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## Category: Answer User Questions about TrackAndField

### Subcategory: Answer User Questions about TrackAndField

#### **Tip: How to Relax and Focus before a Track Meet**

There are nearly as many methods for pre-race relaxation and focus as there are racers. Nearly everyone develops their own rituals over time &ndash; everything from yoga to giving themselves a pep talk. Here are three ideas you may find helpful:

**Breathe deeply:** Kneel with your buttocks resting on your heels, your back held straight, and your arms relaxed at your sides. As you inhale as slowly as you can through your nose, bring your arms up in a wide arc, until your hands touch above your head &ndash; just as your lungs are full. Now lower your arms slowly as you exhale through your mouth as slowly as possible. Your arms should be down at your sides just as you expel the last of your breath. Repeat three to five times.

**Meditate:** Sit in the lotus position, or with one leg crossed over the other, and keep your spine straight. Close your eyes and bring your fingertips together gently in front of the center of your chest. Focus on the gentle pressure of your fingertips touching one another. Just be aware of it. Sit quietly for 3 &ndash; 5 minutes.

**Stretch gently:** Do some very easy stretches. Don't extend yourself to the point where you feel any great tightness in a given muscle. Ask more experienced competitors about how they mentally prepare for a race. Experiment, and adopt the techniques that work best for you.

#### **Tip: Improving Sprint Speed for High School Athletes**

First and foremost, nothing can replace a good coach when developing a training plan. Your coach has the advantage of being able to make specific recommendations based on his/her observations. And don't add anything to your training schedule without your coach's knowledge and approval. That being said, here are some ideas that may help make improvements in your sprint speed:

1. Develop overall fitness with circuit or weight training.
2. Spend time working on good sprinting form.
3. Add hill sprints to your workouts. Some experts advocate "overspeed" training &ndash; sprinting down a slight (10% or less) incline. If you consider this option, be aware that running injuries are more likely when running downhill at speed.

#### **Tip: Improving Sprint Speed on Short Notice**

Making significant gains in sprinting speed in a short time isn't generally feasible. Quick fixes usually carry a high risk of injury. If you aren't already doing hill sprints, they can help improve speed. Be very careful on the downhill "recovery" portion, though. The jarring can be hard on your knees. In sprint events, where tenths of a second count, a better approach to making quick improvement may be to concentrate your extra effort on improving form. For example, work on getting out of the blocks more quickly and smoothly. The first runner out of the blocks has a distinct advantage in a short race. To

make improvements in relay events, practice hand-offs. Passing the baton smoothly and quickly in a race can make the difference between winning and finishing as an "also-ran."

### **Tip: Race Faster with Spikes**

Most authorities agree that racing in track shoes with spikes provides runners with at least some advantage over those wearing flats. This is particularly true when competing at distances of 400M and less, where traction is especially critical. Track spikes (shoes) come in various configurations, depending on the intended distance/event. The spikes themselves come in various styles and lengths. The most common styles are pyramid spikes and needle spikes. The length and type of spike you'll need depends on track surface. Be sure to check with your coach to see what type and length of spike is best for the surface you'll be running on.

### **Tip: Track Spike Materials and Performance**

Track spikes are made primarily from one of three materials: steel, aluminum or ceramic. Steel spikes have a cost advantage, while aluminum and ceramic are lighter. Ceramic, though less durable than steel, doesn't corrode, which can make spike removal and replacement easier. The major manufacturer of ceramic spikes, Omni-Lite, is now the supplier of choice for several of the largest track shoe companies. For the vast majority of runners, the material used in the manufacture of their spikes will have little measurable effect on performance. More important than the material is having the appropriate spike type and length for the running surface, and being sure that the spikes are clean and undamaged.

## **Category: Choosing Track and Field Equipment**

Subcategory: Track and Field Equipment Tips

### **Tip: Am I Missing Something?**

You wouldn't go ice skating without skates nor swimming without a suit, would you? Then why would you run without the correct track and field equipment? Yes, track and field is a sport with relatively little equipment needed, you can wear basically anything to train in, but you must take care of your feet!

Track spikes are made special for each individual event. They do not just help you run fast, they put your feet and therefore the rest of your body in the correct position to maximize your ability and not get injured. Buy track spikes.

