North West Athletics

General Fitness Program

Russell Parsons, OAM, ATFCA4, ASCTA (Bronze)
2/72 Hopwood Street
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No one can make you feel inferior

without your consent

The program offers ideas that can be selected and adapted in accordance with the specific circumstances that operate.

A specific swimming program is offered in a separate outline.

The application of the (any) program **MUST** display **variety** .. preparation both in terms of thought and action are essential.

The sequences outlined are **NOT** set in concrete, and leaders must lead .. think about and apply tasks and challenges that are **appropriate to the program members**.

Challenges should focus on achievable skills and tasks, and those challenges should be individual and progressive .. leaders should not be guided by what they are capable of, but what their target group and its individuals can achieve. The aim of leaders must be to help others be better, not try to show how much better they are .. if they are.

20-30 Minutes per day … fitter, fresher, more receptive students
Self Esteem … **significantly enhanced**

Achievable yet Challenging Tests should be conducted every 3-4 weeks
and, Certificates presented (perhaps at an Assembly)
(Samples included)

Remember .. **Winning is for today** - **Skills are FOREVER**

No one ever thanks or appreciates someone who helps them to fail

Every night, leaders are potentially dinner table conversation in every home ..
you are not there to interpret .. so, **how do you want to be reported?**

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1. General Fitness Program .. Introduction
2. Nanneella Primary School Personal Fitness & Achievement Program
3. Timeline .. Measuring Your Progression
4. A Starting Point: Pairs Beep Test (20m Shuttle Run Test)
5. Sample Tags 1—6 + Cross Body Lifts
6. A Few Stretches
7. General Fitness Circuit .. an example
8. Sample Tags 7—12
9. A Few Basic Tags
10. DFK Stretches
11. 10 Drills Challenge 1 & 2
12. Recognition
13. Standard Strategies
14. Why Drills?
15. What Makes a Great Teacher? (Summary)

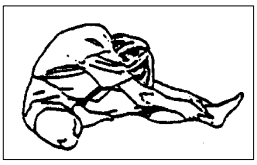
Learning NEW Skills is FUN !!

Learning: **An Eyeful is better than a Mouthful**

Nanneella P.S.
Personal Fitness and Achievement Program

Key Elements

- ALL can be involved .. enhanced self-esteem is the **goal**.
- Activities are skill-based, not performance based.
- **Very** simple to administer: 20-30 mins. per day
- Teacher can decide when to apply; regularity the only essential.
- Rewards are tangible and immediate.
- Variation is teacher-driven; however, tasks/challenges must be achievable .. move on (only) when tasks are mastered; 1-2 new tasks-drills-challenges each session .. don't rush …. **never** prioritise progression ahead of praised professional performance.
- Improved motor skills have wide application .. enhanced confidence



The details that follow are a (small) sample of the resources that are available

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PROGRAMS .. Standard Strategies (Athletics / Swimming) .. read carefully
Also: What Makes a Great Teacher? (Summary)

There is no one, panacea program that will help all …. rather,
a multitude place-specific programs, that will help if prepared thoroughly and performed persistently.
It's a matter of doing the best you can, where you are, with what you've got.

Timeline

Set down specific target dates / challenges .. Examples

Date:	Pairs Shuttle Run (Beep) Test: Level—Shuttle achieved
Date:	10 minutes continuous jog / 4 sessions per week
Date:	15 minutes continuous jog / 5 sessions per week
Date:	Pairs Shuttle Run (Beep) Test: Level—Shuttle achieved
Date:	Cross Country Course .. distance? (Walk-Jog; Time?)
Date:	Cross Country Course .. (Time?)
Date:	Inter-School Cross Country
Date:	3K Continuous Run - Jog - Walk
Date:	4K Continuous Run - Jog - Walk
Date:	Sweat v Steam Fun Run (5K)

Reward/ Recognition (e.g. tag, certificate) for each stage, for **all**.

FOCUS on **improvement**

Personal Records are the Measure of Personal Progress

A person will persist if their performance and improvement is recognised

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Continuous Run/Jog Challenge

I can do that

Be the best YOU can be

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Measuring Your Progression

Procedure:

1. Select a repeatable course (e.g. a course, 1.5 km. – 3.0 km) that you can repeat in the same detail/manner at a future date .. i.e. **a session YOU control**.
2. Run/Walk the course (Trial 1), record your time in minutes and seconds; e.g. 14:28.
3. Convert the time to seconds; e.g. 14:28 = 868 seconds.
4. Train regularly and progressively for a 3-4 week period.
5. Complete the same course (Trial 2) .. similar time of day, similar weather, ...
6. **Aim** (work) **to improve** .. calculate your improvement (see below).

Running (and Swimming): it's not whether you win or lose .. it's **YOU** against the stopwatch. You (assisted by fellow athletes and by your determination) seeking **performance progression** and **personal excellence**.

How Did You Go?

"Split Times(?)" will help

Don't be too judgmental .. that is, don't say things like: *"I'm hopeless"*

Measure *and* ***Evaluate*** … example:

Trial 1: 14:28 = 868 seconds
Trial 2: 13:14 = 794 seconds
Improvement: 74 seconds

74 ÷ 868 x 100 = 8.5% improvement

Individuals can apply their maths skills.

There is no set performance progression percentage that you should seek; but, try to improve (usually Trial 2 is the biggest improvement).

A Starting Point

What am I capable of today?

We need some simple challenge that will reflect fitness progression.

