

the
cheerleading
guide to

practicing and mastering jumps

includes
step-by-step
visuals!



cheerleadingblog
UNIVERSITY

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table of contents

This guide should serve as an introduction to cheerleading jump techniques and should be used as a reference only. This guide should never be used to replace the instruction and supervision of a trained professional.

about jumps

3

performance prep

6

beginner jumps

14

advanced jumps

19

expert jumps

24





about jumps

Cheerleading jumps are a basic, but mandatory skill for all levels of cheerleading – from Pee Wee to All Star. Sideline and elite choreography feature jumps, and forget about trying out for a cheer squad if you can't do jumps!



crowd pleaser

Jumps may be a basic move in cheerleading, but they are great to learn when beginning cheerleading because they will serve as building blocks that teach you valuable techniques that will help you pick up advanced moves and choreography at a faster pace.

Cheerleading jumps are one of the many skills that cheerleaders must perfect for all levels of cheerleading. Jumps are not only a skill that is mandatory to master for tryouts, but once you've made a cheer team you'll quickly find that all cheerleading choreography, including elite levels and competition routines, feature jumps!

Jumps are often combined with tumbling passes to make them even more visually stunning. A jump may be added before a standing tumbling move, or performed after landing the last move in the pass.



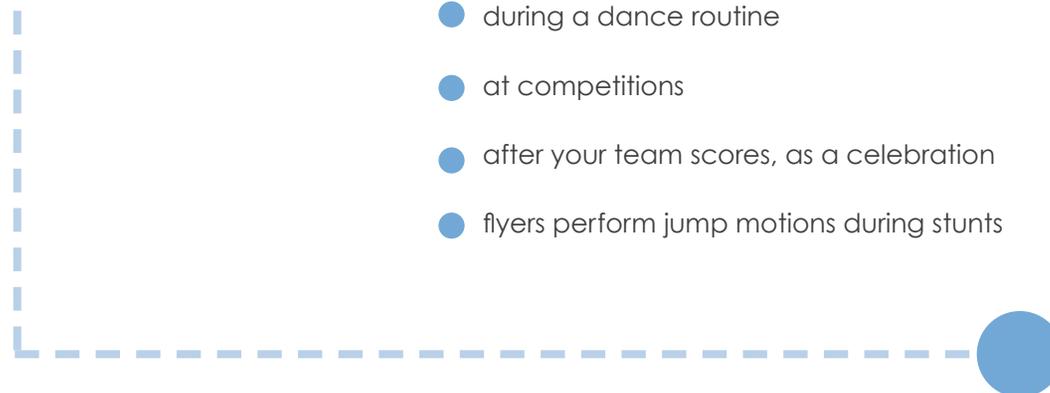
Cheerleading jumps are sometimes performed by a single person, but are more often performed in unison by 2 or more members of a team. One of the most stunning visuals in cheerleading is seeing an entire team perform toe touches together!

working on your jumps has other benefits too:

- helps you fine tune your balance
- builds your core
- teaches you valuable techniques that will help you master advanced moves later

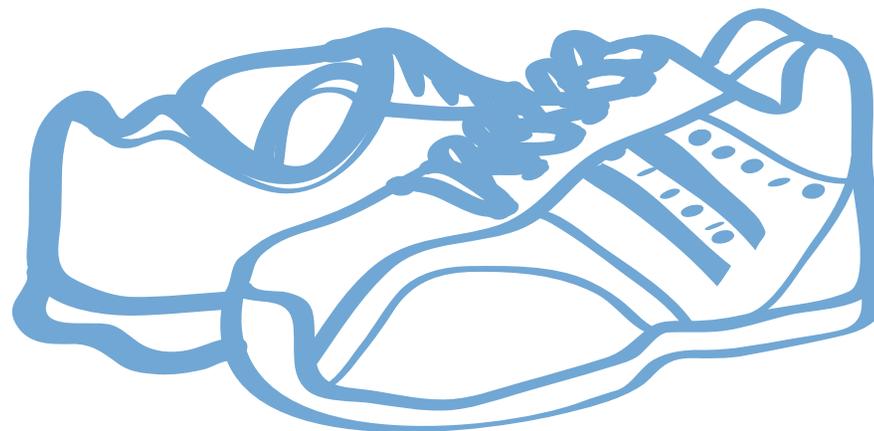
when cheerleaders perform jumps:

- any time you want to pump up the crowd
- at the end of a cheer
- during a dance routine
- at competitions
- after your team scores, as a celebration
- flyers perform jump motions during stunts



quick tip:

wear stable and supportive cheerleading shoes to avoid injuries.



