

The Discus Throw

by Jim Giroux

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The Grip

The discus can be held with either a split (with even space between all fingers) or a grip where the index and middle finger are touching and even spacing exists between the rest of the fingers. Either way the discus should rest on the last joints (closest to the fingernails). Delivery will be against and from the index finger joint with discus spinning clockwise for a right handed thrower. The thumb should rest on top of the discus. When the discus is delivered it will leave the athlete's hand at shoulder height. Attempts to change the angle of release result in a throw that plows through the air. A good throw will appear flat and have an angle of release around 40 degrees.

Drills

Bowling- Hold the discus as described above, take a step forward with your left (for right handers), bend at the waist, hips and knees and roll the discus forward. If done correctly, the discus should roll upright on its edge.

Standing Releases – Start holding the discus at arm's length a little in front of hip while standing. Move the arm upward and release the discus from the index finger, catch it in the same hand and repeat. Once this is mastered athletes can swing the discus and release it higher either catching or letting the discus land before repeating the drill.

The Stand

(Assume Right Handed Thrower for Reminder of Article)

During the stand an athlete winds the discus into delivery position and delivers it. From the ground up key areas for the stand are Feet wider than shoulder width with an instep to toe relationship for the right and left feet. Line up with shoulders square to the back of the circle (same as a full throw start). Right foot will be in the center of the ring closer to the front of the ring. Right toe will aim about 90 degrees away from the front of the ring. Left toe will aim at right instep. Discus should be wound once and put over the athlete's right shoulder. Virtually all body weight will be on the right foot.

Initiate action by turning both feet to get body weight over the left leg. Feet should continue to turn until right ankle is near the ground and discus is delivered. Left arm action will start long and continue until hand is aiming in the direction of the throw. At this point, bend the arm and bring the elbow to the left side of the body. Ultimately this action should be well timed and occur together with the bracing of the entire left side (shoulder to foot). This is commonly referred to as blocking. The right side will then accelerate around the stopped left side transferring momentum to the discus. Standing Throw Variations/Drills

Stand- see above description

Figure 8 Stand- Start lined up like above drill but with discus hanging near right leg. Begin moving the discus in a Figure 8 pattern over and under the shoulder. If done correctly the pattern will be vertical. Master this drill without throwing before adding the throw. To add the throw, have the athlete finish winding the upper part of the pattern and deliver it like above.

Stepping Stand- Have the athlete start with both feet near the center of the ring with discus supported by the left hand above and away from the left shoulder. Simultaneously wind the discus to the right shoulder and reach to the front of the ring with the left leg. Deliver the discus as described above.

Try any of these drills with cones, medicine balls or other implements.

Step & Turn

As we continue to work our way back to the full throw, the next piece is the Step & Turn. This is the link between the front and the back of the ring. Begin with the right foot a little past the center of the ring aiming between the center of the sector and the left sector line. The left foot will be aiming in the same direction and behind the right about shoulder width apart. Start the throw by winding the discus back over the right shoulder and raising the left arm. As this action is being completed, begin turning the right foot and continue turning it until the discus has left the athletes hand. The left leg will pass close to the right knee, land in the stand position and turn to complete the throw. Once the left leg lands this is a standing throw, in essence this drill adds movement to the stand.

Step & Turn Variations/Drills

Step & Turn – See above description

Continuous Step & Turn – Hold the discus like a book with fingers wrapped around the edge. The discus will not be released on this drill. Assume the starting position described above and stand on line. Once the left foot has landed, immediately begin another step and turn back in the direction that you started. Continue for 4-8 repetitions. When first teaching the drill allow a brief pause on each left foot touchdown.

Walking Step & Turn – No need for a discus on this one. Walk normally and complete a step and turn every few steps, initiating the movement when the right foot is forward. You can stay upright while doing this drill.

South African

Begin this drill with the left foot aiming a little left of the center of the sector. The foot position will be where the full throw would start. The right foot will be behind the left set up 90 degrees to the left foot outside the rear of the ring. Most of the weight will be on the left leg. Wind the discus over the right shoulder and lift the left arm so that it is directly over the left leg. Run into the ring with the right foot, keeping the left arm up while the chest runs into it. Think of pushing with left foot instead of reaching with the right to complete this action. By doing this the left foot will land in front of the ring faster. Actively turn both feet when they land.

South African Variations/Drills

South African- See above description.

Running South African- Start with discus slightly in front of athlete, a little in front of right hip. Jog a few steps and complete a South African drill and throw the discus. Work up to a faster run to complete the drill. Shuffle South African – This can be done with or without a discus. Start with feet lined up in South African start position. Complete a South African drill, shuffle in the same direction once (feet don't cross) then complete another South African drill followed by a shuffle. Continue in this pattern and complete 3-5 repetitions.

Continuous South African – Complete 3 South Africans in a row. Start with a small slow one and build on each repetition. Do with or without a discus.

Full Throw

Begin in the back of the ring with feet wider than shoulder width. Wind the discus over the right shoulder, keeping more weight on the left side than the right. Athlete should be slightly bent at the waist, about the angle they will land in the center of the ring. The left armpit should be over the left knee at the start. Think of the left side (shoulder to foot) as being a door. It will need to turn together around the left foot until the arm points at the center of the ring. A couple of cues for

proper completion of this part of the throw are to stay bent and balanced going around the left side and keep the right foot the same distance away from the left as it was at the start. Once the athlete has reached the South African position the throw will continue as described in the South African.

Full Throw Variations and Drills

Full Throw – See above description

Left Foot Drills – Do this series with or without a discus. Begin with all body weight over the left foot. Keeping the right foot the same distance away from the left, touch the ground lightly with the right at 6-8 spots around the left. The pattern is like drawing a circle around the left foot. Reduce the number of taps gradually until the athlete can complete a spin around the left without touching the ground. Try a complete left foot drill just before a full throw, rewind the discus after completing the drill and throw a full throw.

Backwards Full Throw – Do with or without discus. Complete a full throw, stop at the front and reverse the action back to the start. This somewhat advanced.

Right Foot Throw – Start a full throw. Don't let the left leg land at the front of the ring. All weight will be over the right. Throw the discus from the right foot and continue bouncing on it to regain balance.

5 Days, No Meets

Monday

Dynamic Warm up

Pick a drill from each portion of the throw and complete away from the ring

Throw Discus

Weight Training

Tuesday

Dynamic Warm up

Pick up to 2 drills from each portion, use cones or medicine balls if throwing

Medicine Balls

Circuits and/or Sprints

Wednesday

See Monday

Thursday

See Tuesday

Friday

See Monday

5 Days, Two Meets

Monday

See Previous Monday or Tuesday*

Tuesday

Meet

Wednesday

See Previous Tuesday if you threw discus on Monday otherwise See Monday*

Thursday

See Previous Thursday *

Friday

Meet

•The key on these days is to only throw two days in a row once (meet & practice) during the week, try alternating the weeks, you may need to move weight training around to complete two days each week

6 Days, 1 Meet**Monday**

See Previous Monday

Tuesday

See Previous Tuesday

Wednesday

See Previous Wednesday or Recovery & Weight Training**

Thursday

See Previous Wednesday**

Friday

Shake out

Saturday

Meet

** Two days of throwing should be adequate at this point, (Monday & either Wednesday or Thursday) you want to do drills without throwing the discus on one of these days