

**THE SPEED PROGRAM**

Remember, perfect technique is the #1 emphasis with the BFS Speed Program. Faster times will follow perfect technique. The Speed Program is as follows:

1. Start with a Sprint Learning Session with focus placed on the following body areas:
 - Two 30-50 yard sprints with focus on the Head and Eyes
 - Three 30-50 yard sprints with focus on the Back, Arms and Wrists
 - Three 30-50 yard sprints with focus on the Legs, Knees and Feet
 - One additional sprint with focus on any problem area
2. Do 5 practice starts with a 10 yard sprint.

A good start can shave a good tenth of a second off your time. The following is the BFS

3. Finish with 5 full-speed sprints.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF POINTS THAT PRODUCE RESULTS IN SPEED IMPROVEMENT:

1. Sprint 2 to 3 times a week
2. Sprint 10 to 100 yard distances.
3. Get timed once or twice per month. Record and chart all times. A stop watch or a Speed Trap (see page 19) may be used to time the sprints.
4. Sprint year-round: Weather not permitting, sprint 20 or 30 yard distances. A 3.0 second 20 yard sprint is relative to a 5.0 second 40 yard dash.
5. Use video analysis to evaluate sprint form.
6. Incorporate a flexibility routine a minimum of six times per week (see page 4).
7. Do plyometrics a minimum of two times a week (see page 14).
8. Parallel Squat once a week; you must squat down to a position where the upper thigh is parallel to the ground.
9. Straight Leg Deadlift twice a week. This is a secret which very few people know about. This builds and stretches the glutes and hamstrings at the same time. It is critical to speed improvement. Use a weight that is 40% of your Parallel Squat max and do 2 sets of 10 repetitions.
10. Do Cleans once a week. This helps tremendously in developing sprint starts.
11. Practice the 8-Point Sprint Learning Sessions 2 to 4 times a week.

THE START

The best way to start your forty is to use a stance similar to a sprinter's stance. You want your legs close together. The lead leg should be about four to six inches back from the starting line. The back leg could vary, but the ball of the foot should dig and plant deeply into the ground. It's a cramped, uncomfortable position that should feel like a snake that's coiled and ready to strike. Just before you get ready to explode forward out of your coiled stance, the hips should raise up higher than the shoulders. The shoulders should lean over the line with the head down. Do not raise your head up.

There are two reasons. First, it would tend to pop you up too soon rather than keeping you low at the beginning of your sprint. Second, lifting the head up makes you tight; and keeping relaxed is important. Remember, the key is to get a good forward body lean.

Another trick is to raise the arm opposite from the back leg way up above the hips. The idea is to punch out hard to force you into an explosive start. It should throw you out of your stance. When you explode forward, I concentrate on the first three steps. When you punch out with your arm, your back leg will automatically explode forward. Keep your head down and look where your first steps will be.

Those first three steps are all power. These steps perpetuates everything that follows.



READY Position: Place the lead leg about 4 to 6 inches back from the starting line.



SET Position: Raise the butt higher than the shoulders. Push your arm back as far as possible. Lean as far forward over the line as you can without falling over.

ON GO, THE RAISED ARM SHOULD PUNCH FORWARD AND PROPEL YOU OUT OF THE STANCE.

SPRINT LEARNING SESSIONS

Each athlete should participate in a Sprint Learning Session (SLS) two to four times a week, in-season and off-season. These sessions can be done in groups or individually. Critique by a coach, parent or teammate is important.

Improving running technique is the sole purpose of SLS's. Up to 9, half-speed sprints should be run and evaluated each session. There are eight points of the body that should be evaluated: the head, eyes, back, arms, wrists, legs, knees and feet (see the 8 Point Checklist to the right). Each of these eight points fall into one of three body areas: the head, torso or legs. With each half-speed sprint, a different area should be focused on. Learning speed technique is accomplished through constant weekly repetition and can only take place when the body and mind are fresh.

HERE IS A LIST OF GUIDELINES FOR SLS'S

- The learning sessions should be done directly after the warm-up and flexibility period.
- Up to 9 half-speed sprints should be done per session which can be divided into 3 sprints per body area. If one area proves more difficult for the athlete, more sprints can be done concentrating on that area while doing fewer sprints for the other areas. However, nine learning sprints should be enough no matter how the sprints are divided.
- The distance for each sprint should be 30-50 yards with recovery time being 15-20 seconds (about the time it takes to walk-back).
- Each sprint should be 1/2 to 3/4 speed and never full-speed for learning purposes.
- The SLS should never be considered a part of the athletic conditioning but only part of the learning process.

8-POINT CHECKLIST

HEAD

- 1. HEAD** - The head should be held up parallel to the ground.
- 2. EYES** - The eyes should be fixed on a target straight ahead.

TORSO

- 3. BACK** - The back should be upright and locked in.
- 4. ARMS** - The shoulders should stay loose with elbows fixed at a 90 degree angle. The elbows should thrust back and up quick and hard. The arms should never swing across the body but should swing straight forward and straight back.
- 5. WRISTS** - The wrists should simulate a whip action as the shoulder rotates back.

LEGS

- 6. LEGS** - Initial leg action is to lift forward and then up.
- 7. FEET** - Feet should make the initial plant directly under the hips and not out in front of the body. The toes should be kept up -- Don't let the foot drop. The toes should not point in (pigeon toed) or out (duck feet) but should point straight ahead.
- 8. KNEES** - At end of the leg drive, the knee should fully extend.

