

Strength Training Sessions for Runners: Plyometrics



Plyometrics, or ‘Jump Training’ focuses on increasing power and explosive movement. Plyometric exercises involve jumping movements and expending large amounts of energy in short spaces of time. Examples would include burpees, mountain climbers, squat jumps and tuck jumps.

Plyometric exercises require you to have a reasonable level of base strength before you begin introducing them into your programme. This is due to the pressure these exercises put on your muscles and joints. If you do not have adequate strength to begin with, you may be risking injury. Introducing the

[CalisthenicBody Weight Workout](#) will help build base strength if you are completely new to any form of strength training or feel you have some weaknesses to address.

Plyometric exercises are used by many types of athlete, as they mimic movement patterns from a variety of sports such as football, boxing and skiing. A plyometric workout can therefore be specifically designed to suit your chosen sport. Runners would typically do exercises such as plyometric lunges, high knees, height skips and frog jumps.

Working on explosive power by introducing plyometric exercises would be something you would introduce later in a periodised training schedule, once you have built up a good base strength.

Pros

- Plyometric or jump training increases power and explosive movement.
- Strengthens muscles by rapidly stretching and then shortening them through jumping movements, this in turn reduces the effect of impact on the joints.
- This repeated stretching and shortening of the muscles increases the power of muscular contractions.
- Plyometric training can be done at home, in the gym or outdoors at low or no cost.
- Introducing plyometrics to your training schedule will add variety to your strength workouts.

Cons

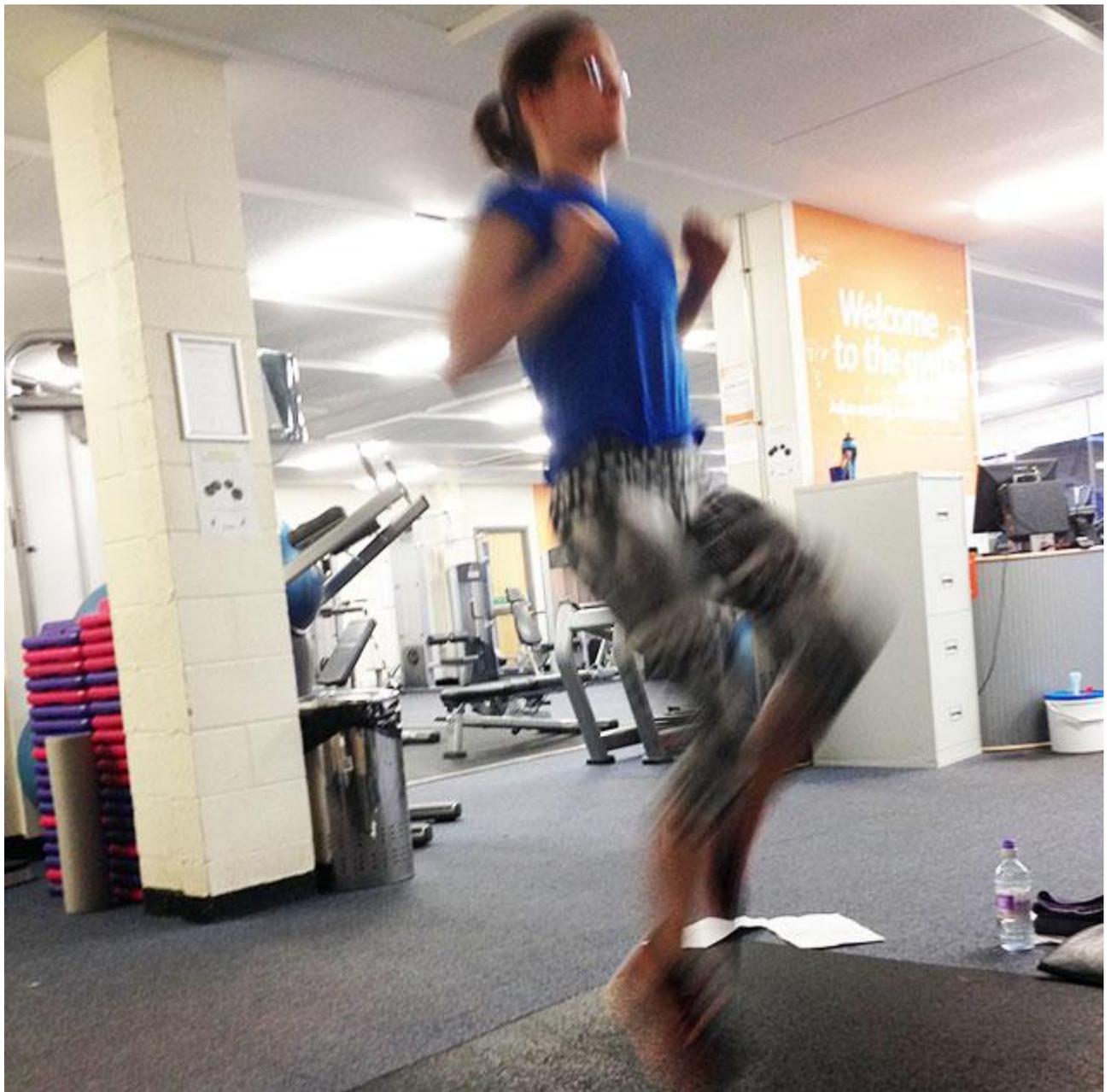
- Plyometric training is a more advanced form of strength training so should only be introduced into a training schedule once you have built up adequate base strength.
- Doing plyometric training without adequate base strength may increase the likelihood of injury.

