

Artistic Gymnastics

Special Olympics Coaching Guide

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ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS COACHING GUIDE



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Advancing the public well-being through improved communication

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ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS COACHING GUIDE

Planning a Gymnastics Training & Competition Season



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Setting Goals

Realistic, yet challenging goals for each gymnast are important to the motivation of the gymnast both at training and during competition. Goals establish and drive the action of both training and competition plans. Sport confidence in gymnasts helps to make participation fun and is critical to the gymnast's motivation.

Goal Setting

Setting goals is a joint effort with the gymnast and coach. The main features of goal setting include the following.

Structured into short-term, intermediate and long-term

- ♦ Stepping stones to success – start small, build big
- ♦ Must be understood and accepted by the gymnast
- ♦ Must be reasonable and obtainable
- ♦ Vary in difficulty – easily attainable to challenging (progressive in nature)
- ♦ Must be measurable
- ♦ Goals can be physical, social, or nutritional in nature

Long Term Goal

The gymnast will acquire basic Gymnastics skills, appropriate social behavior and functional knowledge of the rules necessary to participate successfully in Gymnastics competitions.

Short Term Objectives

These are the stepping stones to long term goals. Example: if “functional knowledge of the rules necessary to participate successfully in Gymnastics competitions” is the goal, then some short term objectives would be to:

- ♦ Use the protocol of saluting the judges prior to and after each routine.
- ♦ Wait for the judges signal before starting each routine.
- ♦ Perform a short warm up, then perform parts of the routine (1st part, middle section, then end) then wait until it is time to perform the entire routine.
- ♦ Participate in the March in and rotations (Olympic order) to each piece of equipment.

To decide on new goals and objectives, look at the skills that need to be learned next on each piece of equipment and the benefits achieved, based on the gymnast's weaknesses (, i.e. a balance beam skill of walking sideways on the floor beam and the added benefit of using correct alignment while walking could be a new objective.)



Benefits of Gymnastics Participation – along with actual skills learned, the gymnast will achieve

Physical Benefits – At the conclusion of an extended program a gymnast should demonstrate:

- ♦ An increase in muscular strength.
- ♦ An increase in muscular endurance
- ♦ An increase in muscular flexibility.
- ♦ An increase in the ability to balance and use leverage.
- ♦ The ability to relax.
- ♦ The ability to concentrate and focus.
- ♦ Correct alignment while walking, standing, jumping, etc.
- ♦ Control of their body weight.
- ♦ Movement in flight and weightlessness.
- ♦ Relaxed landings and knowledge of how to fall and roll safely.
- ♦ An inverted support orientation.
- ♦ Increased agility and coordination:
 - ♦ Hand/eye
 - ♦ Foot/eye
 - ♦ General kinesthetic awareness
- ♦ Ability to move around and along the 3 body axis'.
- ♦ Ability to travel with increased versatility and use a smooth sequence of movement.
- ♦ Ability to overcome resistance and demonstrate action/reaction.
- ♦ Ability to produce a variety of movements.



Cognitive Benefits – at the conclusion of an extended program a gymnast should demonstrate:

- ♦ Using their movement potentialities to solve problems.
- ♦ Awareness of their body. (develop movement vocabulary head to toe and toe to head)
- ♦ Awareness of space and where the body is in it:
 - ♦ Areas and pathways (straight, curved, etc.)
 - ♦ Levels (high, medium, low)
 - ♦ Directions (forward, backward, sideways)
- ♦ Awareness of time and regulation of speed (quick, slow, etc.)
- ♦ Awareness of relationships: body parts to each other and to apparatus (above, below, between, around, on , over, along, across)
- ♦ Awareness of flow and continuity of movement
- ♦ Awareness of relationships with others.
- ♦ Awareness of rhythm
- ♦ Use of apparatus (approach, mount, movements, dismount)
- ♦ Increased depth perception



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Psychological Benefits – At the conclusion of an extended program a gymnast should demonstrate:

- ♦ A joy of movement mastery.
- ♦ A joy of task mastery – achieving an objective.
- ♦ Discipline and self control.
- ♦ The exercise habit as a pleasurable daily occurrence – movement is pleasurable and acceptable.
- ♦ A confident self image and a positive attitude towards their bodies' movements.
- ♦ Creative self expression through movement.
- ♦ Trust in one's own abilities – "I CAN!"





Assessing Goals Checklist

1. Write a goal statement.
2. Does the goal sufficiently meet the gymnast's needs and desires?
3. Is the goal positively stated? If not, rewrite it.
4. Is the goal under the gymnast's control and that it focuses on their goals and no one else's?
5. Is the goal a goal and not a result?
6. Is the goal important to the gymnast that they will want to work towards achieving it? Have the time and energy to do it? The desire to do it?
7. How will this goal make the gymnast's life different? Benefits?
8. What barriers might the gymnast encounter in working toward this goal? How to break down the barriers?
9. What more does the gymnast know?
10. What does the gymnast need to learn how to do?
11. What does the gymnast need to overcome to make this a reality?



Planning a Sport Training & Competition Season

Length of Training/Competition Season

The length of your training and competition season is dependent on several factors:

- ♦ The goals you have set for your gymnasts
- ♦ The facilities availability
- ♦ The gymnasts and all coaches/volunteers availability – some gymnasts train in other sports in different seasons.

Ideally, your gymnasts can train year round (with time for summer vacation). This will give you time to condition your body, to learn new skills, and combine the skills into routines. Learning the routines takes time to memorize and practice for a smooth and consistent pace. Finally, the gymnast must learn how to compete, so setting up practice competitions; demonstrations with people watching, etc. are needed, culminating in your Chapter's Summer Games or larger competitions (National Games, World Games, Championships).

Pre-season planning and preparation

- ♦ Review the Special Olympics Philosophy and how your coaching philosophy will relate to it.
- ♦ Improve your knowledge of gymnastics and your spotting skills by attending training schools and gymnastics clinics or through online educational courses through National Federations.
- ♦ Review the Special Olympics rules for gymnastics.
- ♦ Locate a facility with equipment for practice sessions (private gymnastics club, university, recreation center, Y, etc.)
- ♦ Recruit volunteer assistant coaches from high school, club or college gymnastics programs (partners club). Teachers/coaches at the private club might be interested, also.
- ♦ Train your volunteer coaches on their roles:
 - ♦ Fitness conditioning
 - ♦ Events they will be coaching
 - ♦ First aid
 - ♦ Safety and emergency procedures
 - ♦ Rules for competition (give them needed materials – this guide, rules, music, DVD, SOI website)
 - ♦ Have them get certified by SOI and registered as a local coach
 - ♦ Get certified by the National Gymnastics Federation/Association.
- ♦ Recruit other volunteers (parents?) to assist in:
 - ♦ Transporting gymnasts (check insurance)
 - ♦ Budget and fund raising
 - ♦ Public relations
 - ♦ Booster club or parent support groups
- ♦ Establish a budget and fund raising for transportation, uniforms, miscellaneous items, end of season function, etc.



- ♦ Register your program with your area coordinator and Chapter office.
- ♦ Recruit gymnasts from schools, workshops, Group Homes, ARC's, etc.
- ♦ Obtain all needed gymnast information:
 - ♦ **Medical information/release** (+ x-rays for gymnasts with Down Syndrome) If a gymnast has been in another SO sport, they will already have these forms. (get a copy of them)
 - ♦ Registration/parent release
 - ♦ 2 emergency phone numbers
- ♦ Establish your goals/objectives for the season
- ♦ Write a training plan for the year with the help of your assistant coaches
- ♦ Plan mini-meets with other coaches
- ♦ Meet with parents; educate them as to what you are doing and how they can help.



Season Planning

- ♦ Initiate your season with skills assessment and continue to use assessments to keep track of your gymnasts progress. The initial assessment will determine:
 - ♦ Gymnast's strength
 - ♦ Gymnast's flexibility
 - ♦ Gymnast's coordination
 - ♦ Gymnast's skill knowledge
 - ♦ Gymnast's ability to stay on task/concentrate
 - ♦ Gymnast's behavior/social skills
- ♦ Determine which level and event your gymnasts should participate in, based on:
 - ♦ Initial assessment
 - ♦ Age
 - ♦ Sex
 - ♦ Gymnast preference
 - ♦ Other internal factors:
 - ♦ Enjoyment of music, dancing
 - ♦ Mental readiness and fear
 - ♦ External factors:
 - ♦ Time
 - ♦ Facility
 - ♦ Equipment
 - ♦ Coaches expertise
- ♦ Establish initial goals and objectives as needed for each gymnast. For ease of practice, it is possible to separate the gymnasts into groups, differentiating the skills taught, based on the group.
- ♦ As the season progresses, the gymnasts should go through a consistent progression from lead up drills, to skills, to combination of skills, to routines, to competition of routines.
- ♦ Each practice should contain:
 - ♦ Warm up, including locomotor drills (see warm up in Teaching Skills section)
 - ♦ Body position drills (done on floor first in warm ups)
 - ♦ Rotations to different apparatus
 - ♦ Review previous material
 - ♦ Introduce new skills/drills
 - ♦ Conditioning (strength, cardiovascular, flexibility, coordination,)
 - ♦ Comments and closing (build self confidence)
- ♦ To increase training, send gymnasts home with a DVD of safe conditioning, flexibility, and balance exercises they can do at home in front of the TV (WII for gymnastics??)



Post Season

- ♦ Review pre-season goals and determine how many of them were achieved.
- ♦ Ask for input from the gymnasts and the parents.
- ♦ Write an assessment of each gymnast and where you want to “go” the next season
- ♦ Have a post-season party



There are opportunities for post season competition.



Essential Components of Planning a Gymnastics Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in, and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in a gymnast's daily training program. Please refer to the noted sections in each area for more in depth information and guidance on these topics.

- ☐ Warm ups
- ☐ Previously taught skills
- ☐ New Skills
- ☐ Competition experience
- ☐ Feedback on performance.

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the gymnast is actually going to do. Remember when creating a training session using the key components of a training session, the progression through the session allows for a gradual build up of physical activity.

1. Easy to difficult
2. Slow to fast
3. Fast to slow
4. Known to unknown
5. General to specific
6. Start to finish

Warming Up (see teaching skills section for more on this)

Aerobic Activity:

Music is often used in the aerobic section of the warm-up. The music is often a fast tempo, with a heavy beat emphasis, and the length can be changed as the season progresses and the gymnasts are able to move for a longer period of time (aerobic endurance).

A coach would observe their female gymnasts to see which type of music they prefer (for future levels III and IV optional music choices). Having a set warm up routine to the music will ensure that basic motor skills are practiced daily.

Range of Motion and basic body position activities:

Reviewing the basic body positions (tuck, pike, straddle, stretch and later hollow, arch, and side arch) can be integrated in the warm up. Range of motion moves/stretches can start at the head and work down to the toes or work up from the toes. See the skills section of the guide for a sample warm up.

Previously Taught Skills

Typically, in a gymnastic practice one would rotate from one event to another. (Mix up your rotations in the early part of the season, since endurance and concentration can waiver near the end of practice, you would want different events to be first, for equal learning.) Near the end of the season, practice in Olympic Order – the order they will compete the events, but the starting event can still rotate. (Olympic order for women – Vault, Uneven Bars, Balance Beam, and Floor Exercise. Olympic order for men – Floor Exercise, Pommel Horse, Rings, Vault, Parallel Bars, horizontal Bar) As you go to each event, practice previously taught skills, then add drills to lead up to the next skill.

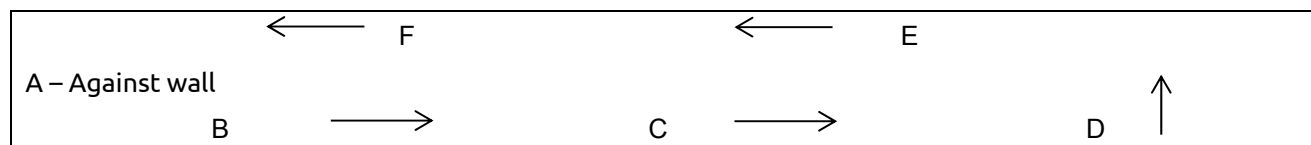


New skills

The Whole-part-whole method works for most skills. Demonstrate the entire skill (you, another gymnast, or watch a video of the skill). Then break it down into parts. Teach the separate parts, including any lead up skills. Eventually, you will put the entire skill together (with spotting to ensure success and safety). See the skill instruction section for examples of various skills broken down into lead up skills and spotting of the skills/drills. New skills need to be taught progressively. Start with the level A, then B, then level 1 skills.

Use **Circuits** for reviewing skills, doing new drills, and conditioning. Instead of having gymnasts wait in line to be spotted, have them do a circuit of skills, with continuous movement up until they get to you (place yourself where you can see everyone). You might be spotting a new skill. You are not only utilizing time effectively, but reducing the need for any discipline, that might be needed if they are idle. Using props and pictures will help remind them what to do when they are flowing through the circuit. Example: In a cartwheel progression circuit on floor, the gymnasts would travel in a circle. Station A might be a handstand against a padded wall; stations B, C, and D, would be “kick-overs” over blocks, station E would be you, the coach spotting a cartwheel. Station F would be practicing a stretched X (with picture). Repeat (Note: gymnasts should be able to safely do the unspotted skills, having learned them previously)

Circuit:



Competition Experience

A variety of experience can and should be lead ups to the area and Chapter games:

- ♦ Invite parents into the gym to watch routines (demonstrations)
- ♦ Perform demonstrations at events.
- ♦ Organize dual meets against other local teams (invite judges to critique the gymnasts)
- ♦ Run a Unified meet with partners that have trained with the gymnasts (Partners might be relatives – brothers, sisters, cousins, girl scouts, or recreational gymnasts) that would learn the routines alongside the gymnasts for a period of time (8 weeks) then have a Unified meet.

The area games should never be the first time the girls or boys do their routines in front of spectators and judges or put on their competition attire.

Feedback on Performance

Improving your performance and trying to **achieve your personal best** is a goal, regardless of the score received. Parents and other interested parties need to keep this in mind. Coaches can help the gymnast and parents understand what the goal(s) for a particular meet are. (i.e. remembering to salute the judge, staying on the beam more than before, etc.) Methods to obtain feedback include:

- ♦ The judges score. (look at D score, but remember it is just a score!)
- ♦ Statistics about falls, etc.
- ♦ A videotape of the routine(s) for gymnast and coach to observe.

Judges, if approached **after** the entire competition is over, will often share feedback about gymnasts and the team in general. A coach could ask them for this. A taping of the competition could be shared with the gymnast and they could talk about what was going on. This would help you to understand their concept of the experience.



Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep all active and controlled	Gymnast needs to be an active listener
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when gymnasts know what is expected of them
Give clear, concise instructions	Increase accuracy of instruction by using all modalities – visual, verbal, and kinesthetic in instructions
Record progress	You and your gymnasts chart progress together
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the gymnast is doing well. Corrections should be stated positively – what you <u>want</u> them to do.
Provide variety	Vary drills and use circuits – prevent boredom
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun, help keep it this way for you and your gymnasts
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully♦ Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it♦ General to specific – this is why I am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively
Allow for individual differences	Different gymnasts, different learning rates, different capacities. Teaching needs to use verbal comments, visual demonstrations, and kinesthetic practice. Use picture cues, videos of good performances, and other gymnasts to demonstrate what you want.



Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions

- ☐ Safety checks of equipment and practice area before each session.
 - Mats in correct placement?
 - Are beams straight?
 - Bars are adjusted and tightened?
 - Vaulting board have correct # of springs for athlete's size?
- ☐ Assign assistant coaches their roles and responsibilities in accordance to your training plan.
- ☐ When possible, have all equipment and stations prepared before the gymnasts arrive.
- ☐ Introduce and acknowledge coaches and gymnasts. Always meet and greet gymnasts.
- ☐ Review intended program with everyone. Keep gymnasts informed of changes in schedule or activities.
- ☐ Alter the plan according to the facility and equipment in order to accommodate the needs of the gymnasts and explain when necessary.
- ☐ Change or adopt activities before the gymnast become bored, and loses interest.
- ☐ Keep drills and activities brief. Keep everyone busy.
- ☐ Devote the end of the practice to a fun, group activity that can incorporate challenge and fun always giving them something to look forward to at the end of practice.
- ☐ If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high and before gymnast is fatigued.
- ☐ Summarize the session and announce arrangements for next practice.
- ☐ Keep the **fun** in fundamentals.



Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that gymnasts know, understand and appreciate the risks of Gymnastics. The safety and well-being of gymnasts are the coaches' primary concerns. Gymnastics is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's and everyone's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions. Risk management should always be considered. Prevention is first. Safety is a journey that should never end.

- ☐ Establish clear rules for behavior at your first practice and enforce them.
 1. Keep your hands to yourself.
 2. Listen to the coach.
 3. When you hear the coach – Stop, Look, and Listen
 4. Ask permission before leaving the gym to go anywhere.
 5. Gymnasts should not be in the gym or on equipment without proper supervision.
- ☐ Make sure gymnasts bring water to every practice or provide a water fountain, especially in hotter climates.
- ☐ Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
- ☐ Train all gymnasts and coaches on emergency procedures.
- ☐ Discuss safety in the gym as well as outside the gym (i.e. parking lot). Have rules about not walking in front of a dismount area; being careful around mats of different heights, etc.
- ☐ Teach gymnasts to look before walking.
- ☐ Check the equipment daily. Are all T handles and cables secure? Tripping areas eliminated? All hazards should be eliminated in the facility.
- ☐ Review your first-aid and emergency procedures. Have someone who is trained in first-aid and CPR on or very near to the gym during practice and games. Do you know where the AED device is and how to work it?
- ☐ All hazards should be eliminated in the facility.
- ☐ Warm up and stretch properly at the beginning of each practice to prevent muscle injuries.
- ☐ Train to improve the general fitness level of your gymnasts. Physically fit gymnasts are less likely to get injured. Make your practices Active.
- ☐ Require all your gymnasts to wear appropriate uniforms. Loose clothing can get caught around a bar, in a spotters hand, etc. No jewelry should be worn and long hair tied up.



Safety in the Gym

Safety is everyone's concern:

- ♦ All coaches should follow the above chart.
- ♦ Parents should make sure their child is on time for warm ups and well rested.
- ♦ Gymnasts should pay attention and follow directions at all times. If not, stop the activity.

Prevention of injuries is a priority ... we need

- ♦ Safe programs
- ♦ Safe environments
- ♦ Safe coaches

Who is responsible? Everyone

- ♦ Properly plan activity (ies)
- ♦ Supervise (general to specific)
- ♦ Proper instruction
- ♦ Safe physical environment
- ♦ Provide adequate and proper equipment
- ♦ Educate yourself regularly
- ♦ Have an appropriate emergency plan/assistance
- ♦ Keep informed of gymnasts moods, feelings, medical issues, etc.
- ♦ Keep records forever.
- ♦ Medical information available? Where is phone? AED? Etc.
- ♦ Become safety certified with your National Governing Body. (i.e. USA Gymnastics, BAGA)

Gymnastics Practice for Competitions

The more we compete, the better we get. Part of the strategic plan for Special Olympics Gymnastics is to drive more sport development at the local levels. Competition motivates gymnasts, coaches and the entire sport management team. Expand or add to your schedule as many competition opportunities as possible. We have provided a few suggestions below.

1. Host Meets – invite another local gym/program over.
2. Join the local community Gymnastics Clubs and/or associations.
3. Have practice meets– invite spectators
4. Incorporate competition components at the end of every training session. To practice doing a skill/routine under pressure – have the entire team watch.

Hosting a Gymnastic Meet

(NOTE: Look on the SOI website for more information on this.)

Your Special Olympics area directors and state office should always be aware of any meets you plan on hosting and approve them. Discuss dates and times with them. Meets for Special Olympics athletes are run the same as meets for NGB gymnasts. The difference is in the awards ceremony. In Special Olympics, everyone is a winner, so everyone goes up to the awards stand for every event and All Around.



Unified Gymnastics – Selecting Team Members

At present, Unified Gymnastics is not in the rule book. Some gyms, clubs and programs are adding it to their programs on a field test basis. The key to the successful development of a traditional Special Olympics or Unified Sports® team is the proper selection of team members. We have provided some primary considerations below for you. In gymnastics, a “team” is 2 gymnasts that are partners. They compete separately, and their scores are added for the team score.

