

## **Jumping Rope: Quick, Easy, Effective**

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If you are looking to improve your overall quickness or jumping ability, or even if you are looking for an alternative form of cardio, one simple tool that is often overlooked or forgotten about is the jump rope. While jumping rope is a skill and does take some coordination and rhythm, it is a very versatile and affordable piece of training equipment. After you get the basic rhythm down you can incorporate all different types of jumps and footwork drills to not only increase your athletic ability, but to make sure your heart rate stays up as well. If you have a couple training partners, you can even try out some of the old school-yard jump rope games from back in the day; or if you're feeling extra springy and coordinated you can give Double Dutch a shot.

As an athlete, I love throwing jump rope into my exercise routine for a couple reasons: first, I definitely notice a difference in my jumping quickness as well as my jumping height between the times when I do jump rope and the times when I haven't jumped rope for a while. Second, after just a few minutes of jumping rope my calves are on fire, not to mention the burn in my shoulders and forearms, and I'm definitely winded. Now I'm not talking about jumping rope at a leisurely pace for ten minutes. I'm talking about intense interval training with a slightly greater than 2:1 work to recovery time.

The routine I do on a semi-regular basis is I go as hard as I can for 80 rotations (roughly 30 seconds), then I bring it down to a much more moderate pace for 40 rotations (roughly 30 seconds). I complete this pattern twice, rest completely for 45 seconds, and complete the whole set again two more times. The entire routine takes less than ten minutes, but if I push myself hard enough I'm feeling it by the end. This is just one example of how you can use a jump rope to get in shape.

Something else you can try would be different footwork drills while jumping rope, such as stepping over and back across a line, doing the "Ali Shuffle", or crossing your legs front to back. You can do single leg hops and you can do double jumps, where the rope rotates around twice before you land. Basically the only thing limiting what you can do as far as footwork with the jump rope is your imagination. Throw in a few minutes of jump rope into the end of your workout sessions and you'll be feeling better and moving more explosively in no time!

Get big or die tryin'.

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