

Skipping, its not just for Smurfs.

When I was young, I grew up going to a daycare. From the time I was 6 weeks old until I was 11 years old I went to daycare five days a week. Back then, we were not allowed to watch TV and there were no Playstations or Wiis so we spent all of our time playing outside. Daycare is where I learned to play things like baseball, football, dodgeball, hide-n-seek, war and hopscotch. We even had these things called monkey bars, I learned how to climb on them. They were great! Thinking back, most of my athletic foundation was probably built in daycare.

Flash forward twenty-five years and the world is quite a different place. There are over 200 TV channels, when there used to be only three. There are computers and games; so much technology that it is rare to see kids go outside and play. It's amazing how I have to argue with my own kids to go out and play on a beautiful seventy degree day. Schools are even starting to cut back on their PE programs. So kids are getting less and less opportunity to play, to learn, to grow. In my opinion, this is tragic. Physical Education is an invaluable part of growing and developing. There are numerous studies that show that an active, playing child is a learning, mentally developing child. Yes, physical activity is directly linked to brain development. Anyway, we are moving further and further away from a world where kids are being physically active and closer to a world where a kid's idea of playing involves a game controller.

It shows too. I meet kids all the time that do not even know how to skip. I like to think that all kids should be able to skip. Skipping is a beautiful display of coordination, rhythm and athleticism. More times than not, if you see a kid that skips well, you see a kid with athletic talent.

Skipping is not just for Smurfs! If you train young athletes and you want an idea about their athleticism, check to see how well they skip. You may be surprised at what you find. You'll have some athletes who will be able to skip gracefully, you'll have some that look like they are trying to learn a new dance move, and you may have some that have no idea how to even start. If you find a kid who doesn't know how to skip, teach him! I truly believe this will help improve their athleticism.

I know it seems crazy to worry about skipping, but think about it. Skipping involves cross-body coordination of opposite, opposing limbs. It is a rhythmic, graceful action; a movement that resembles similar mechanics that are involved with running. When a child is skipping you can see how they swing their arms, how they raise their knees, and how they use their feet, etc... You can also instantly see if they have coordination. Chances are, if they are not skipping well, they are not running well either. So, if you can help a child learn to skip well, you may improve their ability to coordinate other body movements like running. You may even improve their mental focus as well. Remember, physical activity helps with brain development (even with adults)!

If your kids can skip, great! Check to see if they can skip backwards, then sideways. If they can't, work on that too. You'll only be improving their coordination. You'll get your

kids attention with skipping too. I always get these funny looks when I ask my kids if they can skip. But, I haven't had a kid yet who didn't want to learn to skip when he found out that he couldn't. I child driven to learn how to skip, is a child driven...

Skipping can really give you a good window into how well your kids move and how well they can coordinate their bodies. If your kids can perform multi-directional skips with grace and beauty, you've probably got some really good athletes on your hands. If they can't skip well, you can help them learn. If you can't skip well, you can learn too! Your kids may enjoy watching you skip like a smurf. Its another great way to help kids develop and learn while you make training fun.