Ability Grouping – Partners in Gymnastics

Unified gymnastics works best when all partners have similar sports skills. Level I with level I, II with II, etc. Partners with abilities that are far superior to their teammate will either control competition or accommodate others by not competing to their potential. In both situations, the goal of interaction is diminished and a true competitive experience is not achieved. For example, an 8 year old should not be competing with a 30 year old gymnast.

Age Grouping

All sets of partners should be closely matched in age.

- ♦ Within 3-5 years of age for gymnasts 21 years of age and under
- ♦ Within 10-15 years for gymnasts 22 years of age and over

Creating Meaningful Involvement in Unified Sports®

Unified Sports® embraces the philosophy and principles of Special Olympics. When selecting your Unified partners you want to achieve meaningful involvement at the beginning, during and end of your sport season. Unified teams are organized to provide meaningful involvement for all gymnasts and partners. Every teammate should play a role and have the opportunity to contribute to the team. Meaningful involvement also refers to the quality of interaction and competition within a Unified Sports® team. Achieving meaningful involvement by all teammates on the team ensures a positive and rewarding experience for everyone.

Indicators of Meaningful Involvement

- ♦ Teammates compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others.
- ♦ Teammates compete according to the rules of competition.
- ♦ Teammates have the ability and opportunity to contribute to the performance of the team.
- ♦ Teammates understand how to blend their skills with those of other gymnasts, resulting in improved performance by gymnasts with lesser ability.

Meaningful Involvement Is Not Achieved When Team Members

- ♦ Have superior sports skills in comparison to their fellow team members.
- ♦ Act as on coaches, rather than teammates.
- ♦ Control most aspects of the competition.
- ♦ Do not train or practice regularly, and only show up on the day of competition.
- ♦ Lower their level of ability dramatically, so that they do not outscore their partner.



Partners during inclusion rhythmic meet



Sport Skills Assessment Card

The sport skills assessment chart is a systematic method useful to determine the skill ability of a gymnast. The Sport Skills Assessment Card is designed to assist coaches in determining gymnast's ability level in Sport before they begin participation. Coaches will find this assessment a useful tool for several reasons.

1. Help coach to determine with the gymnast which events in which they will compete
2. Establish the baseline training areas of gymnast
3. Assist coaches to group gymnasts of similar ability in training teams
4. Measure the gymnast's progression
5. Help determine gymnasts daily training schedule

Before administering the assessment coaches need to perform the following analysis when observing the gymnast.

- ♦ Become familiar with each of the tasks listed under the major skills
- ♦ Have an accurate visual picture of each skill.
- ♦ Have observed a skilled performer executing the skill.

When administering the assessment coaches will have a better opportunity in getting the best analysis from their gymnasts. Always begin by explaining the skill you would like to observe. When possible demonstrate the skill.



Special Olympics Sport Skills Assessment Sample

Gymnast's Name		Date	
Coach's Name		Date	

Instructions

1. Have the gymnast perform the skill several times.
2. If the gymnast performs the skill correctly 3 out of 5 times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.

Levels A, B and I Floor Exercise

Sideways Stretched Roll

- ☐ Can maintain a tight body while lying on the floor in a stretched position
- ☐ Can initiate the roll with the body with assistance or on an incline
- ☐ Can initiate the roll without assistance and on a flat mat.
- ☐ Maintains the stretched, tight body throughout the roll
- ☐ Can turn in both directions.

Forward Roll

- ☐ Starts in a stretched stand
- ☐ Places hands correctly on mat prior to initiating the roll
- ☐ Keeps hip high while initiating the roll
- ☐ Tucks head with spot
- ☐ Tucks head without spot
- ☐ Remains in tuck position throughout roll
- ☐ Places feet on floor and finishes roll to stand

Back Rock

- ☐ Sits in tight tuck position
- ☐ Places hands in appropriate positions next to ears, with fingers facing back, elbows in
- ☐ Rolls back and up in smooth rocking motion
- ☐ Maintains round shape with back tucked throughout

Handstand Lead Up – Teeter Totter (Lever)

- ☐ Shows correct lunge position prior to starting
- ☐ Places hands on ground, shoulder width apart, fingers spread in front of front foot
- ☐ Puts weight on hands and arms as momentarily hops off front foot
- ☐ Keeps arm straight while supporting body weight
- ☐ Replaces foot and lifts hands off ground to standing lunge position
- ☐ Maintains straight body line throughout skill (from fingers to toes)

These are samples – they can be created for each level and each event. See Teaching Skills section for a list of skills. Take particular attention to the faults & fixes charts.



Daily Performance Record

The Daily Performance Record (Excel spread sheet) is designed for the coach to keep an accurate record of the gymnast's daily performances as they learn a sports skill. There are several reasons why the coach can benefit from using the Daily Performance Record.

1. The record becomes a permanent documentation of the gymnast's progress
2. Helps the coach establish measurable consistency in the gymnast's training program.
3. The record allows the coach to be flexible during the actual teaching and coaching session because he can break down the skills into specific, smaller tasks that meet the individual needs of each gymnast.
4. The record helps the coach choose proper skills teaching methods, correct conditions and criteria for evaluating the gymnast's performance of the skills.

Using the Daily Performance Record

An Excel spread sheet will work well for this. At the top of the record, the coach enters his name; the gymnast's name, and their event. If more than one coach works with the gymnast, they should enter the dates that they work with the gymnast next to their names.

Before the training session begins, the coach decides what skills will be covered. The coach makes this decision based on the gymnast's age, the gymnast's interests, and his mental and physical abilities. The skill needs to be a statement or a description of the specific exercise that the gymnast must perform. The coach enters the skill on the top line of the left-hand column. Each subsequent skill is entered after the gymnast masters the previous skill. Of course, more than one sheet may be used to record all of the skills involved. Also, if the gymnast cannot perform a prescribed skill, the coach may break down the skill into smaller tasks that will allow for the gymnast's success at the new skill.

Conditions and Criteria for Mastering

After the coach enters the skill, they must then decide on the conditions and criteria by which the gymnast must master the skill. Conditions are special circumstances, which define the manner in which the gymnast must perform a skill. For example, "given a demonstration, and with assistance". The coach needs to always operate under the assumption that the ultimate conditions in which the gymnast masters a skill are, "upon command and without assistance", and therefore, does not have to enter these conditions in the record next to the skill entry. Ideally, the coach needs to arrange the skills and conditions such that the gymnast gradually learns to perform the skill while upon command and without assistance.

Criteria are the standards that determine how well the skill must be performed. The coach needs to determine a standard that realistically suits the gymnast's mental and physical abilities. For example, "make three strikes, 60 percent of the time". Given the varied nature of skills, the criteria might involve many different types of standards, such as amount of time, number of repetitions, accuracy, distance or speed.

Dates of Sessions and Levels of Instruction Used

The coach may work on one task for a couple of days, and may use several methods of instruction during that time to progress to the point where the gymnast performs the task upon command and without assistance. To establish a consistent curriculum for the gymnast, the coach must record the dates he works on particular tasks, and must enter the methods of instruction that were used on those dates.



Gymnastics Attire

Appropriate Gymnastics attire is required for all competitors. As a coach, discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, jeans or loose shirts are not proper Gymnastics attire for any event. Explain that they cannot perform while wearing clothes that restrict their movement. Take gymnasts to high school, collegiate, or clubs while training or during competitions and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding gymnasts that do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

Inappropriate attire could be a safety issue. Buckles, belts, buttons, and large T shirts etc. can get caught when moving around bars, etc. Coaches can get hurt by this inappropriate attire, while spotting. Hearing aids and glasses should be secured. Gymnasts need leotards that allow them their full range of motion.



Women

Leotard or unitard may be worn. (see rule book)



Underwear should not show



Hair should be away from face and tied up



Gymnastic slippers are optional



Hands may develop blisters and calluses



Grips are optional. (dowel grips for advanced gymnasts only.)



Safety: Loose shirts can get wrapped around bars and a spotter's hand



Jewelry should not be worn.



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Planning a Gymnastics Training & Competition Season

Men

Leotard with gymnastic pants or shorts may be worn. (see rules)



Grips are optional. (dowel grips are for advanced gymnasts only)



Jewelry should not be worn.



Gymnastics Equipment

The sport of Gymnastics requires the type of sporting equipment below. It is important for gymnasts to be able to recognize and understand how equipment for the specific events works and impacts their performance. Have your gymnasts name each piece of equipment as you show it and give the use for each. To reinforce this ability within them, have them select the equipment used for their events as well.

General Gymnastics Equipment List At-A-Glance

Women's Equipment	Men's Equipment
Floor Exercise Mat (42 x 42)	Floor Exercise Mat (42 x 42)
Blocks (various heights) used in training or mounting equipment	Blocks (various heights) used in training or mounting equipment
Mats (various sizes)	Mats (various sizes)
Landing mats – various sizes	Landing mats – various sizes
Low Balance Beam	High (Horizontal) Bar
Balance Beam	Pommel Horse
Uneven Bars	Parallel Bars
Vaulting board	Rings
Vaulting Table	Vaulting Board
Chalk and Chalk Box or Stand	Vaulting Table
Score Flasher (meets)	Chalk and Chalk Box or Stand
	Score Flasher (meets)



Gym set up for competition



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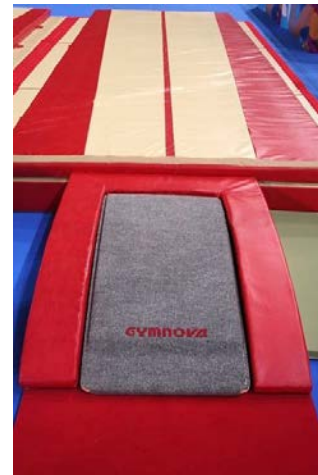
Floor Exercise Mat (Men and Women)



Score Flashers



Vaulting Table with Mats (Men and Women)



Vaulting Board with Safety Collar and Landing Mat



Women's Uneven Parallel Bars with matting



Women's High Balance Beam with Mats



Low Balance Beam with mats
(high beam in background)



Pommel Horse with mats



Ring tower with mats



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide Planning a Gymnastics Training & Competition Season



Men's Parallel Bars with Mats



Men's Horizontal Bar with Mats



Chalk and chalk stand



Adjusting the equipment may need team work.



***Special
Olympics***

ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS COACHING GUIDE

Teaching Gymnastics Skills



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General Guidelines

Warm up, conditioning, and practice drills prepare the Special Olympics athlete for gymnastics. They should be helping the gymnast be prepared for all of the events and include drills to acquire basic and specific physical, physiological and psychological prerequisites. These are some of the more obvious and important items.

Physical

Strength, flexibility, muscular endurance, agility, cardio-vascular endurance, balance, coordination

- ♦ **Vault** – the athlete's ankles, knees and hips must be strong enough to repel body weight
- ♦ **Bars/Rings/Pommel Horse** – the athlete should have adequate grip and upper body strength to support their own weight in a hang or support position for a desired length of time
- ♦ **Beam** – the athlete should be able to balance on one foot
- ♦ **Floor Exercise** – the athlete should be able to run, walk, slide, skip, hop, gallop, leap as well as roll, transfer weight, balance and basic inversions

Physiological

Body weight, distribution of body weight, bone structure, musculature

- ♦ **Vault** – even weight distribution, good ankle, knee and hip flexion and extension
- ♦ **Bars/Rings/Pommel Horse** – shoulder wrist and elbow joints should be structurally sound
- ♦ **Beam** – ability to align the body's center of gravity over the beam
- ♦ **Floor Exercise** – good posture/alignment of shoulders over hips, hips over ankles

Cognitive/Psychological

Focus, memorization, rhythm, little fear of heights or obstacles

Other General Comments

- ♦ Keep your work out consistent and include time for strengthening, flexibility and reviewing.
- ♦ Break down skills into smaller parts, (progressions) teaching them the skill from part to whole.
- ♦ Building a sound basic foundation of physical skills decreases injuries, increases success rates and acts as a catalyst for higher level skills.
- ♦ Network with gymnastics club staff for ideas. Use educational web sites for some insight. Take out some books/magazines from the library that not only have information, but also have great pictures to show your athletes.
- ♦ Promote good hygiene, proper attire, hair fastened securely, no jewelry and empty mouths.
- ♦ Keep your athletes well hydrated and provide rest breaks when necessary.
- ♦ **Remember Safety First "When In Doubt...Check It Out!"**



The Warm Up

A warm up period is the first part of every training session or preparation for competition. The warm up starts slowly and gradually involves all muscles and body parts. In addition to preparing the gymnast mentally, warming up also has several physiological benefits. For the female gymnast, incorporating the warm up to music will increase the fun and will also help instill a sense of rhythm and musicality that is important to floor exercise.

The importance of a warm up prior to exercise cannot be overstressed. Warming up raises the body temperature and prepares the muscles, nervous system, tendons, ligaments, and the cardiovascular system for upcoming stretches and exercises. The chances of injury are greatly reduced by increasing muscle elasticity.

Warming Up

- ♦ Raises body temperature
- ♦ Increases metabolic rate
- ♦ Increases heart and respiratory rate
- ♦ Prepares the muscles and nervous system for exercise
- ♦ Instills a sense of timing and rhythm to music (if used)
- ♦ Begins the practice session with fun and energy
- ♦ Stretches the muscles to increase the gymnast's range of motion
- ♦ Creates an awareness of correct alignment and body position

The warm up is tailored for the activity to follow. Warm ups consist of active motion leading up to more vigorous motion to elevate heart, respiratory and metabolic rates. The total warm up period takes at least 25 minutes and immediately precedes the training or competition. A warm up period will include the following basic sequence and components.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic walk/ fast walk/ run/ locomotor moves	Heat muscles	5 minutes
Stretching	Increase range of movement	10 minutes
Event Specific Drills	Coordination preparation for training/competition	10 minutes



Aerobic Warm-Up

Activities such as walking, light jogging, walking while doing arm circles, chasse, skipping, runs with leaps, etc.

Walking

Gymnasts begin warming the muscles by walking slowly for 3-5 minutes. This circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching. The sole objective of the warm up is to circulate the blood and warm the muscles in preparation for more strenuous activity.

Running and other locomotor movements

Running, skipping, galloping, chasse's etc., are next. Gymnasts begin warming the muscles by running or other movement slowly for 3-5 minutes. This circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching. The run starts out slowly, and then gradually increases in speed; however, the gymnast never reaches even 50 percent of their maximum effort by the end of the movements. Remember, the sole objective of this phase of the warm up is circulating the blood and warming the muscles in preparation for more strenuous activity. Games, as seen in this video can be incorporated in this phase of the warm up.





Stretching/Flexibility/Range of Motion (Warm up and Cool down)

Stretching is one of the most critical parts of the Warm Up and a gymnast's performance. A more flexible muscle is a stronger and healthier muscle. A stronger and healthier muscle responds better to exercise and activities and helps prevent injury.

Flexibility is critical to a gymnast's optimal performance in both training and competition. Flexibility is achieved through stretching. Stretching follows an easy aerobic jog or other locomotor activity at the start of a training session or competition.

Begin with an easy stretch to the point of tension, and hold this position for 15-30 seconds until the pull lessens. When the tension eases, slowly move further into the stretch until tension is again felt. Hold this new position for an additional 15 seconds. Each stretch should be repeated 4-5 times on each side of the body.

It is also important to continue to breathe while stretching. As you lean into the stretch, exhale. Once the stretching point is reached, keep inhaling and exhaling while holding the stretch. Stretching should be a part of everyone's daily life. Regular, daily stretching has been demonstrated to have the following effects.

1. Increase the length of the muscle-tendon unit
2. Increase joint range of motion
3. Reduce muscle tension
4. Develop body awareness
5. Promote increased circulation
6. Make you feel good



Some gymnasts, like those with Down Syndrome, may have low muscle tone that makes them appear more flexible. Be careful to not allow these gymnasts to stretch beyond a normal, safe range. Extremely flexible gymnasts should develop the strength to control their flexibility.

Stretching is effective only if the stretch is performed accurately. Gymnasts need to focus on correct body positioning and alignment. Another common fault in stretching is bending the back in an attempt to get a better stretch from the hips. An example is a simple sitting forward leg stretch.

Incorrect



Correct



Flexibility is needed in gymnastics. This is obtained through stretching.

In this guide, we will focus on some basic stretches and range of motion exercises. Along the way we will also point out some common faults, illustrate corrections and identify stretches that are event specific. We will start at the top of the body and work our way to the legs and feet.



Upper Body

Side Stretch



- ♦ Raise arms over head
- ♦ Clasp forearms or reach overhead with top arm
- ♦ Bend to one side



The position is incorrect when the athlete pushes the hips to the side, weights the feet unevenly or bends a knee.

Wrist and Shoulders



Wrist sequence – “ocean waves”

Palms together – pushing, up, down





Neck

Exercises to warm up the neck will teach the athlete to use the head in different positions. It is important for the body to remain motionless, in alignment, when the athlete moves the head. In rhythmic gymnastics, the athlete will move the head to follow the hand apparatus, especially on tosses, and in the choreography of competition routines. Note – never circle the head in a complete rotation or move the head forcefully

Look up and down



Look side to side



Tilt side to side





Arms and Shoulders

Many skills in gymnastics require shoulder flexibility. Shoulder flexibility is important for supple body waves and an elegant carriage of the upper body.

Arm Circles



Torso and Back

In floor exercise and balance beam, torso and back flexibility are important for some skills. Skills, such as body waves, require the athlete to move with suppleness from an arched to a contracted position or from a contraction on one side to a contraction on the other side. A supple torso and back will give the athlete the appearance of moving effortlessly from one element to the next.

Cat Stretch

This exercise will develop the supple back movement for body waves.



The athlete kneels on the hands and knees



The athlete shows an arched position



The athlete's back moves in a supple manner to a contracted position



Backbend

The backbend is an acrobatic element that increases back flexibility. When spotting the backbend from a stand, the coach must support the athlete with one hand under the back and one hand under the shoulder. Athletes who have Down Syndrome and have been diagnosed with atlanto-axial instability should not do this exercise.



Backbend





Lower Body

Groin Stretch



- ♦ Sit, bottoms of feet touching
- ♦ Hold feet/ankles
- ♦ Bend forward from hips
- ♦ Ensure that the gymnast is pulling up in his lower back



Here, the back and shoulders are rounded. The gymnast is not bending from his hips and not getting the maximum benefit of the stretch



Here, the gymnast is correctly bringing his chest to his feet and not pulling his toes towards his body

WATCH
VIDEO 1

Hamstring Stretch



- ♦ Legs straight out and together
- ♦ Legs are not locked
- ♦ Bend at hips, reach toward ankles
- ♦ As flexibility increases, reach for feet
- ♦ Push out through the heels, forcing toes to the sky

Seated Straddle Stretch



- ♦ Legs straddled, bend at hips
- ♦ Reach out toward the middle, then each leg
- ♦ Keep the back straight



WATCH
VIDEO 2



Legs and Feet

Strength and flexibility of the legs and feet are of the utmost importance for rhythmic gymnastics. All jumps, leaps and high kicks should be performed with the legs and feet extended. Pivots and balances must be executed with the athlete standing high on the toes, with a straight supporting leg.

Point and Flex



The athlete sits in a pike position and points and flexes the feet.



Lunge (on one knee)



In the correct lunge position, the knee will be directly over the foot.



In the incorrect lunge position, the knee will be in front of the foot.



Splits

Front split



Gymnasts should face forward and square the hips.

Straddle split



Knees should face up.



Stretching – Quick Reference Guidelines

Start Relaxed

Do not begin until gymnasts are relaxed and muscles are warm

Be Systematic

Start at the top of body and work your way down

Progress from General to Specific

Start general, then move into event-specific exercises

Easy Stretching before Developmental

Make slow, progressive stretches

Do not bounce or jerk to stretch farther

Use Variety

Make it fun. Use different exercises to work the same muscles

Breathe Naturally

Do not hold your breath, stay calm and relaxed

Allow for Individual Differences

Gymnasts start and progress at different levels

Stretch Regularly

Always include time for warm-up and cool-down

Stretch at home too



Core Strength

Gymnastics incorporates the need for strength – in arms, legs and the core. Most strength exercises can be done during rotations to each piece of apparatus and incorporated within the skills done.

