

A Vertical Jump that Defies Gravity

The vertical jump is quite possibly one of the most sought after abilities in any sport and by every athlete. You may wonder why the vertical jump is held in such high esteem by people ranging from backyard ballers to NFL combine coaches, but if you had a bit more background knowledge of what a powerful vertical jump entails, you would be less than amazed by the impressive respect the vertical jump demands on the court and the field. So what is in a vertical jump and why is it such a sought after attribute of athleticism?

The vertical jump is a mixture of raw power, speed, agility, and grace. The vertical jump not only requires tremendous muscular power, but it also requires the neural ability to put this power to good use. This means that the average guy who has strong legs won't necessarily have a huge vertical unless he knows how to coordinate and apply his muscular strength efficiently.

So, how come the vertical jump is considered such a valid measure of athletic potential? Simply put, it's because if someone can jump high, that means they have massive explosive strength. Explosive strength is the same type of strength that allows someone to run fast, accelerate fast, throw far, and kick hard. This is why the vertical jump is one of the most common tests of athleticism used in professional sports.

How can you increase the vertical leap? Since there are a number of factors that lead to a massive vertical, the most effective way to increase the vertical leap is by addressing these factors one by one. As you increase each attribute required to propel the body into the air, your vertical will increase. If you can balance these aspects, you will absolutely defy gravity!

The main factors are relative strength, plyometric ability, and speed strength or explosive strength:

Relative Strength - Relative strength is your strength to weight ratio. This means being strong for your size. The stronger you are in relation to your weight, the more power you will be able to apply towards letting your center of gravity leave the floor.

Plyometric Ability - Plyometric ability refers to the efficiency at which your body stores and redirects energy. This means that you are able to take force from a run up and use it to cock your tendons like springs, only to release them at just the right moment and send your body flying into the air. This type of strength can be augmented by something known as plyometrics.

Speed Strength - When making a vertical jump, it is not enough to be super strong. You need to be able to apply this strength in under 1 second. This means that you need to teach your muscles to utilize as much power as possible in as small a period of time as possible. This is augmented most effectively through Olympic lifts. Most Olympic lifters have vertical jumps in excess of three feet without doing any jump training whatsoever.

If you can figure out a way to increase these aspects of strength, you will be well on your way to a massive vertical. A great vertical jump program will maximize these three aspects and completely send your vertical leap through the roof!

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