### **Tip: Keep Track**

Get new track shoes every season if you're on a team, every six months if you run recreation-ally, and every three hundred miles (approximately three months) if you train or race a lot.

Some track shoes are built for racing; those are track spikes and only need to be replaced when they get worn down structurally, worn out, or break. The actual spikes that screw into the bottom of the spike plates on underside of the shoe can be changed every few weeks or competitions depending on the surface.

### **Tip: Moisture-wicking Clothes Keep Athletes Comfortable from Head to Toe**

Moisture-wicking fabrics are one of the most helpful innovations in sports equipment in recent decades. The clammy cotton t-shirt is a thing of the past. No matter what your event, invest in a few moisture-wicking shirts, shorts, and pants. They are more expensive than a basic t-shirt, but wash these clothes in cold water with a mild detergent and they will last for years. Don't forget socks; moisture-wicking socks keep your feet drier than cotton and significantly reduce the risk of blisters.

### **Tip: Running in Socks**

Track shoes made for training, or as we like to call them, sneakers, have cushion that gets pounded down and loses its strength and stability. You need your training track shoes to hold their structure in order to support your feet and thus your legs and back because you spend all most all of your running time in these types of track shoes.

If you train on overused shoes, you are repeatedly hammering the sections of your feet, legs, and back that need the most support. You know this because the way you run wears the shoes down in these places faster than others.

## **Category: Discus Tips**

Subcategory: Tips About Discus

### **Tip: Circle Time**

The best way to learn the discus is step by step, or turn by turn. Discus throwing drills in the teaching progression include: Discus swing Discus bowling Standing throw Quarter turn Half turn Full turn Wheel drill South African drill Full throws

## Category: High Jump Tips

Subcategory: Tips About High Jumping

### **Tip: "Lean Away!"**

One of the more difficult, yet most important sections of the high jump for most athletes to nail down is the coordination of the last three steps. In the last three steps of the high jump, the athlete's body should be leaning away from the bar. If a coach were to take a picture of the body position on the very last step, a line should be able to be drawn from the top of the head, down the length of the spine and continuing down the takeoff leg to the ground.

This away position allow the jumper to convert vertical speed to horizontal speed with enough space to help the hips, the center of mass, fly on a parabola over the top of the bar and not into the bar. Top help athletes get comfortable in this position at a fast yet controlled speed, have them practice running twelve foot diameter circles around cones.

### **Tip: Back to Basics**

Back it up! Back overs &ndash; have jumpers stand with heels about eight inches from the edge of the pit. Have them drive and block their arms while jumping off of two feet. Teach dropping the head back to look at someone standing off of the back side of the pit, not jumping into the pit. Athletes should never be thinking about getting into the pit. Dropping the head will lift the hips to clear the bar.

### **Tip: Jumpers are Runners**

High jump training should consist of running short sprint distances and longer distances with lengthened strides, explosive strength and agility training, and weight lifting. High jumpers need to be strong, fast, and flexible, not necessary tall or thin, though height gives an advantage of course.

Dynamic stretching will increase range of motion and strength in muscles that are in an elongated position. High jump training can be worked into practices three times a week including any meet days, if the athlete competes in other running events.

## Category: Hurdle Tips

## Subcategory: Tips About Hurdles

### **Tip: P, P, P, P**

Plan, prod, prepare, practice. How do you get ready for hurdles coaching? Plan your workouts. Prod other coaches and talented athletes for information that can help your runners.

Prepare for the season by gathering all of the video materials, plyometric equipment, hurdle gear, etc. that you'll need. Practice explaining drills and workouts aloud to yourself or to other coaches to see how well you can articulate the technical aspect of your event before you try it out on your hurdlers.

### **Tip: Short or Tall?**

What are the hurdle events? In high school track and field, they are the 100m high hurdles for girls, the 110m high hurdles for boys, and most often the 300m intermediate hurdles for both boys and girls (some high schools run the 400m hurdles).

In college, the high hurdle races are the same, though the height of the 110m hurdles for men is higher than it was in high school. The intermediate hurdles change to the 400m hurdles, the men's hurdler are again three inches higher, with ten hurdles over the course of the race. In indoor track there are no intermediate-height hurdle races, and the high hurdle races are either 55m or 60m, run on a straightaway.

