SPEED AND AGILITY TRAINING 101

Now, let's get into more details about some speed & agility exercises that you can try.

EVOLVED
SPORTS PERFORMANCE

SPEED AND AGILITY TRAINING 101

In a world where weightlifting is the predominant type of exercise, some physical properties of the human musculature are often ignored.

This leads many trainees to become well-defined, sometimes even big, and also, quite strong on compound exercises.

However, the sole focus on strength, strength endurance & muscle growth, may leave you quite unfunctional in some aspects.

This is why you should introduce training activities that stimulate the development of other physical qualities as well unless you are a competitive athlete who needs to develop just a couple of physical skills.

In doing so, you will be able to attain a better-looking, more functional body, capable of a lot more than just pushing, pulling, and squatting heavyweights.

This short guide will give you insight into the main physical properties of human musculature and more specifically, insight on how to develop speed and agility.

So without further ado, let's get to it!

PHYSICAL SKILLS

Before we move on to the core of this article, let's take a look at the fundamental physical skills and properties our bodies have.

Note that these are all important in the context of developing the most functional body of your dreams.

8 MAJOR PHYSICAL SKILLS THAT YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF

1. ENDURANCE

According to Wikipedia, Endurance is the ability of an organism to exert itself and remain active for a long period of time, as well as its ability to resist, withstand, recover from, and have immunity to trauma, wounds, or fatigue.

Endurance is needed in both aerobic and anaerobic training. For instance, some aerobic exercises (that require oxygen to produce energy) are swimming, jogging, biking, etc…

You should remember that aerobic exercises usually last for more than 2 minutes.

On the other hand, anaerobic work is very intense - It doesn't require oxygen to produce energy. When you exercise anaerobically you usually use 80 - 90% of your maximum heart rate.

However, you cannot keep that tempo for a long time and you will soon return to the aerobic state, where you use 60 - 80% of your MHR. (maximum heart rate)

With that being said, you will have success building your endurance through both aerobic and anaerobic exercise.

PRO TIP:

Try to combine both anaerobic & aerobic workouts - This is how you can look good and still be able to run, swim and enjoy other endurance-demanding activities.

You can also switch the boring cardio with some favorite sports of yours.

Go ahead and try swimming, playing tennis with some friends, or even adding martial arts to your training schedule.

2. STAMINA

Stamina is the ability to sustain prolonged physical activity or mental effort.

A common sentence among co-workers would be, do you have enough stamina to finish the task before tomorrow?

Here stamina refers to the mental effort and energy needed to complete a given task.

But isn't stamina the same as endurance?

According to HealthLine, there is a difference between these two.

Stamina is often referred to the feeling of having more energy while doing an activity for a long time OR performing an activity without getting tired.

Endurance, as mentioned above, is your body's physical potential to go through an exercise for an extended period.

To increase your stamina, you can try some:

- Swimming
- Cycling
- Running
- Dancing
- Walking

PRO TIP:

Don't try to engage in every activity. Find the one that gives you pleasure and you don't feel obliged to do. When you love what you do, you will enjoy it more.

3. STRENGTH

This one comes with many definitions, however, when we talk about strength we prefer this:

Strength is defined as the capacity to withstand a great force or pressure.

You can be emotionally stable and rational, which is certainly a strength.

In the context of training though, pure strength is created with enormous effort. You can find some of the strongest people on earth pulling trucks, planes, and ships with their bodies.

If that's not enough, lifting heavy stones, pushing giant structures with bare hands, or carrying fridges on their backs are just part of the activities these people perform.

Some of you may love powerlifting. Perhaps being the strongest guy in your local gym on the big 3 gives you pleasure and fulfillment.

Keep in mind that strength is a subjective term. For your 70 years old grandfather, strength would be having the mindset to chop some woods, so his grandchildren are warm when they go and visit.

Some exercises that you can try to increase your strength are:

- **Heavy lifting with progressively overloading the weights**
- **Body-weight exercises such as push-ups, sit-ups, and squats**
- **Climbing hills and conquering mountains**
- **Helping your relatives with heavy gardening like shoveling**

4. FLEXIBILITY

According to an article from UC Davis Health, Flexibility is the ability of a joint or series of joints to move through an unrestricted, pain-free range of motion.

