



**HIGHJUMP
HIGHER
HIGHER**

Training System & Schedule

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INTRODUCTION

My workout system and chart may seem “easy”, and that is fine by me if you think that. The funny thing is, in all my years of high jumping, I routinely beat guys that were stronger jumpers than I was, simply because they wouldn’t ever take it “easy”. They thought working hard day in and day out was the solution to jumping higher, and it is, but your legs get tired, and they need to rest. One of the key secrets to my high jumping success was the fact that I wouldn’t overwork my legs right before a meet. Some people thought I was slacking off, but I was simply giving my legs a chance to get their springiness back before the upcoming competition.

I have broken down my workout into three areas: plyometrics, training, and jumping. Let’s talk about each one.

PLYOMETRICS

Contrary to popular belief, you can be a great high jumper without ever lifting a weight. Instead, you can do exercises that use your natural body weight and a natural jumping motion to build strength. There are a handful of high-quality plyometrics that can be amazingly helpful when training for the high jump. Think about the motion of jumping. You start with long bounding strides, a powerful plant and drive upwards, a good knee drive, and strong legs. Here are a few plyometrics to start with:

Bounding

Bounding is nothing more than really long, leaping strides. Work on driving your knee upwards and keeping your thigh parallel to the ground while your back leg extends backwards. The perfect example of bounding is the triple jump. To see beautiful bounding form, follow the link below to watch Jonathan Edwards setting the world record in the triple jump:

LINK: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DIN4Q5yT9M>

Frog Hops

You probably already know what these are. They are simply weightless squats where you jump instead of just standing up and crouching down. When you do frog hops, try to keep your butt from going too low which can put unnecessary stress on your knees and joints. Another idea with frog hops is to frog hop from one place to another, jumping 3-4 feet on each jump. I think you will find it a little bit more fun to do than simply hopping up and down in the same spot.

Lunges

Lunges are long strides where you don't leave the ground. You step very far away from your body with one leg, let your trailing knee barely touch the ground, and then bring that leg forward into the next step.

A Quick Tip

When you start doing plyometrics, instead of focusing on repetitions, try using a distance to cover of about 20 yards. As you get stronger, begin increasing the distance or decreasing the recovery time in between your sets. Another helpful idea is to do these workouts on grass. This will cushion each movement and keep you shin-split free.

TRAINING

Training consists of exercises that are directly related to the movements of high jumping. We will start with three basic training exercises: the three step approach, bar clearance jumps, and approach training.

The Three Step Approach

The three step approach consists of three, or perhaps four or five steps rather than your full length run in to the bar. This will give you a chance to focus on your knee drive, arm drive, and in-air form rather than worry about running your curve right and hitting your exact mark. When doing these jumps, try using a bungee instead of a bar to keep yourself from getting discouraged at your misses. Three step approaches will never get you a PR, but are merely to help you focus on different parts of your jump.

Bar Clearance Jumps

A key to a successful jump is great timing and awareness in the air. Once you have left the ground you have just a split second to make a very specific set of movements to glide your body over the bar. For this exercise, stand with your back to the bar, about 18" inches away. Set the bar at about 4' – 4'6" to start with. Crouch down and jump up and slightly backwards, flipping in the air over the bar. Focus on getting a good arch in your back, carefully timing when to drop your butt and kick your legs. This may seem unnatural at first, but with a little practice this will help you in leaps and bounds to develop reflexes that will keep you from bumping the bar off the standards during a real jump.

Approach Training

With approach training you don't even have to have a high jump area to run in. You can do these on a clean gym floor, the rest of a track, or somewhere with good traction. Simply mark your starting point, and take-off point and run your approach over and over to develop consistency. With approach practice you want to focus on three things: acceleration, speed, and position. You first want to focus on the initial acceleration once you leave your starting spot. Don't accelerate so fast that you get ahead of your steps and don't accelerate so slow that you get behind your steps and end up trying to catch up during the curve. Accelerate so you reach your desired speed about a step or two before you start your curve. That way, if you do feel a little too fast, you can back off during the curve. Never, accelerate during the curve: glide through the curve at the same speed that you enter the curve at. Finally, make sure you are hitting your take-off spot each and every time. Make adjustments in your starting point, speed, and acceleration until you find a consistent, comfortable, and quick approach.

JUMPING

What is the most common mistake high jumpers make? Jumping too much. Seriously, it may sound like a contradiction of words, but it is important to develop each part of a jump separately as much as it is to do complete, start to finish, jumps. A couple tips that I found helped me immensely.

Never Jump More Than Twice a Week

Yep, if you are spending more than two days a week jumping, you are probably jumping too much. This may lead to shin splints and tired legs that aren't ready for the upcoming meet.

When You Start to Get Tired, Stop Jumping

And I mean when you just barely start to feel tired, not when you are starting to feel really tired. Jumping is very much a mental sport, and if you are getting misses at low heights simply because your legs are tired, you are going to struggle at that next meet when you start getting to higher heights.

Don't Jump Two Days in a Row

Spread your jumping days a few days apart. Let your legs and mind rest so that when you come back a few days later, your legs are rested and your mind has had a chance to forget your mistakes and bad habits of last round and visualize good clearances.

Always Jump with Someone Else or a Camera

Take your time and let someone watch and coach you between jumps. Don't just head out there and jump over and over again. Tell your partner to look for specific things in your jump or have them record you so you can. Make each jump count!

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

This is just a sample, when you decide on your final schedule, remember to not overwork your legs and give yourself ample time before meets to rest. Before each routine, warm up by doing a few laps around the track and do some light stretching.

Monday – Plyometrics (3 sets)

1 Set = 1 length of bounding + 1 length of frog hops + 2 lengths of lunges.

Tuesday – Training (2 sets)

1 Set = 8 approaches + 5 three step jumps + 5 bar clearance jumps.

Wednesday – Jumping

No more than 15-20 jumps or less if your legs get tired sooner.

Thursday – Plyometrics (3 sets) and Training (2)

Use the same sets from earlier in the week but take time to recover between sets.

Friday – Rest

Take a jog, go swimming, or play some basketball if you still want to be active.

Saturday – Jumping

No more than 15-20 jumps or less if your legs get tired sooner.

Sunday – Rest

If you're a religious person, go to church. If you're not, watch football or soccer.

Good luck with your training! Remember to have fun, stay fresh, and kick some butt in your next meet!