

Build Strength in Speed and Agility Training

Essential for all Athletes

Ladder Drills

Ladders can be purchased or made using tape. Your typical ladder is made up of 18-inch squares that cover a 16-foot distance. You can make your ladder any length you like.

I prefer to use ladders that present a little more physical presence than tape. I find that athletes tend to be a little more accurate when using something that creates a physical barrier.

Many times athletes will cheat and step directly on the tape which minimizes movement distance. With a ladder they can feel when they are not accurately stepping and adjust accordingly.

I try to incorporate 3 different types of drills. The first type of drills are steady state drills. These drills focus on quickness, endurance, and utilize a constant rhythm throughout the ladder.

The second type of drills are burst drills. These drills focus on the ability to turn on a rapid burst of foot movement. The third type of drills are elastic response drills. These drills focus on improving the reactive speed components of the lower leg.

As with all movement drills, stay relaxed and focused during each drill. Try to use a normal arm action (which will change according to the nature of the drill) and avoid the frozen arm syndrome that often times accompanies these drills.

Minimize foot contact time (do not let your feet squeak on the floor as this is a sign of increased contact time). Start slow, work on accuracy, and learn the drills before you speed them up.

Z-Drill

Start beside the ladder with your shoulders and hips perpendicular to its long axis. Step into the first square with the closest foot (lead) followed by the other foot (trail). Step out to the opposite side of the ladder with the lead foot followed by the trail. Tap the trail foot (front half of the foot) on the ground outside of the ladder and step it back into the second square (The trail leg is now going to become the lead and the lead the trail). Now step into the second square with the trail foot. Step out to the same side of the ladder where you began the drill but beside the third square. Repeat this pattern down the ladder. Focus on maximal bursts of rapid foot action as you cross the ladder. Each burst should start and stop with the foot tap. Do not allow your shoes to squeak on the floor (this means

that you are increasing contact time and not efficiently applying force to the ground).

In In Out Out Lateral

Stand beside the ladder facing the side of the first square. Step in with the lead foot (this will be the foot on the long side of the ladder) followed by the trail foot. Step backwards out of the first square with the lead foot followed by the trail foot. Repeat this action down the ladder. Maintain a constant rhythm throughout the drill.

In In Out Out Linear

Face down the ladder and straddle the first square. Step into the first square with the lead foot immediately followed by the trail foot. (perform this entire drill with the right foot leading and another time with the left foot leading). Step back out so you are straddling the second square. Step back into the second square with both feet. Repeat this pattern down the ladder. Maintain a constant rhythm down the ladder.

Skiers

Using an athletic stance face down the ladder and straddle the side (one foot in one foot out). Jump forward and across the ladder so you are straddling the opposite side of the second square. Continue the pattern down the ladder. Maintain a constant stance width and rhythm during the entire drill

Lateral Scissors

Start at the end of the ladder with your shoulders and hips running parallel to the long axis of the ladder and the closest foot in the first square. Jump laterally and cross the outside foot across the front so the lead foot stays in the first square and the trail foot lands in the second. Jump laterally again so the lead foot lands in the third square and the trail foot lands in the second square. Continue down the ladder. Repeat facing the other direction.

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