

rebounds off the ground, and you get the idea. Last are two long-response exercises that focus on range of motion. With these, you'll perform larger and more exaggerated movements where your feet will stay on the ground longer, which will allow you to produce higher levels of power with each repetition.

For all of these exercises, it's important to maintain good form. Aim for perfect posture, with your shoulder blades back and down and your abdominals tight by pulling your belly button in. Keep your legs slightly bent, with your hips sitting back and down, as if preparing to sit back in a chair. Your weight should be forward—on the middle to front of your feet, rather than on your heels.

You'll only need to perform two of these exercises on two different (but not consecutive) days before you head out for your run. On the first day, select one of the rapid-response drills and one of the short-response moves. For your second day of the week, do the other rapid-response drill and choose one of the long-response exercises. Alternate as the weeks go by. **R**

This article was adapted from *Core Performance* by Mark Verstegen and Pete Williams (Rodale Inc., 2004).

Elasticity is just one of seven components that make up the Core Performance System, a total-body strengthening and conditioning plan.

RAPID-RESPONSE EXERCISES

BASE SIDE-TO-SIDE

Benefits: Creates elasticity and quickness in your lower body along with dynamic balance and stability.

Starting Position: Stand with your feet wide enough apart so that they are slightly outside your hips.

Procedure: Keeping both feet apart, jump 4 inches to the right, then 4 inches to the left, as if you were jumping back and forth over a line. Do this as rapidly as possible for 5 to 10 seconds. Rest up to 30 seconds and repeat two to three times.

Coaching Key: As soon as you hit the ground, spring back to the other side. This drill is not about height; it's about quickness in your lower body.

You Should Feel It: In the muscles around your hips, knees, and ankles.



ONE LEG OVER THE LINE

Benefits: Creates quickness, elasticity, and dynamic stability in your lower body.

Starting Position: Standing with one foot parallel to a line, lift the opposite foot off the ground.

Procedure: Jump over the line and back as quickly as possible on one foot. This is a progression from the drill above and requires more hip stability. Jump for 5 to 10 seconds, then rest for 30 seconds. Repeat with the same leg two to three times, then do the same series with the other leg.

Coaching Key: Move as quickly as possible and keep your hips stable underneath your torso.

You Should Feel It: In your quads, hips, and calves.



