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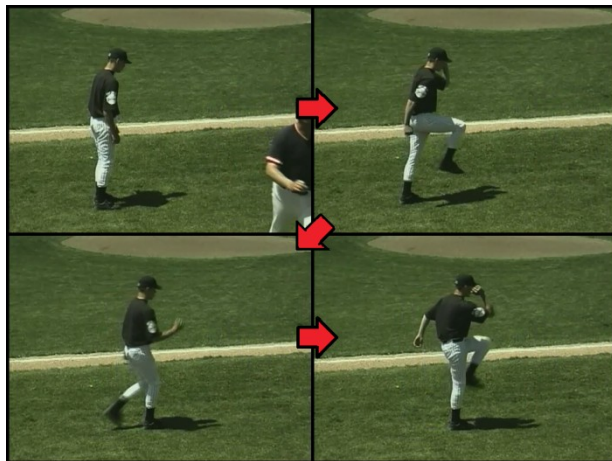
Consult Your Physician

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Hi, I'm Jeff Mercer and welcome to the baseball conditioning workout. This is a workout designed for players from the professional ranks all the way down to the junior league. Today we've got some fellas, high school age, that are going to be helping us go through the workout.

It's a workout designed systematically through a period of time to make you faster, quicker, more active on the baseball field to be able to do those things perform those skills that are necessary to be an outstanding baseball player. This workout will help you develop speed, quickness, lateral movement, agility, any skill pertinent to you becoming a better baseball player.



As we begin any conditioning workout, it's always important to remember that we need to go through a thorough stretching program before we start. As we get started, the first drill that we're going to walk through every time is to make sure that our technique is proper as we begin to move.

And we're going to work forward in what we call a high knee walk. And what Tom's going to do for us is he's going to do, just point out a couple things.

First of all, he's going to pick out a focal point. He's going to pick out a spot that he's going to run to with his eyes and he's going to keep his head there.

A lot of times you see kids flop their head right to left, and all it does is slow them down because then their body starts waving as well. So he's going to pick out that focal point and his body's going to be very mechanical right now, because if we can make our technique good when we run it's going to cut down the amount of time it takes to get from point A to point B.

We want Tom to swing the arms at a 90-degree angle. This way, the hand comes up next to the cheek, we swing with the shoulder, the hand comes back behind the belt or the hip, back in here. The knees are going to come up almost at a 90-degree angle, the elbows' are going to lock in at a 90-degree angle. We want our technique to be very good. So, Tom, if you would, let's take us through and take a look at what we've got.

Notice how the knees are coming up high, the arms are pumping. He's got that good focal point. He's just tuned in right to where he's going. That's a kind of running technique that when we put it all back in gear, that we want to have an opportunity to look at every day for the ball player. Normally, in a workout we would do three to four reps. You don't need to go much more than 20 or 30 feet at any given time.

Part two of our workout involves what we call a quick skip. This is a drill that takes a little while to get used to and to get agile with. However, it does really help your

coordination and it's just another building block, after the walking with the arms, toward getting us to that next level which is going to be a full run.



Jason's going to help me out here. So, Jason, if you'd slide over here. What we want to do is we want to put a skip into a normal run.

We want to also work the arms the way that we would normally work them, and that is to lock at the shoulder, go 90-degree angle, bring it to the ear, and then back behind the hip, right in here, and then get in that nice even, smooth skip and really put some rhythm into it and some coordination. Okay, Jason, let's take a look.

Very nice. Okay, turn around and come back. Notice that he's got the arms locked in a 90-degree, pumping them to the head and then back behind the hip. Getting the knees nice and high, putting that skip in. Okay.

Notice we're getting some extension there with the legs. And really going to be working on driving hard, which is exactly what he's going to have to do whether it's base running or working the outfield or even in the infield on a ball hit to his right or to his left. Notice how he's getting a little bit of rhythm in there. Very nice.

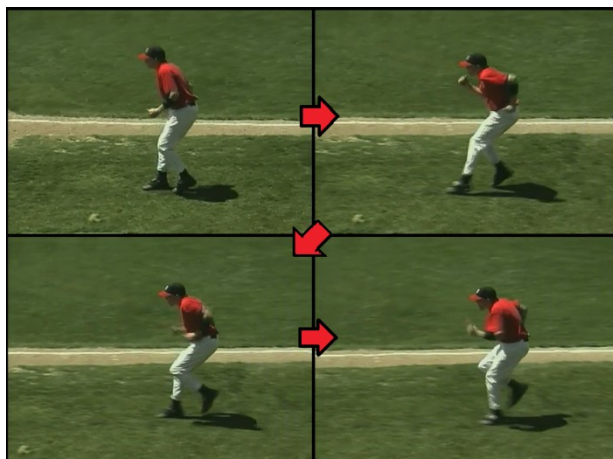


After we've worked our quick skip, we want to go ahead and let our players – in this case, Nick – work through an actual running form where we're going to, again, building-block together after we started out with our walk high knees and then we go to our quick skip. Now we're going to put the whole package together.

A couple key points that you want to remember. Number one. We want to make sure we get our knees up and really get kind of an exaggerated pump of the knees.

We want to make sure that we're, again, 90 degrees at the shoulders, pumping the hands from the cheek back behind the hip, right in there. We want to make sure we have a focal point. We want a little bit of a forward lean with our body, just to propel us forward. And we want to make sure we land on the balls of the feet.

So, Nick, let's take a look at what we've got here. Again, it's worth spending time thinking about how we want to run. If the technique's good, the chances of us



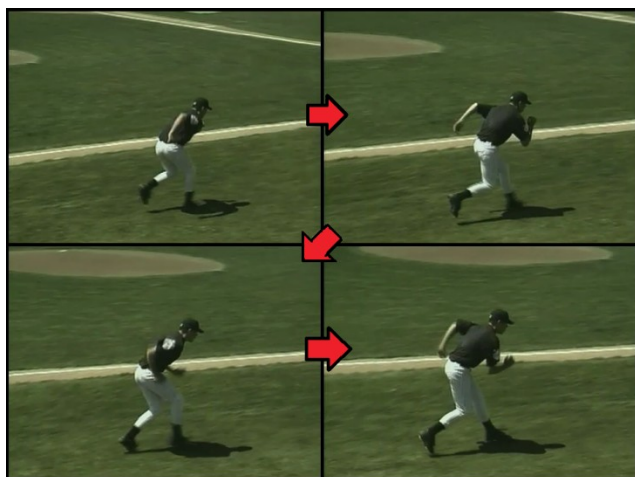
maximizing our speed greatly increase. Notice how he's got a little forward body lean. Knees are coming up. Get the good pump of the arms.

