

How to Improve your Jumps

Leg Explosions: This exercise helps with height and leg strength. Start with your feet together. Take a slow dip so until your knees reach a ninety-degree angle. Explode into the air without using your arms. As you land, absorb gently absorb back into your starting position. Start with three sets of five controlled jumps and work up to executing fifteen in a row.

Sitting Toe Touches: This exercise isolates the hip flexor and abdominal muscles that lift legs into the jump position. Start by sitting on the floor in a tuck position. Balanced with your feet slightly off the floor and your arms in “daggers”. Quickly lift your legs and arms to all the way to the toe touch position. Once you’ve hit it, snap back to your starting position as quickly as possible. It may take a few tries to find your balance. Once you get the hang of it, focus on keeping your toes pointed, your legs straight, and your back upright. Again, start with three sets of five and work up to fifteen reps in a row.

Straddle Lifts: This exercise also isolates the hip flexors. Start on the floor in a straddle position. Place your hands on the floor in between your knees. Lift one leg a two inches off of the floor for a count of two and then set it back down. Keep your leg straight and your toe pointed. Repeat with the other leg. Do these five times (approximately 10 seconds on each leg). Work up to holding each leg twice for a count of five, and then once for a count of ten. Eventually, you may lift both legs at once.

Jump Conditioning Drills: This advanced jump drill helps with strength, stamina and muscle memory. Before you start the drill, make sure your team has good technique. Because this drill is based on repetition, it’s important to tackle technique first (repeating jumps with poor technique is counterproductive).

Using that as your basic count, go through the following set of jumps:

Five T jumps
Five tuck jumps
Five left hurdlers
Five right hurdlers
Rest for 3 sets
Five pikes
Five toe touches
Ten toe touches
Five toe touches
Five pikes
Five right hurdlers
Five left hurdlers
Rest for 3 sets
Five tuck jumps
Five T jumps

That’s 70 jumps! You can usually complete this drill in six to seven minutes. Feel free to mix up the sequence of the jumps according to team needs.

No matter which method you use to improve your jumps, be patient! It can take a several weeks to see results. Over-exercising can lead to injury, so make sure to respect your body and its limits.

4 P's for Awesome Motions

Posture: Proper stance and alignment are essential to motion execution. Stand up straight, with chest lifted and shoulders back. Tuck pelvis under to engage abdominal muscles. Avoid slumping, and keep your shoulders relaxed away from the ears.

Placement: When learning or practicing motions, ensure proper hand/arm placement. Each motion should feel comfortable and identical on either side. Make sure arms are completely locked out without hyper-extending the elbows. Wrists should be straight. Need extra help? Use a partner or a mirror to guide you.

Perfection: Once you have mastered placement, learn how to hit those motions perfectly every time. Repeating motion drills to counts or music can help you develop muscle memory. Include both sides of any motion created with one arm. Once you nail it, challenge yourself by building speed or changing the sequence.

Precision: Precision involves coordinating individual motions with a group. Arrange the team in a bowling pin formation, and start your motion drill. Repeat several times, focusing on hitting motions at the same time with the same placement. Add speed to make the motion drill more challenging.