



THE BENEFITS OF OFF-ICE TRAINING

Figure skating is a compelling and beautiful sport that uniquely combines athleticism and artistry to create powerful moments on the ice. The primary goal of off-ice training is to make ice time more productive for improving skating skills. Off-ice training should be balanced with on-ice training to ensure energy is productively used both on and off the ice.

Effective off-ice training includes six focus areas:

agility, balance, coordination, strength, power and flexibility. These focus areas help produce a conditioning response in the body that increases endurance and power. As athletes become better conditioned, the same exercise intensity will seem easier as the body uses energy stores. Skaters will become more well-rounded and physically literate athletes with proper training.

WHAT IS PHYSICAL LITERACY?

People who are physically literate have the competence, confidence and motivation to enjoy a variety of sports and physical activities. As a result, they are more likely to stay active. Physical literacy develops a movement vocabulary of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sports skills.

WARMING UP AND COOLING DOWN

It's important to warm up before getting on the ice when skaters first get to the rink and during long breaks between sessions. A proper warm-up and cool down are an important part of every work out. Skaters will eventually warm up when they get on the ice, but it may take the better part of the session. Precious ice time could be better utilized on skills rather than a complete warm-up.

Most skaters find that they skate, breathe and generally feel better near the end of a practice session. By this time, they have fully warmed up and can expect their muscles and nervous systems to respond in a quick and efficient manner. This can be achieved early in the session if skaters are warmed up before getting on the ice! Ten minutes off the ice can help the quality of the next 45 minutes on the ice if used effectively.

START WITH THE DYNAMIC WARM-UP

The dynamic warm-up will help increase body awareness and control in stroking and jump timing, muscles will stretch more easily, and skaters will have a decreased risk of on-ice injuries to muscles and tendons.

Having a complete, dynamic warm-up completed every day is also important for competing. Competition is a time of adrenaline and excitement for most skaters. Often the butterflies affect the stomach and the legs feel sluggish – the athlete's body simply does not feel the same as it does in practice. By having a competition warm-up that's nearly identical to the practice warm-up, the skater knows how he or she will feel afterward. It can be calming to have a set warm-up when so many other variables are out of the skater's control while away at competition.

