Volume 1: Hurdle Rhythm

In this book I am going to show you how to develop the 3-step rhythm for the Sprint Hurdles (110 and 100 hurdles) and I am going to do so in a manner that allows you to progress properly throughout the season. I am going to show you it in the 12-week progression that I use with my hurdlers (beginners and advanced).

I do not want to spend this book talking about what doesn’t matter, so I will get straight to the point. Here is the progression that I will teach you for coaching fast hurdlers, on a consistent basis, along with the general training that will be performed in each phase.

**Develop Rhythm** – Drills – 3 weeks  
**Acceleration** - the first 3 hurdles – 3 weeks  
**Top Speed** - the first 5 hurdles – 3 weeks  
**Rhythm Endurance** - 10+ hurdles – 3 weeks

My athletes hurdle only 2 days a week (Tuesday/Thursday) and with only 6 sessions per training phase, they all learn the 3-step rhythm and quickly rise to the top of the ranking in our conference, region, state, and nation.

Lets get started.

Chapter 1 - Developing the 3 Step Rhythm  
Chapter 2 - Accelerating through the hurdles  
Chapter 3 - Developing Top Speed in the Hurdles  
Chapter 4 - Rhythm Endurance, finishing strong
Chapter 1 – Developing the 3 Step Rhythm

All hurdlers should begin the season performing 3 Hurdle Drills to develop and ingrain the proper 3 step Rhythm.

The Cycle Drill – this is the first drill for teaching the proper 3-step rhythm. The drill ingains good movement over the hurdles, and allows athletes to get comfortable with the 3-steps at very low intensities at the beginning of the season. The hurdles are placed 15 feet apart (to begin), which is a distance that even day 1 beginners can 3-step.

The One-Step Drill - is a drill designed to ingrain continual movement over the hurdles and more importantly POSITION (staying forward and keeping the hips tall). The One-Step drill is performed over the middle of the hurdles and has a variation in which the lead leg and trail legs are worked in isolation. The drill in isolation is referred to as the 1-step, and when performed over the middle is called the one-step drill. The hurdles are placed 6-7 feet apart to begin and as the hurdlers advance the drill is performed over greater distances up to 9 or 10 feet.

The Cycle Ladder Drill - is performed to begin developing the habit of creating rhythm on the ground, and adjusting to the distance between hurdles. Like the cycle drill it will ingrain good rhythm, but more importantly begin to develop the athletes confidence at clearing hurdles in 3-steps which are further and further in distance. The Cycle Ladder Drill will begin with the hurdles 9 feet apart and increase by 2 feet for every hurdle placed on the track. The first workout will begin with the hurdles 9-11-13-15ft apart.

I personally begin all my hurdlers with an Assessment on Day 1. This assessment includes the full warm up, sprint drills, The Cycle Drill, The One-Step Drill, and a few full speed runs over the first hurdle. I take this time to take note of the athletes strengths and weaknesses and to understand the areas that he or she needs to focus on for immediate improvement. You can download the complete Day 1 Assessment for free by visiting sprinhurdles.com/day1

These 3 drills are the ONLY ones we will perform for the first 3 weeks of training. This will give them plenty of time to get conditioned (with running and strength and conditioning workouts away from the hurdles) and allow us the time needed to ingrain a very solid rhythm before beginning full-speed workouts in the second phase of training.

The drills should be performed in sneakers, and they should be performed with the hurdles at the lowest height so that confidence and consistency can be most quickly developed.
How to Perform the Drills

Before they begin performing the cycle, one-step, and cycle ladder drills they should learn how to properly execute the Schery Drill

Before they can successfully perform the schery drill, and execute proper hurdle form, they will need to learn the Straight Leg Drill. This drill will develop the proper strength, coordination and balance needed to run off the balls of the feet, and more importantly keep the hips tall.

Simply Stand on the toes, and move forward while keeping the knees locked.

The schery drill will teach them:

1. how to keep the hips elevated when hurdling (hips tall)
2. how to properly cycle the feet under the hips (rotary running, just as in sprinting)
3. how to continue swinging the arms over top of the hurdles (to avoid pausing)
4. how to maintain a proper forward lean (most important for accelerating into hurdles)

With the straight leg approach, move into the hurdles ensuring to keep the knee locked through the cut-step (last step into the hurdles). Bring the heels of the feet directly UP into the hips, ensuring to keep the feet dorsi-flexed, a forward lean, and the arms swinging.

This is the same way you will execute for the One-Step Drill and The Cycle Ladder Drill, and by the time you get to full-speed hurdling the correct movement over the hurdles should be pretty well ingrained.
My athletes hurdle 2 days a week during this time of the season and we cycle through the 3 drills depending on their needs.

The key is to establish a good *rhythm*. This means that simply moving through the hurdles with 3-steps is *not* good enough. The movement through all hurdles *should look consistent and begin to approach something of a run* (or as close as can be with the hurdles so close).