The following core strength can be done during warm ups:



- ♦ For lower back – while lying on stomach, lift one leg, then another.
- ♦ Hold.
- ♦ Build from a few to numerous lifts.

Superman – For Lower Back, Upper Shoulders



- ♦ Lie on stomach, lift arms and legs
- ♦ Hold or rock
- ♦ Add a roll onto back (hollow), then stomach (arch)

Plank



- ♦ Hold a push up position (supported by hands or elbows)
- ♦ Roll over and hold a straight body position on your back.



Tabletop

Doing a Tabletop is an easier version to develop core strength.

Not only is it important for the athlete to be able to arch and contract the back, but he/she must also be capable of maintaining a straight body position.



Doing sit ups, crunches and V sits will also increase core strength and can be done in warm ups or distributed throughout the workout and cool down.



Tight Body

Keeping a tight body during many skills in gymnastics is very important. Isolating it in drills helps the gymnast realize what they are being asked to do, as well as help strengthen the core.





Event Specific Drills

Drills are activities designed to teach sport skills. Progressions of learning start at a low ability level, advance to an intermediate level, and finally, reach a high ability level. Encourage each gymnast to advance to their highest possible level. Drills can be combined with warm-up, such as jumping practice and lead into specific skill development. They are also often done at each event, as you rotate around the gym.

Skills are taught and reinforced through repetition of a small segment of the skill to be performed. Many times, the actions are exaggerated in order to strengthen the muscles that perform the skill. Each coaching session should take the gymnast through the entire progression so that he/she is exposed to all of the skills that make up an event.

Specific Warm Up Activities

- ♦ Jumping (floor ex, vault, etc.) – practice a variety of jumps in warm up.
- ♦ Walking through the locomotor movements used in their floor and beam routines without arm movements, once learned, add the arm movements.
- ♦ Drill the basic body positions (tuck, pike, straddle, stretch)



The Cool Down

The cool down is as important as the warm up, however is often ignored. Stopping an activity abruptly may cause pooling of the blood and slow the removal of waste products in the gymnast's body. It may also cause cramps, soreness, and other problems for Special Olympics gymnasts. The cool down gradually reduces the body temperature and heart rate and speeds the recovery process before the next training session or competitive experience. The cool down is also a good time for the coach and gymnast to talk about the session or competition. Note that cool down is also a good time to do stretching. Muscles are warm and receptive to stretching movements.

Cool Down Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic loco motor movements	Lowers body temperature Gradually lowers heart rate	5 minutes
Stretching	Removes waste from muscles	5 minutes



Body Positions

The basic body positions of stretch, pike, straddle, and tuck can be found used on all pieces of apparatus. Teaching and reviewing these positions (and arch and contract or hollow) during warm up in a game type atmosphere is appropriate for Special Olympic gymnasts.

Stretch Body Position



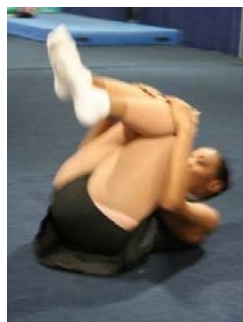
Stretch position on various pieces of equipment. Inverted or upright, it is a common position.



In stretch, gymnasts should have tight core body strength, legs together, and toes pointed.



Tuck



Body is bent at the hips and knees. Legs are together and toes are pointed.

Pike



Body is bent at the hips. Legs are together and toes are pointed.



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Straddle

Legs are apart, straight, and toes are pointed. Body may be stretched (star) or piked.



Putting it together in warm ups

Change the orientation and use the terms tuck, pike, straddle, stretch.

Sitting: show a tuck, pike, piked straddle, etc. (mix it up)

Lying on back: show me stretch, tuck, raise legs to pike, straddle legs to piked straddle, stretch on back, straddle legs to stretched straddle, etc.

Sitting with arm support behind (toes not touching): tuck, pike (V sit), straddle

In tuck on feet, with hands on the ground: straddle legs (piked straddle), tuck, straighten knees to pike, lift arms off ground to standing stretch...

Standing: stretch (arms overhead), straddle legs (star), stretch, and lean forward to pike, etc.

Jumping: stretch jump, tuck jump, straddle stretch jump, pike jump, piked straddle jump, stretch, stretch with ½ turn, etc.

Mix it up and go slow, then fast... show pictures, use word cues – tuck like a snowball, stretch like a pencil, etc. Demonstrate at first, and then see if they can do it without you. Make sure you use the same terminology when on the equipment. Later, add arch and hollow to the positions.

Body Position Drill



Hollow Body Drill





Teaching Loco motor, Dance and Balance Skills (Men and Women)

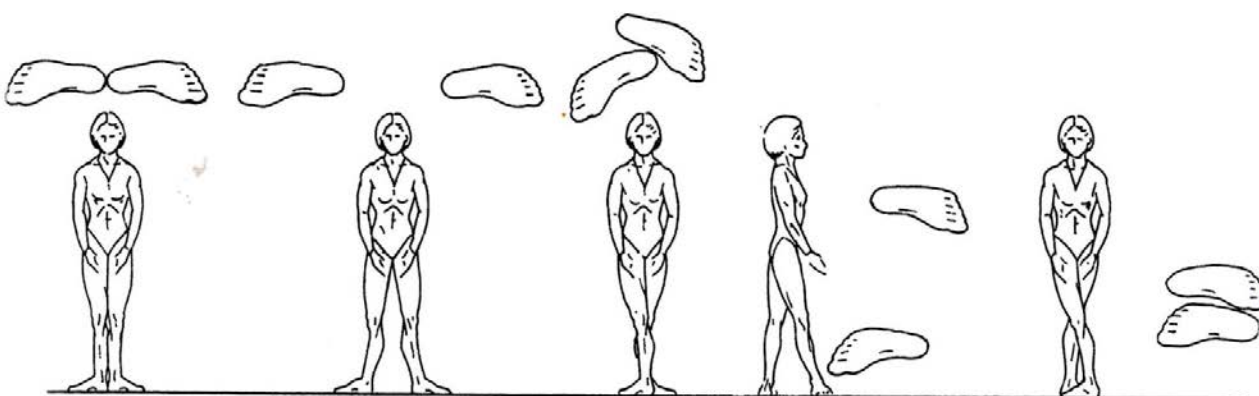
Ideally, dance skills should be taught by a dance teacher in dance classes, and then reviewed in the gym on the floor and on the balance beam. Women use more dance moves than the men do, but men can benefit by the balance, flexibility and coordination obtained in dance. This is a limited discussion of the possible moves that could be placed in routines or used in practice.

Preparation Dance Skills

5 Leg/Foot Positions of Ballet

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand with good posture (chest up, core tight, shoulders down)...
- ♦ 1st Position: Heels together and toes turned out.
- ♦ 2nd Position: Legs separated about 12 inches, with weight distributed equally and toes turned out.
- ♦ 3rd Position: One foot in front of the other foot with the heel of the front foot against the instep of the back foot and toes turned out.
- ♦ 4th Position: One foot approximately 12 inches in front of the other with toes turned out.
- ♦ 5th Position: One foot in front of the other and the heel of the front foot against the toes of the back foot.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

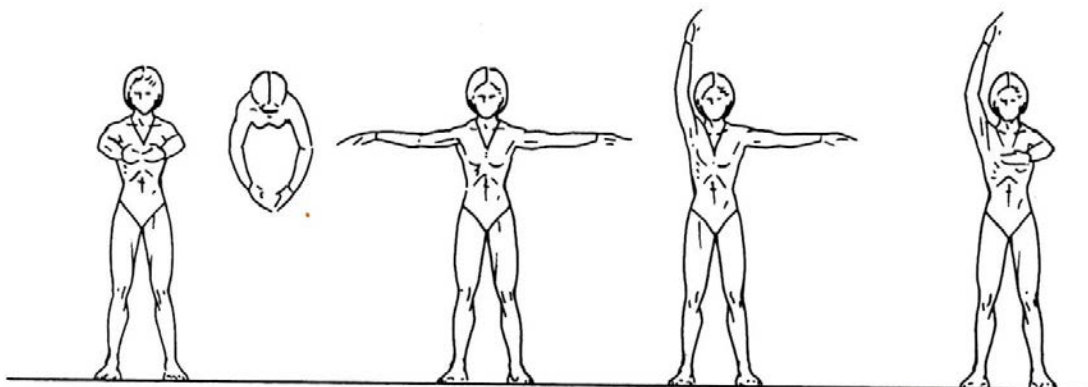
Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Lack of turnout	Extreme turnout is not necessary, but a 90 degree angle is needed Place footprints on the ground for gymnast to place their feet in. Turnout should come from the hips.	Prop – trace shoes on vinyl fabric with permanent marker in the 5 positions
Wrong position		Same as above
Loss of balance	Hold onto the balance beam or ballet barre initially	



5 Arm Positions of Ballet

Teaching Skill Steps

- 1st Position: Arms form a circle in front of the body at waist level
- 2nd Position: Arms extend out and to the sides.
- 3rd Position: One arm curved overhead and the other arm extended to the side.
- 4th Position: One arm curved overhead and the other arm curved down in front.
- 5th Position: Both arms curved overhead and slightly in front of the body.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Arms are stiff	Arms should be slightly curved. Place arms around a large ball to feel the position.	Large ball
Arms and legs are not coordinated	Practice arms separate from the foot positions, then combine.	



Releve Hold/Balance

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ In standing stretched position, raise arms overhead in 5th position
- ♦ Raise up on the balls of the feet.
- ♦ Hold for a 2 count

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Standing flat footed or low on toes	Practice releves holding onto a balance beam or ballet barre. Practice point and flex of ankles in warm up.	Show a picture of the feet – what you want.
Ankles improperly aligned	Remind gymnast to distribute the weight on all 5 toes.	
Off balance	Check body alignment Work on core strength Hold on BB or barre, let go one hand at a time to maintain balance	Ballet barre or beam



Passe and Coupe Positions

Teaching – Skill Steps

Coupe

- ♦ Sit on the ground in a pike position
- ♦ Point toes and stretch ankles
- ♦ Lift one leg up until toe touches ankle of straight leg. Knee is bent and turned out.

Passe

- ♦ Sit on ground in a pike position
- ♦ Point toes and stretch ankles
- ♦ Lift one leg up until toe touches knee of straight leg. Knee is bent and turned out.

Variation

In parallel coupe or passé, the knee will face forward.





Grand Battement Front and Back (Leap Preparations)

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand in stretched position, with side to balance beam or ballet barre
- ♦ The close hand may hold the beam or barre.
- ♦ Front – Keep both legs straight and lift the outside one to at least parallel to the floor.
- ♦ Toes and ankles remain extended, free arm is out to side or in a defined shape.
- ♦ Lower leg and repeat.
- ♦ Rear – Lift leg to the rear, keeping shoulders square and upright.
- ♦ Lower leg and repeat.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Legs are bent	Practice leg extension drills	
Feet are flexed	Do ankle warm ups, emphasizing point and flex.	
Excessive movement of the upper body	Lie on back and practice battements to the front, engaging the core muscles. Keep kicks smaller until alignment is controlled. Condition the core strength.	Front – hold ballet barre or beam with 2 hands – with back to barre for stability. Rear – face the beam or barre and hold with 2 hands.
Legs are turned in.	Rond de jambe and developpe are good ballet exercises for improving turnout.	
Bending the supporting leg	Perform kicks lower and concentrate on stretching the supporting leg.	



Side battement and forward battement done on balance beam.



Body Waves

Prerequisites

Knowledge of the body positions of hollow and arched are needed prior to performing this skill.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Perform arm circles forward and backward on the sagittal plane (side of body). One side only.
- ♦ Circle both arms together forward and backward
- ♦ While standing.



Teaching – Skill Steps

Forward body wave

- ♦ Stand in a stretch position, with arms up in front.
- ♦ Bend the knees slightly, hollow the body (round the back) and look downward.
- ♦ Circle arms forward and down.
- ♦ As arms pass legs, push hips forward, arch the back and lift the head up.
- ♦ Continue circling the arms back and upward to finish overhead, while looking at the ceiling.
- ♦ As arms complete circle, straighten the back into stretch position and look straight ahead.

Backward Body Wave

- ♦ Stand in stretch position, arms overhead.
- ♦ Circle the arms backward and downward, while dropping the head back and arching the back with hips forward.
- ♦ As arms pass legs, bend knees, pull hips back and round the back as head drops forward.
- ♦ Straighten the body starting at the knees and “rolling” up as the arms continue circling forward and upward to finish overhead.



Variations

Either the forward or backward body wave may be done while kneeling.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
No contraction	Hold a large ball or sideways hoop in front of the gymnast. Have her contract forward so that the body conforms to the shape. Poke with noodle to remind her of contracting.	Foam "noodle"
No arch	Stand behind gymnast and have her look at you. Place a mirror behind her – have her arch enough to see herself in mirror.	mirror
Not showing supple wave of body throughout movement.	Break the contraction and arch into separate steps, then combine slowly, then faster.	



Back Body Wave on Floor Exercise.



Loco Motor Skills

Forward Walking

Lead Up Drill(s)

Walk as the start of warm ups. If done to music, start slowly and build up as the beat speeds up. Vary the walks (see below).

Teaching – Skill Steps

Dance Walk

- ♦ Step forward with the toe pointed and foot slightly turned out.
- ♦ Repeat with other foot.
- ♦ Keep body erect with head in neutral position.
- ♦ Let arms swing from shoulders in opposition to feet.

Spotting

Unless gymnast has a physical impairment that makes walking difficult, there is no spotting.

Variations

- ♦ March steps – walk with a high knee lift, ankles stretches and toes pointed.



- ♦ With forward battements – walk while lifting legs straight up, parallel to the ground. (see battement)
- ♦ Waltz steps – $\frac{3}{4}$ time – 1st step is a lunge step, steps 2 and 3 are small steps in releve. Arms may lower, then rise with the toe walks (down, up, up)

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Upper body and head are looking down.	Look up at item on wall.	Prop – place item on wall to look at.
Walking flat footed.	Walk toe, ball, heel, not the normal heel, ball, toe. Slide toe along the ground until it can no longer reach before stepping	
Marching steps – knees do not raise up enough	Hold a hoop parallel to the ground in front of body – poke knees through hoop on each step.	Hoop



Side Walking and Side Chasse

Prerequisite(s)

Make sure the gymnast knows the difference between front and side.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Assume a standing position
- ♦ Step to side in straddle position (right foot – traveling right)
- ♦ Close left foot along ground to right foot to end in stretch position.
- ♦ Repeat to right.

Spotting

Spotting is not necessary on floor (possibly on beam, though)

Variations

- ♦ **Side chasse** – instead of stepping to side, slide feet to side; as bring legs together, a springing or jumping motion occurs with both feet off ground in stretch.
- ♦ Practice moving in both directions. Right and left
- ♦ Increase speed as practice. Drill – 8 right, 8 left, 4 right, 4 left, 2 right, 2 left, 1R, 1L, 1R, 1L
- ♦ Arms may vary in position – hands on waist, arms to side, etc.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Not rhythmic	Use a drum or clap the rhythm – 2 fast, pause, repeat...	“slide, slide, slide” drum
Not correct steps	Slowly move – straddle, stretch, straddle, stretch...	
Feet do not close together in air on chasse	Sit on floor in pike position with feet side by side, toes pointed.	
Chasse – missing the jump when feet close	Practice stretch jumps with feet elevated and pointed	
Excessive movement in upper body	Face a wall or ballet barre or mirror closely. Start slow and keep body upright. Condition body by doing core strength.	Ballet barre or mirror



Forward Gallop and Chasse

Prerequisites

Gymnast needs to know the difference between left foot and right foot as well as forward and rear foot.

Lead Up Drill(s)

Gallop: slowly step forward then slide the back foot up to the front foot. Repeat. "Step, close, step, close"

Teaching – Skill Steps

Gallop

- ♦ Step forward on right foot.
- ♦ Slide back leg (left) up to forward foot, but not passing it.
- ♦ Step right foot forward again, lifting knee as step.
- ♦ Back leg continues to chase front leg "Gallop like a pony."

Chasse

- ♦ Similar movement as gallop, but front leg slides forward.
- ♦ As legs come together, the feet close and toes are pointed.
- ♦ There is a slight jump as feet close.
- ♦ Do several in sequence.

Spotting

Spotting is usually not necessary, unless done on balance beam.



Variations

- ♦ Arm positions may vary (out to side, overhead, etc.)
- ♦ Perform with right or left foot forward or switch feet (harder)
- ♦ Change directions – go on an angle...
- ♦ Chasse, skip, skip





Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Slow, flat footed chasse	Work on toe, use a drum or clapping to keep the pace quicker.	Drum
Not keeping front foot in front	Use the following verbal thought	"Front foot is the robber, back foot is the police – but he can't catch the robber."
Chasse – feet do not close in the air	Sit on the floor in a pike position, with ankles crossed and toes pointed.	
Chasse – Does not jump when feet come together as transfer weight.	Practice ankle and toe points in warm up Practice straight jumps, stretching ankle and pointing toes.	"point"



Step Hops/Skipping

Prerequisites

- ♦ Gymnast should be able to do a gallop first.
- ♦ Know the difference between right and left and be able to march
- ♦ Be able to do a simple step, hop.



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand at attention and step right foot forward.
- ♦ Lift left knee up into the air as right foot pushes off the ground, extending ankle and knee (hop)
- ♦ Land back on right foot, bending ankle and knee.
- ♦ Immediately step on left foot forward.
- ♦ Lift right knee into air as left foot pushes off the ground, extending ankle and knee (hop)
- ♦ Land back on left foot, bending ankle and knee.
- ♦ Repeat.
- ♦ Start slow with alternating step hops, then speed up to a true skip.

Spotting

Not necessary on the floor, but needed on balance beam. Initially, the coach or designated other should demonstrate the skill.

Variations

Arm positions and direction can vary.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Lack of rhythm	Speed up the step hops with music or clapping or drum.	Count the skips
Knees are low – lack of amplitude	Use a hoop to give a visual about how high their knees should go – gymnast holds it in front and parallel to the ground – pokes their knees through it.	
Ankles and toes not pointed	Do ankle flexibility in warm ups and practice jumps, pointing their ankles and toes.	
Lack of height	Strengthen the ankles and knees doing relevés and small jumps.	“Up”



Turns

Prerequisites

- ♦ Good posture and alignment in a standing position.
- ♦ Lift and hold a releve position (balance on ½ toe or higher) on both feet
- ♦ Hold a balance on one foot with other foot in coupe (ankle) or passé (knee)

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Pivot turn – place one foot in front of another and lift heels to balance on ½ toe
- ♦ 1 point turn – practice balancing on one foot, with lifted leg in coupe (ankle) and then passe (knee)
- ♦ Turning the body, while keeping it in one line – do core strength drills, practice stretched log rolls.

Teaching – Skill Steps

Pivot turn

- ♦ Stand with one foot in front of another.
- ♦ Lift heels and balance on the balls of the feet (releve)
- ♦ Turn heels and body in the direction of the back foot
- ♦ Finish with the body in the opposite direction, lower heels.



One foot turn in coupe or passé.

- ♦ Do a forward lunge with the feet turned out, hips square, one arm rounded in front, one arm rounded to the side
- ♦ Lift back leg to a balance in releve on front foot, with free leg in coupe (ankle) or passé (knee)
- ♦ As lift back leg turn body, arms and legs in one unit toward the opposite side as the back leg.
- ♦ Complete turn in 180 (1/2) or 360 (full) degrees and place both feet and heels on the ground.



Spotting

Spotting is not necessary in this skill, unless done on balance beam (learn on floor first)

Variations

- ♦ Pivot turn: may be done in tuck position or stretched.
- ♦ One foot turn in coupe or passé
 - ♦ Free leg position can vary – coupe, passé, out in front, etc.
 - ♦ Turn may be from ½-double turn.
 - ♦ Arm positions may vary.



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Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Off balance	Practice the balance first, without turning.	
Support leg bent	Practice plies and releves to feel the difference. Hold a balance beam – do the prep into releve repeatedly.	
Turn not completed	Focus – practice turning head and looking for (spotting) object at the completion of turn. Body, arms and legs need to move simultaneously.	Spot Picture to look for.
Not on toe	Walk around on toes/balls of feet.	



