



TRACK AND FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM

SESSION 1 // INTRODUCTION TO TRACK AND FIELD // RUNNING FORM



SESSION COMPONENTS

ACTIVITY

WARM-UP

Light Jog (2–5 minutes)

Lead the group on a light jog.

Dynamic Activity (5–8 minutes)

Have the students form a circle around you, about four feet apart from one another. On your signal, students should start to run in a clockwise direction. After 30 seconds the students change direction, speed up, and do drills such as high knees, butt kicks, and high skips.

DRILLS

Form Activities (3–5 minutes)

High Knees

Students can do high knees in place for 15 to 20 seconds. Tell them to maintain an upright body position while bringing the knee level with the hip and pulling the toe up toward the shin, and to alternate legs quickly, while taking very small steps forward. They should move their arms in a coordinated fashion with their legs, as if running.

Butt Kicks

Students can do butt kicks in place for 15 to 20 seconds. Tell them to keep the back straight while moving forward slowly with quick, light leg movements that bring the heels toward the butt. Emphasize speed, not moving forward, in completing the motion.

High Skips

Runners can practice power skipping at 10-, 20-, and 40-yard intervals. Drive arms and legs upward in an exaggerated skipping motion. Bring the leg toward the chest while the opposite arm reaches up. Emphasize getting as far off the ground as possible.

Please see the Supplementary Session on Stretching for additional drills.

SESSION COMPONENTS

ACTIVITY

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

SKILL: Running Form

SKILL COMPONENTS:
Body Awareness, Coordination,
and Balance

(15–20 minutes)

BODY AWARENESS AND COORDINATION

Have students form a circle around you. Have them jog in place and lead them in the following movements to demonstrate correct form:

- Arms should be bent at the elbow at 90 degrees and move in a natural motion from hip to ear
- Keep knees high while raising the opposite arm with each foot landing directly under the body's center of gravity
- Jog in place with the shoulders pulled back
- Jog with the head held high, focusing straight ahead with the torso "Running Tall" as explained in the Running Posture video

This is also a good opportunity to ask the students to demonstrate an incorrect technique. Encourage them to pay attention to the differences they feel while using correct and incorrect form. Use the following activities to demonstrate good and bad form.

Funky Run

You will need cones for this activity. In groups of three or four, students will start at one cone and run to another cone 30 to 50 feet away and back. On their way to the cone, ask students to do a "funky run" by using incorrect technique (flailing arms, hunched shoulders, twisting the body, etc.). On the way back, have them use proper running form.

Bricks and Feathers

While standing in a large circle, students will follow your lead and practice being "bricks" (heavy and low to the ground) and "feathers" (light, bounding, and tall).

BALANCE

Students form a circle around the coach. Students should practice holding their balance with:

- Two feet on the ground, eyes open/closed
- One foot on the ground, eyes open/closed
- Hopping on one foot, eyes open/closed

Tightrope

You will need chalk for this activity. Students can practice walking along a chalk line on the ground. The goal for the students is to stay on the chalk line, maintaining their balance. For added difficulty, you can ask the students to close their eyes.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

SKILL: Running Technique

SKILL COMPONENT: Posture

POSTURE

Explain to your students that in order to have good running posture, they must "run tall," keep their torsos stable and their bodies relaxed and facing forward. Ask students to run at a slow pace and focus on "running tall" with the following points in mind:

1. Keep the torso stable and the entire body upright and facing forward.

SESSION COMPONENTS

ACTIVITY

2. The head, hands, knees, and feet should face forward, with the head up so the chin is parallel to the ground.
3. Stay relaxed, especially with regard to the face muscles, jaw, neck, shoulders, and hands.

Focus on Form

Have students jog and practice incorrect technique for 5 to 10 minutes to develop greater awareness of their bodies and the correct techniques. They can hunch over, lean too far forward or backward, bob or shake their heads, and twist their bodies, as demonstrated in the Bad Form/Good Form Video.

WRAP-UP GAME

(3-5 minutes)

Toe Tag

You will need cones and/or boundary markers for this activity. Keep the playing space small to encourage quick, agile movements. Ideally, you need at least five players. Everyone is "it" at the same time. To play the game, runners tag each other by stepping lightly on one another's toes. Stomping is not allowed. Once a player gets tagged, they go out of bounds, perform 10 jumping jacks or push-ups, and then return to the game. The best way to avoid being tagged is to keep their feet moving quickly.

Cool Down

Light Jog (2-5 minutes)

Lead the group on a light jog.

Static Stretching (3-5 minutes)

Have students form a circle around you and lead them in static stretches. *Please see the Supplementary Session on Stretching.*