With the proper execution of the drills down, it is time to get into performing the workouts to develop and ingrain a good 3-step rhythm. Here is what the complete 3-week cycle of drills would look like, with 2 days a week dedicated to hurdling.

**Day 1**
- Cycle Drill
- One-Step Drill
- Cycle-Ladder Drill
- One-Step-Cycle Ladder-Cycle

This workout includes 5 rounds of hurdling per drill.

Round 1 – **Cycle Drill**
- 5 hurdles spaced 15 feet apart. (25 total hurdles cleared)

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5 Hurdles @ lowest height
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Round 2 – **One-Step Drill**
5 hurdles, spaced 6 feet apart (25 total hurdles cleared)

![5 Hurdles @ lowest height](image)

Round 3 – **Cycle Ladder Drill**
5 hurdles, spaced 9-11-13-15ft apart (25 total hurdles cleared)

![5 Hurdles @ lowest height](image)

Round 4 – **One Step to Cycle Ladder to Cycle**
10 hurdles, the first 3 are 6ft apart (for the one step) then 9-11-13-15 for cycle ladder, finishing off with 3 hurdles at the set distance of 17 feet. (50 hurdles cleared)

6-6-9-11-13-15-17-17-17
This workout would be a total of 125 hurdles cleared. This may sound like a lot, but even beginners will be able to handle the workload, as the hurdles are close, they are in sneakers, and the intensity is relatively low.

**Day 2**
One-Step
Cycle-Ladder
Cycle-Ladder
One Step-Cycle Ladder-Cycle

Round 1 – **One Step Drill**
5 hurdles, spaced 6-7ft apart (25 hurdles cleared)

Round 2 – **Cycle Ladder**
5 hurdles, spaced 11-13-15-17ft apart (25 hurdles cleared)
Round 3 – **Cycle Ladder**
5 hurdles, spaced 11-13-15-17ft apart (25 hurdles cleared)

![5 Hurdles @ lowest height](image)

Round 4 – **One Step to Cycle Ladder to Cycle**
10 hurdles (50 hurdles cleared)
7-7-11-13-15-17 - 18-18-18

![10 Hurdles @ lowest height](image)

Again day 2 will finish with a total of 125 hurdles cleared.

**Day 3**
One Step
Cycle Drill
Cycle Ladder
Cycle Ladder

Round 1 – **One Step Drill**
5 hurdles, spaced 7ft apart (25 total hurdles)
Round 2 – Cycle Drill
5 hurdles, spaced 18ft apart (25 hurdles cleared)

Round 3 – Cycle Ladder Drill
5 hurdles, spaced 11-13-15-18ft apart (25 hurdles cleared)
Round 4 – Cycle Ladder Drill
5 hurdles, spaced 13-15-17-19ft apart (25 hurdles cleared)

![5 Hurdles @ lowest height]

Total = 100 hurdles cleared

**Day 4**
One Step
Cycle Ladder
Cycle Ladder
Cycle Ladder – Cycle

Round 1 – One Step
5 hurdles, spaced 7ft apart (25 hurdles cleared)

![5 Hurdles @ lowest height]

Round 2 – Cycle Ladder
7 hurdles, spaced 9-11-13-15-17-19
Round 3 – Cycle Ladder
7 hurdles, spaced 11-13-15-17-19-20

Round 4 – Cycle ladder to Cycle

Total = 125 hurdles
Day 5 (hurdles up to 33")
One Step
One Step
Cycle Drill
Cycle Ladder Drill

Round 1 – One Step Drill
5 hurdles, 7ft apart (25 hurdles)

Round 2 – One Step Drill
5 hurdles, 7ft apart (25 hurdles)

Round 3 – Cycle Drill
Round 4 – Cycle Ladder
5 hurdles, spaced 9-11-13-15ft apart (25 hurdles)

Total = 100 hurdles cleared

Day 6 (hurdles at 33”)
One Step
Cycle Ladder
Cycle Ladder
Cycle Ladder

Round 1 – One Step Drill
5 hurdles, spaced 7-8ft apart (25 hurdles cleared)
Round 2 – Cycle Ladder
7 hurdles, spaced 9-11-13-15-17-19 (35 hurdles cleared)

Round 3 – Cycle Ladder
7 hurdles, spaced 9-11-13-15-17-19 (35 hurdles cleared)
Round 4 – Cycle Ladder
7 hurdles, spaced 11-13-15-17-19-21 (35 hurdles cleared)

Total = 130 hurdles

By this time, your hurdlers will look like completely new athletes. They will have a good rhythm, they will have good fundamentals in place, and will be hungry to begin running full speed over the hurdles.

In only 3 weeks they went from looking sloppy and out of shape over the hurdles, to looking like champion hurdlers. They are now ready to put on some spikes and begin taking full-speed reps over the hurdles.