

Two Simple Tests to Measure Agility, Quickness and Foot Speed

There are many tests that are used to measure agility, quickness and foot speed as well as acceleration. I believe that many times we confuse agility with mobility. The difference in my opinion is agility is quick, purposeful movements exhibiting balance, rhythm and coordination but do not cover much ground. Whereas mobility also demonstrates quick, purposeful movements exhibiting balance, rhythm and coordination but also cover a lot of ground by incorporating acceleration. An example of the difference would be dot drills and the 5-10-5 short shuttle. Where both are considered “agility” drills, the 20 yard shuttle possesses a great acceleration component which the dot drill does not. Therefore, the following drills are agility in nature, not mobility drills.

Hex Jumps

Tape or draw a hexagonal shaped form on the floor that is 24 inches long on each “arm” of the hexagon. The test is to jump over and back each line for three full circuits. The athlete starts in the middle of the hex and jumps over and back each line of the hex. The tester starts the watch on the athletes’ first move and stops it when the feet land back in the middle of the hex after the eighteenth jump. The “Crooked Stick” by Steve Myrland, the inventor of the ABC Ladder is perfect to put down so the athlete has an object to jump over. It also will not roll up like tape will. If the athlete contacts the “Crooked Stick” the test is invalid and must be re-done. The test is done once to the right and once to the left. The right score, left score and average score are recorded. Below are some norms from Arnot and Gaines, Sports Talent, 1984.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Try Again
Male	11.2 & under	11.2-13.3	13.4-15.5	15.6-17.8	17.8 and up
Female	12.2 & under	12.2-15.3	15.4-18.5	18.6-21.8	21.8 and up

Ladder Shuffle Test

An “ABC” agility ladder with twenty (20) rungs and a stopwatch are needed. The test is executed by instructing the athlete to shuffle laterally using explosive sprint mechanics with quick feet and vigorous arm action to traverse the ladder putting 2 feet in each “hole” of the ladder. The athlete begins from outside the ladder. The watch is started when the first foot contacts the ground in the first hole and is stopped when the ground is contacted outside the ladder by the lead foot. Do not allow any crossover action, hitting of the ladder or missing the opportunity to put both feet in each hole. Execute the test one time right, one time left and record each score as well as the average score. Below are some norms from www.brianmac.demon.co.uk.

Males Time	Age	Females Time
3.8 or better	Middle School	4.2 or better
3.3 or better	High School	3.8 or better
2.8 or better	Collegiate	3.4 or better

Try these simple tests to motivate your athletes and validate your training methods by implementing pre- and post-tests.