See how his hand's coming up alongside his cheek. Very nice. Out on the balls of the feet. You can tell Nick's a good runner.

We want to make sure we keep the arms in close to the body. We want to make sure we don't let them swing out too far. Keep them tight.

We want to again, a couple key points. Making sure we pump our arms. Making sure that our nose goes over our toes so we get a little backward lean, and we're really working on quick feet here, being able to move those feet backward.

In baseball, sometimes you don't have it exactly where you run straight back but, boy, it sure helps if you can move laterally and backward. And this will help enhance that quickness.



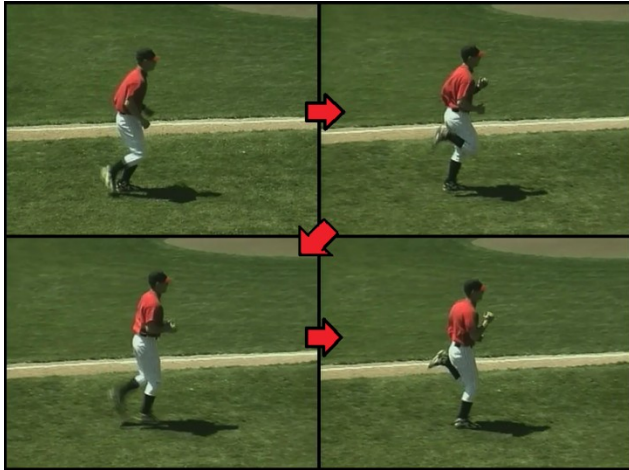
Okay, let's take a look, Jake, at what we got here. We're going to start with the arms up. See how he's pumping? The nose are over the toes. We want to make sure the technique's good with the feet. Straight line.

Always continuing with that focal point. Notice how his head's nice and still. He's locked in right behind him. Whatever it happens to be that he's looking at. It could be the fans or someone there. Always have a focal point.

Arms continuing to pump. Getting the arms up along the cheek. Swinging the elbow back behind the hip. Nose over the toes. Very nice.

PART 2

After we do our backward quick, we want to take that into what we call a backward power. And the focus here is not in speed or quickness; the focus is in really getting a good drive off either leg as you go backwards.



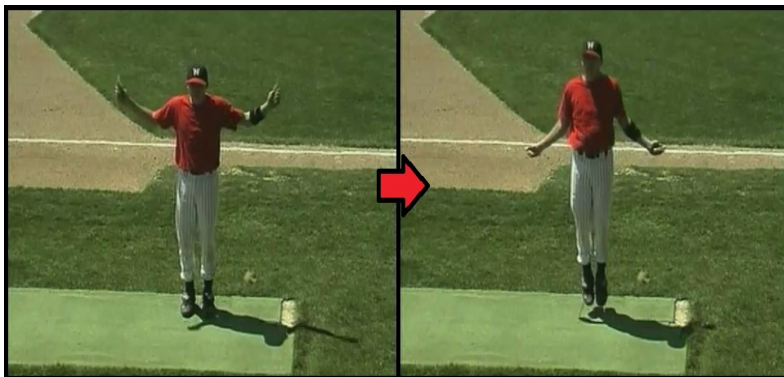
So again we're going to kind of get into a defensive back mode, and we're going to work backward. Still with a good arm pump, but we're going to really try to lengthen the stride out some. Tom's going to help me. We'll take a look.

Okay. Again, we want to make sure that we get the good arm pump backward. You'll notice how he's driving back off either leg. We don't need a whole lot of repetitions at this. This is a very taxing drill, but it's still going to allow us to begin to derive some power from the legs and

the hips, and really have us work the arms. Hand comes up to chin, elbow back behind the hip. Notice how he's getting a good arm pump. He's getting a good leg drive back.

We're going to get a little leg extension with what we call at glute kick. We're going to work hard on lifting our heel up to our tail-end. Making sure that we get still a good focal point, but really getting some pump and some drive with the feet.

And then about halfway through, we're going to change the rhythm a little bit. Nick's going to give us a little different look as we head on down.



Okay, Nick. Still want to get a good arm pump here. Notice how he gets the heels up. Really good; working good leg quickness. Getting the good arm pump. Very nice.

This is not one that's geared toward being fast moving forward; we just want to be fast moving up. Notice he's changed the rhythm a little bit.

He slowed down. Just a little different look.

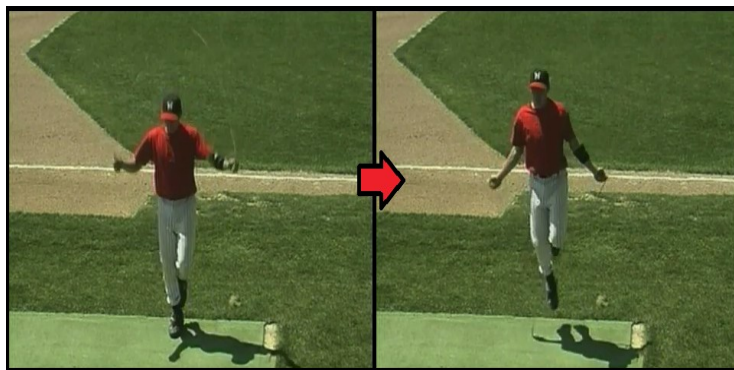
Again, we can get three or four repetitions depending on the length of the field that you're working on. If it's 40 or 50 feet, you want to get four or five. If it's a longer

distance, just a couple will be fine. Notice again the rhythm's changed a little bit. He's still maintaining good technique. Continue to pump the arms.

Jacob's going to work us through our jump rope routine. We're not going to get so technical that it becomes very difficult for him. However, we do want to make sure that we work our foot quickness; and the jump rope is a great cardiovascular workout as well.

The first jump rope exercise we're going to do is we're going to keep both feet together and we're going to let him work at the wrist.

