

JUMP ATTACK

**THE FORMULA FOR EXPLOSIVE ATHLETIC
PERFORMANCE AND TRAINING LIKE THE PROS**

TIM S. GROVER

WITH SHARI LESSER WENK

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TAKING FLIGHT

Near the end of Michael Jordan's career with the Bulls, he agreed to allow a camera crew to follow him around for a documentary on his last season in Chicago.

Early one morning—it was still dark outside and Michael's kids were still asleep—the crew came to his house for a rare glimpse into his private gym where I trained him.

The complete video has never been released, but I can tell you how it began:

The cameraman noticed a poster on the wall, a classic shot of MJ soaring through the air, with the caption “HOW DOES MICHAEL FLY?” He zoomed in on the poster, then turned the camera to Michael and asked him:

“How *do* you fly?”

Michael just laughed, shook his head, pointed across the gym at me, and said in that deep, commanding voice, “Ask him.”

Good question.

No doubt Michael's genetics gave him a physical advantage; he has those huge hands and long limbs and predominantly fast-twitch muscles that allow him to do extraordinary things. But contrary to popular legend, he is not a freak of nature. I know people mean it as a compliment when they talk about Michael as if he's superhuman.

But I see it as an insult, because it suggests he didn't have to work for his success, and believe me, no one ever worked harder.

In fact, there are plenty of athletes who share his physical abilities, and in some cases even exceed them. But Michael had the mental toughness to exceed anyone else's physical abilities, along with the drive and commitment to work relentlessly on his skills, and that toughness is ultimately what separates merely great athletes from iconic superstars. That's why Kobe Bryant and Dwyane Wade, in their thirties, can outplay guys who are much younger; like Michael, they have the mentality and focus and work ethic to maximize their skills, push beyond injuries, and never stop driving to improve.

So there are undoubtedly a lot of factors that allowed Michael to fly. But when he pointed at me in his gym that morning, this is what he meant: We trained in a way that maximized his abilities and gifts and genetics, so he could reach his ultimate potential in every way, and still keep improving. We tweaked the standard training principles, because there was nothing standard about Michael's game. While everyone else was still obsessed with vertical jumps, we focused instead on overall explosiveness. Not just one jump straight into the air, but multiple jumps in all directions, forward, backward, laterally, and maintaining that explosiveness throughout the entire game, from one end of the court to the other.

Everyone loves the showstopper dunk, but what happens right after that dunk? The game doesn't stop; neither did he. We trained for longevity and overall athleticism that would allow him to stay healthy and powerful from the opening game of the season until he held the championship trophy in June, season after season.

And that training—the “secret” to Michael's explosiveness and his ability to take flight—became the basis for Jump Attack.

The first version of this book was created in 1990, when Michael

was doing a lot of camps and clinics and everyone kept asking him, “How do you jump so high? How do you dunk like that? What can I do to increase my vertical jump?” Everyone wanted to “be like Mike,” so he asked me to put together something he could give to everyone who attended, a program they could do on their own that reflected the hard work he put into his own body, so everyone could see he didn’t just show up and look good—he worked relentlessly to be that good.

I developed the original Jump Attack program based on the workout I created for him, which was completely different from the way anyone else was training. At that time, no one else was doing resistance training for the legs during the season; the common belief was that playing basketball and running up and down the court were enough. In fact, it was just the opposite; playing a sport actually breaks down the muscle. So we went the other way and worked on building up the muscles that have a tendency to break down over the course of a long season.

We also began sequencing his exercises to get the most out of every muscle, every time. We focused on preexhausting the targeted muscle, loosening the joints, combining exercises to teach the muscles how to fire correctly, stretching the muscles and joints immediately after so they’d be ready for the next set.

While most programs were targeting the major muscle groups, we were also emphasizing the smaller muscles, the neutralizers and stabilizers, so everything was working together.

