Physical Education

1. The Training of Children in Running

By Authority:

H. E. DAW, Government Printer, Melbourne
THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN IN RUNNING.

Running is one of the essential physical activities and must be used in any scheme of physical education for school children. It leads to the acquisition of skill and ease of movement, good breath control, co-ordination of action, and increased capacity for effort. These qualities are essential for participation in any form of exercise, and their cultivation is especially valuable to girls, to enable them on leaving school to transfer their interest to, and find employment in, whatever form of recreative activity they prefer or circumstances allow.

Running training, then, should begin in a simple way in the lower school and proceed by stages so that at the age of twelve years all children should know the technique of good running and by constant practice and suitable exercises may prepare the body for sprinting, hurdling, and other athletic pursuits.

The activities and exercises listed in this pamphlet are of proved use and must be taken in the daily periods of training.

With children of from 8 to 10 years, the aim is to improve the ability of the child to run fast. This involves a speeding up of the nervous control of the child’s muscles. The ability of one child to run faster than another depends on the quickness with which he can lift his feet and put them to the ground.

AGE 8 YEARS.

EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES.

The following exercises and activities will encourage lightness in action and improve the child’s ability in running, and are suitable for use in the introductory group for children of from 8 to 9 years:—

1. Running, change to running like "fairies."
2. Running, change to running on toes on the spot.
3. Running, change to "aeroplanes."
4. Running, change to skipping or gallop step sideways.
5. Walking on toes, change to running.
6. Running, on signal stand still. On next signal run as hard as possible. On next signal skip jump on spot.
7. Running, change to running lightly on spot with knees high. On next signal sparrow hop anywhere.
8. Riding bicycles up and down hill (slow rhythm up hill, quickening rhythm down hill).
9. Skipping around a circle, on signal run to points. Run back to "homes" and skip around.

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10. Running to four "homes" (marked with colours or numbers), on signal change "homes."

11. Standing on sides of a thirty-yard square (a smaller square may be used). Opposite sides change alternately. All sides change; this encourages dodging and swerving.

**GAMES.**

The following running games are only suggested; many others may be used:

- **Keep Tin Full**
  
  Apparatus: A tin, a box, or a basket containing tennis balls. The teacher or a child throws the balls, one at a time, in every direction, children chasing, and returning the balls to the tin. Children try to keep the tin full.

- "Charley over the Water"
  
  Children form long line on one side of a playground, Charley out in front. Children chant—"Charley over the water, Charley over the sea; Charley caught a blackbird, but he can't catch me." On "me" all run across the playground, Charley capturing as many as possible. Those caught help Charley next time.

- **Jumping Jack**
  
  Children stand anywhere facing the teacher or a child, who runs on spot, skip jumps, astride jumps, hops, crouches, stands still, etc. Children imitate until teacher or child says "Shoo!". All run to home, teacher chasing, catching as many as possible.

- "Kangaroos and Wallabies", "Crusts and Crumbs", or "Rats and Rabbits"
  
  Children form two lines, three feet apart, facing each other. One line is called kangaroos or crusts or rats, while the other line is called wallabies or crumbs or rabbits. Teacher calls out one name, and that line races for home, the other line chasing. Those caught join the other line. Teacher may keep children in suspense by telling a story and working in the name of a line.

- **Bunyip's Treasure**
  
  Bunyip is asleep in his "hole" with a "treasure"—a ball or a match-box—near him. Children creep up, Bunyip turning at intervals. Children stand still when Bunyip turns.

  If he catches any one moving, that child is sent back to start again. When near enough, one child seizes "treasure", and all run, Bunyip chasing. Those he captures help him next time. If the child carrying the "treasure" is caught, that child is penalized by being made to start behind the others.
ADDITIONAL EXERCISES.

The following exercises should improve the child’s powers of running:

1. “Quick off the mark.”
2. Run as fast as possible twenty or thirty yards.
3. All-in race (same distance).
4. Racing in groups of 3 or 4.
5. Racing to a line, picking up sticks or other objects, and racing back (in groups).
6. Weekly running competition over 35 yards (individual achievement records to be kept).

AGE 9 YEARS.

EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES.

Most of the activities for children aged 8 are suitable for those aged 9, but a little more intensive work may be done here, as shown in the following exercises and activities:

1. Free running, change to higher steps and longer spring.
2. Free running, change to walking on heels, walking on toes, and running again.
3. Free running, change to running on spot with knees high, change to walking.
4. Following leaders in teams, in and out skittles—on signal touch wall and run back to places.
5. “Steer the Ship.”
6. Running to a rhythm.
7. Giant strides, walking and running.
8. Running like a wooden man.
9. Free running, change to gallop step sideways following the teacher’s direction.
10. “Chase your own partner.”
11. Any form of rhythmic jumping—skipping, skip jumping, astride jumping, etc.—is useful for developing the muscles of foot, ankle, and leg. These muscles are used in jumping as well as in running.