Developing your flexibility brings along plenty of benefits, including but not limited to:

- **Improved posture and balance**
- **Less chance of having injuries**
- **Less stress**
- **Improved sexual life**

Now you might be wondering, what exactly can be done for the goal of improving flexibility and well, it is quite simple!

- **Stretch before and after every training**
- **Practice some yoga**
- **Try to do a full range of motion on the compound movements (especially squat)**
- **Incorporate some massages into your routine**

5. POWER

According to an article by Rich Borgatti, Power is the ability of a muscular unit, or combination of muscular units, to apply maximum force in minimum time.

If we ask you who is the most powerful athlete in the world, you might say that Mike Tyson wins this category. However, some of you may favor Michael Jordan, Cristiano Ronaldo, or even Michael Phelps.

All of these guys fit perfectly into the definition.

On top of that, applying maximum force in a minimum time is relevant for most sports out there.

Power may also be a position or a title. A manager in a worldwide company is more powerful than the office cleaner in the same company. (no offense to the profession here) The authority the manager has is certainly bigger than the cleaner.

6. COORDINATION

According to Physiopedia, Coordination is the ability to select the right muscle at the right time with proper intensity to achieve proper action. Coordinated movement is characterized by appropriate speed, distance, direction, timing, and muscular tension.

Being coordinated plays a part in our everyday life. Being able to drive properly, running different physical coordination tests, and simply touching your nose with your finger are all types of coordination activities. There are some standard rules for improving coordination such as:

- Continues repetition increases speed
- Breaking down activities into parts makes them easier to perform
- Taking rest after several repetitions avoids exhaustion

7. BALANCE

The dictionary says that Balance is defined as being able to remain upright and walk gracefully, or a state of equality, an emotionally and mentally stable mind, or the presentation of both sides of an issue.

We've all, at one point lost our balance, be it walking on something narrow or just tripping on a flat surface.

You lose your balance right after you lose coordination. When you are young and trying to coordinate your legs with your body, you often fall.

Imagine the little kids running. Their bodies go in front of their legs and they fall on the ground.

Simple physics but a good example to explain how balance works.

Balance is important in achieving something remarkable in every sport but it is most vital in gymnastics, surfing, skating, and snowboarding.

But how do you increase your balance? Well, here's what may help:

- Try to remain upright on one foot. (use a chair if you need help at the beginning)
- Lift your heels and stay on your toes (again use a chair when you start)
- Strengthen your core

8. ACCURACY

Last but not least, we'll talk about accuracy.

According to an article from BBC, Accuracy is the ability to perform movements and skills with precision. Quite often it is being able to direct an object to a small target area.

Accuracy is needed in sports like tennis, badminton, sport shooting, baseball, football, basketball, volleyball, etc...

As you imagine, this physical skill is quite important for every sport mentioned above. Without accuracy, players won't be able to win.

But how do you achieve accuracy?

Well, we cannot give you something special here because every sport is different and we don't know what you are training. However, we can give you one thing that is fundamental to every sport in the world.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

As the great Michael Jordan puts it: "Don't practice until you get it right, practice until you can't get it wrong"

Living by his words, you cannot get it wrong.

Now, let's talk about the two physical qualities this short guide is all about!

WHAT ARE SPEED & AGILITY?

According to Topendsports, Speed is the ability to move quickly across the ground or move limbs rapidly to grab or throw.

It is also worth mentioning that speed is related to acceleration. In other words, how fast you can accelerate from a static position and reach a top speed.

Speed is linked to power and strength. However, too much of the last two can slow you down.

Think of speed as the main physical quality used by sprinters, speed skaters, and swimmers.

On the other hand, Agility, according to ScienceDirect, is defined as "a skill-related component of physical fitness that relates to the ability to rapidly change the position of the entire body in space with speed and accuracy."

Coordination, balance, and speed are all related to agility. If all of these physical skills are possessed by an athlete, then he also has agility.

He can often change positions easily because he reacts very quickly and adapts to different situations.

BUT WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES THAT DEMAND THESE SKILLS?

