

SPRINTING

Sprint Workout Suggestions

Begin each workout with a five-minute warmup of low-intensity walking or jogging (heart rate of “180 minus age” or less) followed by light stretching. Conclude each workout with a five-minute cooldown identical to the warmup. Be certain that you have medical clearance before attempting any strenuous workout, including those described in this book.

Novice Sprint Workout - Strides and 85-Percent Sprints

After proper warm up, conduct six warmup strides of 5 to 8 seconds each, with a 20-second rest period between strides. Focus on maintaining good running form and don't worry about your speed. These are just warm ups for your main sprint efforts. After your warmup strides, do six sprints lasting 8 to 20 seconds each at an estimated 90 percent of maximum effort. Take a one-minute rest period between sprints or otherwise enough to be fully recovered and achieve normal respiration before beginning your next sprint.

After two to three sessions over a few weeks' time, increase your sprint efforts to nearly full speed. Use a moving start (jog up to starting line and then begin sprinting) instead of a static start, to minimize injury risk. Where you fall in the range of 8 to 20 seconds is personal preference. Naturally, shorter sprints will be at faster speeds. I like to include both shorter and longer duration sprint sessions into my schedule. Pay attention to the difference between leg fatigue and pain. If you experience any acute pain or tightness, particularly in your hamstrings, wrap up the workout immediately with an easy cooldown and refrain from further intense exercise until your condition completely clears.

Sprint Workout #1 - Strides and Full Sprints

Strides and sprint workout as described for novice workout, except build to maximum (controlled) effort on the sprints. Remember to deliver a consistent quality of effort on each sprint, and stop the workout if your time or perceived effort is unsatisfactory.

Sprint Workout #2 - Hill Repeats

Six to eight times hill sprints lasting 8 to 20 seconds at 90 percent effort. Recover by walking or trotting down the hill. Return to normal breathing before beginning next effort.

Sprint Workout #3 - Accelerations

Six to eight times 30-second sprints with the first 10 seconds at medium effort, second 10 seconds at hard effort, and third 10 seconds at full sprint. One to two minutes recovery between efforts. You can use a running track and do 150-meter repeats accelerating every 50 meters (start at turn apex, accelerate at straightaway, accelerate again at middle of straightaway, finish at traditional finish line) or any other course you can mark with one-third distance intervals.

Sprint Workout #4 - Technique Drills

- **Strides:** Four times eight-second strides at 90 percent effort. Ten-second rest between efforts. One-minute rest before next exercise.
- **Skipping:** Two to four times 50 meters. Drive knee as high as you can (try to hit your chest), taking off and landing on opposite leg. Then launch off and land with opposite leg, driving other knee high into chest—like an exaggerated skip. Strive for maximum height instead of length. Fifteen-second rest between efforts. One-minute rest before next exercise.

- **Bounding:** Two to four times 50 meters. Take as long a stride as possible, focusing on keeping your balance rather than speed. Thirty-second rest between efforts. One-minute rest before next exercise.
- **Bunny Hopping:** Two to four times 50 meters. Take off on both legs and jump up and forward. Focus on achieving a good balance between height and length. Swing arms to assist effort and ensure a balanced landing. One-minute rest between efforts (you'll need it, trust me). Two-minute rest before next exercise.
- **Full Sprint:** Two to four times 50-meter full sprint. One-minute rest between efforts.

Sprint Workout #5 – Stair Drills

Conduct this workout on stadium or building stairs. Your flight of stairs should take 8 to 20 seconds to ascend. Take 30 seconds rest between each exercise, or more or less as needed to feel refreshed and get your breathing under control.

- Four times warmup stair climbs at 75-percent effort. When you reach the top, return immediately down the stairs at a comfortable pace, then ascend again.
- Two times single stairs. Ascend one stair at a time with rapid leg turnover. Descend comfortably and repeat effort.
- Two times bounding stairs. Ascend by skipping as many steps as you can. Focus on keeping your balance rather than speed. Drive arms for balance and leverage. Descend comfortably and repeat effort.
- Four times full speed stairs. Skip desired number of stairs with each stride to get to the top as fast as possible. Descend comfortably and recover completely between efforts.

Sprint Workout #6 – “Grokball”

This workout, inspired by MarksDailyApple.com regular Grant Peterson, is a refreshing example of the simplicity of fitness in a culture that habitually tries to make things more complex than they need to be. In the amount of time it takes to get through the basic set-up instructions of your heart rate monitor owner's manual, you can capture the essence of Grok with this primal effort.

Take a 5- to 10-pound medicine ball (depending on your own bodyweight and strength level) to an ample-sized athletic field. After a 5-minute light jog, grab the ball and throw it down the field. Sprint after it, pick it up and throw it again, completing repeat trips up and down the field. Discover numerous variations on the throw—overhead like a soccer throw-in, underhand like an old school free-throw, sideways one-armed like a discus thrower, sideways two-armed like a hammer thrower, roll like a bowling ball (one- or two-handed), or face backward and throw over your head two-handed. (Watch out for little kids at soccer practice with the latter.)

Be extremely careful to keep your spine and neck in a neutral position every time you throw. Your legs and core muscle groups will provide the most leverage and receive the most training effect from the throws. Your spine and neck should always be in a straight line (angle to the ground might vary from perpendicular to 45 degrees depending on your throwing style)—don't curve your back or neck fore-aft or side-to-side. Make sure that the force of your effort is absorbed by your legs and core muscles.

Begin with gentle throws that will give you a form check. As you fatigue after a few lengths of the field, you will have to be especially diligent about maintaining proper body position for your throws. When you notice that your ability to maintain correct form becomes compromised due to fatigue, it is time to stop the workout; the same goes if you experience any acute pain in your muscles or joints. Finish your session with five minutes of easy jogging.