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performance prep

No matter what position you hold on your cheer squad, you know the importance on having impeccable and technically correct jumps. Getting tight, high jumps takes a lot of practice and preparation, but the end result of a uniform cheerleading team that is on point during performances is worth it!

Working toward the goal of perfecting your cheer jumps is a little more complicated than just going to the gym and obsessively performing leg exercises. Having great jumps with perfect execution of leg extension and pointed toes is a sign of a true athlete that has spent a lot of time fine tuning their body with exercising, stretching and practice.

stretching

butterfly stretch

Sit on the floor with your knees bent and the bottoms of your feet touching each other. While keeping the bottoms of your feet together, pull your heels towards you and push your knees down, towards the floor, until your muscles release. You can also bend forward and try to reach your nose to the ground in front of your feet.

straddle stretch

Sit on the floor with your legs in a "V" position. Slowly stretch forward without bending your knees. Once your muscles release, you can then stretch towards the left side by reaching both hands toward the left foot. Repeat on your right side as well. Keep your legs straight and your toes pointed.

hip flexor

Stand in an upright position with feet hip distance apart with your toes, knees and hips in a straight line. Take a big step forward with your right leg and bend it at the knee, so your thigh is parallel to the ground. Your left leg should be slightly bent and with your knee almost touching the ground. Lean forward so your elbows are touching the ground. Your pelvis should be tilted back while pushing your hipbones forward until you feel a gentle stretch in that area. Hold as your muscles slowly release and switch legs.

hamstring stretches

For this stretch you will need a towel or a resistance band. Lie down on your back with your knees bent. Keeping your left knee bent and left foot flat on the floor, take your right leg and put it in the air. Then take your resistant band or towel and place it on the arch of your right foot and straighten your leg. Slowly pull your right leg towards you as the muscles release. If you need more of a challenge, lay your left leg straight, on the ground. Repeat on left leg.

splits

Performing splits will stretch the hamstring of your front leg. Go into a split with your right leg forward and slowly lean forward towards that leg. Keep your back as straight as possible. Repeat with your left leg forward. Then, go into a center split and slowly stretch forward, keeping your back straight. If you can't perform a split safely and comfortably, you can perform a half split by bending your back leg at the knee into a right angle.



Multiple studies have shown that stretching can help improve the height of your jump. Stretching actually makes muscles strong so create a daily stretching routine and stick to it.



conditioning

leg circles

Sit on the floor with your knees straight and legs in a "V" position, with your hands behind you for support, and lift your right leg a foot off of the ground and move your leg in a circular motion clockwise 20 times. Reverse into a counter-clockwise motion 20 times and repeat both motions on your left leg.

lunges

Stand in an upright position with feet hip distance apart with your toes, knees and hips in a straight line. Pull your belly button towards your spine and contract your abdominal muscles. Place your right leg a step ahead and bend your right knee. Remember to keep your back straight while you lower your body until your left knee touches the ground. Finally bring your legs together and repeat the exercise by alternating legs.

squats

Stand in an upright position with feet hip distance apart with your toes, knees and hips in a straight line. Pull your belly button towards your spine and contract your abdominal muscles. Slowly lower your body until your butt is in line with your knees (knees at 90 degree angles). If you can't go down that low, go as low as you can. You might also find it helpful to extend your arms straight out in front of your for balance. As you are lowing, make sure your knees are behind your toes. Keep your weight on your heels and slowly push your body back to starting position. Make sure that you don't lock your knees when you return to the starting position.

calf rasies

Stand in an upright position and keeping your body straight, rise up on your toes. Then lower yourself back down until your feet are flat. The key to success in this exercise is to execute it slowly.



