

20 Reaction Drills to Improve Your Motor Skills

Being a survivalist isn't just about stockpiling supplies. The largest food store in the world is useless if you don't have the physical abilities to defend it. Balance, flexibility and hand-eye coordination are crucial survival skills you can't afford to ignore.

Here are 20 different reaction drills to improve your motor skills and chances of survival.

Dynamic Stretching

The simplest way to develop your motor skills is through dynamic stretching. Athletes from all sports use this technique to warm up their fast-twitch movements and coordination before practices or games. Static stretching only requires you to stay in one spot, while dynamic stretching demands full-body training.

1. High Knees

Run in a straight line and raise your knees as high as possible with each step. You should feel a stretch in your glutes, hamstrings and lower back.

2. Butt Kicks

Run in a straight line and kick your legs back so they hit your glutes. This movement stretches the quads and helps with knee flexibility. It's a simple stretch that's highly effective at improving your foot speed.

3. Side Shuffle

This stretch is the speedier version of the side lunge that requires you to do a lateral shuffle as fast as possible. You'll feel the burn in your hips. Lateral movements are common in military exercises, and every survivalist should feel comfortable in this side position.

These particular stretches mimic two key movements you might perform in a survival situation. They replicate running through rough terrain and moving laterally to dodge attacks. Your reaction times will significantly improve once these fundamental movements become second nature.

Gym Exercises

The gym is traditionally a place to hone your brute strength, but some movements can also improve your motor skills. These workout styles are more technique-based, forcing you to focus on your entire body rather than one muscle group. Full-body activities are often the most effective at developing your coordination.

4. HIIT

High-intensity interval training involves short bursts of grueling exercise. They can be anything you want. The goal is to [burn out your muscles](#) and increase your heart rate. Every movement requires full concentration once you're in this vulnerable physical state. Improving your motor skills during exhaustion translates to better abilities at full strength.

5. Calisthenics

Along with HIIT, calisthenics is the most fitting workout style for survivalists. It strictly involves bodyweight exercises like pushups, pullups and burpees. Bodyweight movements help you develop a stronger mind-muscle connection.

6. Powerlifting

Powerlifting builds your strength and coordination. Exercises like the power clean, snatch and clean-and-jerk require you to quickly react to massive shifts in weight. You must control your entire body under the bar and make tiny adjustments to stay balanced. This workout style is a great choice for survivalists.



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Sports

Playing one year-round sport limits your athletic potential. For example, to become a well-rounded soccer player, you should explore other activities to develop a balanced skill set and a better feel for the game. Here are some complementary sports that will help you become a better all-around athlete.

7. Martial Arts

No other sport tests your coordination like martial arts. Your success depends on how quickly you can respond to punches, kicks and attempted takedowns. People with slow reaction times don't last long. If you want to develop elite motor skills and reaction times, martial arts is the way to go.

8. Baseball

Hitting a baseball is one of the hardest things in sports. It's almost impossible to make contact with a ball traveling upwards of 90 mph. Sometimes batted balls are even faster,

reaching more than 110 mph. Baseball has a microscopic margin for error and tests the reaction time of every position on the field.

9. Tennis

Baseball can be fast, but tennis is faster. The swiftest recorded tennis serve was 163.7 mph, while the average player can still reach 100 mph. The sport also involves lots of fast-twitch movements and changes in direction. Everything you do in tennis requires a lightning-quick reaction.

10. Pickleball

Pickleball is a condensed version of tennis with some elements of badminton and pingpong mixed in. The court is just [20 feet by 44 feet](#), so this game requires speedy reaction times no matter where you're standing. The smaller court also makes pickleball more accessible to older players, so it's never too late to start.

11. Dodgeball

Some sports require quick reactions that happen in a controlled setting. Dodgeball is much less predictable. You never know when a ball might come flying at you, and you must keep your head on a swivel at all times. The chaos and urgency are always high. This type of environment is a good simulation for survival preparation.

Ladder Drills

The agility ladder is a versatile training tool you can find at every athletic experience level. It forces your entire body – especially your hips and arms – to work in conjunction with your feet, which is one of the hardest skills to develop. These agility ladder drills are staples in many athletes' training regimens.

12. Sidesteps

Start at the end of the ladder facing sideways, then sidestep through each box with both feet. Your first instinct will be to hop, but it should be a more subtle shuffling movement. Avoid hopping by always stepping with the lead foot and launching off your back foot.

13. Centipede

Stand parallel to the ladder and touch the first box with both feet. Move to the next one without hesitation, then step out of the ladder. Repeat this motion until you reach the end. This drill simulates the centipede's winding movements. It includes forward, backward and lateral shuffles that help build the foundation of your motor skills.

14. Ickey Shuffle

The ickey shuffle is one of the most advanced agility ladder drills. You'll find it helpful to think of it in three steps: in, out and up. You start on one side of the ladder, move both feet into the first box, move the outside foot out, then move the inside foot up to the next box. Take your time and master the movement before increasing your speed.

If you're confident navigating the agility ladder, you'll also be self-assured in other athletic environments. Good footwork is an absolute must-have for any survivalist.

Cone Drills

Cones are popular training items across the sports world. Athletes at the highest level still do cone drills in practice every day. They sharpen your footwork, improve your change-of-direction abilities and force you to make quick decisions to stay balanced. These three activities are among the most popular.

15. Square Cone Drill

The square cone drill is one of the most effective exercises for developing explosive speed, balance and coordination. You sprint, shuffle and backpedal while trying to stay in a straight line. The 90-degree turns add another layer of difficulty. Reacting to these sudden directional changes is a challenge even for most professional athletes.

16. 123 Back Drill

This cone drill requires two people. The cones are set up in a straight line, about 10 feet apart. The athlete backpedals until the other person says one, two or three, at which point the athlete changes direction and sprints to the corresponding cone.

17. W Drill

This drill arranges seven cones in a zig-zag pattern that resembles a W. You can either sprint from cone to cone or do lateral shuffles in the same formation. The real challenge is moving diagonally without rounding your turns. Each turn requires precise placement of the outside foot.

Video Games

Aside from physical activity, playing video games can improve your coordination and other useful motor skills, such as multiple object tracking. These types of games are particularly effective at testing your reaction time.

18. Tetris

One of the oldest video games ever made is still among the most challenging. Tetris requires you to fit descending shapes together at faster speeds until you can no longer keep up. If you haven't played it before, don't be surprised if you start

panicking when you reach the quicker levels. This game forces you to make quick decisions and punishes you for getting them wrong.

19. Racing Games

The real-world act of driving is a good reaction drill, but the stakes are too high. Racing games allow you to push the limits of your abilities without risking anyone's life. They have complex racetracks with many obstacles that require fast reaction times and precise movements. Dust off your old Mario Kart games and put your motor skills to the test.

20. First-Person Shooters

First-person shooter games are popular for their detailed graphics and immersive gameplay. They give you a firsthand point of view of simulated combat, requiring accurate shooting and stealthy movements. This video game genre is especially relevant for preppers and survivalists because it contains all the elements of a real survival situation.

Become a Well-Rounded Survivalist

You should be proud of your efforts to stockpile food, weapons and first-aid supplies. It takes diligent long-term planning to put together a survival bunker. However, these items don't complete the whole picture. You need to master your balance, agility, reaction times and other essential motor skills to become a well-rounded survivalist. These drills will help you get there.

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