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OFF-ICE CURRICULUM

AREA	WHAT IT IS	AGE 9 AND UNDER	AGES 9-14	AGES 14 AND ABOVE
Agility	The ability to change direction quickly and with control	Activities include games that involve change of direction and keep athletes excited and engaged. Introduce agility ladders, squares and cones. Keep it simple, fun and progressive.	Games and drills that teach athletes to change direction quickly and with control. Agility ladders, agility dots, cones and hexagons can all be used to learn progressive drills. Athletes start to emphasize the ability to control their body with directional changes.	Progressive drills that teach athletes to use their body to accelerate/decelerate through drills using hexagons, ladders, hurdles and cones. Examples of progressions include single leg work and sprint intervals.
Balance	To keep something in a steady position so it does not fall	Simple and fun activities that introduce cognitive balance skills. Start with simple positions with shorter periods of time and progress to various skating specific positions (ie. air position, landing position, spiral).	Progress balance training by adding more proprioceptive challenges such as changing positions, balancing for longer periods of time, eyes closed and using unstable surfaces.	Incorporate balance into any strength and power exercise by incorporating proprioceptive challenges. Challenge balance for longer periods of time. Add DBs or resistance bands to balance activities.
Coordination	The ability to use different parts of the body together smoothly and efficiently	Coordination is essential to overall athleticism. Skills such as skipping, hopping, jumping, jumping jacks, jump rope, throwing, catching, juggling and turning should be practiced. Incorporate into games and activities to keep athletes engaged and motivated.	Progress coordination with skating-specific coordination drills (upper and lower body working together) as well as overall coordination through footwork and hand eye coordination.	Coordination can be incorporated into drills that already involve strength, agility or balance (i.e., juggling while balancing, passing a ball while completing a footwork drill, etc.).
Strength	The quality or state of being physically strong	Introduce fundamental movement patterns with bodyweight exercises. Keep volume low to allow the athletes to discover and how to use their bodies. Basics include squatting, lunging, planks and push-up bridge positions. Bands and medicine balls can be used but are not critical at the fundamental level. Focus is on neuromuscular efficiency.	Athletes may be entering their PHV during this phase and can start to build muscular strength. Strength can be established through progressive exercises by increasing volume and adding resistance. Areas to focus on include the posterior chain, core, lumbo pelvic hip complex and shoulders. Also address importance on ankle/hip/shoulder mobility and stability exercises.	Athletes post-PHV are at an optimal phase to build strength. Progress from fundamental movements to add resistance, proprioceptive challenges and uni-lateral movements to increase strength. Program training should build from stability to muscular endurance to a strength phase.
Power	The rate of time of doing work	Power is the ability to produce the greatest amount of work in the shortest amount of time (also known as force x velocity). Developing power at this phase is done through simple exercises, such as learning how to load, jump and land properly. Activities like vertical jump, tuck jumps, power skips and rotational jumps all introduce power.	Power exercises can be programmed to include low volume plyometrics during strength and conditioning sessions. At this age there can be a greater emphasis on the importance of proper technique and mindfulness of the volume of power exercises as figure skaters are constantly working on power during their on-ice training through explosive movements.	Power training is integrated into a strength and conditioning program once the athlete has demonstrated joint stability and muscular strength. Power exercises can be implemented to improve both upper and lower extremity power and can incorporate resistance. Always be mindful of volume and time of season when implementing power training.
Flexibility	The quality of bending easily without breaking	Children are the most supple in this age group. Introductions to dynamic stretching, active flexibility and static stretching will enhance lengthening of key muscle groups, increase ROM around the joints and help resist injury. Flexibility should start simple and progress. Active flexibility should be included in warm-up while static flexibility should be included in cool-down and recovery.	Children are the most supple in this age group. Introductions to dynamic stretching, active flexibility and static stretching will enhance lengthening of key muscle groups, increase ROM around the joints and help resist injury. Flexibility should start simple and progress. Active flexibility should be included in warm-up while static flexibility should be included in cool-down and recovery.	Increased focus on active stretching in the dynamic warm-up. Recovery flexibility can include soft tissue mobilization through foam rollers, balls, static stretching, pnf stretching etc.

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DYNAMIC WARM-UP

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the dynamic warm-up is to physically and mentally prepare the body for the upcoming training session. The warm-up increases the body’s temperature, wakes the central nervous system, focuses on mobilization, range of motion and activation of key joints necessary for on-ice skill development.

How much time does an athlete need for the dynamic warm-up?

The Aspire dynamic warm-up is a 5-10-minute series designed to be completed just before an on-ice training session.

What kind of space or equipment is needed?

No equipment necessary! Just make sure you have enough space to be able to move the body freely on a flat, dry surface. Good athletic shoes are recommended.

<i>DYNAMIC WARM-UP OUTLINE</i>	
Step 1 - Warm-up	Cardiorespiratory warm-up for 1-2 minutes. This consists of continuous movements to increase the body’s heart rate, increase blood flow and awaken the central nervous system. Movements can include jogging, jump roping, jumping jacks, skipping, dancing, etc.
Step 2 - Lengthen and Mobilize	A series of purposeful movements to increase range of motion in key joints and lengthen important muscle groups that are used for on-ice training. Key joints include ankles, hips, back and shoulders.
Step 3 - Activate	Activate the central nervous system to use key muscle groups in reactive movements that may or may not replicate on-ice skills. Key groups include ankles, hips, posterior chain, core and upper body. Movements may replicate skating specific skills.

STEP 1: GET THE BLOOD FLOWING!

Increase the heart rate and blood flow for 1-2 minutes by performing continuous body movements that can progress in movement, speed and range of motion.



Movements such as basic jogging, jump rope, jumping jacks, stair climbing, etc. will increase the body’s temperature and start to activate and mobilize key muscle groups and joints.