And we definitely got people talking when they heard MJ was lifting on game days, which was basically unheard of at that time but made perfect sense to us. Look at the schedule: If you take off every game day, that’s a whole lot of days you’re not working those muscles properly. For us, not acceptable. So we stayed with our workout schedule regardless of the game schedule. It became part of his game

preparation; just like you eat a certain way on game day, you train a certain way on game day.

Bottom line: You can't get extraordinary results from an ordinary workout.

And if you're thinking, "Sure, it worked for MJ, how hard can it be to make MJ look good?" think again. It was quite a challenge to take someone like Michael Jordan, who already had superior ability, and make him even more superior. My challenge: If he's this explosive, if he can jump this high, how can I make him even more explosive? How can we get him to jump even higher?

When you're dealing with the greats—and I've been fortunate to train many—the room for improvement is so small that we're constantly looking for the slightest edge, the tiniest detail or adjustment that will give them the advantage. So Michael's workout program was designed with that in mind: Build on his greatness and make him unstoppable.

Yet it was clear to me that even though the program was created for the best of the best, it would work for anyone, not just the greats. So I expanded the workout into a book, called it *Jump Attack*, and self-published it. Over the next few years, I sold hundreds of thousands of books through mail order, filling out address labels and carrying packages to the post office. When Michael retired, I figured that was that. We sold out, and I didn't print more.

Then one day I got an email from a young basketball player saying he found the book on eBay for \$1,000. That is not a typo. One thousand dollars. I started looking around, and found there were more like it, selling for hundreds of dollars all over the Internet. Before long I started getting emails and tweets from athletes and coaches and parents asking how they could get the book.

I realized that even though science and research and training

had evolved since we released the original *Jump Attack* more than twenty years ago, I was still using the same core concepts with my clients, and they were still getting the same explosive results and increased athleticism. The only difference was now we had ways of getting those results faster and more effectively. All these years later, the same training principles still form the foundation of what I do. From Michael Jordan to Kobe Bryant to Dwyane Wade and so many others, this works.

I also realized it was time for an entirely new book. Now we know so much more about elite training, how to train all the muscle groups so everything works together, how the body responds to rest and recovery, how nutrition affects performance, when to stretch and how to stretch. We know how to condition the central nervous system to create faster reflex action and faster explosive contractions, so you don't have to think about what you're supposed to do, your body just knows. By tweaking the exercises in small ways—something as simple as elevating your heels or changing the leg position of a lunge, for example—we can attack the small muscles that most programs completely ignore. I enhanced the program to work all the different muscular contractions—*isometric, concentric, eccentric*—as we work through every phase of developing explosiveness. I also added upper body and core work designed to make the entire body more explosive, not just the legs. I changed the exercises and schedule to keep it fresh and challenging. The result is an entirely new workout: the all-new *Jump Attack*.

The core concept of the book remains the same—we're still using the exclusive sequences I use with every one of my pro athletes—but the entire program has been updated to give you state-of-the-art training for unprecedented results. If you're one of the hundreds of thousands of athletes who worked out with the original

Jump Attack, you will discover that this program contains entirely new exercises and challenges. If you've never tried this program at all, believe me, you are about to experience something completely unique, train like you've never trained before, and see improvements you probably thought were impossible.

Jump Attack is a total-body workout—lower body, upper body, and the entire core—that delivers measureable improvement. From the world's greatest athletes to the kids just starting out, everyone has room to improve. In fact, the greats *have* to keep improving, because they know someone is always coming up behind them, trying to knock them off the top of the mountain. So it's never an option to stay in the same place, feeling good about what they've done, content to be where they are. It should be no different for you; no matter what level you're at, you can always go higher, and this program will take you there. It's not easy. But if you want proof that this program works, just ask any of my clients; everyone who works with me trains with some version of this workout.

I'm going to ask of you the same thing I ask of all my clients: Do the program exactly as I'm giving it to you and give your maximum effort.

