



Stay Active with Skyhawks!

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Lesson #1: Agility

Lesson Introduction

Welcome to the first virtual lesson in our series “Stay Active with Skyhawks!” These lessons are designed to be performed with a parent and child at your own pace and on your own schedule. We’ve selected activities that we believe are fun, imaginative, engaging, and age-appropriate to develop the right skills at the right time in your child’s life. Each lesson can be completed in under 30 minutes, requires little to no equipment, and can be done in small spaces like your living room, backyard, or local park! To make things even easier, we’ve included links to video demonstrations for each movement and activity. No previous coaching experience required! We’ll take you through a dynamic warm-up, a handful of fun activities, and then finish it off with a challenge! We hope that you have fun playing with your little all-star!

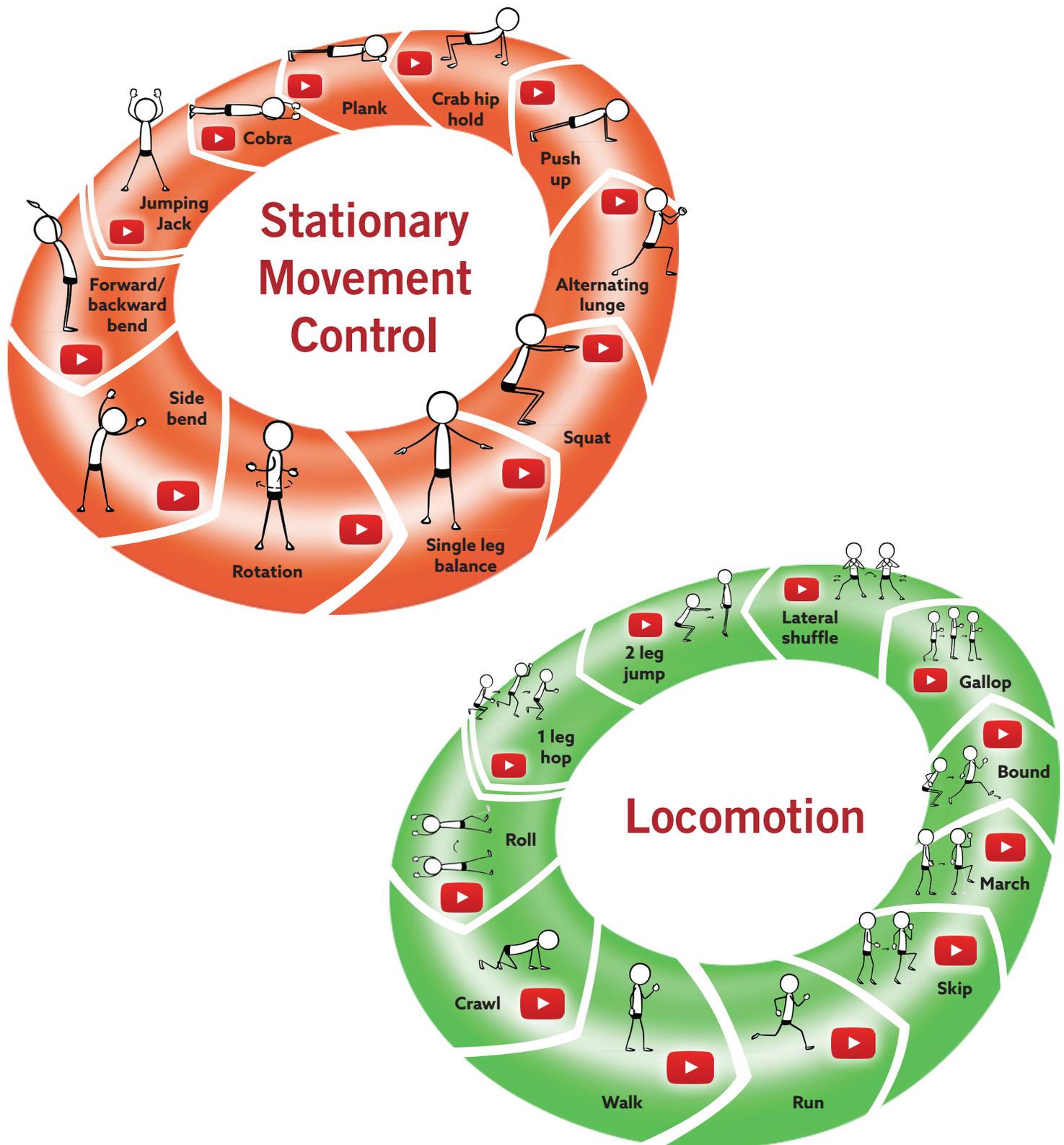
What is Agility?

A young athlete with “agility” can move quickly and efficiently while adjusting to space, timing constraints, and other components of a physical activity. Building the skill of agility requires developing sensory skills like vision, balance, spatial ability, body awareness, and rhythm in addition to fundamental movement skills like running, jumping, shuffling, and more.

Athletes 6 years and older are still developing their sensory skills all the way through puberty, so activities that highlight these skills should still be included in training. However, athletes at this age have the ability to refine the fundamental movement skills involved with locomotion (running, jumping, skipping, etc.), stationary movement control (squatting, bending, balancing, etc.), and object manipulation (kicking, throwing, catching, etc.).

