

# The Off-Season Football Speed Training Workout



**By Bill Martens**

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## **About the Author**

Bill Martens has been a football player for many years and is currently playing for the semi-professional team, Tokorozawa Outlaws of the Japan Private Football Federation (JPFF). He has played several positions including TE, WR, SE, K, P, OT, DT, NG and C. From 1990 until 2007 he has played for 6 different teams, among which one team finished runner ups in their league championship games three times. The 1993 Harajuku Indians went 17-1 including back to back days winning 20-24 and 28-0 only surrendering the championship game.

## **Introduction**

Over the many years I have been involved in different football programs, there has always been one thing that has been a re-occurring theme with each program. Speed! Many people are god-gifted speedsters but those of us who don't have this gift have to work for it.

How do you build speed when you are not the fastest person on the field? How do you train in the off-season? How do you get through the season without injuring a body part vital to your playing the game?

This document covers several of the methodologies used through out the world in football programs today.

## **The Stretch**

Stretching is the most important factor of any sport. Whether it be baseball, soccer, cross country or water polo, you have to stretch. Stretching allows the muscles to get loose so that they will be ready when your body calls upon them to perform. That means if you don't stretch the muscles, they will likely ache or even tear when you try to use them. Your performance will also suffer.

If you want to see the benefits of stretching, just take a look at the likes of Ichiro Suzuki of the Seattle Mariners. Ichiro has made stretching almost his full time job in between hitting baseballs all over the parks that he plays in. Maintaining a good stretching program will allow you to maintain flexibility well into your forties and fifties. Martial artists and ballet dancers show this even into their sixties.

You might be saying at this point, how can it help me, the lineman on a football team? Well, 90% of playing is the ability to move laterally quickly and beating your opponent to the position. It will make you faster, more flexible and a much better player overall.

## **The warm up**

You should warm up your body and tell it that you will be running fast soon. The first part of the warm up should always be a long slow run. This run can be 800 meters to 1600 meters depending on how you or your team handles the warm-ups. In personal warm-ups and private workouts, make the warm-up longer. It is a training session after all.

After that, there are a series of football related warm-ups such as lunges and carioca, high stepping, striding, and quarter eagles that you can do which will warm up the muscles and prepare them for the speed to come. You can also use speed workouts from track and field, which will definitely get you ready to run.

## **The workout**

There are several parts to this workout. Each part serves a different purpose in the build up to getting more endurance and speed when you are working out. We will start with the shorter parts of the workout working up to the longer parts, which you will likely be doing when you are exhausted.

## **The Sprints**

The first part of the workout is the sprints. These are done in measurements of 5 yards, 10 yards, 20 yards and 40 yards.

With the short 5 and 10-yard dashes, your purpose is to work on your starts. The 5-yard dashes in particular are just a bunch of starts.

Each distance will be done in sets of 10 each with 10–20 seconds rest between each sprint. The five-yard dashes can be done with 5–10 seconds of rest between each. The 40-yard dashes can have 20–25 seconds between each dash.

At the end of this section, take about a 5-minute break and hydrate your body. If you are workout out in extreme heat, be particularly mindful of your bodies' hydration, making sure to get plenty of water. You can even drink a quick sip of water during a sprint set if you feel your body so requires it.

## **The Shuttle Run**

This is another very fast sprinting type of exercise. You run this with 10,15, and 20 yard increments. Each leg of the shuttle run is done at full speed. You will be starting and stopping a lot in this exercise, which will help you with restarting during a play, should the direction of the play change such as during an interception or if the ball runner changes direction during the play.

Start standing, running 10 yards touching the ground, running back, touching the start line with your hand on the ground, running 15, etc.

This exercise will be done in three sets. Take 1 minute rest between sets. Take 5 minutes rest after all three sets

## **The Stairs**

This is one of the toughest parts of the workout. Doing stairs requires a lot of stamina and fortitude and it also requires a place with a lot of steps in succession with a decent gait between steps.

Your objective will be to find at least 30 yards of stairs or approximately 60–70 stairs in succession. As you perform each set of stairs upward, focusing on the lifting of your knees and the speed with which you do the stairs.

