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High Jump Approach



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The approach portion of the high jump is the most important aspect of the entire event. It should be practiced hundreds of times each season to ensure correct technique and the correct take-off position.

The athlete needs to establish their steps and be able to correctly measure these steps to have complete accuracy throughout the season.

The approach involves a gradual J toward the [high jump cross bar](#). This J type of approach allows for:

- 1) More Horizontal speed
- 2) The ability to turn in the air (centripetal force)
- 3) Places athlete in a good take off position
- 4) Is easy to teach

The approach should be a gradual acceleration that is neither a sprint nor a jog, but rather a hard controlled stride. The approach should be somewhere between 8-12 strides in which the athlete runs with a tall, bouncy, gazelle like running form. Emphasis should be placed on proper running mechanics. The athlete should focus on the transition into the curve phase of the approach. This part is where many great jumps are lost. The athlete should ensure that they are leaning from the ankles and not the hips. They should also make sure that they are not stepping out of the curve, but actually putting one foot in front of the other. Many high jumpers are former basketball players or football receivers these athletes are a custom to "cutting" in or out. Make sure they stay on that curve.

Many times athletes do not want to practice approaches they just want to jump. Remember you can't change for flight path once you leave the ground so the approach must be perfect.

If you would like more information on the high jump and practice drills, check out the new "[Come to High Jump Practice](#)" video by Bill Falk and Holly Kelly-Thompson. Or, call 1-888-556-7464.

The video shows a step-by-step system to teaching the high jump. It is great for both athletes and coaches!

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