Teaching the Triple Jump

It has always been my contention that there should be more quality triple jumpers in high school than there presently are. The 45' Triple Jumper should be as common as the 13' pole vaulter. I use this comparison because the Pole Vault is an event where coaches seem to spend a lot of time teaching their athletes correct vaulting techniques and the Triple Jump seems to be an event where relatively little time is spent coaching the athlete or the coach is the possessor of relatively little knowledge concerning the event.

How many times have you seen a pole vaulter enter a meet without the faintest idea of how to do the event? Believe me it happens in the Triple Jump all to frequently!

Perhaps this is because the triple jump appears to be a simpler event than the Pole Vault and due to this fact relatively little time is spent working on it during practice. Well, it is a simpler event but this is no reason to sacrifice the athlete's performance and possibly their safety because of this fact. The triple jump probably puts more stess on an atheletes body than any other field event when done correctly. The additional stress experienced by using unsound techniques can be potentially dangerous to theathlete.

Many big, strong high school athletes can muscle their way to 44' and lets face it, this distance wins most meets. The fact is, if a jumper without technique can jump 44', this same jumper could probably jump 47' if they knew what they were doing.

KEYS TO SUCCESS WHEN TEACHING THE TRIPLE JUMP

- understand what's really happening during the jump.
- not what the books and films say it should look like.
- not what the arms and legs should do
- but what the jumper is really feeling (kinesthetic sense). What is the action similar to.
- proper lead up drills
- don't let bad habits develop
- if bad habits develop, go to previous stage of development.
- certain drills are for a certain level of development
- BE PATIENT !!!

PARTS

- approach phase (least important in the beginning but very important once the athlete learns to jump properly)
- hop phase (most problems start here)
- step phase
- jump phase

TEACHING THE PARTS

Hop

It should be noted that when performing the hop, maintaining forward momentum is of utmost importance. Attaining excessive height will make the remainder of the jump impossible to perform correctly.

1. Standing hops
    - •thigh of hop leg should come to level position when hop leg comes off of the ground.
    - •landing should be flat footed or slightly heal toe. Iideally the landing should be flatfooted but sometimes you need to tell the jumper to land heal toe to keep them from landing on their toe. Once the heal toe landing is taught, then it is easier to teach the athlete to land flat footed.

2. Consecutive short hops from a stand. Start at about 4' and when the jumper masters this distance gradually lengthen the length of the hop. A common fault here is that the beginning jumper will tend to jump stiff legged. The thigh of the hop leg when should be brought as close to horizontal as possible when the jumper is in the air.

3. Consecutive hops from a short approach lengthening as in #2 above.

4. Cone hops
    - • place between 5 and 10 cones (or some type of marker) 5' apart and perform the consecutive hop drill landing next to a cone on each landing.
    - • It is sometimes a good idea to keep the first three cones at 5' and then gradually lengthen the distance between the ensuing cones. The reason for this is that the jumper gains momentum on each successive hop and will have a difficult time keeping his hops at 5'.
    - • As the jumper gains mastery the cone interval may be increased.

5. Hopping over 1' high hurdles.
    - • It is important here not to let the body rise significantly.
    - • The emphasis is to lift the hop "thigh" high enough to clear the hurdles without letting the body rise significantly.

    When performing hop drills the hop knee should drive through and hop heel should almost kick the jumper in the hind end. When done correctly the hop will look like "one legged running".

    I also have my jumpers do some of these drills competitively.
    - • How far can you go doing 4 hops from a stand, from a 4 step approach?
    - • How far can you go doing 4 steps from a stand, from a 4 step approach?

STEP

This phase of the Triple Jump is the most difficult to do correctly. This phase is also dependant on the hop. If the hop is not done correctly this phase will not be done well. For the beginning jumper the emphasis here should be on getting into the air not driving forward. (As the jumper masters the event , then they can be taught to go out , out, and up in the three phases.) This phase is a jump and all efforts should be made to reinforce this to you athletes. There are certain preparatory factors (both mental and physical) that take place before an athlete jumps and this fact should be noted when teaching this phase of the triple jump.

ALL LANDINGS SHOULD BE FLAT FOOTED OR SLIGHTLY HEEL - TOE

1. Standing steps.
    - • Jump from one foot to the other (a distance of 4 to 5 feet)
    - • Do the above emphasizing leading with the knee.
    - • All of the above with a foot-knee landing. (This put emphasis on proper form in the air and proper landing position.
    - • Hop to other foot and balance upon landing.