Okay. He works with the wrists. He's not going to use a lot of his shoulders. Just straight up and down. Good. Nice technique. Notice how he's straight up and the rope's the right length. It's not too long, it's not too short. That's good.

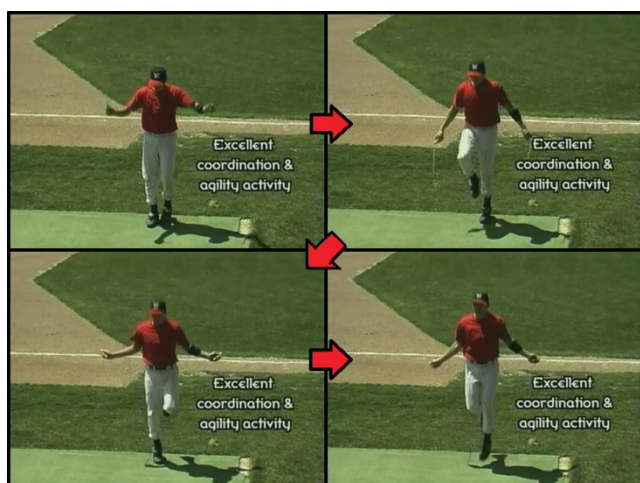


The second exercise we're going to do on the jump rope is just right foot only. So he's going to lift the left foot up off the ground and continue to work at the wrist.

Still want to maintain good technique. Try to come up and down in the same spot or very close to the same spot. Notice how he's working his wrists, not

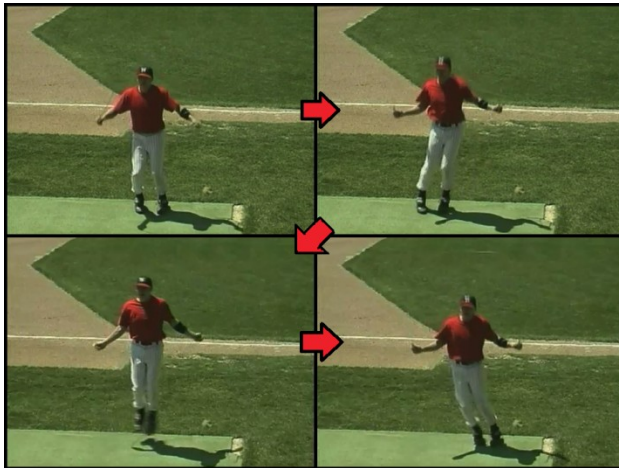
the shoulders.

Then we're going to switch to the left foot. So we'll go right foot up. Good technique again. It's a good cardiovascular workout along with being able to work foot quickness and coordination.



The next exercise, we're going to run in place along with the jump rope. Again, this is a great workout for coordination and ability to be able to move under some duress.

Okay. He's got to avoid that rope. Still be able to have a good technique with the hands. Straight up and down. He's working his focal point. Knees straight up. Going a straight line. Looks very good.



The last one we'll do is to work a little bit of lateral quickness. This is what we call a side to side. And he'll be going from right to left. Jump rope is a great way to get your workout for the day.

Your wind up, get the blood pumping a little bit, work a little bit of lateral quickness, work your foot quickness and, just in general, get a real nice workout.

Baseball's often a game filled with spills and tumbles. And one thing we want to try and help our players with is teaching them how to get out of what could be a bad situation and resulting injury by teaching them how to tumble both forward and backward, on the right shoulder and left shoulder. We're not trying to go for speed here.

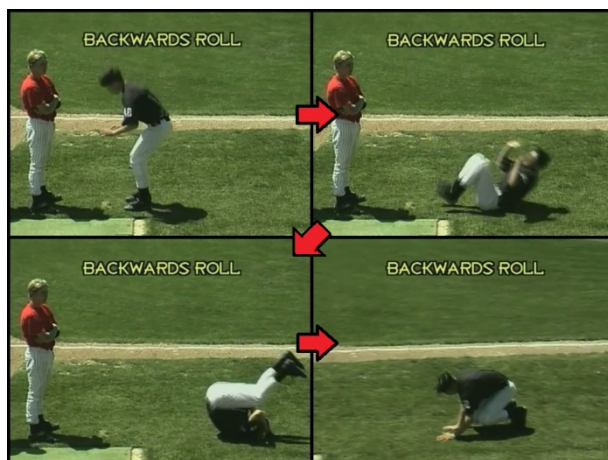


What we're after is some technique. To make sure that we keep our hands inside our body, keep our legs up and underneath us. You'll notice when Tom starts in just a second, he's going to do two forward rolls and once he's done that, he's going to kind of hesitate in between each. Again, it's my job to focus on the technique to make sure that they're doing it properly.

Okay, Tom, let's start us out. Okay, use your hands. Push up off the ground if you'd like, okay? Right there. Good.

Good. Two rolls.

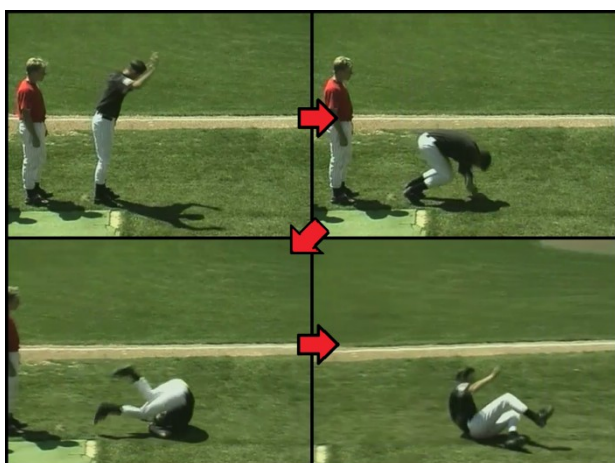
Just a little hesitation in between. Make sure our technique's good. We've got our feet underneath us. We've got good coordination, good agility. We're not out of control.



Our second rotation will be the backward somersault. It's the opposite of the forward, obviously. Keep the hands up and underneath us. Try to keep the legs tucked.

You see an outfielder in this situation periodically where they'll go back on a ball and maybe backpedal a little more than he should and end up going head over heels. Again, we're just trying to help ourselves get out of what could be a bad situation with regard to an injury. Notice how Nick

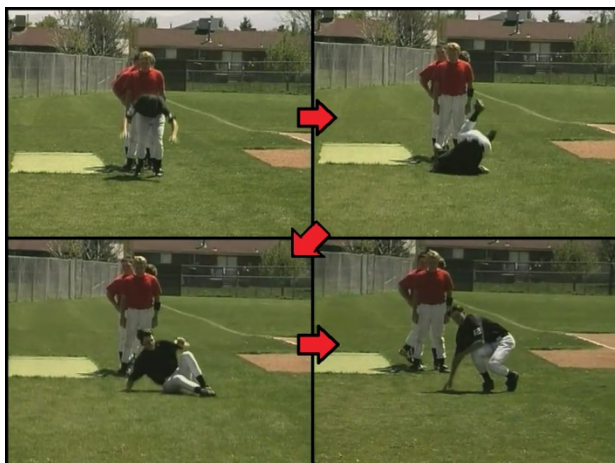
was nice and tight there. Try to keep our legs up and underneath us. Good.



Our third tumbling exercise is our right shoulder roll. This is a little more along the lines of what you'd see in the outfield if an outfielder actually dove for a ball.

Depending on which way the ball went, to his left, to his right, he'd dive on the shoulder. And we're just going to take a look at the right one.

Okay, Tom, let's get started. And get a little more activity to the right shoulder. He'll reset himself and go at it again.



Again, we're just trying to avoid injury and making sure that we know how to tumble and know how to roll, and roll right out of a problem situation. See how he tucked the right shoulder down? Just nice and smooth. That's good. So again, we can work our coordination and our athleticism here. At the same time, we're helping our self prevent injury.

We follow up our right shoulder roll with the left shoulder roll. Just on the other side. So we happen to have to go that direction,

we can roll right out of left. For a right-handed player this is a little more difficult. Just like a right shoulder roll would be a little more difficult for a left-handed player.

But if you work at it just a little bit, get a couple, three repetitions every workout, it won't be long until you'll be equally adept at both. Very nice. Good.



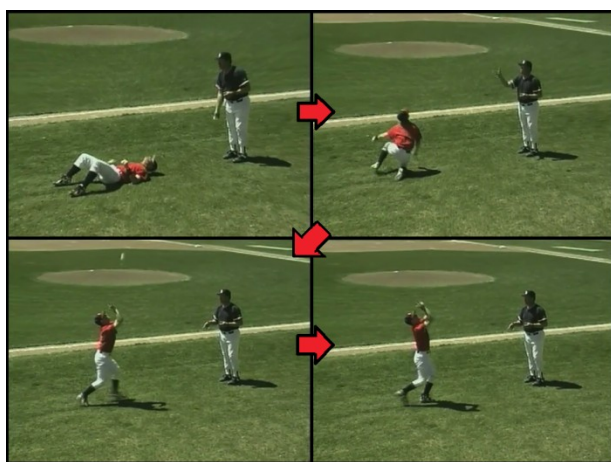
This is our dive roll. We're going to speed up the process a little bit from a normal forward roll or a somersault, and we're going to dive out just a little bit and try to imitate what it would be like if we were in the outfield and had to come running across the outfield to dive for a ball.

Okay, Tom, let's take a look. Notice how he speeds up. Now dive out just a little bit quicker. Okay. Feet go up, but notice he's still got the nice tight tuck right there at the

end. Good.

So his feet come underneath him. God. Trying our best to get our feet underneath us so we can get back on our feet in a hurry. Good.

PART 3



This is a great drill for helping your reaction time regardless of position. What Nick's done is he's going to plop down on the ground right in front of me and he's going to have his head facing toward me.

And I'm going to stand here and I'm going to yell go. When I yell go, he's going to scramble to his feet as fast as he can just like he were coming out of a roll and the ball go up on top of him.

As you get better at it, we can move to the right, to the left. Don't throw it quite as high.

Okay, Nick, let's take a look. Ready? Go. See how quickly he scrambles to his feet? Back down. Eight or 10 repetitions would be great on this. Ready? Go.



Ball took him back just one step. Nick's pretty quick. We're going to move him a little bit to the right or to the left here. Ready? Go. To his right. Great reaction for an infielder. Good instincts for the outfielder. Ready? Go. A little tougher. Made him work.

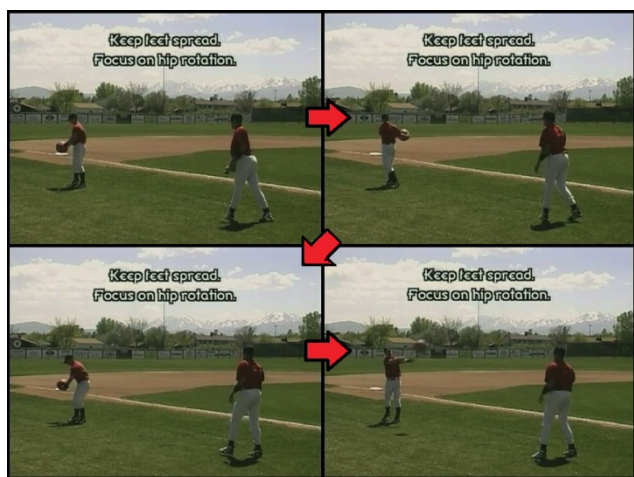
The better the player, the older he is, the more agile he is, the harder you want to work him. Ready? Go. Good. Go. Ball behind us, we can get a good drop step and go back after it. Try to avoid the backpedal. Ready? Go.

We're going to work, right now, about 25 repetitions. Jason and I may not do quite that many, but I think if I were to give a recommendation, it would be to do at least 25. Maybe take a break and do another 25. This is a real good conditioning workout; you see a lot of pitchers do it, a lot of infielders will do it working on staying low.

It also helps your lateral quickness back and forth. Infielders can get some particular benefit from making sure that they're two-handed with everything they do. Every ball they pick up, want to make sure they pick up with two.

Okay, here we go. To the right. Flips it back. He stays low. I'm moving to the left. Back to the right. If you do this for 25 repetitions, you're going to feel it certainly in your legs, in your lower back. It's a good workout. If you want to work them a little bit extra, just spread it out a little bit.

