

High Jump (Tim Forsyth)

The high jump consists of four phases, which are:

1 - The Run Up

A typical high jump run up is made up of nine steps in the form of a 'J'. The first four steps in a straight line and the last 5 on a curve that prepares your body for the rotation that must occur later when your shoulders twist to bring your back to the bar.

Stay relaxed, your run up should be the same every time, try to keep your posture upright and your head up at all times.

Concentrate on maintaining good running form all the way through.

Build the speed gradually so that you reach YOUR optimum take off speed in the last two steps. This will enable you to get the most out of your jump!

Make sure that the second last step of your run up is very active. This will help stop you from dropping your hips at take off and keep your body in a better position for an effective take off.

Training Tip:

Practice your run up with either no bar or a really low bar that you can scissor jump easily. This will enable you to do more practice run ups using less energy. Also concentrate on the second last step, not the last. If the second last step is done well, the last step will take care of itself.

2 - The take off

If done well you should appear to be leaning backwards at take off.

Drive the knee closest to the bar up to 90 degrees, and try to time the drive up of your arms and knee with the jump off the ground.

The timing of this is the most effective way to increase the height of your jump.

Some people like to drive up with one arm, some with two.

There is no one rule, just do whatever feels more comfortable for YOU or whichever gives you the best results.

Keep your head up; the rest of your body will follow wherever your head goes.

Try to go straight up if possible, the momentum gained from your run up will ensure that you don't come crashing back down on the track in front of the bar!

Training Tip:

To work on your take off, try to get the knee that you drive up with level or parallel to the cross bar, the effort of doing this will help you to get the most out of your take off.

3 - Flight/Bar Clearance

Your head guides most of the movement from here.

Let your head lay back and this will raise your hips to give you the back arch to help you to clear the bar.

Once you've passed the bar, lift your head up quickly to help pull your legs out of the way so that they don't hit it.

It doesn't matter what you do with your arms through this phase, just keep them away from the bar.

Training Tip:

Do some back overs! Stand about 30 cm away with your back to the bar. Start with the bar at about

hip height, and leap backwards over the bar landing on your upper back and shoulders. Increase the height of the bar slowly. To add more realism, jump off a low bench.

4 - Landing

Land on your upper back and shoulders.

Your legs should then come through and land behind you, as if your doing a backwards somersault.

Take note of where you land. You should land about one meter into the mats, and you should not be outside of the two uprights.

If you are landing outside of the two uprights, you may be in danger of missing the landing mats (which will hurt a lot) and you may need to adjust the position you are taking off from.

Training Tip:

Becoming comfortable with landing on your upper back and shoulders is probably the biggest fear you need to overcome when learning how to high jump.

By just bouncing up and down on the landing mats (like a trampoline) and occasionally trying to land on your shoulders or back you can slowly become more comfortable with this.

But like most things, take your time with this and you'll realise that its not that bad!