Adding leg exercises to your fitness plan will not only help you obtain higher jumps, but also help you become a better athlete!





quick tip:

watch yourself perform jumps in the mirror so you can make sure you are using the proper form.

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core



crunches

Start by lying down on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Place your palms behind your head, elbows parallel with the ground and face towards the ceiling. Tighten your ab muscles and raise your upper body through your shoulders towards your knees. Hold the position for a second and then get into the starting position once again.

leg lifts

Lie on your back with your arms extended alongside your body with your palms down. Keep your shoulders, head and lower back flat. Lift your legs up until they're at a right angle to your hips. Lower your legs slowly and stop within a few inches above the floor. Hold your legs there for a couple of seconds. Slowly raise your legs back to the starting position and hold for a couple of seconds again. Perform in repetitions and increase the repetitions gradually.

superman

Lie facedown with your legs together and straight and extend your arms above your head. Keep your head and neck in a neutral position. Keeping your limbs straight (but not locked) and your torso stationary, lift your arms and legs off of the ground to form a gentle curve with your body. Hold for 30 counts. Don't hold your breath – work on breathing slowly!

plank with leg extension

Get into a push up position, but instead of resting your weight on your hands, rest your weight on your elbows with your hands in front of you. This is called the plank position. Slowly lift one leg, keeping your knee straight. Keep your shoulders and hips lined up with each other and your abdominals engaged while holding your balance.



You should not lower your upper body to your toes during jumps because it will prevent you from reaching your maximum height. The proper way to execute a jump is by using your abs to pull your legs up.



jump entry



Execute your jump entry steps quickly and consecutively of each other, so your body is moving in one continual motion.

1

Start your jump entry with your feet together, your arms straight down on your side and your hands in fists.

2

Clap your hands and then put your arms into a high V position.

3

At the same time, bend your knees and cross your arms downward into an "X" position in front of your knees.

4

As you are continuing to swing your arm motion back out and up into a "T" or a "V" (depending on the final position you are executing), jump!

5

Upon landing from your jump, bend your knees slightly to absorb any shock and put your arms straight and down by your side with your hands in fists, much like step one.

6

Straighten your knees and clap for the finishing touch.



drills

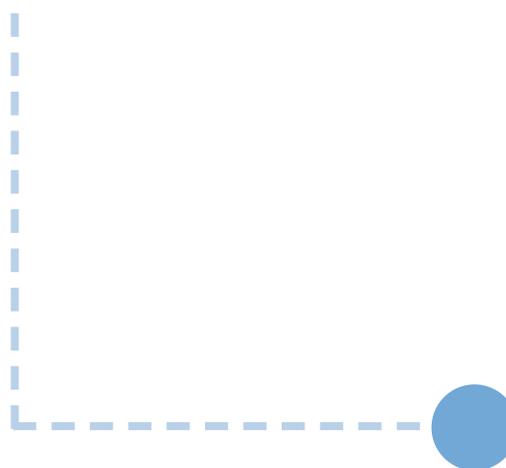


Work on repetitive jumping drills to build your muscle, increase your stamina and nail your timing. Perform your drills on an 8-count, starting with the jump entry for each jump.

This sample drill should take no more than 10 minutes to complete, and can be completed several times as a great cardio workout too!

After a few times performing drills your endurance and stamina will increase, and you should be able to increase the number of jumps while decreasing the number of breaks.

You can use this drill as a starting point for developing your sets too! If there are certain jumps you need to work on more, or if you have mastered beginners jumps and want to focus on advanced jumps, go ahead and add or remove anything you need to from the drill example above!