GAMES.

The following games are suggested:

Team “Tiggy”

Divide class into two teams. One team chases the other, attempting to “tig” all the members of that team.
while teacher counts to 30. Teams then change over. Teacher counts number of "frees" left running at end of counting, and compares one team with the other.

_French "Tiggy" ("tiggy" played in pairs)—_

If a player is touched he must hold the part of the body on which he was touched and chase the "toucheur." The aim is to touch partner's leg below the knee.

_Free and Caught—_

Five or six "hes" chase others. When one of the "frees" is caught, he stands still, but may be freed by one of his own team touching him. The aim of the "hes" is to make every "free" stand still, whereas the "frees" must keep their team moving.

_Bush-rangers and Police—_

Police are asleep in their camp. Bush-rangers creep down from their "mountain hide-out." When near enough, leader of the bush-rangers shouts, "Open fire!" Bush-rangers stamp their feet to make a noise like guns. The police leader springs up, calls, "After them, men!" and police chase bush-rangers back to their hide-out, capturing as many as possible. Teacher then changes teams over.

_Other Games—_

Running from lines on opposite sides of playground, children turn partners in centre (right, left, or both hands), touch partners' line, and then race back home.

Loop File Racing. In files, run around a partner and back to place, etc.

**ADDITIONAL EXERCISES.**

The following exercises should improve the child's powers of running:

Simple relays may be introduced here, e.g., run to a line and tip hand of next person to run.

Shuttle relay without baton (teams in two sections on opposite ends of playground, 30 yards apart).

Gallop step sideways, run back.

Run through a partner's legs, touch line, and return.

Relay races with bean bags.

**A Sample Lesson for Children Aged 9 Years.**

_Introductory activities._

(a) Run and jump over several obstacles 1 ft. from ground.

(b) Skip jump on spot, 4 low, 4 high.
Exercises for stretching and strengthening trunk and leg muscles.

Elephant walk. Walk forward, stiff legs and nodding heads.

Balance and abdominal exercise.
Rabbit hop anywhere.

Lateral trunk activity.
With feet together, jump from side to side over a line, moving forward.

Activities.
(a) "Quick off the mark."
(b) In groups—jumping the fish.

2. Jump across head.
3. Jump across body.
(c) Game—Jockeys and Horses. Horses are loose in a paddock. Jockeys run, each catches his own horse and runs back to the stable with him. Last horse free wins game for horses, first jockey back to stable wins for jockeys.

AGES 10 AND 11 YEARS.

When the child has reached the age of 10 or 11 years, he has mastered the idea of making his legs move quickly. The aim of the teacher at these ages must be to teach the correct running style, and to encourage the children to acquire it. This involves correction of faults by teacher and constant practice of correct style by children.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD RUNNING.

The teacher should study the following characteristics of good running:

*Ease of Movement.*—Ease of action should be encouraged from the outset—good balance of the body and free easy movement in which arms and legs work in harmony.

*Leg Swing.*—Good use should be made of the hip joint. The knee is lifted strongly in front, and on the down sweep stretched forward, so that the foot is put down in advance of the knee. This avoids the mistake of running from the knee downwards. Swing easily from the hips, with the maximum length that is consistent with the pace.
The Stride.—It is important to learn to run straight, and to land squarely on the ball of the foot. The feet should be straight and the weight should be transferred with a forceful push off from the rear foot.

Arms.—A forward and backward action of the arms is preferred. Each arm makes a small circular movement, with strong accent on the downward action. The fingers are slightly closed. The shoulders are brought into play, and the runner gains additional momentum in a forward direction.

N.B.—The hands must never rise above the shoulders, swing below the middle of the thigh, or swing behind the trunk.

Breathing.—The child must breathe in and out through the nose, and the mouth must be closed.
Carriage.—The runner should lean slightly forward when moving, but the inclination should be from the feet and ankle joints. Bending forward of the trunk depresses the ribs and interferes with breathing.

Correct

Incorrect

Speed.—Speed should not be introduced until the technique of running has been mastered. Effort should be directed first towards increasing spring through strengthening the foot and leg action, and co-ordinating the leg and arm movements to obtain maximum result from each stride.

Exercises and Activities.

Exercises from the following groups may be taken to form the daily lesson (a sample lesson is given on page 11).