Sample Plyometric Workout for Runners

30 seconds of each of the following exercises (no rest between exercises).

- **High Knees**
- **Burpees**
- **Height Skips**
- **Plyometric Lunges**
- **Low Stance Jacks**
- **Fast Feet**

After completing one full set of these exercises, take adequate rest (1-2 minutes) and repeat 3-5 times.



High Knees

Start by standing with your feet hip-width apart, knees soft, hips neutral, abdominals and glutes braced, spine long, chest up, shoulders back and down. Keeping your elbows tucked into your rib cage, bring your arms up towards your shoulders and hold them there. Raise one knee up towards your hips then back down. As soon as your foot reaches the ground, raise the other knee up towards your hips. You are aiming to do this with speed and hop from one foot to the other, driving your knees up to your stomach. It is important to keep your core as stable as possible, keep your upper body strong and bracing your abdominals throughout the exercise.

Burpees

Start from standing, in neutral (feet hip width apart, knees soft, hips neutral, abdominal and glutes braced, spine long, shoulders back and down, head facing forwards). Crouch down, bending your knees and put your hands on the ground directly beneath your shoulders. Jump your feet back into full bridge, jump your feet back in and then reach your arms to the ceiling and vertically jump. That would be one burpee!



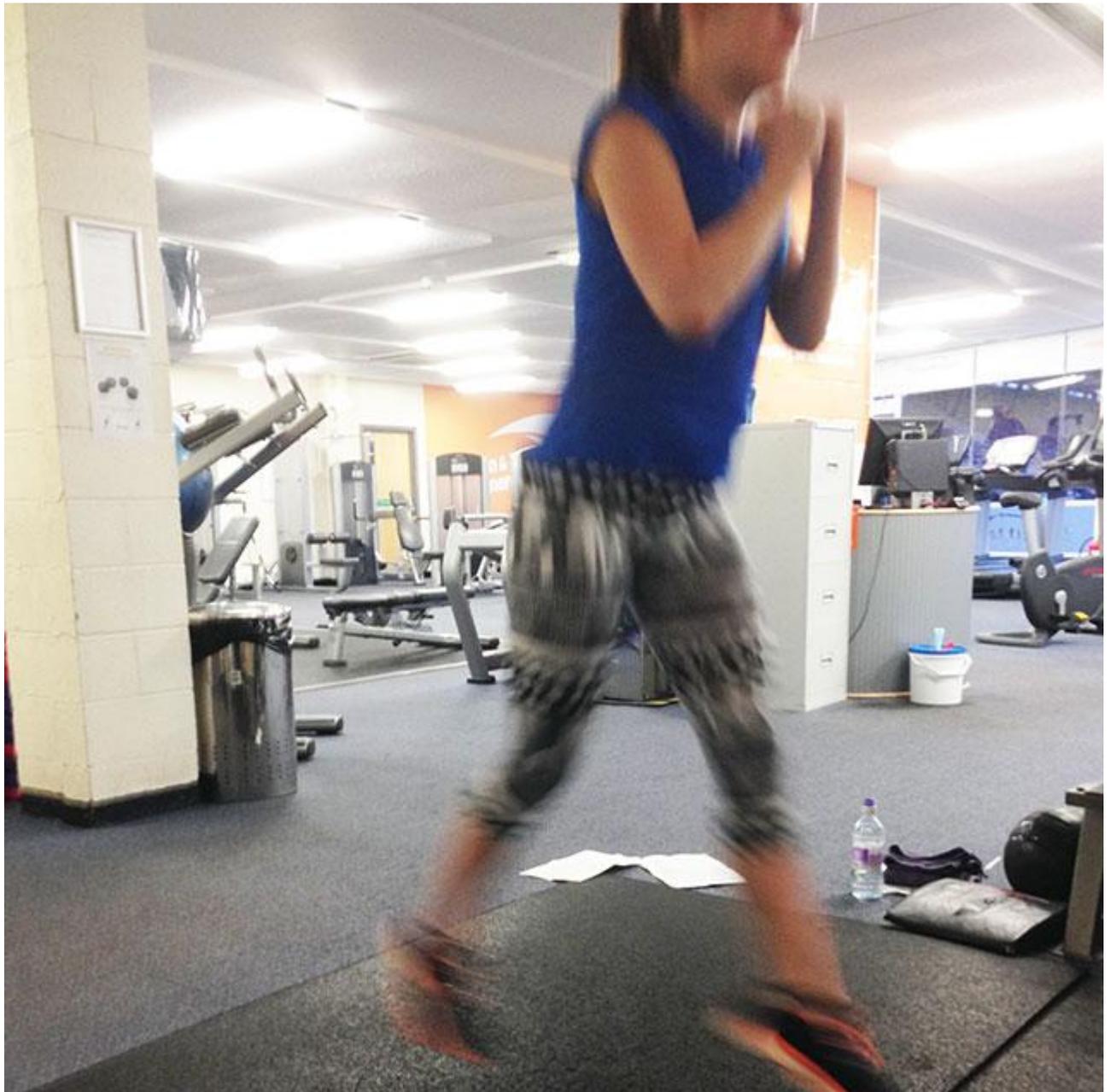




Start from standing, in neutral. Make sure you have enough space to move forwards for at least 10 paces. Raise one knee up towards your hips and skip onto the opposite foot with forward motion, and then repeat with some speed (this would not be anywhere as fast as high knees). Use your arms to give you power, just like when you run.

Plyometric Lunges

Start by lunging with either leg forward, making sure you keep your chest up, shoulders back and down and head facing forwards. Switch your legs mid-air by jumping onto the opposite foot forward, driving your back knee towards the ground. Keep your opposite arm forwards and the arm on the same side as your leading leg back. Use your arms to give you more power for the jumps and to aid your balance. Always focus on keeping your core tight.





Low Stance Jacks

Start in the squat position, keeping your chest up, shoulders back and down and your head facing forwards. Make sure you stick your backside out and keep your weight on your heels. Bring your elbows up and bring your hands together so your fingers meet in front of your chest. Reach one arm towards your opposite foot and reach straight back with your other arm. Raise your elbows and bring your fingertips to meet in the middle before repeating the same thing with your opposite arm reaching for your opposite foot and your other arm reaching straight back.







Start by standing in neutral. Run on the spot moving your feet as fast as you possibly can. Make sure you keep your core strong and use your arms as you would when you are running.

Disclaimer: Please note that at any time if you feel any stress or strain on your body whilst carrying out these exercises, you should stop immediately and consult a fitness professional.