3 straight jumps
3 X jumps

8 count break

5 tucks
5 pikes

8 count break

3 toe touches
5 around the worlds
3 toe touches

16 count break

3 tucks
5 herkies
3 tucks
5 hurdlers

16 count break

3 pikes
10 toe touches
3 pikes

16 count break

5 tucks
5 pikes

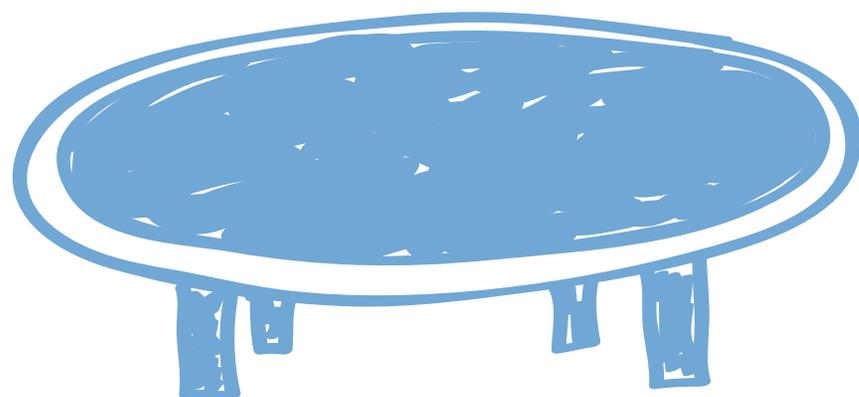
8 count break

3 straight jumps
3 X jumps



Muscle memory is one of the best ways to perfect your technique. Repetitive drills also work and build every muscle it takes to perform jumps!





quick tip:

practice on a trampoline to give you a feel of power and height for your jumping.

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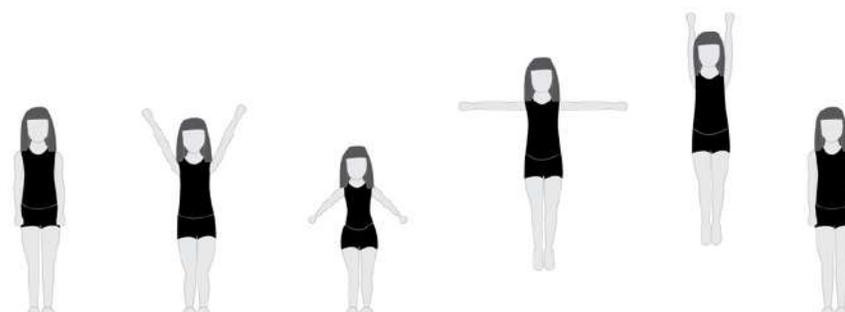


beginner jumps

The most basic jumps in cheerleading are great for helping cheerleaders practice their timing and their body position for more complicated moves.

Don't be discouraged that these are just jumps for newbies. Even beginner jumps are extremely popular for hyping up crowds and requires a lot of power and technique!

straight jump



- Start your jump entry with your feet together, your arms straight down on your side and your hands in fists.
- Clap your hands and then put your arms into a high V position.
- As soon as your arms are up, bend your knees and cross your arms downward into an "X" position in front of your knees.
- As you are continuing to swing your arm motion back out and up, use your bent knees to launch yourself into the air.
- Jump straight up, keeping your legs together, your head and chest up, and your back straight. The straight jump should be done with a stiff and tight posture. Your arms can hit a T or a High V position (pictured here). Point your toes!
- When you land, bend your knees to absorb the shock, and bring your arms straight down by your side, keeping your hands in fists.
- Straighten your knees once you are steady, and finish the jump with a clap.

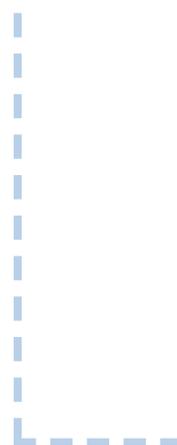
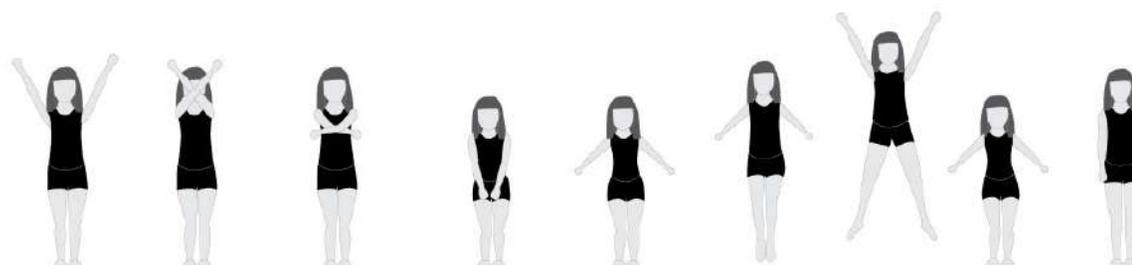
a.k.a. ●●●

