

# “Top Ten” Ways to Get Better Faster



TREVOR RICHARDS

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## About Me



### COACH

- Volunteer coach at Drake University since the early 90's
  - Men's PR: Garrick Wilson, 17'4.25"
  - Women's PR: Johanna Sprang, 11'7.75"

### ATHLETE

- Iowa State University, 1986 – 1991
- PR: 17'5.25"
- “ATHLETE”
- Master's M40 American & World Champion
- M40 PR: 15'1.25"

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## Coaching Philosophy



### MAXIMIZE HEIGHT + CONSISTENCY

- Teach basic mechanics.
- Teach drills.

### RECOGNIZE AND USE INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS

- Different body styles.
- Power/Speed/Finesse.

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## Trevor's "Top Two" Ways to Get Better Faster

TO PARAPHRASE TEDDY ROOSEVELT:  
"RUN FAST AND CARRY A BIG STICK!"

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## About the Top Ten List

- EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED.
- EVERYTHING BUILDS ON PREVIOUS STEP.
- LISTED IN SEQUENCE ORDER, NOT IN ORDER OF IMPACT.

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## First Way to Get Better Faster: Tempo on the Runway

- WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?**
- Need to have a consistent step before you can work on pole vault technique.
  - Helps work on running all the way to box.
  - Makes a good run 'repeatable'.

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## Second Way to Get Better Faster: Carriage

**WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?**

- Building block for a smooth transition from carry to plant.
- Allows efficient running.

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## Third Way to Get Better Faster: Transition to Plant

**WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?**

- Need to maintain speed.
- Helps increase speed at plant (fourth way to get better faster).

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## Fourth Way to Get Better Faster: Speed at Plant

**IF YOU'VE BEEN DOING EVERYTHING WELL TO THIS POINT, YOU'RE IN GOOD SHAPE.**

**IT'S OK TO BE A SLOW RUNNER, JUST NOT AT PLANT.**

- Ideally reach maximum speed at the moment the tip hits the back of the box.
- Watch for heel hitting on final left (assuming right hander):
  - Could be a sign of a bad transition (roundhouse plant, tip too high too late).
  - Could be a sign of reaching maximum speed too soon.

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## Fifth Way to Get Better Faster: Step

TOO FAR IN OR OUT AND YOU LOSE LEVERAGE AND NEGATIVELY IMPACT LATER PARTS OF THE VAULT. IF ANY PART OF YOUR TAKE OFF FOOT IS IN LINE WITH THE TOP HAND YOU'RE IN THE ZONE (MANY WOULD DISAGREE WITH THIS).

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## Sixth Way to Get Better Faster: Improve Plant Position

IMPROVING THE PLANT POSITION IS THE QUICKEST WAY TO GET BETTER FASTER IN THE POLE VAULT. THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE IS THE VAULTER'S BRAIN - IT'S PHYSICALLY EASY. DRILL, DRILL, DRILL. ENFORCE GOOD HABITS.

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## Seventh Way to Get Better Faster: Drive through Plant

PUSH UP WITH ARMS AND PUSH DOWN WITH LEFT LEG (ASSUMING RIGHT HANDER). DRIVE RIGHT KNEE.

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## Eighth Way to Get Better Faster: Drive Swing

**OVERSIMPLIFICATION: DON'T DO ANYTHING TO STOP THE POLE FROM MOVING TO VERTICAL.**

- Example: Bending right arm & pulling too soon.
- Going straight into a pull and turn.
- 'Let the pendulum swing'.

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## Ninth Way to Get Better Faster: Pull Position

**WAIT FOR THE HIPS TO COME TO THE POLE.  
LET THE SHOULDERS DROP DOWN.**

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## Tenth Way to Get Better Faster: Overall Speed

**FULL APPROACH IS BETWEEN 100 AND 120 FEET AT MOST – TRAIN ACCORDINGLY.**

- Ideally, the vaulter should be able to perform 10 full speed 100' runs at a meet
  - Several vaults could have a minute and a half recovery.
- Explosive Power over Raw Strength.

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## Drills

**PLANT DRILLS**

- Walking, jogging, running plant drills.
- Initiate plant on second from last left (right handed).
- Forward and up.

**POLE CARRIES**

- Various distances.

**POPUPS**

- 3 lefts or less.

**BABIES**

- 3 step plant with spotter.
- Work plant, take off, and drive swing.

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## Parting Advice

**KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

- What works for a world class vaulter might not work for a new vaulter.
- Basic fundamentals will take you most of the way.
- Exploit the vaulter's strengths and work around weaknesses.
- Higher Handhold ≠ Higher Bar.

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## Questions?

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