Leaps

Prerequisites

Gymnast should be able to do forward and rear battements prior to attempting a leap.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Do front and rear battements.
- ♦ Work on leg flexibility in splits.
- ♦ Decide which leg is most flexible in the front.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Run forward for several steps.
- ♦ Push off one foot to rise into the air, lifting front leg forward and straight.
- ♦ Straighten back leg behind (leg split at least 90 degrees) while keeping head and chest up and hips square.
- ♦ Land on the extended front leg, bending ankle and knee for a softer landing.
- ♦ Arms lift in opposition during leap.

Variations

- ♦ A Split leap will show at least 180 degree split. Anything with less amplitude is a stride leap.
- ♦ Front or back legs may stag.
- ♦ ¼ turn during leap – showing side split in the air.
- ♦ Switch legs in air, etc.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Legs are bent	Practice grand battements and tendu to front and rear.	
Feet are flexed	Sit on floor – practice pointing and flexing ankles and toes (warm up) Point toes and stretch ankles during battements and tendu practice.	
Excessive movement of upper body.	2 coaches can walk with gymnast, lock arms and help her have more time in air and keep her upper body still. Practice core strength drills.	
Legs do not split in air	Work on flexibility – splits Have gymnast “leap” over a rope on the floor.	Rope “Step, push, lift, kick...”
Not enough height	Practice jumps to increase ankle and leg strength. Do step hops, practicing pushing with the take-off foot.	Try to go over objects that are moveable (i.e. noodle sitting on two blocks)



Assemble

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Stand with one foot in front of another behind a rope or line on the floor. Push off both feet at the same time and land with the feet together on the other side of the line. (or on the line)
- ♦ Use 2 footprints on the floor, one in front of the other. In front of them have a carpet square, then a hoop.
- ♦ Gymnast stands in the footprints, brings feet together to land in the carpet square, then immediately jumps into the hoop.
- ♦ Straight jumps to increase ankle and leg strength.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand with feet together in stretch, arms down.
- ♦ Lift arms overhead as lift one leg straight up, and push off the remaining foot.
- ♦ Feet close together in the air in front of the body.
- ♦ Land on both feet, plié.

Variations

- ♦ Assemble may be followed by a jump.
- ♦ Assemble may involve a turn between the push off and the landing.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Lead leg not high enough	Practice battements to increase height.	
Does not land with feet together	Give gymnast a visual object to land on (carpet square, chalk marks, etc.)	Carpet square (not slippery) Or chalk mark

Jumping

Jumps, including stretch jump, turns in stretched jump, tuck, straddle, pike, etc. can be done on floor, balance beam and are in our lower levels of vaulting.

See Vaulting section for stretched, tuck, straddle, and turns in stretch jumps.





Balance Skills

V Sit

Prerequisites

Gymnast should be able to have core body strength, to lift and hold position.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Core body strength drills – crunches, leg lifts, etc.
- ♦ Battements – ability to lift one leg up straight with toes pointed.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Sit in a pike position on the floor.
- ♦ Support the upper body by placing hands on the floor behind hips. Lean torso back and raise straight legs up to 45 degree angle so that the legs and body form a V position.
- ♦ Hold for 2 counts.
- ♦ Lower legs in a controlled manner.

Spotting

Kneel to the side of gymnast. Place one hand under the athlete's thighs and the other hand on his/her back.

Variations

- ♦ Free V-sit – lift arms off ground and out to side or overhead
- ♦ Change the leg position – free tuck position or in piked straddle
- ♦ May be done on Balance Beam.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Weak hip flexors	Start with bent knees, raise one leg, then another... Work on core body strength	
Legs not straight, toes not pointed	Practice legs straight and toes pointed in pike sit.	
Legs come slightly apart	Place bean bag between ankles – hold it there.	Bean bag



1 Point Balance (Coupe or Passé)

Prerequisites

Ability to stand on one foot. Balance

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Core strength drills to strengthen the core.
- ♦ Practice lifting one leg off the ground, in any direction and holding...

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Assume a stretched stand with hips and toes turned out (1st position)
- ♦ Raise one leg off the floor with a bent knee
- ♦ Slide free toe up the support leg until toe touches ankle (coupe) or knee (passé)
- ♦ Knees and hips should be turned out.
- ♦ Hold balance with arms overhead (5th position) for 2 counts.
- ♦ Slowly lower free leg to floor.

Spotting

Have gymnast hold balance beam, barre or spotter when they initially do it (face forward with 2 hand hold or sideways with 1 hand hold.)

Variations

- ♦ Free leg position could vary in a balance hold.
- ♦ Arm positions could vary
- ♦ Support leg – raise up on toe (amplitude)
- ♦ Parallel passé – knee faces forward
- ♦ Switch the support and free legs.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Loss of balance	Squeeze the gluteus (hip) muscles and activate the core to help maintain balance. Keep free foot low (coupe) until balance improves. Use a support (spotting) until can do it on own	Ballet barre, balance beam or spotter for help.
Poor posture	Keep the head up and body straight See tight body tests.	Place object on the wall to look up at.
Leg in incorrect position	Sit on floor in pike, practice raising leg up to appropriate position	





Arabesque, Scale

Prerequisites

- ♦ Ability to balance on one leg.
- ♦ Ability to do a back battement.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Tendu, developpe and battements to the rear (hold balance beam or ballet barre)
- ♦ Core strength drills – i.e. superman pose

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand in a stretched position
- ♦ Lift one leg in the air backward while maintaining balance on straight support leg.
- ♦ Keep both legs straight, hips square, knees turned out, ankle and toe of free leg stretched.
- ♦ Arms may raise to side or may vary.
- ♦ Hold head and chest high with back arched in arabesque.
- ♦ In scale, upper body lowers (parallel to floor) as back leg is raised.

Spotting

- ♦ Hold onto a balance beam or ballet barre
- ♦ Stand next to and on the side of gymnast, placing one hand on the gymnast's stomach and the other hand on his/her thigh to assist in balancing.

Variations

- ♦ Practice with both legs
- ♦ Vary arm positions – one forward and one to side, both forward, crossed, etc.
- ♦ Bend support leg (attitude) or both legs (attitude)

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Free leg is bent	Practice tendu, developpe, and battements to rear. Pay careful attention to stretching the leg.	Use statements saying what you want... i.e. "keep the leg straight."
Feet are flexed	Sit on floor – practice pointing and flexing the feet.	
Off balance	Check the body alignment. Make sure the supporting leg is straight and the body is aligned, with the torso upright. Lower free leg for better balance.	Use support – balance beam or ballet barre.



Side Scale, Y Scale

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Flexibility drills for side splits to increase hip range of motion.
- ♦ Side battements

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Assume a stretched stand.
- ♦ Slowly lift one leg to the side.
- ♦ Side scale – Keep leg free while upper body is lowered to opposite side.
- ♦ Y scale – arms on same side as free leg, hold the foot /ankle of the free leg.
- ♦ Hold for 2 seconds.
- ♦ Maintain control while lowering free leg to ground.

Spotting

Coach may stand behind gymnast and hold hips to assist in balance.

Variations

May do to either side.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Loss of balance	Core body strength drills to maintain core balance.	Focus on a spot on the wall
Leg not held high	Flexibility for side splits Hip flexor strengthening drills	
Knees, ankles and toes not stretched.	Practice battements to side with straight legs, ankles and toes. Warm ups – point and flex ankle drills	



Beginning Floor Exercise/Tumbling Skills (Male and Female)

Back Rock and Back Rock to Candle

Prerequisites

Gymnast should know what a tucked position is and be able to hold it.

Lead Up Drill(s)

Show a tucked position while sitting in warm ups. Learn to bend elbows and place hands up, alongside ears (coach can walk behind and give him/her “ten”).

Teaching/Skill Steps

- ♦ Sit on ground in tuck position, knees bent, feet on floor.
- ♦ Tuck chin into chest (look at belly) and round back.
- ♦ Bend arms and place hands palm up (finger tips back) above shoulders.
- ♦ Roll back to upper back, placing hands flat on floor.
- ♦ Remain in tuck and roll back to sitting position.

Spotting

Kneel to side of gymnast. Remind them to stay tucked and help initiate their roll back and sit up.

Other Uses/Variations

- ♦ Candle – rock back with legs straight and tight core onto shoulders.
- ♦ Feet point toward ceiling.
- ♦ Start rock from feet.
- ♦ Finish by sitting in pike or straddle.
- ♦ Finish by rocking to feet and standing up.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Elbows stick out to side.	Squeeze elbows in.	Keep “elephant ears” close to head!
Hands do not stay facing up and don’t touch ground.	Pretend to hold 2 “pizza pies” in hands.	“Squish” pizzas into ground!
Tuck opens up when rocking.	Squeeze pillow in belly. Squeeze bean bag under chin.	



Stretched Sideways Roll (log or pencil roll)

Prerequisites

Straight, stretched body position

Lead Up Drill(s)

Body position drills (knowledge of stretched body)

Body tightness drills (see warm up)

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Assume a stretched lying position on back (supine)
- ♦ Extend arms overhead and legs stretched, point toes
- ♦ Roll onto one side and continue onto front (prone) position, continue rolling to other side and onto back.
- ♦ Keep body straight and tight during the roll(s)

Spotting

A spotter could check for body tightness and help initiate the roll

Other Uses/Variations

- ♦ Have log roll relay races at the end of practice...
- ♦ Place picture of log or pencil at mat that reminds gymnast what to do, when incorporating roll into a circuit
- ♦ Tucked sideways roll

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Legs or arms/hands come apart	Place soft object (bean bag) between body parts to remind gymnast to stay tight	"Stretch" "Stay tight"
Crooked	Review tightness drills	
Trouble initiating roll	Roll down an incline	



Forward Roll

Prerequisites

What a tucked head is; what a rounded body is

Lead Up Drill(s)

Rocking (rock and roll)

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand in stretch
- ♦ Bend knees slightly, placing hands on mat.
- ♦ Keep hips elevated, while tucking chin towards chest and place back of shoulder on mat.
- ♦ Roll forward maintaining a tuck position until feet contact the mat.
- ♦ Extend arms forward and upward and ...
- ♦ Rise to standing position

Spotting

- ♦ Stand or kneel to side of gymnast; place one hand (palm up) on their hips to ensure elevation of them, the other (palm down) behind their neck as they lean over to ensure tuck of the head. Lift the hips and remind them to keep head tucked as they roll.
- ♦ To finish to standing you might need to stand in front of them and have gymnast try to grab your hands and lift to stand.



Key Phrases to Remind Gymnast What to Do

Could say this poem as they do it – “Hands up high, Hands down low, look at your belly and over you go.”

As they complete skill, ask them to “reach” to finish in a stand.

Variations/ Other Uses

- ♦ A shoulder roll that does not go over the head.
- ♦ Starting position variations: do not bend knees as lean over (pike); legs straddled as lean over; or start in a lunge, scale balance, kneeling position, headstand, handstand, etc.
- ♦ Ending position variations: finish in sitting (easier), tuck stand, on one knee, rear lying, v sit, one leg step up, straddle stand, pike stand, immediate jump, etc.



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Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key phrases/props
Does not tuck head	Place hand behind head to remind gymnast to tuck Place bean bag under chin	Soft object under chin
Legs come apart	Place bean bag between knees	Soft object between knees
Does not stand up after	Stand in front of gymnast, as completes roll, grab their hands and lift to help them stand up	Object to reach for
Hips too low/ does not roll	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ kneel on elevated surface◆ lean over a barrel, place hands on floor◆ roll down an incline	Folded panel mat, etc. Incline mat





Backward Roll

Prerequisites

Be able to perform a back rock

Lead Up Drill(S)

- ♦ Roll backwards down inclines in tuck position.
- ♦ Place two folded panel mats on ground lengthwise with a gap between (to fit head). Roll backwards across top, placing one hand on each mat, with head in space between. (spot by lifting hips)

Teaching/Skill Steps

- ♦ Assume standing position.
- ♦ Lower to tuck stand, placing bent arms next to head with palms up and fingers back, chin tilted forward.
- ♦ Sit backward, then roll backward
- ♦ Place hands on ground and push off ground to clear the head.
- ♦ Land on feet in tuck stand.
- ♦ Stand up to stretch.

Spotting

- ♦ Stand or kneel to side of gymnast.
- ♦ Check correct hand position and tuck of head.
- ♦ Assist in roll by lifting hips (one hand on each side), as hands come in contact with mat.

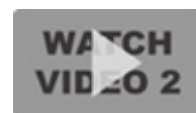
Other Uses/Variations

- ♦ Hand position – turn fingers in and use straight arms.
- ♦ Starting position – straddle stand, pike stand, sitting, etc.
- ♦ Vary finishing position – kneel, straddle stand, pike stand, scale, etc.
- ♦ Combinations – place in combination with other rolls or ...

Backward Roll



Alternate Backward Roll



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Chin not tucked	Place soft object under chin and tell gymnast to keep it there throughout	Soft object – bean bag, roll of socks, etc.
Legs not together	Place soft object between knees	
Back not rounded	Practice back tuck rolls, review body positions Tuck	
Arms not pushing	Check hand position Condition push-ups for arm strength	



Teeter-Totter/Lever (Handstand Lead Up)

Prerequisites

Ability to support body weight on arms.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Assume front support position with feet elevated (on folded mat). Walk hands from one mark to another on the floor. (body stays straight and tight)
- ♦ Lean over a barrel. Walk hands forward until body is straight and in support position (tight body). Walk hands back.
- ♦ Walk feet up and down a padded wall. Stand with back to wall, placing hands on ground in front of you (make marks on floor). Walk feet up wall while leaving arms straight until body is straight. Look at wall when upside down (spot under gymnast's shoulder). When able, move hands closer to wall.

Teaching/Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand in forward lunge position.
- ♦ Place hands on ground shoulder-width apart
- ♦ Lift back leg into air, push off front leg and lift it in the air. (little hop)
- ♦ Front leg returns to floor, back leg behind it with arms lifting off the ground.

Spotting

- ♦ Stand or kneel to side of gymnast.
- ♦ Place one hand, palm up under gymnast's shoulder.
- ♦ Other hand spots athlete's hip.

Other Uses/Variations

- ♦ Legs may switch positions in the air.
- ♦ See teeter totter on balance beam

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Body does not stay straight from fingers to the toes.	As arms go down, leg must go up	Look at a lever or teeter totter
Arms bend	Do strength drills for arms and lead up drills listed above	
Free leg bent, feet flexed	Practice battements to rear Review warm up ankle stretches and toe points	



Handstand

Prerequisites

- ♦ Teeter totter/lever (above)
- ♦ Be able to pass “tightness” tests
- ♦ Inverted awareness

Lead Up Drill(S)

- ♦ See drills under teeter totter/lever
- ♦ Do a teeter totter/lever and tap feet together
- ♦ Bunny hops
- ♦ Teach proper alignment of head, shoulder girdle and pelvis in rear lying, hanging and standing positions first.
- ♦ Stand facing a padded wall in lunge. Place hands on floor with fingertips almost touching wall. Kick legs up to handstand with back touching wall. Coach spots legs and tests for body tightness.

Teaching/Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand in forward lunge position, arms stretched above head, hips and shoulders square, head neutral.
- ♦ Lean over and place hands on mat shoulder width apart as back leg lifts up toward handstand and front foot pushes off the ground. Back leg straightens and follows lead leg up to vertical.
- ♦ Stop body in inverted stretched position with head neutral between arms.
- ♦ Toes are pointed, legs tight, pelvis tucked under, shoulders elevated and head neutral. (no arch)
- ♦ Split leg as lower and push off mat with hands to lunge position as stand up.



Spotting

- ♦ Stand to side of gymnast
- ♦ Spot the hips or thighs to assist in lift and balance. Expect the unexpected.
- ♦ Later, spot ankles for a “lighter” spot
- ♦ Help gymnast in twisting out or rolling out of handstand that is over balanced.

Other Uses/Variations

- ♦ Vary ways into handstand (straddle up, pike up ,backward roll extension, etc.)
- ♦ Vary ways out of handstand – forward roll, pike down, straddle down, bridge over etc.
- ♦ Handstand hops for vaulting propulsion



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Not making vertical	Spot to lift to vertical, so gymnast feels what vertical is. Push off front leg, lift back leg.	"Push mat away with feet"
Legs and body not tight	Do core strength drills and tightness tests	"Long handstand"
Feet landing before hands lift off mat	Remind gymnast of a lever/teeter totter effect. Stretch at end	"Push mat away with hands"



Cartwheel

Prerequisites

- ♦ Kickover, cartwheel lead ups.
- ♦ Handstand

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Kickovers – place folded mats or boxes on matted floor. Gymnast places hands on top of mat and kicks feet to other side. Work on straddle, start in lunge, land in lunge.
- ♦ Side bunny hops
- ♦ Review straddle stretch position (lying, standing)

**WATCH
VIDEO 1**

Teaching/Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand in stretched forward lunge position or side straddle stand “X”
- ♦ Bend forward leg on side of direction of cartwheel.
- ♦ Lean toward mat and place hands, close then far, on the ground with fingers pointing sideways to the direction of the movement.
- ♦ While leaning toward mat, lift far leg up.
- ♦ As first hand touches mat, begin push off front leg.
- ♦ As second hand touches mat, both legs are circling overhead through the vertical plane and are straddled.
- ♦ Legs continue through straddled handstand and down toward mat.
- ♦ As first foot hits mat, knee bends and far hand lifts from mat.
- ♦ Other hand lifts from mat and second leg lands on mat.
- ♦ Finish in lunge with arms up facing the direction that you came from or a sideways “X”

Spotting

- ♦ Stand behind gymnast. Place close hand, palm up on close side of gymnast’s waist.
- ♦ Reach across with far arm (cross arms) and place hand, palm in on far side of gymnast’s waist.
- ♦ As cartwheel progresses, arms will uncross, then cross the other way.
- ♦ Coach may have to walk sideways to stay with gymnast.
- ♦ Hold firmly throughout.

**WATCH
VIDEO 2**

Other Uses/Variations

- ♦ Perform several in a row (same direction or change directions)
- ♦ Vary ending position: low lunge, kneel, arabesque
- ♦ Precede cartwheel with steps, chasse or hurdle
- ♦ One arm cartwheel (close or far); switch leg cartwheel; dive cartwheel; cartwheel “pop”; aerial cartwheel

**WATCH
VIDEO 3**



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Not smooth in execution	Speed up rhythm, keep body straight	Hand, hand, foot, foot
Legs stall	Place hands slightly closer; Practice side battements to speed up lead leg	
Legs bent, toes not pointed	Warm up drills – toes and ankles flex and point, straddle sits, stands, etc. with straight legs.	“Stretch”
Body piked	Practice handstands against padded wall – straddle legs to feel inverted position	Padded wall, spot



Round off

Prerequisites

- ♦ Weight bearing capacity of hands/arms
- ♦ Handstand snap down and cartwheel
- ♦ Hurdle

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Cartwheel with T shaped hands
- ♦ Round off from raised surface (folded mat, vaulting board) landing on floor mat.

Teaching/Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand in lunge (later from hurdle)
- ♦ Lean forward and place hands on ground as per cartwheel except second hand is turned with fingers facing back toward feet (T) (sideways and backwards).
- ♦ First leg lifts as second leg pushes off ground.
- ♦ First leg hesitates slightly as second leg catches up and body rotates slightly.
- ♦ Push off ground with wrists and shoulder shrug as legs stretch toward ground. Body is hollowed.
- ♦ As feet reach ground, ankles, knees and hips flex slightly and arms reach overhead.



Spotting

- ♦ Place close hand on first hip
- ♦ Second hand hesitates until gymnast is inverted and is placed on other hip.
- ♦ Once learned, spotting should not be necessary.

Other Uses/Variations

- ♦ Rebound out of round off into jumps, back handsprings, etc.
- ♦ Hurdle into with or without runs





Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Legs don't come together	Practice handstand snap downs Drill from elevated surface to give more time to bring legs together	
Body does not pass through vertical	Do round off drills between two standing mats to force kicking up	"Lead leg up" Folding mats
Limited push off floor	Review T hand placement – use chalk or rubber spots/arrows to visualize placement Practice shoulder contraction and pop – lunge and push off padded wall.	"Push"





Hurdle – 2 Foot Block

Prerequisites

Know the difference between one and two feet

Lead Up Drill(s)

See assemble drills

Teaching/Skill Steps

- ♦ Start standing with one leg forward, arms back.
- ♦ Push off lead leg and land with both feet in front of body on balls of feet, as arms swing forward and up.
- ♦ Pop off feet to next skill
- ♦ Note: over time increase speed and walk into it, then run into it – blocking the forward momentum and converting it to upward momentum.