### **Tip: Skip Your Way to Better Hurdling**

Not only hurdlers, but all runners and jumpers can benefit from one of the simplest plyometrics drills: skipping. Just like you did in elementary school, but with the goal of lifting your knees high enough so that your upper leg is parallel to the ground. Alternate legs, and continue "high skipping" for about 50 meters. Rest, and repeat 4-6 times after a workout. This drill will build leg strength and help hurdlers refine their technique. Skipping also can help runners achieve a more efficient stride and mitigate the distance runners' tendency to shuffle as they get tired late in a race.

## Category: Javelin Tips

### Subcategory: Tips About Javelin

### **Tip: Do It All**

Really want to impress your friends? Take up javelin throwing and show everyone how you can get a long metal spear to fly through the air and land tip first one or even two hundred feet from where you stand. They'll want you on every baseball, softball, track and field...any team for that matter! If you can run, then run cross over steps, plant, block, and throw, you've got a leg and an arm above almost all your peers.

## Category: Long Jump Tips

Subcategory: Long Jumping Tips

### **Tip: Don't Slow Down**

The long jump is a smooth, consistent acceleration to the board, followed by a takeoff jump and flight into the pit, while maintaining proper body position that will enable the jumper to take off with maximal velocity and land as far as possible into the pit. The long jump can be examined in five phases: the approachpreparationtakeoff mechanicsflightlanding

The long jump is a study in speed, precision, strength, and technique.

### **Tip: Not For the Runners**

Check it off the list. Checkmark systems are for coaching long jump, not competing in the long jump. Coaches may want to put a checkmark four steps back of the board next to the long jump runway. This checkmark allows the coach to see where the long jumper is in relation to where they should be prior to the transition or preparation phase.

This can tell a long jump coach more than the athlete's location on or near the board because the coach will be able to tell by looking at the athlete compared to the checkmark and the board as the whether or not the athlete slowed down a the end of the run, a common and most detrimental error when long jumping.

### **Tip: Who Is Winning?**

Fast, furious, fierce and flying! Long jump training needs to prepare athletes to be all of these things when competing. Therefore, long jump training requires sprint workouts, flexibility and strength training, repetition after repetition, and a competitive atmosphere. Long jumping is not like racing head to head as it is in any event on the track or even in the high jump or pole vault when the bar can be seen being raised and jumpers missing or making each progressing height.

Competitive edge in the long jump must be achieved by the athlete mentally, an edge that can be gained through long jump drills in practice, but must be accompanied by a high level of competition at an important meet. Never underestimate the power of adrenaline and what it can “lift” you to do!

## Category: Pole Vault Tips

Subcategory: Pole Vaulting Tips

### **Tip: Hand Holding Heaven**

What is the best way to hold pole vault poles?

Answers: Grip the pole with hands about shoulder-width apart (measuring trick: grab the pole with your top hand, rest your forearm on the pole and grip with your bottom hand just below your elbow). Top hand with palm facing up, bottom hand with palm facing down and the top hand should be within the assigned grip range of your pole vault pole.

When you carry the pole, the top (rear) hand should be just behind the hip and the bottom (leading) hand, near the center of the chest at a right angle to the elbow. After the first few aggressive steps, the pole tip is relatively high, the pole tip should drop slightly with each step, the change in position controlled by top (rear) hand. The tip of the pole vault pole should be at forehead height just before the plant. Next, it's on to the next phase.

## Category: Race Walking Tips

Subcategory: Tips About Race Walking

### **Tip: The Highest Form**

Race walking events are endurance events. Therefore, many race walking tips are the same as endurance running training tips. Energy systems and fitness are both essential. To coach someone in race walking can be done one of two ways, by the imitation method or the template method. Imitation involves showing films and having the walkers demonstrate and practice the technical model they have viewed. The template method allows the walkers to begin with their own familiar movement pattern that the coach modifies systematically until the athlete has good technical understanding.

## Category: Relay Race Tips

## Subcategory: Relay Racing Tips

### **Tip: Improving Track Speed**

The classic approach to building speed is running intervals. How many at what distance would vary with the event you're aiming at. The longer the distance you plan to race, the longer the distance you'd repeat during your interval workouts. Intervals are typically run at distances shorter than those at which you race, and at a pace faster than your race pace. Between repetitions, you would jog a set distance or amount of time - usually not long enough for full recovery. Running hills is another good way to build speed. Hill workouts are similar to interval workouts, except of course you're running uphill repeats. For runners who compete at longer distances, "fartlek" (from a Swedish term meaning "speed play") can be a nice break from running long interval workouts on the track. Fartlek can be as informal as varying your running speed between telephone poles while running on the road. Finally, some runners find that adding weight lifting to their training program helps improve speed. This is especially true for those racing at relatively shorter distances.