Pairs Beep Tests

A Fitness Assessment .. sure; also a Team-Building Opportunity

How does a Pairs Beep Test operate? My contact with the strategy came several years ago from a former students and athlete, **Jarrod Monaghan**, now teaching with his wife in Cambodia (a long way from Tempy) - Jarrod is one of the best PE teachers I have seen in operation. I have applied the idea often, referred it to others, often; had it ignored, often.

No one program suits all.

Every athlete (person*) is an experiment of one* .. the challenge is to stimulate he or she to find the activity and self-assessment strategies that best suit individual skills and interests.

Asking / demanding all complete a Beep Test can reveal a lack of appreciation of individual skills and a lack of preparation.

Result: excuses, "notes", injuries, …

BUT, a **Pairs Beep Test** approach **encourages** young people to ***have-a-go*** .. to learn what higher levels feel like .. to support their team mate(s) and, encourage others.

NEEDED

Aust. Sports Commission
CD: **20m Shuttle Run Test**

CD Player
Extension cord as needed

Play the CD
Check the Test (several times) **before** you test.

Explain briefly to the group, then, have them rise to the challenge.

NO short-cuts
Respect all test protocols

Having-a-Go at Pallikoodam School, Kottayam, Kerala, India (2006)

Keep it Simple: e.g. a Netball Court measures 30.5m in length; 2 x ⅓ cross court lines = 20.34m … for the Pairs Beep Test,
that's close enough .. we are not conducting an Olympic competition; we are not seeking to compare our results with other groups .. it's a personal and pair challenge.
We are trying to involve young people, encourage them to work together, to try hard, to improve, to recognise their endeavour, and, realise their efforts are valued.
The **Pairs Beep Test** offers
a **simple-to-apply**,
easy-to-appreciate, challenge.
Of course, the Pairs format can be modified; athletes can work as a group of 3, even 4.

If one partner has to stop, the other(s) merely continue, resting during the period when their partner would have run (until such time as they can no longer reach the line by the "beep"). Runners who rest can re-join.
Rules? Basic protocols? .. sure, but it's up to YOU.
Max Score is 22-16

If it's measureable .. Measure It !!
and, maintain a record of achievements.

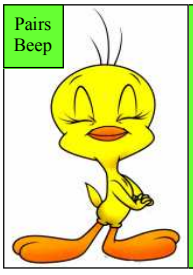
We respond best to objective measurement.

Do not do the test too often: e.g. start of each program and then at about 4-6 week intervals .. keep the same partner(s), if possible; and, keep a record of levels/shuttle achieved.

If an individual stops, (note the standard they reach), but allow them to re-join after a short rest, or, run on every second time they are due .. don't exclude them .. involve them.

Those who are not re-joining, should encourage, and **encourage** (barrack) **loudly**.

They (we) don't get fitter ..
by watching others perform.



Today I did my best

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Example: Every week, progress of those involve should be assessed .. endeavour should be rewarded
For example: laminated tags depicting a task or tasks completed should be available and collected.
Samples shown.

I will provide sufficient tags if I am advised of numbers

Pairs Beep

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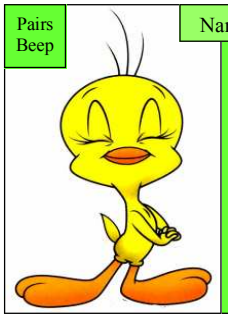
1



Today
I did
my best

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◄Tag reflecting initial Pairs Shuttle Run (Beep Test) score
Other **Today I did my best tags** for later efforts

Level & Shuttle completed
can be written in texta on the back
Keep a record of Individual Achievements

★ A **healthy diet** is **essential** if improvements are to be achieved and sustained.
An activity program is **NOT** a licence to eat what you/we want. **You/we are what you eat !!**

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2

Continuous Run/Jog Challenge

I can do that

Be the best YOU can be

Select your trial course .. Your **Control Session**.
Every 3-5 weeks .. assess progression.

Maintain, and have the students maintain,
a record of their performances over time.

Don't do the Control Course too often;
keep it as a special challenge.

Every week have some new challenge; a task, a drills review, .. anything as long as it's measureable and achievable.

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3

Improving my A-Skip

"Toe Up — Heel Up — Knee Up"
"Step over the support leg knee"
Arms: approx 90°; hand back to hip
*"**Tall**" .. be the tallest you can be*
Lots of perfect practice .. 10L / 10R

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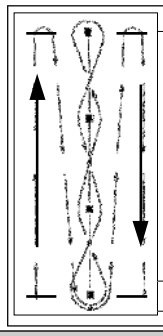
4



Cones are three (3) metres apart.

Hands beneath shoulders, behind the line at the start.

(Prone) Start/Finish

Agility Runs
(Standards available)

Review of Sprint Drills

Review of Stretches

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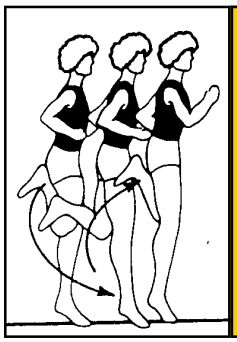
Races, Relays .. 10 minutes of frantic activity and fun
Be sure to slowly trial the task, first.



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5

A-Skip
Alt. Butt Kicks
Alt. Fast Leg
Combinations
Fast Claw

Command Drills

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6

Drills to help improve Running Form & Speed
A-Skip; Ankling; Alt. Butt Kicks; Alt. Fast Leg; Fast Claw; Alt. Combinations; Double A's; Seated Arm Drill; B-Skip; Straight Leg Shuffle - Bounding; Karioka; Running-the-Boards ► Sprint; Standing LJ; Standing TJ; 3 & 5 Step LJ & TJ; 2H-2S-J.

