

Platform Shoes?

Strength Shoes, Platform Shoes, Plyometrics Shoes, Jumpsoles they go by many names (and I will use those names interchangeable throughout this piece). But if you have spent much time on vertical jump forums or if you have spent some time browsing websites on that topic then you have probably seen them.

They usually come in two different varieties, either a pair of shoes with a halve disc on the sole of the toes, or funny block things that you strap onto your shoes. Either way the purpose is to elevate your heels of the ground and make you support all your weight on the fronts of your feet. This activates calves and makes them work much harder to carry you.

The kind that come attached to a shoe are I believe the originals but the strap ones (called Jumpsoles) are probably the most popular today.



(Jumpsoles)

[JumpUSA](#) (the makers of Jumpsoles) claims “Jumpsoles when used regularly and intelligently according to instructions maximize and distribute the workout to your calves and forefoot. Up to 30% of your vertical jump is generated there, and those muscles are available and waiting to contribute crucial inches to your vertical jump - if you can train properly to access the power. That's what Jumpsoles train you to do! There are critics on the internet who say that you don't need tools like Jumpsoles. We say, why fool around? If you're serious about building anything like your vertical jump, having tools is better than having no tools!”

They also claim that the University of Wisconsin Badgers men's basketball team uses them as well as two world cup winning Brazilian Soccer teams.

Before we get any further into these devices I think that it's important to point out that you don't just walk around in them, but you actual do a plyometrics and strength training program well wearing them.

So put on some training device, do some exercises the calves muscles are isolated (at least more than they would otherwise be) and thus you get strong calves. Then take them off and you should jump higher right? Let's all go buy a pair!

Not so fast

Vertical Jump

Basically we need to go over the old standby “this is how you improve your vertical jump” piece. Vertical jumping takes power. Power equals force X speed. So to jump high you must be able to put out a lot of strength very fast. If you are very strong and can squat a lot of weight, but it takes you too long (we are talking tenths of a second here) to put out that strength then you won’t have a good vertical jump.

On the other hand if you have great quickness but almost no strength then you still won’t have a good vertical jump.

Pop quiz which one of these athletes can put out more power?

Athlete A) Strength = 10 (as strong as it gets) Muscle Quickness = 1 (as low as it gets)

Athlete B) Strength = 1 (as low as it gets) Muscle Quickness = 10 (as quick as it gets)

Athlete C) Strength = 5 (middle of the road) Muscle Quickness = 4 (just below middle of the road)

(Muscle Quickness is a term that I made up to represent how fast you can call upon that muscle strength or how fast could you move your legs if there was no resistance)

Now if you were paying attention then you know that it takes power to jump, so who has the best power in that group? And further more if you were listening then you know that power = force X speed. Now I will give you a hint and say that in my example Strength = force and Muscle Quickness = speed.

So multiply the Strength by the Muscle Quickness

Athlete A this superhumanly strong man only has a power rating of 10! Yes he is strong but he lacks power due to the fact that he is sooooo slow.

Athlete B extremely quick but completely lacking in strength he has the exact amount of power as the first guy, 10.

Athlete C this average (or slightly below average) joe probably feels insignificant next to his super strong and super quick friends. But his power rating of 20 doubles theirs.

Those examples were very extreme but I hope that they have worked to show you that you must improve your strength and also make sure that you can put out that new strength very quickly, if you want to jump high.

So how do we do that? The answer is we improve strength by lifting weights and we improve our bodies muscle quickness by doing plyometrics.

Those are the basics of vertical jump improvement.

What They Do

What platform shoes do is put more stress on the calves (as previously mentioned) when doing both plyometrics and strength training. I know that there is a misconception out there that some people think that you only use them when doing plyometrics. But the Jumpsoles manual includes specific weight training exercises (you can also do them bodyweight) into the program.

So Jumpsoles (and you can do the same or a similar program with the other brands) do incorporate the two cornerstones of vertical jump improvement.

And yes Jumpsoles do work. I have personally used them and got great results.

So what's the catch (besides the fact that they cost money?)?

Poor Results?

According to one test done (I believe that it was a university test) the group with platform shoes ONLY get equal or even lesser results than a group doing the same exercises WITHOUT the platform shoes. The platform shoes group also suffered some injuries and had some test subjects drop out.

So do you really want to spend your money on something that will give you less or equal results then if you didn't spend the money (and increase your chance of injury)?

This is where things get stick, because of course we have some people pointing to that study and claiming that platform are a waste of money but we have other people pointing to studies where platform shoes users got BETTER results than people that didn't use them.

So before we decide whether to use platform shoes let's take a look at what other people have said;

What They Think

Mark Sias [Bionic Jumping Power](#)

In my mind this guy doesn't get enough credit. There are lots of Kelly Baggett fans and Luke Lowrey fans (and more Lowrey haters) but there isn't even any controversy over Bionic Jumping Power, it's just not a topic of discussion on vertical jump forums.

Sias is a proponent of strength shoes, but he believes that buying them is a waste of money. So he shows you how to make your own. His program is one of the cheapest out there and he shows you how to make all kinds of training aids.

I have never tried his platform shoes, but his medicine ball directions are awesome (have had a couple for two years now) and that alone makes me think that his platform shoes may work.

Power Plyos

I received his free tips for a while. I seem to remember him hating platform shoes.

Luke Lowrey [Vertical Project](#)

I have never bought his program either, but I did receive his “Dirty Rotten Lies” emails for a while. He is a fan of strength shoes, or more specifically the Jumpsoles brand. But he seems to have a marketing deal going with them. He promotes their products and they promote his. So does he really like them or are they just scratching each other’s backs?

Kelly Baggett [Vertical Jump Development Bible](#)

Kelly basically says that platform shoes will give you a very good temporary increase due to the fact that they kind of “trick” your body into jumping higher immediately after you take them off. But this only works for a few seconds. As far as lasting results he basically says that they might give you some benefit and if you want to use them then you can do half of your exercises with them on. But pretty much they are a waste of your money?

What do I think? I think that the best part of platform shoes might be the proprioceptors that come with Jumpsoles. They are great for many things including preventing or rehabilitating knee and ankle injuries.

Unfortunately you can only get them if you buy the Jumpsoles brand.

So if you want to buy platform shoes then get [Jumpsoles](#) (you can get the proprioceptors and I also think that they are cheaper and more versatile and yes maybe even higher quality than the other brands)

On a more positive note you can build a wobble board which can give you some of the same effects. (Bionic Jumping has a direction for a homemade wobble board)

If you have platform shoes then you can probably get some good use out of them. Otherwise save your money and use it on something else like the [Vertical Jump Development Bible](#) or the [Bionic Jumping Program](#) (you will get your money back with the directions for homemade training aids)

