

Jump Rope for Absolute Beginners

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Introduction

Jumping rope is simple, inexpensive, portable, requires minimal space, provides the most benefits for time spent and is also really fun. The benefits of jumping rope can be enjoyed and utilized by many: casual exercisers, adults and children, athletes, trainers and coaches. Once the basic skill of jumping rope is learned, one can use it to enhance multiple athletic qualities dramatically. For this reason, jumping rope is one of the most effective and dynamic exercises out there.

A jump rope can be used to develop coordination, finesse, speed, power, endurance, rhythm and timing. Jumping rope is a total body exercise, meaning all of the muscles of the body are engaged together, in synchronicity. You can think of it as fine tuning your body's muscles and neurological system, firing it all up in a dynamic way with the rope. It's an amazing experience. You will be glad you tried it!

The Goal of this E-Book

My goal is to teach you to jump rope, providing you with a tangible skill that benefits your mind, body and spirit. In the process, I will eliminate the guesswork and provide a clear explanation of the mechanics of jumping rope, how to execute the perfect jump and how to avoid common mistakes.

Chapter One

Why Jumping Rope Works

Learning to jump rope can be a challenge, know the potent benefits of this amazing exercise!

Simply: Jumping rope is a fun activity can burn calories, fine-tune your neuromuscular response, unify your body's rhythm and timing, increase your speed, endurance, agility, power and explosiveness.

Scientifically: Rope jumping requires the coordination of several muscle groups to sustain the timing and rhythmic movements crucial to the exercise. Coordination of these muscle groups increase capacity for dynamic balance – the ability to maintain equilibrium while executing complex movements. Rope jumping increases one's capacity for streamlined and efficient movements. Efficient movement leads to increased endurance, creating a synergy between quickness, timing, and strength that generates power and explosiveness while also extending endurance. Concentrating on maintaining the rhythm of swinging the rope and jumping over it facilitates subtle neuromuscular adjustments, increasing efficiency of movement.

10 minutes of jumping rope provides the same cardiovascular fitness as the following activities:

Cycling	Two miles in 6 minutes
Tennis	Two sets
Running	One mile in 10 minutes
Swimming	12 minutes
Jogging	30 minutes
Handball	20 minutes

Chapter Two

Choosing a Jump Rope and adjusting it to your height

So, what do you look for in a jump rope? Aren't all jump ropes created equal? Can't I use any rope?

It is CRUCIAL that you buy a rope that is adjustable. If a jump rope is too long or too short, learning the skill will be impossible and thus a big waste of your time and money. Using a non-adjustable rope would be like buying a "one size fits all" running shoe.

Note: Many adjustable ropes require the user to cut the rope down to size to fit. Make sure to cut very small bits at a time, then measure and try it out. If you cut too much, you may have to buy another rope and start over again.

Other ropes suitable for beginners:

The beaded rope: most commonly found in schools or a YMCA gym, the beaded rope has hard plastic segments threaded together with a cotton rope. It can be suitable for learning the skill of jump rope, but not for high performance jumping. Segments are prone to breakage and usually these ropes are not adjustable.

The leather rope: most commonly found in boxing gyms, the leather rope can be suitable for learning the skill of jumping rope but does not turn fast enough for high performance jumping. Typically, they are not adjustable, but if you do buy one, try to get one that is as close to your ideal rope length as possible.

Ropes to avoid:

The Cable Rope: Cable ropes can turn very fast, but are not

recommended for beginners because they can hurt like heck if you make a mistake and the cable whips into your skin. They also break easily and are not adjustable.

The Cotton Rope: These ropes are not recommended because they are too light and don't turn fast enough to maintain momentum. They are typically not adjustable and usually sold as kids toys, not for serious working out.

The Nylon Rope: Similar to the cotton rope, a nylon rope won't turn fast enough to maintain momentum.

ROPE MEASUREMENT

As stated earlier, the measurement of your jump rope will make or break your learning experience. Many times, I have observed folks in the gym pour out effort in vein to jump rope with a rope that is too long, giving up in frustration. Don't make that mistake. Take the time to properly measure your rope.



For beginners, the shoulder measurement of the jump rope is recommended.

1. Stand on the center of the rope with one foot.
2. Pull the handles up so that the tips of the handles come up no higher than your shoulder. If the rope goes past your shoulders, it is too long.

Adjust your rope first by tying a knot or two in the rope to test the shorter length. Once you become comfortable with this rope length,

then you can cut a segment of rope off to make it the right measurement. Take caution to not cut too much off, as this may send you back to the store to buy another rope.

Chapter Three

Shoes, Clothing and a Space to Jump Rope

Clothing

What you choose to wear has impact on your mobility while jumping rope. Here are some items to consider:

- Shoes: An athletic shoe with good cushioning is ideal for jumping rope. Consider the weight of the shoe. Shoes designed for running, tennis or cross training are good. Hiking boots, sandals, football and baseball shoes with hard soles or cleats are all usually heavy/bulky and not recommended for effective rope jumping. Do not jump rope with bare feet.
- Clothes: Normal workout wear is fine for jumping rope. Baggy sweat pants can cause the rope to catch on the pant legs. Use your best judgment.
- Loose jewelry can be distracting and may cause injury.
- Women should consider a quality sports bra.

Space

You can jump rope almost anywhere. As long as the rope isn't hitting a wall or the ceiling and you have some a couple of feet of leeway in each direction, you really only need about a 6x8 foot space to jump rope in. I've jumped rope in a Manhattan studio, a hotel room, a hallway, by a river and in a basement. You can usually find a space. If you're in a gym, be mindful of safety when jumping rope around others who are working out around you.