## Category: Running Tips

### Subcategory: Tips About Running

#### **Tip: Don't Overdress for Winter Running Success**

Many distance runners train outdoors during the winter indoor track season. Layers and warmth are important, but remember that after about 1-2 miles, you will warm up significantly, and too many heavy layers will leave you hot and uncomfortable. A good rule of thumb is to think of the "running temperature" as about 15 degrees warmer than the air temperature. Of course there will be variables such as wind chill and humidity, but if you feel chilly during the first mile, you are probably dressed right.

#### **Tip: Feel the Breeze**

Swiftly moving down a wooded trail. Your senses attune to your surroundings. You can feel your heart beating and you can hear yourself breathing, both in a rhythmic pattern. Cross Country running is not about short distances, and never on a track.

It takes place on trails and roads, traversing hills and crossing fields. Its something that lets you know who you are, and how good you can be. It is both an individual and team sport that relies on your conditioning and mental strength.

### **Tip: Get in the Pool**

What's this business about pool running? I hear people say they are taking the day off or training in the pool instead of running. I'm not a swimmer, how can that help me?

Pool running simulates the running motion (without the full range of motion or impact) and will allow an athlete to stay in shape while rehabbing from an injury or if they need to take a day to allow their muscles less stress but do not want to lose fitness.

### **Tip: Never Enough of a Good Thing**

Stretching. It's something that every runner must do. One of the many running tips that runners ignore is stretching after warming up. Most runners choose to stretch before they go out for a run, which is incorrect.

Stretching before warming up your muscles causes them to strain and tear, which does the opposite of what stretching intends, and can lead to injury. Runners should warm up their muscles by running for 10 to 15 minutes before stretching their muscles prior to a run.

### **Tip: Run For Fun**

Feel like you need to get in to better shape? Try running. Running is one of our most basic skills, and is not something that you have to learn how to do. It is also a very effective way to get into the shape you always wanted to be in. You can always go for a run. There is no fee to participate or specific time you need to do it. Simply putting on your shoes and hitting the road is very therapeutic, and will do wonders for your mind and your body.

### **Tip: Take Off Your Shoes**

Barefoot running - worth it, or a waste of time? Definitely worth it! Incorporate barefoot running or strides into your track and field workout plan once a week and you'll spend years with fewer injuries. Track shoes today are very structured to support your feet, which is great. They also take away the need for all of the small muscles in your feet and ankles that ensure stability and pliability to develop.

Barefoot running exercises these small muscles by requiring them to move and adjust while a runner's barefoot impacts the ground in a different, yet very natural way, than in shoes. Be careful not to over do barefoot running, you do need the cushion that track shoes afford.

## Category: Shot Put Tips

### Subcategory: Tips About the Shot Put

#### **Tip: From the Ground Up**

How about some shot put tips for shot put coaching? To coach the block and arm strike at the end of the throw, have athletes work with medicine balls doing chest passes with elbows out and thumbs down.

Have athletes throw from their knees with the left leg bent up, left arm extended. Add the blocking movement and more torque as athletes get stronger and more capable.

#### **Tip: Get Jacked**

“I couldn’t be a thrower, see how week my arms are?” A common misconception among high school athletes is that you must be big to be a shot putter. Well, it’s a good thing that high school students learn fast and learn well, because the major force and strength behind the throw in the shot put comes from the athlete’s legs, not arms.

Shot put training requires full body strength training, which includes arms, but also focuses on building a strong and flexible core and legs. Think about it &ndash; quads, gluts, and hamstrings are significantly larger muscles than biceps and triceps.

#### **Tip: Shot Putters Need More Than Big Biceps**

A beefy upper body is not a prerequisite for shot put success. Strong legs and a strong core put the “kinetic chain” in motion and propel the shot forward. When working on leg strength, remember to work opposing muscle groups equally. For example, try to lift similar amounts of weight with both the quads and the hamstrings. Keeping the opposing muscle groups at a similar strength will help your shot put form.

