

Gym shapes

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

1

Objective

Identify, explore, create and perform various gymnastics actions showing five key shapes of straight, star, tuck, pike and straddle.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

- Print copies of gym shapes puzzle (Resource 1).
- List the gym shapes on the left side of a whiteboard i.e. straight, star, tuck, pike and straddle.
- List types of movement' on the right side of the whiteboard e.g. action spring, slide, rotate, turn, balance.

Equipment:

- Gym shape puzzles (Resource 1)
- Pencils and board pens
- Whiteboard or similar
- Floor mats

Delivery

Introduction

- Session starter – gymnasts select and complete a gym shapes puzzle individually or in pairs. (1)
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Share answers to the puzzle to identify the gym shapes as straight, star, tuck, pike straddle. (2)

Warm up 1

- Teach gymnasts the five gym shapes: (1)
 - Standing straight shape
 - Standing star shape
 - Sitting tuck shape
 - Sitting pike shape
 - Sitting straddle shape
- Lead gymnasts to come up with alternative basic ways of holding each of the gym shapes. (2)
- Explain that positions of balance are just one type of gymnastics action through which the gym shapes can be shown.
- Using the whiteboard lists, draw a line between a gym shape and a type of movement e.g. straight and action. Gymnasts respond with a movement that shows that shape and action e.g. walk on tiptoes. (3)
- Continue to draw lines between shapes and types of action to inspire further gymnast responses.

Warm up 2

- Lead participants to come up with and perform stretches and mobilisations showing the gym shapes e.g. upper body twists in standing star shape or side bends in sitting straddle shape

Teaching & safety points

- (1) There are two difficulties available.
- (2) These shapes are important to learn early as they form the basis for many gymnastics' actions.

- (1) Straight: Reach up tall with a straight back and arms above the head.
Star: Legs, arms and back straight with knees and feet pointing to the side.
Tuck: Round the back. Keep knees together and tight to the chest.
Pike: Keep back straight at 90° to straight legs. Stretch arms up.
Straddle: Keep back straight at 90° to wide straight legs. Stretch arms out.
- (2) For example, a tuck shape could be shown in crouch, kneeling down or whilst lying on your side or back.
- (3) Continue to only show basic actions.

- Give teaching points applicable to each stretch and mobilisation activity with a focus on showing clarity in the gym shapes.

Gym shapes

Main activity:

- Gymnasts work in small groups on floor area to come up with further individual actions showing the straight shape. Can each group identify/perform/create a straight shape action for each type of gymnastics movement?
- Repeat the above task for the star, tuck, pike and then straddle shape.

As a group, collaborate to identify a range of actions showing the straight shape with each gymnast practically exploring ideas appropriate to their own ability level e.g. more experienced gymnasts may want to explore inverted straight shape actions. If space is limited, ask gymnasts to practice shapes whilst others perform movement.

Development:

- Challenge each group to come up with their own gym shape to add to the list. Can they come up with examples of different types of gymnastics movements that show this shape?

As a group, first explore different ideas for a new gym shape, then select an idea that all group members can show through the performance of at least one type of action each.

Cool down:

- Each group designs and performs a gym shape balance. For example, the first group member might perform a sitting pike shape then the next group member might join on by sitting back to back with them in sitting straddle shape before the third gymnast sits opposite them in sitting tuck shape, joining by putting their hands palm to palm with the gymnast in straddle etc. until all group members have joined on to form a complete balance of different gym shapes.
- Final reflection on the gym shapes. Highlight the variety of different gymnastics actions for which the gym shapes can form a basis whilst also praising for identifying/creating further ideas for shapes that can be shown in or inspire new gymnastics actions.

The shapes you select to make up the balance must be basic i.e. comfortable and safe to hold.

Join on to the balance in a way that involves basic contact i.e. rest on or against> No gymnasts should be expected to take any weight.

Once all group members are in position, hold the final balance for a further 3 seconds.

Objective

Develop the ability to show consistent safe landing positions when performing a variety of increasingly complex two feet to two feet jump and landing based activities.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Plan a layout for the main activity stations. Include hoops placed on the floor, individual floor mats and a variety of different height platforms with sufficiently matted landing areas.

Create a visual display of the main activity jump and land progressions.

Find clips/montages of gymnasts performing skills from various disciplines with “stuck” landings.

Equipment:

- Clips of gymnasts performing “stuck” landing positions
- A visual display of the main activity jump and land progressions
- A whiteboard titled “The Safe Landing Position”
- Whiteboard pens
- Hoops
- Low to high platforms
- Floor mats and safety landing mats if required

Delivery

Introduction

- Set out the main activity equipment layout. (1)
- Show the clips of gymnasts performing skills with “stuck” landings.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Altogether reflect on the session starter clips to identify teaching points for the safe landing position and note responses on the whiteboard. (2)

Warm up 1

- Gymnasts select a basic whole-body pulse raising action to do on the spot e.g. march. (1)
- Gradually add in “stick”, “star” and “tuck” commands upon which gymnasts pause to adopt a safe landing position, a standing star or sitting tuck shape for 3 seconds. (2)

Warm up 2

- Teach the following warm up sequence:
- Front lying straight shape
- Push up to front support
- Lift bottom into down dog & walk through feet
- Return to front support
- Jump or walk feet into crouching tuck shape
- Uncurl to stand
- Stretch jump to safe landing position finish
- Repeat the sequence with a focus on taking participants through take off technique before the stretch jump. (1)

Teaching & safety points

- (1) Ensure all the platforms are stable on the floor.
- (2) A “stuck” safe landing position will be held for 3 seconds, show slightly apart parallel feet, bent knees, a straight back, head up and arms forwards horizontal to the floor.

