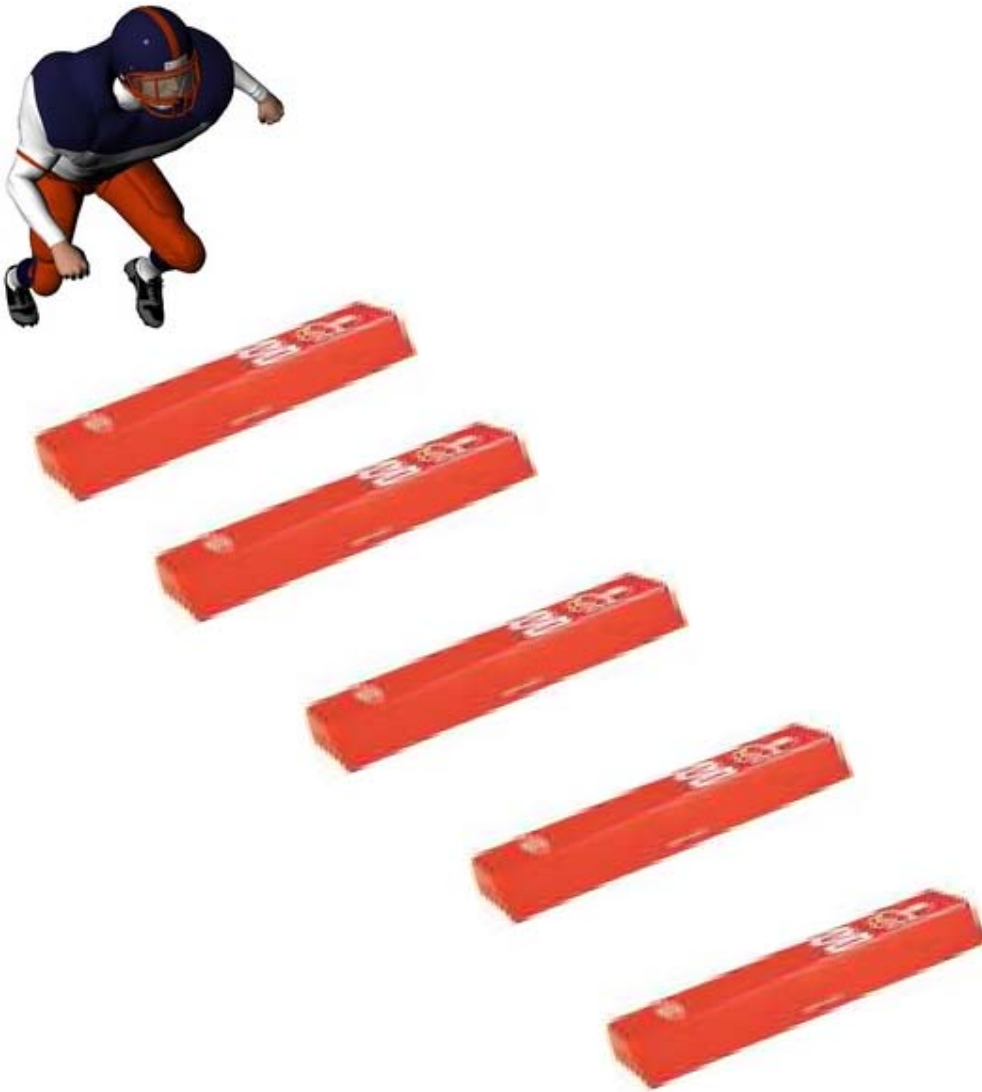


AGILITY DRILLS FOR LINEMEN



In the game of football, building up agility helps in maintaining the balance while starting, stopping, changing direction and changing speed. The kinesthetic awareness and neuromuscular coordination are also developed apart from the maintenance of balance. Agility drills for football are an important part of fitness training for young and experienced players.

Agility Drills for Football

Football Agility Drills are necessary to make the players quick in their movements and to increase the muscle strength. These drills are very important for the development of the players. Let us have a look at some of the agility drills for football in the following paragraphs.

Shuttle Runs: The shuttle runs not only help in increasing the agility of a football player but also builds up stamina and endurance. In this drill, one has to begin by running a certain distance and then gradually increasing it. For example, if a person starts with 10 m, he progresses on to 20 m, 30 m and so on. However, the players after completing the first lap (i.e. 10 m), have to turn back and once again cover the distance before progressing to the next lap. The 'shuttle runs' helps in improving the take off.

Pro Agility Drill: In pro agility drill, a player has to sprint between 3 cones placed at equal distances of 5 meters in a straight line. A player has to start from the middle cone and then sprint 5 meters in any (left or right) direction. Then he has to turn back and run 10 meters towards the cone at the end. Again he has turn back after reaching the far end cone and return to the original place, i.e. the middle cone. The starting position for this exercise should be the three-point stance, i.e. the legs and one of the hands should touch the ground. One should bend at the waist with the angle between legs about 15 degrees. If the player decides to start off running rightwards, the left hand should touch the ground and vice versa.

One-legged Squats: The one-legged squats are performed by lifting either of the legs. Generally, 2 sets of 25 squats are performed with or without weights. Around 15 lbs. weight is used to perform these squats.

Vertical Leap: The vertical leap is an agility drill for football which leads to the development of muscles and explosive movement during the game. The players should leap vertically while in a squatting position. One should perform 5 such leaps in succession and the height of these leaps should also be measured.

Steps-ups: In this exercise, a plyo box is used for stepping up. The exercise is performed by stepping up on to the plyo box and balancing the body for 5 seconds. One should step down in a controlled manner and repeat the step 25 times which completes a set. Two sets of 25 steps for each leg should be performed. The exercise can be made a bit challenging by doing it with weights.

Speed and Agility Drills for Football

The speed and agility for football can be developed with the help of ladder drills. In these drills, ladders or boxes (of generally 18 x 18 inches) are used for increasing the quickness and improving the balance. The 'Forward 2-in' is a commonly used agility ladder drill in coaching for youth football. In the agility ladder drills for football, one has to run forward in a manner that both the feet are placed in every square at a time. The arms shouldn't drop down while running, but be driven backward.

X Drill

- For the X drill, you will need five cones. Place four of them in a square pattern, with sides each five yards long. Place the fifth cone in the center of the square.

Players should start at the cone that makes the lower-left-hand point of the X and sprint to the center cone. From the center cone, make a quick cut to head toward the cone at the top left of the X. From there, sprint across to the top right of the X, and then back to the center. Finally, sprint from the center to touch the remaining cone at bottom right, and then sprint back to your starting cone.

Moving from cone-to-cone at so fast a pace will increase a player's ability to turn in mid-sprint and to shift direction quickly. You can change the exercise from sprinting to backpedaling and side-shuffling, or any combination of the three movements, to keep players focused and using different parts of their bodies. Calling out the commands when the players are already moving can help to improve their reactions to changing situations like they will see on the field.

5-10-5 Drill

- **Lay three cones on the field, each five yards apart in a relatively straight line. The player should begin at the center cone and sprint to one of the side cones. He must touch that cone, and then abruptly shift direction and sprint to the far cone, now 10 yards away. Again he must touch the cone, and then quickly shift and sprint back to touch the middle cone. This relatively simple cone drill will have the players changing position and direction quickly, which is a vital component of agility on the field when the ball can change hands and direction at any time.**

Much like the X drill, you can incorporate a number of running techniques like backpedaling into this drill. Have players run with one technique, or change the technique in the middle of the drill, to keep the player on his toes and paying attention to everything around him.

Zig-Zag Drill

- **The zig-zag drill will have football players literally turning on a dime and pushing their physical abilities to the limit.**

Set up four cones in a straight line, each seven yards apart. In between each pair of cones, set up a cone seven yards to one side of the line, so that you now have two separate lines: one with four cones and one with three. Players must navigate the zig-zag pattern formed by these cones and a sprint. Each player must pass around each cone and then abruptly turn and sprint to the next cone in the pattern. Be sure each player rounds each cone and doesn't skip any within the pattern.

This drill can also be performed at a shuffle or backpedal. Quick running and sudden changes of direction will increase a player's agility.

20 Yard Shuttle Drill

The 20-yard shuttle drill is an agility drill that teaches proper footwork. The 20-yard shuttle drill is performed at the NFL Scouting Combine. A football player begins the 20-yard shuttle drill in a three-point stance. When the whistle blows, a player sprints five yards to the side to touch a cone. The football player then sprints 10 yards in the other direction and touches the cone, before turning and sprinting back through the beginning yard line. This football agility drill helps football players increase lateral quickness and avoid wasting steps before changing direction.

60 Yard Shuttle Drill

The 60-yard shuttle drill is an extended version of the 20-yard shuttle test. The football player starts in a three-point stance, and when the whistle blows, run 10 yards to one side touching the cone. The player then runs back 20 yards to the other side before touching the cone, before finally changing direction and sprinting back 10 yards through the finishing line. This football agility works on quick feet and change of direction. The longer distance covered adds an element of stamina training in this football agility drill.

W Drill

The W drill requires cones to be set in a diagonal slalom fashion with five yards between them. The University of Vermont football players use this drill. The football player starts in a crouched stance and on the whistle, sprints forward and diagonally to the first cone. The player rounds the first cone before backpedalling diagonally to the next cone. This process continues until the player backpedals to the sixth cone. This football agility drill develops sprinting and change of direction. Football players who practice the W drill also improve their footwork and speed while moving backwards. Backpedaling is an important skill for defensive players, in particular cornerbacks and safeties who are required to backpedal to cover wide receivers and not allow offensive players to get open in behind them.

Three Cone Drill

The three-cone football drill requires three cones to be placed in an "L" shape five yards apart. The three-cone drill is used as a performance measurement at the NFL Scouting Combine. The football player starts in a three-point stance and sprints five yards forward to touch the second cone, before changing direction quickly and returning to touch the first cone. The player then runs back to the second cone before rounding and sprinting to the third cone. The player runs round the third cone then returns to the start by rounding the second cone. Philadelphia Eagles college scout Matt Russell states that this drill helps a player practice bending, pivoting and shifting their body weight.

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