

High Jump Approach Drills

By Mike Garcia

“A Consistent approach leads to consistent heights!”

Drills

1. Vertical Jumps (3 x 10)

Directions: Have athletes stand underneath the basket or backboard vertical jumping and rapidly reaching for the net or backboard. Emphasize bouncing off the balls of the feet, utilize the arms, and as feet contact the surface explode up.

2. Straight Line Running (4-5 times) works on straight steps in the approach

Directions: Have athletes start at the baseline and perform the start of the Approach. The athlete should run the first six steps of the approach. Jumpers should run tall, bring the knees perpendicular and run with a bounce. Make sure there is good arm action and start out fast to faster.

3. Three Point Line Running (7-8 times) works on running j-curve.

Directions: Have the athlete start on the baseline where the baseline intersects with the three-point line. The athlete runs the arc back to the baseline. Make sure the athlete is running in the right direction. Jumper should drop the inside shoulder. Body should be in a line from the feet. Run is not too fast or too slow. Jumper should be bouncy. Arm action is important in this drill.

4. Circle Runs (3 x 6 rotations) works on body positioning in j-curve.

Directions: The athlete will start on the jump ball circle. The athlete will run around the circle trying to stay on the line. The athlete will pass the starting point six times. Emphasize running tall. Use high knees. They must keep their inside shoulder down.

5. Figure Eights (3 x 4) focus on body positioning from j-curve to takeoff.

Directions: Take 8 cones or markers and place them in a manner that the figure eight is developed. There will be four cones per circle. The athlete will start at the bottom of the eight and will run outside the cones in the eight pattern. When the athlete passes the intersection the shoulder will shift from down to level. The circles should be determined by taking the distance away from the standard and double this to make the diameter of the circle. Like the other drills emphasize high knees, inside shoulder down to level at directional changes.

6. Arm Skips- (4-6 times) focuses on arms just before takeoff to block position.

Directions: The athlete does regular skips. Every time the takeoff foot contacts the ground the arms go to a block position. Make sure the knee is driven to perpendicular. Emphasize the block position. Bring the hands to the top of the ears. Hands are together, elbows out wide. Dorsiflex the the foot.

7. Wall Jumps- (3 x 15) focuses on arms going vertical at takeoff

Directions: Set takeoff foot about an arm's length away from a wall similar to takeoff. The lead leg swings up from behind the body to in front of the body as arms go to block. If body or arms go into the wall the high jumper is not going vertical. Use caution when doing this drill!

8. Reverse dunks- (8 times) puts approach and takeoff together.

Directions: Athlete measures their approach so they can takeoff near the basket. The jumper goes up and tries to touch the rim with their chest facing half court. . It is a fun drill. Athletes can touch the net or backboard in place of touching the rim.

Random thoughts on the High Jump

1. When in doubt undertrain the high jumper. Fresh legs are important.
2. Keep track in meets of how many jumps are attempted. . In my opinion, 7-12 jumps in a meet are ideal. Know how your jumpers ideal number of jumps.
3. High jumpers need high jump shoes. If you cannot get them use a j-heel.
4. Videotape their jumps in practice and meets.
5. If you have two or three meets in a week you don't have to go for height every meet.
6. Utilize a bungee cord in practice.
7. If your high jumper is a sprinter or hurdler do your jumping work before the workout begins.
8. Practice jumping in the rain a few times. Your athlete will possibly have large meets in the rain.
9. Every high jumper is different; communicate with your athletes about how their legs feel.
10. Know the surfaces you are jumping on, fast surfaces may cause you to back up their approach.
11. Make sure your marks are accurate for your approach.
12. Measure your standards make sure they are accurate. Nothing worse than an athlete thinking they jumped 6-6 and it was 6-4.

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