- (1) Work in a safe space away from the equipment.
- (2) Stick - teaching points noted on the whiteboard.
Star – straight back, wide straight arms and legs with knees/feet pointing to the side.
Tuck – rounded back and knees together tight to chest.

Create the longest body length possible during the stretches.
Maintain a straight bodyline throughout.

Place head between arms and push heels into the floor.
Lift the head last!

Call out “stick” during landing as a reminder.

- (1) Swing arms down and back as legs bend then swing arms up as legs straighten into take off. Keep arms in a fixed position if the swing causes stability issues.

Main activity

- Organise participants into ability pairings sitting where they can see all equipment.
- Display/demonstrate jump and land progressions:

- 1) Jump into and out of a hoop
- 2) Vary the direction of jumps into and out of a hoop
- 3) Stretch jump to safe landing on a floor mat
- 4) Star jump to safe landing on a floor mat
- 5) Stretch jump from low platform to land on mat
- 6) Star jump from low platform to land on mat
- 7) Tuck jump to safe landing on a floor mat
- 8) Tuck jump from low platform to land on mat
- 9) Stretch jump from high platform to land on mat
- 10) Star jump from high platform to land on mat
- 11) Tuck jump from high platform to land on mat
- 12) Jump half turn on floor
- 13) Jump full turn on floor
- 14) Jump half turn from low platform to land on mat
- 15) Jump full turn from low platform to land on mat

Highlight:

- Pairs will move around the layout in free flow.
- Take it in turns in a pair to perform a jump.
- Start on a jump and land activity that's comfortable for their ability then move through the progressions as each task is accomplished.
- Pairs work through the jump and land progressions.

Remember safe landing position teaching points from the whiteboard.

In addition:

Show wide arms and legs in flight.

Aim to travel upwards and forwards when jumping from any of the platforms.

Quickly bring knees to your chest at the top of the tuck jump.

Keep straight in the air as you turn the shoulders and feet in the twisting direction. Arms should be stretched up during the turn. Use a visual cue to spot the landing.

For extra challenge, progressions 12 – 15 can be repeated turning the other way!

Be responsible for keeping yourselves safely spaced.

When observing, call “stick” for your partner and use the teaching points on the whiteboard to help them improve the consistency of their safe landing position.

Development

- Pairs reflect on their consistency to “stick” landings leading gymnasts to set their partner a safe landing position improvement target to focus on as they then continue working through the progressions.

Using the points on the whiteboard as a checklist, which elements of “stick” is your partner showing every time they land and which are they not showing regularly? What is the main teaching point they need to focus on next during the practical exploration?

Cool down

- Walk around in pairs taking it in turns to tell their partner at which activity they saw them perform the best “stick” and what made it so good.
- Lead whole body stretches focusing on legs and ankles e.g. repeat down dog and walk through the ankles
- Lead participants to pack away the equipment safely.

Keep heads up whilst walking, negotiate other pairs and equipment safely.

Work in a safe space away from the equipment.

Objective

Explore, create, develop and sequence a variety of static and moving wide shaped gymnastics actions.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Find a piece of music suitable for an aerobic warm up activity.

Equipment:

Warm up music and player
Floor mats

Delivery

Introduction

- Session starter – gymnasts mentally recall the five gym shapes.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Reflect on the session starter to identify which of the five gym shapes are wide shape actions i.e. star and straddle shape. (1)

(1) Make participants aware of the positioning of those either side to maintain safe spacing during performance of the wide shape aerobics actions.

Warm up 1

- Lead an aerobic warm up to music using the star shape as a basis for the actions e.g. step the right foot out into star shape then step it back in before repeating to the left, jumping jacks etc.

Make participants aware of the positioning of those either side to maintain safe spacing during performance of the wide shape aerobics actions.

Warm up 2

- Lead whole body stretches that are performed from or in the star and straddle shape. For example:
 - Small arm circles whilst standing in star shape
 - From standing star shape, fold the upper body into standing straddle shape (1)
 - Side lunges from star shape
 - Side bends in sitting straddle shape (2)
- Challenge participants to come up with further ideas for stretches that are performed from or in the star and straddle shape. Select a range of ideas suitable for all gymnasts to try.

(1) Fold from the hips to keep the back straight.

(2) Bend one leg until the knee is in line with your foot.

Teaching & safety points

Main activity

- Lead participants to safely set up the floor mats so they can each work at an individual mat (or one mat between two as necessary).
- Altogether identify and explore static wide shape actions accessible for all gymnasts to try such as:
 - T balance (1)
 - Side splits (2)
 - Straddled half lever progressions: (3)
 - in sitting straddle shape, lift hips off the floor
 - in sitting straddle shape, raise one leg at a time
 - straddled half lever
- Gymnasts individually explore ideas for static wide shape actions relevant to their own ability level, working in turn where a mat is being shared.
- Midway through the activity, encourage gymnasts to explore creating original static wide shape actions.
- Altogether identify and explore moving wide shape actions accessible for all to try such as:
- Rock backwards and forwards in straddle
- Star jump
- Individually explore ideas for moving wide shape actions, creating original ideas by adapting non-wide shape moving actions to show wide shapes and/or by inventing their own new wide shape moving actions.

