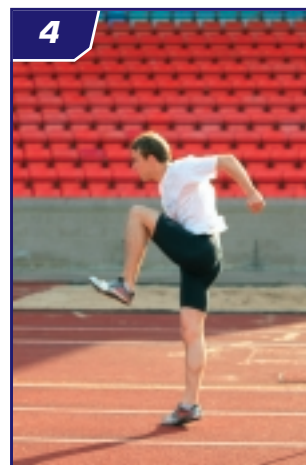


## Introduction

Hurdling is a sprint race that is run over barriers. Students should be encouraged to maintain their sprinting action whilst clearing the barriers. The faster and more efficiently an athlete can clear a hurdle and begin sprinting again, the faster their time will be.

Rhythm is the key to running a good hurdles race. The athlete who can touch down with the least amount of stride alteration will be the most successful. Students should be encouraged to use the same number of strides between each hurdle. Gradually raise the obstacles to a height that enables students to maintain speed and rhythm.

The following chart details the main technical points and provides tips on how these techniques can be developed. You may find it helpful to do specific technique work indoors.



### 'How to'

#### Eyes

Keep eyes focused forward throughout the hurdling action.

#### Teaching tips

Encourage students to focus their eyes on a fixed point ahead and not to look at the hurdles.

Ask students to monitor each other as they hurdle.

#### Take-Off

Maintain an upright posture for the attack of the hurdle.  
Drive is more forward than upwards.  
Hip, knee and ankle joints of the take-off leg are fully extended.  
The thigh of the lead leg swings rapidly to the horizontal position.

#### Teaching tips

Ask students to imagine they are putting their knee under their chin.

#### Clearance

The take-off is well in front of the hurdle.  
The lower part of the lead leg is actively extended towards the hurdle.  
The amount the trunk is bent forwards depends upon the height of the athlete and the height of the hurdle.  
The trail leg is drawn alongside the body and roughly parallel to the ground at clearance.  
The knee of the trail leg is kept high as it pulls through.  
The lead leg is brought down as quickly as possible after the hurdle.

#### Teaching tips

Keep the heel of the trail leg close to the buttock then pull the knee through in a high position.  
Maintain actions - do not float over the hurdles.  
Keep the lead leg in line with the sprint direction.

## 'How to' (cont.)

### Landing

The landing is active with the leg minimising bending.  
Hips are over or beyond the landing foot.  
The trail leg stays tucked until touchdown, then pulls quickly and actively forwards.

Contact with the ground is brief and the first stride off the hurdle should be aggressive.

Establish a smooth, fast 1,2,3 over rhythm.

#### Teaching tips

Encourage students to count the 1,2,3 over rhythm for each other.

Keep rhythmic arm action in opposition to the legs.

#### Teaching tips

Encourage students to explore hurdling with their arms in different positions – on their head, tucked under their arms, folded in front of them, out to the sides. Get them to compare these to the right technique.

### Steeplechase

An efficient hurdling technique is critical to success in the steeplechase event. In the running element of steeplechase the athlete covers the distance using technique and tactics similar to other middle and long distance events. In both the barrier clearance and water jump the athlete should minimise time in the air and disturbance to the overall running rhythm.

A key differentiator from hurdling is that the athlete is permitted to place the lead foot on the barrier if desired when running over it. 'Flow' over the barrier is promoted, rather than standing on top or jumping over. Lead and trail leg actions are as critical in this respect as in hurdling.

### Hurdles – Technical Specifications

The following grids detail the maximum race distances, hurdle heights and numbers of hurdles to be used for competition in each age-group. Younger and less able students should learn on a shorter and less challenging course, progressing as technique and confidence develops.

Standard practice is to run 8 strides to the first hurdle. Novices should commence with a 4-stride approach and progress in increments of 2 strides. Hurdle speed can be introduced by challenging novice hurdlers to improve their times over three hurdles.

Men	Distance of race	Height of hurdles	Number of hurdles	Start to the first hurdle	Distance between hurdles	Last hurdle to finish
U17	100m 400m	91.4cm 84.0cm	10 10	13m 45m	8.5m 35m	10.5m 40m
U15	80m	84.0cm	8	12m	8m	12m
U13	80m 75	76.2cm 76.2cm	8 8	12m 11.5m	8m 7.5m	12m 11m

Women	Distance of race	Height of hurdles	Number of hurdles	Start to the first hurdle	Distance between hurdles	Last hurdle to finish
U17	80m 300m	76.2cm 76.2cm	8 7	12m 50m	8m 35m	12m 40m
U15	75m	76.2cm	8	11.5m	7.5m	11m
U13	70m	68.5cm	8	11m	7m	10m