pencil jump

T jump



X jump



- Start your jump entry with your feet together, your arms straight down on your side and your hands in fists.
- Clap your hands and then put your arms into a High V position, and slightly bend your knees.
- Cross your arms into an X and swing them down. Don't just pull your arms down – swing them to help you build momentum for your jump.
- Your arms will uncross after lining up with your knees. As you continue to swing your arm motion back out and up, bend your knees even more, and spring up and launch yourself into the air. Continue pulling your arms back up into a High V motion.
- Jump straight up with your head and chest up and your back straight. Once you are off the ground, pull your legs apart, into an upside down High V. Be sure to point your toes!
- Pull your legs back together as you are coming down. Your legs should be together when your feet hit the ground, and you should bend your knees to absorb the shock.
- As you are landing, you'll also start pulling your arms down.

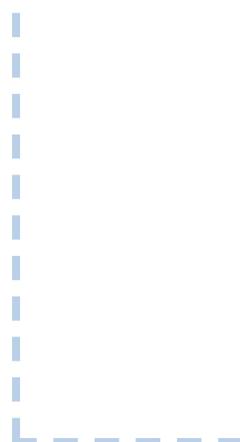
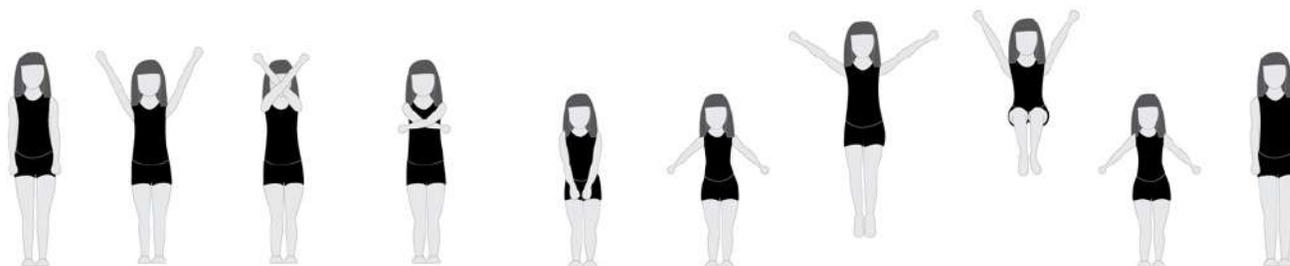
a.k.a. ●●●

spread eagle jump

star jump



tuck jump



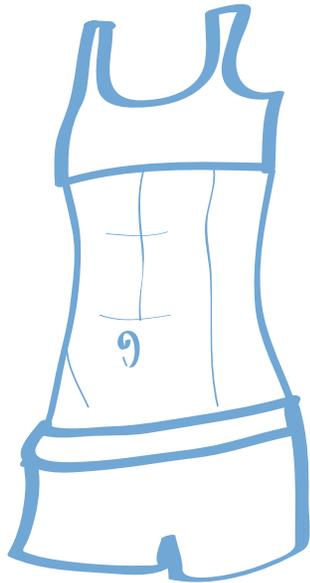
- Start your jump entry with your feet together, your arms straight down on your side and your hands in fists.
 - Clap your hands and then put your arms into a High V position, and slightly bend your knees.
 - Cross your arms into an X and swing them down. Don't just pull your arms down – swing them to help you build momentum for your jump.
 - Your arms will uncross after lining up with your knees. As you continue to swing your arm motion back out and up, use your bent knees to spring up and launch yourself into the air. Continue pulling your arms back up into a High V motion.
 - Jump straight up, keeping your legs together, your head and chest up, and your back straight. Once you are off the ground, pull your knees up to your chest. Be sure that you use your ab muscles to pull your knees in – do not bring your head or chest down!
- When you land, bend your knees to absorb the shock,
- and bring your arms straight down by your side, keeping your hands in fists.

a.k.a. ●●●

knee tuck jump

front tuck jump





quick tip:

leaning forward will stunt the height of your jump- instead, use your stomach muscles to pull your legs up towards your chest during a jump.

