

What Does It Mean To Be Fast?

There is a popular saying in sports - "speed kills." Ask almost any coach in any game and they will say that what they daydream about the most is a team of ultra-fast players. But what does it really mean to be fast?

When most people talk about how fast someone is, the discussion is usually about an athlete's track speed. In most US sports, the two basic "measures" often discussed are an athlete's 40 and 100 meter speeds.

But, how useful is that?

How often, in sports other than track, does an athlete run straight ahead for 100 meters without having to dodge, twist, and turn? Not often. In most field sports, as in life, you need to be fast at much shorter distances. It's about being agile, quick, and responsive.

Linear speed is just one aspect of speed. What about lateral speed (moving sideways), limb speed, visual speed, interpretation speed?

All of these other types of speed play a critically important role – both on the field and off. Let's take a short look at each.

LATERAL SPEED

This is the ability to move quickly sideways. You see it on the field or court all the time – tennis, basketball, American football, soccer. Virtually every sport out there has a lateral component.

Off the field, lateral speed is what lets you catch something that is falling just out of reach, grab a kid that is about to walk in to something, and narrowly avoid running in to someone in the hallway while you are both checking email on your phones.

LIMB SPEED

You can have amazing lower body speed without running a great 100m. If you have any doubts, search YouTube for clips of soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo. He has spent years developing amazing footwork skills. Great boxers and martial artists display those same skills with the upper bodies.

And again, these skills translate off the field. Catching a glass that is tipping over, or using a foot to stop a door from closing when your hands are full with your laptop bag and morning Americano.

VISUAL SPEED

In almost every sport, there are legendary players who are best known for having amazing field vision.

What is that? It's another term for elite-caliber visual speed. When you study these athletes, it is obvious that

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EVENTS CALENDAR

Be sure to check [our website](#) regularly for updates.

Essentials of Elite Performance

El Segundo, CA
November 12-14

Orlando, FL
December 10-12

Phoenix, AZ
January 21-23

Atlanta, GA
February 18-20

San Diego, CA
March 4-6

Seattle, WA
April 8-10

Denver, CO
April 15-17

Boston, MA
June 3-5

Cleveland, OH
June 10-12

San Francisco, CA
June 24-26

R-Phase

Bridgeport, CT
February 11-13 & March 18-20

Los Angeles, CA
February 18-20 & March 25-27

Copenhagen, Denmark
March 7-12

Orlando, FL
April 8-10 & May 13-15

Phoenix, AZ
May 13-15 & June 10-12

Seattle, WA
June 24-26 & July 29-31

that driving). While I joke, you get the point – the ability to quickly change your focus is incredibly important to safe, skilled driving. If you've ever followed a slow, hesitant driver – there is an excellent chance you've seen poor visual skills in action.

INTERPRETATION SPEED

Finally, in our brief description of different components of speed, we come to interpretation speed. You can also think of this as reaction speed – but no matter what term you use, it's your brains ability to take in what is going on around you and do something with it. Two very different skills.

You know those great field vision guys I referenced above? They also have amazing interpretation speed skills. They can see the field, know exactly where everyone is, and know what is likely coming next. They know if the hole is going to close or not and where a new gap is likely to occur (or not). The most important point here? What these athletes do with their eyes is a trainable skill – not a genetic mutation to make them a better football player!

With that said, I'm going to extend the driving analogy as well. We all say less-than-nice-things about the driver that "wasn't paying attention" and didn't realize that the cars in front of them were slowed down, or that they were driving at exactly the right speed such that they were holding up multiple lanes of traffic and effectively causing a traffic jam. What if they actually were paying attention, but simply didn't have the skill to be able to interpret what was going on around them so they could respond accordingly.

At this point you might be thinking that in the examples above, that none of those skills live in isolation. And, you are exactly right. Being good at all of them, and being able to integrate them is what is necessary to perform and be your best. Speed is not one single thing, but a host of intertwined movement, balance, and visual skills – all of which can be improved in virtually everyone – far faster than you might ever believe.

Interested? The best way to take that step is with our [Essentials of Elite Performance workshop](#). We've just released our [2011 calendar](#), and there is an excellent chance there is a workshop near you. You won't find another three days that will as completely change how you think about your body as this course. And, at \$647 (early registration pricing), it's a bargain at twice the price.

[Click here](#) to register today.

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Onitsuka Tai Chi Shoes

If you have spent any time at a Z-Health course or with a Z-Health certified practitioner, you'll know that we have thing for shoes. The flatter-soled, the better. The more minimalist, the better.

Those things can be quite hard to come by in the US.

Los Angeles, CA
June 16-19

Copenhagen, Denmark
June 16-19

S-Phase

Phoenix, AZ
February 10-13

T-Phase

Phoenix, AZ
November 4-7

Phoenix, AZ
March 31-April 3

9S Certification Series

9S: Speed
Phoenix, AZ
December 2-5

Master Trainer

Live Training
Phoenix, AZ
January 3-8

And, the black Onitsuka Tai Chi shoe is a favorite brand and color of many practitioners, but it isn't manufactured on a consistent basis. As a matter of fact, they are ONLY manufactured when Classic Sport Shoes places an order. But, we needed our shoe fix, and they agreed to do a run for us if we can help them out with some pre-orders. Of course, we took the bait!

HOW IT WORKS

1. Order the shoes [online](#). Be sure to use coupon code **ztaichi** to get free shipping! *(Since these aren't manufactured often, you might want to consider stocking up.)*
2. Once Classic Sport Shoes has enough orders to fill the pre-order, they will order the shoes to be manufactured.
3. Because these are made-to-order, it's 6 months from ordering to delivery, so at this point it's hurry up and wait.
4. Once they have arrived, you'll get a note from Classic Tai Chi that your shoes are in and being delivered.
5. Wear your black Tai Chis in style and enjoy!

NOTE: Z-Health is not affiliated with Classic Sport Shoes, and makes no money from any shoe orders you place. We just know how popular and hard-to-find these shoes are, and want to make them available to you (and restock our respective wardrobes).

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Newsletter Archive

Did you miss an issue of the Newsletter? Our regular newsletter is filled with interviews, articles, reviews, and all of the goodness that is Z-Health Performance.

Are you receiving our Training Tips? These brief training nuggets will be sure to enhance all of your activities.

Catch up on all of [our back issues](#) on the Z-Health web site or click on the "Manage your Subscription" link on the bottom of this email to ensure you are getting the latest news.

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If you are already on Facebook, [become a fan](#), write on our Wall, or ask a question on our Discussion board. We'd love to hear from you.

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Learn More on YouTube

Interested in the science and theory behind Z-Health?

Want some athletic performance tips and tricks?

Check out our growing video library on [YouTube](#). Our most popular clips include:

- [Hamstring vs. the Running Shoe](#)
- [Jump Landing Training](#)

- [Z-Health in 3 Minutes](#)

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