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OFF-ICE DYNAMIC WARM-UP

STEP 2: MOBILIZE AND LENGTHEN

Start with a series of dynamic stretches that are held 2-5 seconds in each position and done in multiple repetitions. The purpose is to lengthen the muscles and increase range of motion around key joints such as the hips, shoulders and ankles.



Walking Quad Stretch: Step forward, bending the free leg and grab the free foot with your hand, pulling the heel toward the buttocks. Extend through the standing leg and tuck the buttocks underneath your hips to emphasize a stretch in the front of the thigh. Use the free arm for balance. Hold the position for 3-5 seconds and repeat on the opposite side.



Walking Leg Cradles: Standing tall, lift one knee up and externally rotate the leg so the inner thigh is pointing up. Grab the leg with both hands and cradle it higher to stretch out the outside of the hip. Repeat on the opposite leg.



Walking Toe Touch: Standing tall, kick one heel out in front. Next push the hips back, keeping the front leg straight and standing knee bent. With a flat back, reach toward the front toe, emphasizing a stretch in the back of the hip, hamstrings and calf. Alternate legs as you walk forward.



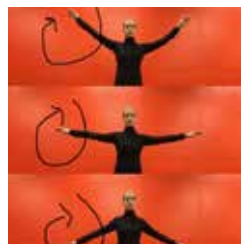
Lateral Lunge: Start by taking a wide step out to the side, keeping shoulders and hips square. Feet should still be parallel. Shifting your weight to one side of the body, push the hips back, keeping the weight in the heel and dropping down into a lunge position. Increase the depth of the lunge to emphasize the stretch in the inside of the extended leg.



Runner's Lunge with Twist: Begin by taking a giant step forward with one leg. Keeping the back leg extended, drop the hips, allowing the front knee to bend into a runner's lunge. Make sure the front knee is bent 90 degrees. Twist the upper body toward the front leg and reach the top arm up to the sky, keeping the opposite arm on the ground for balance. Repeat on the opposite leg.



Inchworm: Standing with feet hip-width apart, begin by pushing the hips back and reaching the arms down toward the toes. Walk the hands out to a plank position, focusing on keeping the legs extended and allowing a soft stretch in the back of the leg. From the plank position, keep the legs and straight walk the toes toward the hands to make a pike position. Proceed by walking the hands out again and repeat.



Arm Swings: Stand up straight with knees slightly bent and feet shoulder-width apart. Extend the arms so they are parallel to the floor and begin to circle the arms forward using a controlled motion. Gradually increase the circles in size with each repetition. Complete in both directions.



Cross Body Shoulder Stretch: Standing tall, grab one arm with your opposite hand and pull it across your body. Pull the arm toward your chest until you feel a stretch in the shoulder. Repeat on both sides.

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OFF-ICE DYNAMIC WARM-UP



Ankle Circles: Begin by standing (you may hold on to something for balance) or sitting. One foot at a time and starting at the ankle joint (avoid moving the lower leg) make circles going both clockwise and counterclockwise. Focus on the ankle's movement.



Standing Calf and Ankle Stretch: Starting a few inches back from the wall, keep the foot in a neutral position so it is flat on the ground. Press the knee forward toward the wall, allowing a passive stretch down the back of the calf toward the ankle. Repeat on each foot.

STEP 3: ACTIVATE

Activate the central nervous system to awaken key synergies and movement patterns to prepare for on-ice skill training.



Basic Squat: Start standing with the feet just wider than hip-width apart, toes facing front. Begin the movement by pressing the hips back and bending at the hip, knee and ankle. Be aware the knees are staying in line with the shins (and not falling inward). Sit back into the squat, keeping the weight back in the heels, chest up and shoulders back.



Jump Squats: Starting with the feet shoulder-width apart, push the hips back, dropping down into a squat or quarter squat position. Next, engage the core and legs to explosively jump into the air, focusing on extending the hips, knees and ankles in the air. Upon landing, roll through the foot, focusing on control and alignment of the hip, knee and ankle.



