Power Moves

Spring into action to build a stronger, better body.

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If you're ready for a challenging workout that gets results, consider adding plyometrics, a.k.a. jump training, into your current exercise program. This workout technique stretches and contracts the muscles to help build strength with hopping, skipping and jumping movements.

Findings show that for many people engaged in sports, and those who aren't, adding plyometrics to a workout regimen can certainly boost athletic performance and improve agility and flexibility. But factor in your age, history of injury and fitness level, experts warn.

Plyometrics uses explosive movements that require exercises be properly executed to steer clear of injuries. This is why experts suggest people first "learn landing mechanics and balancing after a jump," says Len Kravitz, PhD, a program coordinator of exercise science at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque and a contributing author for IDEA Health & Fitness Association's website.

What's more, safety first, stress experts. Before engaging in plyometrics, get training from a certified instructor, make sure you warm up thoroughly, don't attempt the exercises when you're tired, avoid working the same muscles on consecutive days, wear appropriate shock-absorbing footwear and work out on stable but cushiony surfaces.

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