SPEED DRILLS

Speed drills are meant to augment the BFS Speed Program but should never replace the Speed Program. Some speed drills are designed to isolate the different movements involved in sprinting in order to evaluate and improve technique such as the General Speed Drills (this page) and Specific Speed Drills (see page 12). Other drills are designed to improve agility and foot quickness as with the agility circuit (see page 13), the Dot Drill (page 3), Jump Roping, etc. Devices such as sprint chutes and sprint sleds (page 16) can be used to increase running power. It is usually best to pick only a few drills each sprint workout day.



THE A-RUN

The purpose of the A-Run is to develop quick foot transfers. During this run, concentrate on getting the knee high then thrusting the foot back down hard and quick. The runner should not just stride but should get the knees up. Come down hard and fast on the heel in order to get a good rotation and the feeling of a quick turnover.

TEACHING TIPS:

Emphasize a quick transfer from one leg to the next. The faster the leg comes down and the faster the runner's weight is transferred to that leg the better. Also make sure the runner keeps the head up, the chest spread, the lower back locked in and the toes pointed forward.



THE A-RUN WITH EXTENSION

The purpose of this drill is to help develop quick foot transfers and to teach good leg extension. During this run, concentrate on getting the knee high, reaching out with the leg and then pulling the heel quickly down to the ground.

TEACHING TIPS:

Emphasize quick movements. The faster the leg comes down and the faster the runner's weight is transferred to that leg the better. Also make sure the runner keeps the head up, the chest spread, the lower back locked in and the toes pointed forward.



BUTT KICKS

Butt Kicks help develop an extended range of motion while stretching the quadriceps. Simply kick your heels all the way back until they come in contact with the butt. Then bring them straight down.

TEACHING TIPS:

Make sure the runner keeps the head up, the chest spread, the lower back locked in and the toes pointed forward.

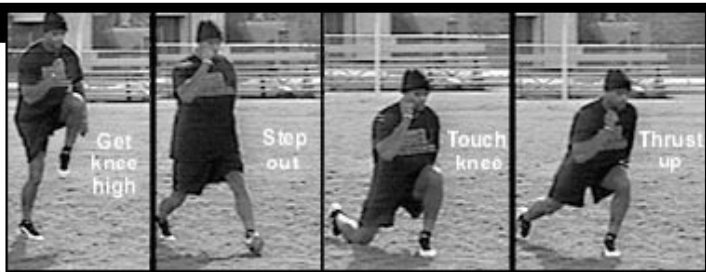


HIGH KNEES

High knees help develop good knee height for faster sprints. They also stretch the glute and hamstring muscles. The runner should hold both hands up in a stationary position. While running, the runner should thrust the knee up as high as possible. The knee should go higher than hip level.

TEACHING TIPS:

Make sure the knee gets as high as possible. Quickness should also be emphasized. Also make sure the runner keeps the head up, the chest spread, the lower back locked in and the toes pointed forward.



STEP LUNGES

Step Lunges develops balance, hip & leg strength, hip & leg coordination and teaches good leg extension. It is important to go very slow and controlled. The runner should step out as far as possible, plant the foot, let the back knee touch the ground, push off with the back leg and thrust back up with the front leg.

TEACHING TIPS:

Make sure the runner keeps the head up, the chest spread, the lower back locked in and the toes pointed forward.

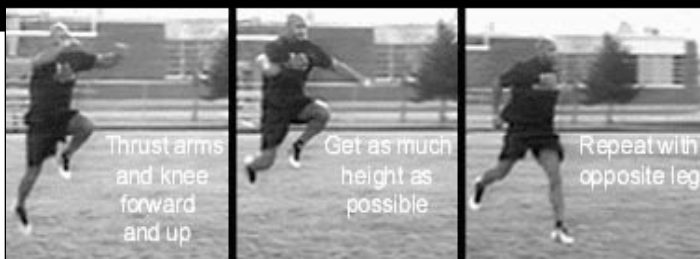


THE POWER SKIP

The Power Skip helps develop quick explosive movements and strengthen the tendons and muscles in the ankles. It also stretches the glute and hamstrings. During this run, the runner should power the knee up then snap it down and back with a quick, hard movement.

TEACHING TIPS:

Emphasize a quick transfer from one leg to the next. The faster the leg comes down and the faster the runner's weight is transferred to that leg the better. Also make sure the runner keeps the head up, the chest spread, the lower back locked in and the toes pointed forward.



BOUNDING

Bounding develops quick explosive movements while strengthening the tendons and muscles in the ankles, glutes and hamstrings. It also improves knee height and balance. Try to bound as high and far as possible while maintaining good balance.

THERE ARE TWO VARIATIONS:

1. Arms go back and forth like a regular sprint.
2. Both arms go forward and back together as in jumping (as shown).



SIT AND PUMP

The Sit and Pump drill emphasizes the importance of arm swing. It develops quick and strong arm movements. It also stretches and strengthens the arms. Sit on the ground and pump arms faster and faster until almost bouncing off the ground.

TEACHING TIPS:

Emphasis punching the elbow back as far and high as possible. Also emphasis loose shoulders and wrists. The wrists should whip back because they are so loose. Don't allow tensed shoulders. Make sure the athlete keeps the head up and focused, the chest spread and the lower back locked in.