Wide shape actions will cover most of the surface area on/above your mat.

- (1) Lift the leg one way and lower the upper body the other way to make a horizontal line.
- (2) Go as low down/wide as is comfortable for you to hold.
- (3) Try suitable progressions based on ability level. In each progression, push down on flat hands between the legs.

Use the star/straddle shape as a basis for exploration but remember that other wide shapes can be made.

Can you turn non-wide static actions into wide shape actions e.g. show an arch with wide arms and legs or can you invent your own completely new wide shape actions?

The moving actions we explore must show wide shapes e.g. whilst a forward roll would cover the length of a mat, if you paused mid roll, the shape shown would actually be small and tucked whereas, if you paused a rock backwards and forwards in straddle, the shape would cover most of the surface area on/above your mat.

Continue to work at your own ability level.

Development

- Gymnasts individually link their best/favourite wide shape actions into a sequence of 2 - 4 actions including at least one balance and one spring or rotation action.
- Lead gymnasts to perform their sequences half at a time with audience members observing and sharing feedback on the wide shape actions they see.

Make sure all the wide shape actions selected to include in the sequence cover a large surface area on or above the mat.

What was the most original wide shape action?

Which of the actions observed covered the largest surface area on or above the performer's mat?

Cool down

- Reinforce the concept that wide shape actions will cover a large surface area by challenging gymnasts to find basic balances that have a point of contact near at least three corners of the mat e.g. a wide front support shape with hands and feet each making contact on the mat near a different corner.
- Lead gymnasts to pack away the mats.

Think Twister...

Can you find an idea in which different body parts make contact with the mat near three or all four corners at the same time e.g. lie on your back with a shoulder near one corner, a hand stretched to another, a knee bent towards another and a foot reached to the other?

Objective

Copy, explore and create gymnastics actions on the floor and apparatus to represent hour and minute hand positions for various times on an analogue clock.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Produce a worksheet showing a blank analogue clock face.
Plan a layout of equipment for the development section.

Equipment:

An analogue clock
School tablets (if available)
Pencils

Blank clock face worksheets
A hoop per pair
Floor mats
Various apparatus e.g. boxes, benches, agility tables etc.

Delivery

Introduction

- Check that all the equipment due to be used in the development section is easily accessible.
- Turn the hands of a clock to various times. Ask gymnasts what body shapes they see in the shapes made by the paused hands. (1)
- Introduce session theme and objective.

Warm up 1

- Organise participants into pairs. Each pair collects a hoop and places it on the floor.
- Pairs move around the outside of their hoop in response to “clockwise” and “anticlockwise” direction commands.
- Pause the activity for pairs to imagine their hoop as a clock face and together work out where around the clock the numbers 1 - 12 would be.
- Repeat the activity also introducing time commands upon which the gymnasts in each pair freeze around their hoop at the imaginary numbers to which the hour and minute hands would point.

Warm up 2

- Collect in all the hoops.
- Teach the following warm up sequence:
 - Sitting tuck shape
 - Piked V-sit with hand support
 - Sitting pike shape
 - Turn over to front support
 - Down dog
 - Lower knees and lift chest to finish kneeling up.
- Altogether identify the times of the warm up sequence. (1)

Teaching & safety points

(1) For example, the shape made by the hour and minute hands at 6 o'clock could be reflected in a gymnast performing a standing straight shape.

Place hoops in a floor space with ample room to move all around it.

Use a basic movement action on feet to circle the hoop. Eg, jogging, skipping or chasse.

Match the pace with a partner to stay evenly spaced when moving around the hoop.

Work together so one freezes in the position of the imaginary number to which the hour hand would point and the other where the minute hand would point. Focus on responding accurately rather than quickly!

Focus on keeping your back and legs straight in the v-sit, sitting pike shape, front support and down dog.

(1) For example, a precisely performed v-sit reflects the shape of the hour and minute hands at five past eleven.

Main activity

- Lead the set up of a floor mat per pair in a space then distribute a blank clock face worksheet and pencil to each pair.
- Work with partners to explore and create individual body shapes to reflect the hour and minute hand positions for different times on a clock, plotting successful ideas onto their blank clock face. Use tablets to take photographs of ideas so that gymnasts can evaluate and improve the precision of the body shapes they create in relation to the 'time' they were aiming to represent.
- Midway through the activity, reflect on the range of ideas they've plotted so far. Ask pairs to identify if they have visited every number on the clock at least once.
- Pairs continue their exploration with a focus on finding body shapes that allow them to reach the numbers not yet accounted for on their clock face.

Use a different pattern to plot the hand positions for each successful idea so you can clearly see each separate idea represented on your clock.

Safety points:

- 1) take it in turns to work practically on the mat.
- 2) explore ideas using actions relevant to your ability.
- 3) keep sheets and pencils well away from working area.

Explore ideas in which the body shapes created show the position of the second hand as well as the hour and minute hands to help you visit more numbers on the clock e.g. in performing splits, you could visit the three, nine and twelve in one go thus reflecting fifteen seconds until quarter past twelve.

Development

- Lead the set up the equipment layout as planned.
- Explain that the equipment is out to further inspire possible ways to visit every number on the clock. Give an example such as an inverted pike shape with hands on the floor and feet on a high table or box to reflect quarter to or quarter past six (depending from which side you look at it).
- Pairs explore new body shapes as inspired by the equipment to represent different times on the clock. Highlight/share particularly creative/original ideas.

