



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
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ELBOW AND SPORTS
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Return to Soccer Physical Therapy Protocol

Guidelines:

- All skills should be performed in the presence of an Athletic Trainer, Physical Therapist, or qualified coach to stress proper mechanics.
- The athlete must pass all functional tests on a field before beginning Return to Soccer Protocol.
- The athlete may progress through the steps and phases as tolerated, performing one phase every other day with cross-training on off days.
- The athlete should only progress to the next step of each phase if he/she is able to complete the current step without pain or difficulty.
- Each phase should be tolerable and comfortable and be completed without swelling or decreased ROM.
- Emphasis should be placed on developing and maintaining proper mechanics without developing symptoms.
- The athlete should ice the affected extremity for 20 minutes following the activity.

Phase 1: Progression of Running and Soccer Drills

1. Fast paced walk the length of the field.
2. Jogging high knees to midfield, back kicks back to the end line.
3. Forward lunge to midfield and back to end line.
4. Jog down the field and back.
5. Side lunge to midfield and back.
6. $\frac{3}{4}$ speed sprint length of field, down and back.
7. Full speed sprint length of field, down and back.
8. Diagonal hops, midfield and back.
9. "Suicide" line touches at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed.
10. Agility ladder drills: Figure 8, X-Lane Drill, M Drill, ZigZag, and T Drill. **See attached sheet for drill descriptions.

****No Passing or dribbling until phase 2.**



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Phase 2: Progression of Running and Soccer Drills

1. Jog down the field and back, 2X
2. Jogging high knees to midfield, back kicks back to the end line.
3. Forward lunge to midfield and back to end line.
4. Side lunge to midfield and back.
5. $\frac{3}{4}$ speed sprint length of field, down and back.
6. Full speed sprint length of field, down and back, 2X
7. Diagonal hops, midfield and back.
8. "Suicide" line touches at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed.
9. "Suicide" line touches at full speed.
10. Agility ladder drills: Figure 8, X-Lane Drill, M Drill, ZigZag drill, and T Drill. **See attached sheet for drill descriptions.

Passing with a Teammate

Side footing: start with standing ball and move through the progressions, then progress to a moving ball both on the floor and on the volley.

- a. Short distances
- b. Longer distances
- c. Greater velocity on the pass

Dribbling – Full length of field for each Step

- a. Straight-line ball control
- b. Forward/backward turns
- c. Instep ball control
- d. Outstep ball control

Phase 3: General conditioning, skill work; individually and with a team-mate:

1. Jog down the field and back, 2X
2. Jogging high knees to midfield, back kicks back to the end line.
3. Forward lunge to midfield and back to end line.
4. Side lunge to midfield and back.
5. $\frac{3}{4}$ speed sprint length of field, down and back.
6. Full speed sprint length of field, down and back, 2X
7. Diagonal hops, midfield and back.
8. "Suicide" line touches at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed.
9. "Suicide" line touches at full speed.
10. Agility ladder drills: Figure 8, X-Lane Drill, M Drill, ZigZag Drill, and T Drills.



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- Continue with general conditioning (up to 60 minutes). Begin interval training (jog for 1 minute, then sprint for 20 seconds).
- Continue partner drills, but with no contact. Continue with individual skill work as per phase 2.
- Continue with partner passing and kicking on goalie drills.
- Begin walk-throughs on offense and defense.

Passing: forefoot (on the laces)

- a. Short distances
- b. Longer distances
- c. Greater velocity on the pass: same as with the side-foot pass. Once moved through the progressions, progress to moving the ball on the floor first, then eventually on the volley.
 - a. Volleys side foot/laces/outside of foot
 - b. Volleys with quick-feet: incorporate quick-feet and volley to ladders/hurdles/left-right foot on command, quick reaction volley drills

Lateral dribbling movements

- a. Long distances
- b. Short distances
- c. At speed
- d. Side movement with the ball, changing direction on command, with speed

Phase 4: General conditioning, skill work and team drills:

- Do not play live scrimmages. NO CONTACT
- Resume regular conditioning and duration of practice.
- Practice team passing and kicking drills, practice offensive, defensive and counter attack tactical schemes with no contact to the player.
- Review heading the ball techniques. Do a few reps of low intensity with limited height and distance.

