

3 Best Types of Exercises for Increasing Explosive Power in Rugby Athletes

- 1) **Plyometrics:** Fast, explosive and reactive movements
 - a) Start Light, start slow, start with proper mechanics; Practice the landing form and holding your balance
 - a) Slowly pick up the intensity ie. height, distance, speed, reps
 - b) Eventually can add light to medium weight 30-60% 1RM to the movement
 - c) Unweighted (Unloaded) or Weighted (Loaded) ie. vests, resistance bands, weighted ball

Examples of Lower Body:

Hops - mini, knees slightly bent, short distance, and long distance

Skips - single leg stationary vs alternating legs across field

Vertical Jumps - Single leg, Double leg

Lateral/skier jumps - can jump continuously side to side 5 reps each or jump back and forth and land on the the starting leg x 5 reps

Box Jumps - various box heights ie. 12-36 inches starting 4-5 reps x 2-3 sets

Depth Jump (using stretch reflex & don't start the drop from too high or too low ie. start from 12 inches and build up); lower reps with maximal effort on the jump

Broad Jump - measure your distance each time

Examples of Upper Body:

Explosive Pushups ie. clap pushups, pushups to box, decline from a bench

Med Ball throws

Swings with dumbbell or kettlebell

Medball one-arm explosive pushup - switching side to side

2) **Weight Lifting for Power:**

Adding speed to your lifts to explode into a concentric contraction

- a) Start with a solid foundation of strength training movements and proper form
- b) Mimic power movements and add speed prior to adding weight

c) Have a second set of eyes for form and spotting

Examples:

1) Olympic Lifts - should be explosive and fluid movements
-Requires **a lot** of practice to master the movements and may benefit from coaching for proper form
-Two main lifts - the Snatch Lift and the Clean and Jerk lift
-Can break the above lifts into multiple movements ie: Power Clean, Front Squat, High Pull, Power Jerk, Push Press, etc
-Ideally lift with barbell but can also use dumbbells to perform similar exercises and learn proper form

2) Adding Power to Basic Weight Lifting Movements - fast concentric contraction (explosive) and slow eccentric movement, ie. power/explode up and slow return to starting position
-Ex. Squat Jumps, Dead Lifts, Bicep Curls, Overhead Press, Chest Press, etc
-5 reps of similar explosive movement using 30-60% 1 RM x 6 Sets with 2 min rest in between each set - may feel light but focus on speed of movement during the lift and slowly lower to starting position
-Can use dumbbells, barbell, resistance bands depending on exercise

Pro Tip: If you initially need to work on strength, then start with strength training. You need a stable foundation of strength plus proper form and control before you add in power and speed.

3) Speed Training: Focus on sport specific styles of sprinting ie. what will help you with rugby

- a) Start sprinting workouts gradually, not 100% max speed right off the bat
- b) Focus on form with sprints ie. lean forward, take longer strides, and swing your arms side to side to improve the body's natural flow of movement and Breathe
- c) Unweighted (Unloaded) or Weighted (Loaded) ie. vests or resistance bands
- d) Walk back for recovery

Examples:

Shuttle Runs

10 meter sprints

20 meter sprints

5-10-5 sprints

Tempo Running

Zigzag Sprints with quick change in direction

T Sprints

Hill Sprints

Final Thoughts:

- 1) If you don't train like this already or your are unfamiliar with these exercises, ease yourself into the movements and a routine
- 2) Focus on form, breathing, how you start the exercise and how you finish it, and staying in control
- 3) Ramp up speed when you master the movement
- 4) Include mobility sessions especially for hips and spine
- 5) Don't underestimate the importance of nutrition and recovery