To build a foundation for agility, athletes at this age should learn and practice the different fundamental movement skills (even the ones outside of their top sport), and over time, provide more challenges to the activity. For example, once they are confident with skipping, they should skip in different directions, over and around objects, and at different speeds.

Fundamental Movement Skills



Dynamic Warm Up (5 Minutes)

Movement Words

Begin by calling out movement-based words and have the children do that movement for about 10 seconds. These do not have to be specific skills; they can be more abstract movement skills like “fly” or “slither”. Have fun and be creative! There are no “wrong” ways to move here! Kids can choose how they “interpret” the movement words. If they struggle, help prompt them, but there is no specific correct movement pattern here.

Here are some suggested movement words:

- Jump
- Roll
- Dance
- Fly
- Shake
- Kick
- Explode
- Roll

Movement Sentences

Once your child is able to respond to individual movement words, put 2-3 of these words together and have him transition from one movement to another for 10 seconds.

Here are some suggested movement sentences:

- Spin, Punch, Explode (repeat for 10 seconds)
- Run, Grow, Shrink (repeat for 10 seconds)
- Roll, March, Wiggle (repeat for 10 seconds)
- Sneak, Hide, Fly (repeat for 10 seconds)
- Go Crazy, Climb, Run (repeat for 10 seconds)

Movement Variables

Start by having children perform a fundamental movement skill for 5 seconds. After that, add an extra “movement variable” to that movement. Provide just enough instruction for children to understand how to perform the movement and what the added variable looks like.

March

(5 seconds), Legs and Arms Wide (5 seconds), Legs and Arms Narrow (5 seconds), March (5 seconds)

Jump

(5 seconds), Fast (5 seconds), Slow (5 seconds), Jump (5 seconds)

Squat

(5 seconds), Hands above head (5 seconds), Hands below waist (5 seconds), Squat (5 seconds)

Gallop

(5 seconds), In a circle (5 seconds), In a square (5 seconds)

Agility Activity #1: Simon Says (Body Awareness)

Here we use Simon Says as a game to help kids recognize the parts of their body and what they do. Make sure to incorporate movements Simon doesn't say.

“Simon Says”

- Touch elbow to knee
- Opposite elbow to other knee
- Hands to floor
- Hands above head
- Touch hands to thighs
- Bring your heel to your glute* muscle
- Opposite heel to your other glute muscle
- Bend your knees
- Straighten your knees
- Push your hips forward
- Push your hips backward
- Reach to your right
- Reach to your left

This game is a classic, so have fun and get creative!

*Your glutes are the muscles that make up your booty!

Agility Activity #2: “Elastic” Foot Contact with Popcorn Jumps

Elastic foot contact with the ground is an important aspect of agility. It is also a precursor for improving speed. It's important that 6-year-olds and up are introduced to the technical aspects of how to rebound off the ground effectively and efficiently.

Perform 4 sets of 10-15 seconds or 15-20 yards

Agility Activity #3: Agility Shapes

Agility requires young athletes to have the ability to quickly change direction at a variety of speeds and movement angles. Moving in non-linear directions is a great way to develop agility with young athletes.

Call out the shapes to the right and have your child quickly move their feet in a small area to create an outline of the shape on the ground. Have her continue to make the shape for the duration of time.

Below is an example of a letter/number/shape sequence (resting every 15 seconds to maintain movement quality).

The letter A (5 seconds)

The letter Z (5 seconds)

The number 2 (5 seconds)

Rest 20 seconds

The number 10 (5 seconds)

The number 237 (5 seconds)

A square (5 seconds)

Rest 20 seconds

A triangle (5 seconds)

The outline of a person (5 seconds)

The word C-A-T (10 seconds)

Rest 20 seconds

The athletes first name (10 seconds)

Spell their sport (10 seconds)

Agility Activity #4: My Gears (Running in place or across an area)

Activities that require changes in movement speed lay the foundation for agility. Begin this activity by speeding up and slowing down progressively, then call out the gears in random order.

Run in: (5 seconds in each gear)

- 1st gear, 2nd gear, 3rd gear, 4th gear
- 3rd gear, 2nd gear, 1st gear
- 3rd gear, 1st gear, 4th gear, 2nd gear
- Keep changing it up!
- Repeat the progression 3 times.

Agility Activity #5: Partner Tracking Tag (Visual Awareness)

As young athletes' vision develops, it's important they learn how to use their entire field of vision to track and react to their environment.

**Each bout should last roughly 10-15 seconds.
Perform 3 bouts.**

Below are some other modifications to this activity:

- Stand on one foot
- Tag across the body (For example, right hand would reach across to tag over left shoulder)
- Move hands to periphery. The head does not move, so you must use peripheral vision

Today's Challenge: The Shoe-Tie Challenge

- Stand on one foot.
- Untie the shoe of the foot that is off the ground without letting it touch the ground. Work on that balance!
- Once the shoe is untied, take it off your foot, then put it back on.
- Re-tie your shoe.
- Do all of this while keeping your balance.
- Switch feet.

Thank you for playing today! We hope you had fun! Since agility is so important to athletic success, we'll have some more fun agility-based games for you next week. Until then, let's stay active, eat healthy, and sleep well so that we can succeed in sports and in life!