

The Top 5 Speed, Agility & Quickness Drills

Speed, Agility & Quickness, also known as SAQ, are three of the top athletic qualities required to excel in many sports. Training them has benefits for many reasons and soccer players especially require all three of these athletic qualities in bunches. The definition of speed is the time it takes to cover a distance between two points, literally distance divided by time. Agility is the ability to change directions as fast as possible. Quickness is the ability to execute multiple steps in a sequence as fast as possible. In over a decade working with soccer players and other athletes looking to improve their SAQ, I have used hundreds of drills to improve these athletic qualities. The below 5 drills are my favorites.

1. Sprint at an incline

Hill sprints, treadmill sprints at an incline, sprint with sled resistance, sprint with band resistance, wall sprints, or any variation that allows you to get leaning forward and working on an aggressive knee drive and shin angle is going to be a very effective tool for getting faster. I recommend starting with 1 set of 8 reps after a good warmup. To be effective these efforts all need to be less than 10 seconds in duration and have plenty of rest in between. At least 50 seconds or more. Once you do 8 progress to sets of 10, 12, 15 and 20.

<https://vimeo.com/366158415>

2. Pro Agility also known as the 5-10-5

This drill is featured at the NFL and MLS combines and is a standard at many college sports programs across several sports. This drill tests an athlete's ability to accelerate, decelerate and change directions, all key skills for an athlete in a sport where agility and change of direction feature prominently. All these skills can be drilled individually but the 5-10-5 is one of the top tests of agility out there without question. Start with drilling your shuffle step and jab cut to make sure that you are training the skills needed to do this drill correctly.

<https://vimeo.com/95419737>

<https://vimeo.com/95419739>

3. 3- Hurdle Drill

This is my favorite drill for improving quickness. While there are tons of drills that I like for improving quickness this one is especially great because it can be broken down or scaled up in infinite ways to make it fun and effective. It is also great for training single leg stability, as well as proper running cadence and technique. The two variations I like starting out are the 3-Hurdle Drill with Stabilization and the 3-Hurdle Drill Continuous.

<https://vimeo.com/366158447>

<https://vimeo.com/366158482>

4. Lateral Shuffle

The lateral shuffle is my favorite agility drill. While the Pro Agility / 5-10-5 is one of my top drills, it is also a test and requires many skills working together at once to master. The reason I like the lateral shuffle so much is because it is simple to coach and highly measurable. It also teaches athletes to change direction faster, which is a key skill in soccer and many other sports. There are many ways to progress this drill but I like to start with 5 sets of 10 seconds of maximum effort. It is important to rest enough between sets. At least 50 seconds and probably 2 minutes between sets is the right amount of rest. A good score is 14 or more touches in 10 seconds.

<https://vimeo.com/152173298>

5. Jumping Rope

We like to use the jump rope to warmup and train speed, agility and quickness. Skipping rope is a great way to work on being light on your feet, increase coordination, rhythm, speed, agility and quickness. It is also excellent and efficient conditioning. People always say, "5 minutes of jump rope is worth 30 minutes of jogging." Here's a couple of great workouts to try:

First workout is a [jump rope crank](#). This is a set of multiple activities in a row where the goal is to never stop the rope. Here's one of our favorites:

100 single unders + 50 r leg only + 50 l leg only + 100 alternating + 25 double unders

Second workout is a cadence based workout:

Complete three 30 second efforts where the goal is to complete as many single unders as you can in a 30 second period. Add them up and divide by 3 to get your average. The goal is to average 90 per set or more.

Third workout is a running specific workout:

Complete 5 sets of 75 [alternating single unders](#) as fast as possible. The goal is to be able to do each set in 30 seconds with 60 seconds rest.

<https://vimeo.com/95420196>

<https://vimeo.com/95420195>

<https://vimeo.com/86578096>

This blog was written by Max Lipset, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, founder and owner of The Power House MN. Mas has coached Varsity high school soccer in Minnesota for the past 10 years at St. Paul Academy and Summit School. Max played professional soccer for the Minnesota Stars, the Kitsap Pumas, and La Paz FC, in the Bolivian First Division and has worked with dozens of professional

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