Spotting

This Is Not A Spotted Skill.

Other Uses/Variations

- ♦ Hurdles are used on the vaulting board
- ♦ Hurdles are used on floor ex – i.e. before forward dive rolls, forward saltos, etc.
- ♦ Hurdles are used on floor ex – i.e. before forward dive rolls, forward saltos, etc.



- ♦ Stand with 2 feet on the board. Jump to lunge with arms up.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Not getting any power	Place feet farther in front of body Condition with jumps to increase ankle and leg strength	Use chalk marks
Legs and arms not coordinated	Teach movements separately, then put together	



Optional Floor Ex Routines – The Next Step

Look at FIG for skill lists in floor exercise to choose from, as well as the judging section of our rule book to decide how to best create a routine for your gymnast(s) that utilizes their skills and abilities. Teaching these skills is beyond the scope of this guide. Please take clinics with your NGB and ask for help in your local gymnastics organization and gyms. Please view the inserted routines from the SOI World Games in 2011.

- ♦ Women – Pick music without words and noises, that has a good 4 or 8 count beat that the gymnast likes, this makes it easier to teach the skills while counting the movements out loud.
- ♦ Keep the length of the music to the minimum limit set by FIG rules. (women)
- ♦ Plan out a simple floor pattern that can be adapted for places where only a tumbling strip is being used.
- ♦ Nine different elements are required and they can be of any value, (A,B,C) or an element without an FIG value (recognizable skill).
- ♦ Five different required groups must be represented; a performed skill may only meet one requirement at a time. A deduction of .5 is taken for each missing requirement.

Women

- ♦ Acrobatic skill(s): rolls, handstands, cartwheels, round-off, walkovers, handsprings
- ♦ Dance skill(s): leaps, hops, jumps, turns, locomotives
- ♦ Balance(s)/Hold(s): v-sit, scale, arabesque, attitude
- ♦ Forward/Backward skill(s): may be dance or acrobatic showing movement forward and/or backward
- ♦ One 360 degree turn or spin

Men

- ♦ Flexibility, balance, strength
- ♦ Jump(s) and turn(s)
- ♦ Forward element(s)
- ♦ Backward element(s)
- ♦ Side element(s)
- ♦ Use locomotive skills to combine and connect passes; gallop, step hop, cat leap, cartwheel
- ♦ Try to combine acrobatic skills into a pass of three skills; handstand forward roll step out, cartwheel, back roll.
- ♦ Combine dance and acrobatic skills together; tuck jump, forward roll, straddle jump
- ♦ Vary arm positions and use them for rest periods during the routine; i.e. while kneeling sweep both arms to the right, overhead and down to the left to the count of four.
- ♦ Start with very basic movements and add more difficult ones as the gymnast progresses.
- ♦ You may use compulsory elements but performing any three consecutive elements from the compulsories will result in a 1.00 deduction from the start value.



Level IV Routines (Male and Female)

Men Level 4A



Men Level 4C



Men Level 4D



Women Level 4A



Women Level 4C



Women Level 4D





Pommel Horse skills (Men)

Setting the equipment for your body.



Grips and Support Positions (Front, Rear, Tuck)



Prerequisites

Be able to hold a push up position on the floor without arms collapsing.

Lead Up Drill(s)

Front Support



Grip Change Drill



Strength



Spotting

Stand behind gymnast, may support hips





Leg Swings

Prerequisites

- ♦ Upper body strength to support their weight
- ♦ Balance to shift their weight

Lead Up Drill(S)

- ♦ Support holds – weight shift right and left while lifting one hand
- ♦ Standing horizontal kicks with one leg.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ In support try to get some side to side motion.
- ♦ Then straddle legs slightly and try to get side to side motion.
- ♦ Next implement an upward kick at the end of the side motion.

Spotting

Stand behind the gymnast.

- ♦ You can help maintain a support by pushing on their upper back.
- ♦ Once they have the basic swing, you can help lift their legs to have them get the feeling of the height required.

Variations

- ♦ This may be done with the legs in front of the horse as well as in back, although this takes a lot of triceps
- ♦ Strength and is difficult to stretch open in the hips properly.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Falls backward often	Weight needs to shift forward more	"Lean over"
Arms collapse	Locking arms out	"Push your hair up to my hand"
Lack of height	Hold hands up to try and kick	Noodles or foam are best to kick upward to



Single Leg Stockli In

Prerequisites

Weight shift left and right, straddle swings, leg cuts

Lead Up Drill(s)

Jump Support. Floor Practice. On horse with no pommels. On horse with one pommel.

Teaching – Skill Steps

Gymnast should learn to turn shoulders 180 degrees and spin on one hand practicing on the floor or panel matt. Next they may jump off a panel matt and attempt the turn on one hand while on a horse with no pommels. Then add one pommel for the support with grip turned to start the turn. Lastly add the second pommel.

Spotting

Stand directly in front of the gymnast with the horse in between you and him. As he jumps and spins you can grab the shoulders to help balance shift from the end to the center of the horse.

Variations

This can be done from either end or from the middle to the end.

Skill Faults & Fixes Charts

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Falls Backwards Often	Weight needs to shift forward more	"Lean over"
Arms collapse	Locking arms out	"Lock your arm"
Gets stuck on turn	More aggressive turning of shoulders	"Turn hard"
Hurts Wrist	Flexibility, Stretching	





Leg Cuts Forwards and Backwards

Prerequisites

Support Swings

Lead Up Drill(s)

Support Holds, Weight shift right and Left and right. Straddle support swings.

Teaching – Skill Steps

First gymnast should lean over on one arm and place their opposite foot on the end of the horse to assist a forward cut. This will help them understand the reach behind their leg. Once they can do a cut with a slight push off of their foot to assist them they can attempt without.

Spotting

Standing behind the gymnast you can help maintain a support by pushing on their back to assist their balance forward and over on the support arm.

Variations

This can be attempted with no pommels to get the motion and not worry about hitting the pommels. Forward cuts are much easier than backwards. They should start doing cut forward, then other leg forward. Next Starting in front Cut backward and other leg backward. Finally trying cut forward and back on the same leg and then switching to the opposite leg.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Falls Backwards Often	Weight needs to shift forward more	"Lean over"
Arms collapse	Locking arms out	"Push your hair up to my hand"
Hits Leg on Pommel	Straight Legs	"Squeeze your knee"
Hits Leg on Pommel or Horse	Being more Aggressive	"Cut hard"





Flank Dismount

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Straddle Swings

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

- Lead-up to straddle swings – kicks to either side



Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Half Circle Mount

Prerequisites

- ♦ Front support
- ♦ Rear support
- ♦ Leg cut
- ♦ Circle on mushroom

Lead Up Drill(s)

Jump support, walk through on floor to or low horse

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ With the horse lowered and with no pommels, jump legs over to the front and try and stay up in rear support.
- ♦ Next add the one pommel that one support arm will be on.
- ♦ Then add both pommels.



Spotting

Stand directly in back of the gymnast with your hands on his hips. Assist his jump and circling motion as he attempts the half circle.

Variations

This can be done from either end of the horse to adjust to the gymnasts circling ability as long as the routine follows this direction throughout the routine.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Falls backward often	Straighten hips during circle	"Stretch"
Arms collapse	Locking arms out	"Lock your arm"
Comes down in front hard	Less height on jump	"Legs just over pommel"
Hits rear end on horse	Get hand down quicker to support	"Fast hands"



Single Leg Travel Uphill

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



False Scissors

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Keeping Moving on Pommel Horse

Conditioning for Pommel Horse

Optional Routines – The Next Step

Optional routines require the following:

- ♦ Single leg element(s)
- ♦ Double leg circles
- ♦ Face at least two directions
- ♦ Use all three parts of the horse
- ♦ Dismount

Check the rulebook and judging sheets for more information as well as FIG rules.

Please watch these video clips of routines of gymnasts on pommel horse from World Games – Athens, Greece.

Level 4A



Level 4B



Level 4C



Level 4D





Teaching Rings Skills (Men)

Grips

See General comments on grips





Tucked Chin Up

Prerequisites



Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Straight Arm Tuck Hang



Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Swings

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Inverted Tuck Hang

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting



Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Pike L Hang

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Pike L Hang Drill



L Drill Between Two Blocks



Pike L Hang Drill Using Parallel Bars



Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Pull Up Mount

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Inverted Straight Body Hang

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Inverted Hang Between Two Blocks



Inverted Hang to Inverted Pike



Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Swings to Back Tuck Flyaway

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps



Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Straight Body Support Hold

Inverted Straight Pike Hang – German Hang Pull Out

Inlocate

Optional Routines – The Next Step

The requirements for an optional ring routine are:

- ♦ Hold(s) 2 seconds
- ♦ Element(s) in support
- ♦ Strength
- ♦ Swing
- ♦ Dismount

Read the rules for optional routines and the judging sheets as well as FIG rules.

Watch the following videos of level IV routines done at World Games – Athens, Greece

Level 4A



Level 4B





Teaching Parallel Bars skills (Men)

Setting Bars



Grips – see general guides under grips



Hand Walks

Prerequisites

- ♦ Gymnast must be able to do a support hold.
- ♦ Gymnast should be able to hold a push up position and alternately lift hands from floor.



Lead Up Drill(s)

With block or stacked mats under bars (so gymnast can stand between bars), walk and move hands on rails.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Have instructor hold feet and legs and have gymnast walk hands.
- ♦ Gradually use less help.

Spotting

Hold legs, walk between bars.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Straddle Sit and Travels

Prerequisites

- ♦ support hold and swing above rails
- ♦ straddle position
- ♦ straddle sit position on bars

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Support walks
- ♦ Straddle stretch



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Sit and straddle with legs straight
- ♦ Put feet on bars and slide behind to support position

Spotting

- ♦ Hold arms, so gymnast does not fall through
- ♦ Facilitate legs going up (one leg at a time)

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Tuck Support Hold

Prerequisites

- ♦ Hold in support position
- ♦ Strong stomach muscles

Lead Up Drill(s)

From support position, lift knees up and down.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ From support position, ask gymnast to lift knees (hold object – i.e. noodle at height needed)
- ♦ Keep head up, arms straight.

Spotting

- ♦ Spot arms, so they do not fall.
- ♦ Help lift legs, if needed.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Knees do not lift high enough	Core body drills for abdominal and hip flexor strength	
Falls forward	Keep head up and arms straight	





Swings

Prerequisites

- ♦ Support hold
- ♦ Being able to walk in support

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Walk in support
- ♦ Support hold



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Hold a hollow position in support
- ♦ Hold legs up and start a swing

Spotting

Hold arms above the rails, so they don't bend.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Tuck Flank Dismount

Prerequisites

Swing above horizontal

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Swings above horizontal
- ♦ Swing to feet on one bar and pushaway.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Swing to crawl over
- ♦ Swing properly (extension in front and hollow)

Spotting

Spot upper arm to make sure they do not collapse.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Front Uprise Mount to Straddle Support

Prerequisites

- ♦ Underarm swings
- ♦ Front uprise
- ♦ Straddle
- ♦ Hold support

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Dips
- ♦ Straddles down bars
- ♦ Upper arm swings

Teaching – Skill Steps

Keep hips up on front uprise

Spotting

Spot on back as push up for front uprise



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



L Hold

Prerequisites

- ♦ Tuck hold
- ♦ Support hold

Lead Up Drill(s)

Core strength drills, ab work (V ups)

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Place object (i.e. mat) across the p bars – lift legs up and hold against object
- ♦ Keep legs straight

Spotting

Help hold legs up

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Legs do not stay high enough	Abdominal core drills	Prop – item over bars to touch
Legs lower too soon	Abdominal core drills	
Knees bent		Place cardboard milk box over each knee...



Reverse Scissors

Prerequisites

- ♦ Swing backward with feet resting on rails
- ♦ Half turn

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Swing above horizontal
- ♦ Swing quarter turn to butt (should be sitting on one rail)



Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

- ♦ Hold arms
- ♦ Facilitate twist
- ♦ Make sure they sit on bar

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Front Dismount

Front Dismount



Dismount Landing



Straight Leg Flank Dismount

Prerequisites

- ♦ Swing above horizontal
- ♦ Swing to feet on one bar and push away

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Swings above horizontal
- ♦ Swing to feet on one bar (push up position), then push away to land on ground outside bars.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Swing to crawl over
- ♦ Swing properly

Spotting

Spot arms – make sure they do not collapse

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Hits bar	Swing higher	Pad bar (i.e. noodle) so does not hurt self and not fearful

Flank Dismount





Kip from Upper Arms to Rear Straddle Support

Prerequisites

- ♦ Inverted pike on floor
- ♦ Upper arm swings
- ♦ Straddle sit
- ♦ Baby dips

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Upper arm swings
- ♦ Pike position
- ♦ Straddle position

Teaching – Skill Steps

See video footage

Spotting

Hand on back to push hips up (see video footage)

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Shoulder Stand Hold to Modified Back Uprise

Prerequisites

- ♦ Headstand
- ♦ Shoulder stand on parallel bars
- ♦ Swing through out of shoulder stand
- ♦ High swing from underarm

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Headstand on floor
- ♦ Spotted shoulder stand on parallel bars
- ♦ Shoulder stand fall to feet on bars so they don't full swing through (mats on bars)

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Same as lead up drills
- ♦ Make sure elbows always turned out and feet together
- ♦ Heel drive on modified back-uprise
- ♦ Chin in on roll

Spotting

- ♦ Spot elbows to make sure they are turned out
- ♦ Spot feet

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Stutz off Dismount

Prerequisites

- ♦ Flank off in front swing
- ♦ Half turn
- ♦ Swings above horizontal

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ High swings
- ♦ Build mats as high as p bars and do swing half turn to stomach
- ♦ Above but lower mats and do to feet.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Proper swings
- ♦ Half turns

Spotting

Hold arm opposite of the way they are turning while helping to facilitate the half-turn off.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Optional Routines – The Next Step

The requirements for optional Parallel Bar routines are:

- ♦ Hold(s) 2 seconds
- ♦ Swing element(s) in support above bar
- ♦ Swing element(s) below the bar
- ♦ Face each end of the bars
- ♦ Dismount

Check the rulebook and judging sheets for more information as well as FIG rules.

Observe the following routines as examples of optional routines done by men at the World Games in Athens.

Routine A



Level 4B



Level 4C



Level 4D





Teaching Horizontal Bar Skills (Men)

Long Hang and Swings in Hang

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Hand Hops in Swings

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Swings with Half Turn and Grip Change

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Turn Drill on Floor



Half Turn in Hang



Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props

Half Turn Swings





Release from Back Swing to Stand

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Pullover Mount

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Casts

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Cast Back Hip Circle

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props





Undershoot to Swings

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Baby Giant

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Undershoot

Prerequisites

Lead Up Drill(s)

Teaching – Skill Steps

Spotting

Variations

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props



Optional Routines – The Next Step

The requirements for an optional Horizontal Bar routine are:

- ♦ Release (regrasp of one or two hands)
- ♦ Turn(s)
- ♦ Long hang swing(s)
- ♦ Element(s) near the bar
- ♦ Dismount

Check the rulebook and judging sheets for more information as well as FIG rules.

Attached are three sample routines from SO World Games in Greece that demonstrate what could be put together for optional routines.

Level 4A



Level 4B



Level 4C





Teaching Vaulting skills (Men and Women)

Jumping – Straight (Stretched); Tuck; Straddle (Stretched Body and Piked Body)

Prerequisites

The difference between the body positions (see warm up drills) stretch, tuck, pike, straddle

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Perform jump series drills, to gain strength in ankles, knees and legs.
- ♦ Warm up drills with body shapes (stretch, tuck, pike, straddle)



- ♦ Landing drills – jump off slightly elevated surface. Land with a flexion of ankles and knees, dropping arms to straight front position, with head and chest up. Squeeze.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Assume a stretched standing position.
- ♦ Bend knees and hips, lowering arms to sides...
- ♦ Reach up in the air with arms as straighten knees and push off floor
 - ♦ Stretched jump – keep legs straight and together as lift in air
 - ♦ Tuck jump – raise legs up to tuck position as lift in air
 - ♦ Straddle/Star – separate legs into straddle as lift in air
 - ♦ Straddle/pike – separate legs and pike at hips as lift in air
- ♦ Keep/close legs together and reach toes toward ground as come down
- ♦ Bend knees and hips, dropping arms to straight front position, keeping head and chest up as land, squeeze gluts.
- ♦ Assume a stretched standing position.

Spotting

May stand to side of gymnast, spot front and back as land.

Variations

- ♦ Jumps may be done on floor, vault, balance beam...
- ♦ Jumps may be done in sequence or following another move (i.e. round off, jump)



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Alternate foot take off.	Jump from elevated surface to floor. (easier) Do multiple jumps	
Lack of height	Strengthen legs and ankles with jumping drills.	
Focus not up, chest dropped	Place picture or item on wall to focus on.	Picture or item to look at.
Leg position in air inaccurate	Practice leg positions while sitting on floor.	

Tuck Jump



Straddle Jump





The Run

Running is an important skill for vaulting. One must be able to run quickly, consistently (same speed and length of stride), and in a straight line. A powerful run will make the execution of a vault easier.

Prerequisites

Willingness to go fast.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Arms – practice standing, then walking, then running with arms bent 90 degrees, hands loosely clasped. Arms move in opposition of legs and swing forward and back. Practice moving arms as quickly as you can while standing.
- ♦ Stride – work on high knee lift, foreleg reach, and push off floor while doing conditioning runs. Practice running on a vaulting runway or down a line to keep the stride straight.
- ♦ Consistency – practice starting from a stride stand and running ___ steps (start with a small number, such as 5) see how often you land almost in the same place with the same foot.

Teaching – Skill Steps

Start walking – increase speed and length of stride.

Spotting

NA unless visually impaired – then use a guide rope stretched down runway (waist height) to hold onto

Variations

May start vaulting run from stride stand or straight stand. It will conclude in a hurdle. (add)

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Slow run	Play “cop & robber” – try to catch them.	
Run slows down before hurdle	Shorten the run, better shorter and faster than longer and slower at hurdle.	





Hurdle (also see Assemble)

Prerequisites

Know the difference between one (foot) and two (feet)

Lead Up Drill(s)

Use targets to visually demonstrate skill in slow motion:

- ♦ Stand in stride position with front foot on a rubber dot. Push off feet and land with both feet together in a hoop placed in front of body.
- ♦ Stand in stride position behind a line on the floor. On signal jump to both feet landing on the line. Then jump forward off the line.



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Take one step forward as lower arms down and backward together.
- ♦ Spring forward off front leg, swinging back leg forward to arrive in two foot landing with knees slightly bent. Arms begin to lift forward.

Spotting

NA

Variations

- ♦ **Hurdle, rebound, land on floor** – As land on both feet, immediately take off feet with arms moving up and jumping to another two foot landing with knees bent. Bend knees as land and stretch.
- ♦ **Hurdle onto board with rebound and landing on mat** – Perform as above, but step onto floor in front of board, land with two feet on board, jump up and land on mat in front of board. (jump on, jump off)

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Gymnast leaning forward on hurdle	Reach toes in front of gymnast to block forward momentum. Use arms to lift upper body.	Place object (rubber dot) in front of athlete to reach for.
Slow lift on hurdle	Work on bounding drills for ankle and foot strength.	



Landing (and Falling) Drills

Prerequisites

- ♦ Jump off elevated surface (few inches) to mat.
- ♦ Know the difference between bent knees and straight (locked) knees.

Lead Up Drill(s)

Practice landings by jumping onto landing mats from slightly elevated surfaces. Gradually increase height.

Teaching – Skill Steps

Land properly by absorbing shock on contact with:

- ♦ Balls of feet touching first (feet slightly apart)
- ♦ Flex ankles as heels land
- ♦ Bend at knees and hips slightly
- ♦ Lower arms if needed to maintain balance
- ♦ Straighten body, extend arms overhead, bring heels together and assume final “stretch” position.

Spotting

Stand to side of gymnast and slightly ahead of them. Place one hand in front of hips and one behind while they jump and land.