Take a look at the list of some of the activities that require speed and agility:

- **High knee drills**
- **High heels drills**
- **Basketball**
- **Volleyball**
- **Football**
- **Tennis**

Think about Football for a moment. The players are constantly running on the pitch. The game is intense because everyone is moving fast.

The athletes need speed and agility to optimally change positions and adjust to a situation. Furthermore, these skills have to be developed...

3. HOW DO YOU DEVELOP SPEED & AGILITY?

We are going to cover the top 10 Speed & Agility exercises in the next paragraph, but first, you need some general information on how to increase these two skills.

- ***Improving your balance***

Increasing your overall agility demands an improvement in your balance. You can do this by practicing some balancing exercises such as standing on one leg, side leg raise, and clock reach (lying on the ground the pointing at the numbers on the clock with your feet)

- ***Lifting Weights***

But how is lifting heavy weights going to help me be faster you may wonder. Remember, that speed & agility are related to power and strength.

Progressively overloading the compound movements can do wonders in your sports carrier. We know for sure that most of the athletes out there train with weights on a weekly basis to increase their performance, regardless of the sport.

- ***Run some shuttles***

Basketball players know this exercise very well. They know how tiring it can be but they also know that it is one of the major exercises when it comes to building speed and agility.

IF YOU HAVEN'T TRIED IT YET, YOU DEFINITELY HAVE TO GIVE IT A GO!

TOP 10 SPEED & AGILITY EXERCISES

1. HIGH-KNEE DRILLS

To perform this exercise simply run forward with high knees to a certain point. Make sure to land on your toes. Walk back to the starting position and do it again. To make it more complicated, attach yourself to a resistance band and repeat the exercise. You can do a couple of sets of about 10 - 15m.

2. JUMP BOX DRILLS

This is a sweet, effective exercise you can include in your regular routine. To execute it, simply put a box (30-40cm) on solid ground. Jump high and explosively and land safely on the box, then return to the ground. Keep your body balanced. Repeat for 20 - 30 seconds and take a rest. Strive for 4-5 sets to increase performance.

This exercise targets your quadriceps, your core, and also calves. It is a great way to increase agility.

3. 8 DRILLS

Place two cones about 1 meter from each other in a perfect line. If you don't have access to cones, put two little stones or draw 2 X-s.

Imagine that you are drawing an 8 with your feet. Run from the left cone to the middle and then the back of the right cone. Strive to be as fast as possible without hitting the cones/stones or stepping on the X-s.

This exercise is used a lot in racket sports, basketball, football and can also be implemented in other dynamic sports like boxing.

4. LINEAR BOUND

Put two cones 1 meter from each other. Jump from the first one to the other one on one leg and keep your balance. Replace feet on every jump.

Start slowly but build it up when you start getting more confident. Here you strive for repetitions. 10 per single leg should be enough in the beginning.

5. SHUFFLE TO EXPLOSIVE JUMP

This one is quite tricky. Put two cones on the ground but make more space this time. Around 2 meters should be enough. You should move with small side steps to reach the cones.

Move quickly from one cone to the other and when you reach them, simply make a fast and explosive jump in the air with your knees high. Land safely on the ground and immediately start moving back to the other cone.

Strive for 5-8 jumps on each side and take some rest. Repeat for 3-5 sets.

6. SLED PUSH

Work on the acceleration phase of sprinting. Its not about how much weight you can push, its the form, knee drive, full extension , Dorsi-flexion, and the drive angle.

Make sure you are leaning into the sled with your hips, dont bend at the waist to lean.

A-march to start, working on form, then you can build to A bounds (lighter weight)

7. JEXPLOSIVE SPRINTER SIT-UPS

They are almost like the regular sit-ups but the difference is that your elbow is tucked to your ribs and you try to reach your opposite knee with every rep.

Imagine that you are running on the ground. That's how you should look when doing the sit-ups.