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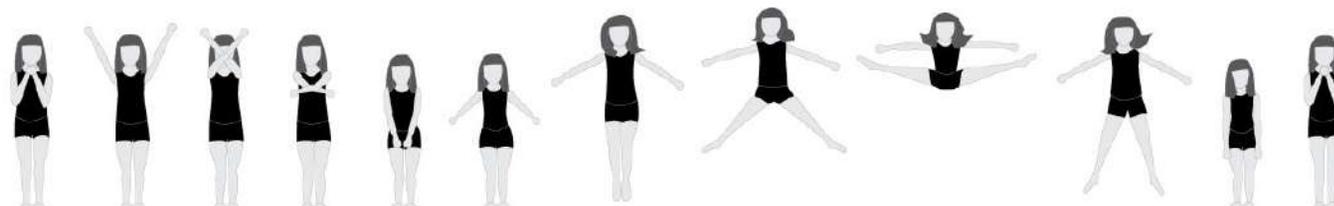


advanced jumps

From behind the scenes at tryouts and practices, to in front of the cameras at national and worldwide competitions, chances are that your team will perform advanced jumps in synchronicity!

Advanced jumps are easier to perform if you have improved your flexibility, built great core strength and mastered your jump entry. Some advanced jumps may take a little bit longer to perfect – but all your effort will be worth it when you are hitting your jumps and stunning the crowd!

toe touch



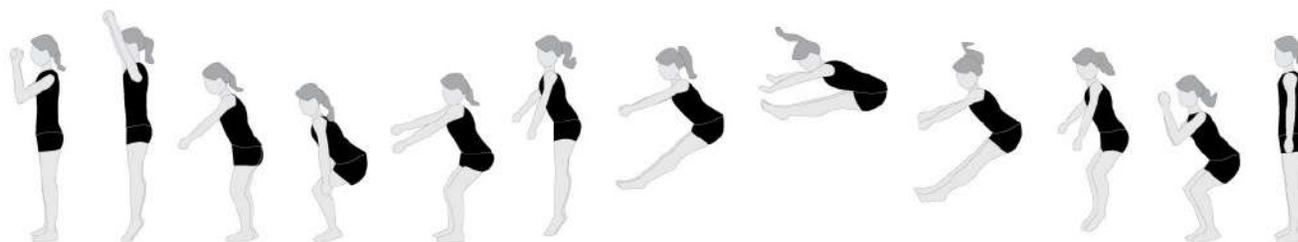
- Start with your feet together, your arms straight down on your sides and your hands in fists. Clap your hands and then put your arms into a High V position.
- While still in the High V position, cross your arms, then swing them down while bending your knees and lowering yourself into a squat. You want to help build momentum for your jump, so put a little power into this move!
- From your squatting position, you will swing your arms up and use your legs to launch yourself into the air.
- Once in the air, swing your arms into a standard cheer T motion and rotate your hips while pulling both legs parallel to the ground so that your legs form a V.
- Use your stomach muscles to pull your legs up towards your chest instead of leaning forward towards your toes – which will stunt the height of your jump. Don't forget to point those toes!
- Your legs should be together when your feet hit the ground, and you should bend your knees to absorb the shock. As you are landing, you'll also start pulling your arms down to your side.

big deal ●●●

Toe touches are one of the most popular and often executed jumps in cheerleading.



