



Jumping off a Height

Jumping skills are challenging for your child as it requires arm, leg and body coordination as well as controlling a flight phase when both feet are not in contact with the ground. The jumping movement is usually divided into three components: the preparation or take-off, the flight, and the landing.

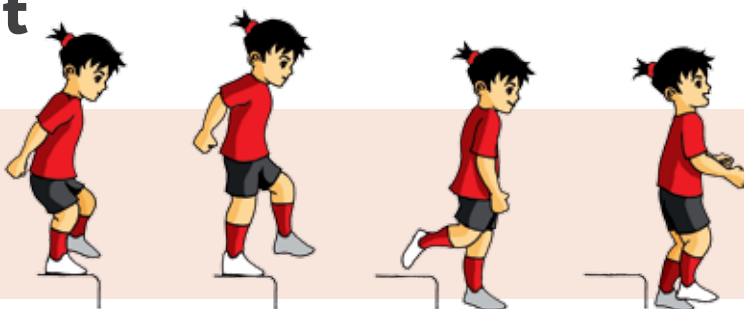
When jumping off a height, your child first takes off on two feet into the air and then land on both. This skill is used when he jumps from chairs, sofas, stairs and playground equipment. Jumping off a height is a great thrill for children – just watch your child's face as he jumps off from a staircase or a playground block to flee a tagger.

To land with knees slightly bent is an important safety consideration, as is landing on soft, non-concrete surfaces. Also, your child should always have his shoes on when jumping.

Developmental Phases

Jumping off a Height

Initial



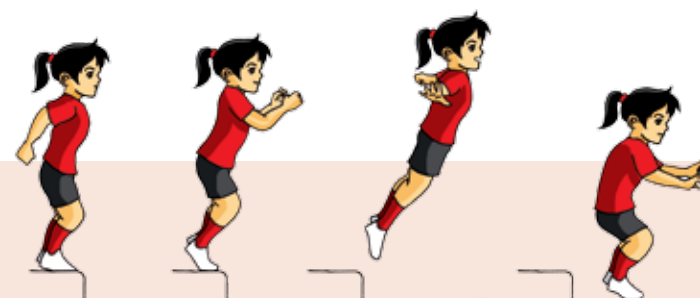
- One-foot take-off, with take-off foot contacting ground first before other foot leaves surface (like stepping down).
- No flight phase visible.
- Heavy dependence on arms for balance.

Transition



- Two-foot take-off with one foot leading in front.
- One-foot landing followed by immediate landing of other foot, resulting in minimal flight phase.
- An uneasy bending at knees and hip upon landing.
- Awkward use of arms for balance.

Mature



- Smooth two-foot take-off to give a controlled flight phase (both feet in the air).
- Both arms used efficiently for balance.
- Upon landing, both feet contact ground simultaneously, with toes touching first.
- Feet land shoulder-width apart.

Approximate Age of Development (in years)

Initial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Transition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Teaching Strategies

Jumping off a Height

What to do if your child...

... is afraid/unwilling to jump off a height?



- Place your child on a low height and get him to bend knees. Facing him, hold him on both shoulders.
- Count to three and gently lift him up.
- Gradually reduce physical help, from shoulders to elbows, then to hands, and finally just verbal cues.

... is unable to take off with both feet?



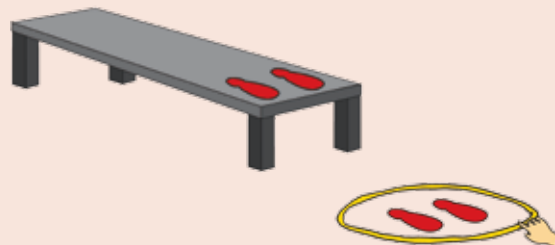
- Make a 2-cm wide newspaper band to wrap your child's feet near ankles (staple or tape ends of the newspaper together). Get your child to imagine his feet are now glued together.
- Place two footprints at end of raised platform and a matching pair on ground.
- Get your child to jump off, keeping his feet together.

... is not swinging both hands to help in take-off?



- Hold an object or target slightly in front and just above your child's head level.
- Get your child to jump and reach for the target.

... is not gaining distance with jump?



- Place a hoop near raised platform and get your child to jump off and into hoop.
- Progressively move the hoop further away.

Variations

“Can your child jump off...?”