When you are going down, you do the stairs on your toes, quickly touching each stair. This will be up and down in a very rapid succession. Take 15 seconds rest between each set. Perform 10–15 sets of this. If you have been training for a while, then perform 20 sets of the stairs.

Take 5 minutes rest after this exercise.

## **The Ladders**

This is a very tough sprint type workout, which gets longer with each sprint.

You do 10 x 2, 20 x 2, 40 x 2, 80 x 2 and finally 100 x 2 without stopping. The total distance of the sprint is going to be 500 yards non-stop.

During this exercise, you will focus on your running technique, making sure to run the distances as if you were running in a race. The speed at which you run these distances will be  $\frac{3}{4}$  speed during all of them. This

means that you will are not running them as fast as you can as you have to cover 500 yards.

Rest 2 minutes between each one, performing three of these runs. They will help you build the endurance necessary to get through the games when they come up.

### **Ins and Outs**

This run is also know as a basic fartlek run but we run on the 400 meter track using the straights as our sprint zone and the curves of the track as the resting zone. Each sprint is 100 meters long with the total distance being run at 1000 meters. That will be 5 laps of two sprints each lap. The sprints are done at 100 percent of your speed. There are no half efforts on this one.

On the curves, you are not walking, but instead are jogging slowly and running into the next sprint. This allows you to actually get in 1000 meters of jogging and 1000 meters of sprinting. Since you are trying to build up your endurance as well as your speed, this will go a long ways towards both goals.

### **The Full Monty**

The reason this is called the Full Monty is that it is the place you will give everything else you have. By the end of this run, you will feel like you have been stripped naked and have nothing left.

This exercise is one 100-meter sprint running right into another. We do this drill when everyone has done everything else and is just dog tired. If you feel like throwing up during this exercise, that is a good sign. It means that you are just about on empty. This when you should push harder.

Start on one end of the field or at the start line on the track. Sprint 100 meters, turn around and sprint back. Do this 5 times depending on your training. You will be fatigued and exhausted but this will be the one run that will test your mettle. Keep in mind that this is nothing compared to the fatigue you will feel at the end of a really hard game, especially if there is overtime involved.

## **The Warm Down**

For the warm down, you can run a nice easy 4 laps of the track or run 1 mile nice and easy out on the grass or in a park. This is a time to reflect on the workout and meditate.

Don't run the warm down like it is part of the workout. It is supposed to allow your bodies' muscles recover a bit and slow down.

## **Ending Notes**

During this entire workout, remember that you will only get out of the workouts what you put into them. If you put halfhearted efforts into the workout, then your results will be sub-par and you will notice it later on. If you put all your heart and effort into each workout, you will find that your results will show and you should be able to get through the games in great shape. It will definitely show in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter when everyone else is getting tired.

# The Workout Sheet

## Warm Up

800 to 1600 Meter run for warmup

Warmup Exercises

<p><b>Sprints</b></p> <p>5 Yards x 10            10 Yards x 10            20 Yards x 10            40 Yards x 10</p> <p>5 minute rest</p>	<p><b>Shuttle Run</b></p> <p>10 x 2            15 x 2     x three sets            20 x 2</p> <p>1 minute rest between sets            5 minutes rest</p>	<p><b>The Stairs</b></p> <p>30 Meters up            fast feet down            15 seconds between sets            x 10-20 sets</p> <p>5 minutes rest</p>
<p><b>The Ladders</b></p> <p><math>\frac{3}{4}</math> speed            10 Yards x 2            20 yards x 2            40 yards x 2            80 yards x 2            100 Yards x 2</p> <p>no rest between each distance            3 sets            2 mintues rest between sets            5 minute rest</p>	<p><b>Ins and Outs</b></p> <p>100 sprint            100 Jog            x 10 sets</p> <p>5 Minute Rest</p>	<p><b>The Full Monty</b></p> <p>100 meters x 5            back to back            no rest            turn and sprint</p>

## Warm Down

1600 meter easy run