Skills I can achieve

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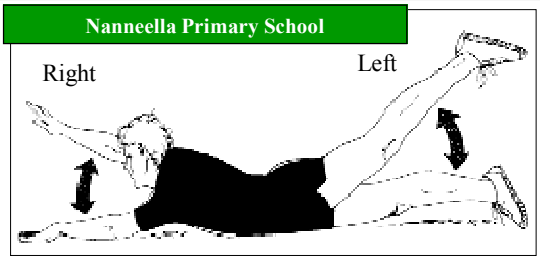


Cross Body Lifts: hold for 2-3 seconds; 5L + 5R

Cross Body Lifts

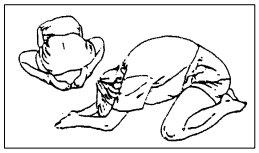
NWA: A few stretches

North West Athletics: www.nwaswimaths.com

Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds

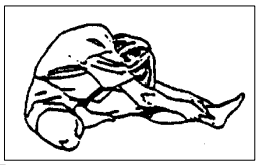
Rating
5: Excellent; "lookin' good; real good"
2: Very Good; some refinements recommended
1: Encouraging; practice regularly to improve

1. Frog Stretch: (for the groin) Kneel; knees wide apart; toes in and touching at the back; From sitting on heels, lean forward; arms outstretched.



5 4 3 2 1

2. Sitting Forward Bend / Modified Hurdle Sit (Hamstrings) Sit with legs outstretched; bend your right knee, the sole of the foot pulled into the groin. Using both hands, grip your left knee, ankle or foot (wherever you feel the stretch is enough). Repeat on both sides.

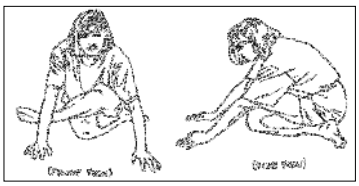


5 4 3 2 1

3. Groin Stretch
Hold your feet and gently use your leg muscles to move your knees towards the ground. Keeping a straight back; bring your feet closer to your body to intensify the stretch.

5 4 3 2 1

4. One Leg Over / Under
Sit down cross legged; take your left leg and bend it over the top of your right knee. Keep your butt on the floor; do not sit of your heels. Aim to get your knees on top of one another; lean / reach forward until you feel a stretch; hold, then repeat with alternate knee on top.



5 4 3 2 1

Stretching

It takes persistence .. Different individuals will find different stretches "easier" to achieve.
Suggestion: Introduce two (2) stretches per week; other examples are shown .. DFK Stretches (p. 10)
Encourage the kids to do stretches at home .. **REGULARLY** (every day)
Most can simply be done while watching TV (during the adverts.).

Do not spend too much time on stretches at daily activity sessions; 2-3 stretches (5-6 mins. max.)
Stretching is important, but can be boring, especially to those who need to do it most .. too often these individuals "cheat" on stretches or release too early; encourage the participants to develop, maintain and extend their capabilities.

The Stretches shown are merely examples.

NWA: A few stretches

North West Athletics: www.nwaswimaths.com

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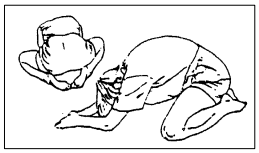

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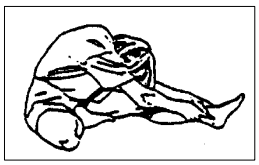

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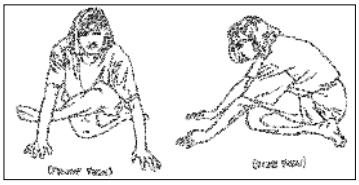


5 4 3 2 1

General Fitness Circuit 1 .. an example

AIM: to enhance your fitness and the benefits that come with that.
We can't all be winners, but ..
We can all be CHAMPIONS

Comfortable training clothes & footwear.
Full water bottle .. sip/drink as needed.

Date / Day, e.g. W8/9 = Week 8—Thurs. Aug. 9

A tick for each time you complete activity
R = Run; E = Exercises

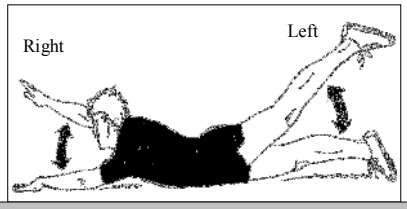
Month:

M	T	W	Th	F	S or Sun
Month:					
Month:					

1

2-3 times a week; 10+ minutes LSD run/jog/walk
(LSD = Long Slow Distance .. brisk walk)
Conversational pace .. take a football/netball.
Why? We are trying to develop your aerobic capacity .. contributes to your capacity to recover … 2nd, 3rd, 4th efforts. A measure of your fitness is how quickly you recover from activity.

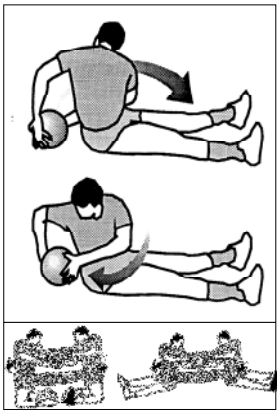
2



Lie face down on a comfortable, flat surface; legs extended fully, toes pointed (swimming streamline); feet together; arms extended straight forward, fingers stretched, palms down; face looking directly downward, nose touching the ground; arms & legs to be raised straight (streamlined), with knees well clear of the ground with at least the mid-point of the thigh off the surface; right arm with left leg / left arm with right leg ..

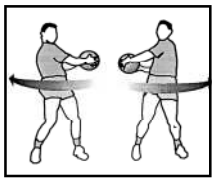
hold each lift for 3 seconds: 2 x 6 -10 Lifts each side

3



Medicine Ball (2-3 kg.),or, a **Brick**, or a **Netball** or **Football**.

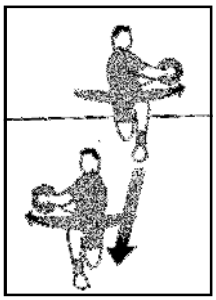
10 Twists Right
10 Twists Left
(Keep the ball/brick at upper chest level)



4

RAPID Skipping:
2 x 50 or 2 x 100
Build to .. re-starts apply

5



5 x Right
5 x Left
Execute with care; separate sheet for correct technique

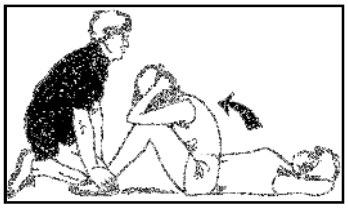
Medicine Ball or **Brick** or **Netball**

10-20

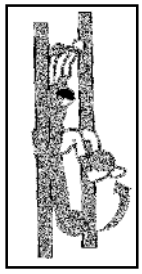
variations

5L+5R

6



Build to
2 x 50 sit-ups
(bent knee, feet anchored; **variations**)



▲ Preferred: arms folded in front of chest

General Fitness Circuit 1
An example only
Activities should be varied to maintain interest and involvement.

Regularity is the key !!

Let the simple recording of your efforts become part of your life.
(max. 5 mins. per day)
If required adjust to your program.

Nanneella PS
Quickstep Ladder

7

Single Step

2 Steps
(Double Step)

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Nanneella PS
Quickstep Ladder

8

INS
&
OUTS

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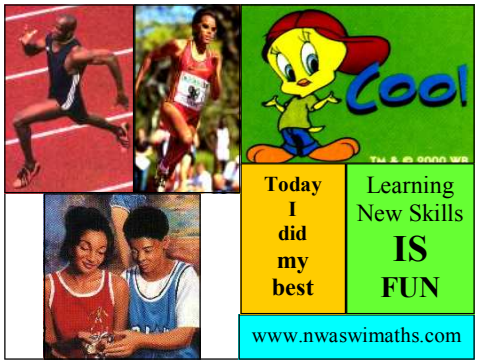
8

Nanneella Primary School

Movement Skills & Agility Drills

Be the best YOU can be



Today I did my best

Learning New Skills **IS FUN**

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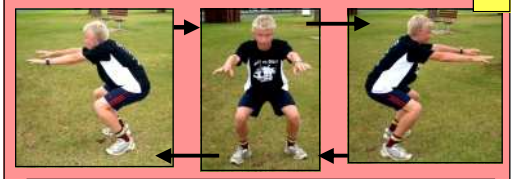
Nanneella PS: Quarter Turns

9



5 x Front►Right►Front►Left►Front
Stabilised bound posture; coach commands

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Drills
&
Skills

Today, I did my best

Well Done !!

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Nanneella Primary School

10 Drills Challenge

10

WELL DONE

Below is an example (only) of a Test-Certificate-Tag (**10**) used by NWA .. usually **after** several weeks of **gradual** drill / skill introduction, practice, and execution.

Variations can be planned.

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Russell Parsons, ATFCA4
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10 DRILLS CHALLENGE (1)

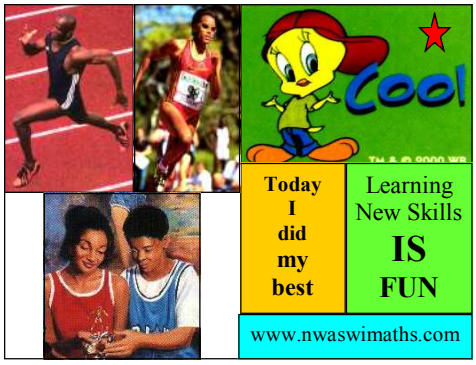
1. ***A-Skip (10L+10R .. 10m)*** ► **jog 15m**
2. ***Double A's (5 Doubles Left + 5 Doubles Right)*** ► **jog 15m**
3. ***Alternating Butt Kicks (10L+R .. 10m .. fast heel-to-buttock snaps)*** ► **jog 15m**
4. ***Fast Claw (6 x Right + 6 x Left) ..*** Tall, balance on the ball of the support foot; partner/coach/teacher calls: ***("Preparation" .. "1" …. "Preparation" .. "1" ….)***
5. ***Combinations (Fast Leg-Butt Kick) .. Alternating; 10 Combinations (5L+5R) .. 10m*** ► **jog 15m**
6. ***Falling Start*** ► ***Sprint to 15m***
7. ***3-Point Start*** ► ***Sprint to 15m***
8. ***Agility (Ladder) Drills: Single & Double Step; Ins and Outs; Ali Shuffle***
9. ***Stretches: Frog + Modified Hurdle Sit;*** positions held for 30 seconds minimum
10. ***A&C Drill .. (6L + 6R .. 10m)***

You will be given two chances at each drill

How to read the task: ***A-Skip (10L+10R .. 10m)*** ► ***jog 15m*** = A-Skip .. 10 times Left Leg + 10 times Right Leg (alternating) then, jog 15m (arm action: elbows 90°) (.. 10m = within a 10m distance)