#### **Tip: That’s a Heavy Softball**

Put that shot as far as you can. Put it? Put it where? Shot put it from the circle out into the sector. The shot put is the name of the event in track and field that requires the athlete to throw, or rather “put,” which is more equivalent to pushing, a heavy round implement as far as they can.

#### **Tip: Where Does the Speed Come From?**

Some shot putters use the glide shot put technique and others use the rotational style. Is one better than the other? No. Currently, in professional and top level world competitions, the rotational and glide shot put techniques are being used with equal success.

The glide shot put is the more basic shot put technique and generally easier for beginning shot putters to learn, but can be as powerful as the rotational style, a throw more similar to the discus. Athletes may take longer to develop consistency with the rotational shot put technique. With consistent shot put coaching though, you can master any technique.

## Category: Track and Field Tips

Subcategory: Tips About Track and Field

### **Tip: 800m Dash Record**

USA Track & Field, the governing body for track & field in the United States, doesn't maintain statistics by grade, but by age group. For younger competitors, the age divisions are maintained in two-year intervals. According to USATF, the boys "Midget" (ages 10 - 11) record was set on July 26, 2001 by Reginald Warren of Smyrna Georgia. He covered 800m in 2:07.21. The boy's "Youth" (ages 12 - 13) record is currently held by Cody Harper of Albuquerque, NM. On July 28, 2001, Cody ran 1:56.36 for the distance. Both records were set in Sacramento, CA, which hosted the 2001 USATF Junior Olympic National Championships.

### **Tip: Be Smart Before Anything Breaks**

Tough: falling over a hurdle or no-heighting in the high jump. Worse: running too hard in the first mile of a 2-mile race ending in a walk across the finish line. Worst: being injured.

So called "failures" or difficulties can teach an athlete as much or more than winning. Injuries, especially over use or ignored small injuries over time are the hardest issues to deal with when running or coaching track and field.

Getting injured only teaches athletes that being injured is the pits. Teach athletes to learn how to prevent injuries and stay healthy in their lives and in their sports, and they will never have to recover from a lesson not learned soon enough.

### **Tip: Can You Do It?**

Do you think you have what it takes to be a track and field coach? If you are as flexible as you are dedicated and strong-minded, then coaching track and field could be a great job for you. Coaching track and field at the college or division I level can be a full time job, or could be just afternoon and weekend hours for high school track and field.

You'd be kidding yourself if you thought that was all the time it took, however. When you see the kids and the athletes looking to you for advice, encouragement, and critique, you'll know that coaching track and field becomes a part of you, it grabs your heart and soul, it is not just a job.

### **Tip: Cough It Up**

There's money for the taking, If you are a track and field athlete, especially a female, research colleges that have track and field programs, their performance requirements for membership, and whether or not they give scholarships. When you find a few good fits, call the coaches after your junior year in high school.

Many people think that unless a college coach recruits them, they are not good enough for college athletics. That is untrue. College coaches are very busy with their own athletes and cannot spend all of their time recruiting. Give them a hand - they'll appreciate it and you may get a "hand" in return.

### **Tip: Don't Cut It Short**

How long should my warm up and cool down be? Warm up should be twice as long in distance and/or time than your track and field workout. So, if you are running 4 x 800m for your workout, your warm up should be about 2 miles.

For short, sprint, or hurdle workouts, if your workout of 5 x 50m and 3 x 30m with hurdles will take about 20-30 minutes of actual time, your warm up should be about 40 minutes (including drills). Cool down should be no less than 10 minutes of active cool down and another 10 minutes of flexibility exercises or stretching, no matter what your workout was.

### **Tip: Get Ready**

Coaching track and field isn't easy. It takes as much preparation and hard work from the coach as it does from the athlete. You don't have to have been the best athlete at the even you coach, but you need to know it inside and out in order to allow your athletes to put their trust in your coaching.

### **Tip: Lift**

Possible weight lifting plan for high school track and field athletes (the following three days are not consecutive): Day 1 - lat pull downs, seated row, bicep curls, hamstring curls, rubber band resistance exercises, calf raises, sit ups. Day 2 - bench press, leg press, leg extension, tricep extensions, Russian twists with a plate, push ups, lunges. Day 3 (only if over 17 years old) - squats, push jerks, good mornings, military press, box jumps, sit ups.