Re-arrange the spacing of the floor mats as necessary.

Move freely around the equipment layout in pairs. It is important to be considerate of spacing and where other pairs are working. Keep worksheets and pencils to the side of the hall and go to them to plot any new ideas so there are no objects or sheets lying around on the floor.

Cool down

- Pairs move mats away from the equipment so they can work in a safe space.
- Members of each pair take it in turns to give their partner a time to reflect using a basic action appropriate for the cool down. (1)
- Whole group reflection to verbally share a selection of the gymnasts' favourite ways of representing different times with their body concluding that they're unlikely to ever look at an analogue clock in the same way again!
- Lead group to pack away the equipment safely.

- (1) Most times can be represented by lying on your side and folding at the hips to reach the precise angle of the hour and minute hand positions you're aiming to reflect.

Make a shape

British
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Objective

Explore, practice and refine various ways of making circles in gymnastics.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Identify circular gymnastics actions for participants to progress during this session e.g. forward roll, backward roll, cartwheel etc.

Plan a layout for the main activity that incorporates the floor mat in addition to any equipment stations that support the teaching of circular gymnastics actions.

Equipment:

- Floor mats
- Small apparatus items e.g. skipping ropes, hula hoops and juggling scarves/ribbons
- Any apparatus that will support the progressive teaching of circular gymnastics actions e.g. an incline, springboard etc.

Delivery

Introduction

- Set out the equipment required.
- Introduce session theme and objective
- In small groups, gymnasts explore how they can use their bodies to make shapes such as 'make a circle'
- Gymnastics actions such as forward roll or cartwheel. For example, participants can make circular body shapes alone and with others, they can work in circular formations, travel in circular floor patterns and/or make circles with small apparatus.

Warm up 1

- In their groups whilst travelling in a small circle, gymnasts play 'follow my leader' with the leader taking responsibility for selecting movements such as jog, march, bounce or hop. (1)
- Ensure all gymnasts have a turn in being the leader. (2)

Warm up 2

- Lead stretch activities that involve making circles with the whole body and individual body parts e.g.
 - arm circles
 - ankle rotations
 - standing star shape, side bend to one side,
 - move through forward fold towards the floor then come back up
 - In straddle sit side bend on the other side etc.
- Challenge gymnasts to suggest further ideas for circular stretch activities.

Teaching & safety points

Ensure there is enough space for the group to move around the outside the floor area without coming close to other groups or the edge of the space.

- (1) Leaders need to set a steady and appropriate pace for their chosen travel action so all their group members can remain safely spaced out whilst moving around the circle.
- (2) To ensure the changeovers are smooth, make sure you know what your chosen travel action is going to be before it is your turn to take over as the leader.

Focus on completing each circle fully.

Make a shape

Main activity

- Create a circuit set up for gymnasts to move around the different stations where they explore ways to create a circle with their body. (1)
 - An incline station for forward and backward roll progressions
 - Front support – back support – front support
 - Spin on one foot
 - Full turn jump
 - Cartwheels
 - Log rolls
- Share particularly original ideas during the exploration to inspire further creativity around the “Make a circle” theme. (2)



- (1) Gymnasts take turns as necessary and always check that the space you need is clear before performing each action.
- (2) Can you make circles with items of hand apparatus e.g. rotate a rope to skip over or rotate a hoop around different body parts or make circular patterns with a ribbon?
Can you perform travelling gymnastics actions in a circular floor pattern?
Can you perform gymnastics actions whilst creating a circular formation with others?
Can you and a partner perform gymnastics shapes that make a circular shape when connected by basic contact?

Development

- Pack away any remaining equipment stations.
- Gymnasts explore ways of combining their “Make a circle” ideas involving sequencing:
 - Perform a circular gymnastics action, travel in a circular pathway and then make a circle with an item of hand apparatus. (1)
 - Challenge gymnasts to simultaneously show as many ways of making a circle as possible e.g. travel in a circular pathway using a turning action whilst circling a ribbon. (2)



- (1) Only combine actions that you can perform safely in their full individual form.

If you are using a small apparatus item for part of your sequence, make sure it rests in a safe place away from your working area and others' working area when not in use.
Consider safe spacing at all times.
- (2) Can you explore your combinations safely in a floor space rather than on a mat?

Cool down

- Challenge groups to devise a short cool down sequence that they can perform in canon, in a large group circle formation e.g. rise onto toes from a standing stretched start, lower slowly into crouching tuck shape, walk hands forward into front support and lower to a stretched front lying straight shape. (1)
- Highlights the many ways in which gymnasts have creatively explored ideas for “making a circle” i.e. with their bodies, as a formation, as a floor pattern and involving hand apparatus items.



- (1) Encourage groups to agree the order in which they will start and identify the point of the sequence that signals when the next person goes e.g. when all are standing in the stretched position, the first to go rises onto toes then the next group member rises just as the first begins to lower and so on until all have reached the lying straight shape finish.

Balancing on hands

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

6

Objective

Develop the ability to perform handstand progressions leading to the designing of group handstand balances involving apparatus to photograph and share within school.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Source visual images of a clip of handstands.

Plan an equipment layout for the main activity to include an area of individual floor mats, an area of increasingly high platform apparatus each with a floor mat placed up to it, a sufficiently matted unobstructed wall space and an area of as many floor mat strips as the space/floor mats allow.