Surface

The surface you're jumping on is important.

- Wood: Ideal surface because it has a little bit of give and is easy on the body.
- Concrete: The worst surface to jump on because it has no give. Use it as a last resort.
- Carpet: Ok for jumping rope, although depending on the carpet, it may slow down footwork and rope speed slightly.
- Rubber: Good for jumping rope, absorbs shock, designed for running/walking/jumping.

Chapter Four

Mechanics: The Three Phases of a Jump

Did you know a single jump has three phases?

It does! One jump has three phases: Load phase, flight phase and landing phase, which you will perform hundreds of times in one session. A fundamental understanding of the jump will greatly enhance your experience with the rope.

Load Phase: With your feet shoulder-width apart, balance your body on the balls of your feet with your legs slightly flexed. You are loading your body weight in preparation to jump.

Flight Phase: When you jump, muscular contractions from the ankles, calves, knees and hips propel the body upward and off the ground. You should not jump over 1 inch from the surface as the rope swings under your feet. Because you will perform hundreds of jumps, less is more when jumping rope, jump as low as possible to clear the rope. This also greatly reduces your chances of injury.

Landing Phase: As gravity brings the weight of the body back down, land softly and quietly on the balls of the feet. Your heels should not touch the surface.

In some ways, rope jumping is like running. If you don't run with proper form, you increase chances of fatigue and injury. Good form allows you to maximize the benefits of the exercise and reduce the risk of injury. Managing the multiple movements required of a proper rope jumping form produces not only the aerobic and anaerobic training effects but also develops the kinesthetic sense that will enhance balance, rhythm and timing, producing graceful movement.

Rehearse the jump without the rope, allowing muscle memory to learn the jump without the tension of trying to clear the rope. Be mindful of lightness, jumping only three inches, keeping the head straight, back straight and bouncing off the balls of your feet. Rehearse several times.

Chapter 5

Now let's jump rope!

Jumping the Rope: The starting position of a jump is with the rope in the crook of your knees which are slightly bent, handles slightly forward to pull up the tension in the rope. As you spin the rope over your head, the body loads up in anticipation of the jump. Jump over the rope using only the motion needed, keeping the same form as when there was no rope. Stop. Do only one jump.

Multiple Jumps: Following the first jump, spin the rope overhead again and



jump the rope using the same motion and body feeling from your rehearsal jumps. Jump straight up and avoid kicking the heels. Bounce on the balls of the feet. Fewer relaxed jumps are better than many rigid forced jumps.

Sustained Jumping: 2+ jumps and you are now jumping rope!!

The Bounce Step and the Alternate Foot Step are the two basic jump rope techniques that will help you develop the proficiency necessary to use jump rope training. These techniques are also best to use to establish training baselines and to test conditioning and proficiency.

The Bounce Step. (The Schoolyard Step) Simple and effective. Jump with the feet together, just high enough to clear the rope (1-2 inches from the ground) by pushing from the balls of the feet, slightly bending the knees and flexing the ankles. Land lightly on the balls of your feet. Stay on the balls of your feet and reload to repeat.

It is key to only bounce once per swing of the rope, don't double bounce. A common mistake is to double bounce. This uses twice the effort and also increases the risk of injury. Begin with only one jump at a time, then increase to 5 jumps per set. Next perform sets of 10 jumps. You have reached proficiency when you can perform 140 jumps without a catch of the rope. Master the Bounce Step before trying alternate foot step.

The Alternate Foot Step. Similar to the Bounce Step, but alternating steps, as if running in place. Jump a little higher than one inch. Jump by lifting the knees forward without kicking the feet backward. Swing the rope around and jump over it with one foot. From this position, on the second turn of the rope, jump over it with the alternate foot. Continue at a slow pace until you establish a comfortable rhythm.

Keys to Victory

- Rehearse the jump several times without the rope to teach your body the three phases of the jump in a relaxed manner using good form.
- Utilize shadow jumping, spinning the rope at your side while jumping with relaxed and proper form, to further develop your timing.
- Once you are jumping the rope, jump straight up and do not kick your heels back.
- Once you are performing multiple jumps, inhale and exhale for a specific number of jumps, ex. breathe in for three jumps, out for three jumps, to synchronize your breathing with the exercise.
- Stretch before, during and after your jump rope session. If anything feels tight, stop and stretch it out.
- Above all, be patient. Never end a jump rope session on a down note. Make sure you have completed several jumps with good form to end a session on a positive note.

Chapter Six

The Road to Proficiency (500 Jumps)

Teaching our brain a skill like jumping rope is like cutting a path through the woods. The first time through, we are cutting the path, doing the physical work of clearing the way. We get a little further each time, and with each session we walk that path back and forth, until it becomes smooth and easy to walk upon.

One way of keeping our jump rope practice in perspective is to embrace the learning process and think of it as an evolving practice. It can also be thought of as a tool that we use. At first, the tool is blunt and needs to be sharpened, so we keep sharpening, little by little, until the tool is useful for what we want to use it for: a warm-up, to increase stamina, to increase speed, power, agility and balance, and overall workout.

Proficiency = 500 jumps without missing!

Start with a baseline number of jumps you can perform with good execution (no double bounce or heel kicks). This gives you a tangible number by which to measure your success. Aim to reach or exceed your baseline with each jump rope session.

Good Luck!