



TRI NZ Running Drills

If you want to improve as a runner, you've got to do more than just run.

Taking 20 minutes to do a handful of drills, such as these can dramatically improve your running technique and economy (or the ability to run fast efficiently) and increase your stride cadence and racing speed.

Each of the drills highlights one or more aspects of good running technique and accentuates them through repetitive motion, which trains the body to become comfortable with that movement so it can be inserted into your typical running mechanics. These drills can serve as a dynamic warm-up routine after a 10-minute easy jog before your regularly scheduled run or workout, or they can be completed after a run to reinstate the notion of running with good form while fatigued.

Try to do these drills three times per week on an ongoing basis doing them consistently, focusing on the precise movements outlined below.

Butt Kicks

Why: Butt kicks engage the hamstrings and accentuate the recovery portion of the running gait and improve leg turnover cadence.

How: Run in place with your thighs more or less locked in a neutral position and try to kick yourself in the glute with your heel on each stride. Focus on keeping the rest of your body still and simply flicking your lower leg backward. If you're not making contact, you need to improve your dynamic range of motion. Do two or four reps of 15 kicks with each leg.



Grapevines

Why: This drill loosens hip flexors and glutes and increases hip and leg and gluteal mobility while also using lateral strength required to run with good form.

How: Standing upright with your head and torso facing forward, move laterally in one direction by placing your trailing leg in front of the lead leg. Then move the lead leg in that same lateral direction and place the trailing leg in front of the lead leg. Maintain a fluid motion with your arms rotating in the opposite direction from the legs. Do two to four 50-meter reps to the left and right, facing the same direction for each lateral movement.





Running Backwards

Why: Running backwards helps strengthen the glutes and upper hamstrings, as well as various core muscles in the abs and lower back.

How: Although it will seem awkward at first, try to replicate your forward running motion while moving backward. You'll still be pushing off of your forefoot and swinging your arms, but you'll be lunging backward with your hamstrings and using core muscles to stabilize differently than you're used to while moving forward. Focus on form, not on speed. Do two or four reps of 50 to 100 meters.



A Drill (March, Skip, Run)

Why: This drill helps develop calf and foot strength needed during the toe-off phase of the gait cycle while also stimulating neuromuscular timing for running with high cadence. It also accentuates the high-knee action of the lifted leg during a running stride.

How: Skip with a moderate leap off of one foot and return to the ground and immediately leap off the other foot, main- training a compact arm swing as if you were running. This slow-action skipping drill should have a staccato rhythm. Do two or four 50-meter reps.



B Drill (March, Skip, Run)

Why: This drill increases mobility of the hamstring and gluteal muscle groups and enhances forward hip extension necessary for running fast with efficient form.

How: With an upright posture and straight legs, alternately flick one leg forward while reaching with the opposite hand to lightly tap the extended foot. Focus on form, not speed, as this will wind up being a variation of a slow-moving skipping drill. Do two to four reps of 10 extensions on each leg.