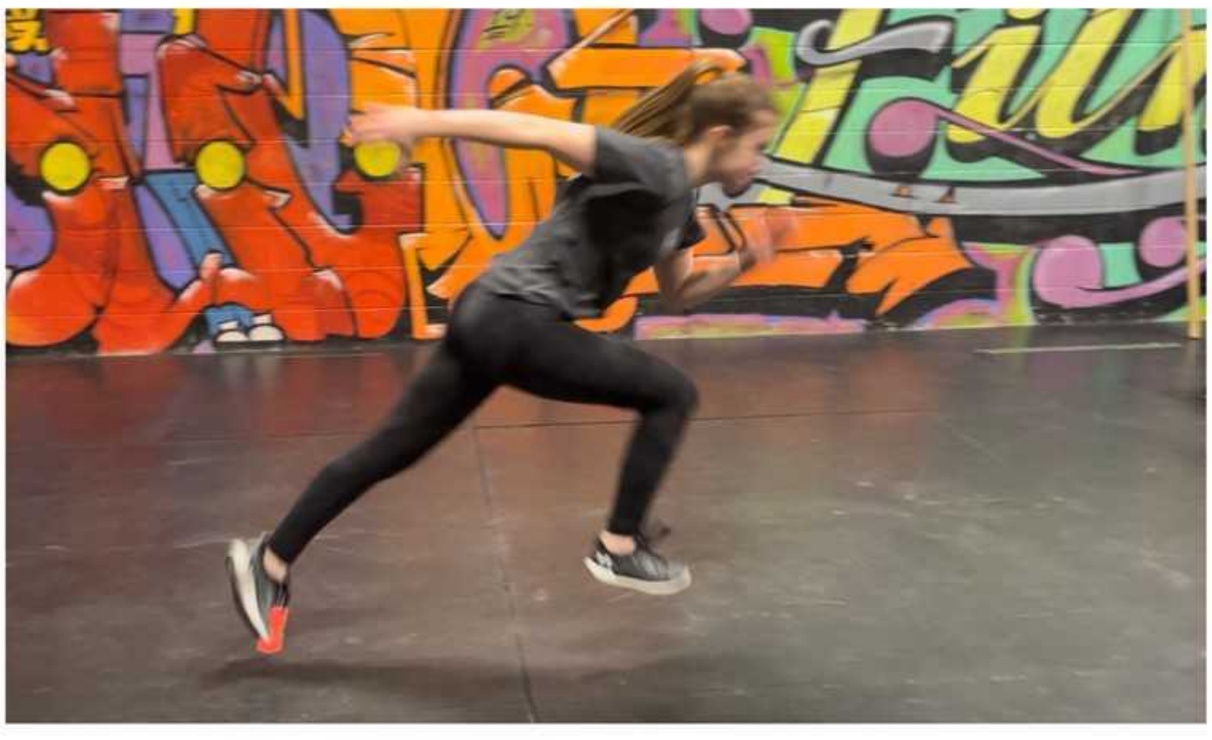
You should do them very fast for maximum effect. Do 20-30 in total and take a rest.

8. MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

Stand in a push-up position with your hands on the shoulder length. Start running with your knees and imagine that you are climbing a mountain crawling as the name suggests.

If you are more intermediate you can do a push-up after every leg raise to make it harder.

Strive for 30-45 seconds per set.



9. RUSSIAN TWIST

A great exercise for your core.

Sit on the ground and lift your legs. Reach out left and right and touch the ground every time.

Do it as fast as possible and add a medical ball or some weight if you want to make it harder.

Again 30-45 seconds should be enough per set.

10. 4 CONE SQUARE DRILL

Put 4 cones at around 2,5 meters from each other and create a square.

Sprint from the back row to the front, then shuffle to the side one, then backpedal to the back row, and shuffle to the one that you started.

Repeat exercise. You can also change sides.

Do it for 30-45 seconds and take a rest.

The exercise is perfect for improving your speed & agility and getting better at your sport.

FINAL THOUGHTS

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS E-BOOK. IF YOU FOUND IT USEFUL, DO NOT HESITATE TO SPREAD THE LOVE BY SHARING IT WITH A FRIEND.

NOW, THERE IS ONLY ONE THING TO DO, GO OUTSIDE AND PRACTICE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED HERE TO IMPROVE YOUR SPEED & AGILITY!

BE YOUR BEST, MOST FUNCTIONAL SELF.

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