

about the
AUTHOR

Kyle Brown is a health and fitness expert whose portfolio includes everything from leading workshops for Fortune 500 companies and publishing nutrition articles in top ranked fitness journals, to training celebrity clientele—from pro athletes to CEOs to multiplatinum recording artists. Kyle's unique approach to health and fitness emphasizes nutrition and supplementation as the foundation for optimal wellness. After playing water polo for Indiana University, as well as in London, Kyle became involved in bodybuilding and fitness for sport specific training. Kyle is the creator and Chief Operating Officer for FIT 365—Complete Nutritional Shake (www.fit365.com).

Back to the Playground: Jumping Rope for Athletic Conditioning

Reminisce for a moment back to your childhood when fitness was not a monitored chore but a multitude of fun games and activities you looked forward to participating in during recess or after school. One of the most time-efficient and beneficial childhood activities for physical fitness was jumping rope. Yet as adults, the only group that notoriously taps into the conditioning benefits of jumping rope is fighters. With a little persistent practice, you too can reap the conditioning benefits of this fun yet challenging and time-efficient workout tool.

Make sure you purchase a quality rope and the appropriate size. The rope needs to be long enough but not too long that it is not challenging. To find a standard starting measurement, stand with one foot in the center of the rope and the handles should reach your underarm. Since jumping rope is a plyometric move, (explosive jumping movement) you must ensure you have a forgiving shock absorbing surface. A few good examples are a basketball court, tennis court, or gym mat.

Since jump roping is considered by many a plyometric activity, there should be a gradual progression in the quantity and intensity of the jumps. Learning how to jump rope parallels in many ways learning how to play a musical instrument. You need to get the skills down before you can

play. When you are beginning learning to jump rope, you should focus on frequency rather than duration. For example, if you are at the gym to lift weights followed by cardio, use jump rope for a minute or two as a warm up, post resistance training, and post cardio. Once you've developed baseline proficiency, you can train with a variety of programs. For instance, try one minute rounds followed by 30 seconds rest. Try to work up to 6–12 of them. Start by running in place or double leg jumps and work up to double unders (two turns of the rope for every jump), crisscross patterns, single leg jumps, and backwards jumps.

Not only is jumping rope a challenging workout, but once you develop proficiency it can become quite fun. No more need to stress if your hotel doesn't have a gym and it's cold or raining outside. You can take a jump rope with you wherever you travel so it's the one of the most inexpensive portable workout options. If you are a novice, be patient and expect a challenge. Yet the rewards are worth the practice and jumping rope can become an enjoyable, time-efficient conditioning tool. ■