

“Hurdle Drills With a Purpose” “Effective and Efficient Use of Hurdle Drills”

2019 WISTCA CLINIC-Beginning Coaches Series

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My own philosophy on hurdle drills is that they are and have been beneficial for my athletes to do and focus on during hurdle sessions. Drills need to be completed for a purpose and have direct positive impact upon overall hurdle performance. Drills need to mimic actual hurdle motion and simulate race conditions as much as possible. In other words, use hurdle drills, but use them wisely. I have had much success with my younger hurdlers using a multitude of hurdle drills. The more my athletes can feel comfortable around the hurdles the better. Drills have helped my athletes feel confident racing the hurdles. Drills are also a way to improve the strength and flexibility that is necessary to become a good hurdler.

My own definition of a hurdle drill is anything that a hurdler does in a hurdle workout that is not running full speed over hurdles at full height and full distance between. Everything else is a drill. Running over hurdles at lower heights and discounted distance is considered a drill. Running over hurdles with modified step patterns is a drill. The other factor to consider is the decision to teach the part, the whole, or both. I structure my workouts as a blend of both. We do drills to improve the holistic motion of hurdling, as well as drills to work on differing aspects of the hurdle motion. I would say that I have become more of a holistic coach over the years, but at the same time continuing to incorporate basic hurdle drills into my workouts. As athletes become more efficient hurdlers, more time will be spent on advanced race modeling and sprint training. Several other factors will be considered when deciding when and how to use drills in practice:

- 1) Drills may be reduced later in the season as part of the overall tapering plan
- 2) Drills may be reduced, as athletes become more efficient hurdlers
- 3) Drills may be reduced to decrease overall hurdle touches in order to reduce injury potential.

General Hurdle Philosophies

1. Drill for a purpose
2. Think in practice. Race in meets.
3. The Hurdles are a Sprint. The faster you can sprint the faster you can hurdle.
4. Most Hurdle Faults are the result of the following
 - Poor take off mechanics
 - Poor strength or flexibility
 - Poor sprint mechanics
5. Be aggressive. If you let the hurdles control you-they will.
6. Practice, Practice, Practice, Repetition, Repetition, Repetition.
7. Athletes need to be students of their event.
8. Be patient, be positive-the road to success is rarely smooth
9. Hard work can pay off in success.
10. Hurdling is sprinting with attitude.
11. Hurdlers need a short memory.
12. Hurdlers need both physical and mental toughness.

General Hurdle Questions

1. What is a hurdle drill?
2. To drill or not to drill?
3. Teach the whole, the part, or both?

Hurdle Drill (my definition-still working on it)

-Any hurdling related activity that is done with hurdles at lower heights, shorter spacing, or that breaks down the hurdling motion into smaller parts. Basically any hurdling activity that is not full speed, out of the blocks, with hurdles at full height and distance between would be considered a hurdle drill.

Teaching the Whole

1. Use small adjustable hurdles
2. Set up a three step pattern-move the hurdles where needed.
3. Gradually raise hurdle height and increase distance between.
4. Introduce standing and running drills
5. Introduce more difficult drills as technique and confidence improves
6. 5-step hurdling- work on technique

Teaching the Part

1. Drill for a specific purpose
2. Drill to correct a fault
3. Drill to improve flexibility
4. Drill to improve strength
5. Drill to improve confidence
6. Approach drills with a mental focus
7. Be creative
8. Standing/Walking Drills
9. Walking Drills
10. Jogging/Running Drills
11. Use adjustable hurdles at lower heights while learning drills if needed
12. Work on the drill-keep ground speed under control-quick over the top
13. Drill needs to mimic actual hurdling motion

HURDLE DRILLS

WALL DRILLS (Can be done daily as warm up or cool down)

1. Lead Leg Drive Drill-help athletes through the motion if needed
2. Trail Leg -help athletes through the motion if needed
3. 4 Count Trail Leg
4. Trail Leg Slide Drill-can also load up the drill...1-2-slide.
5. Trail Leg Slide Drill w/ Angle-girls only.
6. Trail Leg Isometric-5x5seconds
7. Continuous Trail Leg
8. General Lead and Trail Leg Stretching

STANDING DRILLS (Can be done daily as warm up or cool down)

1. Straddle Trail Leg
2. Ankle on Hurdle Trail Leg
3. Shin on Hurdle Trail Leg
4. Step Overs
5. Pull Drill

WALKING DRILLS

1. Continuous Step Overs-5+ hurdles
2. Trail Leg Walk Overs
3. Lead Leg Drive Drill ...with pop

JOGGING DRILLS- 5-Step, 3 Step, or 1 Step Pattern

1. Trail Leg (3-step, 5-step, 1 step)
2. Lead Leg (3 step, 5 –step)
3. **Up the Ladder (4x5 hurdles with 5-step pattern once each @30", 33", 36", 39" for guys, @24", 27", 30", 33" for girls. Hurdles can be at full distance or full distance plus two yards) This is my new favorite hurdle drill. Could be adapted for three-step pattern.**
4. Camera Drill over low hurdles. Keep arms from swinging
5. Pat-Pat Drill

OVER THE TOP

1. One step (10 ft. spacing)
2. 3-step short spacing (5-8 yds.)
3. 5-step at full distance or at 12 yds. Work technique

STRENGTH DRILLS

1. Up and Backs: 8-14 continuous hurdles at 5 steps @ 10-12 yards apart. Hurdles can be looped or up to 14 in a row. My favorite is 12-14 hurdles at 12 yds with a 5 step pattern @ 36"
2. One Step Drills-Trail leg or over the top. 5-10 hurdles-lower heights

DRILLS FOR SPEED

1. Hurdle full speed with hurdles at a reduced height and or discounted distance.
2. 1-3-4-5, or 1-3-5 with seven-step pattern where hurdle is removed. You may have to discount 3rd hurdle distance.
3. Flying 3-step at 8 yds.-nice rhythm drill for race day warm-up.
4. Nehemiah Drill. Block starts with hurdles at 8.5 yds. for guys. Reduce by 2-3 shoes for girls. **(This is an advanced drill)**

I know that is not the final word on the advantages or disadvantages of using hurdle drills to improve hurdling efficiency, nor will it be the last time that I change the drills used or the frequency of their use (that may change by mid season). I have used the ideas that I have learned over the years not only to improve my own practice sessions, but also to share my results with fellow coaches and future athletes.