

Coach's Corner

"Most elite runners are doing some form of running form drills" today, said Terrence Mahon, Sara Hall's coach. Which means that some of the following drills may be familiar to experienced runners. But everyone can benefit from the regimen, Mahon believes. These four exercises, he said, form a basic routine for improving front and back-side mechanics, foot-strike position, and explosiveness. Practice them on a soft level surface a few times a week.

GRETCHEN REYNOLDS



SKIPS Just like you did as a child. Skipping teaches you to keep your hips underneath you. Try to land flat-footed or near your heel and push into the ground with each step. Experiment with the length, height and number of skips you can do over a set distance.



HIGH KNEES While striding forward, pull up one knee after the other until your thigh is parallel to the ground, repeating as often as possible in about 15 seconds. Over time, increase the number of repetitions in that same 15 seconds. Make sure your feet land square with your hips.



BOTTOM KICKS Rapidly raise one heel at a time toward your bottom, making sure your knees, thighs and shoulders are in a straight line. The quicker you can pull your foot back and up, the faster your leg turnover will be while running, and the more power you will produce.



STRAIGHT-LEG SCISSOR KICKS Start with your legs together, then push off explosively from one foot. Keep the leg straight, using your arms, calves, hamstrings and gluteus muscles to propel you forward. Repeat with the other leg. Try to cover at least 50 feet rapidly.

WARM UP DRILLS



Walking Lunge



KARAOKE SIDE STEPS ON A LADDER