Equipment:

Visual images/clip of handstands
on tablet (if available)

Main activity equipment layout plan

Floor markers e.g. beanbags

Low to high platforms e.g. bench, agility table, box etc.

Floor mats

Delivery

Introduction

- Set out the number of floor mats featured in the main activity layout plan and check access to all other equipment due to be used later in the session.
- View the handstand images and clip.
- Introduce session theme and objective.

Warm up 1

- Lead a warm up game based on characters, Participants should work on the spot in a floor or mat space. Incorporate:
 - Mr. Tall = standing straight shape
 - Mr. Lazy = lying straight shape on back
 - Mr. Bounce = bounces in the straight shape
 - Mr. Dizzy = turn on tiptoes in straight shape.
- Identify the common shape and how it's relevant to our theme. Conclude that well performed handstands show a clear tight straight shape.

Warm up 2

- Teach the following warm up sequence:
 - From sitting pike shape, roll to shoulder stand with hips supported
 - Return to sitting pike shape and circle the wrists
 - Back support
 - Turn over to front support
 - Walk feet into crouching tuck shape
 - Bunny jump
 - Uncurl to standing straight shape
 - Low lunge forwards on right leg then left leg
- Identify how these actions prepare for handstands e.g. more straight shapes, inverted actions, lunge entry and develops tension and control.
- Highlight handstand hand placement teaching points then gymnasts repeat the sequence focusing on showing the hand placement in front support and bunny jump.

Teaching & safety points

Space the mats out individually in the hall.

Give information to support the images and clip.

Stretch as tall and long as you can when performing these actions.

Work in a safe space or on a mat if skills are new to the participant.

Aim to hold a vertical straight body shape in the final position for 3 seconds.

Keep the body straight and tight throughout the turn.

Jump off feet to lift the hips. Aim to get the back in a straight line with the arms.

Step forward, bending the front leg until the knee is in line with the ankle, keeping the back leg straight with the knee facing down. Hold the final position for 3 seconds.

Place hands shoulder width apart with fingers spread to increase control.

Balancing on hands

Main activity

- Lead the group to set up the equipment layout then demonstrate progressive handstand-based activities such as:
 - 1) At an individual mat, from crouching tuck shape straighten the legs slightly
 - 2) At an individual mat, perform a one-leg handstand balance
 - 3) Place feet on a low platform taking weight on hands in a front support
 - 4) As for progression 3 gradually increasing the height of the platform
 - 5) Moving towards handstand using apparatus
 - 6) At a floor strip, improve the length of your step into forward lunge
 - 7) At a floor strip, step into forward lunge, place hands on the floor ahead and lift the back leg off the floor into a low kick then lower to return to standing
 - 8) As for progression 7 gradually increasing the height of the leg kick until both feet are joining just before the vertical
 - 9) Practice the handstand shape next to a wall
 - 10) At a floor strip, perform a handstand reaching a vertical straight shape
 - 11) At a floor strip, change leg handstand
 - 12) Extra challenge e.g. repeat progressions 6 – 10 lunging onto the other leg, vary the handstand leg shape and/or explore other ways to enter handstand.
- Highlight that the group will move around the layout in free flow working on progressions relevant to their own ability level at their own pace. Continue to work through the handstand progressions.

Place hands shoulder width apart on the floor in front of feet for this activity.
With hands shoulder width apart on the floor in front of the feet, lift one leg straight up.

From inverted pike shape with feet on a high platform, lift each leg to vertical in turn.
Place a floor marker off the mat in line with the front foot.
Lift the back leg high enough that the front foot also lifts off the floor slightly.
Keep arms up straight by the ears throughout the action.

Do this with the back flat against the wall and/or with the chest towards the wall.
Make sure there are no obstacles or people close by in case of rolling forwards or cartwheeling out of the skill if over rotation occurs.

Be responsible for keeping safely spaced.
Start on a progression relevant to ability level and move up through the activities as participants accomplish each task.

Development

- Clear away the floor markers, organise into groups of 4 and lead them to re-arrange equipment so each group has a share of the platforms and mats.
- Groups create a balance of handstand progressions involving their equipment e.g. a shoulder stand on floor, another in front support with feet on bench, one leg handstand balance on the bench and a handstand with split legs with a foot resting on a high table.
- When a group can perform their idea consistently with every member holding their shape for at least 3 seconds, photograph the balance.

Gymnasts should show shapes they can hold safely – they do not have to be the same.
Continue to swap roles regularly and note that the hoop guiders can either work together from either side of the shape or negotiate half the shape each.

Cool down

- Individually link three basic straight shape actions into a short movement sequence incorporating a wrist stretch/mobilisation activity.
- Final reflection on handstand – consider how the photographs could be shared within school to inspire others to get involved.
- Pack away the equipment safely.

Work in an individual safe space away from the apparatus on a mat or on the floor.

Trick and treat

Objective

Compose a group “Trick and Treat” sequence to combine and create a display.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Source images of various gymnastics actions in a format that can be displayed.

Produce a Trick and Treat box –

- Find a box and label it ‘Trick and Treat’ on the outside.
- Fill the box with shreds of paper.
- Cut one strip of card per participant all in one colour. Write a different gymnastics action on each card e.g. turn, roll, balance, jump, spin, twist, slide, travel, shape, weight on hands.
- On a different colour card, cut out strips and write an instruction such as speed, level, unison, canon, direction, mirror, match, contrast, meet & part, repetition, formation etc.
- Hide all the card strips in the “Trick and Treat” box amid the shredded paper.