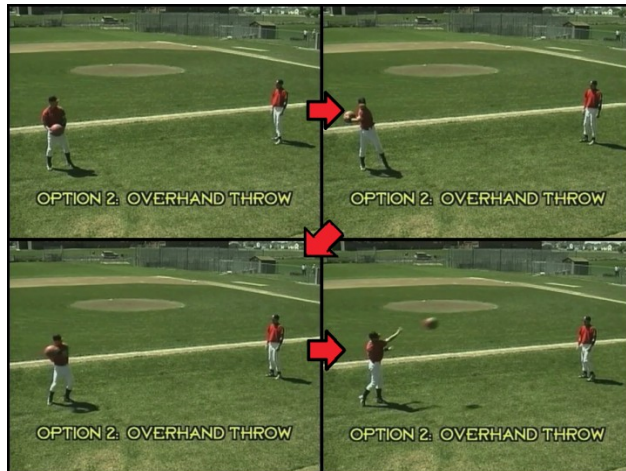
Feed the ball a little further apart. If they've had plenty of a workout, you can keep the balls kind of tight; you don't have to move them quite as far. Notice how he's going side to side, he's not crossing his feet. Just a nice shuffle. Good way to conclude any workout. It's also a good way to start a workout.



Depending on the age of your players, a medicine ball may be appropriate. Certainly with the high school age players like I have here with Nick and Jason. They can handle it. Even with the younger guys, if you get a little smaller medicine ball they can still do it. This is a great drill and a great exercise for being able to work at the waist in what would be your normal hitting technique, with some rotation; or a normal throwing technique, to be able to really get some hip drive and power.

As Nick takes a look at it here you'll notice he's lined up just in his hitting stance, where he's got his shoulders, hip, and his knee pointed at Jason. He's going to take that medicine ball and he's going to rotate the body as far as he can, get good rotation. And then as he comes back through he's going to drive through his hips, and Jason will, in turn, do the exact same thing. Feet are spread. Good rotation.

Always making sure we line up, just like in our hitting stance. Excellent rotation. Medicine ball really helps us gather some strength and some power. Okay, fellas, let's take it over the top. Overhand. This'll be more along the lines of our actual throw. We're going to work the back arm a little bit, also the hips.

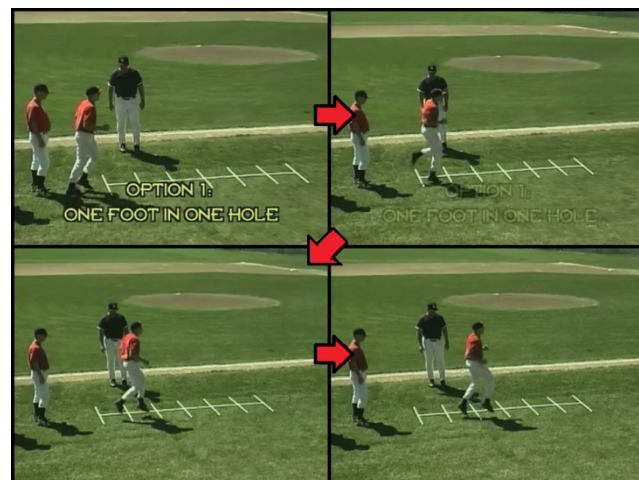


Notice how Jason got the nice pivot on his back foot to make his good throw. So we first went underhand and now we're going to be above the waist with the ball.

So we get a little arm strengthening along with the hip action that we want as well, and a good pivot technique on the back foot. Very nice.

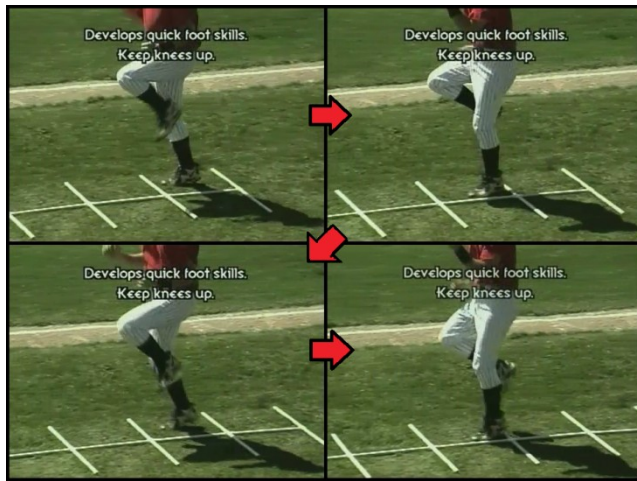
This really helps our agility, our coordination in making sure that our running technique is still good. There are a hundred different drills you can do with

this running grid. We're going to run through a number of them, but there are certainly more options if you're looking for something else to do in a little more advanced way.

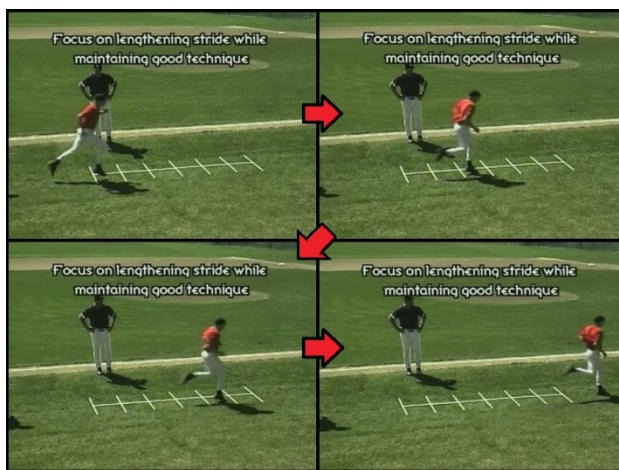


Alright, first one we're going to do is one foot in one hole in a running format. We want to pick out our focal point.

Okay, Jake, go ahead and start us through. One foot in one hole. Get the good arm swing. Okay. Knees up. Good. Touch down light. We want to try to avoid making contact with the grid whenever possible. Good technique. Light on the feet. Still pumping the arms. Good focal point. Good.



