

# How to Balance the Thrower's Work load!

Bill Richards  
Homestead High School  
WISTCA Throws Coordinator  
[wisthrows@wi.rr.com](mailto:wisthrows@wi.rr.com)

Before we get started:

Don't be afraid to ask any questions or use what I have listed. My hope is that you will walk away with something that is tangible to use for your upcoming season. Within my presentation, I have items I have borrowed from Jim Aikens, Roger Einbecker, Mark Harsha (NTCA), as well as Larry Judge.

Today's current athletes

Lack strength

Prefer to play video games, on the internet, or text rather than to play outside

Challenges we face

Lack of coordination, balance and overall strength and conditioning

Short Season - twelve weeks(in Wisconsin) from day one to the State Track Meet

Very Technical Events

Limited practice time each day

Other Activities outside of Track – job, school group, or family items

Weather and Facilities

Characteristics of successful throws

Balance/Coordination

Strength

Speed/Explosiveness – “Speed Kills!”

Flexibility

Desire – Athlete Controls

Areas I focus on and have in mind for all drills

Balance and Speed

If you do not have your balance, you will not have a good throw Also, if you recall Speed is one of the three components that make up a good throw. Speed is something that we can continue to improve on all the time. Height of release and Angle of release are limited on the improvement you can make.

## Balance

Why – The movements in the Shot Put and Discus require an athlete to be balanced in order to optimally transfer momentum/power into the implement. The positions and movement are not natural to most athletes.

During the month of March, we will work daily on improving our balance. We will use Balance Beams drills, balance boards, and balance discs.

We will also work on balancing in socks on the floor as well as on mats. We will walk, balance on a single leg, single leg with eyes closed, single leg with eyes closed and head tilted back.

## Balance Beam

Try on a line on the floor. Make sure athletes are comfortable

Can build a balance beam

10' – 12' 4X4

Use 12" long 2X4 as base space every 18" – 24"

Make sure wood is dry and if possible stored indoors

Use screws to attach base to beam

Also make sure screws are counter sunk so you will not scratch the floor

I begin these drills working on a line in the gym. I want to make sure that the athletes are comfortable with the drill.

Stay on the beam for the entire drill. Talk about fighting to stay on.

Mentality to fighting to stay in the ring at the end of the throw

Balance beam work for 10 minutes daily during the month of March

Each item listed is done twice, the second time faster than first

Fight to stay on the Beam and do not touch the ground

Go forward to end, turn around and come back slowly

Go forward to end, turn around and come back as fast as possible

Go forward to end, come back backwards

Side steps on toes down and back

Walking lunges – forward and backwards

Go forward to middle, turn go backward to end, turn go forward to

Middle, turn and go backwards to end

Hop down on right foot, back on the left foot

Hop down on right foot, come back hopping backwards on right foot

Hop down on left foot, come back hopping backwards on left foot

Do shot glide down and back

Spin on line, heads up, stay on toes, arms out

Stand on a balance board

Catch the ball and throw back

Hammer throws

Overhead throws

Shot put throws

Between the leg throws

Remember to work the opposite side as well

Stand on two balance discs and complete different drills

Catch the ball and throw back

Hammer throws

Overhead throws

Shot put throws

Between the leg throws

Partner Throws

Remember to work the opposite side as well

Additional Balance Drills with dumbbells or bar

- Single Leg Squats
- Single Leg Push Press
- Single Leg rows
- Single Leg curls
- Single Leg Squats
- Single Leg RDL

## Strength

My suggestion is to review the program the football team is using. Once you have reviewed it, I would use the same program for the throwers. If the football team does not have a program, I would then work on creating a program.

Areas to strengthen

- Use the whole body
- For the Throws we need to focus on Chest, Shoulders, and Triceps
- Don't forget the legs
- Also work both sides

**Stress form/correct technique and speed over weight moved. This is an issue for your male throwers**

Our Goal is to move the bar or dumbbells as fast as possible.

Program I created was for any sport as well as the weight lifting class.

This program only uses the Hang clean. There are other Olympic lifts that are beneficial to use.

A website that will be very helpful is the National Strength and Conditioning Association <http://www.nscs-lift.org/>. You will find video clips of the different Olympic lifts

Drills to help with adding Strength

- Root Hogs
- A-B-C Push Up
- Clap Push Ups
- Decline Push ups
- Step ups
- Medicine ball push ups
- Medicine ball roll in/outs

Medicine balls will help improve strength. We will cover this aspect later in the presentation.

## Squats

Excellent lift for the entire body.

Most High School athletes lack Hip Strength, making this a difficult exercise to be successful early on.

Begin using body weight only. Ensure athlete is getting to parallel. May need to have them squat to an object like a box or chair to help them understand how low they need to go.

I then add a Medicine Ball held over the head to the squat.

Once they have confidence and solid form, we will move to the bar and then weight from there.

**Remember to stress form and Speed over weight moved.**

## Hip Strength Drills

This year, we will add additional new drills for strengthening the hip area.

The drills we will be doing are

- Clam drills with resistance

- Wall push up

- Side leg circles

## Plyometric Work

Helps build strength, endurance, and explosion

Count the number of touches

2 sessions a week, at least 48 hours apart

Begin with two foot work before you go to one foot

Jump from the floor to the box before you move from the box to the floor

**Coaching Point** – Optimal height of the box should not result in a landing where the heel is forced to the ground by momentum – be quick off the ground.