Phase 5: Full Team Practice with Body Contact:

- Join team in a full practice to get yourself back in the lineup. If a full practice is completed with no symptoms, you are ready to return to competition.

Phase 6: Discuss with the coach about getting back in the next game

Agility Drills:

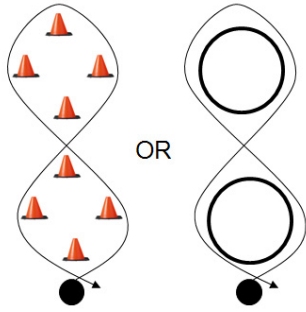
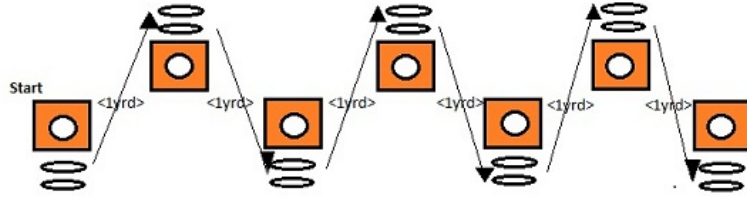
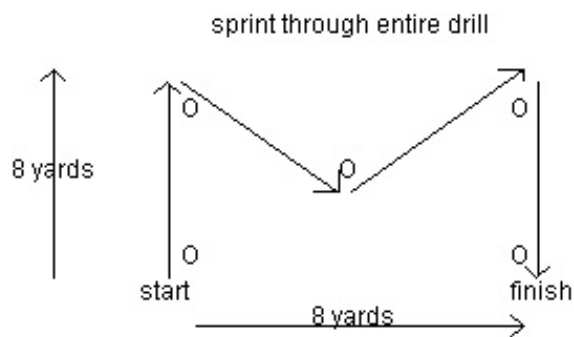


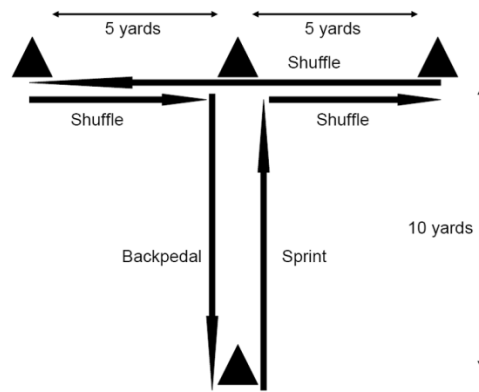
Figure 8 Drill



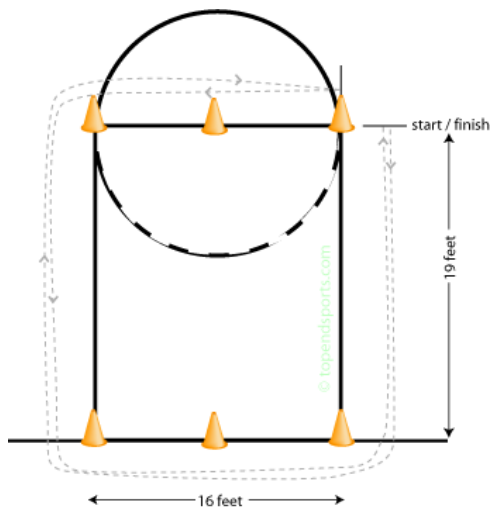
Zig Zag Drill



M Drill



T Drill



X Lane Drill: Sprint, side shuffle, back pedal, side shuffle