

PERSONAL TRAINER PROFILE

Jumping for Sport

Subject: Tim Grover

Location: Chicago, Illinois

Business: A.T.T.A.C.K. Athletics

Experience: Fifth year as owner; 10th year as personal trainer to top athletes

Hot Clients: Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Alex Rodriguez, Darius Miles

Maverick Approach: “Trainers might think, ‘My client is not a Michael Jordan,’ but anyone in generally good shape can be taught to jump higher and move quicker,” Grover explains. “Weekend warriors, tennis players, hockey players and firefighters all can benefit from learning explosive step movements. The average person can add 4 to 6 inches to his vertical jump by building body strength and practicing the jump itself.”

Assessment: “You want to determine a client’s current vertical jump, so you can later determine the gains made. First, ask the client rub chalk on his fingers, then find a wall where the chalk mark will show up. With his feet firmly planted, have him reach as high as his arms will allow and touch the wall. This is his standing-only mark.

“Second, have the client do three jumps using all of his might to touch the same wall. The distance between the standing-only mark and the highest of his jumps is his vertical jump number. Periodically perform this test to monitor the client’s progress.”

Warm-Up: “As part of a regular program, your client should do warm-ups. Have him jump rope for five to 10 minutes before any workout or game; you want him to break a light sweat but not overtax any muscle group.

“I also believe in visualization as part of the warm-up. Research shows that exercisers who believe in their ability to perform well in workouts maintain the best technique throughout their sports activity and are less likely to be fatigued.”

Sample Program: “Ask your client to stand upright with eyes focused straight ahead. Have him drop to a quarter-squat, then drive the knees to the elbows—in other words, jump—while flexing ankles, knees, hips, shoulders and elbows. His arms should be held out, with hands cupping the knees.

“I believe in doing sequences—a combination of weight-lifting sets, jumping exercises, sport skill drills and sport-specific stretches. Doing the workout in a sequence targets the client’s muscles *and* his brain for maximum memory and performance during the sport.”

Precautions: “The mistake many jumpers make is tilting forward at the trunk. This action robs the athlete of maximum force in the leg springs. It also inappropriately recruits more lower-back muscle fibers—a slow twitch region—while not firing enough of the powerful abdominals. Another negative result is lower-back pain.”

Quote: “Even the best athletes can get better.”

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