

The following drills are taken from an article by Lee Taft - a leading Basketball Coach, but are equally useful for netballers!

What is one of the first things that spectators comment about with regard to a basketball player's ability? Undoubtedly it is the breath-taking speed and quickness that a player displays. When an offensive player crosses over and slices through the defense you can hear sudden WOW'S from the crowd. Or when a defensive player smothers the ball handler, the crowd immediately comments on how quick that player is. Speed and quickness are the dominant qualities that stick out in a basketball player's athletic ability; of course a good vertical gets noticed as well.

When a young athlete has speed it is even more outstanding than the college or pros. The reason is due to the fact it stands out even greater. A 14 or 15 year old high school ball player can simply dominate the game with speed and quickness; obviously they need some serious basketball skills as to go along with it.

I have listed some of the drills that will make young athletes lightning quick. Some athletes may not be born with speed and quickness, but you are going to learn some drills that will drastically increase these abilities.

The lateral shuffle progression:

1. *Speed shuffle*- Set up cones that are 15 feet apart. Have the athlete shuffle in one direction as fast as possible with great technique. Repeat this 3-5 times on each side.
2. *Speed shuffle and stop*- Repeat the same drill above but emphasis creating a great stopping angle with the outside leg. The athletes should feel as though they could explode in the opposite direction immediately.
3. *555 shuffle drill*- In this drill the athlete will shuffle as fast as possible with two changes of directions. (The 555 stands for 5 yards 3 times). If the athlete starts shuffling to the right first they will change direction to go left and one more change of direction to go right again. The athlete should not allow any hesitation during the stopping or starting motions. Repeat 2-3 times in each direction.
4. *Random shuffle drill*- This may be the most important drill of all. The coach should stand in front or behind the athletes. The coach should use an auditory command and a visual command. The athlete must be able to perfectly perform these the shuffle drills in a random action. This simulates the game.

The linear acceleration progression:

5. *First step drill* - Line the athletes up on the baseline. On your command, auditory or visual, the athletes should go from an athletic stance into a 15 foot acceleration. The athlete should use the plyo step to create a quick force angle behind the body. The shoulders should lean forward and the athlete should push aggressively against the ground. Repeat 4-6 times.
6. *First step angled drill*- The drill is performed the same as the above drill with the exception of all takes offs should be at a different angles to the right and left. Angles can be anywhere from 15 degrees to 90 degrees. The athletes should use the same principles of acceleration as in the first drill. Repeat 4-6 times in each direction.
7. *Turn and run first step drill*- In this drill the athletes will quickly turn the hips and feet, using what I call the hip turn technique, to explosively accelerate behind the facing direction. The coach will give a command and the athlete will quickly turn to the right or left and accelerate for 15 feet. There should be no hesitation at all once the command or direction is heard or seen.

Combination lateral, linear, and angular drill:

In this drill the coach will start the athletes at center court. On his command, once again it will be auditory or visual, the athletes must explode either laterally, linearly, or angularly in all directions. All movements should be under control and easily be redirected to a new direction with our hesitation. This drill should be repeated 3-5 times for no longer than 8 to 12 seconds.

Have fun and remember that speed and quickness kills. Your opponents will be scared to death to face you. Go get em!