pike



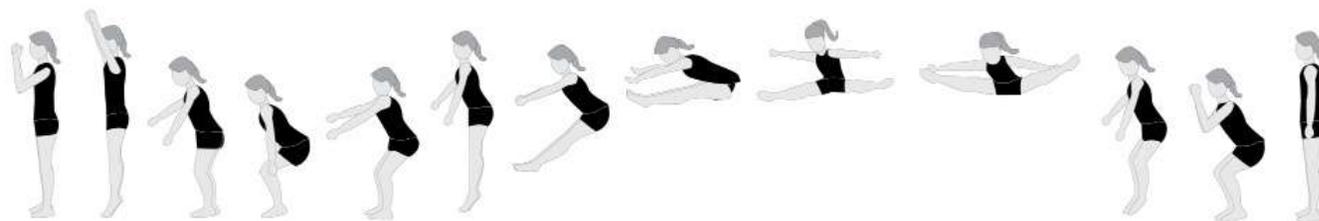
- Start your jump entry with your feet together, your arms straight down on your side and your hands in fists.
- Clap your hands and then put your arms into a High V position, and come up onto your toes.
- Swing your arms down while bending your knees and lowering yourself into a squat. You want to help build momentum for your jump, so put a little power into this move!
- From your squatting position, you will swing your arms up and use your legs to launch yourself into the air.
- Once in the air, pull your legs up straight out in front of you at a 90 degree angle, bringing them up to your chest as high as you can. At the same time, lean your upper body forward and reach for your pointed toes, keeping your arms straight.
- Try to keep your legs and arms parallel to the ground during your jump. Be sure to point your toes!
- Your legs should be together when your feet hit the ground, and you should bend your knees to absorb the shock.
- As you are landing, you'll also start pulling your arms down. After your feet hit the ground and you straighten your legs, you'll bring your arms straight down by your side, keeping your hands in fists.

angle it ●●●

Pikes are most often performed either at a diagonal or from the side, not straight on.



around the world



- Start your jump entry with your feet together, your arms straight down on your side and your hands in fists.
- Clap your hands and then put your arms into a High V position, and come up onto your toes.
- Swing your arms down while bending your knees and lowering yourself into a squat. You want to help build momentum for your jump, so put a little power into this move!
- From your squatting position, you will swing your arms up and use your legs to launch yourself into the air.
- Keeping your legs together, pull them straight out in front of you at a 90 degree angle into a Pike position, bringing them up to your chest as high as you can.
- At the same time, lean your upper body forward and reach for your pointed toes, keeping your arms straight and your hands in a fist. Try to keep your legs and arms parallel to the ground during your jump.
- Open and rotate your hips to bring your legs parallel to the ground into a Toe Touch position, while swinging your arms into a "T"
- Upon landing, bend your knees slightly to absorb any shock. Bend your arms toward you and pull them into your chest, with your hands in fists. Straighten your knees and clap for the finishing touch.

combo deal ●●●

This jump is a combination of the pike jump and the toe touch—so be sure to master both of those jumps before attempting this one!



quick tip:

remember the key to a cheerleading jump is good form in the air- focus on the position of your hips, shoulders and legs, and always strive for greater height.



Things are starting to get brighter.

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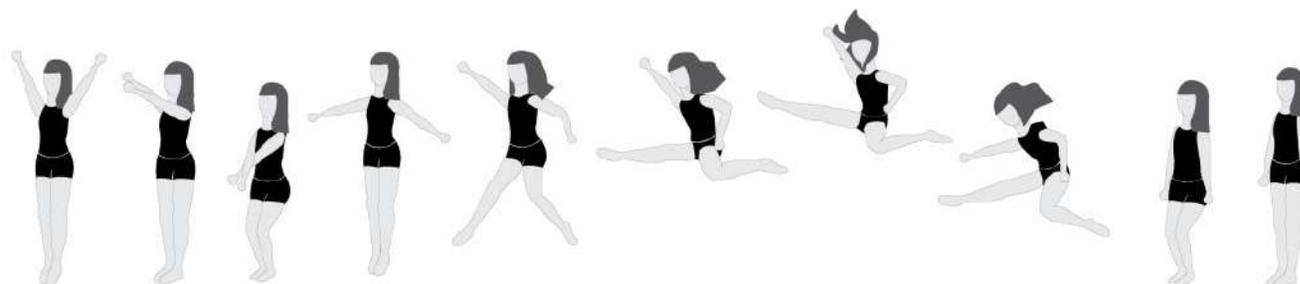


expert jumps

Cheerleading jumps will get more difficult as you get more experience and your team and coach begin to expect you to contribute more advanced skills to the team. Expert jumps require a lot of power, and are often even described as an explosion of spirit!

