CROSS COUNTRY · AGES 7 TO 10

Ages 7 to 10: three calm weeks before tryouts.

Short sessions at home are enough to arrive ready.

3 sessions a week of 15 to 20 minutes, from SSTracker's at-home cross country plans for 7 to 10 year olds. Two weeks build up, the third eases off, and the day before tryouts is a rest day.[1]

WEEKS	SESSIONS A WEEK	MINUTES A SESSION[2]
3	3, at most	15 to 20

Two weeks build up, then the last week eases off.

Week 1	Learn the sessions, one day at a time. Do sessions 1, 2 and 3, with a rest day between. Write your self-check number in session 1.
Week 2	The same sessions again, a little smoother. Repeat sessions 1, 2 and 3. Let your child lead the one they like most.
Week 3	Lighter, so your child arrives fresh. Sessions 1 and 2 early in the week, with the self-check again in session 1. Rest the day before tryouts.

With two weeks to go, start at week 2. With four weeks, do week 1 twice. Pick days that fit your week, with a rest day between sessions.

This packet online, with links to every drill: sstracker.app/tryout-prep/cross-country

1. Sessions: SSTracker's at-home cross country plans for 7 to 10 year olds. Every drill here is open at ages 7 to 10 in the app.
2. Session limits: SSTracker's own rule for age 7, at most 3 days a week and 30 minutes a session.

Every area coaches watch at tryouts is something that grows.

Many tryouts look at a few areas like these. SSTracker's own tryout notes use these five, a coach notes only what they saw, and there is no overall grade.[1]

Pace	Quick first steps grow with practice and with rest. Arriving fresh helps more than one extra hard day.
Technique	Clean touches grow with many short, calm tries. The sessions here give your child lots of them.
Reading the game	Looking up and choosing well grow by playing. After a game, ask about one good choice they made.
Physical	Balance, landing and core strength are part of every warm-up here. Every body grows at its own pace.
Attitude	Trying again after a mistake, listening and cheering a teammate are things every player can bring.

Skills these sessions train: Aerobic Base, Pacing, Running Form.

Your child compares only with their own earlier number.

The test: Talk Test Jog: your own number.

Week 1, first session _____

Week 3, first session _____

What feels easier now? _____

Compare only with your own week 1 number. Any number is fine: it shows where you are today, not who you are.

1. Tryout areas: the five areas in SSTracker's own tryout notes for coaches.

Every session starts with the same moving warm-up.

Cross Country Warm-Up, Ages 7 to 10[1]

1. Jog easy for 1 minute, then skip for 30 seconds.
2. Moving warm-up over about 10 yards and back, once each: high knees, heel flicks, side shuffles facing both ways, and grapevine steps.
3. Leg swings holding a fence, wall or partner's shoulder: 8 forward and back, then 8 side to side, each leg.
4. Walking lunges with a reach to the sky, 5 each leg, then 5 slow squats.
5. Balance on one leg for 15 seconds each side, then again while you circle your arms slowly.
6. Jump and land: 5 two-footed jumps forward, landing softly with knees over toes; freeze each landing for a count of 2.
7. Sport moves: 3 relaxed strides of about 50 yards, building smoothly to a comfortable quick pace; walk back between each.

In these sessions the warm-up is the short version, 4 minutes: steps 1, 6 and 7. The full routine takes 8 minutes.

A flat, clear space with room to run. Stop if anything hurts: a warm-up should leave you ready, not tired.

Every session ends with a few minutes of gentle stretches.

Cross Country Cool-Down Stretches, Ages 7 to 10: each stretch held a slow count of 10, never to pain.

In these sessions the cool-down is the short version, 3 minutes: steps 1 to 4 only. The full routine takes 5 minutes.

1. Warm-up and cool-down: SSTracker's routines for this age, with the research at sstracker.app/warm-ups-and-stretches.

Have these ready before the first session.

FOR THE SESSIONS AT HOME

- Cones
- A parent or partner
- Watch
- Park
- List of things to spot
- Stopwatch
- Open grass

Week 1: learn the sessions, one day at a time.

Do sessions 1, 2 and 3, with a rest day between. Write your self-check number in session 1.

Session 1: Aerobic Base at home — 20 min ◯

1.	Warm-up, short version: steps 1, 6 and 7	4 min
2.	Talk Test Jog	4 min
3.	Run-Walk Builder	5 min
4.	Nature Scavenger Jog	4 min
5.	Cool-down, short version: steps 1 to 4 only	3 min

Drills: Talk Test Jog, Run-Walk Builder, Nature Scavenger Jog

Session 2: Pacing at home — 20 min ◯

1.	Warm-up, short version: steps 1, 6 and 7	4 min
2.	Guess the Time	4 min
3.	Same-Speed Loops	5 min
4.	Traffic Light Pace	4 min
5.	Cool-down, short version: steps 1 to 4 only	3 min

Drills: Guess the Time, Same-Speed Loops, Traffic Light Pace

Week 1 continues with session 3.

Session 3: Aerobic base: Run-Walk Builder — 15 min ◯

1. Warm-up, short version: steps 1, 6 and 7 — 4 min
2. Run-Walk Builder — 4 min
3. Swinging Arms Game — 4 min
4. Cool-down, short version: steps 1 to 4 only — 3 min

Drills: Run-Walk Builder, Swinging Arms Game

Week 2: the same sessions again, a little smoother.

Repeat sessions 1, 2 and 3. Let your child lead the one they like most.

DAY	WHAT	MINUTES	DONE
Day 1	Session 1	20	◯
Day 3	Session 2	20	◯
Day 5	Session 3	15	◯

Week 3: lighter, so your child arrives fresh.

Sessions 1 and 2 early in the week, with the self-check again in session 1. Rest the day before tryouts.

DAY	WHAT	MINUTES	DONE
Day 1	Session 1 + self-check	20	◯
Day 3	Session 2	20	◯
The day before	Rest. Pack the bag together.	·	◯

Pack the bag together the day before.

ON TRYOUT DAY

- What the program asks for: read its sign-up together.
- A full water bottle.
- The shoes and gear your child trains in, already worn in.
- Any safety gear the program asks for.
- A snack and a warm layer for after.

The night before, calm matters more than practice.

- No new drills tonight. The work is already done.
- Pack the bag together, then set it by the door.
- A normal dinner, some water and the usual bedtime.
- Tell your child one thing you saw them grow at in these weeks.
- Nerves are normal. Say so, and that you feel them too sometimes.
- Whatever happens tomorrow, your love and pride stay the same.

AFTER TRYOUTS

- Ask what was fun, and what they want to practice next.
- Talk about their own growth, never about other children.

When to stop

- Stop if anything hurts, knees and heels too.
- Stop if landings get noisy or wobbly, or form breaks down. Rest, then try again easier.
- Thunder: go inside. Heat signs (dizzy, headache, feeling sick, confused, unusually tired): stop, rest in the shade and drink water.

After a knock to the head [1]

- Stop right away. No more play today. See a doctor before playing again.
- Call 911 for danger signs: throwing up again and again, a seizure, can't stay awake, a headache that gets worse, slurred speech, or one pupil bigger than the other.

Whatever happens at tryouts, your child is enough.

Practice makes progress, because there is no such thing as perfect.

More free drills, warm-ups and weekly plans: sstracker.app/drills. No account needed.

1. After a knock to the head: the CDC's HEADS UP guidance (same words as every SSTracker stop card).