

Teaching The Beginning Hammer Thrower

No experience necessary.

The purpose of this presentation is to give the coach, with or without hammer experience, an effective routine they can use in order to give their athletes an opportunity to throw the hammer.

Part I – Counting Steps to Begin

Initial Setup – Feet parallel and a little give in the knees



❖ See "Part I, 1, 2, 3 & 4" in QuickTime

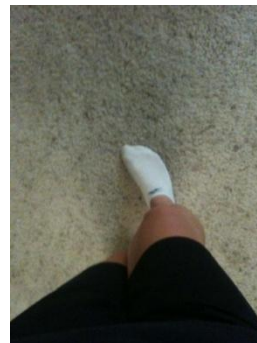
Step 1 – Left knee and toe out to open up.



Step 3 - Left foot back to initial setup.



Step 2 – Right foot forms 90° or a “V” with left foot. Knees must be together.



Step 4 - Right foot back to initial setup.



Counting Steps

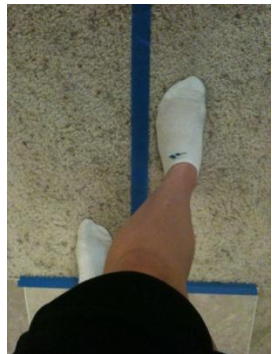
Initial setup



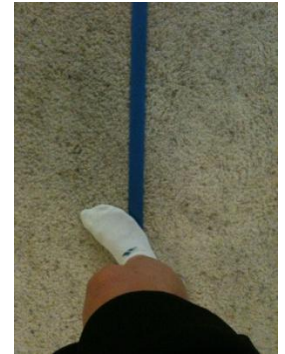
Initial Setup – On left heel and right toe...



Step 1 - Pivot 180° and both feet point in the same direction. Knees together.



Step 2 – Right foot forms 90° or a “V” with left foot. Knees must be together.



Up on your toes, pivot to...



Steps 3 and 4 (together) back to initial position. Expect feet to be staggered.



❖ See “PartII,123&4” in *QuickTime*

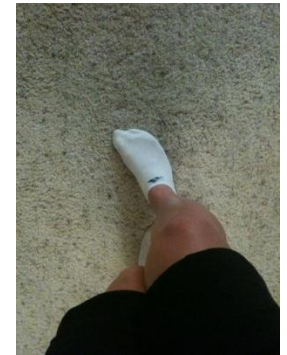
Counting Steps – “The First Challenge”



Coming out of Step 2



Initial Setup and left foot rocks back to pivot on heel.



Start with **Step 2**.

Step 3 & 4 and **continue to turn** through **Initial Setup** with the left foot rocking back to the heel (to continue the pivot to **Step 1**).

Step 1 - Pivot 180° and both feet point in the same direction. Knees together.

End with **Step 2**.

❖ See “TheChallenge” in QuickTime

If the athlete can do this for at least 3 continuous turns, they are ready to start winding the hammer.

This is a good place to stop (if need be), and send the athlete home to accomplish the challenge in the kitchen with their socks on.

Counting Steps

- Count aloud while showing your athlete/s. “1...2...3 and 4”.
- Establish a rhythm in sync with your counting.
- Make sure they pivot on their heel from initial setup to step 1. (Habit from the disc).
- Make sure they over exaggerate their pivoting heel, and get the full 180° . (It tends to get lazy with beginners).
- Keep it simple. (Send them home to work on it). No need to focus too much on foot work as most problems work themselves out with practice.

The Next Time They See You

A very (almost 100%) common mistake.

Athlete: “Coach, my feet are all tied up like this”!



Answer: “You’re turning on your toes. Use your heel”.

Now they can turn continuously.

*Although, this is the release of the hammer at the end of the throw.



Part II - Winding



Winding

- **How to hold the hammer**
 - Right-handed... hold the handle with your left hand and place your right hand over.
- **Posture**
 - Chin up, Chest out, Back straight, Legs under.
- **Begin winding. As they are winding...**
 - Let the hammer graze the blades of the grass.
 - Relax the arms, think as if the fingers are the only thing holding the hammer.
 - Let the hammer tug on your shoulders.
 - Ways to cue athletes...
 - Think of a golf swing, batting, volleyball, etc. Think of a pendulum.
 - Your goal: **USE THE LEAST AMOUNT OF ENERGY POSSIBLE** while getting the longest radius.
- **Do the 3 tens. LEFT, CENTER, & RIGHT**
 - Have the low point of the hammer graze the grass in front of their left foot for 10 reps, then in front of the midpoint between the feet (center) for 10 reps, and then in front of the right foot for 10 reps.

Transition-Winding to First Turn

The athlete can now transition from a wind to their first turn. If they get this, they are ready to throw in the ring.