Be the Best YOU can be … YOU can never be better than YOUR BEST

A few Basic Skill Tags .. there are many more



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Improving my A-Skip

"Toe Up — Heel Up — Knee Up"
"Step over the support leg knee"
Arms: approx 90°; hand back to hip
*"**Tall**" .. be the tallest you can be*
Lots of perfect practice .. 10L / 10R

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Improving my A-Skip

"Toe Up — Heel Up — Knee Up"
"Step over the support leg knee"
Arms: approx 90°; hand back to hip
*"**Tall**" .. be the tallest you can be*
Lots of perfect practice: 10L / 10R

Improvement is my aim

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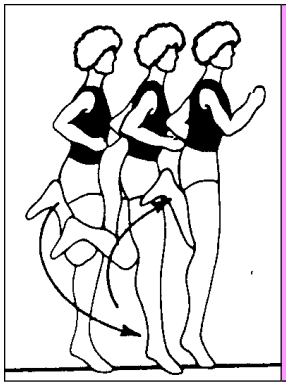

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Butt Kicks

- **Right**
- **Left**
- **Alternating**

Fast "snaps"; slow forward progress

Reminders
Tall—Toes dorsiflexed—active arms—snap heel to buttocks

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Combinations

(Alternating)
Fast Leg / Butt Kick
a complex drill

Tall throughout - toes dorsiflexed - active arms - knee to thigh parallel with ground - snap the butt kick

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Fast Leg

- **Right**
- **Left**
- **Alternating**

Active foot should land **just** beyond support foot

Reminders
Tall—Toes dorsiflexed—active arms knee lift until thigh parallel with ground
Jog►FL►Jog►FL►Jog►FL ...

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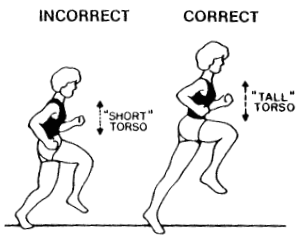

Improving my Running Form

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Fast Claw

Maximum of 6-8 calls (repeats)

*"Preparation" = **Tall** — active knee to thigh parallel with ground - toes dorsiflexed - "claw" to ground beneath hips - lift heel of active leg to buttock - fast recovery back to "preparation" position - wait for command. Straight support leg - upright - heel lift. Commands by 3rd party.*

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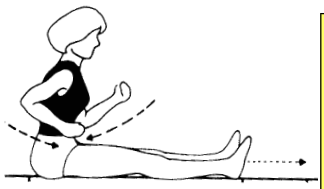
Seated Arm Drill



- Sit tall; knees together;
- Preserve a 90° arm angle;
- Arm swing should not cross centre line of the body;
- Gradually increase tempo to maximum for 5-6 seconds.

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The best received tags are one showing the athlete performing .. easy to make; do not feature elite performers (at least not too often) .. their execution can be a turn-off … *I'll never be that good.*

Flexibility is important; *every athlete is an experiment of one*; learn the stretches that assist you to be more flexible, i.e. apply your power (safely) over its maximum range.

In general, **warm-ups** should have an increasingly **dynamic** aspect, but, young bodies should also seek the benefits of enhanced flexibility.

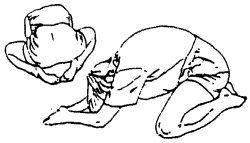
After a w/u: you compete or train
After a w/d: you go home
What is the message?

Debbie Flintoff-King (AUS)
Olympic Champion, 1988
W400H: 53.17

(Some) Debbie Flintoff-King Stretches

Don't over-stretch; hold each stretch for **at least** thirty (30) seconds

1. **Frog Stretch:** (for the groin) Kneel; knees wide apart; toes in and touching at the back; from sitting on heels, lean forward; arms outstretched.



2. **Thigh Stretch:** Kneel; back to the wall; place your knee against the wall; position your foot outside your buttocks so you can press back with your bottom into the wall. The opposing leg balances; repeat on both sides.

3. **Kneeling Twist:** (for the groin and lower back) Kneel on your right knee; bring your left knee out in front of you; extend your right shoulder over your left knee, pushing your palm to the ground.

4. **Sitting Forward Bend / Modified Hurdle Sit** (Hamstrings) Sit with legs outstretched; bend your right knee, the sole of the foot pulled into the groin. Using both hands, grip your left knee, ankle or foot (wherever you feel the stretch is enough). Repeat on both sides.

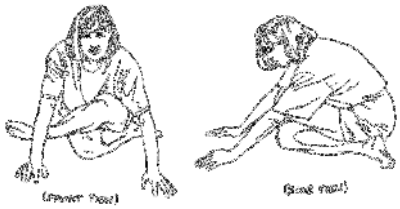
5. **Lying Forward Stretch (Bent Knee)** Sit, bending your right knee at 45°, extending your left leg straight back behind you. Lean forward stretching your arms in front of you. Keep your right buttock on the floor. Both sides.

6. **Dog Stretch:** Standing, feet shoulder width apart, with toes slightly turned in. Walk your hands away from your body, fingers pointed straight ahead. Head hangs loose; push your heels to the ground (hold); at the same time keep your buttocks high.

7. **Tricinasna:** (for the back) Best done against a wall. with feet apart (1m+), run your left foot along the skirting board (2cm out from the wall). Right heel back, toes pointed slightly inwards. Keep your legs straight; extend your left arm down; try to keep your shoulders back. Right arm raised above your head. Look up.