Basic Glute Bridge: Begin by laying on your back and bend both knees so your feet are flat on the ground directly below the knees. Keep arms extended by your sides to help with balance. Next, push through the heels and drive the hips up in the air. Squeeze the glutes and brace the abdominal muscles. Make sure the belly button is drawn in to avoid hyperextension in the back.



Broad Jump: Starting with the feet shoulder-width apart, bent at the hip, knee and ankle while swinging the arms back. Swing the arms forward as you drive your feet into the group and push the hips forward to create a jump. Upon landing, drop back down to the starting position, maintaining balance.



Single Leg Deadlift: Standing on two feet, begin by shifting your weight to one leg. With a soft bend in the knee, begin hinging at the hip and extending the free leg behind you, pushing through the heel. As the free leg extends, keep the back flat as the torso and free leg start to become parallel with the ground. Pull yourself back up to a standing position on one leg and repeat.



Power Skips: Step forward on one leg and jump into the air. Upon jumping, the knee of the back free leg will flex so the upper leg becomes parallel with the ground. Landing on the same leg as take-off, step forward with the free leg and repeat on the opposite foot.

ABCS OF ATHLETICISM (AGILITY, BALANCE AND COORDINATION)

Aspire to be strong, aspire to be powerful, aspire to be fast!

AGILITY

BASICS OF AGILITY	Agility is the ability to change directions quickly and with control. Agility can be incorporated with a variety of fun and progressive exercises that will allow the athlete to continue to develop athletically	
Running and Sprinting	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Learn the basic technique on running forward and accelerating and decelerating with control.
Lateral Shuffle	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Keeping the feet parallel, shoulders and hips are square. Begin to shuffle laterally, learning how to accelerate and decelerate with control. Pay close attention to control of the ankles with these exercises.
Grapevine	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Start to incorporate more footwork. Cross over the free leg, step to the side and then cross behind.
Quick Feet	<i>10-20 seconds</i>	Focus on increasing the rate of speed the feet can move in a short burst of time.
Forward Hops	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Starting with small hops on two feet, focus on control and body awareness. Progress to larger hops on two feet. Continue progressing to one-foot hops.
Lateral Hops	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Starting with small hops on two feet, keep the shoulders and hips square, avoiding in transverse rotation to keep the movement lateral. Increase distance and power on two feet. Continue progressing this drill to one-foot jumps medially and laterally.
Line Jumps (front-back, lateral, scissors)	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	Using a tape line on the floor, jump over the line and back as quickly as possible. Focus is on control and quickness. Continue this exercise with the feet jumping laterally and scissoring the feet over the line.
Hexagon Jump	<i>3 rotations</i>	Using 6 24" strips of tape, create a hexagon on the floor. Have the athlete start in the center of the hexagon. Begin by hopping forward and back toward center, hopping across all six sides of the hexagon as quickly as possible while maintaining control.
Speed Ladder Drills		

BALANCE

BASICS OF BALANCE	Balance exercises help young athletes become familiar with proprioception, or their body awareness in space. These exercises can be fun and involve a variety of different games and activities	
Barefoot Two-Foot Balance	<i>30-40-second intervals</i>	Begin standing tall on two feet with the feet facing forward, directly below the hips. With the hands on the hips educate the athlete on how to stand with their big toe, little toe and heel all on the ground to evenly distribute weight on the foot while balancing. Discuss the muscles in the legs, core and arm and how they can support balance in this position.
Barefoot Two-Foot Balance with Eyes Closed	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	Closing the eyes will change the athletes vestibular balance, challenging their ability to balance.

