

THE EXPLOSIVE STRENGTH WORKOUT (ESW)

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(1) Jog easily for 1.5 miles to warm up.

(2) **Run intensely for exactly one minute while counting the number of times your right foot hits the ground (you may count the number of footstrikes on your left foot, if you prefer, but do not count both feet).** If the number is less than 90, rest for a moment and repeat two more times, attempting to increase stride rate to *at least* 90 on each occasion. Otherwise, move on to step 3.

(3) **Skip on the balls of your feet for 30 seconds,** using very quick leg action (keep your feet on the ground for a minimal amount of time). Rest for a moment, and then repeat.

(4) **Double-leg hurdle hops:** Please position your eight hurdles in a neat row, 45 inches apart, with the height of each hurdle set at 24 inches. Starting from one end, jump over each hurdle, landing and taking off on two legs, until all eight hurdles have been cleared (movement is continuous). Minimize ground-contact time with each landing; try to be as explosive as possible. Once you have cleared the eighth hurdle, jog back to the beginning point, and repeat three more times (four run-throughs in all). *Avoid taking a little hop in between hurdles. Important: The idea is to land and then explode over the next hurdle, spending as little time as possible on the ground – and making just one contact with the ground, not two.*

(5) **One-leg hops in place: 2 sets of 40 seconds on each leg.** To do these, stand with your left foot forward and your right foot back, with your feet about one shin-length apart (they should be hip-width apart from side to side). Place the toes of your right foot on a block or step which is six to eight inches high. All of your weight should be directed through the middle-to-ball portion of your left foot. Then, hop rapidly on your left foot at a cadence of 2.5 to 3 hops per second (25 to 30 foot contacts per 10 seconds) for the prescribed time period. As you do so, your left knee should rise by about four to six inches with each upward hop, while your right leg and foot should remain stationary. Your left foot should strike the ground in the area of the mid-foot and spring upwards rapidly, as though it were contacting a very hot burner on a stove. Your hips should remain fairly level and virtually motionless throughout the exercise, with very little vertical displacement. After completing the first set, rest for a moment, and then repeat the one-leg-hopping action on your left leg. Rest again, and perform one more set on each leg.

If a small hill is available, you may add uphill hopping for about 20 meters on each foot. If you have hurdles, you may also add hurdle-hopping (hopping over three to four consecutive hurdles which are initially about eight inches in height).

(6) **Diagonal-hop for 45 seconds, rest for 15 seconds, and then diagonal-hop for 45 more seconds.** To diagonal-hop, jog for a few strides and then move diagonally to the right with your right foot. When your right foot makes contact with the ground, hop quickly in place. When your right foot comes down to earth from this single hop, explosively hop diagonally to the left, landing on your left foot. When your left foot strikes terra firma, hop once in place and then explode diagonally to the right. Your right foot will then hit, and you will hop once and then explode (not literally, of course) diagonally to the left, and so on. Stay relaxed at all times as you carry out this drill; try to move in a rhythmic and coordinated manner. Look ahead, not at your feet.

(7) **Complete 8 greyhound runs.** Carry these out in an area which has 100 meters of unobstructed surface. Simply accelerate for 20 meters, hold close-to-max pace for 60 meters, decelerate for 20 meters, turn around, rest for several seconds (by walking around), and repeat your high-speed running in the opposite direction. You are finished with this drill when you have completed eight 100-meter sprints (four in each direction).

(8) **Perform 2 X 12 one-leg squats with lateral hops on each leg, with a one-minute break between sets.** To carry out the one-leg squats with lateral hops, stand with your left foot forward and your right foot back, with your feet about one shin-length apart (they should be hip-width apart from side to side). If possible, place the toes of your right foot on a block or step which is six to eight inches high. Most of your weight should be directed through the mid-foot of your left foot. Now, bend your left leg and lower your body until your left knee reaches an angle of 90 degrees between the thigh and lower leg. Once your left knee reaches an angle of 90 degrees between the thigh and lower leg, hop laterally with your left foot (your right foot stays in place) about six to 10 inches, hop back to center, and then hop medially (to the right when your left leg is forward) for six to 10 inches, before coming back to center position and then returning to the starting (straight-leg) position, maintaining upright posture with your trunk (that completes one rep). When you hop laterally and medially, be sure to keep the toes of your hopping foot pointed straight ahead. Also, be certain to perform a close-to-90-degree squat in each position (medial and lateral, as well as center).

(9) **Complete 15 high-knee explosions, rest for a few seconds, and repeat.** To carry these out, stand with erect but relaxed posture with your feet directly below your shoulders. Begin by jumping very lightly in place, but then suddenly – while maintaining fairly erect posture – jump vertically while swinging both knees up toward your chest. Land back on your feet in a relaxed and resilient manner, jump lightly for a few moments, and then repeat 14 more times. Make certain that you do not carry out the basic movement by hunching your upper body forward to meet your knees; your upper body should be fairly erect at all times. The key action is the dramatic upward acceleration of the knees toward the chest.

(10) **Perform 3 X 20 seconds of Shane’s In-Place Accelerations (SIPAs).** To carry these out, stand with erect but relaxed posture with your feet directly below your shoulders. Begin by simply jogging in place, but then – when you feel ready – begin to dramatically increase your in-place “stride rate,” building up fairly quickly to as rapid a rate of striding as you can sustain (remember that you are not moving forward to any significant degree). Keep your feet close to the ground as you do this; you are not shooting for high knee lift but rather for dramatically minimized foot-contact times. Maintain erect but relaxed posture. When you are learning this exercise, it sometimes helps to turn your legs slightly outward at the hips as you build up toward “top speed.”

(11) While staying relaxed and running rhythmically, **run 4 X 800 at a pace which is faster than $v\text{VO}_2\text{max}$,** with 2- to 3-minute jog recoveries.

(12) **Cool down with about 2 miles of light jogging.**

Note: We’ll say that this workout involves approximately 7.5 miles of total running, with almost three high-quality miles (including the step-counting, skipping, and SIPAs). Please make sure that all of the stride-rate-enhancing activities are completed on a “forgiving” surface (soft dirt, grass, cushioned artificial turf, compliant track, or wooden gym floor).

Note: See Al Rider about using a foot-pod running watch. Makes cadence control considerably easier.