

Improve you jump

For ultimate, improving one's jump actually requires two sets of practices.

Firstly you must train to maximize your jump, this involves strength work, followed by dynamic and plyometric exercises, with an emphasis on fewer reps and explosive actions. The second string of exercises must be highly repetitive to improve your endurance and repeat performances. In a given game or tournament you will be required to run and jump on a regular basis unlike track athletes who must only perform a few times with ample rest between.

Unfortunately the two sets of training regimes can have detrimental effects on the others performance. Learning to maximize your jump requires concentrated burst of power which is difficult to replicate many times over. Similarly training for endurance requires huge numbers of repetitions which can have the affect of training to jump at 80%. It is possible to train to meet in the middle, but must be done with some prior thought.

There are numerous theories to how to achieve the best results, and you may want to research yourself [or merely ignore all of this], however, I have found the best results follow a similar pattern to other training regimes.

NOTE: ALWAYS do an adequate warm up and warm down, these are dynamic and high intensity exercises and so can damage your body if you have not properly stretched and warmed up.

Also a good core and strong upper body is absolutely necessary for a good jump. These exercises focus on your lower body because that is where most of the 'jump comes from', however, your upper body must be lithe/supple and strong enough to deal with the stresses and strain of repeated high impact running and jumping.

Muscle endurance

Assuming you have already done ample strength work, you can now train strength endurance at the same time as your specific jump training.

Typical exercises for strength endurance are:

timed wall sits;

single leg wall sits;

single leg or double leg squats (with high reps and low weights);

calf raises.

Knee drop press (press-up position, right foot on raised step, other foot in air. Drop the right knee (bend at the knee not the hip) then straighten leg. Sets of 15 on both leg)

These exercises are maintaining your muscle strength whilst simultaneously improving your muscle endurance.

Plyometric

Your next phase can be to break down the various elements/muscle groups/actions used in the various jumping motions and practice them. Small weights can be used to increase

their efficiency. It is in these exercises that you must focus on form and correct posture. Your back should be upright and straight for all these exercises as none of them require leaning over or bending.

A medium number of reps 10-15 should be carried out per set, and with ample break before starting a second set.

Concentrate on exploding through these actions, as these are the ones which will increase your maximum jump. Jump as high as possible on each jump, and rest as much as necessary.

Exercises: ('bounce' means bounce back up for the next jump, i.e. don't lose momentum)

squat-to-jump[vertical] -bounce

squat-to-jump[horizontal](i.e. frog jumps) - bounce

single-leg bounds(similar to frog jumps but on one leg) -bounce

butt kicks(both leg at the same time) - bounce

tuck jumps - bounce

single leg tuck jumps(one leg comes up and forward, the other goes up and backwards)

single leg take-off tuck-jumps (same as standard tuck jumps but jump with only one leg)

single-leg running (run letting only one leg touch the ground, but cycle the other one)

20-yard sprinting and cutting

split jumps (starting in a lunge, jump up vertically and land in lunge on opposing legs)

bounding

high-skipping (make sure you jump as high as you can on every step)

5-5-5 (5 slow squats, 5 quick squats, 5 squat to jumps)

Lunge to single leg jump (lunge position right leg in front. Jump straight off your right leg whilst bringing your left leg through and up)

Step up jumps – start with one leg on a bench and jump as high as possible off that leg

Technique

Correct jumping technique is (if jumping off left leg) is to bring your right leg up till there is a 90degree bend at the knee.. also your right arm should be pushed forward and up with a similar bend at the elbow. Push your hips forward just as you are reaching maximum height.

If you are running into a one legged jump, then (jumping off left again) your penultimate step is off your right leg. You will put the leg out and drop your body weight onto it lower than normal. Your left leg now comes through already with a greater bend than usual. When it hits the ground, explode upwards. The penultimate step allows you to control the upward motion of the jump and also prepares your body into a better more efficient jumping position.

Running jump off two legs. You also want a penultimate step with a similar effect. However instead of bringing your trailing leg through, you plant it slightly behind the lead leg. This stabilizes the jump and allows you to push upwards. Also it means the bend in your knees are more efficient, and you wont go flying forwards as much(unless that's what you wanted)

Most problems people have are to bring both leg together, which causes an uneven jump and no forward control. It can also unbalance you.

Another problem people have with two footed running jumps is that they either don't take a penultimate step or they take two. No preparation step will not allow much vertical leap, whilst having two steps will slow you down and cause you to lose momentum.

Another fault people make when jumping, is to slow themselves down too much.. That penultimate step is used to brace your body and control your speed which often means slowing it down. That is necessary, however, often people will plant their jumping foot too heavily and also on their heel. This slows them down too much, removes too much of their momentum and also damages their foot and lower leg on impact. The jumping foot needs to be placed rapidly with the ball of the foot hitting the ground first. The foot should be struck into the ground hard and fast, as the longer the foot is in contact with the ground the more energy your body loses.

Jump Training

Now you want to piece it all together.

Practicing your jump action is the best way to improve your jump now.

Find a height marker (maybe a basketball rim or backboard) and simply start to jump for it.

Start with deep-seated two footed jumps. Two feet together(or one slightly behind) quickly drop into a deep squat (about a 90degree bend at the knees, but no further) and jump as high as you can reaching for your marker. Work your way until you can now comfortably touch your marker with both hands.

Repeat about ten times, with plenty of breaks.

Repeat the exercise with single leg jumps. Take a single step into the jump and explode upwards.

Once you can achieve this, you want to start moving yourself away from the marker and jump from a distance.

If you can now jump from a good distance (1 – 1.5m should be plenty). Either do it with weights, or make the marker higher.

Repeat the whole process. Over a period of weeks (about 3 or 4 days a week at most, once a week will do little)

You should find you can jump for a higher marker and from ever greater distances

Jump endurance

Now you want to make this new jump useful. This can be achieved by once again breaking down the individual aspects of the jump and repeating them with a much high rep rate.

Hops – hop back and forth over a small object

Box jumps.- jump back and forth over a box (hops but higher/larger distance to jump)

Repeat the plyometric exercises but with a greater number of reps

The aim is to make your jump more bouncy. You should be able to rebound much quicker. A lot of this is teaching your calves and quads to store the necessary energy for the recoil action.

Rebounds- Stand feet together under your marker. Jump up for it and touch with your right hand, then bounce back up and touch with your left hand, then bounce back up and touch with both hands. Repeat for 12 jumps. rest