Variations

- ♦ **Practice safety rolls for landings** – if momentum is forward or diagonally forward, forward rolls/shoulder rolls after feet hit the floor. If momentum is backwards, let feet contact floor before seat, then back. Land in a rolling motion. Place chin toward chest during fall. Fingers should face forward keeping elbows bent as hips contact the floor.
- ♦ Practice landings on floor, vaulting, and on each piece of equipment.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Head down, leaning forward on landing	Keep focus up and elevated.	Have a focal point on wall to look at.





Squat on, Straight Jump off Vault

Prerequisites

- ♦ Run, hurdle and rebound to initiate skill are needed.
- ♦ Proper landings are needed for jump off

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Perform jump series up and down folded mats for leg strength, practicing good landing technique.
- ♦ Perform hand foot jumps – from tuck stand, reach forward to push up position, jump forward to tuck stand, etc.
- ♦ Practice hand foot hops onto elevated surfaces.
- ♦ Climb on table, practice jumps off to safe landings.



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand at attention a short distance down the runway.
- ♦ Run forward down runway
- ♦ Hurdle from runway to the board, landing with feet together and knees slightly bent
- ♦ Rebound off the board, reaching in the air with arms.
- ♦ Place hands on top of the vaulting table, tuck the body, and land in a squat position on the horse with feet between hands
- ♦ Jump off the horse, reaching arms in the air and extending body.
- ♦ Land on mat without taking steps by bending knees slightly
- ♦ Straighten the body and raise arms overhead.

Spotting

- ♦ Initially use 2 spotters, one in front of the table, one behind. Both are to the side of the gymnast.
- ♦ Front spotter lifts the hips and supports the upper arm of the gymnast moving to squat on the table
- ♦ Back spotter assists in the landing, spotting front and back as land.

Variations

Straight jump off can be varied in jumps – tuck, straddle, ½ turn, etc.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Knees crash into table.	Better block or run; elevate hips to leave room for feet to land on top. Board may be too close to the table.	





Squat on, Straddle Jump off

See above, but perform a straddle jump in place of a straight jump on dismount.



Squat Vault

Prerequisites

Gymnast needs to be able to do the squat on with clearance for her/his legs.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Stand on board, facing several folded mats placed lengthwise in front. Jump, placing hands on top of folded mats. Shoot legs through arms to pike sit on top of folded mats. Arms push off mats and raise overhead as land in pike sit.
- ♦ On floor, do above but move from stretched front support to pike sit on floor with arms up.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand at attention at end of runway.
- ♦ Run forward down the runway.
- ♦ Hurdle from the runway to the board, landing with feet together and knees slightly bent.
- ♦ Immediately rebound off the board, reaching in the air with the arms.
- ♦ Place hands on top of the table as body begins to tuck.
- ♦ Keeping the head and chest up, rebound off the hands as the knees pass over the table without touching it.
- ♦ Lift arms and stretch body in the offflight.
- ♦ Land on the mat without taking steps by bending the knees slightly.
- ♦ Straighten the body and raise the arms overhead.

Spotting

Initially, use 2 spotters, one to the front and side of table, one to the rear and side of table. Front spotter lifts hips and supports upper arm as gymnast reaches and clears the table. Rear spotter assists in off flight and landing by spotting the hips.

Variations

Move board farther from table. With speed and block, stretch body before tuck in preflight.



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Body touches table before feet on preflight	Improve speed of run and block off board to help elevate body.	Quick
Hands are on front of table.	Use chalk or other visual cue to encourage reaching farther in front.	"Reach" Chalk
Limited, small off flight	Emphasize repulsion from horse – practice hand hops in handstand. Rebound quickly and stretch body before landing.	Push and lift



Repulse through Handstand

Prerequisites

Gymnast should be able to do a handstand and hold a tight body in inversion.

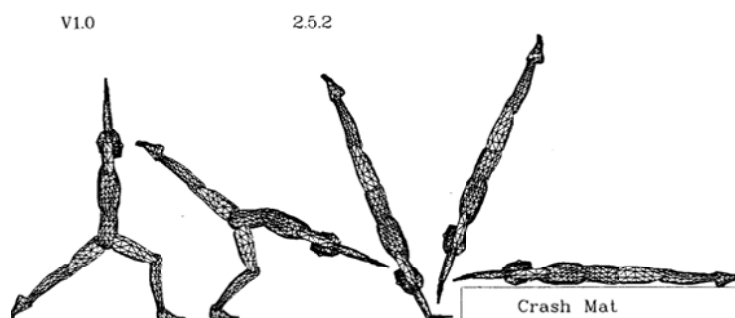
Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Handstand holds
- ♦ Tightness tests in handstand
- ♦ Maintain hollow body with head neutral when doing tightness tests
- ♦ Shoulder block, wrist snap drill (see videos)



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand in lunge facing vaulting board.
- ♦ Place hands on vaulting board, fingers forward as kick legs up to handstand
- ♦ Maintain tight body as fall to back on crash mat set on ground behind board. Keep arms straight, block off hands.
- ♦ Hold hollow tight body while lying on ground.
- ♦ Stand up



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Spotting

Stand to side of gymnast as kicks to handstand. Spot legs, if needed until fall.

Variations

As learn to block with distance, add ½ to full twist before falling.

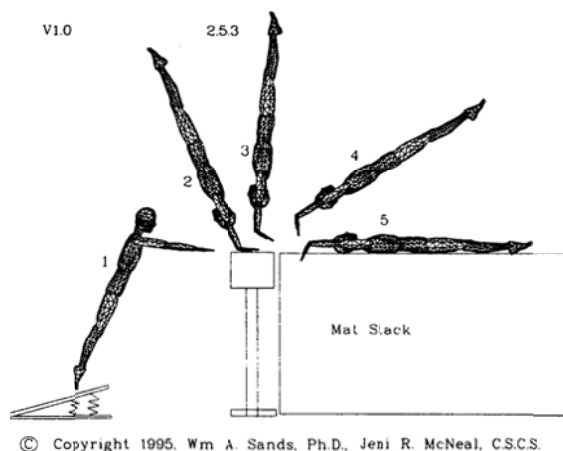


Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Does not land as one unit on mat	Body parts may be bending (arms, hips, etc.) Review tightness tests	Squeeze
Limited repulsion	Reach forward in lunge, keep shoulders stretched, immediate push from wrists.	
Legs come apart	Squeeze bean bag between legs	Bean bag, etc.



Other Handspring Vault Lead ups



**WATCH
VIDEO 1**

Optional vaults – the next step

Check the rulebook and judging sheets for more information as well as FIG rules.

See rulebook and judging sheets for guidelines. Also, view the following:

**WATCH
VIDEO 2**

**WATCH
VIDEO 3**

**WATCH
VIDEO 4**

**WATCH
VIDEO 5**

**WATCH
VIDEO 6**

**WATCH
VIDEO 7**



Teaching Uneven Bars Skills (Women)

Grips on Bars

- ♦ Overhand grip – both hands are on top of the bar with palms down and fingers forward. Thumbs are on top of the bar.
- ♦ Underhand grip – palms are up with fingers forward.
- ♦ Mixed grip – one hand is overhand and one hand is an underhand grip.

Strength in Uneven Bars

A certain amount of strength is needed to perform uneven bar routines. Attached is a good strength drill sequence that should be used to help build the prerequisite strength.





Straight Arm Front Support with Hand Shifts

Prerequisites

Gymnast must be able to hold a push up position on floor with arms straight.



Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Standing on block, jump to straight arm support position (short distance) on bar, hold momentarily and land back on block. Repeat, increasing time in hold.
- ♦ From push up position on floor, or with arms on an elevated surface (stack mat), alternate lifting one arm, then the other. Keep arms straight throughout.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stand facing low bar.
- ♦ Place hands on bar using overgrip.
- ♦ Jump up to straight arm support, with chest up, head up, and arms straight.
- ♦ Hips touch the bar.
- ♦ Shift weight to one arm, pushing down on bar, while quickly lifting other hand off bar, regasp.
- ♦ Repeat on other side.



Spotting

Stand behind gymnast, support at waist. Or stand to side of gymnast, support at hips and arm.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Body position in straight arm support is slumped.	Focus should be up. Practice hollow body position, with core tight. Push down on bar.	Head up Tight body Squeeze
Unable to lift hand momentarily from bar.	Increase strength in hands, arms, upper body with conditioning. Practice on floor or with elevated mat.	Push off bar with hand.



Casting in Straight Support

Prerequisites

Must be able to hold a straight arm support position on bars, without resting belly on bar.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Introduce “pike-extend” position on bar without attempting to lift hips off of bar.
- ♦ Use a foam pad over bar initially to prevent bruising or unwillingness to repeat skill.



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Assume a straight arm support position on bar with hands in overgrip.
- ♦ Bend arms slightly so bar reaches slightly above hips
- ♦ Flex hips to assume a momentary pike position (slight) legs remain straight
- ♦ Extend hips and thrust legs backward and upward to resume a straight body as hips leave bar (cast)
- ♦ Bring hips back to bar and return to a straight arm support position (hips will flex slightly)

Spotting

- ♦ Stand at side of gymnast behind the bar.
- ♦ Provide control at upper arm with forward hand and assist with pike-extend action with other hand.
- ♦ Prevent inadvertent forward rotation over bar.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
On pike action, chest falls forward.	Keep head and chest up.	Have something to focus on the wall in front of bar.
Limited lift off bar (cast)	Using noodle or other soft object behind them, have them “kick it” Cast off of bar, trying to land farther away.	





Forward Roll Over Bar

Prerequisites

Understand of and ability to do a forward roll on floor. Ability to hold a straight arm support position, with arms straight

Lead Up Drill(s)

From straight arm support, spotter (standing in front of bar and to the side) places forward hand on gymnast's forehead. Tell gymnast to keep her head on the hand, as hand lowers. Spotter also spots wrist, to prevent gymnast from letting go of bar. Once upside down, spotter switches forward hand to spotting the back.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Begin in a straight arm position with hips touching bar.
- ♦ Flex arms slightly and change focus to downward to initiate forward rotation.
- ♦ Flex hips and knees and roll forward slowly over bar.
- ♦ Rotate hands in overgrip forward over the bar as move.
- ♦ Bring feet down to mat slowly as complete roll.
- ♦ Release grip and stand.

Spotting

- ♦ Stand at side of gymnast and in front of the bar.
- ♦ Provide support and control at head and shoulder area as initiate roll, move to the back and finally the legs as they complete the roll. If gymnast tries to release hands early, spot the wrist with one hand.

Variations

May be done from low bar as a dismount to floor or from high bar to long hang.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Limited control	Slow it down, do not tuck body until a little later. Conditioning drills for stomach muscles.	
Stuck – cannot complete to landing	Initiate with a tight body. Do not flex arms so much that bar is above or stuck on stomach.	Keep focus up longer.
Legs apart, loose body	Tight body drills.	





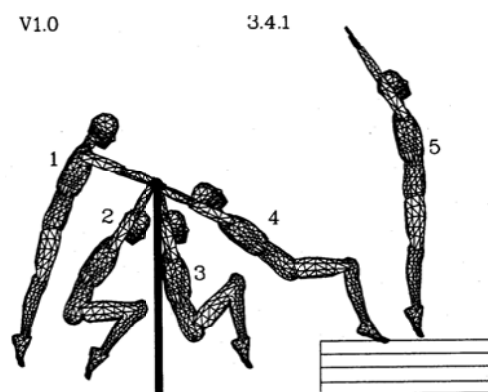
Swings in Long Hang (and with Hand Hops)

Prerequisites

- ♦ Knowledge of stretched body positions – straight, hollow and slight arch.
- ♦ Knowledge of and ability to do tight body drills.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Jumps to long hangs and release to mat or block.
- ♦ Practice on low bar with legs bent.



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Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ From block placed under high bar, jump to long hang with hands in overgrip and return to block. Coach should perform tightness test while in long hang.
- ♦ From block placed slightly behind high bar, jump to long hang with a swing and land back on block. Repeat.
- ♦ From block, jump to several long hang swings with grip change and land back on block.
- ♦ Grip change – practice standing on floor, near low bar. Place hands in overgrip on bar; walk toward bar, letting hands rotate slowly, walk back and at end of back walk quickly lift hands and replace in overgrip on bar. Repeat until understand motion.

Spotting

Stand between bars on side of gymnast. Support at waist.

Variations

- ♦ May be done before dismounting to stand and with ½ turn on dismount.
- ♦ May add ½ turn(s) to the swings.



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Loose body	Tightness drills on floor (conditioning) Place item between legs to insure they stay together.	Soft socks, bean bags, etc.
Poor body position	Back swing – slight hollow body, push down on bar...	





½ Turn in Long Hang Swings

Prerequisites

- ♦ Ability to do long hang swings with tight body and hand hops.
- ♦ Ability to do log rolls/pencil rolls with tight body on floor.

Lead Up Drill(s)

Raise floor or lower bar so that gymnast can walk and hold bar. Practice the turn with grip change as walk under bar. Repeat.

Teaching – Skill Steps

At completion of forward swing, gymnast turns ½ way over on their longitudinal axis, simultaneously turning their outside hand. Turn other hand as swing continues in other direction.

Spotting

- ♦ Stand on side of gymnast that they are turning away from.
- ♦ Assist in turning hips initially, as they turn.
- ♦ Remind them to do the grip change.

Variations

Both hands may be “hopped” changed simultaneous.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Entire body does not turn.	Tighten body, so it turns in one unit. Tight body drills in conditioning.	Squeeze
2 nd hand does not turn.	Practice without weightbearing	





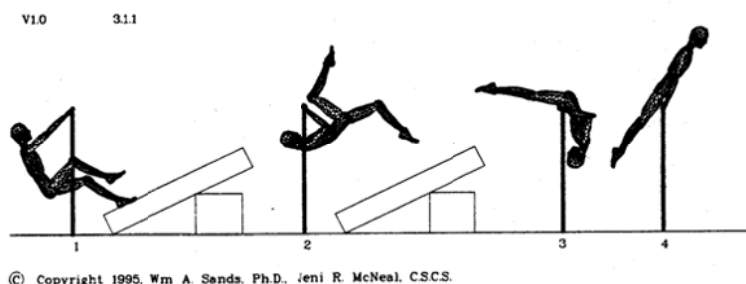
Pullover Mount

Prerequisites

- Core stomach strength to lift legs up and over.
- Willingness to go backwards

Lead Up Drill(s)

Stand holding low bar in overgrip. Run feet up an incline as simultaneously pull with your arms toward the bar. At top of hill, kick legs up and over bar, as head and shoulders rotate backwards. Lift upper body to straight arm support position. (see diagram)



Teaching – Skill Steps

- Stand facing bar, step into lunge position with hips directly under bar. Hands in overgrip position.
- Swing back leg upward and forward while pushing off the mat with front leg. Legs should come together as soon as both leave the mat.
- Flex arms and pull hips to bar while continuing to rotate upper body backwards around the bar.
- Complete backwards rotation around the bar and finish in a straight arm front support position.

Spotting

Stand at side of gymnast, in front of the bar. As gymnast kicks his legs upward, give assistance at the hips to provide both lift and rotation. The free hand may be used to grasp behind legs as gymnast rotates over bar to aid in completing the rotation.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Hips do not make it to bar.	Practice using block or hill to push off of. Work on core body strength.	Props – hill or block.
Does not finish to front support – laying over bar	Lift head and chest at conclusion of squeeze gluts.	Object to look up to in front of gymnast.





Back Hip Circle

Prerequisites

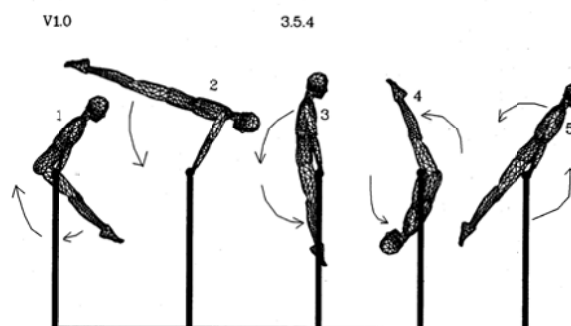
- ♦ Cast on low bar.
- ♦ Ability to keep body tight in hollow position.

Lead Up Drill(s)

Casts – as increase height of casts, body will want to rotate around bar as return to bar.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Start in straight arm front support with hands in overgrip.
- ♦ Flex arms slightly, pike at hips and cast off the bar.
- ♦ As the hips return to the bar, hollow slightly and perform a complete rotation backwards around bar.
- ♦ Finish in a straight arm front support position, with head neutral.



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Spotting

Stand to side of gymnast, behind bar. After cast, place one hand behind knees, the other on the back and assist on the rotation, if needed. Move hand to upper arm at conclusion, if needed.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Bouncing around bar	Review tight body drills in hollow position.	Use pad on bar to prevent bruising.
Does not finish in good straight arm support.	Arms bend too much on rotation, may lay stomach on bar...	Stay tight and hollow





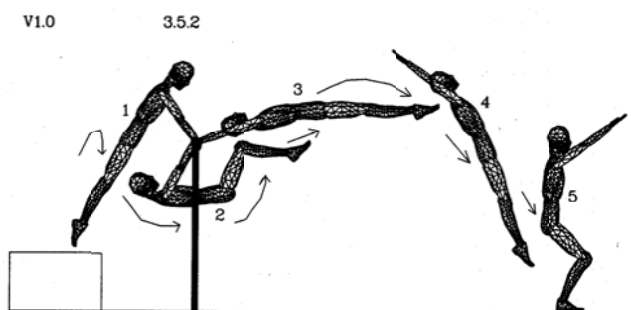
Underswing Dismount from Low Bar

Prerequisites

- ♦ Good cast on low bar.
- ♦ Ability to do a back hip circle would be helpful.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Cast to beginning of underswing, rotate under bar to land on soft mats on back placed in front of bar.
- ♦ From block, jump to underswing under bar and shoot to landing on feet. (see illustration)



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Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ From front support on low bar, perform a cast
- ♦ As return to bar, increase the backward rotation under the bar
- ♦ When legs reach about 45 degrees above horizontal, push bar back with hands as shoulder angle increases
- ♦ Feet should propel out and away from the bar.
- ♦ Release bar and land on the ground in stretch.

Spotting

Stand on side and in front of bar and support hips from side.

Variations

- ♦ May be done with ½ or full rotation before landing.
- ♦ May be done from high bar

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
"falls" off bar – limited distance	Rotate longer before release	Use carpet square or rubber base to aim for on ground.
Loose body	Tightness drills	





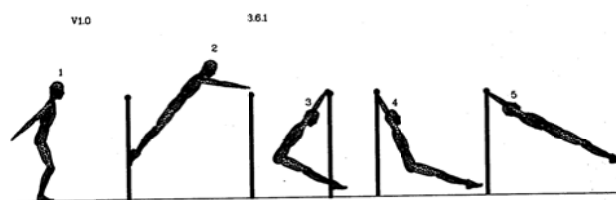
Glide Kip Lead ups

Prerequisites

- ♦ Glide kip drills
- ♦ Strong core and hip flexor muscles to prevent legs from dragging.
- ♦ Ability to pike body in long hang, with toes touching bar.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ From stand on ground, jump to grab low bar in overgrip. Pike body and allow legs to shoot under bar, ending in stretched body position. May glide back to stand, if able. Repeat.



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- ♦ From long hang on high bar, practice core strength drills by lifting legs to pike position; circling legs, zig zagging legs, etc.



- ♦ #3 – lying on ground on back, with short bar held between hands (overgrip) held over your head. Pike up lifting hands up toward ceiling and toes to the bar, pull bar down legs to stomach, as lift legs higher to shoulder stand, lie on back.





Optional routines – The Next Step

The optional routine requirements include:

- ♦ Bar change(s)*
- ♦ Cast(s)
- ♦ Kip(s)
- ♦ Forward and backward swings
- ♦ Dismount

Check the rulebook and judging sheets for more information as well as FIG rules.

*As the uneven parallel bars equipment has developed over the years, many Special Olympics athletes have a difficult time performing skills that they can safely do, using both bars. The distance between the bars has become insurmountable for some. Creative coaches have been able to work with the equipment and their athletes to create useable routines. Attached is an example from SOI World Games in Greece.





