



TRACK AND FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM

SESSION 11 // 800M AND 1600M // RUNNING MECHANICS



SESSION COMPONENTS

ACTIVITY

WARM-UP

Running Rewards

You will need cones and a stopwatch. This exercise integrates some friendly competition to teach runners to identify their goal race pace and how to monitor speed. Determine each runner's goal race time based on time trials, performance history, and your assessment of their potential. Calculate even splits for each runner. Give every runner 100 points. Have students run the split distance. Subtract one point for every second they run faster or slower than their target split. The runner with the most points at the end of the warm-up is declared the most consistent runner. Remind runners that they are trying to maintain a pace, not beat it.

Building Leg Strength

(10 minutes)

Have students form a circle around you and lead them in leg-strength exercises. *Please see the Supplementary Session on Muscular Strength and Endurance.*

Dynamic Stretching

(5–10 minutes)

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

DRILLS:

Form Activities (3–5 minutes)

Please see Session 4 for drills High Knees, Butt Kicks, and High Skips.

Please see the Supplementary Session on Stretching for additional drills.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

HEEL RECOVERY

SKILL:

Running Mechanics

When running, even at a modest pace, distance runners must work to shorten the recovery leg by bending at the knee and bringing the heel toward the upper hamstring. As athletes tire, it is common to see very low heel recovery. Tell athletes to land on the lower part of the ball of the foot, drop the heel, and push off the ball of the foot. Do not let their heels “slap” or hit first. Students also should not turn their feet out while they run. Tell athletes to listen to themselves while they run—they should not hear anything. Have them practice this technique while walking, jogging, and running.

SKILL COMPONENTS:

Heal Recovery

Stride Length and Frequency

(15–20 minutes)

SESSION COMPONENTS

ACTIVITY

STRIDE LENGTH AND FREQUENCY

When teaching running technique to young athletes, the focus should be on finding the correct stride length for each athlete's strength level and size.

Here are some reminders for your runners:

- Take off and land on the midfoot or the ball of the foot.
- Avoid landing flat-footed, on the heels, or way up on the toes.
- Choose a stride length that feels natural and comfortable; ideally, the feet should land directly beneath the hips.
- Avoid under-striding or taking short choppy steps.
- Avoid over-striding, where the foot lands well in front of the body.
- The components of a longer and faster stride will be exaggerated when sprinting as compared to during distance running.
- Distance runners need to develop the capacity to run faster, but while balancing speed with endurance.

Bricks and Feathers

Have your team begin jogging at a moderate pace. Alternate between calling out "Bricks!" and "Feathers!" every 15–30 seconds. When you call out "Bricks!" they should run heavy, as if they have a sack of bricks on their back. When you call out "Feathers!" they should run light, as if they have only feathers on their back. After the exercise, ask them for their observations about their running form in "Bricks" versus "Feathers" and encourage them to always "run with feathers."

WRAP-UP GAME

(5–10 minutes)

Continuous Relay

You will need cones, batons, and a stopwatch. Split your runners into at least two evenly matched teams. Give each team a baton and set up exchange zones along a running loop. Place one runner from each team at each exchange zone, with two runners at the starting position (pick one of them to run first). As runners complete their legs of the loop, their teammates will be recovering from their own leg. The objective is to have all of the runners return to their starting positions as fast as possible.

Make sure you have at least one more runner per team than there are exchange zones. You need at least three runners per team. Choose distance based on athletic ability and training objectives.

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.*