A Closer Look at the BFS DOT DRILL

Why this great warm-up exercise should be a part of every workout program

One of the most complex and controversial topics in strength and conditioning is how to warm up properly. Dynamic exercise, aerobic training, PNF stretching – no wonder the typical high school coach often throws up their hands and just says, “Go run a lap!” At BFS, we’ve found a simple and effective method of properly warming up for lifting. It’s called the Dot Drill.

If nothing else, a warm-up needs to increase your body temperature, breathing rate and heart rate to the level of the activity you will be performing. This means you need to break a sweat, so static stretching is not what you need – after a workout, yes, but not before. Certainly running around in circles or spending a few minutes pedaling a stationary bike will heat you up, get your blood pumping and make you breathe hard, but does this sound like the type of warm-up an athlete should use? Not quite.

At BFS, we believe that one of the best ways to warm up is by performing the Dot Drill. The Dot Drill is performed on a 2-foot-by-3-foot surface with five dots, as shown in Figure 1. There are five exercises in the Dot Drill, and the athlete performs each drill six times in the following sequence: Up and Back, Right Foot, Left Foot, Both Feet, and Turn Around. Detailed descriptions of each of these drills are included in Dr. Greg Shepard’s book Bigger Faster Stronger, and in all our set-rep log books. We also have a DVD, the BFS Dot Drill, that shows the Dot Drill in action.

The Dot Drill is an ideal warm-up because not only does it fulfill all the basic requirements of a good warm-up, but it improves coordination, foot speed and agility as well. It also strengthens the ankles, an area of the body that could be considered a “weak link” in athletes, as they are frequently injured in athletics and often frustrating to rehabilitate. And because an athlete who injures an ankle is five times more likely to injure it again, it makes sense to include exercises that will prevent the ankles from becoming injured in the first place.

When athletes first attempt the Dot Drill, they often feel clumsy and find it extremely tiring. But these issues will pass, especially if the athlete commits to performing it six times a week. That may seem like a big commitment, but consider that the record for the Dot Drill is 33.37 seconds for boys and 37.77 seconds for girls. So, for most athletes, we’re asking for less than 10 minutes of work per week – an investment well worth the price.

At BFS, we’ve found that if you’re really serious about improving performance in any aspect of strength and conditioning, you have to test it. Whether it’s by how much you lift, how high you jump or how fast you run, you have to find a way to accurately measure performance so you can set personal records and then break those records. This is also true with the Dot Drill, and we recommend that athletes get tested twice a month and record the results. And to help the athlete determine how they are doing on the Dot Drill, BFS has established a set of standards for both girls and boys. Table 1 shows these standards.

We believe the BFS Dot Drill is a perfect warm-up for any workout program, for any athlete at any age. There are certainly many more ways to prepare the body for a workout, but for its simplicity and effectiveness, you can’t beat the BFS Dot Drill.

[To appreciate how effective the Dot Drill is as a warm-up and to see good athletes demonstrate how to perform it perfectly, we have downloaded a video clip of the exercise from one of our training DVDs on our website. It will remain there until the publication of our March/April 2008 issue.]
There is nothing better than the BFS Dot Drill Exercise for a workout warm up. Why? Because it can be done anywhere, it’s quick, easy, and athletes love it! Start reaping the benefits such as increased speed, improved agility, knee and ankle injury prevention and more with the BFS Dot Drill!

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✔ Fun and easy to use
✔ Safe and stable steel frame
✔ Non-slip rubber top
✔ Great for all athletes, all levels
✔ Effective rehab tool

DRILLS 1 & 2: Right & Left
DRILL 3: Up & Back
DRILL 4: Side to Side
DRILL 5: Quarter Eagle
DRILL 6: Round the World

TRAINING TIP: All team sports require that athletes move quickly and explosively, not just forward but also laterally (and sometimes backward). So it just makes sense to include lateral plyometrics in your complete plyo package.

BFS HAS YOUR ANSWER: THE BFS PLYO RAMP.
TEACH CHAMPIONSHIP HABITS

SIX ABSOLUTES

1. ATHLETIC OR JUMP STANCE
2. BE TALL
3. SPREAD THE CHEST
4. TOES ALIGNED
5. KNEES ALIGNED
6. EYES ON TARGET

ATHLETIC OR JUMP STANCE

Correct Form

Incorrect Form

SPREAD THE CHEST

Correct Form

Incorrect Form

TOES ALIGNED

Correct Form

Incorrect Form

KNEES ALIGNED

Correct Form

Poor Form

EYES ON TARGET

Correct Form

Incorrect Form

Parallel Squat
Power clean

ATHLETIC OR JUMP STANCE

BE TALL

SPREAD THE CHEST

TOES ALIGNED

KNEES ALIGNED

EYES ON TARGET

ATHLETIC OR JUMP STANCE

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POWER LINE

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