



FIBA

We Are Basketball

by Bill Foran  
and Robin Pound

# AGILITY

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## DEVELOPING AGILITY

To improve agility, you must perform quality repetitions of a variety of agility drills that mimic the movements required during the game. Agility drills train the body to react more quickly and under control. By performing drills repeatedly in a practice setting, you become better when the skill is needed during the game. Just as shooting jump shots and free-throws will help you become a better shooter, practicing agility, thereby making you a better, more efficient all-around player.

By practicing agility movements, you will learn to cut down on the wasted motions that cause fatigue faster. And by learning to do the drills correctly and under control, you will learn to move more efficiently.

Because of individual physical differences, agility movements and technique are described only in general terms. Players move through a number of horizontal and vertical planes and must perform a variety of unpredictable movements rapidly. Agility involves acceleration, deceleration, and change of direction while moving at a fast speed and under control. The development of these components involves speed, power,

quickness and balance. Basketball agility requires you to move rapidly and under control. You must train other components—flexibility, strength, speed, power, and balance—because these components contribute to improve agility.

## YEARLY TRAINING SCHEDULE

Agility training should play a major role in a yearly conditioning program.

**Off-season:** During the off-season, players should make their greatest gains because they have more time to train. The off-season is the time to learn new drills and develop proper technique for all drills. Entire workouts can be devoted to agility training. Agility training should be done 2 or 3 days a week.

**Preseason:** Agility training continues, but the workouts are shorter and the work gets sharper. Agility workouts should be once or twice a week, depending on the needs of individual players.

**In-season:** Agility training is limited to a few drills that may be done as part of the daily dynamic warm-up. Players who do not play many minutes can continue agility training throughout the season. The amount depends on the needs of individual players.

## GUIDELINES FOR AGILITY

Agility training requires proper footwear (basketball shoes) for agility drills. Drills should be done on a nonslip surface, such as a clean gym floor.

Perform drills at slow speeds first, beginning with a proper technique and footwork. When you can perform repetitions successfully and under control, you can increase speed. For every agility drill, start in the ready position: feet shoulder-width apart; ankles, knees and hips flexed in a quarter-squat position; head and shoulders slightly forward with hips and ankles in a straight line. Keep knees and hips flexed and your center of gravity over the feet.

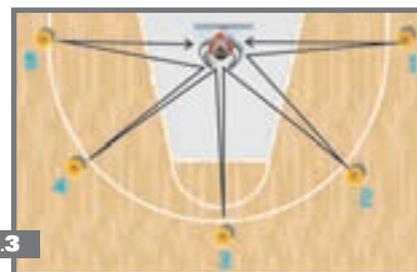
The body cannot move quickly when it is standing straight up. From this position,



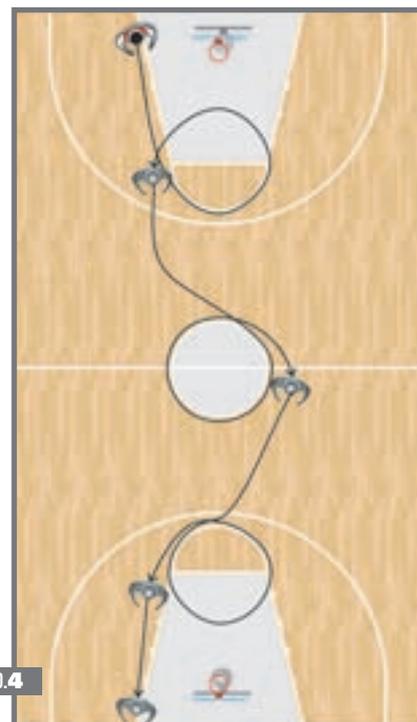
D.1



D.2



D.3



D.4

you are ready to move in any direction and can hold this position if bumped from any angle. This ready position is the most efficient position for moving and reacting. Agility drills should be short in duration (anaerobic), approximately 20 to 30 seconds. Each workout should include a variety of drills that involve multiple changes of direction as well as sprints, backpedals, shuffles, hops, skips, turns, rotations and jumps. Workouts should start with a good



warm-up and flexibility program and finish with a cool-down.

#### AGILITY DRILLS

##### Lane shuffle, sprint, backpedal

1. Start in the ready positions at the right corner of the baseline and lane, facing the court.
2. Shuffle to your left across the lane. Touch the line with your left foot, change directions and shuffle back to the start.
3. Immediately sprint up the free-throw line. Shuffle to your left across the lane and back.
4. Quickly backpedal to the starting position. Caution: be aware of the baseline wall during the backpedal finish.

##### Lane agility

Setup: Set a cone in each of the 4 corners of the free-throw lane.

