

FUN AND EFFECTIVE CROSS TRAINING FOR DISTANCE RUNNERS

DAVE SHROCK, PACIFIC ASSOCIATION-USATF COACHES CHAIR

The goal of any distance runner is to train as effectively as possible, maximizing each workout without overtraining and getting injured.

By incorporating some of these cross training ideas, combined with good nutrition, enough rest, and a planned training program runners, will improve their training effectiveness and be able to run faster.

These activities can be done on your recovery days when you don't want to pound the pavement, or on wet and nasty days outside in the gym, wrestling room, school hallways or cafeteria.

CORE EXERCISES:

For any athlete, a more stable 'core' or area from the knees to the chest makes an athlete more efficient, and enables better form in the later stages of the race.

- ✓ Sit-ups (abdominal)
- ✓ Iron crosses (lat's)
- ✓ Supermans (back)
- ✓ Alternate leg-arm extensions (lower back stability)
- ✓ Scorpions (back stability, flexibility)
- ✓ Fire hydrants (hip flexors)
- ✓ Mountain climbers (gluts-hamstrings-quads)

STRENGTHENING AND FLEXIBILITY DRILLS:

Drills strengthen the lower legs while enabling better form and flexibility. Do for 20-30m on a soft surface. Maintain good posture with your hips tucked under, eyes looking forward, and good arm form. Remember to keep your toes 'dorsiflexed', or toes towards your knee.

- ✓ Toes in, toes out
- ✓ On your heels, on your toes
- ✓ Roll from your heels to your toes
- ✓ Karaoke (be tall, stepping over the opposite knee)
- ✓ Skipping (high as you can)
- ✓ Straight leg bounds, running backwards back
- ✓ High knees
- ✓ Butt kicks
- ✓ 'A' march, then skips (clawing the ground, kicking your bum, and stepping over the opposite knee)

UPPER BODY STRENGTH:

Don't compromise your form and rhythm by neglecting a strong and toned upper body.

- ✓ Push-ups (change hand positions)
- ✓ Partner wheel barrows
- ✓ Pull-ups/shin-ups
- ✓ Arm form drills with light weights or socks filled with sand. Remember to split leg position

HIP-CORE FLEXIBILITY:

The repetitive nature of running long distances tends to make us less flexible and lessen our stride length. Incorporate these activities to improve flexibility and reduce injury:

10 hurdles, all uniform height, hurdle leg distance apart. You will have several rows of varying height to accommodate all team members. Do three reps of each set, jogging a lap between each set.

Keep good posture, hips tucked under, eyes forward.

* hands on top of your heads to kick it up a notch.

- ✓ Legs swings at the ends of the hurdles
- ✓ * Stepping over the hurdle forwards
- ✓ * Stepping over the hurdle backwards
- ✓ * Alternate over and under the hurdles
- ✓ Can-can backwards and forwards over the ends of the hurdles

KEEPING IT FRESH:

Set-up activity stations around a grass field, in the gym, set-up relays, be flexible and vary your routine.

Deep water training is very effective for developing core and hip girdle strength whilst taking a break from the pounding of dry land surfaces.

INSTRUCIONAL DVD:

The beset distance oriented d DVD is by fabled Humboldt State and UC Davis coach Dr. Jim Hunt:

'Developing the neuromuscular aspects in youth and prep. endurance runners'

Coach Jim Hunt at 775.424-2429

runningawaycoach@sbcglobal.net