

Equipment for inclusive gymnastics sessions: What have clubs found useful?

You don't need any specialist equipment to coach disabled participants. We've know of clubs running in small non-dedicated facilities with very limited equipment who run fantastic Disability Gymnastics sessions by being innovative and adapting activities to the needs of their gymnasts.

However, we know that some clubs are interested in purchasing some new equipment to specifically make disability gymnastics sessions more engaging and to encourage more disabled people to take part. To help to give you ideas on the types of equipment that might benefit your disabled members, we asked clubs that have received funding for Disability Gymnastics Equipment what they bought and how it has helped them. You may find it helpful to read some of the ideas they shared...

We bought.... Large Gymnastics Equipment

<i>What sort of thing?</i>	<i>What did it cost?</i>	<i>How did it help us?</i>
A trampoline	£4,000	We haven't owned a trampoline before so have been able to introduce a new experience to our inclusive classes, giving our gymnasts the opportunity to enter disability trampolining competitions and most of all being fun! We've used the trampoline on a one-to-one basis with children in our classes with more profound learning or physical needs, helping them with coordination, rebound and confidence.
Roll up floor mats	£6,000	As a trampoline club, we wanted to create a large floor soft floor area which was safe for disabled participants. We found that the floor gave us the opportunity to introduce a new Freestyle Gymnastics activity which has been very popular with disabled members, and also allows us to set floor activities to keep gymnast's attention in between turns on the trampoline.
Vaulting table	£1,500	We bought a table vault to replace our box top so that disabled members could develop skills, be familiar with equipment when competing elsewhere and relate to the equipment they see on TV. With improved equipment, we've been able to host high quality disability gymnastics competitions, creating more opportunities for disabled people.
A-bars	£3,000	We have a lot of disabled adults visiting our club but found that our mini-bars were not strong enough for them to use safely. Within our disability gymnastics sessions the bars have been very popular (second only to our trampolines!). In particular, individuals with limited lower body mobility or those using wheelchairs have been able to develop upper arm strength and experience swinging and movement.



We bought.... Foundation Gymnastics Equipment

<i>What sort of thing?</i>	<i>What did it cost us?</i>	<i>How did it help us?</i>
Wooden floor bars	£79	We are a trampoline club that was previously unable to offer any floor gymnastics activities. We set the new equipment up in a circuit on a matted area at the front of the hall to enable participants to explore and experience balancing, climbing and jumping gymnastics activities as well as trampolining. This allowed us to offer even more in our Disability Trampolining sessions and taster sessions, and encourage more disabled people to continue within our club.
Foam steps	Total £2,300	
Foam wedges		
Foam beam		
Foam dome/ mushroom		



We bought.... Small Hand Equipment

<i>What sort of thing?</i>	<i>What did it cost us?</i>	<i>How did it help us?</i>
Soft balls	£18	Foam balls were fun and added colour to our sessions as well as allowing us to play games. Gymnasts of all ages love this equipment.
Gymnastics ribbons	£40	We've used these within our disability gymnastics taster sessions where everyone wants to plan and experiment with hand apparatus. They have been great as sensory tools and are a fun introduction to gymnastics for disabled people who might think they aren't physically able to take part.
Parachute	£40	As a club with limited large equipment, we are always looking for small pieces we can use to make our disability gymnastics sessions fun. Our coaches have used the parachute to encourage disabled gymnasts to get to know each other, play games, improve listening skills and introduce warm up activities. The parachute has encouraged teamwork within our club, and given disabled gymnasts the experience of a 'festival' when visiting our club.
Chiffon scarves	£30	We used this equipment to provide additional activities for gymnasts in sessions and allow them to explore different types of movement. The scarves and hoops make great side stations, warm up activities or something we can all do together. With more activities on offer, we've expanded our session capacity and our number of disabled members continues to grow.
Rhythmic hoops	£12 each	

Looking for recreational gymnastics equipment or hand apparatus? [Visit British Gymnastics' Shop.](#)



We bought.... Sensory Equipment

<i>What sort of thing?</i>	<i>What did it cost us?</i>	<i>How did it help us?</i>
Rope lights	£135	Lights around the gym allowed us to offer a fantastic music and light themed festival for disabled people to come and try gymnastics and trampolining. The gym looked fantastic and really engaging for individuals with sensory needs, with a particularly spectacular effect when the main lights were dimmed.
Large inflatable balls	£45	These created a great deal of fun on the trampolines and also helped the coaches to encourage some gymnasts who lacked confidence to participate.
Giant balloons	£22	
Sensory tent	Anything from £100	We're hoping to buy a sensory tent that will help to add an additional element to our gymnastics sessions, for those with sensory impairments or who may need some quiet time away from the busy gym.

We bought.... Technical Equipment

<i>What sort of thing?</i>	<i>What did it cost us?</i>	<i>How did it help us?</i>
iPod	£199	We've used the iPod to play music in the background during our Disability Gymnastics sessions and taster days, to add to the sensory experience and create a relaxed environment.
2 x iPads with 'unbreakable' cases	£300 each	Our iPads have been great to help distract and calm those with more challenging behaviour, keeping them focused safely and independently while waiting for their turn. This enables our coaches to devote more of their time to coaching.
Widgit – Communication in Print	£150	We use this communication tool to print signage and club documents in symbols for our Disability Gymnastics sessions and events. Many of our disabled members now feel more involved in our classes as we can provide information to them in a way that they understand.



'Using new equipment within our regular disability sessions has improved our members' experience of trampolining and encouraged them to stay within the sport/club for longer.'

'We've been able to offer high quality Disability Gymnastics with the new equipment, and as a result have increased the number of disability sessions we run and disabled members we have.'