2. Do all of the above with a 4 step approach.

3. Step stop, step stop, step stop. The jumper does consecutive steps and balances upon landing before proceeding to the next step.

4. 3 to 4 consecutive steps
    - watch for leg swing and foot lead instead of knee drive.
    - remember these are jumps and the emphasis should be on jumping.

PUTTING THE HOP AND STEP TOGETHER

The hop step transition is quite easy to learn when taught correctly. The main limiting factor here is the strength of the athlete. This is a powerful athletic action.

1. Hop-Long Jump (This is the singularly best drill that I know of for teaching the Hop Step transition)

    - 4 step approach
    - Perform a short hop
    - Upon landing, long jump off of the foot that you landed on
    - Gradually increase the length of the hop as the skill is mastered
    - Gradually increase the length of approach

This drill teaches an active landing and teaches the athlete to jump off of the hop foot into the step.

2. Hop-Step into the pit (or crash pad)

    - This should only be taught after the "Hop-Long Jump" has been mastered
    - Perform a short hop
    - Upon landing, jump into the step
    - Hold step position into landing (foot knee landing)
    - Gradually increase the length of the Hop
    - Gradually increase the length of the approach

JUMP PHASE

I really don't work very much on this phase except to have my Triple Jumpers do long jump drills.

PUTTING THE WHOLE JUMP TOGETHER

Rhythm Jumps

- Put three cones 7' apart with a landing area 5 - 10 feet beyond the last cone. (if 7' is too long a distance, shorten it to suit the jumper)
- The jumper takes off from the first cone

- Lands next to the second
- Steps to the third
- Jumps into the landing area
- This drill can be done from a stand or an approach (it should be done from stand first)
- Gradually increase the distance between the cones and the length of the approach as the drill is mastered.

OTHER DRILLS

1. HOP HOP, STEP STEP, HOP HOP, STEP STEP ETC.
2. 5 TO 10 CONSECUTIVE STEPS.
3. 3 HOPS AND A STEP INTO A LANDING AREA
4. 1 HOP AND THREE STEPS INTO A LANDING AREA.

*** Any of the above can be done from a stand or a short approach.**

THE TOTAL JUMP

Approach

The same as in the long jump although there is no lowering of the center of gravity during the penultimate step.

Hop

- Blow through the board (AGGRESSIVE)
- Do not try to attain height !!! (This will destroy the jump)
- Eyes straight ahead
- Think about preparing for the step. After all, this is what the hop does, it prepares you for the step.
- during the last part of the hop do what ever you would normally do both mentally and physically to prepare to JUMP into the step.
- single or double arm block

Step

- Heal toe or flat foot landing from the hop
- JUMP into the step
- Drive the thigh up
- Drive the knee up
- Eyes straight ahead
- Double arm block
- Chest high

Jump

The jumper will feel the greatest amount of forward rotation during this phase. All of the mistakes made earlier in the jump will be compounded here. Early in the jumpers development they will barely have the strength to complete this phase if the other parts are done correctly. The Triple Jumper should strive to use good long jump technique during this phase of the jump.

BOX DRILLS

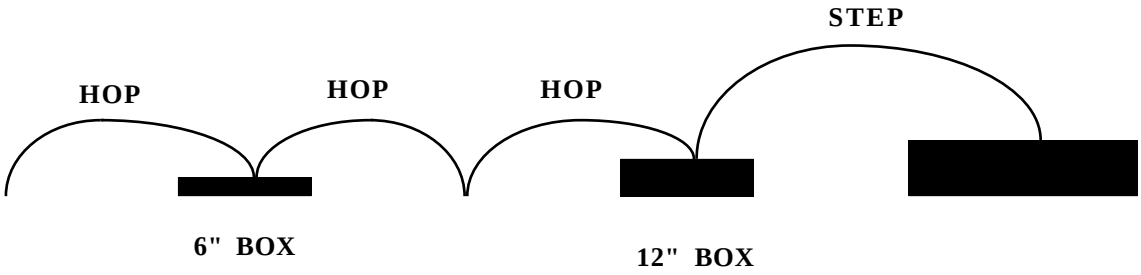
Box drills are a integral part of every Triple Jumper's training program. I use a set of plywood boxes that have a top surface area of 3' X 3' and range in height from 6" to 2'. Below is listed an ideal selection of boxes for Triple Jump training:

2 - 6" Boxes
2 - 12" "
1 - 18" "
1 - 24" "

The following is a set of drills that utilizes the above combination of boxes:

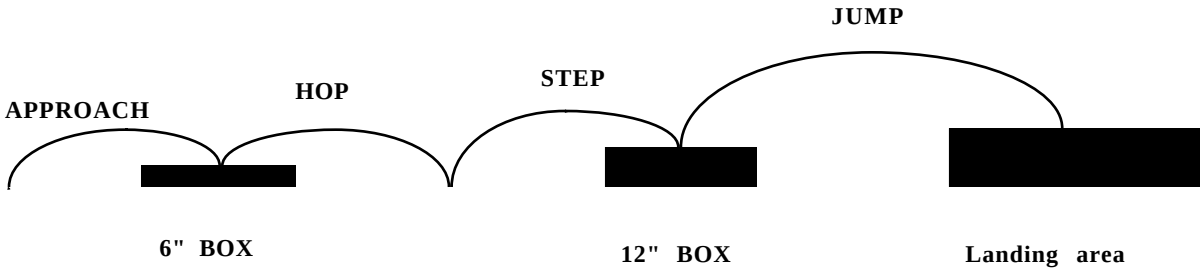
Drill #1:

- Use 4 step approach
- Hop off of floor to a 6" box
- hop off of a 6" box to the floor
- hop off of the floor to a 12" box
- Step very high
- hold the landing position into the landing area



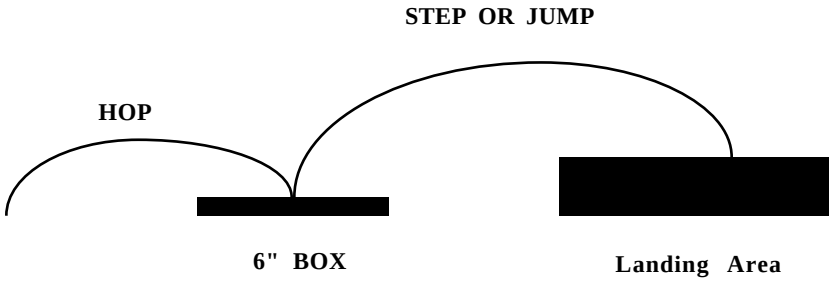
Drill #2

- Use 4 step approach
- Hop off of a 6" box to the floor
- Step to a 12" box
- Jump into the landing area



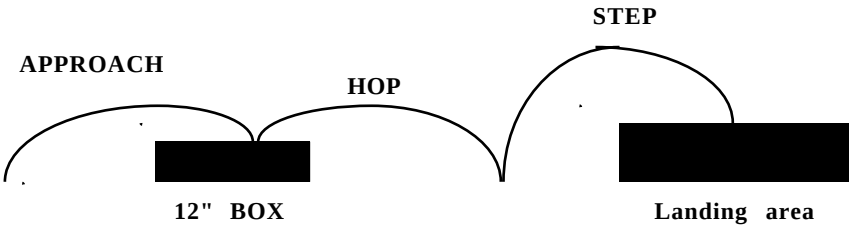
Drill #3 (Hop jump drill or hop step drill off of a box)

- Use a 4 step approach
- Hop to a 6" box
- Upon landing jump into landing area (or step into landing area).



Drill #4

- Use 4 Step approach
- Hop off floor to a 6" box
- Step off of box to the floor
- Jump into the landing area



Jump

Hop **Step**

As the jumper gains proficiency the distance between the boxes may be increased. The initial distance between the boxes though, is for you and your jumper to decide. The further apart that the boxes are the better but be conservative, do only what you feel your jumper can handle. For example, in Drill #1 I would usually start with the distance between the 6" and 12" boxes at 10' and then gradually increase the distance as my jumper gets better.

There will also be a tendency with all jumpers to get away from the heal - toe landing when they start working with boxes. When landing from any height, the tendency is to cushion the landing as much as possible and this leads to a toe landing. It is essential that they realize that a slightly heal toe or flat foot landing when done correctly will not cause injury and will greatly increase the length of their jump.

GOOD LUCK

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