How the body moves	Force/Effort	Time	Flow
	• and stamp the ground with his feet • with hands stretched out like a star • lightly to land in a bowl of ‘jello’	• and clap before he lands • and turn in the air before he lands • and touch his knees before he lands	• with a bean bag in each palm (palm facing up) • and wave a towel held in his hand • with hands ‘glued’ to his sides
Where the body moves	Location	Direction/Pathways	Levels/Extensions
	• into a hoop • and land near the marker/line • from different stools or benches around the space	• towards two footprints on the floor • and reach for the sky before landing • and turn clockwise before landing	• from a low crouch position • like a tall rocket taking off
With whom/What the body moves	Self (body parts)/People	Objects	
	• and land with hands touching tip of toes • and land on one foot • and turn to face you standing on his right/left	• holding a scarf • and land across a rope placed on the floor • onto a gym mat	

COMBINATIONS

- Lightly like rain from a stool waving a scarf before landing with hands touching knees
- From a stool, turn in the air and clap before landing in an ‘electric’ hoop

Activity 1

Jumping off a Height

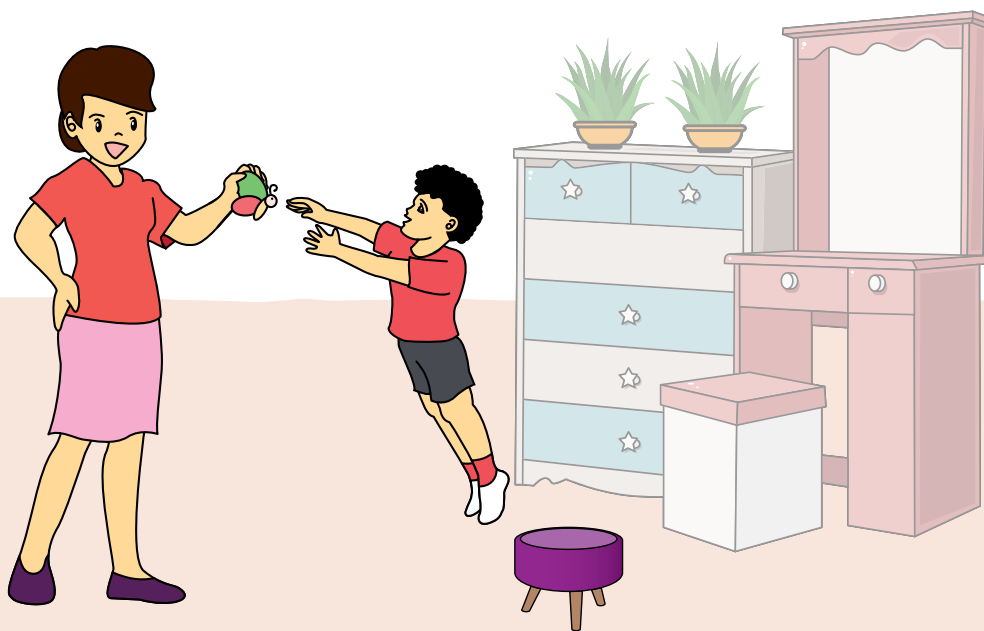
LOCOMOTOR SKILLS



- Ensure the stool is stable and not easily toppled.

WHAT YOU NEED

- A stable stool
- A stuffed toy



HOW TO PLAY

- Have your child stand on a stable stool. Let him practise jumping off the stool.
- Hold a stuffed toy in front of and above your child's head. On the stool, from a low crouching position, he must spring forward, swinging and stretching his arms forward to touch the stuffed toy.



- Encourage your child to jump and touch the stuffed toy 10 times. Count the number of successful attempts together.

BE AWARE

- Dangling the stuffed toy promotes swinging of your child's arms as he reaches forward for the stuffed toy.
- Swinging his arms forward will aid in lifting his body upward and forward.
- Encourage your child to start from a low crouching position by telling him to pretend he is a small round ball. Bent knees will help his body gain greater take-off power as he jumps off.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

- This activity can be done any time and does not require much space.
- Do this activity with your child in the living room during TV commercial breaks, or using stairs at the lift lobby while waiting for the lift.

Activity 2

Jumping off a Height

LOCOMOTOR SKILLS

WHAT YOU NEED

- A ball



- Remind your child to lift his legs upwards when “bouncing” off. This will help him maintain his balance and prevent falls.
- Remind him to bend his knees on landing. This will help absorb the landing impact, minimising the risk of knee injury.



HOW TO PLAY

- Show your child how a ball can bounce freely. Then ask him to imagine that he is the ball.
- Get him to “bounce” off a short flight of steps or kerb by crouching low, jumping and crouching again.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

- Do this activity while out with your child. Instead of the lift, take the stairs to let him practise jumping off a height. Have him jump off a kerb at the playground or park.

Activity 3

Jumping off a Height

LOCOMOTOR SKILLS



- Be alert and get ready to catch your child should he needs assistance.

WHAT YOU NEED

- A piece of paper with footprints drawn on it



HOW TO PLAY

- Get your child to stand at one end of his bed.
- Tape a piece of paper with footprints drawn on it, a distance away from the bed.
- Your child must jump forward and off the bed.
- As he jumps, he should try to land on the footprints.



- Depending on your child's ability, increase the challenge by increasing the distance between bed and the piece of paper.

BE AWARE

- Placing a piece of paper with footprints encourages your child to take off and land with both feet for balance and stability.