

10 No-Gym Plyometric Moves for Explosive Strength

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Watch any sprinter explode off the starting line and you're bound to be impressed by her toned glutes and chiseled legs as she blazes down the track to victory. The key training technique to such explosion, power and speed is plyometrics. A favorite exercise modality of explosive athletes, plyometrics uses forceful eccentric contractions to produce power. These movements train speed, strength and elasticity in the athlete's muscles. Plyometrics is meant to be executed with impeccable form, so if you notice your knee starting to track over your foot or you're not getting as much height off the ground -- stop! It's important to be precise and explosive. Here are 10 moves to "shock train" your body with plyometrics.



1 Star Jumps

Start with your feet underneath your hips in an athletic stance. With a tall chest, bend down so that your hands touch the ground. As soon the tips of your fingers reach the ground, drive your arms up overhead and jump into the air. At the top of your jump, spread out your arms and legs so that you're making an "X" with your body. Return to the squatting position and repeat.



2 Tuck Jumps

Stand with your feet hip-distance apart in an athletic stance. Swing your arms up as you jump straight up while pulling your knees to belly-button height. When you land, think of the ground as being extremely hot, quickly rebounding back up so that your jumps are in rapid succession.



3 Box Drops

Stand on top of a sturdy box or bench. Start with an eight- to 12-inch box and work up in height. Step off the box and land firmly in an athletic stance. Do not let your hips drop as you land. Absorb the shock of the jump with your knees slightly bent, straighten up to standing position and repeat.



4 Depth Jumps

Also known as a drop jump, the depth jump trains force development, speed and elasticity. Stand on top of a sturdy box or bench. Start with an eight- to 12-inch box and work up in height. Step off the box and as soon as your feet hit the ground, quickly and forcefully drive your arms up and jump up into the air. For a more advanced move, you can jump on top of another box to work on your vertical jump.



5 Single-Leg Lunge Jump

Start with your feet directly underneath your hips. Step back on your right leg into a lunge position with your right hand lightly touching the ground and your left foot planted firmly. In one motion, explode off your left leg and drive your right knee up into the air in front of you. Your left arm should be reaching high to the sky. Swing your right leg back to the starting position and land back on your left leg and repeat.



6 Single-Leg Box Jump

Use an eight-inch box to begin. Start by standing on your left leg. Dip slightly and drive your hips up while jumping off the planted leg and land on top of the box while still balancing on your left leg. Step down and repeat on your right side.



7 Scissor Jump

Similar to a lunge jump, start with your left leg forward and your right leg back in a lunge. Drive your left arm up into the air as you power off your left leg. While you're in the air, quickly kick your right leg forward, landing in the same position as you started. Repeat on the other side.



8 Alternate Leg Bounds

This is an advanced movement, so you'll want to work up to it. Start standing with your feet underneath your hips. Take a step forward and with your lead leg and jump off with it while driving the opposite knee into the air. Try to get as much hang time as possible. The opposite arm of the lead leg should be driving forward so it looks almost as though you're running with a giant stride in the air. As you land back down on the leg that was driving forward, quickly alternate legs and repeat the same movement on the opposite side. Repeat with 10 to 12 bounds total. Remember to be elastic in your movement, and don't spend too much time on the ground.



9 Broad Jumps

Yes, just like the ones you did in high-school gym class. This move is key for building power. Start in an athletic stance with your arms behind your hips and eyes gazing ahead of you (not down at the floor). If you look at the floor, that's exactly where you will end up, and your jump will end early. You can swing the arms a few times to build momentum if you need to. Then, with a big explosion, drive your hips and arms forward as far as you can go until your feet touch the ground, landing in a frog-like manner. Do not dip too far into a squat or you will lose the explosiveness of the hips. Remember: This is not a squat jump.



10 Single-Leg Bounds

A very advanced take on the alternate leg bound, this should only be done by an athlete that can squat at least his or her own body weight. Start by standing on one leg with that knee slightly bent. Swing both arms up as you jump with the leg you were standing on. Cycle the leg to get as much distance as possible. Land back on the same leg you took off with and repeat five to six times. As you repeat this movement, your arms will aid you by moving in a circular fashion.