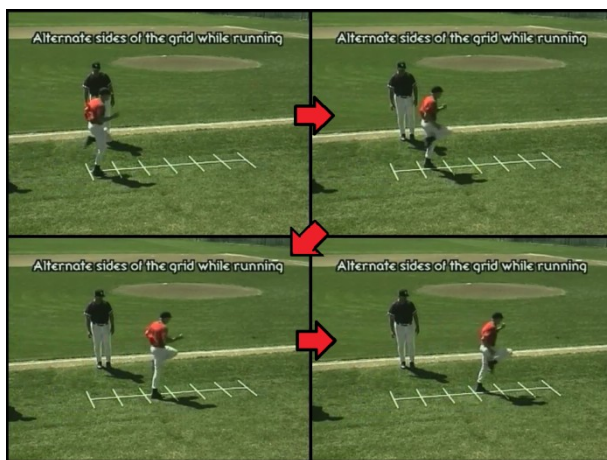
Second drill will be two feet, one hole. So we're going to touch down twice in one grid and then we'll move on to the next. We've really got to get our knees up in order to do this or we're going to miss hitting in the grid.



Okay, this time we're going to take one step, we're going to elongate a little bit. So we're going to hit the one hole, the three hole, the five hole, and out. So we're going to lengthen our stride out just a little bit. Staying on the right side of the grid.

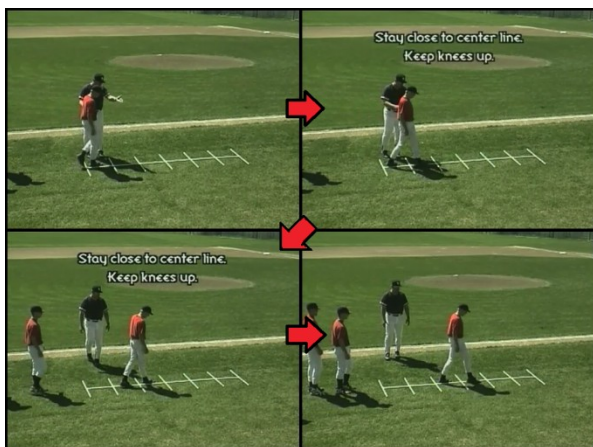
Here we go. One, three, five, and out. Still getting the knees up. We're going to elongate our stride a little bit. More like a normal run. Good. Coming back. Good. Knees up. Good arm pump. That's it.

One, three, five, and out.



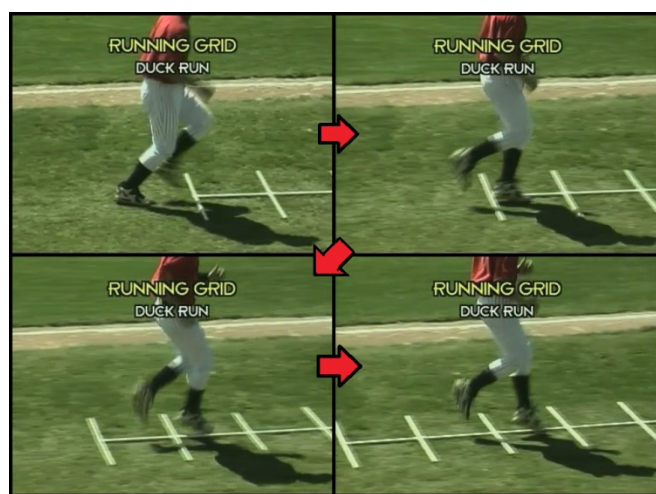
Okay, our next exercise is going to allow us to use both sides of the grid. We're going to touch down in the first grid with our right foot, then we're going to hit the next grid with our left. We want to stay close to the center line. With good running technique.

Don't want to get sloppy here and start straggling all over the running grid. Stay always close to the center line. Good. That's it. Pump the knees. Good. That's it. See how nice and light on the feet? Very nice.



Okay. We're going to do this one, the next one in a walking form. This is what we call a duck waddle. We're going to take our right foot and we're going to step on the left side of the grid, and then we're going to go left foot up, step on the right side.

We want to stay real close to the center line. Knees up. We don't have to pump the arms on this one. We want to lift at the knee. Good. Stay close to the center line.



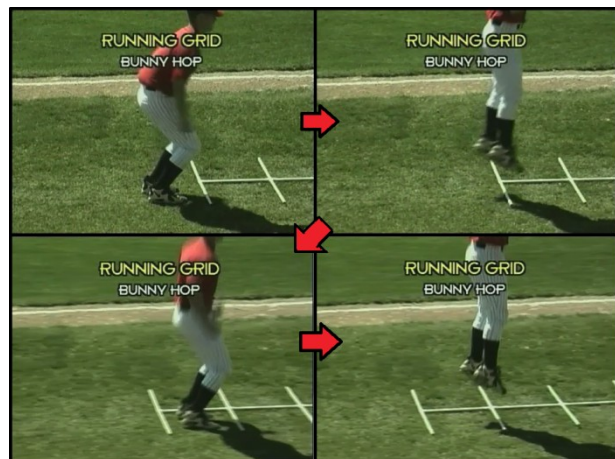
We're going to walk through this one time and then we're going to come back with a run. The natural tendency is for people to swing out away from the center line.

We don't want to do that. Get your knees up and be able to put them straight up and straight down. This requires some coordination, a little bit of agility. Especially if you raise this off the ground.

This time through we're going to run it. And then we're going to see if we can

avoid going back and forth each time that we have to touch down with our feet. We want to go in a straight line.

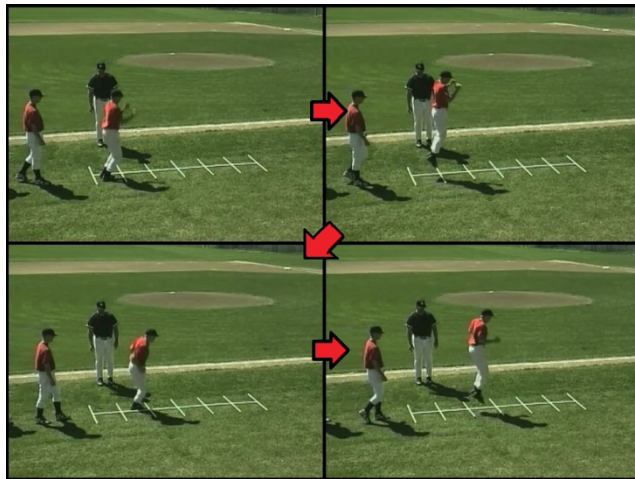
Okay, knees up. Very nice. See how he stayed in a straight line? Good. Any degree of coordination you can achieve through a running grid will just transfer into success on the ball diamond.