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ABCS OF ATHLETICISM

Single Leg Balance Progression	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	While practicing single leg balance be aware of the athlete's body position. Take note if their knees are collapsing in, feet are falling inward or turning outward as well as any lateral shift in the hip or rotation in the core. Start to talk about alignment of the hip, knee and ankle as well as keeping the weight even through the foot.
One-Foot Glide	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	Revisiting a skating skill from Basic 1, start with the athlete barefoot or in shoes (barefoot will add a greater challenge) and have them hit a basic one-foot glide position without the support of a skate or shoe. They may find it much more challenging to hold the position for an extended period. Increase difficulty by placing the hands on the hip.
Stroking Position	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	Progress from the one-foot glide to a stroking or landing position with an extended free leg. The free leg can be extended with the toes pointed. Arms can be extended out or hands on the hips.
Hip Flexion/"h" Position	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	Standing tall on one leg, bend the free knee and hip to 90 degrees so the hip and knee are level. Keep the free foot flexed to demonstrate an "h" position. Pay attention if the athlete is standing tall through the hip, activating the hamstring, glutes and quads. Watch for the hips to be level, torso also level. Arms can be extended or hands on hips.
Loading Position	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	This position will resemble the free leg as it loads for the take-off of a waltz jump. Begin standing tall on one leg, extend the free leg behind and bend the free knee 90 degrees. Bend the standing leg into a quarter squat to resemble a take-off position. Arms can be extended outward, drawn behind the body (same as a take-off) or hands on the hips.
Air Position	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	Standing tall on one leg, cross the free leg over the standing leg and draw it in tight like a scratch spin or air spin position. Talk to the athlete on how to engage the muscles in the glute and abs to support this position. Hips, shoulder and arm positions can be specific to your on-ice teaching style.
Spiral Position	<i>10-20-second intervals</i>	Standing tall on one leg, hinge at the hips, keeping the chest lifted. Extend the free leg back and up to stretch in to a spiral position. Free hip can be open, and the toes can be pointed. Back is arched, chest lifted and arms extended.

Once these basic positions are introduced you can continue to progress the exercises by doing any of the following:

1. Increase length of time for the intervals in each position
2. Create combinations: transferring from one position to another with no break between
3. Use yoga blocks, gloves, etc. to balance on the head for body awareness
4. Add a coordination game by passing a lightweight ball back and forth while in a balance position
5. Begin to increase difficulty by standing on an unstable surface such as an Airex mat or Bosu ball
6. Introduce the exercises with the eyes closed

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ABCS OF ATHLETICISM

COORDINATION

BASICS OF COORDINATION		Defined as the ability to use different parts of the body together smoothly and efficiently, coordination is relevant to every aspect of athletic development for figure skaters. Coordination can be implemented in classes with hand-eye coordination, balance activities, footwork activities and drills or games that require use rhythm between the upper and lower extremities.
Skipping Progression	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Learn the basic movement pattern in skipping by introducing multiple variations, including change in direction, size and speed of the skips.
Walking Skip	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Much like the walk-through of a skating jump. Start standing tall on one leg and flex the free knee 90 degrees so it is level with the hips. With the knee still flexed, take a small hop up and down on the standing leg. Step forward on to the free leg and repeat. Introduce the arm movement so the elbows are bent 90 degrees. The opposite arm will pass through with the free leg.
Forward Skip	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Repeating the movement patterns listed above increase the speed for a forward skip.
Backward Skip	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Begin with a skipping motion standing in one place, then continue skipping backwards, paying attention to body position and balance. Pay attention to keeping the feet close when changing feet.
Lateral Skip	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Begin with a skipping motion standing in one place, then begin to shift in a lateral direction. Focus on keeping the shoulders and hips square. Avoid twisting the upper body or crossing the feet. Keep the feet close and parallel when switching feet
Turning Skip	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Begin with a skipping motion standing in one place. Start to rotate the body either clockwise or counterclockwise, continuously skipping while rotating.
Power Skip for Height or Distance	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Increase range of motion and power to create more height with each skip. Focus on triple extension in the arm and controlling the landing and take-offs. Focus on either maximal height or distance with each set.
Jumping Rope	<i>Variable times</i>	Introduce the basic coordination concepts of jumping rope. Teach proper technique by emphasizing use of the wrists and ankles to create rhythm with the jumps.
Bear Crawl	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Start in a plank position on the wrists and toes. Keeping the knees bent, push off one foot, reaching forward with the free leg and opposite arm. Continue by alternating arms and legs in a crawling pattern for the desired distance.
Crab Walk	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Begin sitting on the floor with your arms placed behind your shoulder and the fingertips pointing toward the feet. Next, lift your hips up into the air and reach forward with one heel and the opposite hand. Continue moving forward, alternating arms and legs as you “crab walk” for the desired distance.
Inchworms	<i>10-20 yards</i>	Begin standing with feet hip-width apart. With a soft knee, bend at the hip and reach down toward the toes. Next, walk the hands out to a plank position with a flat back. Continue by planting the hands in one spot and walking the toes in toward the hands, keeping the legs extended except for a soft bend in the knee.
Galloping	<i>10-20 yards</i>	The gallop can be done in a forward or sideways direction. Spring forward with one foot and immediately transfer the back foot up to the position of the front foot and continue with the lead foot. Repeat the exercise with the opposite foot leading.
Bird Dogs	<i>10-20 reps</i>	Begin kneeling on the floor or mat with your knee and feet hip-width apart and your toes flexed. Place wrists underneath the shoulders, shoulder-width apart. Engage the core to create a flat back with the core engaged, and simultaneously extend one arm and the opposite leg until it is parallel with the floor. Focus on keeping the hip neutral and the back flat during the exercise.