That's it. If you can do those two things, here's what you'll get in return:

- Explosive athleticism for improved performance
- Increased vertical jump, muscle mass, power, speed, and agility
- A tighter, leaner physique
- Mental toughness and endurance
- Effective rest and recovery
- Nutritional guidelines for improved performance

- Injury prevention
- Improvement in your overall ability

Jump Attack works because it takes challenging moves, combines them in a specific order to maximize results, and tests your ability to push yourself to new levels. This is not a weight training program; the goal is not to see how much you can lift. The goal is to train your muscles for maximum explosive force. If you want a bodybuilding program for beach muscles, look elsewhere. You'll definitely develop muscle tone, but we're going for overall athleticism, not just great biceps. And it's not a weight loss program: You might drop weight if you have weight to lose, but that's a by-product of the workout, not the goal. I don't want skinny athletes, I want strong, explosive athletes. You might actually put on weight as you put on muscle. I expect you to eat like an athlete so you can build the muscles you're going to need to perform at your maximum ability in any sport or activity.

This is a program designed for athletes who are committed to seeing how high they can go, and are willing to make the commitment to find out. Are you ready to get serious about your body, and discover what you're capable of achieving? Are you comfortable being uncomfortable? If you're serious, if you're ready to change your body and your game, if you're committed to showing up and doing the work, you're on a journey that will set you apart from the competition and take you places you never imagined.

It works. This is how my pros do it. If you want to become more explosive, stronger, and faster, if you want to jump higher and improve your overall athletic performance in any sport, this is exactly how we do it today: the difference between jumping and taking flight.

This is how the best get better—and you will too.

THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF EXPLOSIVENESS

The first question I'm always asked about Jump Attack: "If I do this workout, will I be able to dunk?" I can tell you this: You will be closer. If your only goal is to dunk, you can get there with this program, but I want you to do so much more. And you will.

Increasing vertical jump and explosiveness is one of the most difficult things to accomplish in athletic training; it requires specific muscles to be activated and firing for a prolonged period of time. If you're doing it correctly, everything works together for extraordinary results; the right training will send you soaring over the competition. The wrong training will leave you flat on your feet.

When I started working with Michael in 1989, his vertical jump was 38 inches. At 38 inches he was already at the top of the game, and his dunking ability was not in question. So part of our goal with this program was to take him even higher, just to see how far we could get. We were going for increased explosiveness in every area, not just an increased vertical, but the vertical was definitely a by-product of the training. We got him up to 42 inches, and eventually

to 48 inches before he took a break from the NBA in 1993 to play baseball.

Ten inches over several years, for the greatest player in the game.

Now, if you're hoping this program will add ten inches (or more) to your vertical jump during this ninety-day program, let me just tell you up front: That may not happen.

I know there are thousands of books and DVDs and programs promising massive increases in your vertical jump. I understand that the vertical jump stat is a great number to brag about and an easy way to compare yourself to others.

But it's just a number. And it's definitely not the only number if you're serious about athletic performance. Everyone gets so caught up in the numbers at the big scouting combines, waiting to see how much athletes can bench or how fast they can run the 40 or how they do on the vertical jump.

None of that gives an accurate measurement of how an athlete can actually perform in a game.

This may surprise you, but I don't measure my players' vertical jumps. If a team or agent or player wants that measurement I'll get it, but the answer is irrelevant to me.

Why? Because the ability to jump straight up one time or jump onto a tall, immobile object is not a way of predicting whether you can do that repeatedly during a game. It doesn't make you a better player or allow you to perform in an unpredictable or unstable situation. Vertical jump is meaningless if that's all you can do; jumping higher doesn't mean you will perform better overall, and dunking doesn't translate into being a better athlete. I've had players who could barely dunk a ball but could run faster and last longer than anyone else on the team. Who has more value, the guy who can jump high one time, or the guy who can keep going until the last

second on the clock? The ultimate test is what you do during the game.

