



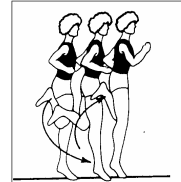
Why Drills?

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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 sport(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**”.

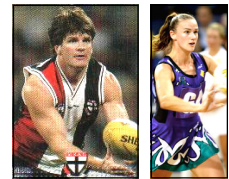
An **automatic skill** is a movement we can do without thought.

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



“We are what we repeatedly do ... excellence can become a habit”

Learning new skills is FUN !!

But, “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 sport reflects the sum of a series of movements; each movement can form the basis of a drill. Drills enhance movement skills: speed, co-ordination, confidence and self-esteem .. as such they offer opportunities to 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.
- We learn incorrect responses as easily as correct movements. **NEVER-NEVER** practice errors. **Do not compromise on quality** .. aim on **every** occasion aim to practice a drill perfectly.
- 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. many athletes 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. But, the coach by providing positive, corrective feedback, can assist the athlete to refine his/her feelings.
- Where appropriate, slow the movement down ... execute with eyes closed ... Seek to feel what is right ... learn to read your body.
- **An eye-ful is better than a mouthful** .. demonstrations linked to trial execution linked to immediate video/ DVD feedback is the most effective teaching/learning strategy we have. What the athlete sees, he/she can/will refine.
- **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.
- *You can't put in what God left out* (Chariots of Fire), but **drills** offer us an opportunity to refine and expand our skills, and, accumulate self-esteem ... don't miss the opportunity.
(Not every athlete can be the fastest .. but, all can refine their skills: We can't all be winners, but, we can all be champions.)