

## Jump Rope, Step Aerobics, Fitness Walking

“Physical activity is good not only for the heart, but also for the brain, feeding it glucose and oxygen, all of which makes it easier for children of all ages to learn. Numerous studies show that children who exercise do better in school.”

### Jump Rope

The main muscles groups that are used during jumping rope are calves, quadriceps, hamstrings and glutes on your lower body. The constant turning motion of the rope will also shape and tone the entire upper body including your chest, back, deltoids (shoulders), forearms, biceps and triceps. Your core really gets worked hard since your abs have to contract to stabilize your entire body as it propels through the air.

Jumping rope is an excellent exercise for cardiovascular fitness, muscular endurance and coordination. Now researchers are learning that physical activity like jumping rope also prepares the brain for optimal learning. Current brain research supports the need for movement in the learning process. Jumping rope is one of a few tasks that engage all four quadrants of the brain.

Here are just a few ways that jumping rope may help prepare the brain for learning.

- Raising heart rate gets more blood to the brain, feeding it needed nutrients and oxygen for heightened alertness and mental focus.
- Aerobic exercise grows new brain cells in rodents, and promising research suggests that may also apply to humans. In short, jumping rope is an exercise that allows both brain hemispheres to perform parallel.
- The vestibular system that creates spatial awareness and mental alertness is strengthened through activities such as jumping rope. Balance and jumping activities provide the student with a framework for reading and other academic skills.
- Rhythmic aspects of jumping rope can develop the internal dialogue needed to establish basic reading skills. Beat awareness and beat competency simulate the basic rhythm patterns of our language that need to be established for better language acquisition.
- Physical activity reduces stress. Cardiovascular exercise places the brain into homeostasis and contributes to balancing the body's chemistry, electrical and organ systems. Exercise can have similar benefits as some anti-depressant medications. Jumping rope can be a lifelong activity requiring little equipment, time and space.

Most beginners "double bounce" in between rotations. This actually allows them to rest their core a bit as well as their calf muscles in between rotations and means that they have a low level of core fitness. You will want to jump cleanly in between each rotation and keep the abs and core tight.

Your arms should barely move when you jump rope. The rotation of the rope should come from wrist movement. If you want to increase the speed of the rotations, simply increase the tightness of the circles that your wrist is making (this will make more sense when you start jumping rope). The goal of your first two weeks of jumping rope is to eventually work up to a point where you can jump rope for 5 minutes solid without having to stop and start again. This means that if you have to stop because the rope hits your feet, you have to start again from zero. You also want to be able to jump rope alternating feet, so it looks like you are running while jumping rope.

Jumping rope burns more calories per minute than any other exercise (more than running)

How to Get The Correct Adjustment on Your Jump Rope

- Place Your Jump Rope on the Ground
- Stand on the Midpoint of the Rope (an equal distance between the handles)
- Grasp the Handles and Pull them to Your Chest While Standing on the Rope
- The Top of the Handles Should Reach About 6 Inches Below the Collar Bone or to the armpits

Use a variety of jumps to vary your workout

1. Two foot hops
2. Right- left alternate (one foot hops)
3. Two right, two left (one foot hops)
4. Spin rope backwards (two foot hops or alternate right-left one foot hops)
5. Cross rope- 2 foot hops
6. Double spins- per one hop
7. Skiers (feet shuffle from right front/left back to left front/right back)
8. Jumping jacks feet (apart-together)
9. Cross feet (apart-cross-apart-cross)

Step Aerobics

Step Aerobics is a cardiovascular activity with dance origins. Workouts consist of a series of combinations performed on a raised bench to the timing of the music. Even tempo music is needed to perform a fluid step aerobics routine. The music is usually broken down into 8-count measures.

The main benefits of step aerobics include an increased cardiovascular endurance, improved agility, and an increase in coordination. Workouts can be adjusted to fit most endurance levels. The intensity of a step aerobics routine can be increased or decreased by adding/removing arm movements, raising/ lowering the height of the step, and by increasing/decreasing the tempo of the music.

It is important to step your whole foot on to the bench, and to step heel to toe. If you do not get your whole foot on the bench (you heel hanging off the edge) then you may strain your Achilles tendon located in the back of your ankle.

It is also important that you step straight up on the bench so that the bench does not slide out from under you.

When performing a step routine, keep breathing consistently and evenly. This helps your regulate your heartbeat and circulate oxygen to your muscles.

### Fitness walking

Fitness walking is brisk, vigorous walking. The pace, how quickly you walk, is important in fitness walking. The natural armswing when walking is the opposite arm is forward as your legs stride. The arm swing will help increase your pace and help keep your balance.

**WATCH** your posture. Walk tall. Think of elongating your body. Hold your head up and eyes forward. Your shoulders should be down, back and relaxed. Tighten your abdominal muscles and buttocks and fall into a natural stride.

Be sure to drink plenty of water before, during, and after walking. Incorporate a warm up, cool down and stretches into your routine. Start your walk at a slow warm up pace, stop and do a few warm up / flexibility drills. Then walk for the desired length of time. End your walk with the slower cool down pace and stretch well after your walk. Stretching will make you feel great and assist in injury prevention.