Equipment:

- Floor mats
- Trick and Treat box
- Visual images of a variety of gymnastics actions.

Delivery

Introduction

- Organise gymnasts into mixed ability groups of three if possible and lead each to set up a floor mat area as large as possible for each group.
- Introduce the session theme and objective, explain that “Tricks” refer to different types of actions and “Treats” refer to instructions that we can apply to make our actions more interesting for an audience to watch.

Warm up 1

- Within their groups, spaced out on their floor area, participants take it in turns to lead a whole-body pulse raising action e.g. jog, march etc. whilst all recalling and discussing different types of gymnastics actions. (1)
- Each group should give examples of the “Tricks” they identified during the warm-up to share with other participants. E.g. turn, roll, balance, jump, spin, twist, slide, travel, inversion, shape, weight on hands etc. (2)

Warm up 2

- Participants take it in turns to lead a stretch activity whilst discussing different instructions. (1)
- Lead each group to give examples of the “Treats” they identified to share with participants and define a range of instructions that may feature during the session e.g. speed, level, unison, cannon, direction, mirror, match, contrast, meet & part, repetition, formation etc. (2)

Teaching & safety points

- (1) Which different types of gymnastics actions have we explored in recent gymnastics sessions that could appear in the box as a “Trick” today? This is not about naming individual actions but categories of actions e.g. a headstand is an individual skill that could fall into the “Trick” category of balance, inversion or weight on hands.
- (2) How many of the gymnastics skills/actions have you been able to recognize during this activity?

- (1) Work through the body from head to toe to help you come up with ideas for stretch and mobilisation activities.
- (2) Can you recall any instructions or devices explored during previous composition based sessions such as Pair or Group Composition?

Trick and treat

Main activity

- One participant from each group picks out a “Trick” and a “Treat” card from the box to take back to their group.
- Each group designs a short sequence in response to the “Trick” and “Treat” pulled out of the box e.g. “Roll” and “Direction” could be answered with one group member performing a forward travelling roll, another performing a sideways travelling roll and the other performing a backward travelling roll. (1)
- Repeat the above process twice more so each participant can select a “Trick” and “Treat” card from the box to result in three separate short sequences. (2)

- (1) Consider each participant’s ability level in the way you respond to each “Trick”.
Consider how to safely space each sequence on/around your floor area.
Use the gymnastics actions images as necessary to help come up with “Trick” ideas.
- (2) Work co-operatively – listen to each other’s ideas before making decisions on how to respond to the “Trick” and “Treat” cards.

Development

- Groups link 2 or 3 of their short sequences into a longer routine. (1)
- As a class, discuss the importance of performing sequences with good quality to be able to show off the “Tricks” and “Treats”.
- Support groups to think about and implement a method to improve performance quality. E.g. add counting to the sequence so each member is precise in their timings of each action. (2)
- Manage the groups to each perform their sequence to at least one other group. The observers aim to identify and list back the 4 – 6 “Tricks” and “Treats” they saw in the sequence to the performing group. (3)

- (1) Make sure your sequence has a clear start and finish position.
- (2) What do you need to do in your performance to be sure that anyone observing your sequence can easily identify the ‘Tricks’ and ‘Treats’ you picked out of the box?
- (3) Observe the performing trio from a safe distance.

Cool down

- Ask if any of their observing groups managed to correctly identify all 4 – 6 “Tricks” or “Treats” then ask participants to share which the observers did not identify accurately. (1)
- Demonstrate a whole body stretch for all the participants to implement e.g. standing star shape. Working at their floor area, each group identifies and applies a “Treat” to how they perform that stretch or mobilisation e.g. step out into standing star shape in canon or show a triangular formation. (2)
- Repeat this process for 3 – 4 further whole body stretches.
- Lead participants to pack away the mats.

- (1) Where an observing group did not identify one of your “Tricks” or “Treats” correctly, do you think that was down to your group’s performance quality or another factor e.g. a “Trick” you performed fitted into more than one type of Gymnastics action category or a “Treat” wasn’t identified because the observing group hadn’t come across it before?
- (2) Work co-operatively – listen to each other’s ideas before making a decision on which idea to demonstrate.

Objective

Participants explore ways of working “together” with a partner to develop rolling, counterbalance, travelling involving a bench and skipping or hopping activities.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Plan an equipment layout for the main activity including four “together” stations such as a rotation area made up of mat strips, a balance area made up of individual mats, a travelling area made up of safely spaced benches with access to floor mats close by to make landing areas as necessary and a skipping area made up of individual mats with a skipping rope close by each.

Equipment:

Floor mats
Skipping ropes
Benches
A whiteboard titled “Together” and whiteboard pens

Delivery

Introduction

- Check access to all the equipment due to be used later in the session.
- Session starter – discuss what “together” could mean in a gymnastics context e.g. making contact, copying, collaborating, working in unison etc.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter to begin recording ideas on the whiteboard for what working together could look like in gymnastics club.

Warm up 1

- Organise participants into similar height pairs.
- Participants walk round the hall “together” with their partner.
- Pairs share ideas for how they walked together. Add new ideas for ways of working together to the whiteboard e.g. at a co-operative pace, side-by-side etc.
- Challenge pairs to work in a different way together to move around the hall using a basic travel action of their choice. (1)

Warm up 2

- Lead stretch and mobilisation activities with pairs deciphering a way to work on each activity together e.g. mirror one another in performing low lunges with both legs – forwards and sideways (8) or make basic contact in performing Japana to 45° with hands palm to palm.
- Add any new ways that pairs have worked together to the whiteboard.