- ❖ In volleyball, an athlete will “bump” with arms extended and hands together forming an isosceles triangle. Same in the hammer...
- ❖ Have the athlete wind (once or twice) and once they hit (zero) or the volleyball position, it triggers the turn on their left heel.
 - The hammer is fixed in this position relative to the athlete.
- ❖ With a hammer, have the athlete do “wind and turns”, where the athlete will wind, then turn, then wind and so on.
 - Make sure they are using their left heel
 - This is a very SLOW drill, so keep the athlete slow and use the least amount of energy possible.

Part III – The Throw

The athlete is ready to throw their first one turn.

- Let them take as many winds as they need.
- All they need to think about is “ball hits zero, left heel, step and throw”.
- Releasing the hammer.
 - There is no reverse. There is no heel after the last “step”.
 - Athlete must get use to keeping their feet on the ground. (Expect a little discus interference).
 - Everything is straight up, have athlete facing the field with legs all tied up.
 - The release mimics a power clean.
- For the orbit (once they break out of throwing it like a disc). I’ll tell them to think “left heel, throw the ball up, step under and release”.



One Turn, Two Turn, Three Turn, Four

- ❖ Now that they are comfortable with a one turn, have them do two. If they struggle on two turns, have them do a four turn throw. I'll even push some of my beginners to do five turn throws for a whole practice so that two or three turns seem like a walk in the park.
- ❖ Let them go and have fun with the hammer. They will improve on their own quicker than the other throws and with **minimal coaching**.

Tips For Coaching Beginners

We are going for simplicity and comfort at this point. One less thing to think about (simplicity) allows athletes to master the largest movements first. Comfort will allow them to relax and let the ball do the majority of the work.

So Let's Break Some Rules...

- **Let the athlete stay tall.** You can load them later and they MUST have solid posture.
- **Force them to lock out their elbows when they hit zero if you have to.** They will quickly learn to relax.
 - Spinning in circles with the hammer is a quick cure. Start them out with locked elbows and let the arms relax while spinning. They should get this down in less than 1 practice.
- **Let them hold the hammer with a full hand.** You can teach an advanced hold later when they've built up their hands/callouses.
- **Let the athlete turn with the hammer allowing the ball to do the work.** You can teach them how to push the ball when they are more advanced.
- **Force an orbit.** You can teach the natural path of the hammer once they know what the heck is going on.
- **Scottish hammer throws as part of your beginning routine will set your hammer thrower back by possibly months.** Here's why...
 - **They don't have to learn the footwork or the turns that go with it.** It's like your discus thrower that's fixated on the standing throw. Use it for training purposes after they have the footwork down if you feel it will help with teaching the release, otherwise, cut it out completely.

Keep in mind that we are **grossly over exaggerating movements** in this beginning presentation, and fine tuning or any philosophical base comes after the athlete has mastered these movements. **You are creating a default or a template hammer thrower in a reasonable amount of time. (You or another coach can *un-break* the rules later).**

Hammer Safety

- Most accidents occur at the blue arrows, where the next thrower is waiting in line.
- Also beware athletes hanging on the nets.



Hammer Etiquette

- **Field and Facility Care**
 - **Teach your athletes to fill their divots. Hammers don't tear up fields, neglectful coaches and athletes do!**
 - ONLY use chain hammers on turf fields. Better yet, don't throw on turf at all.
 - **If sharing a field, use a mix (seed, sand, and dirt) to take care of worn areas.** Maybe even offer “leftovers” to the other coaches and their fields. **YOUR FOOTBALL AND SOCCER COACHES WILL THANK YOU!**
 - **Be smart about field use.** You know the people you work with best. So know “where” a good place is to throw the hammer. (If there is a cage, plywood works well).
- **Liability**
 - If you find yourself coaching the hammer more than you expected and you have athletes planning to compete unattached, your athletes must **get a USATF card.**
- **Be Courteous and Thoughtful!!!!**
 - **This is an unsanctioned event.** If your athletic director or head coach says “no”, cooperate, be patient and let them call the shots. **It's their job to be cautious!**
 - **Don't mix the two.** Throw the hammer after track practice or on a Saturday.
 - Once a week for the first month of track is a good way to ease in and will expose participation.
 - The next year, try to get 3 unattached hammer meets on **your** schedule. They will throw if they know there is a meet.
 - **No need to flaunt it.** Try to throw when there are not a lot of people around. Keep it simple, small, and humble. This is key to cooperation and ultimately more participation for your athletes.

Let's face it... Hammer is a safe event, but it LOOKS scary! So cooperate, start small, and be patient till people understand it and grow more familiar with the hammer.

