

300m/400m Hurdle Workouts

200 or 300 Repeats over Hurdles

Favorite workouts for 300m hurdlers is to have them do repeat 200s over the last five hurdles. Each rep is timed, and the athletes always have someone to run beside (same gender, pair a boy with a girl and give the girl a head start, and sometimes have the hurdler run beside a sprinter).

In the early part of the year (*emphasize hurdle conditioning*)

- 1) 5-6 reps
- 2) 3 minutes recovery between

The last week of the season (*emphasize speed*)

- 1) 2-3 reps
- 2) 6 minutes recovery between

Use to predict what the range of the athletes' race times should be for that week's meet. Do this workout two days before race day. An athlete's average time on the 200 repeats is 27.0 - a projected race time will be in the range of 40.5 (13.5 x 3), give or take a half-second.

Although the athlete obviously won't be able to maintain the early pace in the last 100 of the race, it is also true that the first 200 of the race will be even faster than it is in practice, due to factors such as adrenaline and to the fact that, in a meet, you only have to run it once.

This workout will work remarkably well in predicting race times. The only way it doesn't work is if the athletes are taking either too little or too much rest between reps. The coach needs to be sure the athletes are getting on the line and running when it's time to go.

An equivalent workout for 400 hurdlers would be to run repeat 300s over the first eight hurdles, with similar recovery periods. Then do the math x 4 to project race times. If the athlete averages 42.0 for his 300s, the projected race time would be in the range of 56.0.

Repeat 200s can be used as a 400 hurdle workout as well, except with more repeats and less recovery. A 400 hurdler who is able to do eight 200s at a consistent pace with two minutes rest between each one, will feel the same level of fatigue in the last few reps that he will feel at the end of a race.

Back & Forth 100s

This is an off-season conditioning workout (*emphasis is not on speed - but of maintaining running form when fatigued and stepping over hurdles when fatigued*)

- 1) From a standing start, run 100 meters one way
- 2) Rest 30 seconds
- 3) Run 100 meters the other way.

In the early part of the off-season, you might not want to add any hurdles at all.

As conditioning increases

- 1) 2 hurdles at the 50m mark (one hurdle facing one way, the other facing the other)

- 2) 4 hurdles (two facing one way, two facing the other); in this case, use the intermediate hurdle marks on the final straightaway for hurdle placement.

A total of 24 - 100 meter sprints would be a full conditioning workout. Generally have athletes 4 sets of 6 reps - with about 3 minutes rest between each set.

Good workout to do on days when pressed for time because, with only thirty seconds between reps, you'll be getting in a lot of reps in a very short period.

Variations:

· As a speed workout during the season, do only 2 reps per set, with 5 minutes rest between sets. Four (4) sets would total 8 sprints. Each sprint would be timed, and the goal would be to keep the second rep of each sprint as fast as the first rep. For this workout, having a teammate to push athlete to fast times is virtually essential.

· Do 110s instead of 100s, having five (5) hurdles going in one direction, and five (5) more going the other way. Place the hurdles on the even-numbered 110 marks (hurdles 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 of the 110 race) - set them at the intermediate height.

Recovery between reps and between sets would be the same as for the 100 meter back & forths discussed above.

Sixteen (16) reps of this workout (4 sets of 4 reps) would be plenty for the off-season

Six (6) reps (3 sets of 2 reps) would be plenty when in season.

For hurdlers who want to alternate lead legs, this workout is especially useful, as athletes will probably take eight steps between the hurdles.

Athletes who can't alternate legs will take either seven or nine.

For girls or women, keep the distance at 100 meters, and use the women's 100m hurdle marks for placing the hurdles, not the men's 110 marks. Have 5 hurdles facing one way, and 5 more beside them facing the other way.

400m Runs

This workout usually reserved for the latter part of the season – after spring break.

- 1) The 400 starts at the 300m start.
- 2) Hurdler clears the first three intermediates, sprints the curve and part of the homestretch
- 3) clears the last two hurdles, crosses the finish line, cuts into lane one
- 4) finishes the 400 at the 300m starting line.

Time at both the 300m mark and at the 400m. Athlete should hit the 300m mark no more than 2 seconds slower than projected race time, and then try to finish the last 100 in 16 seconds (for a boy) or 18 seconds (for a girl).

If the athlete's goal is to run a 40.0 in the next meet, then, in this workout he will want to come across the 300m mark in 42, and finish the 400 in 58.

Have the athletes do 2 reps of with an 8-10 minute rest between reps.