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FOUNDATIONS OF STRENGTH

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BASICS OF STRENGTH

Strength is defined as the quality or state of being strong and the capacity for exertion or endurance. Functional strength, or using one's body as resistance, is an essential element of athleticism for figure skaters. Learning how to move properly to engage key muscle groups will help improve strength to support the muscles and movement patterns needed for on-ice skill development.

Basic Squat	10-20 reps	Begin with feet hip-width apart. Initiate the movement by pushing the hips back and bending at the hip knee and ankle. Lower down to a 90-degree angle at the knees. Keep the weight in the heel of the foot. Watch for alignment of the hip, knee and ankle (avoid the knees falling inward or forward during this movement).
Overhead Squat	10 reps	Lift arms over your head. Bend the hip, knee and ankle into a squat position while maintaining overhead arms, with the arms in line with the ears. Keep the chest lifted during the movement.
Split Squat	8-12 reps	Begin standing with the feet under the hips. Take a large step forward with one foot. Keeping the feet parallel, the weight should be even on the front and back foot. The weight is on the ball of the back foot and the heel of the front foot. Bend the knees and lower the hips, keeping the front shin vertical and the knee lined up with the front toes. Squat low enough that the back knee almost touches the floor. Press through the heel of the front foot to return to a standing position.
Step Back Lunge	8-12 reps	Standing with both feet under the hips, balance on one leg and extend the other leg back so just the ball of the foot is on the ground. Bend the knees and lower the hips to a lunge position. Keep the front shin vertical during the movement. Push through the heel of the front leg to return to the starting position.
Walking Lunge	8-12 reps	Standing with both feet under the hips, take a controlled step forward and drop the hips straight down as you bend both knees to 90 degrees. Keep the front shin vertical and control the back knee so it is just hovering above the ground. Keep the chest lifted and back straight as you alternate feet, moving forward with each lunge.
Side Lunge	8-12 reps	Standing with both feet under the hips, balance on one leg and take a large step to the side with the other foot. Begin the lunge by pushing the hips down and back. Watch to ensure the knee does not pass beyond the toes while lunging. Push off the inside of the bent leg to return to the standing position.
Basic Hinge	8-10 reps	Stand vertical with feet hip width apart. Toes can be pointed slightly outward. Begin the movement by shifting the weight into the heels and pushing the hips straight back. With soft knees and maintaining a straight and flat back, continue the movement until the chest is parallel with the ground (much like a camel spin or spiral). Return to the starting position by pushing the hips forward and squeezing the glutes.
Glute Bridge	10-20 reps	Laying on your back, bend the knees so the ankles are directly under the knees. Lift the hips in the air and activate the glutes and abdomen to the bridge position. Maintain a neutral spine during the movement. Slowly lower to the hips back down and repeat.