1. Start in the ready position outside the left hand corner of the free-throw line extended, facing the baseline.
2. Sprint to the baseline past the cone. Defensive shuffle to the right past the cone. Backpedal to the free-throw line past the cone and defensive shuffle to the left to the starting edge of the free-throw lane.
3. Immediately change directions and defensive shuffle to the right past the cone, sprint to the baseline past the cone, defensive shuffle left past the cone and backpedal through the starting line.

##### Four corners

1. Start in the ready position at the center

of the lane facing the free-throw line.

2. Sprint to corner 1 and backpedal back to the start (diagr. 1).
3. Shuffle to the right to corner 2 and shuffle to the left back to the start.
4. Backpedal to corner 3 and sprint back to the start.
5. Shuffle to the left to corner and shuffle to the right back to the start.

##### Jump, shuffle, jump

1. Start in the ready position in front of and below the right edge of the backboard, facing the baseline.
2. Jump up as high as possible with both hands above your head. Touch the backboard if you are able.
3. Land on both feet and immediately shuffle left. Jump as high as possible in front of the left edge of the backboard.
4. Shuffle back to the right edge of the backboard and jump as high as possible.
5. Continue this over-and-back pattern for 3 to 5 repetitions.

##### Extended-lane drills

Acceleration, deceleration, backpedal, jump and shuffle

Setup: Set 4 cones feet apart along the free-throw line extended, starting 3 feet from the left sideline. Set cones at 3 feet, 6 feet, 9 feet and 12 feet from the sideline (slightly less than 1, 2, 3 and 4m).

1. Start in the ready position behind the left corner of the baseline and sideline, facing the court.
2. Sprint to the first cone and backpedal to the baseline (diagr. 2).
3. Sprint to the second cone and backpedal to the baseline.
4. Sprint to the third cone and backpedal to the baseline.
5. Sprint to the fourth cone and backpedal to the baseline and the edge of the lane.
6. Immediately jump as high as possible and then shuffle across the lane on the baseline and back.

Caution: Do not step on the cones.

Advanced version: Repeat the drill all the way back to the starting position.

##### Four-way closeout

Setup: This drill is done along the free-throw lane.

1. Start in the ready position at the baseline along the left side of the lane, facing the court.
2. Sprint up the lane to the free-throw line and stop quickly in a defensive stance.
3. Shuffle left a 45-degree angle for 2 shuffles and right for 2 shuffles, then backpedal to the start.
4. Repeat this sequence on the right side of the lane.

##### Five-spot closeout

Setup: Spread out 5 cones evenly around the three point arc.

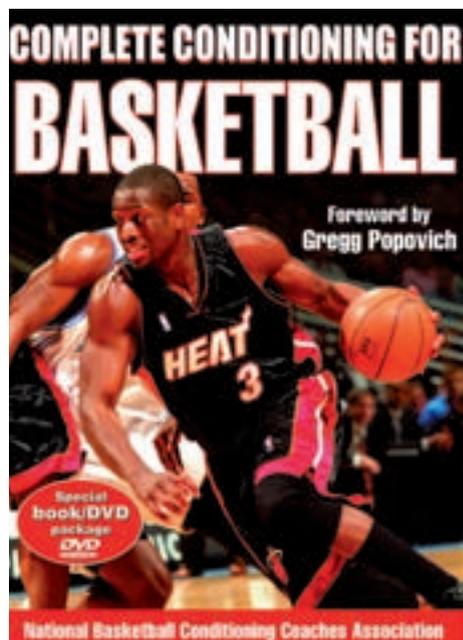
1. Start in the ready position under the basket, facing the court.
2. Sprint to the first cone, jump stop, and backpedal to the start (diagr. 3).
3. Repeat the sequence to the second, third, fourth, and fifth cones.

Advanced version: a coach or teammate stands at the first cone with a basketball. Sprint to the coach and react to the coach. If the coach pump fakes, react to block the shot. If the coach moves to the right or to the left, defensive shuffle a step or two to cut off the coach. Immediately backpedal to the start as the coach moves to the second cone. Repeat the sequence to the second, third, fourth and fifth cones.

##### Full-court drill

Circle run

1. Start in the ready position on the baseline at the end of the right lane, facing the court.
2. Run up the right lane and run counterclockwise around the first jump circle (diagr. 4).
3. Continue to the left of the half-court jump circle and run clockwise around the circle.
4. Continue to the right of the far jump circle and run counterclockwise around it. Finish at the baseline.
5. Return from the left lane so the pattern on the way back is opposite.



*Taken from the book "Complete Conditioning for basketball", National Basketball Conditioning Coaches Association, Bill Foran and Robin Pound, Human Kinetics, 2007*