



Plyometric Training

“I want to jump higher” or “I want to be more explosive”. These statements are thrown about all over the place and it seems there are a number of “trainers” out there that promise the world over that they can make improvements in these areas but seem to miss out on some key components. This leaves athletes in a bind to be sure when their sport coaches wonder what the heck they have been doing in training.

Plyometric training is one area of training that is often used to achieve the goals listed above but often misunderstood and frequently misused. Donald Chu, PhD, a recognized and respected pioneer in the athletic development and training arena, defines plyometrics as “exercises that enable a muscle to reach maximum strength in as short a period of time as possible. This speed–strength ability is known as power”. In the book “High Powered Plyometrics” James Radcliffe and his co–author Robert Farentinos state that “plyometrics is a method of developing explosive power”. In both, you can see it is method, a component of training and not solely that main focus of a training program. It can be useful in capitalizing on the foundational strength, Inherent or obtained, and positively influencing deficits that an athlete may have. It should not be done without care for a number of factors:

1. Chronological age of the athlete
2. Athletic age of the athlete
3. Gross strength of the athlete
4. Flexibility of the athlete
5. Joint mobility of the athlete
6. Proprioceptive and balance awareness of the athlete
7. Injury history or state of the athlete
8. Objective of the sport and athlete
9. Safety of the athlete
10. Ability of the athlete to perform basic foundational movements effectively and decelerate/eccentrically load appropriately.



I have seen and heard trainers/sports physical therapist include plyometric training or exercises into a plan and not consider or account for all of the things listed above and then wonder why an athlete is not progressing as expected or sustains an injury and struggles to advance. Want to learn more? Contact us at www.elitelevelpt.com.