No sport requires you to stand in one place and jump straight up one time. Even if you're going for a jump ball or a block, you still have to perform countless other moves during a game; that one vertical jump isn't going to allow you to excel at everything else. Why focus only on that number?

An increased vertical jump is definitely a by-product of this program. But it's not the overall goal. I'm not training you to take a test. I'm training you to be an explosive athlete.

Think of it this way: You can prepare for a test and pass it if you have a few good study tricks and some basic facts nailed down. But if you don't really understand what you studied or how to use what you learned, you'll never be able to apply the information in real life. Do you go to a doctor just because he did well on his exams, or because he can practice medicine? I want you to test well *and* apply what you learned.

I'm not saying there's no reason to measure your vertical jump; if it helps you to see your gains, then go ahead and measure. You'll actually be able to test yourself twice during this program; I included it here because I know most people want to take the test as a measurement of their results. It's good bragging rights if you improve. But don't make the mistake of thinking an increased vertical jump is the only way to improve. I hear people say they went from 23 inches to 26 inches and they're disappointed. Then I ask if their ability has improved, and they realize how much they've actually achieved. Use the measurement as a guideline, not as a "score" or a test you can pass or fail.

The true art of athletic jumping isn't just about going up, it's about how you come down, hit the floor, and shoot back up again.

Effective training enables you to jump repetitively, getting into position for the next jump, and performing at peak levels for the entire game. You need to be firing those muscles over and over, from different positions, under different conditions, with opponents in your face. One jump under controlled conditions in the gym has nothing to do with game time performance. I train athletes for real life, not one number on a chart.

I don't care how high you can jump for a quick measurement. I care if you can jump while you're running. Can you explode off one foot? How about two feet? Can you jump while falling backward? Can you explode laterally? Jump Attack will give you the ability to do all of that. We're going for total explosiveness and repetitive jumping in every direction, in any situation, so you can—and will—excel in your performance throughout the game. Not just once but over and over.

I would love to tell you that if you do this program, you will achieve unlimited results, but unfortunately, that's probably not true. Everyone—and I mean everyone—has physical limits. The simple truth is that we all have different genetics and a different level of athleticism and different potential to excel at different things, and it's up to you to determine what you can do, and not dwell on what you can't. You may not jump like Michael Jordan, but he might not bench press like you.

Whatever limits you may have, this program will help you stretch them and get the most out of your abilities. You can—and will—show improvement if you do this program correctly. You might see progress in your vertical jump, your one-step jump, your running jump; you might become quicker or stronger or faster. Something is going to happen for you. Some people are more disposed to move quickly, some will jump higher, some will be better runners, some

will move better laterally. Some people get quick gains and then plateau, others might see all the improvement at the end. That's almost always a result of genetics, not determination. True for the pros, true for you.

Everyone will get a different result from this program. You'll see an overall improvement in all areas, but you'll probably experience a remarkable improvement in one specific area, maybe in a way you didn't even intend, an unexpected by-product of your workout, determined by how you're built and how your body moves. For example: I worked with a guy who was one of the most explosive players in the league, had an unreal vertical jump, and he wanted to increase it even more. While working on that, he realized he had also developed his ability to move from side to side, backward and forward, making him a tremendous defensive player. Not what he had intended, but this workout had dramatically increased the flexibility in his hips, giving him not only the results he wanted but so much more.

If you do the program correctly and you complete the whole schedule, here's how you'll get the best measurement of your results: Use your new athleticism to perform in real game situations. I don't care how high you can jump in the gym. I want to see how you play the game. Measure your success by how this program makes you an all-around athlete in your sport. Maybe your vertical went up "only" 4 inches and that disappoints you (which it shouldn't). But when you're playing, pay attention to how much quicker you can get down the court or the field. How fast can you get around your opponent? How's your second jump? Are you finishing shots you weren't able to finish before? How much faster can you explode off the line? We're measuring results by your stronger legs and tougher body. When your opponent can no longer get that rebound in the fourth quarter, when

he's too fatigued to play defense, when everyone else is gassed and you're still feeling good . . . that's how you measure the success of this program. Don't get caught up in meaningless numbers. Can you do something now that you couldn't do before? Are you playing defense better, are you quicker laterally, are you getting height on your second and third jump? Yes? Congratulations; you've succeeded.