Teaching Balance Beam Skills (Women)

General Guidelines

- ♦ Teach, isolate, practice and reinforce all head, body, leg and arm positions on a mat and floor line.
- ♦ Expect and encourage the best posture and alignment at each practice.
- ♦ Take the time to teach all athletes how to perform Safe Landing Positions from platforms gradually increasing in height. This includes safety rolls forward, side and back. They must learn to jump away from the beam and land safely if their balance is lost and non-negotiable.
- ♦ Give your athletes some time to explore the balance beam; crawling, sitting, alternating weight from left to right foot and turning around like a ballerina music box.
- ♦ All skills need to be mastered on a floor line before performing them on a four inch wide balance beam.
- ♦ All skills need to be proficient on a low/floor beam before performing on a high beam.
- ♦ Try not to isolate skills but combine them into short patterns or combinations. Moving in and out of skills with changes in rhythm is what constitutes a great routine because it creates a flow of movement.
- ♦ Use a lot of visual cues, props, cue words, games and perhaps a point system or skill chart with stars.
- ♦ Bean bags, plastic 4' rods/noodles, sidewalk chalk, painters tape, small stuffed animals, plastic dots, scarves, soft ropes of yarn and anything that is basically safe are helpful to have around. They keep your athletes more productive and focused on the task at hand.
- ♦ Try doing your line/floor/beam drills to music. This helps create rhythm in their routines.
- ♦ Read the written text and watch the videos often to refresh and confirm proper execution of the routines.



Body Alignment and Posture

Prerequisites

- ♦ What do they need to know prior to attempting this skill?
- ♦ Isolation/contraction of specific muscle groups, general arm, feet/legs and head positions, focus
- ♦ Head must be positioned squarely on top of shoulders with hips and feet aligning directly underneath them

Lead Up Drill(s) Teach Isolate And Practice (Tip)

- ♦ Foot positioning (train position and staggered position), left and right, being sure that weight is equally distributed on both feet
- ♦ Arm positions; hands by sides, hands on hips, arms in side middle, stretched overhead, high and low oblique, curved in front middle, curved in fifth position overhead
- ♦ Head positions; neutral, flexion, extension, right and left, head must be in neutral for proper head alignment and focus
- ♦ Shoulder elevation and depression, shoulders need to be depressed for balance and shoulder alignment
- ♦ Rib cage and abdomen lifts and contractions, must be isolated to maintain alignment of the torso
- ♦ Hips need to be tucked under by rotating pelvis forward
- ♦ Muscles of the buttocks need to contract to maintain hip alignment
- ♦ Focusing on different objects for a specified amount of time



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Start on one body part at a time gradually adding other parts as a review and a connection
- ♦ Use the same words consistently to build memory of muscular and joint movements
- ♦ Review and remind athletes often what the key words are to developing good body posture and alignment
- ♦ Have them practice in front of mirrors and/or pair them off to correct each other's alignment
- ♦ Practice walking forward, back and side with only their legs in motion, add some shuffle turns (flat feet) on floor lines, climb up and down a few stairs
- ♦ Transfer to low balance beam when athlete is proficient

Spotting

N/A

Variations

Have athletes demonstrate good alignment in other positions; lying down – (supine and prone), in a squat, straddle or sitting position

Key Phrases

Stretch, squeeze, focus/head, shoulders down, belly button in, be a statue



Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Back arched, abdomen out	Have athlete practice lying on the mat and depressing a soft object into it like a foam ball	"Squash the tomato, push/press down"
Difficulty maintaining the neutral head position	Place a bean bag on top of athlete's head	"Steady, head freeze"
Lack of focus	Place object directly in line with their visual field for them to focus on	"Look, see, watch, smile for the camera"





Walks

Prerequisites

- ♦ Isolation/contraction of specific muscle groups, especially upper body, torso and arms.
- ♦ The athlete must be able to walk in a straight line with the head remaining in a neutral position.

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Begin all drills in train position, feet slightly turned out from the hips. Good alignment, head neutral.
- ♦ Line drills on a mat stepping forward right then left, extending foot and ankle prior to weight transfer.
- ♦ Line drills on a mat stepping sideward with the right foot and closing the left foot next to the right.
- ♦ Reverse to left side, stepping left then closing right foot next to left foot.
- ♦ Line drills on a mat stepping backward with the right foot then the left. Weight transfer is toe, ball, then to the heel.
- ♦ In a stretched stand on mat, isolate the free leg in different positions; *coupe, passé, arabesque, attitude, battement, dip, releve and waltz steps forward.
- ♦ Practice both right and left sides possibly with hand support on a wall/bar, then without support.
- ♦ Base leg should be straight and slightly turned-out away from the body.
- ♦ Weight transfers should be even and rhythmic. Use a clapping or drum beat rhythm, 1-2-3-4.

Coupe Walks

the extended foot of the free leg is pressed against the ankle of the base leg, knee is forward for beginners, but can also be to the side.

Passe – Walks

the extended foot of the free leg is pressed against the knee of the base leg, knee is forward for beginners, but can also be to the side.

Arabesque Walks

the free leg is extended either forward, side or back and upward about 45 degrees before the weight transfer occurs.

Attitude Walks

the free leg is lifted forward with a slight knee bend so that thigh of free leg is parallel to the mat/beam.

Battement Walks

the free leg is lifted forward to a horizontal position with hips turned out before weight transfer occurs.

Dip Walks

the base leg demi-plié's, (bends slightly) as free leg moves forward and downward along the side of the beam. Step forward into demi-plié, pull back leg forward and downward in a scooping action.



Releve Walks

forward, side and backward steps are executed on the balls of both feet, ankles extended, legs stretched and straight. The movement initiates from the hip while the heels remain high off of the beam.

Waltz Steps

the first step forward is a demi-plié step and the next two steps are in releve. Step right in demi-plié, step forward left in releve, step forward right in releve. Use terms like “Down-up-up” with a Waltz rhythm; “slow-quick-quick.”



Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Start with feet in train position with good alignment and posture, right foot in front of left, arms in side middle position, focus ahead. Weight should be evenly distributed on both feet.
- ♦ Transfer weight to right foot as left foot is placed in the *requested position while shoulders remain over hips and upper body, arms and torso do not change positions.
- ♦ Maintain this position momentarily by contracting leg and foot muscles.
- ♦ Transfer weight again this time to the right foot and repeat* requested position.
- ♦ Continue this process on a tape line until gymnast is meeting all of the expectations.
- ♦ Transfer to low balance beam when athlete is proficient and have them perform passes of the skill from end to end.
- ♦ Transfer to a higher beam when athlete is confident and proficient.

Spotting

- ♦ Avoid holding the gymnasts hand if / when spotting is necessary for the athletes’ safety. It is best to hold the athletes wrist or hips. Stand on same side of athlete as their dominant base leg and place hands on hips or grasp wrist and upper arm for support.
- ♦ Provide support so athlete has a chance to find their center of balance.
- ♦ Be prepared to grasp hips if athlete loses balance and help them to dismount the beam safely.

Variations

- ♦ Combine one to three different walks into a sequence on dominant and non-dominant sides.

Key Phrases

Focus/Look, Lift, Place, Press.



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Poor alignment of hips	Check base leg and foot they should be turned out not in Check free leg for being away from body's center	"Turn out, pull in, square, press" Use chalk to draw correct foot placement
Abdomen is not isolated and shoulders are elevated	Pull belly button (navel) up and in. Shoulders need to be depressed (down).	"Shoulders Square and Down, Belly in and up under ribcage."
Lack of focus	Place object directly in line with their visual field for them to focus on	"Look, see, watch, smile for the camera"

Side Walks



Backwards Walk





Shuffle and Chasse Forward, Side Chasse

Please see the dance section of this guide for how to perform these skills. They should be learned on floor first, then performed on beam.

Forward Chasse on Beam



Side Steps and Chasse



Straight Jumps / Straight Jump Dismount

Prerequisites

Standard Landing Positions, proper body alignment (posture), foot and arm positions, specific muscle group contractions, demi-plié (small bending of the knees for take-off and landing), arm swings/positions; forward, upward and down

Lead Up Drill(s) Teach Isolate and Practice (Tip)

- ♦ Foot positioning (train position and staggered position), left and right
- ♦ Straight arm swings forward, upward and lowering down to sides of body
- ♦ Stationary (with/without hand/arm support) demi-plié, releve, demi-plié
- ♦ Jumping actions with hand/arm support (use bar rails, beam, mats that are chest height of athlete)
- ♦ Straight jump on a floor line / Straight jump off platforms gradually increasing height to a balanced landing

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stretch body position with arms up, feet in staggered or train position
- ♦ Demi-plié while simultaneously lowering arms down to sides of body (keep shoulders aligned with hips)
- ♦ Swing both arms stretched, forward and upward while simultaneously pushing off both feet to completely extend legs and ankles lifting the body off of the beam completely
- ♦ As body descends and balls of feet contact beam, demi-plié to absorb landing while simultaneously lowering the arms to the sides of the body
- ♦ Body alignment should be maintained throughout jump. Head is in neutral position. Eyes can be focused on end of beam, dismount landing mat, or on horizon

Spotting

- ♦ Stand behind athlete and place hands on waist above hips. Avoid back swing of athlete's arms. Help lift and lower the athlete up off the beam and down to a safe landing position.
- ♦ Two spotters standing on either side of the athlete can hold their wrists (not hands) and upper arms to safely spot and encourage height of jump



Variations

- ♦ Straight jump with forward travel
- ♦ Changement (change foot positions in air to land with opposite foot forward)
- ♦ Tuck, straddle, split, wolf jump
- ♦ Stag jump (single and double)
- ♦ Jumps with $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $1\frac{1}{1}$, turns in air

Key Phrases

Stretch, bend, swing, jump, lift and reach

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Legs separate in air	Go back to isolation drills, check to make sure athlete can keep legs and feet together and has memorized the muscle contractions	"Squeeze" place a soft, small object between knees
Shoulders lean forward on take-off and on landing	Have athlete demonstrate muscle contractions in the upper and lower abdomen and buttocks	"Lift, squeeze, tighten" Place one hand on athlete's abdomen and one on the back to cue contractions

Stretch Jump on Beam



Dismounts





1 Point Balance

See the dance section of this guide for teaching the one point balance. Learn this skill on floor before attempting it on balance beam.



Releve Turns

Prerequisites

Proper body alignment (posture), correct foot, leg and arm positions, specific muscle group contractions, spotting the turn with the eyes, lunge position

Lead Up Drill(s) Teach, Isolate and Practice (Tip)

- ♦ Foot positioning (train and releve locked positions), left and right
- ♦ Balancing in locked releve position on floor line with/without support
- ♦ Releve walks on floor lines; forward, side and back with upper body isolated and legs straight
- ♦ Stationary (with/without hand/arm support), $\frac{1}{4}$ turns to the left and right on floor line
- ♦ Stationary (with/without hand/arm support, $\frac{1}{2}$ turns to the left and right on floor line
- ♦ Lunge position to a releve arabesque position right and left on floor lines
- ♦ Coupe position from the releve arabesque position right and left on floor lines
- ♦ Spotting the turn with the eyes for directional accuracy

Teaching – Skill Steps

Releve Turn $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$

- ♦ Stretched stand in train position, right foot in front of left foot, arms in side middle
- ♦ Simultaneously push up onto balls of feet with straight legs (releve), athlete can slide feet closer together to a locked position where heel of right foot is in contact with the front of the ankle of the left foot (high releve)
- ♦ Twist entire body to the left $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ while spotting the turn with the eyes
- ♦ Drop heels onto beam to stop turn, arm position is optional during the turn

*Reverse steps for right dominant athletes

Single-Leg Releve $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ Turn In Coupe

- ♦ Stretched stand in train position, right foot in front of left foot, arms in side middle
- ♦ Step forward about 16-18 inches with the left foot bending at the knee about 45 degrees, curve left arm forward
- ♦ Releve on left foot while simultaneously pulling right leg slightly out to side and then forward (coupe), to touch left ankle while remaining in full releve
- ♦ Body should start turning to the left as right foot is placed in coupe, right arm joins left arm in a curved front middle position
- ♦ Drop heel of left foot at desired degree of turn; $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$
- ♦ Body alignment should be maintained throughout the turn. Head is in neutral position. Eyes can be focused on end of beam or on horizon while spotting the turn

*Reverse steps for right dominant athletes



Spotting

- ♦ Stand behind athlete and place hands on waist above hips and gently assist by initiating the turn from the hips
- ♦ Two spotters standing on either side of the athlete can hold their wrists during start and finish of turn

Variations

Free leg position, degrees of turn, arm positions and base legs can vary in form; arabesque, passé, battement

Key Phrases

“Stretch, look, releve, high heels, snap, lift, drop”

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Feet twist off of beam because of failure to remain in full releve throughout the turn	Go back to isolation drills, check to make sure athlete has enough ankle strength and muscular endurance to hold releve position	“High Heels, belly button in, squeeze, shoulders down” Have athletes practice releve against a low beam or mat so heels can rest on a platform
Body segregates into segments during turn; shoulders turn then hips	Have athlete demonstrate muscle contractions in the upper and lower abdomen and buttocks	“Lift, squeeze, tighten” Place one hand on athlete’s abdomen and one on the back to cue contractions and initiate turns



Arabesque and Scale Balance

Prerequisites

- ♦ Isolation/contraction of specific muscle groups, general arm, feet/legs and head positions, focus
- ♦ Ability to balance on one foot
- ♦ Arabesque walks forward and back
- ♦ Sufficient back and leg flexibility

Lead Up Drill(s) – Teach Isolate and Practice (Tip)

- ♦ Arabesque position holds on mat in prone position; vary arms from overhead to side middle without compromising leg position
- ♦ Scale position holds on mat in side lying position, right and left
- ♦ Stationary drills using mats or low platforms, place the top of the foot (arabesque leg) behind and on top of platform. Line drills stepping forward right then left into a 30-45 degree arabesque and holding for two counts on each leg
- ♦ T-body positions using support of beam, bar or mat at hip level of athlete, down into and back up (teeter totter)
- ♦ Arabesque into T-position using support and changing legs every 5 counts

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Start with feet in train position with good alignment and posture, right foot in front of left, arms in side middle position, focus ahead
- ♦ Lift left leg up to an arabesque position 30-45 degrees, shoulders remain over hip
- ♦ Maintain this position momentarily by contracting muscles in the buttocks
- ♦ Lift left leg up while simultaneously lowering the chest to form a T-position
- ♦ Hold this position for two counts
- ♦ Return to arabesque then to train stand
- ♦ Transfer to low balance beam when athlete is proficient



Spotting

- ♦ Stand on same side of athlete as their dominant base leg and place one hand on the athlete's shoulder and the other about mid thigh on the lifting leg
- ♦ Provide support while athlete finds center of balance
- ♦ Be prepared to grasp hips if athlete loses balance

Variations

Bend base and/or free leg, side scale, varied arm positions

Key Phrases

Focus/look, lift, hold, lean, 'T', knee lock, square



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Poor alignment of hips	Check base leg and foot they should be turned out not in Check free leg for being away from body's center	"Turn out, pull in, square, press" Use chalk to draw correct foot placement
Chest drops below horizontal, body pikes at hips	Buttocks has lost contraction, return to arabesque position	"Crunch, 'T', scoop" Use spotters in groups of 3, one in front, one in back, one in action
Lack of focus	Place object directly in line with their visual field for them to focus on	"Look, see, watch, smile for the camera"



Teeter-Totter

Prerequisites

- ♦ Isolation/contraction of specific muscle groups of the upper body/torso, arms and legs
- ♦ The ability to hold their own weight on their hands and arms
- ♦ The ability to transfer weight from feet to hands, with hands flat and wrists touching each other
- ♦ The body positions; lunge, arabesque, lever

Lead Up Drill(s)

- ♦ Begin all drills in the lunge position with feet slightly turned out from the hips, arms stretched overhead, good alignment of shoulders and hips, head neutral.
- ♦ On a mat have students do one leg hops from foot to hands across mat transferring weight from foot to hands and back to foot while moving forward. Single leg bunny hops. Repeat on opposite side.
- ♦ Use a folded/stacked panel mat(s) and have athlete assume a push-up position with feet on top of mat. Have athlete walk on hands around mat maintaining a hollow body position.
- ♦ Walk up a matted wall with feet to a semi-inverted position. Walk hands in towards wall. Remove one foot away from wall, replace and move opposite foot away from wall. USE A SPOTTER!
- ♦ Line drills on a mat; stretch, lunge, arabesque, lever, transfer weight to hands, return to lunge.
- ♦ Line drills on a mat with a tape or chalk line. Reverse to opposite side.
- ♦ Use folded/stacked panel mats which are wider and tape a line on them. Practice steps for teeter-totter, raising the height of the mats when appropriate.
- ♦ Practice on end of a floor/low beam so that feet can land in lunge on mat surface, not beam. USE A SPOTTER!
- ♦ Transfer onto a wide, low beam until athlete is proficient. USE A SPOTTER!
- ♦ Transfer to a 4 inch wide, low beam when athlete is confident and proficient. USE A SPOTTER!

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Stretch straight arms overhead keeping them close to the ears. Shoulders elevated and ready to block off of beam
- ♦ Step forward with right foot into a lunge position with weight equally distributed on both legs.
- ♦ Arabesque left leg by lifting leg and contracting buttock muscles to hold leg in position.
- ♦ Lever through a ("T" position), while pulling the wrists together so they are touching.
- ♦ Place hands in line with right foot, hands flat, the fingers spread and facing sideward.
- ♦ Transfer weight onto hands maintaining legs in a split position until left leg is vertical and weight is completely off of the right foot.
- ♦ While blocking through shoulders lift chest and arms upward as the weight is transferred back to the right foot, through the lever position, back through arabesque and then finish in a right lunge position.
- ♦ Head should remain neutral, do not extend neck back or forward. Arms should never leave the ears throughout the skill.





Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Spotting

Stand to the right side of the gymnast and place left hand on right hip before gymnast transfers weight. Place right hand on left hip as gymnast transfers weight. Pull up on gymnast's hips to reinforce stretch to vertical.

Variations

Perform a $\frac{3}{4}$ teeter-totter, and bring legs together momentarily, then immediately split legs to return to lunge position. "Kiss Up Teeter-Totter"

Key Phrases

Stretch, Lunge, Arabesque, Lever, Block, Chest Up, Lunge, Cover Ears, Look/Follow Your Feet.

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
Leg does not reach vertical because hips are in a pike position and not in line with shoulders. Shoulder angle has changed and arms are no longer by ears. Neck extends causing head to go back.	Hands are being placed too close to foot on transfer. Mark a line for gymnast to reach for with tape or chalk so that hips do not pike / bend. Check that arabesque and lever positions are being maintained throughout weight transfer. Shoulder angle needs to remain open throughout skill with arms by ears.	Reach, Stretch, Square Hips, Block, Push Floor Away, Head/Neck Straight
Gymnast has difficulty getting up out of teeter-totter. Legs fall down without control, bending at the hips and hands are remaining on mat.	Gymnast needs to defy gravity by pushing floor away and stretching second leg upward and back. Check to be sure gymnast is passing through lever and arabesque positions with arms by ears.	Stretch, Push, Lift, Arms By Ears, Reach With Leg, Foot, Toes
Wrists come apart before weight transfer. Incorrect hand positions.	Check for lack of flexibility in wrists and shoulders. Some gymnasts are unable to perform this hand position due to structural differences. Place an "X" on mat with tape / chalk for a visual clue. Draw or tape a box for hands to be inside of.	Sticky Wrists, Butterfly Hands



Round off Dismount

Prerequisites

Isolated body positions: (hollow, pike and stretch), handstand, cartwheel, hurdle step, and round off on the floor.

Lead Up Drill(s) – Teach Isolate and Practice (Tip)

- ♦ Start on mat that is marked with tape or chalk for the correct placement of feet and hands to insure correct alignment.
- ♦ Use two folded panel mats end to end with tape or chalk marks for hands and feet alignment. Perform round-off dismount off of end of panel mats.
- ♦ Use four folded panel mats, two stacks of two, end to end for more height and perform round-off dismount off of end of panel mats.
- ♦ Practice on a low or wide floor beam before attempting on higher beam. Mark beams with chalk or tape for proper alignment of hands and feet.

Teaching – Skill Steps

- ♦ Starting in a right lunge position, right leg bent, left leg stretched behind, arms up overhead and close to ears.
- ♦ Arabesque into a lever position and transfer weight onto right hand approximately 16" from end of beam followed by left hand at very end of beam, left leg kicks upward towards vertical while right leg follows to close to left leg by vertical. Pass through vertical as shoulders block legs join together to repulse body off of beam. Square hips and shoulders as chest lifts up and land on both feet in demi-plié facing the end of the beam.