Exercises designed to warm the child and prepare him for the activities to follow—

1. Running to a rhythm in a big circle, change to marching on the toes with a high arm swing.

2. Doubling on the spot—slowly at first, then faster until a maximum speed is reached, then slowly again. Repeat.

3. Running, change to giant strides.

4. Running, sprint, on signal change back to easy jogging.
5. Jogging on the toes, change to running on the spot with knees high.


7. Skip jumping to count of 4, on 4 an upward jump with leg parting.

8. Toe tapping.

9. Toe tapping with hopping.

10. Hopping to 4 counts.

Exercises for stretching and strengthening leg muscles—

1. Long sit position—trunk rolling forward and downward (relaxed movement) with unrolling.

2. Long sit position—trunk rolling forward and downward with pressing, trying to push the finger-tips beyond the toes.

3. "Angry Cats."


5. Snail Crawl. Grasp toes in long sit position; with knees straight, slide each leg along the ground.

Exercises with strong movements to further strengthen the legs—

1. From crouch position spring as high as possible and stand erect.

2. As for the above exercise, but return to crouch position.

3. Knee spring to 3 counts, on 4 leap forward to crouch, and repeat.

4. Crouch, join hands with partner—a hopping tug of war.

5. Crouch, join hands with partner—"Russian dance".
Exercises that aid in the development of the side muscles of the trunk and the legs—

1. Feet astride, elbows by sides, arms bend, forearms parallel to ground—trunk twisting to left and to right.

2. Crouch, one hand sideways—run around hand and stand up.

3. Pin wheel (see pamphlet on Agility Movements).

4. Long sitting, arms forward raise—arm swinging sideways and backward with trunk turning, returning to clap the other hand.

5. Feet astride (short), arms sideways, fists closed—trunk turning sideways with pressing.

N.B.—These trunk turning movements are best done in the standing position, but be careful of the child's posture as he turns his trunk. A child will allow his abdominal muscles to sag and increase the lumbar lordosis of the spine unless he is checked.

Class and group activities—

1. "Quick off the mark."

2. Jogging, change to sprint patterning.

3. Work with individual skipping ropes.

4. Starting practice—lean forward with feet in shallow holes.

5. Running to a line, sprinting to another line, and then running, gradually easing down to a stop.

Games.

Shuttle relay without batons.

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X X X X X  X X X X X
X X X X X  X X X X X
X X X X X  X X X X X
X X X X X  X X X X X
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Shuttle relay with batons.
Racing, in 4 files. Each boy in file races against his opponents in each of the other files (i.e., 4 boys, one in each file, race over a distance of 30 yards). A win in any race scores a mark for one file.

Ball relay, on "shuttle" pattern.

"Under and over" relay.

N.B.—With children of 11 years an attempt can be made to teach starting practice (as shown for the next group) if the children have advanced far enough in the elementals.

A Sample 30-Minute Lesson.

The following lesson may be taken in the normal physical education period for children of 11 and 12 years:—

1a. Running, change to giant strides, change to running. Repeat several times.

b. Toe tapping with hopping to 4 counts. Repeat several times.

2a. Feet astride—trunk rolling forwards and downwards with unrolling. Repeat several times.

b. "Snail Crawl."

3. With stiff legs, bend trunk down and touch toes with fingers; then bend knees and spring high in the air, arching back and kicking heels up at rear.

4. Feet astride, arms bend, elbows into sides, forearms parallel to ground—trunk turning slowly, then quickly, left and right.

5a. Jogging, change to sprint pattering.

b. "Quick off the mark." In groups of 10, race for a distance of 15 yards.

c. Shuttle relay with batons, covering a distance of 30 yards.
The film strip on running should be studied carefully by teachers and by pupils from the age of 11 years on. Sprinting should be introduced now. This includes starting, finishing, running on curves, and so on.

**The Starting Position** (study the film strip carefully).—The signal is “Get on your marks.” The crouch start is adopted; if the forward leg is the left the starting position is taken as follows:

The left foot is placed about 8 to 10 inches behind the starting line and the right knee rests on the ground so that it almost touches and is in line with the toes of the left foot. At the same time the right foot is kept perpendicular to the ground and a mark is made with the fore part of that foot to get the position for the back hole. Holes are dug from the front, deep enough to enable strong backward pressure to be exerted without danger of slipping when making the start. The hands are placed on the ground on each side of the forward foot, with the thumb and the index finger of each hand resting on the starting line; the distance between the hands is not less than the width of the shoulders.