Variations:

· Set up the hurdles differently.

- 1) If the athlete is having trouble with curve hurdling, then leave out the first two hurdles, and have the athlete clear hurdles 3-5 and 7-8.
- 2) If the athlete is running out of gas at the end of races, leave out the first three hurdles, and have the athlete clear the last five.
- 3) If the athlete needs to improve the early part of the race, then set up the first five.

As long as there are five hurdles set up, the challenge to the athlete will be more or less the same. Prefer having the last two hurdles set up for athlete to get used to coming off that last hurdle and driving through the finish line.

· For a 400m hurdler, these would be 500s, starting at the regular starting line, and finishing at the 1500 meter start. Run over the first three and the last three hurdles.

Shuffle the deck

This is a workout from **Coach Lee Pantas** of Asheville-Reynolds High School in Asheville, NC.

The workout is designed to improve the ability to use either lead leg with equal efficiency, and to develop a full confidence in both legs.

In the workout, the athlete does a series of reps covering anywhere from 100 to 400 meters, setting up four to seven hurdles at race height, and staggering the distance between them anywhere from ten to thirty meters apart.

The key to the workout is that the athlete is going to have to attack each hurdle with whichever leg comes up. It puts the athlete in a situation where he or she is forced to react.

After each rep, the coach "reshuffles the deck" - randomly change the distance apart between each hurdle so that the athlete doesn't get used to the stride pattern during the course of the workout, and therefore continues to need to adjust and use whichever lead leg comes up.

Ins and Outs

This workout is as old as Track & Field - good for conditioning, and putting hurdles in the way is always a good method to make it specifically useful for hurdlers.

In this workout, you sprint the straight-aways and jog the curves, running a total of anywhere between two to four miles, sprinting and jogging combined.

The sprints should be run at about 75% - 85% of full speed. The jog between should be more of a bounce/shuffle, not a distance runner's fast-paced jog. The focus of this workout is on maintaining efficient sprinting mechanics, staying relaxed in the upper body, and developing cardiovascular strength.

Hurdle-specific variation: add a hurdle on each straight-away, on or about the 50-meter mark, so that every sprint includes the need for hurdle clearance.

When in even better shape, add two hurdles on each straight-away, about 30-40 meters apart from each other.

The hurdles can be at any height; raised as high as you like for the sake of the challenge. Generally set them at 30" (females) or 36" (males). It's important for hurdlers to always have the option of doing hurdle-specific variations of sprinter/quarter-miler workouts. Since the basic difference between a hurdler and a

sprinter is that a hurdler has to negotiate barriers while sprinting, having hurdles in the way during workouts always keeps you tuned in to that fact.

400m Back-and-Forths

This is an intermediate-hurdle version of the 110m hurdle back-and-forth workout.

Set up hurdles 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 on the straight-away, using the 110hh marks. Five hurdles going one way, five the other. The workout is to run over the five 36" hurdles (30" for women), 9-stepping, going 100 meters one way, turn around, go 100 meters the other way, then repeat the entire up-and-back once more. In other words, go up and back twice, running a total of 400 meters, clearing a total of 20 hurdles.

Unlike in the 100m back-and-forth workout that was discussed earlier on this web page, in this workout, there should be no rest at all in the turn-arounds; don't cheat the workout!

Five reps, with three minutes rest between each rep, is an excellent conditioning workout for the 400m hurdles. If the quality of the workout begins to deteriorate too soon, then increase the rest to four minutes, five minutes, and even six minutes if necessary. Even though the athlete doesn't run at full speed, this workout is very demanding, because keeping the 9-step rhythm for the entire 400 meters gets to be very difficult. The fatigue factor in the last 100 meters of each rep mirrors the fatigue factor in the last 100 meters of a 400m hurdle race. Therefore, if the athlete can maintain consistent arm swing, knee lift, and efficient hurdling technique in the latter stages of the workout, he or she can do so in the latter stages of a race.

This workout is not designed to mimic the stride pattern of an actual race. Similar to the five-step rhythm of the high hurdle back-and-forth workout, the idea is to build up your hurdling conditioning, and to trust that when you do run full speed, the strength that you gain from this workout will help you to maintain speed and technique for the entire race. An athlete who utilizes the ability to switch lead legs in a race will want to do some of the reps leading with the left leg, and the other reps leading with the right leg. Or, another option would be, on each rep, to lead with the left leg on the way up, and to lead with the right leg on the way back. Be creative in adapting the workout to suit your purposes.