Spotting

Stand to right side of gymnast and place left hand on their right hip as they enter the weight transfer from feet to hands. Place right hand on their left hip and follow through until landing is stable. Reverse for left-side dominate gymnasts.

Variations

A half turn before landing can be performed if gymnast has enough block to create the height necessary to successfully complete the half turn to end facing away from the end of the beam.

Key Phrases

Stretch, arabesque, kick, block, bend



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Teaching Gymnastics Skills

Skill Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Key Phrases/Props
gymnast does not pass through vertical, legs go to the side	Hands may be too close to front foot which causes body to pike	Use tape or chalk to mark where feet and hands need to be placed
	insufficient kick of (left) leg and push off of (right) foot	Practice kicking cartwheels/handstands up onto a folded panel mats
	arabesque and lever not shown	practice teeter totters showing lever position, arms close to ears
	shoulder angle is closing and head is not in neutral causing misalignment	





Optional Routines – The Next Step

- ♦ Once a gymnast can complete level III skills and enjoy making up her own routine, the coach and athlete may make up a level IV, optional routine. See FIG rule book for specifics needed in these routines.
- ♦ 9 different elements are required and they can be of any value, (A,B,C) or an element without an FIG value.
- ♦ Five different required groups must be represented; a performed skill may only meet one requirement at a time. A deduction of .5 is taken for each missing requirement.
 - ♦ Turn(s)
 - ♦ Leap(s)
 - ♦ Low/high beam element
 - ♦ Balance hold(s)
 - ♦ Dismount
- ♦ Use locomotive skills to combine and connect passes; gallop, step hop, cat leap, etc. Use the entire beam.
- ♦ Combine dance and acrobatic skills together; tuck jump, forward roll, straddle jump
- ♦ Vary arm positions and use them for rest periods during the routine; i.e. while kneeling sweep both arms to the right, overhead and down to the left to the count of four.
- ♦ Start with very basic movements and add more difficult ones as the gymnast progresses.
- ♦ You may use compulsory elements but performing any three consecutive elements from the compulsories will result in a 1.00 deduction from the start value.
- ♦ Vary rhythm and tempo (use music in practice to assist with developing rhythm)
- ♦ Check the rulebook and judging sheets for more information as well as FIG rules.





FIG (Federation Internationale de Gymnastics)

The governing body for Gymnastics. Their Code of Points for Men and Women set the standard for all optional competitions around the world. Anything not covered in our rules are deferred to their rules.

Modifications and Adaptations

In competition, it is important that the rules not be changed to suit gymnasts' special needs. Judges should judge what they see. There are however, approved aids that do accommodate some gymnast's special needs and are permitted in the rules. In practice, coaches can modify the training exercises, their communication and equipment (i.e. raising the floor, height of beam, etc.) to assist gymnasts in achieving success. Example – gymnast who is bothered by extraneous noise should wear noise cancellation headsets. The coach may have to use sign language or other hand signals. See below for more ideas.

Modifying Exercises

Modify the drills involved in acquiring a skill so that all gymnasts can participate. For example, if a gymnast is afraid to do a forward roll, have them do back rocks to standing (ending of a roll) and lean over barrels to touch the floor as the beginning of a roll. Once they are comfortable with both, combine them.

Accommodating a Gymnast's Special Needs

See the rulebook – Examples: a rope along the runway for visually impaired gymnasts to hold onto for vaulting, a hand signal for floor exercise to start for auditory impaired, and most of the level A accommodations allow gymnasts of all abilities to participate.

Modifying Your Communication Method

Different gymnasts require different communications systems. For example, some gymnasts learn and respond better to demonstrated skills, others need to feel how it feels (be spotted through it), whereas others require greater verbal communication. Some gymnasts may need a combination – to see, hear, feel and even read a description of the skill.

Modifying Equipment

Successful participation for some gymnasts requires equipment modifications to suit their particular need. The floor might need to be raised if the bars/rings cannot be lowered sufficiently. Raise the floor with mats or spotting blocks.

Adaptations

More specific adaptations for Gymnastics are listed below.

Orthopedic Impairments*

1. In level A, a coach may remove wheelchair or walker and assist gymnast to starting position without penalty
2. Spotting is acceptable to assist gymnast. (the score will be lowered for this, however)

Auditory Impairments*

Use hand signal for start with music.



Visual Impairments*

1. Use a shorter approach or start with a stand on the board for vaulting. Using a rope down the runway is also acceptable.
2. Allowing the gymnast to touch the equipment before starting is acceptable.

* Please tell the meet referee prior to competition of any accommodations that are being used and why, so they can tell all of the judges.

Mental Preparation and Training

Mental training is important for the gymnast, whether striving to do his or her personal best or competing against others. Mental imagery, what Bruce D. Hale of Penn State calls “No Sweat Practice,” is very effective. The mind cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined. Practice is practice, regardless of whether it is mental or physical.

Ask the gymnast to sit in a relaxed position, in a quiet place with few distractions. Tell the gymnast to close their eyes and picture performing a particular skill correctly. Each is seeing them self on a large movie screen on a beam, pommel horse, etc. Walk them through the skill step by step. Use as much detail as possible, using words to elicit all the senses – sight, hearing, touch, and smell. Ask the gymnast to repeat the image, picture rehearsing the skill successfully – even to the point of seeing the entire routine completed and saluting the judge.

For Example, gymnast A had difficulty staying on the beam. She fell off repeatedly while walking forward to the middle of the beam. She learned to visualize herself walking upright, without wobbles to the middle of the beam.

Some gymnasts need help to start the process. Others will learn to practice this way on their own. The link between performing the skills in the mind and performing the skills in the gym may be hard to explain. However, the gymnast who repeatedly imagines them self correctly completing a skill and believing it to be true is more likely to make it happen. Whatever goes into one’s mind and one’s heart comes out in their actions.

Cross Training in Gymnastics

Cross training is a modern day term which refers to the substitution of skills other than the skills directly involved in the performance of an event. Cross training came about as a result of injury rehabilitation and is now also used in injury prevention. When gymnasts sustain injuries in the legs or feet that keeps them from running, other activities can be substituted (i.e. swimming) so that the gymnast can keep up his/her aerobic and muscular strength.

There is a limited value and cross over to the specific exercise. A reason to “cross train” is to avoid injury and maintain muscular balance during a period of intense sport specific training. One of the keys to success in sport is staying healthy and training over the long haul. Cross training allows gymnasts to do event-specific training workouts with greater enthusiasm and intensity, or less risk of injury.

Gymnastics is inherently a sport that uses cross training within itself, due to the different events. Vaulting and tumbling use quick high intensity lower body strength and movements, while balance beam uses slower, deliberate movements and pommel horse, rings, and bars use upper body strength.



Home Training Program

1. If gymnasts only train once a week with their coaches and do no training on their own, progress will be very limited. General fitness, strength and core training as well as balance practice can only enhance what is done in the gym. Female gymnasts would benefit from dance classes, as well.
2. A Gymnast Handbook/Home Training Guide can be downloaded from the Special Olympics website to assist coaches in integrating Home Training into their season, as well as helping gymnasts and families with ideas on how to practice between practices!
3. Nothing improves the gymnast's sport ability like a challenge! Parents/Guardians can challenge the gymnast to unified competitions with family members for additional practice. (balance beam – line on floor (chalk?), playground bars for single bar, etc.)
4. To be effective, coaches should run a home training orientation for family members and/or training partners. This should be an active session where partners get hands-on experience with the different activities. (Conditioning, practice with floor routine (without tumbling), or balance beam, etc.)
5. As a motivational tool, a coach may want to award a certificate of Achievement to gymnasts and training partners who complete a set number of home training sessions during the season.



***Special
Olympics***

ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS COACHING GUIDE

Gymnastics Rules, Protocol & Etiquette



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Teaching Gymnastics Rules

The best time to teach the rules of Gymnastics is during practice. For example, place a stuffed animal near the equipment with the label "JUDGE" on it. Have the gymnast practice saluting the judge before and after each routine. Please refer to Official Special Olympics Sports Rules Book for the complete listing of Gymnastics rules.

Gymnastic Levels in Competition

See the Artistic Gymnastic Rules on the SOI website for the official rules. This is just a quick overview. Gymnasts may be specialists (do one or more of the events) or All Around gymnasts, where they do all of the events at that level.

Levels A and B

Very short, simple routines in 4 events. Both sexes do the same routines, but are in different divisions during competition.

- ♦ Level A: Is written for gymnasts who have additional physical issues that would impede their ability to do a higher level.
- ♦ Level B: Is written for individuals who are unable to remember or unable to participate in Level I. Women may add music to their floor routine.



Level A gymnast on Wide Beam.

Level I

Women do the 4 events (vaulting, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise) in short compulsory routines. (See rulebook) Men do the 6 Olympic events (floor exercise, pommel horse, high bar, parallel bars, rings, and vaulting) in short compulsory routines. (Compulsory routines are written specifically so that everyone does the exact same skills in the same order.)

Level II

Men & Women do the same events, as in level I, but the compulsory routines at this level are slightly longer and a little harder.

Level III

Men & Women do the same events, as in levels I & II, but are given a list of skills to be put in their own routine. Women may choose their own floor music.



Level IV

OPTIONALS (see glossary) the mainstream artistic codes (FIG and national respective NGB's) are such that they are a very good basis on which to form the rules for people with disabilities. It is therefore essential that coaches and judges should be familiar with their respective mainstream Men's or Women's artistic rules. Special Olympic accommodations are in the rulebook. Many gymnasts may not receive full difficulty, but will still be very competitive in Special Olympic meets.

Level IV Gymnast Vaulting



This level allows a coach to formulate a routine using the strengths and weaknesses of the individual gymnasts to their best advantage.

Judging Artistic Gymnastics

Throughout practice, once gymnasts know how to do their skills, a coach could explain the execution and amplitude deductions to his/her gymnasts. Showing how legs apart, flexed ankles legs, and other such form breaks can lower their score. Then practice executing all skills with good form. Before the first competition, explain the judging (see judging sheets at the SOI website) to the parents and athletes.

Unified Sports® Rules

At present, Unified Gymnastics is not in the rule book. Some gyms, clubs, and programs are adding it to their programs on a field test basis. Unified Gymnastics is competition and practice in pairs. Two gymnasts – one a Special Olympics athlete, the other a Unified Partner – practice and learn the routines together. They then compete and their scores are added together for the “team” score. It has occurred more than once where the judge had no idea which person was the Special Olympics athlete!

1. A roster consists of a proportionate number of partners. Partners should be in the same age group.
2. Partners compete at the same level in all events. If there are enough judges and equipment, partners could compete simultaneously.
3. Divisioning is based on their level of competition (levels A, B, I, II, III, or IV).
4. Player-coaches are not allowed, but after the Unified season, a partner may be “hooked” and become an assistant coach.



Where do Unified Partners come from? A variety of places are potential sites to get partners of similar age:

- ♦ If the Special Olympics athlete is taking a recreational gymnastic class, any classmate could be a partner and come to the unified practices.
- ♦ Family members that are similar ages and same sex – cousins, brothers, sisters, and even a parent of an adult gymnast.
- ♦ Girl Scouts or Boy scouts.
- ♦ Classmates of students that are in inclusion classes...
- ♦ High School students that need volunteer time for graduation, etc.

More information about Unified Gymnastics is in the Planning section of this guide.



Unified Partners in a Rhythmic Gymnastics Competition.

Protest Procedures and Coaches' Expectations

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition. The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As coach, your duty to your gymnasts and team is to protest any action or events while your gymnast is competing that you think violated the Official Gymnastics Rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your gymnast did not get your desired outcome of an event. A protest is a serious matter that impacts a competition's schedule. Check with the competition team prior to competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.

Judging decisions cannot be protested. An inquiry could be submitted if there was an issue with any equipment, music, or divisioning using the Special Olympics guidelines. Coaches need to do this in a timely manner. (Check coaches manual at competition)



The Coach is additionally obligated during meets to

- ♦ Obtain a Special Olympics certification in gymnastics (before your first practice).
- ♦ Show professional behavior (see sportsmanship).
- ♦ Always be aware of safety before during and after (awards) meets.
- ♦ Present himself/herself at the meet dressed appropriately.
- ♦ Be present no later than 1 hour prior to official opening time of the meet. Know meeting places, starting times, and rotations of athletes.
- ♦ Attend coaches meetings. Notify the meet director of any scratches or errors in level prior to the meet.
- ♦ Supervise his/her team during the competition and warm ups. Get bar setting, spot gymnasts in warm ups and during competition.
- ♦ Be available to march in with his/her team for introduction and opening ceremonies.
- ♦ Accept the score shown without verbal criticism or comment. Write immediate and courteous inquiries, if needed. (see above)
- ♦ Have music ready to play and presented to music manager prior to competition.
- ♦ Have equipment set, mat and boards in place prior to the gymnast's competition. (Quickly)
- ♦ Move board immediately after mounting and Spot gymnast throughout their routine (see rulebook)





Gymnastics Protocol & Etiquette

During Practice

- ♦ Gymnasts should be present and ready to participate at the start of each practice.
- ♦ Gymnasts should be dressed in appropriate and safe attire for every practice (see planning section)
- ♦ Gymnasts should follow the safety rules set by his/her coaches. (see planning section)

At Competition – the gymnast is obligated to:

- ♦ Be present at the meet prior to the start of warm ups.
- ♦ Be dressed in team uniform and have all extra equipment (shoes, grips, etc.) in a gym bag.
- ♦ Be well groomed in appearance – clean attire, hair secured, no jewelry or gum, etc.
- ♦ Obey warm up regulations and rotations.
- ♦ Stay in designated areas.
- ♦ March in with your team and participate in any pre event ceremony.
- ♦ Present to judges as rotate to each event.
- ♦ Be prepared to compete at each event, when it is your turn.
- ♦ Give name/number to judge before competing and wait for the judge's signal prior to competing.
- ♦ Perform to the best of his/her ability in each routine and at the conclusion – present to the head judge.
- ♦ Be courteous, respectful, and polite to all meet officials, coaches, hosts, hostesses, and competitors.
- ♦ Eat or drink in designated areas only.
- ♦ Be dressed appropriately and be ready to go up on the awards stand at the conclusion of the meet.



Presenting as a group at start of rotation to the judges



Waiting for the judges signal



The judge will signal the gymnast. The gymnast then signals back.



Always be ready for any pre meet ceremonies and parade.



Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship is both the coach and gymnasts commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your gymnasts. Lead by example.

Competitive Effort

- ♦ Put forth maximum effort during each event.
- ♦ Practice the skills with the same intensity, as you would perform them in competition.
- ♦ Always finish a routine – Never quit. (unless injured, then stay down)

Fair Play at All Times

- ♦ Always comply with the rules.
- ♦ Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- ♦ Respect the decision of the officials at all times.

Expectations of Coaches

1. Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow.
2. Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship and ethics the top priorities.
3. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the event and display no behavior that could incite fans.
4. Treat opposing coaches, directors, participants and fans with respect.
5. Shake hands with officials and the opposing coach in public.
6. Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

Expectations of Athletes and Partners in Unified Sports®

1. Treat teammates with respect.
2. Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
3. Treat opponents with respect: shake hands prior to and after contests.
4. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the contest and display no behavior that could incite fans.
5. Cooperate with officials, coaches or directors and fellow participants to conduct a fair contest.
6. Do not retaliate (verbally or physically) if the other team demonstrates poor behavior.
7. Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing Special Olympics.
8. Define winning as doing your personal best.
9. Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coach.
10. "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."



Coaching Tips

- ☐ Discuss gymnastics etiquette, such as congratulating opponents after all events, win or lose; controlling temper and behavior at all times
- ☐ Teach waiting for one's turn
- ☐ Teach saluting judges.
- ☐ Give sportsmanship awards or recognition after each meet or practice.
- ☐ Always commend the gymnasts when they demonstrate sportsmanship.

Remember

- ♦ Sportsmanship is an attitude that is shown is how you and your gymnasts act in and out of the gym.
- ♦ Be positive about competing
- ♦ Respect your opponents and yourself
- ♦ Always stay under control even if you are feeling mad or angry
- ♦ Be proud of all of your awards, regardless





Gymnastics Glossary

Term	Definition
Aerial	A skill performed without hands (e.g. a cartwheel done without hands is a side aerial)
Agility	The ability to quickly change direction or body position and regain control and balance.
All Around	Competing in all of the events in a level. (women – 4 events, men – 6 events)
Amplitude	Extension and stretch of the body; height achieved.
Artistic Gymnastics	Sport of gymnastics for men (floor exercise, pommel horse, rings, vault, parallel bars, horizontal bar) and women (Vault, uneven bars, balance beam, floor exercise)
Balance Beam	A piece of equipment for women. 4" wide, 16'long and depending on level, the height can vary. FIG sets the standard for the high height. Routines on the beam should move continuously and with good rhythm.
Blocking	Transferring momentum (usually from horizontal to vertical) by placing feet or hands on the ground or on object in front of the body.
Cardiovascular	Pertaining to the function of and blood flow through the heart and the blood vessels.
Compulsory routine	A specific routine for an event that can be found in the rulebook and is the same for everyone.
Dismount	Last move in a routine; skill used to get off the equipment or last tumbling pass in a floor exercise routine.
Execution	How the skill is performed.
Flasher	A person who shows the score on large numbers or "flashes" after each routine is judged.
Flexibility	The range of motion in the various joints of the body: e.g., shoulder, elbow, hip, back.
Floor pattern	The design of straight lines or curved ones that a gymnast makes on the floor exercise during their routine.
Horizontal Bar (High bar)	A piece of equipment consisting of one high bar– see FIG for specs. Male gymnasts move over and under and around the bar, switching directions while continuously moving.
Inverted	Head down, legs extended upward (e.g. handstand)
Judge	Person or persons that evaluate routines for competition. Their score could range between 0 and 20.
Mount	Skill used to get on the equipment or start a routine.
Optional Routine	An individual routine done on any event that is made up specifically for a particular gymnast. Guidelines must be followed, but routines are created to highlight the gymnast's abilities.



Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Coaching Guide

Gymnastics Rules, Protocol & Etiquette

Term	Definition
Parallel Bars	A piece of equipment for men's competition that has 2 parallel bars. (See FIG for specs). Swings and other movements move over and under the bars.
Pommel Horse	A piece of equipment used in Men's Gymnastics. (see FIG for specs) Men need a great deal of upper body strength, since only their hands should be on the horse, with placement quick and moving around the horse, while the legs circle and swing.
Pose	Position held for 2 seconds.
Prone	Lying face down
Rhythmic Gymnastics	Sport of gymnastics for women which incorporates dance with the use of small apparatus (Hoop, ball, ribbon, and rope)
Rings	A piece of equipment used in Men's gymnastics. (See FIG for specs) 2 rings are suspended above the ground. In routines, the rings shouldn't wobble or swing, the body shouldn't sag or twist and the arms shouldn't waver or shake.
Runner	A person who takes the written score from the judge and brings it to the scoretable in a competition.
Salto	Somersault; aerial skill with a 360 degree rotation around the horizontal axis.
Scorer	A person who records scores on the scoresheets at competitions. Scorers also add up compulsory and optional scores as well as all around scores, where needed (GMS computer program will do this for you, as well as divisioning).
Specialist	A gymnast that competes in one or more events but not all of the events offered.
Spotter	Trained coach who assists the gymnast through a new skill and insures a safe landing.
Supine	Lying face up
Timer	A person who, using a stopwatch, times either falls on an event or the entire length of the routine. Compulsory routines are not timed in Special Olympics.
Uneven Parallel Bars	A piece of equipment used in women's gymnastics. (see FIG for specs) Women should move over, under and around the bars and change directions while swinging.
Vaulting Table	A piece of equipment used in men's and women's gymnastics (see FIG for specs) In Special Olympics, the table is not used in levels A,B, or I. In level II, gymnasts stop on the table then jump off. In levels III and IV, gymnasts merely touch the table while using power and speed to go over the table and land without stepping.
Vaulting Board	A piece of equipment used to mount equipment. (see FIG for specs) Men and women use it to add to their block, gaining height and potential rotation.