ASPIRE FOR POWER

STEP 1: MOVEMENT AND COORDINATION – SELF-DIRECTED, UNSTRUCTURED AND FUN!

These activities should be self-directed and used in a manner that is fun and playful, allowing the athlete to feel out the coordination and movement patterns on their own.

1. Skipping



2. Hopping on two feet



3. Galloping



4. Jump roping

STEP 2: LANDING MECHANICS

Before knowing how to create power, one must know how to properly absorb landing impact forces to create strong training habits.

1. Quick snaps



2. Mini depth landing –

Starting on a small step approximately 6" high, practice stepping off and landing softly and with control. Absorb impact through the foot and maintain your athletic stance when landing.



3. Mini two-foot jump –

Only jumping 2-3" off the ground, develop positions for take-off and landing, focusing on soft landings and control.

STEP 3: INTRODUCTION TO BASIC POWER EXERCISES

1. Two-foot bound

– Start with mini two-foot jumps moving across the floor. Progressively increase the distance in the jump.



2. Power skips –

Practice skips to achieve either greater height off the ground or greater distance across the floor.

3. Two-foot vertical jumps –

Starting with the feet underneath the hips, teach a "counter movement" by flexing the hips, knee and ankles and swinging the arms down and back. Next, extend through the legs while swinging with the arms to fully extend the body and the arms overhead. Practice proper landing mechanics.



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POWER

- 4. Basic box jump** — Start with your feet under the hips approximately 6-10" in front of a box 6-12" high. Perform a countermovement and explode up into the air, landing in an athletic stance on top of the box. Focus on control and mechanics of the landing.



- 5. Squat jumps** — Start standing with the feet hip width apart, pushing the hips down and back. Flex the hips, knees and ankles into a quarter squat or squat position. Next, explode up into the air and land on soft knees back in the squat position.



- 6. Tuck jumps** — Start by practicing hip flexion through an exercise such as a high knee run to warm up. With the feet under the hips, jump straight up into the air, pulling your knees into your chest, landing on a soft knee. Keeping the weight in the ball of the foot, rebound back up into the air to repeat the tuck jump.



- 7. Hurdle jump and stick** — Set up 4-6 hurdles 6-12" high (dependent on athlete age and skill level). Jump over the hurdle and absorb the landing, stabilizing in an athletic stance for 2-3 seconds before resetting for the next jump. Focusing on quality and control of the jump.



STEP 4: SPORT SPECIFIC

- 1. Two-foot rotational jumps** — Starting with the feet under the hips and keeping the shoulders and hips square, set up quarter rotation jumps that take off and land on two feet. Complete rotations in both directions. Progress the exercise to half rotation jumps and then full rotation jumps. Focus on mechanics and control of quality jumps rather than speed of continuous jumps.



- 2. Jump check outs** — Starting with the feet under the hips, launch into a vertical jump, landing softly on one leg and extending the free leg out into a proper landing position with the arms and legs. Focus on stability and control of the landing leg.



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FLEXIBILITY

Having flexibility in the muscles is essential to achieve specific positions and skills in the sport of figure skating. Training flexibility should begin early in on-ice skill development to help promote the development in moves, such as spirals, camel spins, landing positions, etc. Athletes are recommended to incorporate flexibility into their daily training routine.

