

9.0 – Two Parts of The Foot

You can implement French Contrast by having the athlete step onto a disk that rotates. Instruct them to hold that position and have the athlete practice internally rotating from the hip. This will cause a co-contraction response throughout the hip complex forcing the body to adapt and learn to work in unison as a pair with the ankle complex at high speeds. A great byproduct of this exercise will be a springier, more efficient stride. Once the ankle has become efficient and can symmetrically shift the center of mass over the ankle joint when performing the ankle rocker movement our focus should shift to the proper follow through of the big toe.

The concept that we are trying to drive home here is that there are actually two parts of your foot responsible for separate but coinciding mechanisms. The reflexive part of the foot is responsible for absorbing and guiding the energy from the ground contact toward the propulsive part of the foot. The propulsive foot is responsible for creating tension and releasing energy to push the body forward. If you were to walk barefoot, a perfectly functioning foot's purpose is to guide all energy forward. As the energy travels through the foot and toward the toes the big toe is to smoothly flex in. From here energy should roll through the big toe thus propelling all transpiring energy forward. Unfortunately, for a lot of athletes they find themselves moving exclusively on the outside of their foot, never being able to capture true propulsive drive through their flight phase. This means that the athlete will lose a detrimental amount of energy that should be propelling them forward as well as placing the knee at a high risk of injury due to placing force on the complex in a manner in which it is not designed.