

THE TRIPLE JUMP

The triple jump event is a combination of three different types of jumps performed while trying to maintain maximum speed through each phase. Training for triple jump can improve coordination and strength, although the technical aspects can be quite challenging initially for young athletes.

SAFETY & RULES

The safety points described in the long jump also apply to triple jump. The rules are identical with the addition of the requirements for a valid jump where a competitor must make three distinctive jumps – a hop, a step and a jump. In the hop, the athlete must take off and land with the same foot; the step landing must be made on the other foot and in the jump phase the competitor must take-off from the foot on which the step was finished.

TEACHING PROGRESSIONS FOR TRIPLE JUMP

In training for triple jump there is a definite teaching progression. The first task is to teach the correct sequence and rhythm of the three phases. This can be introduced by having the athlete perform a standing triple jump. Useful cues are 'same', 'other', 'both' to assist the athlete in understanding on which foot to land.

Once the correct sequence has been mastered, the athlete should perform a standing triple jump alongside markers that are evenly spaced to develop correct rhythm. Carpet squares or lane lines on the track also provide useful markers. Encourage the athlete to be

aware of performing the action with even phases (clapping your hands as they land will also help them to hear the sound of the rhythm)

A useful coaching aid when working with beginners is to evenly place small carpet squares alongside the long edge of the pit as follows (Fig.1):

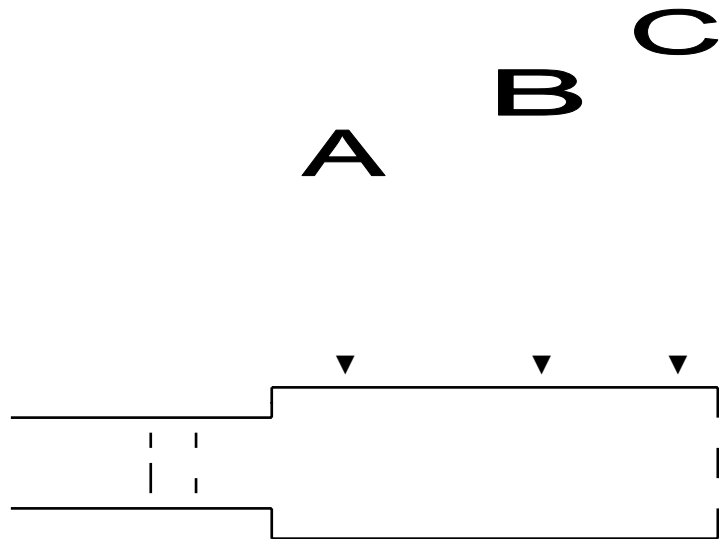


Fig. 1: Ensure the sides of the pit are level and safe for the athletes to learn to triple jump

Have athletes start from the sequence marked (a) and perform a standing triple jump into the pit. If the athlete is able to easily land on the squares on each of the phases, progress to the (b) sequence mats and again to the (c) sequence.

the sandpit:

- Standing long jump
- Standing triple jump – alternate starting from each foot
- Standing two hops, a step and jump
- Standing four hops and jump – try one on each leg
- Standing four bounds (steps) and jump – try to keep thighs parallel to the ground in the bounds
- Standing two hops, one step, two hops and a jump

There are numerous combinations a coach can utilise. It is important, however, that this type of activity should be used sparingly in young athletes to prevent overuse injuries.

Athletes enjoy the challenge of trying to better their efforts while developing the correct rhythm of the event.

Once the athlete has learned the correct sequence of triple jump and has begun to develop rhythm, the coach can start to create an awareness of two vital components that assist the athlete to maintain speed through the jump as well as reduce the likelihood of injury.

1. The landing in the hop and step phases should be with a flat foot

A flat foot (or 'active') landing allows the momentum gained in the run up to carry through the three phases of the triple jump. If the foot lands toe first the athlete will lose balance and speed, affecting the rhythm of the jump. A heel first landing is usually caused by the athlete over-striding therefore lowering the athlete's hips and making it more difficult to maintain speed through the jump. It may also result in a bruised heel.

2. The trunk should be upright

Keeping the trunk upright allows the athlete to maintain balance through the triple jump phases. It will also make it easier for the athlete to achieve active landings and reduce the risk of developing shin pain.

These components should be continually reinforced in the young athlete to ensure they will be able to cope with the additional speed of the run up. Some of the activities the athlete can practice include:

- a standing hop into the pit with a flat foot landing – ensuring the trunk is upright; eyes should look straight ahead. The athlete tries to achieve distance without losing form. Progress to walking 3 strides and hopping for distance, then jogging 3 strides.
- Leaping for distance from a standing start with an upright trunk and flat foot landing (jump the river is a good drill for this). The athlete should try to drive the leading thigh to a position parallel to the ground. Progress to a 3 stride jog and leap into the pit.
- A standing hop and step into the pit, progressing to a 3 stride jog.
- A 3 stride walk and triple jump, progressing to a 3 stride jog. Once competent, the athlete can extend the jog distance by 2 strides at a time, always reinforcing the upright posture and flat foot landings

As with long jump, the run up should be fast, controlled and accurate. Unlike long jump, however, where the athlete drives up from the take off, the triple jumper should 'run' off the board. Excessive height in the hop phase will cause loss of speed and potential injury. The knee of the take-off leg should be brought through flexed and the thigh should be almost parallel as it is driven forward and up prior to an active landing with a flat foot. This will take time to develop as it requires strength and coordination, which will increase as the athlete matures

In the step phase, the aim is to hold the leading knee high so that the thigh is parallel to the ground and try to hold this position until the athlete lands with a flat 'active' foot in preparation for the final jump phase.

Most young athletes tend to try to hop too far resulting in a very short step phase and subsequently a fairly high long execution. Most of the run up speed will have been severely diminished at the end of the hop. The coach should continue to encourage the athlete to triple jump with even phases.

COORDINATION AND STRENGTH DEVELOPMENT

It should be noted that most athletes who compete in both long and triple jumps take off their jumps with the same foot. Some athletes, however, prefer to hop off in the triple jump on the 'opposite' foot as they will perform the long jump phase from their preferred long jump take off foot. The key to good triple jumping is to ensure that strength and coordination development occurs on both legs.

There are many activities a coach can use to develop coordination and strength in the young athlete. Whatever the skill, the coach should continue to reinforce flat foot landing, an upright trunk and even rhythm. The following activities can be used in a game format (landing in a certain zone), in a testing situation where distances achieved are measured and recorded, or as the concluding part of a technique session. All jump landings are in