8. **Simple Twist:** Sit down cross-legged. Take your right leg over your left knee. Take your left shoulder inside your right knee, and hold on to your right foot. Turn, and look over your right shoulder.

9. **One Leg Over / Under** Sit down cross legged; take your left leg and bend it over the top of your right knee. Keep your butt on the floor; do not sit on your heels. Aim to get your knees on top of one another; lean / reach forward (chest to top of thigh) until you feel a stretch; hold, then repeat with alternate knee on top.



These are not the only stretches … an excellent series .. select, apply and practice your own event-specific stretches.

Coaches: beware too much static activity .. some, OK - functional, "yes" .. but youngsters are seeking activity; *the only **wrong activity** may be **no activity***. So incorporate stretches incidentally, regularly, creatively.

NWA

Sample Test Certificates

Tests may be conducted every 3-4 weeks .. over several seesions; e.g. a Test Week

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10 DRILLS CHALLENGE (1)

1. *A-Skip (10L+10R .. 10m)* ► **jog 15m**
2. *Double A's (5 Doubles Left + 5 Doubles Right)* ► **jog 15m**
3. *Alternating Butt Kicks (10L+R .. 10m .. fast heel-to-buttock snaps)* ► **jog 15m**
4. *Fast Claw (6 x Right + 6 x Left) ..* Tall, balance on the ball of the support foot; partner/coach/teacher calls: *("Preparation" .. "1" …. "Preparation" .. "1" ….)*
5. *Combinations (Fast Leg-Butt Kick) .. Alternating; 10 Combinations (5L+5R) .. 10m* ► **jog 15m**
6. *Falling Start ► Sprint to 15m*
7. *3-Point Start ► Sprint to 15m*
8. *Agility (Ladder) Drills: Single & Double Step; Ins and Outs; Ali Shuffle*
9. *Stretches: Frog + Modified Hurdle Sit;* positions held for 30 seconds minimum
10. *A&C Drill .. (6L + 6R .. 10m)*

You will be given two chances at each drill

How to read the task: *A-Skip (10L+10R .. 10m) ► jog 15m* = A-Skip .. 10 times Left Leg + 10 times Right Leg (alternating) then, jog 15m (arm action: elbows 90°) (.. 10m = within a 10m distance)

Be the Best YOU can be … YOU can never be better than YOUR BEST

Cathy Freeman
Australian Legend

North West Athletics
Russell Parsons, ATFCA4
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10 DRILLS CHALLENGE (2)

1. *10 Minutes Continuous Jog*
2. *A-Skip (10L+10R .. 10m)* ► **jog 15m**
3. *Double A's (5 Doubles Left + 5 Doubles Right)* ► **jog 15m**
4. *Alternating Butt Kicks (10L+R .. 10m .. fast heel-to-buttock snaps)* ► **jog 15m**
5. *Agility Run .. Completion within time set*
6. *Combinations (Fast Leg-Butt Kick) .. Alternating; 10 Combinations (5L+5R) .. 10m* ► **jog 15m**
7. *3-Point Start ► Sprint to 15m*
8. *Agility (Ladder) Drills: Breakdowns; Ickey Shuffle .. forwards & backwards .. coach calls.*
9. *Stretches: Frog + One leg Over / Under;* positions held for 30 seconds minimum
10. *Running the Boards ► Sprint 10m*

You will be given two chances at each drill

How to read the task: *A-Skip (10L+10R .. 10m) ► jog 15m* = A-Skip .. 10 times Left Leg + 10 times Right Leg (alternating) then, jog 15m (arm action: elbows 90°) (.. 10m = within a 10m distance)

Be the Best YOU can be … YOU can never be better than YOUR BEST

Challenges set should be Challenging, yet Achievable
The aim is to stimulate, then reward (recognize) endeavour

It's **not** about who can do the best, but about **more youngsters doing their best regularly**

RECOGNITION

It is essential that endeavour is recognized
IMMEDIATELY after it is presented

This involves preparation by teachers/coaches.
No excuses .. if preparation of rewards is not ready, DO NOT proceed.
I suggest that a tag be given out weekly .. not too often, and **only** to those who display endeavour.

If it can be measured …. Measure it
and
Keep an on-going Record of achievement for each individual and the group

Examples of Individual and Group Recognition

1. **Pairs Beep Test:** Individual — Level and Shuttle
   Pairs — Total: Level and Shuttle
   Group — delete the top and bottom score .. average the remaining scores.

2. **10 Drills Challenges** … group should be well rehearsed; the old saying, *never ask a question of a person who you feel may not know the answer you are seeking* .. similarly, *be sure an individual can complete a task before you ask it of them* .. (or ask them to demonstrate to others).

3. **Continuous Run/Jog/Walk Challenges ..** e.g. How far can you go in 10 minutes; could be laps of a track or circuit, or, number of times a netball court can be travelled. Keep the task relatively sort in duration .. everyone will be challenged (the better will always go further) .. don't need a 3K cross Country course to determine who is the best runner—make it 1.5K and **all** will have-a-go ..

   an ***I Can Do It*** Run

4. Keep a visible record of how many sessions each individual completes; recognise (and reward) endeavour and improvement.

5. I strongly recommend that **Standard Strategies** be read carefully.

6. **Encourage** individuals to keep a **simple** diary of their endeavours, so they can see their effort and progress. Training diaries should not involve more than a 5 minute entry each day. It's not about becoming a slave to the diary .. it's about developing an on-going record of activity.