Teaching & safety points

- (1) For example, if focused on walking at a co-operative pace, can they now focus on maintaining safe contact whilst travelling e.g. face each other to gallop holding hands?

Main activity

- Lead gymnasts to set up the equipment layout as planned then divide the pairs up equally between the four activity stations.
- Explain that participants will rotate around/explore four themed stations:
 - Rotation - find ways to work together when rolling.
 - Skipping/Hopping - find ways to work together when skipping or hopping.
 - Travelling involving benches - find ways to work together to travel onto/along/over/off benches.
 - Counterbalance - work together through counterbalance progressions.
- Demonstrate counterbalance progressions:
 - 1) Lean back from standing with your partner behind holding your shoulders.
 - 2) From kneeling up facing each other, hold each other's wrists with bent arms then extend arms simultaneously and fully until you're both leaning back.
 - 3) As for progression 2) but from standing with toes touching.
 - 4) Once in counterbalance, let go with one hand and stretch the arm out.
- Highlight:
 - You will work in pairs at each station at a bench, mat strip or single mat.
 - Be responsible for safe spacing.
 - Re-arrange mats as necessary.
 - Bring landing floor mats up to the benches where you explore travelling off/over the bench.
 - Always work at your own ability level e.g. rolling activities could range from rock backwards and forwards in tuck to handstand forward roll.
- Pairs explore ideas for working together at their first station.
- After rotation 1, pairs share new ways in which they just worked together. Add ideas to the whiteboard e.g. walked backwards along a bench with a full turn in the middle in canon, took it in turns to skip for 45 seconds and timed our partner, made up a pair sequence of three rolling actions.

Sit in a safe place to the side of the allocated station and be able to see the whole equipment layout.

At the rolling, skipping and travelling involving benches stations, it's up to pairs to discover as many ways of working together as possible to develop/perform that type of action whereas the counterbalance activity is more specifically about working co-operatively to achieve a point of balance where you're taking equal weight in the skill.

Start at progression 1 and only move up when each level is mastered. Only lean back slightly with the aim of maintaining a straight tight bodyline. Straighten arms slowly at the same time so you take equal weight. Maintain a straight bodyline and hold the counterbalance for 3 seconds before pulling back in.

Agree which hand you are going to release before getting into the counterbalance!

For example, turn the floor strip into a square of mats where you wish to explore a skill such as teddy bear back to back with a partner.

Working together does not mean you always have to be doing the same actions. Problem solving when partners are unable to do the same actions is another example of a way in which you can work together.

Come up with new ideas and/or draw on inspiration from the whiteboard for ideas on how to work together.

Development

- Rotate pairs around the other three stations.

Find a different way of working together at each station.

Cool down

- In a safe floor or mat space, pairs respond to gym shape (session 1) commands by working together to show that shape e.g. on a "pike", members of a pair perform a pike shape lying on their side positioned so they form a square shape together.
- Review the "together" whiteboard to highlight all the positive ways in which we've found we can work together.
- Lead the group to pack away the equipment safely.

Which of these ways of working together could also be beneficial ways of working together in the classroom or at home?

Right angles

Objective

Participants explore, create, develop and perform individual and pair gymnastics shapes showing clear and precise right angles.

Is your session inclusive?

Preparation:

Start a visual display showing two individual body shapes from the warm up sequence e.g. sitting pike shape and box shape.

In the same format, start a visual display showing pair contact shapes that show one or more right angles in the base position e.g. both in front support with the feet of the top on the base's shoulders.

Equipment:

Floor mats
Board pens
Tablets (if available)
Visual display of individual body shapes showing right angles
Visual display of pair contact shapes showing right angles

Delivery

Introduction

- Look at the visual displays of individual body shapes and pair contact ideas and identify where those shapes show right angles.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter, marking onto the visual displays all the right angles shown in the individual body and pair contact shapes.

Warm up 1

- Lead a series of pulse raising actions that show right angles in the body shape:
 - March on the spot
 - Run on the spot for 30 seconds
 - Hop, jump, hop, jump on the spot lifting the foot behind on each hop
 - Hop, jump, hop, jump along the floor

Warm up 2

- Teach the following warm up sequence.
 - Sitting pike shape
 - Lower slowly to bent leg dish
 - Roll out sideways to finish in box shape on hands and knees
 - Front support
 - Walk feet to crouching tuck shape
 - Uncurl to standing straight shape with T arms
 - Lift a leg up and forward into a bent legged 1-foot balance
- Altogether add all the warm up sequence actions showing right angles to the visual display. Challenge participants to mark on the right angles.

Teaching & safety points

Ask participants to share anything they already know about right angles with the people around them so everyone can correctly identify where the right angles are in the shapes shown.

Where are the right angles in each of the actions?

Show a precise right angle at the knee and hip each time a leg is lifted.

Show a precise right angle at the knee and hip each time a leg is lifted.

Show a precise right angle at the knee on each hop.

Continue to show a clear right angle at the knee on each hop during travelling.

Identify and place emphasis on where the right angles should be clearly shown:

At the hips

At the hips and knees

At the hips, knees and under the shoulders

Under the shoulders

Under the shoulders

At the hip and knee of the lifted leg.

