Step

The second phase of the triple jump is the step phase (figure 4.2). Rules dictate that the triple-jumper land on and take off from a different foot than was used during the takeoff from the board and the hop phase. The goal of the step phase is to achieve distance, conserve horizontal velocity, and preserve posture.

The step phase is a relatively simple maneuver for any athlete with adequate bounding skills. Cause-and-effect coaching is perhaps more applicable here than in any other instance in track and field, because nearly all poor steps are caused by poor pelvic alignment, resulting from faults in the takeoff or hop phase.

When moving from the hop to the step phase, here more than any other instance, the jumper...
must initiate the swing with the free leg in a lengthened position. This is a critical moment in which pelvic alignment can be gained or lost; proper swinging mechanics here can make a big difference in performance distances. Although many jumpers display a high knee during the step, it is a common fault to bend and drive the knee prematurely. It is frequently good coaching practice to de-emphasize high knees with beginners, so they can more easily swing the leg in an extended position. The athlete should not attempt to flex the knee until the swing leg is positioned approximately perpendicular to the ground.

A key coaching point of the step phase is developing a high takeoff angle. The takeoff angle in the step phase should be higher than that of the takeoff from the board. Because this is an inherently unnatural act for the triple-jumper, a concerted effort must be made to achieve consistency in performing this aspect of the jump correctly. This is accomplished by good isometric preparation of the limb prior to the hop landing and a concerted attempt to push up early and vertically. At this point in the event, horizontal forces are already established, so it is good coaching practice to have the jumper envision the step takeoff as purely vertical.

Jump

The final phase of the triple jump is the jump phase (figure 4.3). The goal of the jump phase is to achieve distance, conserve horizontal velocity, and position the body for an effective landing.

The jump phase is a simple bounding maneuver. As in the step phase, the secret to success in the jump phase is performing prior movements correctly so that the jumper arrives in position to execute the jump correctly.

Maintaining composure is important when executing the jump phase. The phase is very simple to execute, but frequently the simplest fundamentals of bounding are violated because of the anticipated completion of the effort. Posture and swinging mechanics are often compromised. The jumper must remain technically disciplined through this final takeoff. A frequent error in the takeoff of the jump phase is failure to block properly. Jumpers often err by continuing to lift the arms after takeoff. Proper blocking should occur prior to beginning flight mechanics.
During the flight of the jump phase, control of forward rotation is a concern. Some jumpers can perform a hitch-kick maneuver with the free leg, but usually flight time limits the jumper to a hang technique. The arms should be extended high overhead to effectively lengthen the body and control forward rotation. This lifting of the arms should be done only after the blocking movement at takeoff is complete.

**Landing**

At the peak of flight, the jumper should begin to prepare for landing (figure 4.4). Throughout the preparation for landing and the landing itself, the torso and head should remain upright. It is a common error to drop the torso toward the thighs. This effectively shortens the body’s effective radius and accelerates forward rotation.

The extended arms begin a downward sweep from high overhead, and the legs are brought forward and extended in anticipation of landing. A common error is to begin preparing for landing too late, during the descent. This late preparation frequently results in the feet contacting the sand prematurely as they are brought forward.

At impact, the jumper should permit forward movement to continue by flexing at the hips and knees, allowing the buttocks to move forward toward the heels. It is common practice to turn the body during this flexion to ease pressure on the knees. This is an acceptable practice, but it is critical that the shoulders stay square until the jumper hits the sand. Turning prematurely results in a countering rotation of the lower body and causes one foot to land in front of the other, decreasing the measured distance.

Finally, as the buttocks reach the heels, the jumper should kick aggressively, extending the knees so that the feet leave the sand. This permits the buttocks to fall into the hole made by the feet so that distance is conserved.

![Figure 4.4](image.png)