

# Pivot Turns

## Forward Pivot Turns

**The Drill:** Start with your feet in an open third foot position with your left foot forward; your heel of the left foot is still in line with the instep of the right foot, but now the feet are about hip width apart.

Put your weight on the three toe base of the left foot, and rotate your right shoulder back to match the angle of your hips and feet. This rotation is the source of the energy for your pivot. Keeping your legs together—think about squeezing your upper thighs to each other—let your shoulders and core unwind, and use that energy to pivot on your left toe base  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn. At the end of the pivot, pause with your weight on your left toe base, then let your right foot make contact with the floor.

Repeat quarter turns until you are comfortable with quarter turns. Then, work on half turns. Be sure to practice both with left foot in front (turning to your left) and with the right foot in front (turning to your right).

## Backward Pivot Turns

Backward pivot turns feature the same technique as forward pivot turns, but they are harder because you need to avoid settling onto your heel as you step backwards.

**The Drill:** Step backwards with your right foot, in open third position, but do not allow your weight to move past your toe base of your right foot. This should feel like the position you were in after you completed a forward pivot around your left foot (from the previous article in this series), but now your weight is on your back foot.

As you step onto your right foot, pull your right shoulder back in order to create rotational energy in your core. Unwind your core and let the rotation pivot you a quarter turn to your left (i.e., your left shoulder is going backwards) while you are on your right toe base. When you land, make sure that you can pause while on your right toe base; you don't want to be falling out of the pivot. After you can comfortably do quarter turns, move up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  turns.

## Troubleshooting:

If you feel like you are falling off balance, make sure that:

- Your center is tight;
- Your weight is on your toe base of the right foot (and not the heel or the outside edge of the foot);
- Your left thigh is pressed to your right thigh so your free leg is not flailing;
- You are not throwing yourself into the turn with your upper body. Think about unwinding the core rather than pushing with the core.
- Be sure to practice with both feet. When your right foot is behind, you are turning to your left. When your left foot is behind, you are turning to your right.