

FIGURE SKATING JUMPS EXPLAINED

Entries to jumps

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Mohawk - you are skating backwards on one leg, then you put your other leg behind you but pointing forwards. Then you turn onto that leg. Then you stay on that leg and turn backwards again. The mohawk part is the step (with foot pointing the other way).

3 Step - you are skating forwards on one leg, then you stay on that leg and turn direction.

The only exception to the above is the lutz, where you skate backwards for several seconds and go straight into the jump. You don't use an turning energy in the steps before it, all the turning is generated by the upper body. Explained later!

Jumps

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Edge jumps - axel, salchow, loop

Toe assisted jumps - flip (toe salchow), toe loop, lutz

Edge Jumps

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Axel

The only jump where you take off facing forwards. You therefore need to do an extra half rotation compared to other jumps. On the outside edge. Both arms are back and the free leg is stretched back too, with the weight on the front (skating) leg. You transfer the weight from the skating leg to the free leg during the rotation, changing axis, ie take off on one leg, land on the other leg. In singles, the skater usually does the triple axel first, and it is the hardest jump (harder than lutz).

Salchow

Inside edge.

Change of axis.

Weight on front leg, skating arm same side as skating leg. Free leg back, same side free arm back. You bring the free leg around out to the side upon take off, so that the body is square and the legs are quite far apart (the free leg almost touching the ground but not!) Then rotate. It almost looks like the person is standing square and legs wide at the start of the jump.

Loop

Outside Edge.

No change of axis (as weight is taken on back leg)

Loop is the opposite of the salchow, in that the free leg and arm are forwards and the skating leg and arm are back. ie the body weight is over the back leg. As the free leg is forwards, you just lift the free leg upon take off, so there is no swinging of the free leg like there is in the salchow. All the turn is generated in the upper body. The free arm (arm in front) is crossed over in front of the body, whereas in the salchow it is straight forward. Upon take off, the legs look crossed, and not wide apart like in the salchow. The upper body is square still though on takeoff.

Toe assisted Jumps

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Flip

A toe assisted salchow. Everything about the salchow still applies, ie inside edge, arm and leg positions. However, because the free leg is digging into the ice (toe pick) then the free leg can't swing around as much as on a salchow. The body is still square with the feet apart on the moment of take off, but this time the free leg is out and moves down and actually digs into the ice and pushes helps push off.

Toe Loop

The skater adopts the loop take off position, the weight being on the back skating leg, skating arm back, with the free arm and leg forwards. However, in order to do a toe pick, the free leg can't stay out in front. So the free leg does an extra move and goes back and digs into the ice. Because the take off position is the same as the loop except that the free leg goes back, then it looks a bit like a salchow, as the weight appears to be on the front foot. However, because the arms have stayed in the same place whilst the free leg moved back, then the skater is now in an opposite arm opposite leg position (salchow is same arm forward same leg forward). Whenever you see the skater in an opposite arm forward to the leg that is forward, then you know it is a toe loop. The toe loop is the easiest jump.

Lutz

Outside edge. The Lutz is the only jump that doesn't have footwork preceding it to get some rotational force (ie 3 step or mohawk). The skater has weight on the front foot with same skating arm forward. The free arm is out to the side and the free leg is back. It looks a little like a salchow/flip, however, it is an outside edge jump not an inside edge jump. The main visual difference is that the body is twisted to the person's inside, coiled, to generate torque in the upper body upon release and digging in the free leg for the toe pick and take off. The skating arm is also bent around the front of the skater. Some skaters mess it up by rotating too early and putting the toe pick in too far out and not behind them, so that the edge changes from an outside to an inside edge and the body weight goes to the free leg and not the skating leg, and it looks like a loop jump (ie body weight over back leg, free leg in front)