



Samantha Ayers  
1 Brookside  
Eaglesfield  
Cockermouth  
Cumbria  
CA13 0SD



www.bodyfitpersonaltraining.co.uk

01900 825974

asksam@bodyfitpersonaltraining.co.uk

These notes accompany the England Athletic training days that have taken place in Keswick, Cumbria throughout 2011. They will be ongoing in 2012. For more information contact Sam Ayers (details above) or Emma Williams (England Athletics Club and Coach Support Officer on [ewilliams@englandathletics.org](mailto:ewilliams@englandathletics.org)) Over time, further videos will be added to supplement this information. Videos will be available via [www.bodyfitpersonaltraining.co.uk](http://www.bodyfitpersonaltraining.co.uk)



## Speed, Agility and Quickness

SAQ definitions according to Coachwise Education:

**Speed:** Athlete who maximises speed will be at an advantage. Simply put, speed is the time taken to travel from A to B but in all but shortest of sprints, this is really speed endurance. Speed endurance is when straight line speed is exhibited and maintained over time. This is the main focus for endurance runners.

**Agility:** Agility is the result of combining mental and physical ability to perform a series of pre-determined power movements one after another in opposing directions e.g. forwards, backwards, sideways or diagonally.

**Quickness:** Speed of movement of a limb in a given direction or predetermined manner.

Benefits: **SAQ** drills can lead to improved performance because they help to improve the economy of the athlete. An athlete who is more economical will travel the same distance with less energy expenditure.

Technique plays an important part in improving speed, agility and quickness by focusing on:

- Body posture
- Neuromuscular co-ordination

SAQ: Focus identified by relevant letter, i.e. **S** = **S**peed

## Ladders

- a. Health and safety (slips/trips)
- b. Note alternatives (e.g. kitchen floor tiles, chalk on floor)
- c. Being aware that different surfaces present different challenges, e.g. grass more difficult to perform drills than tarmac or sports hall

### Focus on good form throughout:

- Good posture, i.e. run tall – imagine a helium balloon attached to the top of your head, gently lifting up
- Light on feet (keep the volume down) but with rapid fire foot action
- Slow controlled movements to gain correct technique, i.e. walk, then slow jog, then running pace
- Build speed once technique has been established
- Shorten ladder to begin with to encourage success
- Powerful arm drive

### Coaching...

1. Consider group size and ability
2. Is it best to split the group and if so how?
3. Break down of skills/drills...
  - a. Introduce the movement pattern off/away from the ladder
  - b. Start slowly focusing on technique
  - c. Half length of ladder to encourage success
  - d. Add speed after correct movement patterns have been achieved
  - e. Lots of praise
  - f. Perfect practice makes perfect



## Drill examples:

1. Facing forward, basic drills, e.g.
  - a. Basic run through (one foot tap) **S,Q**
  - b. Two foot tap (right and left leg lead) **S,Q**
  - c. Ladder break runs, i.e. change of speed e.g. 1 foot tap to predetermined point (marked with cone) followed by two foot tap **S,Q**
  - d. Two forward one back (right and left leg lead) **A**
  - e. Ladder skips - concentrate of foot speed, not height **S,Q**
  - f. Ladder scissor skip (straight lead leg) **S,Q**
  - g. Butt flick, knee forward of hip, heel to butt **S,Q**
  - h. Adding lateral movement e.g. step to side, both feet in **A**
2. Adding jumps, e.g.
  - a. Jumping (straight through **or** two forwards, one back) **S,Q**, adding change of direction = **A**
    - i. Concentrate of foot speed, not height
  - b. Hopping (straight through **or** two forwards, one back) **S,Q**, adding change of direction = **A**
    - i. Concentrate of foot speed, not height
  - c. Jumping jack **A** (slow and fast progressions along ladder)
  - d. Hop scotch (alternating hopping leg) **A**
  - e. Combinations e.g. hop, hop scotch **or** jump hop scotch **or** jump and floor touch **A**
3. Lateral movements (not specific to endurance running but good for overall conditioning)
  - a. Side-stepping **A**
  - b. 'Slow' ladder step up drill (straight in, diagonally out) **A**
  - c. 'Fast' ladder step up drill (zig-zag in and out) **A**
  - d. 'Slow' Cross-Country ski drill (slow progression down ladder – both feet in each square) **A**
  - e. 'Fast' Cross-Country ski drill (slow progression down ladder – both feet in each square) **A**
  - f. Jumping **A**
  - g. Hopping **A**