“*Set*”.—On the command “Set” or “Ready”, the right knee is raised a few inches from the ground until the weight rests chiefly on the hands and the left leg. The trunk is now approximately horizontal, and the eyes are directed towards the ground at a point a few feet in front of the starting line. The whole position is one of readiness.
"Go".—On the command "Go", a powerful drive from both feet, accompanied by a vigorous use of the arms, assists the runner to get the quick start that is necessary. The rise from the crouch is gradual and is accompanied by a lengthening of the stride, which reaches its normal sprinting length at about 20 yards from the starting line. Correct running style is maintained to a point well beyond the finishing line; there is no checking of speed on reaching the tape.

Throwing the head backward and the arms upward are faults which cause a loss of speed.

The Finish.—The runner should run through the tape as fast as possible; encourage the child to race as though the finish were ten yards farther away. (See film strip.)

Running on a Curve.—As most relays are now run around a circular track, practice should be given on curved running tracks. This usually entails running in a left-hand direction.
When doing this the runner must lean to the left strongly. The position is not a tense one; the child should find relaxation in this sideways body lean.

Training for Sprinting.—The following exercises improve respiratory efficiency and muscular condition, and increase the flexibility of the joints. Avoid racing in early training. Watch closely the balance of the body and the leg action.

EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES.

The following exercises are suitable for inclusion in the daily period of physical education throughout the year:—

1. Running on the spot at varying speeds.

2. Stand with arms forward, leaning at an angle of 75 degrees towards a support (wall or partner). Run on spot with raising of knee and stretching of rear leg.

3. Skipping exercises—

   (a) Feet at the position of attention, spring on the toes, keeping both feet together and allowing the rope to pass underneath. Then give a small rebound with bent knees; the toes are slightly raised from the floor before the second skip is begun.

   (b) The feet are alternately raised in front, with pointed toes and straight knees, while two hops—one true hop and a rebound—are given on the other foot.

   (c) This exercise is similar to the exercise in (b), but the toe of the foot which is raised should tap the floor twice each time the rope is turned.

   (d) Give two hops on the left foot—on the first hop place the right foot behind the left leg, the knee being well turned out; on the second hop stretch the right leg out, with the knee stretched. Repeat hopping on the right foot.

   (e) Hop and rebound, crossing the feet alternately. The feet are uncrossed and changed after the rebound each time the rope is turned.

   (f) Hop on the left foot and stretch the right leg in front with pointed toe. Repeat the hop on the left foot and raise the right knee, keeping the toe pointed to the floor. Change the feet and repeat hopping on the right foot.
4. Cycling—lying on the back with knees raised.

5. Leg swinging. High kicking and exercises for joint flexibility.

6. With body erect pick each knee up as high as possible—try to hit chest with knee.

The activities should include the following items:

1. Steady running over short distances for easy correct style with good balance and striding. Rest or walk during intervals. Gradually increase distances to be run.

2. Jogging, changing to skeleton jogging—arms down by sides and allowed to flop about as whole body is relaxed.

3. Stride at a quarter pace over a distance of 100 yards.

4. Stride at half pace over a distance of 100 yards.

5. Stride at three-quarters pace over a distance of 100 yards.

6. "Run throughs"—stride at easy pace for 75 yards, then sprint the remaining 25 yards. Start the run through in lines of about 6 children. (The children must keep together for the first 75 yards, i.e., the striding part. Over the last stage they strive for the lead. The teacher should stand on the 75-yard mark and call "Go" as they draw level with him.)

7. Practise crouch start and vigorous spring out of the holes.

8. Practise running through the tapes at the finish.

9. Sprint patterning—jog slowly for twenty yards, then run as fast as possible, covering as little ground as possible, for another ten yards, then jog twenty yards, and repeat the patterning.
PREPARATION OF A TRACK FOR RUNNING.

Almost any piece of level ground can be formed into a track. The area selected should be one yard wide for every individual track (that is, six runners would require a track 6 yards wide) and from 75 to 100 yards in length. All holes should be filled in, and raised portions, such as tufts of grass, should be removed. Behind the finishing line the track should be cleared to allow the children to stop gradually. The track is measured and marked off with lines at 20 yards, 30 yards, 40 yards, 50 yards, 60 yards, 75 yards, and the full distance. The individual tracks are separated by white lines or lengths of twine. If the straight track is to be used as part of a long-distance track, the curve of the latter should join the former about 20 yards from the finishing line. In a curved track each track should be measured separately, and individual starting marks should be put down. At each end of the finishing line a stick is placed (a five-foot stake 1 inch x 1 inch is best), and a strand of wool is tied between them. This is the "tape", and its height should be varied according to the size of the competitors, to allow it to touch the chest. If holes are dug on the track they should be covered over afterwards. Children should never be allowed to race over depressions of any kind.

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