

Soccer Plyometrics

(Adapted from Sports Fitness Advisor)

What are plyometrics?

Plyometrics is a type of exercise training designed to produce fast, powerful movements, and improve the functions of the nervous system, generally for the purpose of improving performance in sports.

Using plyometrics for soccer is one the most effective ways to increase explosive speed and power. The U.S Soccer team has been using plyometrics to become more competitive on the international level. Landon Donovan, leading scorer of the U.S. team, has used plyometrics to improve his strength, speed, and confidence.

Important Guidelines for Plyometric Training:

Here are some very important guidelines to bear in mind before commencing plyometrics for soccer.

- Warm up with 5-10 minutes of light aerobic activity followed by 5-10 minutes of stretching to all major muscle groups.
- Perform plyometrics for soccer at the start of a training session before endurance training or lots of ball work. Muscles should be fresh.
- Plyometric training will not leave you out of breath or even feeling tired. Athletes often feel the urge to do more. Don't. Stick to your program to avoid injury and severe muscle soreness 34 hours later!
- Actions should be performed at high speed and with maximum intensity while maintaining high quality
- Two minutes rest between sets is normal. Remember, the idea is not become fatigued. Keep good form.
- Two sessions per week with 24-48 hours rest between during the late pre-season are ample. One session a week is enough during the in-season.
- If any muscle feels sore during a session, end it immediately.

Here are some sample plyometrics for soccer exercises. A session might contain between 10 and 15 sets of 8 to 10 repetitions in total. For example, you could choose 4 exercises and perform 3 sets of 8 reps for each exercise.



Jump Running

- Run in 'slow motion' landing on alternate feet. Try to achieve as much height and distance with each stride as possible.
- For every right and left foot strike, count one repetition.



Bounding

- Mark out a series of small cones or obstacles about 3 feet apart in a straight line.
- Start behind the first obstacle in a semi squat position.
- Jump as high and far as possible over each obstacle. It's a good idea to practice first to gauge how far apart you should set the markers.
- You can use anything to jump over, a training top or even just a line on a track.



Knees to Shoulders

- Stand with hands at shoulder level.
- Alternate driving left and right knees up to hands.
- For every right and left knee strike, count one repetition.



Groucho Walk

- Arch back, push butt back, and bend forward at hips until chest is almost parallel to ground.
- Take long step with right leg by reaching out with heel; make sure to keep right leg straight.
- When heel reaches ground, extend foot so that ball of foot touches ground.
- Without allowing shoulders to rise or body position to change, pull yourself forward with right leg.
- Repeat with left leg and continue in walking fashion.
- For every right and left leg step, count one repetition.



Zigzag Shuffle

- Shuffle right at 45-degree angle for three strides.
- Plant right foot, pivot, then shuffle left at 45-degree angle for three strides.
- This is one repetition.



B-Skip

- Skip by driving right knee up as you push off with left leg.
- With knee still elevated, extend right leg and accelerate it down by contracting hamstring.
- Repeat with left leg, counts as one repetition.



A-Skip

- Skip by driving right knee up as you push off with left leg.
- Drive right foot down as you raise left knee.
- Repeat with left leg, counts as one repetition.