Advanced jumps are a sure way to show off your team's skill level and to get the crowd loud. These advanced jumps are a staple routine element seen at all levels – from sideline squad performances to All Star competitions!

herkie



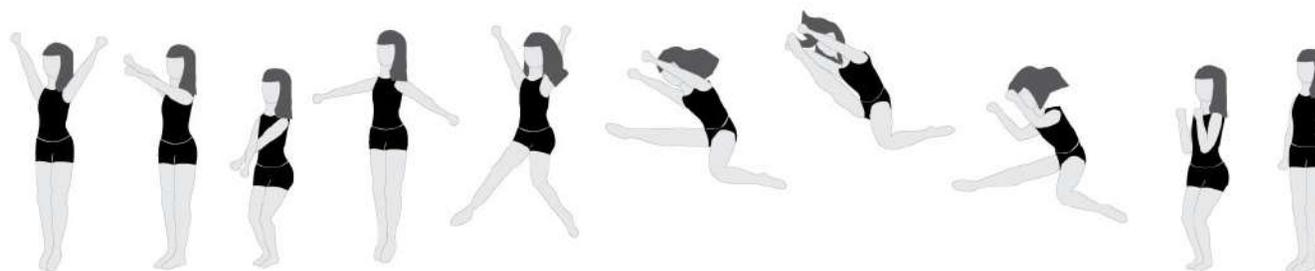
- Start your jump entry with your feet together, your arms straight down on your side and your hands in fists.
- Clap your hands and then put your arms into a High V position, and slightly bend your knees.
- Cross your arms into an X and swing them down. Don't just pull your arms down – swing them to help you build momentum for your jump.
- Your arms will uncross after lining up with your knees. As you continue to swing your arm motion back out and up, bend your knees even more, and spring up and launch yourself into the air. Continue pulling your arms back up and hit a Motion Punch position (where one arm is straight up and the other is bent on your hip).
- Jump straight up with your head and chest up and your back straight. Once you are off the ground, one leg will go into a toe touch position and the other leg will be in the general toe touch position, but bent at the knee, with the knee pointing to the ground.
- Pull your legs back together as you are coming down. Your legs should be together when your feet hit the ground, and you should bend your knees to absorb the shock.
- As you are landing, you'll also start pulling your arms down. After your feet hit the ground, you'll bring your arms straight down by your side, keeping your hands in fists.
- Straighten your knees once you are steady, and finish the jump with a basic cheer clap.



The difference between a Herkie and a Hurdler is arm position and your bent knee position. The Herkie jump is performed with your arms in a motion punch position and your bent knee perpendicular to the ground.



hurdler



- Start your jump entry with your feet together, your arms straight down on your side and your hands in fists.
- Clap your hands and then put your arms into a High V position, and slightly bend your knees.
- Cross your arms into an X and swing them down. Don't just pull your arms down – swing them to help you build momentum for your jump.
- Your arms will uncross after lining up with your knees. As you continue to swing your arm motion back out and up, bend your knees even more, and spring up and launch yourself into the air. Continue pulling your arms back up into a High V motion.
- Jump straight up with your head and chest up and your back straight. Once you are off the ground, one leg will go into a toe touch position and the other leg will be bent, but parallel to the ground. Your arms and head may bend slightly forward, but as a rule you should be pulling your leg up, not pushing your head down.
- Pull your legs back together as you are coming down. Your legs should be together when your feet hit the ground, and you should bend your knees to absorb the shock.
- As you are landing, you'll also start pulling your arms down. After your feet hit the ground, you'll bring your arms straight down by your side, keeping your hands in fists.
- Straighten your knees once you are steady, and finish the jump with a basic cheer clap.



The difference between a Herkie and a Hurdler is arm position and your bent knee position. The Hurdler jump is performed with your arms in a “V” and your bent knee parallel to the ground.





quick tip:

videotape your jumps each week and compare them to the previous weeks (and to your first practice session) so you can get a good idea of your progress.

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