

Fitness for Umpires



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Introduction

A fitness training program for hockey umpiring must aim to develop:

- Speed and agility specific to the nature of the running that occurs while umpiring
- Endurance to be able to perform 4km of functional running in 70 minutes, of which approximately 50% or more is at moderate to high intensity

Umpires are known to cover up to 4km during a match that lasts 70 minutes. The total distance covered can vary and is dependent on the nature of each specific match. The intensity of the work can also vary considerably regardless of the total distance covered in each match.

The total work performed comprises of a variety of modes of work that determine the physical demands. These modes of work include various types of motion; walking, jogging, cruising and sprinting, which are performed forwards, backwards and sideways. This is termed functional running which is punctuated with stopping, starting, accelerating and decelerating. A certain amount of time is spent standing and there are stationary positions which are commonly assumed by umpires to enhance viewing which include the sideways lunge and the squat position to varying depths.

Running in a typical match

Percentage	Running speed
10-16%	Maximal sprinting intensity
50%	Moderate intensity
34-40%	Stationary - low

Dynamic Warm-up and flexibility

Use the warm-up on the table below before all training sessions and umpiring appointments. Perform the dynamic exercise in the left-hand column at an intensity that you feel comfortable with and then the corresponding static stretches in the right hand column.

Dynamic Exercise	Static Stretches
1. Jog for 200m or perform stationary cycling or rowing machine for 5-10 minutes	Hamstrings Quadriceps
2. Walking lunges for 25m	Groin Calves Hip flexor
3. Walking with high knee lifts for 25m	Gluteus Achilles
4. Sideways shuffling for 15m each way	Hamstrings Lower back
5. Running butt kicks for 25m	Groin Quadriceps
6. Sideways bounding for 25m	Groin Calves
7. Strides at 60% of maximum effort for 40m	Hip flexor Gluteus Achilles

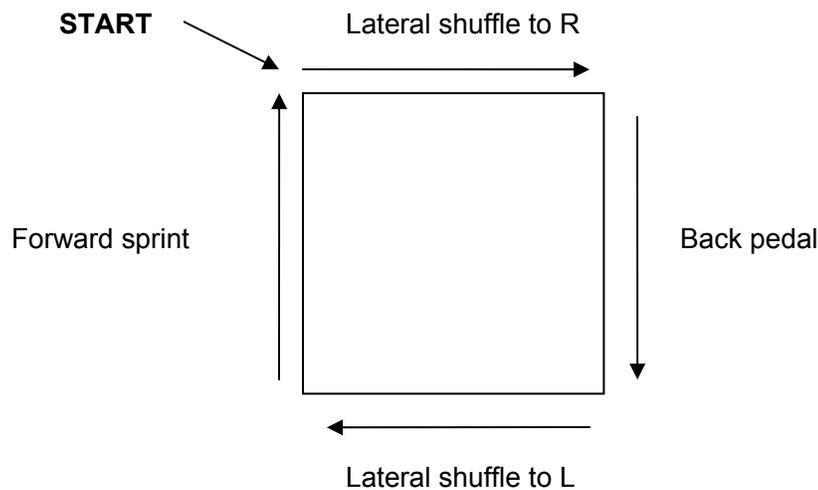
Speed and Agility

Speed and agility development requires that each exercise is performed at maximum effort with adequate recovery between sets and reps. Umpiring requires running both forwards and backwards, together with getting low to the ground and changing direction quickly (especially when the ball is in the circle). Below are three exercises which can be performed to improve both speed and agility.

1. Functional square sprints

From a standing start, jog to the corner of a 10m square grid (cones), perform a lateral shuffle leading with the right leg for 10m, followed by 10m back pedalling, 10m lateral shuffle leading with the left leg, and finish with a 10m forward sprint. All running should be performed at maximal effort.

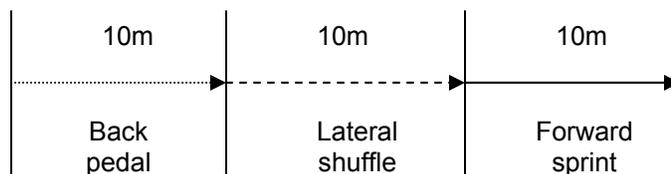
Recovery: Standing recovery and perform each repetition every 40seconds



2. Retreating sprints

From a standing start back pedal for 10m at maximal effort, followed by 10m lateral shuffle as fast as possible and 10m forward sprint. Alternate the direction of the lateral shuffle for each repetition. Emphasize smooth transitions from back pedalling to lateral shuffle and then to forward sprint.

Recovery: Stationary recovery, perform each rep every 30seconds.



3. Shuttle runs

Measure out a 10m mark, 20m mark and 30m mark. Do a set of 5 x 10m sprints, followed by 5 x 20m sprints and 5 x 30m sprints. Recovery occurs immediately after each sprint, with the umpire either walking or jogging back to the start after each sprint.

Endurance

Endurance is developed by performing moderate to high intensity functional running interspersed with recovery in the form of low intensity running and standing still. An endurance session that lasts for much longer than 70 minutes, the duration of a hockey match, will not develop the high intensity component of endurance. Whereas a shorter duration session with high intensity running and reduced recovery will result in adaptations specific to the more demanding phases of umpiring. This means that as the volume (duration) of endurance training session increases, so the quality or intensity must decrease.

Endurance should be developed by starting with longer duration (70-80 minutes), lower intensity sessions, while gradually increasing the intensity and reducing the duration as the competitive season, or a particularly important tournament approaches.

Fartlek is a commonly used method for increasing endurance. This involves running at varying speeds over a distance; interspersing jogging, "cruising" and sprinting. An example of a fartlek program is given below – alternatively you can make up your own.

Track Fartlek

On a running track (400m) perform four laps running according to the following schedule. Cruising is defined running with elongated stride at an intensity at which you cannot speak while running but is slower than sprinting. Sprinting for this purpose, means running at greater than 90% of maximum effort.

- I. 100m jog, 100m cruise (200m)
- II. 100m jog, 150m cruise (450m)
- III. 100m jog, 200m cruise (750m)
- IV. 100m jog, 50m sprint (900m)
- V. 150m jog, 50m sprint (1100m)
- VI. 200m jog, 50m sprint (1350m)
- VII. 100m jog, 50m cruise, 100m jog (1600m)

Summary

Umpires cover up to 4km in 70 minutes during a hockey match. This comprises of functional running, which is stop-start and is characterised by changes in speed from jogging to sprinting. It is multi-directional, forwards, backwards and sideways, and is interspersed with stationary positions including the lunge and squat.

Fitness is an extremely important attribute for umpires, and should be approached in a similar manner to which players approach fitness. Endurance should be developed in the pre-season and maintained during the season, whilst speed and agility are the core components. It is important to vary your fitness sessions and training with others will make the process more enjoyable – why not train with the players in your club.

Umpiring is far more enjoyable when you are fit, and therefore able to be in the right position and keep up with the speed of the modern game of hockey. Good luck with your umpiring!