

Pole Vault Drills

- Left Right Left

This is THE BASIC vault plant drill. It should be used by all level of vaulters, all of the time. The drill is initiated by planting the pole against a surface (box, wall, block) and assuming the plant position. The vaulter then takes three large steps back. From the marked position, the vaulter puts the pole in the “carry” position. Taking the first “left” step, the vaulter takes the right hand from the hip to the ribcage, allowing the tip of the pole to begin falling. At the next “right” the vaulter thrusts the right hand vertically up, finishing completely outstretched overhead with the right elbow near the ear. The pole tip should be close to the ground, and the left arm should be following the pole up and extending. At the last “left”, the pole should strike the planting object. The vaulter should be fully extended UP into the pole with both arms, head, chest and hips. The right knee should be extended to a 90 degree angle, and the left leg should be extended down. The vaulter may apply pressure to allow the pole to bend - but should NOT turn the shoulders (shoulders should be perpendicular to the runway and pole) and should NOT “push” the pole forward, but should press the pole up.

- Left Right Left with Lift

Same as Left Right Left drill, with more speed and a spotter. The vaulter performs the left right left drill at speed, leaving the ground at the plant. The spotter follows the vaulter, contacting them just below the shoulder blades. The vaulter “takes the vault up” leaving the ground and bending the pole. The spotter controls the vaulter and while the vaulter maintains the plant position, brings the vaulter back down to the ground. **THE SPOTTER SHOULD NOT BE SUPPLYING THE ENERGY FOR THE TAKEOFF, THE VAULTER DOES THIS WITH THE RUN AND PLANT.**

- Grass Drill (sand Drill)

The vaulter performs a plant drill using a four to five step approach. The vaulter holds at “reach” height (with the pole vertically beside the vaulter on the ground, the vaulter reaches as high on the pole as he can grab) runs four to five steps, then plants the pole in the grass. Flexing the left arm, the vaulter swings up using proper technique. Emphasis should be on keeping the right arm long at all times. As the vaulter reaches the peak (not likely vertical) he should turn, pull and land on his feet in the grass. The same drill can be performed in the long jump pit using a higher grip.

- Towel Plant (box plant)

The vaulter marks a towel (or a sliding box) as the planting mark on the track surface. The vaulter then does a standing plant in the box, measuring the appropriate “plant step” on the track. The vaulter then takes a full approach run to the towel, trying to establish a consistent step pattern that is repeatable. The vaulter should “hit” within 6” of the plant mark each time to be successful. If a sliding box is used, the vaulter can additionally work on getting a more vertical takeoff by using the box to create a “plant” feel. Vaulter **SHOULD NOT** push the plant ahead of them for the purpose of “driving” the box, but **SHOULD** press the vault above the head.

- Count and Carries

Several vaulters line up on the track, using either poles or “stubbies”. Starting at the same time, the vaulters will run a similar step pattern, counting the “jump” foot on each step, and planting appropriately (six, seven or eight “jump” steps). This drill is particularly good for teaching running “rhythm” to novice vaulters by having them run with more experienced vaulters.

- Vault Box Drills

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Vaulter plants into wooden box. Emphasis is on having an early and tall plant. Coach should check to make sure vaulter is not “pushing” plant forward -- must keep pressing plant up.

- start from 3 step - vaulter should do left-right-left
- move to 4-5 steps - vaulter should press and jump
- move to full approach

- Rope Drills, Ring Drills

Using a swinging rope, rings, or a designed “vault trainer” hanging from a secure connection, the vaulter can perform several exercises.

- swing up to close off and flex in
 - the vaulter stands in a plant position with the left arm “flexed in”
 - the vaulter generates some swing momentum
 - at the top of the swing, the vaulter swings up to an inverted position, keeping the left leg long at all times, and “closing off” to the rope
- standing - the vaulter performs the same exercise from a standing position
- swing to turn and extension (with a high jump or pole vault mat)
 - the vaulter generates swing momentum, holding the “plant” position with a flexed in left arm
 - the vaulter at the peak of the swing, inverts, pulls, turns and extends, landing in the mat provided (spotters are required for this drill)
 - NOTE - on at least two separate occasions, “vault trainers” have broken putting vaulters in jeopardy. If using one, make sure to inspect it EVERY TIME it is used, and make sure spotters are alert and in place

- Floor Pull and Turns

This drill requires a wall and a very slippery floor. Placing the tip of the pole against the wall, the vaulter turns (back to the wall) holding the pole in the “flexed in” position. The vaulter then “sits” into the pole, creating bend and sitting on the floor, The vaulter then extends away from the wall, with the energy of the pole creating momentum allowing him to pull and turn. Note: slippery floors and sweat pants make this drill work - carpets will “burn” the vaulter.

- Stubby Drills

“Stubbys” are three foot sections of pole (crossbar). They can be used for a variety of drills.

- Stubby plant
 - same as a left right left drill, done on the track with a stubby, emphasis on vertical planting action and extension
- Stubby close off
 - vaulter lays flat on the ground in plant position with stubby. Vaulter turns stubby to align with shoulders, then closes off stubby to knees (while driving long left leg and bent right knee to chest
 - vaulter then “flexes in” left arm to align pole with chest and right hip
- Stubby close off with partner
 - using a longer stubby, vaulter assumes a plant position on the ground - pole held vertically. Partner secures top of pole so that it will not move. Vaulter then swings up on pole, closing off and flexing in, and reaches a vertical position.
- Stubby Hurdle Pops
 - Vaulter uses stubby as pole in carry. Vaulter uses a three step approach to a hurdle, then performs a “plant” with the stubby overhead while jumping over the hurdle. Form should be a good “plant” form, with the right knee and foot clearing the hurdle, and the left leg “dragging” through the hurdle.
- Snake Drill
 - Vaulter stands. Partner places stubby at vaulters waist, simulating a crossbar. Vaulter bends over the crossbar, simulating clearing the bar. Partner moves bar

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up the vaulter, vaulter simulates “draping” over the bar, releasing first right then left, and “snaking” over the bar at the last instant.

Drills on the Pole Vault Pit

- One Arms - vaulter performs a 4-5 step approach. Pole is held in top hand, with the pole resting on the shoulder. Pole tip is “pushed” along the runway. When pole hits the box, vaulter extends the top hand overhead. Vaulter then leaps up, maintaining a “plant position”
Vaulter will maintain that position into the pit, working to keep the left leg back.
- One Arm Pop-Ups - the same as a one arm, except that the vaulter will then swing the left leg through trying to get to an inverted position on the pole.
- Stall Through - using a “short pole”, and using a short approach, the vaulter will attempt to maintain a plant-drive position under the pole after the plant, using it to drive into the pit while not swinging up. **CAUTION SHOULD BE USED TO NOT USE TOO SOFT A POLE - AS THIS CAN BREAK THE POLE.**

- Pole Run and Catch - Using a very stiff pole, the coach holds the pole in the box at plant height. The vaulter runs from a short approach, “catching” the pole at the appropriate hand position. The vaulter leaps up at the plant, while the coach “pulls” the pole towards the pit. This drill is especially exciting for young vaulters (and old coaches!!!!@!@#)

- A Frame Drill - two poles are lashed together in an “A Frame” configuration. The poles are set just over the box in front of the pit (or can be set at the side of the pit). Spotters have each side of the A Frame. From a short approach, the vaulter runs and leaps to an appropriate hand position on the A frame. As the spotters move the A frame towards the pit, the vaulter swings up into an inverted position, then pulls, turns and extends into the pit.