Okay, we'll come back. Good. That's it. Try not to swing out too much. Good. Very nice.

Okay, we're going to do bunny hop. We'll go on the right side of the grid. And what we're working on here is a little bit of lift with the legs, but a whole lot of lift with the arms. One hop at a time on the bunny hop.

Up. Good. See how he's getting some extension? Jake is getting up. Good. Lifting the arms, and that helps us drive as we then take that into a running format where the arms are used to being able to lift and give you a little bit extra help.



Okay, now we're going to take the bunny hop and we're going to go diagonals with it. So we're going to hit this hole, then come over here, and then back, and then back. Again, stay close to the center line. Good. Excellent. Nice.

See how he's getting up off the feet? One thing you want to try to remember is, whenever you do this, try to find a soft surface that you can hit on. A gym floor works well; it's got a little bit of give. You don't want to do this on concrete.

As I mentioned, there are a myriad of things that you can do with this. You can do all kinds of different ones coming in and coming out. You can make it as advanced as you'd like.

You can keep it fairly simple. I think if you get eight or 10 exercises in in a given day, that would be a good number to shoot for. You may find that you're not quite as good at some as others. You want to work those a little harder.

May be some that come very simple to you. Chuck those aside and keep the ones that are a little more difficult and work those extra. Whatever it happens to be, whatever you come out of this, I'll guarantee you're going to come out more agile, more coordinated, and more able to move right, left, forward, and backward on a baseball diamond.

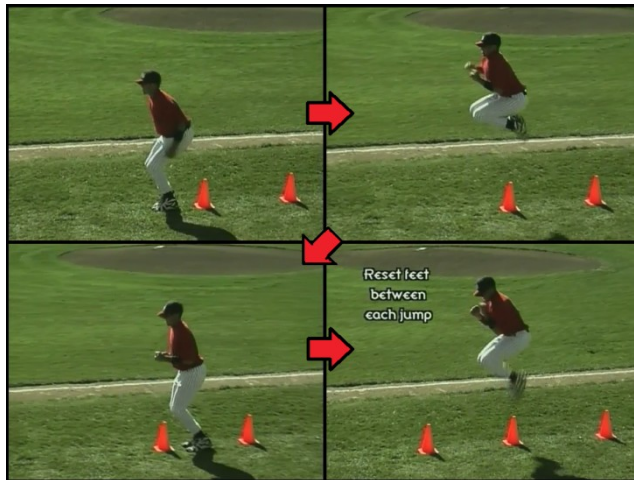
PART 4



This is our cone drill. This is somewhat similar to our running grid; however, it's going to require a little bit more power. And as we go through our five rotations here... and I might mention that that's just a few of what can be done. But as we go through our five rotations, you're going to notice the amount of power that it takes Nick and Jason to be able to get over these cones and to work through it.

Forward bunny hop. Working on getting good lift. Generally, if we can get a couple of rotations or repetitions at each

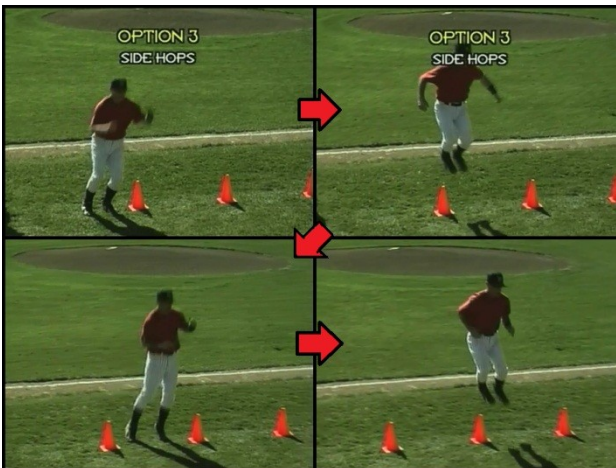
one of these, each one of the five, we'll be in good shape. If you really feel like you got some leg strength and you want to do down and back twice, that's fine.



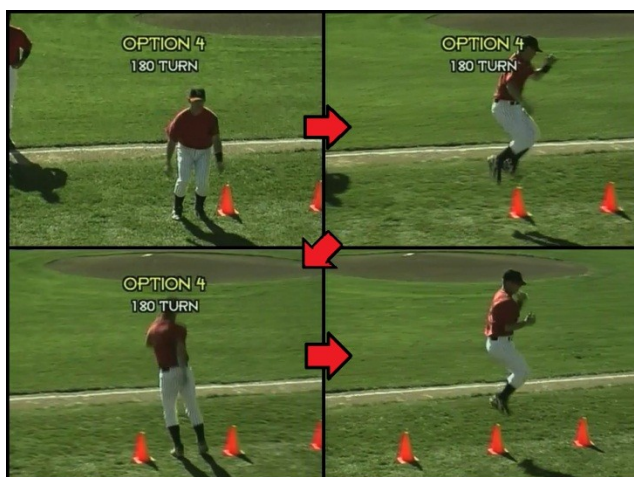
pop them coming up.

Okay, backward bunny hop. And getting some lift. Good. I think you'll find that in our normal situation, if you'll do at least two rotations, one down and one back, especially if you add a couple cones. If we get eight or 10 cones, once down and back on each one of these is generally pretty good.

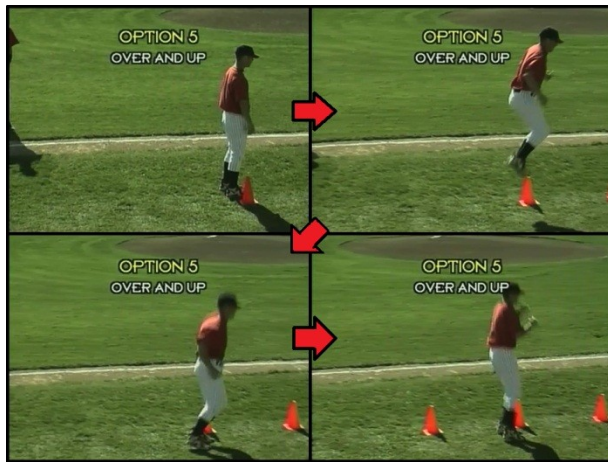
And you'll be pretty worn out by the time you finish it. Okay, coming back backwards. Good. Again, we're going to get good lift with the arms. And really



Okay, side. Good. Good. Keep our feet under us. Get good lift with the hands. Don't want to let the legs fly apart. Stay tight. Good. Trying to get good lift, good power.



