

Sample Speed & Agility Drills

These speed and agility drills are designed to improve your **speed off the mark** and **acceleration**.

For multi-sprint sports such as basketball, soccer and tennis **absolute speed** is **not** the most important factor. Speed off the mark, acceleration and agility are...

How often does a basketball player have to sprint over long distances (50 to 100meters) in a straight line?

The point to remember is that you don't have to be blessed with the genetic makeup of a Carl Lewis to be quick in many sports. With a little training and practise you can run 5 yards while your opponent is still thinking about it.

If you're a sprint athlete then absolute speed is a major determining factor of your success. Speed off the mark and acceleration are still key elements however.

General Guidelines For Speed And Agility Drills

Quality is the key for successful performance of these speed and agility drills. Keep the individual sprints short and rest **completely** between sets. Use these 6 pointers to optimize the training response:

- 1.** Warm up thoroughly. Speed and agility drills may not leave you out of breath but they do put considerable strain on your musculature.
- 2.** Speed and agility drills should be performed either on separate days to other training or at the start of a training session after the warm up.
- 3.** You will gain most benefit from these speed and agility drills if you have previously developed a **solid strength and power base**.
- 4.** A typical session may consist of approximately **5 sets of 10 repetitions** (each sprint being 1 repetition). Work to rest ratio should be **1:5** i.e. a 5 second sprint should be followed by a 25 second recovery period.

5. The number of sessions per week varies greatly. For most team sports speed and agility drills should be introduced late on in the pre-season phase. Two sessions a week is usually adequate. During the competitive season, one session per week may be enough. Sprint athletes may need as many as 3-5 sessions per week.

6. The speed and agility drills below are suitable for many sports. To make them more specific adapt them slightly to mirror the **movement patterns** in your game. You'll find some examples below.

Choose 2 or 3 of the speed and agility drills below to make up the session, keeping to the recommended number of sets and repetitions.

Ready? "Marks" "Set" "Go!"...

Speed And Agility Drills

1. Basic Sprints

Set 2 cones out 10-20 meters apart. Sprint from one cone to the next and slowly jog back to the start. Vary the start of the sprint to make the drill more sport specific. For example...

Face backwards, lie down, jump up, pretend to receive a pass, jump to head a ball etc.

2. Rolling Start

Exactly the same as above except you jog for 10 meters before sprinting. This drill is specifically designed to enhance acceleration rather than speed off the mark. Try running backwards or side stepping as well.

3. Up Hill Sprints

In competition the first few strides are crucial. Running **up** a slight hill (about 30 degrees) helps to develop power and acceleration. Keep the distances short (10-15 meters) and allow extra rest between sets and reps.

An alternative to uphill running is a **resistance parachute**. Resistance chutes are one of the most



popular and effective training aids for sprinters. If it's adjustable it can be used to develop power for sprint trainers or even long distance runners.

4. Down Hill Sprints (Over speed training)

Down hill speed and agility drills help to develop leg speed and co-ordination. This is sometimes referred to as over-speed training. Keep the distance short (10-15 meters) and make sure the hill is only slight.



An alternative method of over-speed training is to use elastic cords. An **Over-Speed Trainer** consists of a pulley system to provide a smooth build up of speed. It enables the sprinter to move at a rate greater than 100% of their usual top speed. It can also be used to provide resistance much like uphill sprints.

5. Hollow Sprints

Set 5 cones out in 30 meters intervals. Sprint 30 meters, jog 30 meters, sprint 30 meters and jog 30 meters to the final cone. Walk back to the start and repeat.

6. Cruise And Sprint

Mark out a distance of 100 meters. From the start gradually accelerate to reach full speed at about 60 meters. Sprint all out for the final 40 meters.

Reduce the number of repetitions for this exercise as it takes longer to complete.

7. Ladder Drills



A ladder is a simple training device that helps to improve co-ordination and leg speed. It can be used for a number of speed and agility drills and is particularly useful for sports such as tennis and basketball that requires fast and co-ordinated footwork.

8. The Snake

Set up a series of 6-8 cones in a straight line about 1 meter

apart. Weave through the cones, turn and weave through back to the start.

9. Follow The Leader

A training partner and large area is required for this drill. Have your training partner jog, run and sprint randomly over a large area. You must try to shadow her as closely as possible. This is an excellent drill that helps to develop reaction time, acceleration and speed endurance.