   Diaries should be checked by the teacher/coach every 2 weeks .. commitment should be recognized.

It's not how fast or how far … it's **how well !!**

An **Eyeful**
is better than
a **Mouthful**

SHOW the individual what you want them to learn .. Don't just talk.
Individual learn from what you show, not what you say.

Of course, the eyeful could be:
- direct demonstration by the teacher/coach or an athlete
(often demonstration by another athlete is best, as this offers the task as "I could do that".)

- video / DVD example
(Show repeatedly .. once or twice is **never** enough)

If possible, video/photograph the individual's attempts and progress.

Standard Strategies

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A **few** ideas / strategies that should be considered in the presentation of your coaching session(s).

You will have your own *"coaching philosophy"*; you may make personal modifications; but, keep in mind:
everything you do,
everything you say,
will be dinner table conversation in each athlete's home over the next few days.

Your perception of your performance as a coach or teacher is sometimes the least important consideration.

In each session

- **Speak / demonstrate clearly and confidently.** Athletes are seeking and appreciate leadership.
- Keep your approach **simple** and **consistent**. (Don't complicate things; simplicity facilitates success; demand attention, *(Looking and Listening)*, and do not proceed without it; praise endeavour; show confidence in the ability of athletes to achieve the standards **you** set.).
- **Review Skills** from the previous session; 10-20% of time allocated should be associated with this purpose. Do **not** prioritise "skill extension" ahead of "skill acquisition".
- **Continually** and **consistently** reinforce expectations: equipment, punctuality; **do not compromise** standards.
- **Be prepared** .. *Why are we doing this?* Relate activities (drills) to the outcomes you are seeking to achieve.
- **Always** outline (in advance) to the athletes *"what's in it (the session / the drill) for them"*; use incentives and rewards, e.g. cards, certificates, praise at some stage to **every** athlete, but, be sure to **expect the best they can offer** *(no more ... no less ... no excuses)*.
- Positive, corrective feedback should prevail. Athletes should walk away from **every** session confident they have enhanced their knowledge and/or skills.
- **Be in control at all times**; e.g. allowing athletes to make decisions is just another way of you being in control. Keep the session moving .. a **minimum** of talk (demonstrate, explain .. but on a needs basis). But remember, you do not need 4 years of tertiary training to let kids do what they like ... parents are watching; be accountable (a term often used but less understood).

- Don't be distracted.
- Have a **theme** for each session: e.g. ***100% Right is 100% Right*** .. ***99% Right is 100% Wrong***; ***Good is not enough, where better is possible***; ***Be Your Best: No More; No less; No Excuses***; ***You can never be better than you best***; ***It takes more courage to try than to win***; ***It's not how fast, it's how well***.
- **Use care and common sense**, but, don't be afraid to challenge the athletes. **Young people love to acquire new skills and have those skills recognised; they enjoy being able to do things others cannot do**.
- **Do something positive** and **personal** for **every athlete**, **every session**; e.g. praise; technique evaluation; special attention; a comment / a joke; personal comments to the athlete in view of the parent; have the athlete demonstrate to the group, lead a drill, or answer (correctly) a question(s).

There are many other issues and strategies; **every athlete is an experiment of one**; you will constantly add to your strategies … it's called, ***experience*** (you can't buy it, only acquire it).

But, keep in mind that **teaching is fundamentally a simple process**:
YOU take a group of students / athletes into a classroom / on to a track;
show them, explain to them how to do something;
organise skill acquisition opportunities, providing appropriate feedback;
then, let them have a series of attempts; see how they perform;
reinforce, refine, replicate .... ***the learning process never ends !***

Knowledge (only) accumulates quickly in an open mind

An Eyeful is better than a Mouthful

Also: **Standard Strategies .. Swimming**
www.nwaswimaths.com > PROGRAMS

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Why Drills?

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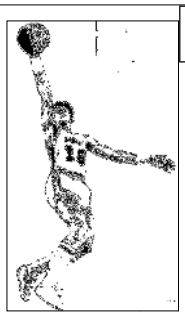
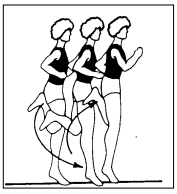
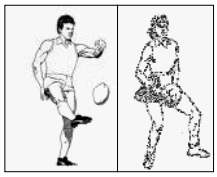


1. To practice **YOU** being in command of **your** intentions and reactions.
2. To provide interest, variety, and fun.
3. To improve technique: including rhythm and co-ordination.
4. To improve balance and flexibility (drill both sides of the body to equal efficiency).
5. To improve strength and power through ranges of motion specific to your sports(s).

> ***Self-esteem is developed through confronting challenges ...***
> ***and, developing skills to achieve positive outcomes***



6. To focus on and understand aspects of your event; drills are the key to technique improvement and refinement; the establishment of the correct ***dynamic stereotype***.
7. To expand your confidence in your potential as an athlete and as a person.



Muscle Memory and Skill Acquisition

When we learn a skill, it requires **repeated** and **continuous practice** before it becomes "**automatic**".

An **automatic skill** is a movement we can do without thought.

Walking is the obvious example. From our early years repeated practice day in, day out, result in our arms and legs eventually co-ordinating into an efficient walking action.

Think about the almost countless arm movement variations you can perform while walking.

Simply: your muscles develop a (correct) *"muscle memory of walking"*. Your (mind and) body is free to focus on other tasks, and, develop a muscle memory of those tasks.

