

The 5 “W’s” Revisited – Part II The Ultimate Plyo Recipe

Man do I love Chinese food! If you’ve been around me in the weight room you’ll often hear my stories of General Tso’s chicken and pork fried rice and how they make up a good portion of my day’s thoughts. If you haven’t, well, I like them a lot. The problem is that I can only handle so much Chinese food before I either A) start to feel sick, or B) know that I shouldn’t be eating anymore leftovers no matter how delicious that may sound. What does this have to do with plyometrics, nothing. Well except that you *can* have too much of a good thing! Plyometrics are great, but only in the proper quantities and with the appropriate parameters...and just incase you’re wondering, I only eat Chinese food about four times per year.

If you haven’t read my first article covering some of the basics regarding plyometrics, please read here: www.shelbytrained.com/. The take away from that piece should be that everyone should be performing some form of plyometrics on a regular basis no matter what age, sport, gender, or skill level. The questions are: how much, what types of drills, and how do I do them? Great questions, hopefully these answers will help...

I like to break down my plyo exercises into 4 basic sub-categories: unilateral (1 leg or arm), bilateral (two legs or arms), straight (straight/linear), and multi-directional (different planes of motion). From there multiple combinations can be used to create a variety of drills, sequences, and progressions to accommodate just about any athlete.

Unilateral (Single limb dominant; on one side of the body or limb):

Agility Ladder Drills

Single leg hops

Single leg hop w/ bounce

Single leg box jumps

Single Arm medicine ball throws

Skilled Sporting movements (i.e. tennis serve, baseball throw, lacrosse shot)

Bilateral (both limbs contacting at the same time and/or contributing equal force):

Squat Jumps

Pogo Jumps

Double Leg Hurdle Jumps

Medicine Throws (overhead, slams, chest passes, etc.)

Explosive Push-ups

Straight (Sagittal plane movements going either forward or backward – think sprinting):

Bounding

Long Jumps

Skipping

Medicine Ball Throws

Scoop Tosses

Multi-Directional (Rotational movements, side to side movements, and any combination of movements not in the same plane of motion):

Rotational Throws

Rotational Jumps

Agility Drills

Most Field/Team Sports

My progressions for plyo drills are as follows: Start your athletes with unilateral movements. Next get them to improve those unilateral movements in a straight plane with more dynamic progressions (think single leg hop to single leg skips or bounds). After add in some simple multi-directional unilateral movements (think side to side hops). Continue to progress the athlete by adding in bilateral movements (squat jumps, rocket jumps) and then turn those bilateral movements into rotational movements (rotational pile/hurdle jumps). Exercises should always move from easiest to hardest both in terms of complexity and in terms of height/force.

If I were giving you a recipe for making the ultimate plyo recipe it would look kind of like this:

Ultimate Lower Body Plyo's:

1-2 exercises - unilateral movements

1-2 exercises – multi-directional/unilateral

1-2 exercises – bilateral

1-2 exercises – bilateral/multi-directional

Sprinkle in a little bit of core work or mobility work around each set of movements and voila, a faster, more explosive athlete.

Start out by using the most basic unilateral drills you can think of (I like single leg hops); get the athlete(s) to learn to stabilize first. Next have them take that same movement to a side to side movement (single hops side to side). Add in a bilateral movement (squat jumps) and then take those squat jumps and have them squat jump side to side. I like a couple sets of 3-5 reps for unilateral movements, and 2-3 sets of 5-8 reps for bilateral movements. Most importantly, give the athletes enough time to recover between sets so that they are maximizing their power output (i.e. jump height, jump length, etc.). Plyometrics are not about conditioning, but rather about improving power output (think getting faster versus getting in shape).

Below is a sample program for athletes or coaches to start with. This can be done as a piece of a warm-up prior to practice or early on in practice when the focus is high before athletes begin to fatigue. If you're trying to maximize time between sets of plyo's, throw in some extra core work (planks/side planks) or mobility work (ankle/hip/t-spine), both of which athletes can almost always use.

Lower Body Plyo's:

A. 2 x 3 Single leg Hops (straight)

A. 2 x Planks

B. 2 x 3 Single leg hops (side to side)

B. 2 x Side Planks

C. 3 x 5 Squat Jumps

C. 3 x 10 Ankle Mobility

D. 3 x 6 Side to Side Squat Jumps

D. 3 x 5 Split Squat Patterns

Keep athletes moving so that it goes quickly and is done efficiently. This works great as a short introduction into practice after some form of dynamic warm-up and before you get into specific sporting or position skills. Almost every athlete regardless of position can use this type of format for both upper and lower body power output. Video examples of these exercises can be found at: [Videos](#) . The same thought process can be applied for upper body progressions and movements.

Shelby Turcotte (MS, PES, YCS) is now into his 5th year of performance training. His company, Finer Points has quickly become known as the premier performance company in Maine, helping athletes of all ages and abilities reach their peak. His belief is that athletes are developed not "worked out." Therefore training must be planned both short and long term to allow the athlete to be able to reach their maximal potential. Shelby's comprehensive and customizable training system is designed to meet the needs of athletes of all ages. It has been used and tested numerous times to improve youth, high school, college, and even professional athletes. His training theory consists of 4 steps that build upon one another to create a comprehensive system which builds and develops various qualities so that athletes learn to maximize both movement and efficiency.

For more information please visit: www.finer-points.com or www.shelbytrained.com for more information.