

Jump Rope Vs. Running: Which One Will Give You a Better Workout?

Zoe Weiner · 1 day ago



[Jump ropes](#) have long been a staple on the playground, but as an adult, it's a good idea to put them at the forefront of your fitness routine—especially if you're a runner. The two workouts go hand-in-hand for building your best possible cardio routine, and when it comes to choosing between jump rope vs running, you'll benefit from embracing both.

"I alternate between jumping rope and running, because both are great forms of cardiovascular exercise," says [Joshua Vela](#), a NASM-certified personal trainer with [DailyBurn](#). While running unquestionably has its fair share of benefits, jumping rope actually offers all of the *same* benefits... and then some. "Jumping rope and running share the same general goals," says Vela. He explains that both will help you increase overall longevity, build cardiovascular and mental health, maintain a healthy weight and bone density, reduce risk of disease, and increase oxygenated blood flow to your muscles.

Keep reading to find out why you should add a regular rope session into your routine, plus some fun ways to do it at home.

Benefits of jump rope vs. running

1. It's efficient

Forget spending an hour on the treadmill for the sake of your cardio routine—all you really need is a few minutes jumping rope. "The benefits of jumping rope for 10 minutes per day have been proven to be just as effective in terms of cardiovascular health and caloric expenditure as running for 30 minutes," says Vela. This means you can get your daily dose of cardio in three songs, flat.

2. It's low impact

There's no question that running is great for your cardiovascular health, but one thing it's not so good for? Your joints. "When done correctly, jumping rope can actually be lower impact on the joints than running," says Vela. "It's a great way for runners to train on off days to build ankle stability and even prevent shin splints." When done properly, the light, repetitive movements put less pressure on your knees than pounding the pavement mile after mile. "It's great for

someone who may be nursing an injury that doesn't allow them to run," adds Joel Okaah, CPT, field support director with [D1 Training](#).

3. It's great for strengthening

Jumping rope isolates the muscles in your calves and quads, and the repetitive bouncing on the balls of your feet serves to target and strengthen these areas with every swing of the rope. Plus, it's a great warm-up for the rest of your muscle-building routine. "Jump roping is similar to running the 300 to 800 meter in track and, when paired with strength training, may lead to greater results," says Joey Cifelli, a master trainer at [Crunch Gym](#) in New York City. Vela is a fan of super setting his strength training routine with five minutes of jumping rope to spike his heart rate and get the endorphins flowing.

4. It improves speed, agility, balance, and coordination

Need some extra work on speed? Grab a jump rope. "The activity is typically done in bouts of three minutes or less for multiple sets across and engages the type two muscle fibers," says Cifelli. "Jump rope is more effective than running for individuals focusing on quick-twitch facilitation." Need proof? There's a reason why jump ropes are such a longstanding staple in boxing gyms. And if you've ever tried jumping rope for yourself, you know that it's not exactly an easy feat. "Quick footwork and full-body coordination can be acquired with jumping rope," says Cifelli. According to Vela, it has a one-up on running in this sense, because running requires the sort of "locomotion movement we're all innately programmed for," he says. Plus, jumping up and down over a rope requires a certain level of hand-eye coordination and balance, and over time you'll see improvement in those areas, too.

How to jump rope

Before you add a jump rope into your routine, it's important that you know what you're doing—and proper form is key. “Practice without the rope and get into the proper position,” says trainer [Amanda Kloots](#) in a recent episode of Well+Good's *The Right Way*. “Jumping rope is a rhythm—the rope hits, you jump. Your foot rhythm and your hand rhythm have to be the same.”

A few other things to keep in mind? “You never want to jump higher than the rope is thick,” says Kloots, who explains that this is an unnecessary expenditure of energy and will tire you out more quickly than necessary. Hold your arms out at a 90-degree angle so that the rope forms a perfect circle around your body, and engage your core to keep your body in a straight line from your head to your (jumping) feet.



Need a quick tutorial? Follow along with Kloots' lesson in the video below.

<https://youtu.be/u3zgHI8QnqE>

How to incorporate jump rope into your routine

When you're first starting out with a jump rope, start simple and go from there. "Start with the basics and work your way up to more complex jump rope workouts that challenge your tempo and isolate different parts of your body," says Okaah. If you're really new to the art of jump roping, you can start by training yourself to jump at a regular cadence while swinging your arms *without* the rope, then add the equipment when you're ready. At first, you can challenge yourself to jump for one minute straight, then build up to three-minute rounds, which can be integrated into your warmup or used as a cardio break between strength-training intervals.

Once you've got the classic jump down, you can up the intensity with some more complicated movements:

1. Single leg jump

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-7rkdgQ6A0>

To really isolate your calf muscles, spend your interval jumping exclusively on one foot. By the end of the round, you'll be *seriously* feeling the burn in your lower body.

2. Alternating foot jump

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wcm5kJCCSw>

If you want to further enhance your coordination, try jumping back and forth from one foot to the other. This will help with your balance

and agility, and takes so much focus that it will be *impossible* to think about anything else during your workout.

3. Double unders

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBR4nfTjI7M>

To spike your heart rate, try swinging the rope around *twice* with every jump.

4. A full routine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve5i1gbJgxE>

Ready for a full-scale jump-roping class? Follow along with the video above for a routine that will leave your heart racing in the *best* possible way.