Okay, we'll 180s. Lift and turn. Lift and turn. Good. Good. Takes a little power, a little coordination, a little agility. All the above. Good. Good.

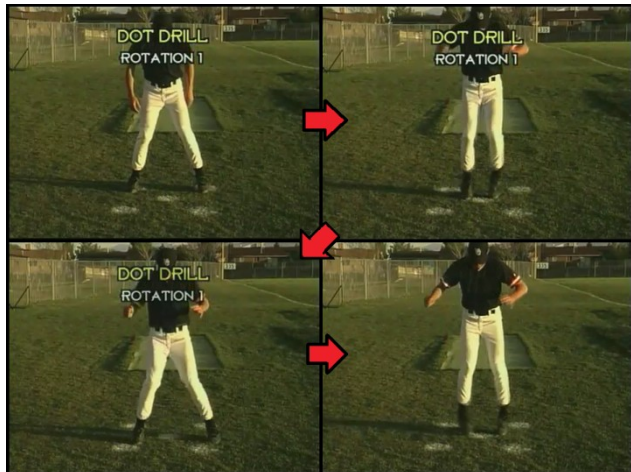


Over and up. Good lift. That's it. That's the way to be light on your feet. Very nice.

We go five rotations on this drill and we do six repetitions per rotation. And Tom's going to take us through what we do; and we do it the exact same way every time.

An athlete, a high school athlete Tom's age, if he's pretty good at it, should be somewhere in the 50-55 second range. Anything below that would have to be considered pretty good.

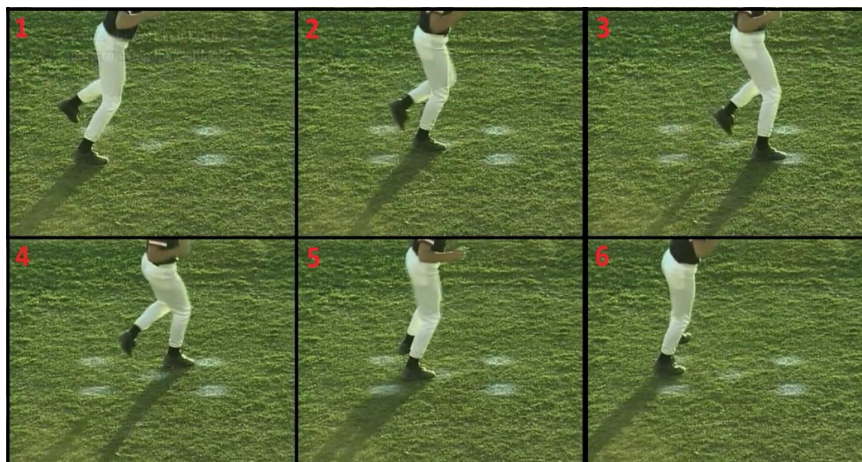
And anything above that would be considered a little bit slower and you'd certainly want to work down toward the 50-second mark.



Okay, the first rotation Tom's going to do is he's going to touch both feet on each dot, starting out with the ones nearest him. Both feet'll contact the center dot and then they'll go back to the outside. Okay, Tom, here we go. We're going to go six rotations. Feet start on the dots. Go. He's going to contact the dots.

Notice how he's quick with the feet. And he'll go six rotations. Now when we do this for real, we go all five rotations back to back to back to back. Right now we're

going to stop in between so we can take just a moment to take a look at it.



The second rotation that we're going to do is going to be with the right foot only, and we're going to form a figure eight as Tom starts. He's going to start on the right back dot. Notice how he's contacting the figure eight form. And he's going to go again. Six repetitions on this particular rotation, okay?

The next one will be our left foot. We'll do the exact same thing.

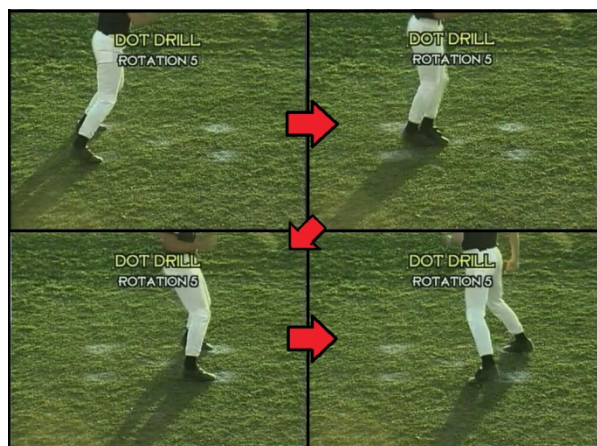


We'll start with the figure eight movement and he's going to make six contacts here. Ready? Go.

Doesn't take long to wear you down a little bit. It's very taxing on the legs. You can imagine if you do all five rotations simultaneously.

This rotation will involve two feet touching each dot. Almost like the bunny hop that we've done on the running grid and that we've done on the barriers or the cones. Okay, here we go. Ready? Go. Again, in a figure eight rotation. Both feet. Want to make as quick a contact as we possibly can.

You can see how we have some degree of carryover here to a baseball skill, with regard to lateral movement and foot quickness. And this can't help but assist you in getting better and quicker, whether it's running the bases, in the outfield, trying to catch up to a groundball in the infield, or even behind the plate.



Okay, the last rotation we'll take, Tom's going to go down just like the first rotation except this time when he gets down to the end, he's going to turn and come back the other direction. Okay, Tom, let's show them what we've got. Ready? Go. Watch him. Turn. He spins at the end. Back and makes his contacts. Good.

Those are our five rotations, each with six repetitions. And again, when we do this for good, we do it, all five, simultaneously. And we should be somewhere in the 50- or 55-

second range for a high school athlete.