### Seated (non ladder):

- a. Seated stationary arm swings (seated on floor, legs out in front) **Q**

### Standing (non ladder):

- a. Standing stationary arm swings (feet hip width apart) **Q**

These are just a sample of some of the SAQ drills which can be performed with ladders, most of them can be varied in some way to produce a different outcome.

## Hurdles

- a. Health and safety (correct direction for hurdles)
- b. Note alternatives (e.g. lines on floor, cones)
- c. Being aware that different surfaces present different challenges, e.g. grass more difficult to perform drills than tarmac

### Focus on good form throughout:

- Good posture, i.e. run tall – imagine a helium balloon attached to the top of your head, gently lifting up
- Light on feet (keep the volume down) but with rapid fire foot action
- Slow controlled movements to gain correct technique, i.e. walk, then slow jog, then running pace
- Build speed once technique has been established
- Start with one or two hurdles then add more as athlete progresses **or** start with lines on floor or cones before progressing to hurdles
- Powerful arm drive



### Coaching...

1. Consider group size and ability
2. Is it best to split the group and if so how?
3. Break down of skills/drills...
  - a. Introduce the movement pattern off the hurdles, then with lines on floor, then cones, then hurdles
  - b. Start slowly focusing on technique i.e. walking pace
  - c. Introduce 2 hurdles to begin with, focussing on quality, then add more as athlete progresses in ability
  - d. Add speed after correct movement patterns have been achieved
  - e. As ever, perfect practice makes perfect

### Drill examples:

1. Facing forward, basic drills, e.g.
  - a. Basic run through (one foot between each hurdle) **S,Q**
  - b. Two foot tap (both feet between each hurdle, right and left lead) **S,Q**
  - c. Hurdle break runs, i.e. change of speed e.g. 1 foot tap to predetermined point (marked with cone) followed by two foot tap **S,Q**
  - d. Dead leg drill **S,Q**
  - e. Butt flick **S,Q**
  - f. Skipping **S,Q**
1. Adding jumps, e.g.
  - a. Jumping (straight through **or** multidirectional e.g. 'mad rabbit') **S,Q**, adding change of direction = **A**
    - i. Concentrate of foot speed, not height
  - b. Hopping (straight through **or** multidirectional e.g. 'mad rabbit') **S,Q**, adding change of direction = **A**
    - i. Concentrate of foot speed, not height
2. Lateral movements (not specific to endurance running but good for overall conditioning)
  - a. Side-stepping high knees **A**
  - b. Scissor kicks **A**
  - c. Jumping **A**
  - d. Hopping **A**

These are just a sample of some of the SAQ drills which can be performed with hurdles, most of them can be varied in some way to produce a different outcome.

### Resources/Bibliography

1. Core Stability on the Ball  
Samantha Ayers  
Contact 01900 825974 for a copy, £6  
Available at the course
2. Flexibility Workshop Booklet  
Samantha Ayers  
Contact 01900 825974 for a copy, £2  
Available at the course
3. Agility Training Drills (DVD)  
Published by Coachwise 1<sup>st</sup>4sport  
[www.1st4sport.com](http://www.1st4sport.com)
4. Speed Training Drills (DVD)  
Published by Coachwise 1<sup>st</sup>4sport  
[www.1st4sport.com](http://www.1st4sport.com)