There are numerous reasons Jump Attack gets results like nothing else. I don't want to throw all the science at you, but I think if you understand how it works, you'll have greater success as you go through the program.

Jump Attack works because it takes all the elements of elite training and combines them, like carefully measured components of a formula. There's nothing secret about any of the components; when you look at them individually, they're all easy to understand. But the science—and the unparalleled success of this program—is in how we combine them: the order of the exercises, how they're paired with other exercises, the duration of the sets, the speed of the reps, the muscles we preexhaust and stretch, the structure of the phases. The formula is based on how it all comes together.

Look at it this way: You can buy a can of Coke and read about all the ingredients on the label. You can go out and get all the ingredients, and spend years trying to figure out how to put them all together. But we both know you're not replicating that can of Coke. Why?

You don't have the formula.

You can take apart a Big Mac, go buy the meat, buns, tomatoes, lettuce, cheese . . . but the secret is in the special sauce, and without the formula, you can't create that sauce. You'll have an ordinary burger. No formula, no Big Mac.

In this book, I'm giving you the formula for excellence. I'm giving you the formula for explosive athleticism. Not just the ingredients, but the ninety-day step-by-step instructions for combining them. Any program can give you squats, lunges, tuck jumps . . . okay, you have the ingredients. So does everyone else. Do you know what to do with them so you can be *better* than everyone else? The details, the order, the pairing of the exercises, how to create the different types of muscular contractions, the number and speed of the reps? That's what Jump Attack gives you: the formula for putting it all together so you can train and succeed like no one else.

Keep in mind that this formula was originally designed for the best of the best, and has been used by countless elite athletes over the past two decades, with proven and incomparable results. So I've had a long time to observe and study those results, to determine what works and what works even better. I've had many years to hone and craft and tinker with the formula as science and our knowledge evolve; I can't imagine the results we would have had twenty years ago—with Michael and Scottie and Olajuwon and Barkley and so many others—using the science we use now to train Kobe and Dwyane and all the rest of my clients. And believe me, every player I've worked with from then until now has had an impact on this book. As much as they learn from me, I learn from them. Everything here is based on time-tested performance and results.

Since the program was first developed in 1990, there have obviously been changes and advancements in fitness and training, which is why the workout in this book is different from the original Jump Attack. Science has shown us new ways to activate certain muscles, identify the areas that have a greater tendency to tighten up, effectively loosen up those areas before, during, and after the workout, and enhance the ability to become more explosive. So over the years

I've integrated the new science and advancements into the program. The result is that you have everything you need to take it to a new level—using all the smaller muscles, not just the obvious big ones, working in phases to prepare the body for what's coming next, adding details to the exercises so you're working in ways you've never experienced. We're not just lifting weights, we're lifting them from different angles, and combining weights with intense plyometrics so your muscles can learn what they're training for. We're not just going through a bunch of exercises, we're doing them in a specific order and adding preexhaustion moves and stretches to make sure every muscle gives maximum effort. We're training those muscles by lengthening and shortening them so they can snap like a rubber band to give you that explosive response every time you want it. And we're combining all of that with intense core training, because it's not just the legs that give you flight, it's motion of the entire body, everything working together for maximum results.

You don't get extraordinary results by doing the same ordinary program everyone else is doing. Everything about this workout is different from anything else you've ever done. This is the difference between where you are and where you want to be. Give yourself ninety days to commit to excellence and give maximum effort, and I will give you results and improvement using the same proven formula I give my pros.