

Exercises for Jumping

Jumping is a key skill that helps to support a child's overall development. During preschool years, children are building the foundations for balance, coordination and body awareness all of which form a part of jumping.

Jumping can help support:

Gross motor development – Jumping helps to strengthen the large muscles of the legs, hips and core all of which are essential for other activities such as running, climbing and other physical activities

Balance and coordination – Jumping requires coordination of both sides of a child's body and control of their movements during take-off and landing. This helps improve balance as well as motor planning.

Bone and joint health – Weight-bearing activities like jumping, help to support healthy bone development and joint strength.

Body awareness and confidence – Learning to jump helps children understand how their body moves in space. Successful jumps can help to build confidence and a willingness to try new physical challenges.

Readiness for other activities – Jumping can help support participation in playground activities, games and other movement tasks used in preschool and early school years.

Safety

To ensure that jumping activities are done in a safe way, the following should be considered:

Footwear

- Children should be wearing well-fitting closed-toe-shoes with non-slip soles
- Shoes should provide good support
- Avoid jumping in socks only

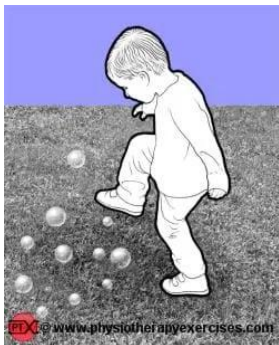
Supervision

- Jumping activities should always be supervised by an adult
- The adult should provide clear instructions and demonstrations, especially for safe take-off and landing (bending knees and landing on both feet)

Environment

- Use a safe, open space free from obstacles such as toys and furniture
- Avoid jumping on slippery surfaces
- Avoid uneven surfaces

Stomping



Helps to encourage pushing with force through feet.

Position your child in standing. Use targets on the floor and instruct your child to stomp on them, alternating the leg they are stomping each time.

This exercise can also be done with bubbles on the floor.

Stepping up and over a step



Helps improve control of movements and push off.

Position your child in front of a small step.

Encourage them to practice stepping up with one leg and stepping down with the other one.

Make this more challenging by increasing the height of the step.

Standing on tiptoes



Helps strengthen calf muscles and improve balance. Also encourages pushing through toes (an important part of jumping).

Place an object such as a toy on a surface such as a table.

Encourage your child to reach up to retrieve the toy.

Progress this by increasing the length of time spent on tiptoes. Encourage your child to play with the toy on the table whilst on tiptoes.

Stepping over obstacles



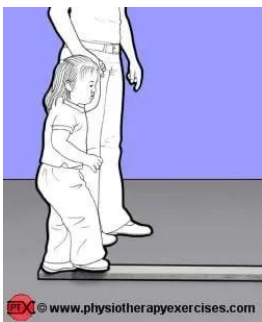
Helps to improve balance and pushing off through feet.

Place an object on the floor.

Encourage your child to step over it, initially holding their hand for support.

Progress this by taking away the hand hold or by increasing the height of the object.

Tandem walking



Helps to improve balance.

Mark out a line on the floor. This can be done using something like masking tape.

Encourage your child to walk along the line, one foot in front of the other, initially holding their hand for support.

Progress this by increasing the length of the line and by reducing hand hold support.

Jumping down from a step



Helps to get a child used to the action of jumping

Position your child on a low step.

Encourage your child to jump off the step, initially holding their hands for support. Make sure they are bending both of their knees when landing.

Use targets on the floor to help make this more engaging.

Jumping

Once a child has become comfortable with jumping down from a low step, they may be ready to try jumping on the spot on a flat surface.

- Encourage your child to jump on the spot on a flat, even surface
 - Start by holding both of their hands
 - As they become more confident reduce this to one hand and eventually to no hands when they are comfortable enough to jump independently

Once your child is comfortable jumping independently on the spot, begin to introduce jumping in different directions starting with jumping forwards.

- Use targets placed on the floor for your child to aim for to help turn it into more of a game

Once they can jump forwards safely and confidently introduce sideways jumping, again using targets on the floor to help guide them where to jump.

Finally, once they are able to jump sideways, introduce them to jumping backwards.