### **Tip: Spice It Up**

Do you ever get bored with plain old running, for miles on end? Do you enjoy running but want to be faster or get in better cardiovascular shape?

Do a few track and field workouts each week, and the difference you'll notice in your muscle tone, strength, stamina, and even metabolism will amaze you. Throw in three track and field workouts per week like these, and you'd be ready to race a 5K in one month. 5 x 60 seconds with 60-90 seconds of walking or jogging in between each 6-8 times up a hill 200+ meters ladder: 200, 300, 400, 500, 350, 250, 150 increasing speed, decreasing rest.

### **Tip: Track Meet Day: What to Pack?**

All track and field athletes need to take responsibility for their personal equipment needs and bring gear including spikes, gloves, their specific shot put, discus, or javelin. But a few other things are helpful for athletes in any events to have in their bags: -Band-aids, both small and large, for mid-meet blisters on fingers, toes, or heels -Toilet paper/Kleenex -Water bottle/sports beverage of choice -Energy snack of choice (bars, gels, crackers, etc.) - Pain reliever (Advil, Tylenol, etc.) -Warm-up jacket; even on a warm day, sprinters, jumpers, and hurdlers in particular need to stay warm between events

### **Tip: We're all Human**

Coaches make mistakes. It's true, it happens, just try to make as few as possible! Coaching track and field from experience gives you credibility when dealing with your athletes, especially the more talented ones.

However, in order to really become the best and most trusted coach, which will in turn help your athletes excel, you need to be a student of your track and field sport, not necessarily the best at it. Learn to be a student of your athletes mentally, physically, and verbally. When you make them the center of your training and racing plans, and not the results, the improvement will take care of itself.

## Category: Track and Field Training Tips

Subcategory: Training for Track and Field

### **Tip: Catch Me If You Can**

Lactic Acid. It's a runner's worst enemy. It's that pain you get in your legs when you are nearing the end of your race. Lactic Acid is a bi-product of your muscles burning energy to keep you moving forward, and making your legs feel like anchors in the process.

One way to train your legs to better deal with the problem is through interval training. Interval training consists of running a certain distance or time, and then repeating it multiple times, with a predetermined amount of rest in between. It is a great way to become a better runner, and lower your race times!

### **Tip: Ice, Ice, With Veggies**

Any track and field athletes get hurt now and then. For post-workout muscle strains, keep a few bags of frozen peas or corn in the freezer. They easily shape to fit around a knee, elbow, or ankle, and can be secured in place with an ace bandage if needed. Keep ice packs in place for about 15 minutes, and then return them to the freezer until after your next workout. Caveat: Make sure to mark the bags or remember which frozen veggies are your ice packs and don't eat them! Repeated thawing and refreezing render the veggies unfit for eating, but as ice packs they can last for months, or until the bag breaks.

### **Tip: It Started Long Ago**

Remember that gym teacher you hated back in the sixth grade? Running in and out of cones, or back and forth between two lines carrying chalkboard erasers? I sure do. Y

ou might not have realized then that you were doing speed and agility drills. These drills, and others like them are great ways of improving your sprinting by developing speed, agility, and most importantly, explosiveness. This will allow you to get out of the blocks and down the track much faster.

### **Tip: Run Fast**

Have you ever wondered what it took to run fast? Power, speed and agility. Three traits that are essential to being fast, and being a good sprinter. Sprint training combines all

three. The sprint races in track and field require an athlete to develop each of these traits in order to be successful, and be as fast as they can be.

**Tip: There's Nothing "Mid" About It**

Middle distance running involves a combination of speed and endurance. The races are usually too far for sprinters, but too fast for distance runners. Most of the races feel like an all out sprint, just covering a greater distance.

The runners who race these distances, need to have a great amount of running strength to compete in these events. Interval training is a great way to gain this type of strength. Interval training will build lactic acid buffers in your legs, allowing you to maintain the high speed over a greater distance.

## Category: Triple Jump Tips

Subcategory: Tips About the Triple Jump

**Tip: Even Better**

Triple jump tip #2: If you're only a triple jumper or an experienced long and triple jumper, ignore tip triple jump tip #1. Take off the board with your most dominant leg. This way, two of the three jumps in the triple jump are initiated by your stronger leg.