

The Walk-In Drill

By: Angelo Posillico, Army West Point

A common challenge for throwers who are learning the rotational shot put or discus throw technique can be developing the appropriate balance between the linear and rotational aspects of the throw. To help teach this concept, I utilize a drill called the “Walk-In”. This drill works to blend linear and rotational dynamics and is one we perform with a variety of implements including but not limited to shots, discs, broomsticks, medicine balls, the discus training tool, and bowling pins.

The right-handed thrower begins the walk-in drill by standing at the back of ring, feet together, with their left foot roughly aligned with where it would be placed for a full throw (Fig. 1). The thrower takes a normal walking step forward with their left foot (Fig. 2), followed by another walking step with their right foot (Fig. 3). The goal is to have the right foot pointed at 180-220 degrees upon contact. This is very different than a full technique throw where most throwers are landing with their right foot pointed in the 270-360 degree range. By landing in this spot, the thrower is forced to work a much larger radius of the circle with their right foot and learn how to translate their linear momentum into rotational speed.



Fig. 1 – The start of the walk-in drill



Fig. 2 – The first left foot step

Another point of emphasis with the right foot is having the thrower place the right foot down heel first. While I would never ask an athlete to land heel first in the full throw, I find that by doing so with the right foot during the walk-in drill it is much easier and more natural to take a linear approach to the middle. When I have used a ball of the right foot landing with the walk-in drill it has led to the thrower over rotating the right foot and landing in the 270-360 degree range, contradicting the main focus of the drill. When teaching this concept to beginning throwers it is of utmost importance to make sure they understand that they will not land heel first on the right foot during the full competition throw.



Fig 3. – The right foot step

As the athlete works the ground with their right side, I prefer to emphasize maintaining 80% of body weight on the right foot until the block foot grounds. Once the block foot is ground, the thrower can begin to violently lift and rotate the right foot, knee, hip, and shoulder in unison. I prefer to perform walk-ins using a non-reverse fixed foot delivery, but for the advanced thrower there is nothing saying they cannot benefit from reversing at the end of the drill. When using the non-reverse, I will cue the athlete to watch the shot hit the ground after delivery. The walk-in drill serves as an important intermediary between stand throws, half turns, and the full technique during my teaching progressions in the rotational shot put and discus throw.

Once the correct right foot placement has been established, the thrower will move their block foot to the front of the ring exactly as they normally would (Fig. 4). An important focus at this stage of the drill is to not allow the thrower to pull too aggressively with their head or left shoulder to create momentum. This will typically result in a loss of connection with the implement and fouls down the right sector line. If your athlete is struggling with pulling their head to the left, it may be helpful to have them bite down on the collar of their shirt as this limits the ability to pull your head away from your chest.



Fig 4. – The transition to the power-position

Angelo Posillico is the throws coach at Army West Point, the United States Military Academy. Posillico holds USATF Level III Certification, IAAF Level V Certification, and is a NSCA Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialist.