

## Why You Should Add Jumping to Your Workout Routine

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### When was the last time you jumped? (On purpose, that is.)

Unless you play sports or take part in something like CrossFit, it's probably been a while. Jumping just isn't part of most adults' day-to-day lives.

But if you want to age powerfully and gracefully, it probably should be. Jump training is highly underrated—many people don't know that it can help you stay strong and build a more resilient body in just a few minutes a week.

And, frankly, it's a fun way to add variety to your workout routine.

Let's take a look at why jumping is so important and how you can get started—because the earlier you integrate jumps into your workout routine, the better.

## Jumping Builds Age-Defying Power

First, let's talk about the difference between strength and power.

Strength is your ability to create force—this is what you'll use when you lift something heavy, like a big piece of furniture.

Power is your ability to create force *quickly*. This helps you with things like getting up from a chair or walking up a set of stairs. It's also necessary for staying upright when life throws you off-balance, whether you're hiking a steep trail, chasing a grandchild around the park, or making your way down an icy sidewalk.

**Jump training helps you train fast-twitch muscles that generate high amounts of power and maintain function.**

Unfortunately, power declines more quickly than strength as we age. And, as it turns out, power is highly important in maintaining function. **This 2020 study** puts it succinctly:

“Reduced lower-limb power and slowing of force production have been proposed as important predictors of age-related deterioration in functional performance and should be targeted in exercise programs for older adults.”

Resistance training, while extremely useful for **building bone density** and even **protecting your brain**, doesn't help with power unless you're moving weight *fast*. Jump training helps you train fast-twitch muscles that generate high amounts of power and maintain function.

But that's not all it does.

## **Jumps Strengthen Bones for Resilient Aging**

Beyond developing power, jumping exercises have been shown to promote skeletal growth, which is crucial for staying active and safe at all ages.

“There are two types of bone health,” says fitness expert, transformation coach, and Super Age advisor Michelle MacDonald. “Bone mineral density and architectural strength. Impact training can improve both, and we're seeing estimates of 4% improvements from these interventions.”

Research backs this up: studies have shown that jump training can increase bone mineral density at the hip and in the lumbar spine—two places where people with low bone density **often get fractures**.

And it doesn't take a significant amount of training.

**One study** found that just 10 to 20 jumps, done twice a day, increased bone density in premenopausal women. **Another study** showed that just 10 maximum-height jumps, performed three times per week, was enough to make an improvement.

(Of course, jumping more than that, especially after you've built some strength and power, can accelerate your progress.)

Both men and women at different ages have seen improved power generation, increased bone density, and better functional performance from jump training.

With all of these proven benefits, it seems like everyone should add jump training to their regimen. And that's basically true—but there are a few things to know first.

## Who Should Be Jumping?

The ability to generate power is helpful in any stage of life. And jump training is a research-backed way to improve power generation in the lower body.

But MacDonald points out that women at higher risk of accelerated bone loss should talk to their doctors before including high-impact training in their regular exercise routines. Those at higher risk include women who

- experience early menopause (before age 45),
- have a family history of osteoporosis,
- have a low body weight or BMI,
- have a history of smoking or excessive alcohol use,
- lead a sedentary lifestyle, or
- have a history of dieting or insufficient nutrition (especially calcium and vitamin D).

These women—and anyone else who’s concerned about their bone health—should speak with their doctors before starting jump training. Your doctor can tell you about your risk levels and how you should approach jump training. They may also recommend a DEXA scan to get a baseline measurement of your bone density.

## How to Add Jumps to Your Routine

So—you’re ready to start jumping. What kind of exercises should you be focusing on to get the most benefit?

Jennifer Wagner, MD, MS, founder and CEO of PROSPER and another Super Age advisor, recommends keeping it simple: “Starting with hopping, jumping jacks, or jumping rope is a good way to introduce jumping into a workout routine.”

She also recommends working with a trainer if you’re interested in higher-impact work, like hard-landing training that fosters bone health or plyometrics that boost muscular power.

If you’re training on your own, here’s a set of exercises that you can use to start building lower-limb power and bone strength:

- **Plyo hops** (small hops up and down, side to side, or forward and back)
- **Skip jumps** (hops on one foot while raising the opposite knee)
- **Jump squats** (adding a jump between full-depth squats and immediately squatting again upon landing)
- **Broad jumps** (jumping forward as far as you can)
- **Skater jumps** (jumping from side to side, taking off on one leg and landing on the other)
- **Dumbbell jump squats** (squat jumps while holding weights in each hand)

Start with just a few, aiming for around 20 jumps three times per week. When you start to feel stronger after a couple weeks, increase the number of jumps, the frequency of your workouts, or the difficulty of the exercise.

# Supplement Jump Training to Meet Your Goals

If you're looking to improve your power generation, agility, and balance, adding jumps to your routine is a great start.

But when it comes to bone-strengthening, it's worth noting that jumping on its own may not be enough to counter accelerated bone loss, says MacDonald.

**“Starting with hopping, jumping jacks, or jumping rope is a good way to introduce jumping into a workout routine.” – Jennifer Wagner, MD, MS**

If your bone density is already low or you're at a higher risk of osteoporosis, jumping should be part of “a holistic approach to bone health, [including] adequate protein and nutrition, calcium and vitamin D supplementation, and pharmacological intervention,” she adds.

Be sure to ask your doctor about a bone health screening, nutritional counseling, or proven drugs for helping you on your bone-building journey if you're at higher risk. And remember that aging well is about more than optimizing your workout: it's about **building longevity-promoting habits**, from nutrition to stress management to your outlook on life.

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