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JOURNAL ARTICLES

Jump Rope Basics - Part 3

Intermediate Phase

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By the end of the preparation phase (step 1 of my four-step training system), athletes should have developed sufficient skill and cardiovascular conditioning levels to allow safe increases in training intensity as they go to the next level. (See my articles on the preparation phase in *CrossFit Journal* issues 62 and 64.)

Learning how to progress safely from 500 jumps to 5 minutes of jumping is a matter of focusing on body mechanics and turning technique, building concentration, and being able to rely on a good jump rope conditioning base for muscular stamina and cardiovascular endurance. By now your sense of balance, timing, and coordination should have improved to prepare you for safe progression from the 500 jumps we built up to at the end of the preparation phase to the five minutes of continuous jumping that we'll aim for this time. During this phase your level of jump rope proficiency should allow you to gradually increase rope speeds from 140 turns per minute to somewhere in the range of 160 to 180 turns per minute.

We'll also add a few additional new moves to the ones we've already discussed, the basic bounce step and the alternate-foot step. While increasing your endurance to five minutes in this phase, you'll also expand your repertoire of moves to include the side straddle, forward straddle, skier's jump, and bell jump.

Performance standards for the intermediate phase

The principle of continuation is the key to maximizing each jump rope training session. Continuation means being able to sustain an uninterrupted bout of jumping lasting up to five minutes or longer while executing different foot

patterns at varying intensity levels. The more proficient you become and the more endurance you develop, the more benefits you can reap from the exercise. Wearing the proper clothes, jumping on a good surface, and using an adjustable jump rope with a good turning mechanism are some of the keys to ensuring continuation.

Athletes will be working toward the following goals in the intermediate phase:

1. Progress to five minutes of continuous jumping at a pace of 160 to 180 RPM while alternating between the bounce step and the alternate-foot step.
2. Add the side straddle, forward straddle, bell jump, and skier's jump to the jump rope repertoire.
3. Alternate between the bounce step, alternate-foot step, and these new movements during each jump rope set. A set might consist of one or more minutes of jumping while alternating between the bounce and alternate-foot steps, followed by such combinations as the following:
 - a. 4 alternate-foot steps
 - b. 4 bounce steps
 - c. 4 side straddles
 - d. 4 forward straddles
 - e. 4 bounce steps
 - f. 4 skier's jumps
 - g. 4 bell jumps
 - h. 4 bounce steps
 - i. 4 alternate-foot steps

THE INTERMEDIATE-PHASE MOVES

Side straddle

Procedure

1. Start with bounce-step jump, with your feet together.
2. Spread your feet to shoulder-width apart while the rope passes over your head, so that you land in a straddle position.
3. On the third jump, bring your feet back in to the bounce step position.
4. Repeat this sequence. It should look like a jumping jack.

Technique tips

- Start with the bounce step and then integrate one side straddle jump (jumping your feet into a straddle position), before you go back to the bounce step. When you feel comfortable with this, start to integrate additional side straddle jumps, until you are eventually alternating them continuously with bounce steps so that the sequence of jumps is feet together, feet straddled, feet together, feet straddled, and so on.
- Do not extend your feet wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Remain on the balls of your feet for each jump.

Benefits

- Dramatically improves coordination and agility.
- Increases proprioception of the ankles.
- Strengthens groin and inner-thigh muscles.
- Improves lateral shifting capabilities.



Forward straddle

Procedure

1. Start in the bounce step stance.
2. On the first swing, jump by shifting the right foot forward.
3. On the second swing, jump by shifting the right foot back to its starting position while shifting the left foot forward.
4. Repeat.

Technique tips

- Shift your feet only a few inches forward and backward.
- Quickly shift one foot forward and the other backward at the same time.
- Keep your body weight balanced on the balls of your feet.
- Like all new movements, this one takes practice, so keep at it.

Benefits

- Strengthens the quadriceps, ankles, and knees.
- Further improves quickness and balance.
- Simulates sport-specific running or scampering movements.
- Improves start speed.
- Improves lateral shifting capabilities.



Skier's jump

Procedure

1. Start in the bounce step stance.
2. Keep your feet together and jump a few inches to the right with both feet on the first rope swing.
3. Keep your feet together and jump a few inches to the left on the second rope swing.
4. Repeat.

Technique tips

- Move your feet only a few inches to each side.
- Keep your feet together and torso upright.
- The movement should resemble a skier's slalom.

Benefits

- Develops timing, rhythm, and balance.
- Improves flexibility of the legs and hips.
- Improves lateral shifting capabilities.



Bell jump

Procedure

1. Start with the bounce step stance.
2. Keep your feet together and jump a few inches forward on the first swing.
3. On the second swing, keep your feet together and jump a few inches backward.
4. Repeat.

Technique tips

- Move your feet only a few inches back and forth.
- Keep your feet together.
- The movements should resemble the action of a bell clapper.

Benefits

- Develops coordination, balance, agility, and concentration.
- Strengthens the quadriceps and knees.
- Improves proprioception of the ankles.
- Improves lateral shifting capabilities.



Sample jump rope program

Your goal is to focus on a smooth transition from one technique to the next without a break. Remember to jump no more than one inch off the surface, land lightly on the balls of your feet, let the rope barely skim the surface, and stretch your legs and calves between and after sets as needed.

Week 1

Practice jumping at 160 turns per minute, performing the two basic techniques. Alternate between the basic bounce step and the alternate foot step, performing four of each step and repeating the pattern continuously for five minutes.

Week 2

Practice jumping at 170 turns per minute, alternating between the basic bounce step, the alternate foot step, and the side straddle, performing four of each step and then repeating the pattern continuously for five minutes.

Week 3

Practice jumping at 175 turns per minute, alternating between the basic bounce step, the alternate foot step, the side straddle, and the bell jump, performing four of each step and repeating the pattern continuously for five minutes.

Week 4

Practice jumping at 180 turns per minute, incorporating all six techniques: basic bounce step, alternate foot step, side straddle, forward straddle, skier's jump, and bell jump. As in previous weeks, perform four of each step and repeat the pattern continuously for five minutes.



Buddy Lee is a U.S. Olympian in wrestling (1992), the author of the book *Jump Rope Training*, the inventor of the U.S. Olympic Team Official Licensed Jump Ropes, the owner of [Jump Rope Technology](#), a two-time Marine Corps athlete of the year, a motivational speaker, and the world's leading jump rope training expert.

