

Running and Movement

My colleague Jeremy Frisch recently stated, *"Trying to sell me an expensive timing system. I had to explain that I have adolescents who can't skip, balance on one foot, do an honest push-up or squat down on one leg. Speed training is awesome, but this current generation has some serious limitations that sprinting can't fix."*

Perfect description of the perils the younger generation faces as we succumb to the physical and well-being limitations that a sedentary lifestyle brings. Add to this the additional limitations that some coaching environments create, and the problems are destined to remain. In many sports, especially field and court sports, running is a major, if not critical, element of the sport. Running is one of the skills listed as being a fundamental element in the physical journey of all children. It is supposed to exist within a continuum where Foundation movements, Fundamental movements and Sport-Specific movements are executed with efficiency, consistency and resilience in a cyclic manner over many years. One thing missing from this progression equation is the role of free play where children are exposed to just about all of these fundamental and foundation movements in a setting of personal joy and discovery.

Fig.1 - The Pathway of a Movement Vocabulary

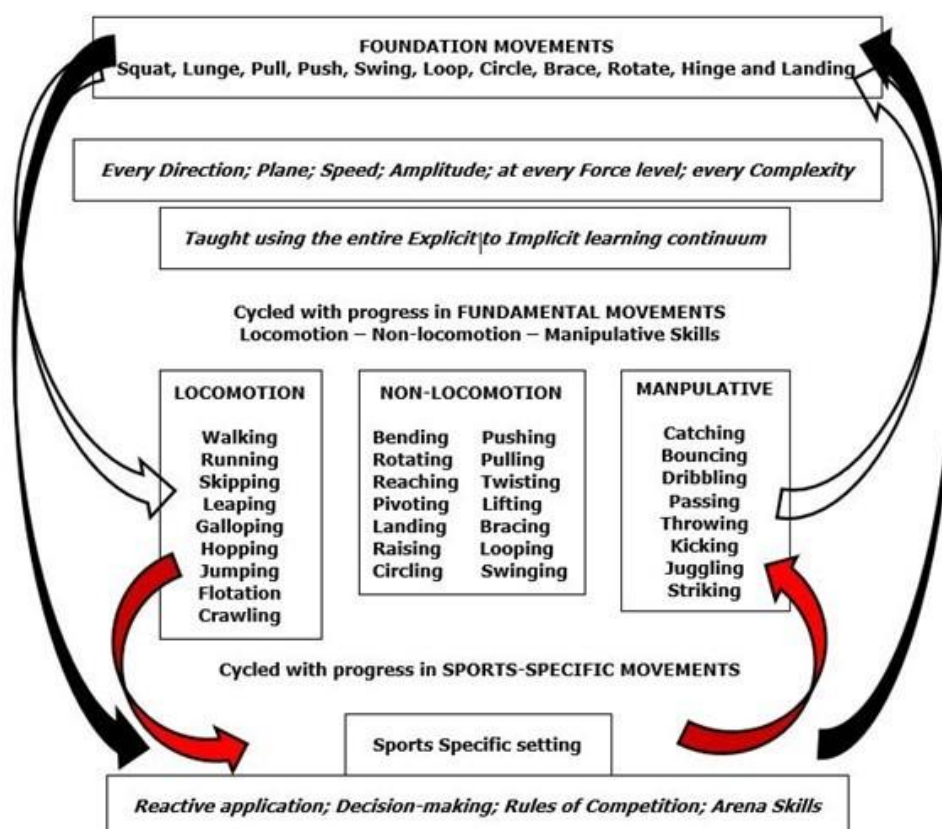


Fig. 1 - There is continuous cycling between Foundation, Fundamental and Specific Movements. Only the emphasis on each alters. Note that the Running and Jumping

elements contain the foundational elements required of the COD and Agility journeys for the field and court sports.

Each of these sectors supports the others as the journey is undertaken. As efficiency is sought in the fundamental movement patterns so the foundation movements act as both a cornerstone and stimulus for their progression. As efficiency, consistency and resilience are sought in the competition-specific sports actions and postures so the foundation and fundamental movement patterns feed their support into their progression. This is an example of the coaching expertise required in the development of a movement vocabulary that sees an appropriate manipulation of the general, related and specific elements of the journey.

I recently spent some productive time with some Athletics coaches in a "Little Athletics" setting here in Australia and took this overall concept into the context of a running session. The session framework looked like this:

Warm Up	General Running & Locomotion	Event Specific Running	Physical	General Running	Event Specific Running	Physical	Warm Down
Contains learning of new skills, consolidation of older skills, preparation for what is to come in terms of movement and tempo.	Reference to selected 'Keystones'. Applied in Games and Relays	Focus on the 'Keystones'. Applied in Games and Relays	New and old movement pattern learning of the Foundation Movements. Applied in Games and Relays	Repeat first cycle	Repeat first cycle	Repeat first cycle	

This format was designed for those in the 6-12 age groups where they experienced eight different sectors with 'Keystone' themes running through. Every main sector contained games and relays within which the chosen keystones were focused.

The General Running & Locomotion sectors were populated from a deep and wide list of activities e.g.

- Walking; Running; Skipping; Galloping; Jumping; Leaping; Hopping
- Forwards; Backwards; Sideways (Side-step; Cross-over)
- Around circles clockwise; around circles anti-clockwise
- Short strides; long strides
- Low Knees; High Knees
- Stop and re-start in a different direction
- Start the locomotion from stationary; from walking; from running at different speeds (this is the start of the Acceleration journey); from running at different speeds in different directions.
- Stationary start locomotion from different positions: Standing facing forwards; facing backwards; facing sideways; standing 2 feet; standing one-foot; kneeling; sitting; lying prone; lying supine; lying on side; on hands & feet prone (4-point); on hands & feet supine (4-point); 3-point; 2-point.
- Arms at sides; Arms ahead; Hands behind Head; Arms overhead; normal Arm action
- Trunk bend; Trunk rotate; Trunk bend and rotate
- Carry load low; carry load at waist; carry load at chest; carry load overhead; carry load and bend; carry load and rotate. Carry load and push out; carry load and push up
- Catch an object; pass an object
- Go around obstacles; go over obstacles.

In this Athletics setting (different to a Field and Court setting) the Event Specific sector was populated from its own list e.g.

- Mach A series
- Mach B series
- A Skip series
- Dribbles progressions
- Wickets series
- Mini-Hurdles
- Ins & Outs
- Overhead Series
- Straight Leg
- TUSOKH2H series

The Physical (Movement) sector was populated from the existing Movement Dynamics video library e.g.

- **5in5** – Squat, Ground based stability, Lunge, Ground based stability, Complex.
- **More 5in5** – Balance & Vertical Stability, Ground based stability, Squat & Lunge, Pull & Push, Complex.
- **Progressive Exercise Syllabus** – Flexibility, Body Shaping & Control, Lower Body, Upper Body, Running & Agility, Medicine Ball.
- **Additional Movement Puzzles.**
- **Connected Work** – Push, Raise, Swing, Circle, Loop, Throwing Journeys.

It will take an ongoing series of workshops to slowly arm the coaches with all these tools and to a level where they are confident enough to use them and coach them. Amazing how keen and appreciative the coaches are when someone gives them a little help that is appropriate to their actual environment.

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