

## THE NEED FOR SPEED

Travelers and athletes have much in common. Both challenge their bodies' ability to perform under difficult conditions, which can lead to injuries. Does this mean that travelers should train like athletes? Absolutely! | **By Michael Sena**

A plyometric jumping exercise like this one can improve your coordination and agility and reduce the chance of injury. For more health tips, visit [www.michaelsena.com](http://www.michaelsena.com).

FOR 50 YEARS, STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACHES AND EXERCISE physiologists have tested performance-enhancing techniques such as plyometrics. They've found that these exercises not only work for athletes but also help the rest

of us perform daily activities with more efficiency and less injury. **What Is Plyometrics?** / A plyometric movement is a jumping, throwing, or rotating exercise performed at "ballistic" (rapid) speed. This action engages connective tissue and fast-twitch muscle fibers, which provide speed and strength. Plyometric exercise is different from regular exercise; plyometrics is performed faster and consists of specific movements. You can perform these rapid movements with both upper- and lower-body muscle groups, together or separately.

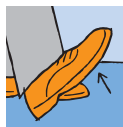
**Get Started** / Want to increase your body's physical resilience? Start with these tips.

1. Check the Web for information. Try [www.weightsnet.com](http://www.weightsnet.com), and search for "plyometric exercise."
2. Incorporate one or two plyometric movements into your weekly routine, and master them before adding more.
3. Always warm up and stretch before performing plyometrics.
4. Even regular exercisers need to start slowly because plyometric movements are demanding. (Be sure to get your doctor's approval.)
5. Exercise your upper-, middle-, and lower-body muscles for a balanced approach. /END/ **Michael Sena** is the health and fitness expert for NBC-5 TV in Chicago, a member of Mayor Daley's fitness council, and co-owner of Energy Training Center, a health facility specializing in one-on-one personal training.

### Staying Fit: Inflight Flexibility



**Knee Flexion:** Lift knee toward chest, decreasing the amount of joint space at back of the knee. Repeat with other leg.



**Dorsiflexion:** With heel on floor, point toes upward, decreasing the angle between the foot and front of the leg. Repeat with other foot.



**Inversion:** With foot on floor, gently roll the sole of the foot inward. Repeat with other foot.



**Knee Extension:** Straighten knee, increasing the amount of joint space at the back of the knee to its full range. Repeat with other leg.



**Plantar Flexion:** Lift the heel and keep toes pointed toward the floor, increasing the angle between the top of the foot and front of the leg. Repeat with other foot.



**Eversion:** With foot on floor, gently roll the sole of the foot outward. Repeat with other foot.

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