. **Good for the sport**)

It is **VITAL** to establish
correct technique, in order that improvement may extend beyond the years of accelerated growth.

Highly recommended: **Speed Dynamics** .. Drills for Speed (DVD or video)

If further support is sought ... contact NWA

Russell Parsons, North West Athletics, © Copyright, NWA, 1998

Movement Skills

Modified from: World Juniors Training Diary, April 1996; issued to the Australian Team.
Prepared and Presented by: Russell Parsons (Athletics Australia, U20 Juniors Head Coach. '95-'96)

Tip # 4: Always Warm-Up & Cool-Down

When muscles are cold they are stiff and difficult to move. To perform well you need to be *warmed up* before training or competition, and *cooled down* afterwards.

Build your own routines and learn **event-specific warm-up exercises**.

Try to be systematic ... develop and stick to your own system.

Before Activity

- Perform a general body warm-up.
- Stretch.
- Incorporate active-dynamic movements where appropriate.
- Practice event-specific movements.

After Activity

- Keep your muscles active for 10-15 minutes using similar, but a less intensive version of your warm-up.
- Stretch, using a similar sequence of exercises to that used in the warm-up.

General Stretching Guidelines *(for the advanced junior athlete)*

- Warm-up prior to stretching; a minimum of 5 minutes light aerobic activity.
- Allow a minimum of 15 minutes for stretching. A more thorough stretching session may require 30-60 minutes.
- Stretch before and after training.
- Focus and concentrate on the muscle to be stretched with each stretch.
- Use static stretching first, i.e. move slowly into the stretch to avoid engaging the stretch reflex. Ballistic or dynamic stretching (done with progression and caution) may be used towards the end of the stretching session to prepare you for the specific demands of training or competition.
- Perform each stretch with the correct body position. Remember, changing the position of your body may change the effectiveness of the stretch.
- Breathe in a relaxed and free manner. Try exhaling slowly as you move further into the stretched position.
- Hold each static stretch for a minimum of 15 seconds. Greater results may be achieved, however, when the stretched position is held for longer, i.e. 30 seconds to 2 minutes.
- Repeat each stretch a minimum of 3 times.
- At no time should pain accompany any of the stretches.

Stretching routines are highly individual.

Athletes should ensure that have an appropriate and thorough warm-up and cool-down strategy; one that they implement with meticulous care and consistency.

2-4 General / Event Specific Stretches per Session (develop skills, but vary your routine). Offer something new ... young athletes love to learn and apply skills unfamiliar to their "mates", but, work towards each athlete establishing a personal routine that is right for them and their event(s).

Coaching
is not
Rocket Science

Often (always)
it is the
application
of
common sense

Body Position is Critical

Body Position
Determines
Muscle Recruitment

Stretching
IS
Important

BUT

Don't
smother
the
enthusiasm
of
a
junior
athlete
by
over-
emphasis
on
stretching

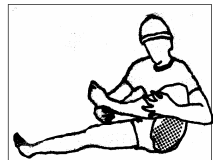
—

Train
Smart

Get
their
attention
with
variety

—

Keep
the
fun
and
unexpected
element
in
training



Build your
own routines
and

learn
event-specific
warm-up
exercises