Seated Hamstring Stretch	1. Sit with both legs extended in front with feet together
	2. Reach forward toward feet, keeping legs straight
	3. Feel stretch in the back of legs and low back
	4. Once able to hold feet, bend elbows and draw torso toward legs
Hip Flexor Stretch	1. Start in a half-kneeling position
	2. Extend the back leg so the toe is further back
	3. Press the hips forward, lifting the chest and extending through the front of the hip
Butterfly Stretch	1. Start sitting in straddle with legs in a "V" position
	2. Bring soles of feet together, hold ankles and press forearms down into the thighs
	3. Lean forward to increase the stretch
Standing Quadricep Stretch	1. Start standing with feet together
	2. Lift one leg and bend the knee, grabbing with the same hand and pulling it toward the buttocks
	3. Squeeze the buttocks and press the hips slightly forward to increase the stretch
Laying Down Figure Four Stretch	1. Start laying on your back with the legs extended
	2. Take one ankle and place it on the opposite knee
	3. Pull the knee in toward the chest, which pushes free knee out and down

Seated Hamstring Stretch



Hip Flexor Stretch



Butterfly Stretch



Standing Quadricep Stretch



Laying Down Figure Four Stretch



FLEXIBILITY

Standing IT Band Stretch	1. Start with feet together; cross one foot over the other
	2. Keeping shoulders and hips square and a soft bend in the back knee, hinge at the hips and lower the chest toward the legs
Half Split Stretch	1. Start in a kneeling position
	2. Extend one leg out in front of you with the heel on the ground
	3. Keeping the hips square, push the hips back and bring the chest toward the knee to increase the stretch
Downward Dog Stretch	1. Start in a plank position with wrists under shoulders and weight on toes
	2. Press the hips back and up toward the sky, pressing the hands out and away while lifting the hips up in the air
	3. Shift weight from one foot to the other, pressing the heels toward the ground for an increased stretch in the calf
Standing Side Bend	1. Start standing with feet together
	2. Lift both arms overhead; grab the right wrist with the left hand
	3. Keeping the shoulders and hips square, bend the upper body to the side, feeling a stretch in the right side
Cross Body Arm Stretch	1. Start standing, and grab one arm above your elbow with the opposite hand
	2. Pull the arm across your body toward your chest until you feel a stretch



Standing IT Band Stretch



Half Split Stretch



Downward Dog Stretch



Standing Side Bend



Cross Body Arm Stretch

FLEXIBILITY

Seated Pretzel Stretch	1. Sit with both legs extended on the ground
	2. Bend your right leg and place it over your left leg, just above the knee
	3. Take your left arm and place the elbow near the right knee
	4. Apply pressure through your arm, causing your body to twist
Prone Chest and Shoulder Stretch	1. Start laying on your stomach with arms extended out shoulder-level
	2. Gently roll to one side, keeping the arm extended underneath you
	3. Open hip, chest and shoulder to the sky
Child's Pose	1. Begin on your hands and knees
	2. Spread the knees apart with the big toes touching
	3. Push the hips back, keeping the arms extended, and resting the buttocks on the heels
Front Split	1. Start in a half-split position
	2. Using your hands for assistance and balance, extend the back leg
	3. Extend both legs into a split position; use hands or yoga block for assistance
Standing Spiral	1. Start holding a wall or railing for balance (or balance on your own)
	2. Standing tall on one leg, push the hips back, lifting the free leg and chest into an extended spiral position
Standing Calf and Ankle Stretch	1. Start standing at least one foot length away from the wall
	2. Stagger the feet, keeping the back foot flat on the ground
	3. Keeping the back leg extended, press the hips and heel toward the wall, stretching the back of the calf and ankle

Seated Pretzel Stretch



Prone Chest and Shoulder Stretch



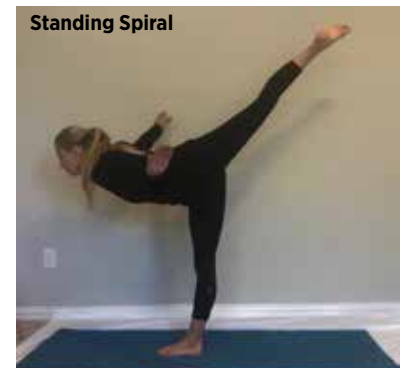
Child's Pose



Front Split



Standing Spiral



Standing Calf and Ankle Stretch



The U.S. Figure Skating Aspire Program

The U.S. Figure Skating Aspire Program provides a solid foundation in figure skating through the development of athleticism and artistry, empowering skaters to be successful on and off the ice.