

Triple Jump Drills
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Presentation Outline

- I. General Considerations for Teaching the Triple Jump
 - A. Introduction
 - 1. Style vs. Technique
 - 2. Identifying Commonalities and Skills
 - 3. Teaching the Run, the Landing/Takeoffs, and Flight Movements
 - 4. Practice Time Distribution
 - B. Horizontal and Vertical Components
 - 1. Addressing Horizontal and Vertical Components
 - 2. Vertical to Horizontal Progression
- II. Technical Features
 - A. Features in the Run
 - 1. Starting Skills
 - 2. Acceleration Skills
 - 3. Transition Skills
 - 4. Sprinting Skills
 - B. Features in the Phases
 - 1. Postural Skills
 - 2. Contact Skills
 - 3. Swinging Segment Skills
 - C. Unique Features
 - 1. The Takeoff from the Board
 - 2. Free Leg Usage in the Hop and Overcoming the Cannonball Reflex
 - 3. Landing Skills
- III. Teaching Progressions
 - A. The Approach Progression for Running Skills
 - 1. Starting Skills
 - 2. Acceleration Development Work and Resisted Running
 - 3. Speed Development Work and Runway Rehearsal
 - B. The Horizontal Progression for Bounding Skills
 - 1. Short Bounding Series
 - 2. Medium Bonding Series
 - 3. Extended Bounding Series
 - C. The Vertical Progression for Bounding Skills
 - 1. Remedial Bound Series
 - 2. Vertical Bound Series
 - 3. Extended Bounding Series
 - D. The Specific Technical Progression for Unique Skills
 - 1. Fundamental Drills
 - 2. Staggered Start Triple Jump
 - 3. Short Run Triple Jumps
 - E. The Landing Progression for Landing Skills
 - 1. Gymnastic Standing Long Jumps
 - 2. The Squat
 - 3. The Kickout
- IV. Motor Learning Concepts
 - A. Whole vs. Part Learning
 - B. Variance in the Practice Environment
 - C. Understanding the Overload Principle
 - D. Controlling the Practice Environment and Practice Rhythms
 - E. Addressing Technical Features in the Training Program

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Presentation Notes

The first step in teaching any event is identifying commonalities. These are technical features or skills that must be learned to succeed in the event, as identified by study of great performers and sports science.

Time must be spent in the triple jump teaching the run, the landings and takeoffs throughout the phases, and flight movements. Most of the practice time should be devoted to those things that occur on the ground, as they have the greatest bearing on performance. Some attention to flight movements must be given, however, as rotation control though flight movements is more important here than in other jumping events.

There are horizontal and vertical components to the triple jump run and phases, and both must be taught.

When teaching phase mechanics, it is best to progress from vertical to horizontal over time. Postural conservation is much easier in a vertically oriented exercise. However, some remedial horizontal work must be done in the earliest stages of training.

We will now identify technical features and skill we must be able to accomplish in order to succeed at the event. We should provide teaching and rehearsal opportunities for all these skills in the training program.

Technical features we identify in the Approach include starting skills, acceleration skills, sprinting skills, and transition (meaning transition from acceleration to sprinting) skills.

Technical features we identify in the landings/takeoffs through the phases include postural conservation skills, contact skills, and swinging segment usage skills

There are some unique features that we don't find in most running or jumping exercises that occur in the triple jump. These are the takeoff from the board, free leg usage in the hop, and landing skills.

Teaching the triple jumps involves addressing all the skills in a fashion that orders skills from simple to complex. This is done through several teaching progressions that occur simultaneously. They will be described below.

The approach progression for running skills involves beginning with starting skills (a crouch start, progressing to a rollover and/or block start), progressing to acceleration development work and resisted running (short sprints to teach drive phase mechanics) to speed development work (sprinting to address continuation and transition phase mechanics) and runway rehearsal (actual performance of the approach run, including run management, technical terracing, and checkmark usage)

The horizontal progression for bounding skills used in the phases begins with a short bounding series (standing long jumps, three double leg hops, standing triple jumps, and a standing RRL, to teach rudimentary horizontal limb firing and heel-toe type foot contact patterns), progresses to a medium bounding series (standing RRR, LLL, RRL, LLR, and RLRL, teaching foot contact patterns and swing leg usage by keeping the swing leg extended and primarily in front of the jumper), then progressing to an extended bounding series (RLRL..., RRR..., LLL..., RRL..., LLR..., RRL..., with the same foci). Note that cycling the free leg is never addressed, rather complete push from the ground is stressed.

The vertical progression for bounding skills used in the phases begins with a remedial bound series (RRR..., LLL..., RRL..., and lateral bounds each direction. These are short, small, and vertical, with no recovery of the jump leg whatsoever. Initial contact is on the heel, and the free leg is held extended slightly in front to preserve pelvic alignment, and remains stationary) progressing to a vertical bound series (same exercise with a slight swinging of the free leg and horizontal component) to the same extended bounding series discussed in the horizontal progression). Note that cycling the free leg is never addressed, rather complete push from the ground is stressed.

The specific technical progression for unique skills includes fundamental drills (skips for height and distance, emphasizing foot contact patterns and blocking the swing below a parallel position to the runway, followed by repeated run-run takeoff exercises, and galloping over hurdles with an emphasis on vertical action, and arm movements. The latter two exercises mandate an extension of a free leg in flight, introducing this skill), progressing to staggered start triple jumps (a standing start triple jump with the takeoff leg positioned in front of the other at the start, as an initiation to a single legged start) to actual short run triple jumps (approach lengths or 4-11 steps, generally increasing as the athlete becomes more proficient).

The landing progression for landing skills starts with gymnastic standing long jumps (standing long jumps with the athlete landing in a balanced upright position, arms in front) to the same with a squat (to teach the absorption component), to the previous two skills followed by a kickout (a simultaneous roll onto the buttocks and kicking action of the legs, to develop the clearing of the feet so that the buttocks may land in the mark made by the feet), to standing long jumps and running long jumps with actual complete landings.

Generally speaking, provided the practice environment is not too intense, whole learning is more effective than part learning. Therefore, we should not spend great portions of the training year doing remedial drills, and should use larger portions when dividing up the event for teaching.

Motor learning science tells us variance in the practice environment improves transfer to the test. We should then vary the practice environment on a fairly regular basis by changing exercise choice, vertical/horizontal emphasis, and approach run length in short run jump situations.

The Overload Principle applies to motor learning as well, some controlled stress is needed to promote adaptation and learning. Thus the training should become a little more complex as the skill approaches perfection, not after perfection is gained.

The practice environment, especially the actual triple jump work, should be done in a controlled environment. This produces an opportunity for more repetitions. Also, slowing down rhythmically is a skill that jumpers must master as they improve, controlling the practice environment and rhythm can aid here.

Use the first few, unimportant competitions to help your athlete adjust to meet speeds.

There is not enough time to address all of the skills involved in triple jumping during triple jump practice. Most must be addressed elsewhere in the training program, saving triple jump practice for unique skills and problems.