Drills

- Weight Room Specific
 - “U” Vollmars x 10e w/25#
 - 1 turn lifts x 5 w/10#
 - 3 turn lifts x 5 w/10#
 - Continuous turns x 10 w/ 25# (10# for beginning girls)
- Warm-up/Progression Drills
 - ❖ Continuous winds x 10e (L/C/R)
 - ❖ 2 ball turns at sides
 - ❖ 2 ball turns in front (~1 ft. apart)
 - ❖ 5-6 “slaps” (horizontal throws) with ball ~2 feet above the ground
 - ❖ 2 turns flat and up on 3-4-5 with release
 - Wind and turn repeats
 - Single hand continuous turns (L&R)
 - Single hand throws (L&R)
 - Continuous angled turns

Hammer Meet Opportunities

FINAL 2010 Washington State High School Hammer schedule

The fee for each meet will vary. As each meet approaches you should make contact with the meet representative to make certain that the meet will be conducted and confirm time. All participants will be required to have a valid 2010 USATF card for liability insurance. Only athletes who are in the USATF intermediate or young women/men age groups will be permitted to compete in the high school hammer with proof of valid 2010 USATF card.

Day	Date	Meet	Time	Location	Contact person
Saturday	3-13-10	Polar Bear Hammer Champ.	Noon	Centralia	John Schultz 360-388-6569
Saturday	3-27-10	Centralia Hammer meet	Noon	Centralia	John Shultz 360-388-6569
Saturday	4-3-10	Centralia Hammer meet	1:00 PM	Centralia	Dwight Midles 360-432-5002
Saturday	4-10-10	Mooberry Relays	8:00 AM	Spokane	Alan Wardsworth 509-927-8241
Saturday	4-17-10	Eason Invitation	????	Snohomish	Tuck Gionet 360-568-2862
Sunday	4-18-10	Concordia Hammer	1:30 PM	Portland	Mac Wilkins 503-780-7310
Saturday	4-25-10	Blue Bear Invitation	10:00 AM	Spokane	Alan Wardsworth 509-927-8241
Fri+Sat	4-30-10	Oregon Invitation	????	Eugene	U of Oregon
Sunday	5-9-10	Concordia Hammer	1:30 PM	Portland	Mac Wilkins 503-780-7310
Sunday	5-16-10	Centralia Spring Fling Hammer Championships	1:00 PM	Centralia	Dwight Midles 360-866-9144
Sunday	5-16-10	Eastern District Hammer	10: AM	Spokane	Alan Wardsworth 509-927-8241
Sunday	5-23-10	Eastern Wa Regional Hammer	10:00 AM	Spokane	Alan Wardsworth 509-927-8241
Sunday	5-30-10	10 th Annual Washington State High School Hammer Championships	1:00 PM	Centralia	Dwight Midles 360-866-9144
Sunday	6-6-10	Centralia Hammer meet	1:00 PM	Centralia	Dwight Midles 360-866-9144
Sat + Sun	6-26+27-10	Association Jr Olympic	?	Seattle	????
Saturday	7-3-10	Centralia 4 th of July Hammer Hammer Blast	1:00 PM	Centralia	Dwight Midles 360-866-9144
Thursday	7-8-10	Centralia Twilight #1	5:30 PM	Centralia	Dwight Midles 360-866-9144
Sat + Sun	7-10+11-10	Regional Jr Olympics	?	Seattle	????
Sat + Sun	7-17+18-10	Track City Classic	?	Eugene	????
Wednesday	7-21-10	Centralia Twilight #2	5:00 PM	Centralia	Dwight Midles 360-866-9144
7-28 to Aug 1		Jr. Olympic Nationals	????	Sacramento Cal.	??????
Wednesday	8-4-10	Capital City Hammer Festival	4:00 PM	Centralia	Dwight Midles 360-866-9144

Washington State High School Hammer Championship 2011

Sponsored by: Valley Athletics Club, Central Valley High School, Spokane Falls Community College

Date: Sunday, May 29, 2011 1:00 P.M.

Location: Spokane Falls Community College, 3410 West Fort George Wright Drive, Spokane, WA

Event: High School (4k and 12 lbs.) Hammer

Parking: Free parking next to the track.

Awards: Top nine throwers, H.S. men and women.

Cost: \$15.00 at the event. T-Shirt \$20.00. Program \$2.00.

Contact for event information: awardsworth@cvsd.org<mailto:awardsworth@cvsd.org

Alan Wardsworth
Central Valley High School

Recap

- **Part I: Counting Steps**
 - The First Challenge
- **Part II: Winding**
- **Transition**
 - Winding into the first turn.
- **Part III: The Throw**
- **Tips for coaching beginners**
- **Hammer Safety**
- **Hammer Etiquette**
- **Drills**
- **Opportunities**