One drawback of this workout is that it does not factor in the curve issues that become a problem in the longer hurdle race. If you feel that your biggest flaw in the intermediates is that you lose your stride pattern on the curve, then this workout is not the one that will provide you with the most benefit.

In this workout, the coach shouldn't time anything except the recovery. The purpose of this workout is to teach the body to relax when fatigued. Maintaining the stride pattern will serve the purpose of making sure the athlete doesn't decelerate drastically. Too often, athletes try to force speed. But when you're too tired to force speed, then you have to rely on your running mechanics, running posture, hurdling mechanics, and ability to stay relaxed when the body is instinctively trying to tie up. When you're able to do those things, then speed becomes not a matter of running fast, but of being able to maintain the speed you have. Similarly, technical proficiency becomes a matter not of being able to hurdle efficiently, but of being able to maintain the technical efficiency that you have already established. Everybody looks good over the first hurdle, right? The idea is to still look good over the tenth.

200 Doubles

This workout is designed specifically for the 400m hurdles. And it is best suited as a big-race preparation workout, to be done two or three days before a championship meet. Set up all ten hurdles. Have the athlete sprint a timed 200 over the first five hurdles. Then, after a minute rest, have him or her sprint another timed 200 over the last five hurdles. After a ten-minute rest, repeat the double. Then, after another ten-minute rest, repeat the double a third time. The goal is to keep the second rep of each double within two seconds of the first rep. If the athlete can maintain a two-second difference throughout the workout, then you know he or she can maintain that difference in a race. Once the second rep of a double gets to be more than four seconds slower than the first rep, then cut the workout short because the athlete is not ready for it and it is

no longer serving its purpose. In a race, a difference of more than four seconds between the first 200 and the second 200 indicates that the athlete is fatiguing too much in the latter half of the race. For a beginning hurdler, the difference will be closer to six seconds in a race.

Variations: to adapt this workout for the 300m hurdles, do the same thing. Set up all eight hurdles, and have the athlete do a 150 over the first four, take a minute rest, then do another 150 over the last four, with the goal being to keep the second 150 within two seconds of the first one.

Damn Damn Damn James Workout

This workout is designed for the 300m/400m hurdler who has trouble finishing strong. It's a mid-season to late-season workout, designed for race preparation. Here's the workout:

6x200 over the last five IH's, with a walk-back recovery after each rep, and a 6-minute rest after the third rep.

On each rep, the athlete should strive for a negative split. For instance, if I want the athlete to hit all the 200's in 26 seconds, I'll want him to run the first 100 of each rep in 14 seconds, and the second 100 in 12, crossing the line in 26.

This workout forces the athlete (and therefore teaches the athlete), to control his speed. In the intermediates, distribution of energy is one of the keys to success. So by striving for negative splits, the athlete is learning to go out hard, but not too hard. Also, getting in the habit of finishing the last part of the race in acceleration mode helps the athlete to move beyond the mindset that he or she is just trying to hang on at the end.

In this workout, it is the coach's job to make sure the athlete doesn't go out too fast. For instance, if, in the above example, the athlete goes out and runs the first 100 in 12, the coach has to step in his way and tell him to stop, walk back, and start the rep over. Some athletes have no "body clock," so to speak; they go full speed every time they step on the track. If allowed to run in this manner over and over again, such an athlete will never learn how to distribute his speed throughout the course of the race.

Two-Step Drill (to develop the ability to alternate lead legs)

This is a workout I got from Aaron Wheatcraft, a former hurdler who now coaches in Minnesota. This drill is designed to help a hurdler develop the ability to alternate lead legs. Here is the drill as Wheatcraft described it:

The hurdles should be about 15 steps apart (not meters, foot to foot). Set the hurdles at intermediate height – 36 inches for boys, 30 inches for girls.

Have the hurdlers chop/high knee to the hurdle and then, when about 5-7 meters away, have them attack the hurdle. The natural tendency here is that they want to carry a lot of speed to the hurdle, which isn't necessary. They need just enough speed where it forces them to be quick with both the lead and trail. That is the beauty of this drill – it forces you to alternate and to speed up the mechanics.

To make it more challenging and to work getting down off the hurdle, I will shorten the distance after the first set. Not much, maybe 1 or 2 feet. This makes them even work harder on the lead leg whip and bringing the trail leg through.

I usually end our warm up with this drill. We do 2 sets of 10 reps through 6-8 hurdles. Obviously you can change the quantity as you see fit.