

## Plyo's – The 5 “W's” You **Should** Know...

There is a lot of talk in the headlines about plyometrics (plyo's for short). Everyone from your next door neighbor who used to be a *great* athlete back when peach baskets were used as basketball hoops, to the guys on TV who are selling workout “programs” to get you in the greatest shape of your life in 90 days. Who do you believe? What should you do? How is it going to help you? I'm here to clear up the beef between your neighbor and infomercial man; I present to you the 5 “W's” you should know about plyo's.

**Who:** Plyo's are for everyone, plain and simple. The only problem is that they can be used a variety of ways for a variety of different people. Everyone from your 5 year old athlete to your 95 year old grandmother is doing some variation of plyo's—you just don't realize it. Call yourself an athlete? You better be doing plyo's regularly!

**What:** Plyometrics are actually a term used to describe “ballistic” or “explosive” movements which take advantage of your nervous system efficiency. Basically, they take advantage of what you already possess and allow you to maximize your “power” and “efficiency” of various movements. Usually if it's done fast, it's plyometric in nature.

**Where:** If it's a solid, non-slippery surface, go for it. Most plyo's can be done on any surface ranging from grass to a basketball court. Depending on the drill you may need plyo boxes, stairs, or medicine balls, but many basic lower body drills can be done with simply open space.

**When:** You have two useful options: 1) You can place plyometrics within your workout after your warm-ups and before your resistance training (lifting) or 2) You can do your plyo's on a separate day altogether. Both have their plusses and minuses. If you put them within your workout you limit the volume you can use. Because plyo's are so demanding on the nervous system, they take lots of energy (both physically and mentally), and therefore you might run out of steam before you actually hit the heavy weights of your workout. If you put them on a separate day you'll have to manage your training the day(s) before and after your plyo's to ensure that you are optimizing all variables.

**Why:** Plyo's help you run faster, move more explosively, jump higher, leap quicker, lift more weight, and can even help you lose weight.

Plyometrics are a very versatile tool. When used appropriately, the right exercises done in the right volume can turn a good athlete into a great athlete, and a great athlete into a freak! In part two I will cover: my favorite exercises, sets and reps, rest intervals, among many other common issues with implementing plyo's properly.

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