Standard Drills

- With a line go side to side over it

- Then go forward and back over line

- Add an obstacle like a cone or towel that you jump over front to back and side to side

If the athletes are clearing the obstacle easy, add a larger obstacle

Other Drills

- Jump to box

- Jump from box to floor

- Land backwards on foot – glide

- Land backwards off of step on foot

Find a stadium, bleachers, stairs and do the following

- Two feet hops up every step

- Two feet hops skip a step

Two feet hops skip two steps  
Single foot hops up every step  
Single foot hops skip a step  
Single foot hops skip two steps

Make sure that the individuals complete the single leg hops on each leg!

## Core Work

What is Core?

The area from above your knees to your armpits.

Why is this important?

The Core area helps to transfer power from your legs up into the Implement

How do I strengthen this area?

Need to incorporate lots of different exercises to cover this area Have athletes do a minimum of 5 to 6 Core items a day, every day including days off.

I have a list of roughly 50 different core exercises I like to have my throwers do.

Like to vary these to keep the kids interested.

I have these grouped by type of exercise.

From Chin up Bar

Straight Leg ups – careful not to rock back and forth  
Bent knee ups  
Hanging Twist – split legs out and twist from side to side

On the Floor

Four way Pillar  
Four Way Pillar with leg raise  
Super Man  
Alternate Super Man  
Squirm feet 12” from buttocks, tuck chin to chest, reach and tap foot with same hand  
Advanced Squirm – like squirm except touch foot with opposite hand  
Around the world  
Partner throw downs  
V ups

Swiss Ball

Sitting position extend leg  
Catch a Med ball and throw it back  
Supine Roller – hands behind head, push with legs, ball goes to small of back, hold for five to ten seconds, pull with legs to return to starting position  
Prone Wobble – on stomach in different Super man positions

Machines

Russian Twists on decline bench  
Back hyper extensions  
Back hyper extensions with Med Ball toss

On dip bar bent knee ups  
On dip bar straight leg ups  
On a decline bench knee ups  
On a decline bench leg thrust

## **Explosive Power/Speed**

A great presentation given at ITCCCA in 2008, by Roger Einbecker, looked at the High School age throwers competing and the speed at which each individual moved through the Discus circle. You may want to take a look at it. The presentation is at [Ithrow.com](http://Ithrow.com) under 2008 presentations.

Need explosive power to move the implement as fast as possible as the speed of release is critical to the result of the throw.

Need to develop upper and lower body – strength program is critical to this point

Help to improve range of motion, flexibility, joint integrity, and coordination

Also will aid in improving Core Strength

Med Ball Drills will help improve these areas.

Beginning of season, indoors we will begin with 50 to 60 meter sprints. Once outdoors in April, we will reduce down to 30 to 40 meter sprints

In May we will not go further than 20 meters. We are trying to be extremely fast and explosive as we head into the State Competitions.

Other Drills we will do are:

- Agility Ladders
- Sleds
- Chutes
- Bunge cords

I also have the throwers work with the Sprinters as I view the two groups as having numerous similarities

Jumping Rope

The other item I use religiously is the BFS Dot drill. We will do this every day in March and the first half of April. I will then reduce this down to three days a week until the first week in May, and then maybe two days a week from that point to the State Meet in early June.

## **Power/Med Ball Drills**

I have used a program from The Complete Guide to Medicine Ball Training by Vern Gambetta and Steve Odgers.

They have programs for different sports and within track and field, they have different event workouts.

Review the Throws work out

Several places to find different Medicine Ball drills

Youtube

Different Equipment sites

Workoutz.com

## **Flexibility**

Very critical component to overall success in the throws

Medicine Ball work will help with improving range of motion

Great drill is the Inch Worm

Warm up before practice

Dynamic Stretching with team or group. I use the evidence of perspiration to know athlete is ready.

Cool down at the end of practice – VERY IMPORTANT!!!!

More static stretching during this time Make sure you stretch the shoulders, arms, and triceps along with your lower body

## **Fun Things to Do**

I try to make sure that the athletes are able to have some fun along with getting a workout in

We will play Med Ball Basketball about once a week, normally on Friday's.

Use a 3 kg Medicine Ball

Half court

Three steps and you must shoot or pass

Defense gets all jump balls

Free backs to the three point line for defense after a miss

Great arm and shoulder workout

We will use the Physio Balls/Swiss Balls to work on balance and core work

Relay races with heavy objects

When weather improves we will have a car push for time

## **Resource to Use**

National Throws Coaches Association

Wisconsin Throws Coaches Association

Long and Strong Throws Journal

Book - Stronger Back and Abs by Dean Brittenham and Greg Brittenham

Book – The Complete Track and Field Coaches' Guide to Conditioning for the  
Throwing Events by Larry Judge

Book - Jumping into Plyometrics by Donald Chu

Book - Progressive Plyometrics for Kids by Donald Chu, Avery Faigenbaum, and  
Jeff Falkel

Book - The Throws Manual by George Dunn and Kevin McGill

Book - The Complete Guide to Medicine Ball Training by Vern Gambetta and Steve Odgers