Like walking, sprinting / hurdling / breaststroke / butterfly (examples) are acquired skills that can become automatic when our body develops a ***"muscle memory of sprinting / hurdling / breaststroke / butterfly"***. This takes time and is **strongly dependent** on **regular**, ever-improving practice.

"We are what we repeatedly do … excellence can become a habit"

(But, only plenty of perfect practice produces perfect (professional) performance)

Learning new skills is **FUN !!**

> "**Fun**" is NOT just allowing young people to do what they like;
> as coaches and/or teachers, our responsibility is to provide leadership

- **Think** about your sport .. each outcome reflects the sum of a series of movements; and, each movement can form the basis of a drill. Drills enhance movement skills: speed, co-ordination, and confidence .. as such they address issues that contribute to improved performance in **all** sports.
- The range of drills is almost endless, but pure fun; variety and enjoyment aside, drills should be specific to the movements you wish to enhance. There are **basic drills**, but a multitude of **sports-specific drills**.
- **Drills** should be **precisely planned** and **perfectly executed** .. **repeatedly**. You have to demand precision, but also apply persistence.
- While in many instances walking through a drill is a good basic starting point (i.e. teaching the mind and body what is expected), some drills are easier to do at a moderate tempo, e.g. in athletics, many find A-Skip easier to accomplish than A-Walk.
- Athletes should be encouraged to "feel" the movement, and associate the correct feeling with the correct movement. Remember, the athlete can *"feel"* the movement .. the coach can only see it. But, the coach by providing positive, corrective feedback, can assist the athlete to refine his/her feelings.
- Where appropriate slow the movement down … complete with eyes closed ... learn to read your body.
- We learn incorrect responses as easily as correct movements. **NEVER** practice errors. **Do not compromise on quality** .. aim on **every** occasion aim to practice a drill perfectly.
- **End** each training unit with a **successful outcome**, e.g. a perfect drill performance, and, (if appropriate) include the drill into the complete movement pattern to demonstrate your mastery and appreciation of its role in the skill you are refining, e.g. end a series of backstroke drills with a backstroke swim.
- ***You can't put in what God left out*** (Film: Chariots of Fire), but **drills** offer us an opportunity to refine and expand skills, and, thereby enhance performance and self-esteem … don't miss the opportunity.

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It takes only 50 repetitions to establish a "habit" … up to 10,000 repetitions to change the habit

Special Attention: Parents, Teachers, Coaches

What Makes A Great Teacher? – Amanda Ripley

"The Atlantic" January/February 2010 pp. 58-66

The following was referred to me by Swim Coach Legend Bill Sweetenham .. the **full article** by Amanda Ripley is **very** interesting reading, and should, in my opinion, be read, by teachers, parents and coaches

Below is Bill's summary of some of the issues she identifies.

Teachers Matter

The school, statistically speaking, **does not matter as much as** ... **which adult stands in front of their children**.

Traits of Great Teachers

1. **Great teachers** tend to **set big goals for their students**.
2. **Great teachers** perpetually **look for ways to improve their effectiveness/evaluate what they are doing**.
3. **Great teachers avidly recruited students and their families into the process**.
4. **Great teachers maintain focus and ensure that everything contributes to student learning**.
5. **Great teachers plan purposefully and exhaustively** – for the next day or the year ahead – **by working backward from the desired outcome**.
6. **Great teachers work relentlessly, refusing to surrender to obstacles**.

Bill Sweetenham

One way great teachers ensure kids are learning is to frequently check for understanding. Are the kids—all of the kids—following what you are saying ? Asking "Does anyone have any questions?" does **not** always work.

Students are not always the best judges of their own learning.

Great Teachers:

- *Establish and maintain* .. routines so strong that they run virtually without any involvement from the teacher. In fact, for many highly effective teachers, the measure of a well-executed routine is that it continues in the teacher's absence. **The activities come in a brisk sequence**, **following a routine the kids know by heart** .. very little time is lost in transition.

A measure of the quality of any program is what behaviour is evident when the program leader is not present. RP

- **Display a history of perseverance-not just an attitude, but a track record**. "Teach America" now asks applicants to talk about overcoming challenges in their lives, and ranks their perseverance based on their answers.

  Issues/Traits such as ..

  "**Grit**" – defined as perseverance and a passion for long-term goals, and, "**life satisfaction**" are critical.

  In general, though, "Teach America" staffers have discovered that **past performance-especially the kind you can measure-is the best predictor of future performance**. Recruits who have achieved big, measurable goals in college tend to do so as teachers.

The above is basically Bill's synopsis, with a few personal additional comments.

The full article is also attached for parents, teachers, and coaches.

Amanda Ripley is the author of "The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes-and Why."

It's what you learn,
after you think you know it all,
that really counts !!

Bill Sweetenham

Head Olympic Coach: 1980, 1984, 1988; Head Coach (AIS): 1980-1991
13 times Australia's Head Coach; Olympics: 2G, 5S, 3B; Worlds: 2G, 1S
Commonwealth Games: 18 Gold Medals; Head Coach of Great Britain .. the list goes on

In the late 90's we were fortunate to have Bill lead two NWA Echuca Swimming Intensives; Excellent coaches/teachers can be found, but, I have never seen any person with the depth of knowledge and practical skills to deal so effectively with groups and individuals of all ages and abilities. Having worked with Bill at Kings Mornington, visited him in Queensland, and attended numerous (what I call) "Bill Clinics", the man talks ***and*** *walks the talk. Amanda Ripley's thoughts (in my opinion) warrant similar respect.*