Right angles

Main activity

- Organise participants into similar height pairs and lead each pair to safely set up a floor mat area in a space.
- Explore ability relevant ideas for individual body shapes showing one or more right angles e.g. back support raising a leg at a time towards the vertical, splits etc. Invite participants to add successful ideas to the visual display.
- Introduce the reason for exploring individual shapes showing right angles i.e. they can provide the most stable base positions to begin exploring pair contact ideas.
- Further explore individual body shapes showing right angles with a focus on finding ideas that will provide a good base position for weight taking.

Work in turn at a mat with the observing partner providing feedback to help the performer show clear right angles in their shapes (use tablets to photograph and analyse angles together where possible).

What do classrooms contain that show many right angles? Tables and chairs. Why are they designed with right angles? To provide a stable surface for taking weight.

The most stable base positions for weight taking will be those that have many right angles, many points of contact with the floor and cover a large surface area.

Development

- Lead pairs through basic pair contact shapes showing right angles in the base position to introduce weight taking safety points. For example:
 - V-sit on box shape – the top sits over the hips of the base position placing their hand at the top of the base's back for support.
 - Front support with partner – the top and base both hold front support with the feet of the top resting on the base's shoulders.
- Go through any further safety considerations not covered by the example pair contact shapes.
- Pairs create ability relevant pair contact shapes using the display of individual body shapes showing right angles as a starting point for finding stable base positions. Use tablets to photograph developing ideas so pairs can analyse the precision of the base's right angles. Invite gymnasts to add successful ideas to the visual display of pair contact shape ideas.
- Pairs select and show their most stable pair contact idea. Observing participants provide feedback in relation to the precision of the right angles shown.

Weight taking safety considerations:

- Swap between the roles of base and top as long as you use shapes you can hold independently and only take weight within strength capabilities.
- Agree each contact shape idea, consider the best positioning for the base on the mats and how the top will carefully enter/exit the shape before initial attempts.
- The top must check the base position is stable before applying weight over the base's contact points with the floor e.g. if the base is in box shape, the top can place weight over their hips and/or shoulders (and NOT the middle of the back).
- Place hands, knees and/or feet shoulder width apart in relevant base positions.
- Make arm connections by gripping around each other's wrists.

The base position must show at least one right angle in each pair contact shape idea. The top position does not have to show right angles but any incidental right angles in the top's position can also be marked on to the visual display of successful ideas.

Draw inspiration from the contact shape ideas that pairs add to the visual display.

Cool down

- Lead pairs to pack away their mats.
- Individually travel around the hall using a slow basic travel method showing one or more right angles e.g. walk with arms out horizontal to the floor.
- Lead whole body stretches showing one or more right angles e.g. low lunges with both legs – forwards and sideways, from standing star shape, fold at the hips into standing straddle shape etc.
- Final reflection on right angles – challenge to look beyond this session and the classroom for examples of where objects have been designed with right angles to provide a stable base of support.

Identify and place emphasis on where the right angles should be clearly shown in each stretching action.

Can you challenge the theory by finding examples of objects designed to provide support that show angles other than right angles e.g. bridges?

Hand apparatus

Objective

Work in trios to explore, create and develop combinations of body actions and hand apparatus actions involving a ball and hoop.

Is your session inclusive?

Preparation:

Copy one hand apparatus exploration worksheet for each group (Resource 10).
Find clips of rhythmic gymnasts performing ball and hoop routines.

Equipment:

Hand apparatus exploration worksheets and pencils
Clips of rhythmic gymnasts performing ball and hoop routines
Floor mats
Soft indoor balls
Hula hoops

Delivery

Introduction

- Show the rhythmic gymnastics clips of hoop and ball routines.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Re-play the clips with half the participants observing the body actions they see the rhythmic gymnasts perform and half observing how the hand apparatus is used. Both groups share ideas e.g. body actions may include steps, leaps, rotations and body waves and hand apparatus actions may include throw, trap, roll, spin etc.

Warm up 1

- Lead a warm up introducing various body actions observed in the clips such as:
- Gymnasts step around the hall space
- Challenge to make their stepping more creative
- Participants create an individual repeatable step pattern out of their ideas
- Demonstrate/teach cat leaps.
- Add cat leaps twice on each leg to their repeatable sequence.

Warm up 2

- Individually explore and practice a basic example of each of the following body actions in a safe floor space:
- Balance
- Rotate
- Body Wave
- Link a basic balance, rotation and/or body wave into their stepping sequence.

Teaching & safety points

Can participants step in different directions, on a different level or at a different speed and/or mark out a pattern or shape?
Try the action leading with both legs, lifting each knee above the height of the hips.

Ask participants to find a balance they can hold for 3 seconds that works to stretch the whole body.
On what different body parts can they spin?
This can be a whole-body wave or a wave of an individual body part.

Hand apparatus

Main activity

- Organise in to trios and lead to safely set up a floor mat area in a space. Distribute a worksheet and pencil to each trio. Half the trios collect 1 or 2 balls whilst the others collect 1 or 2 hoops.
- Explain how to use the worksheet to create body and hand apparatus combinations i.e. select a body action and an apparatus action to explore in combination such as spinning your body whilst trapping the ball. Draw a line between the two actions on the worksheet when a successful idea is found. (1)
- Highlight:
- Trios will have half the activity time exploring each item of hand apparatus i.e. trios starting with hoops will explore working with a ball later.
- Share the floor mat area considerately where there are two hoops or balls.
- Explore combining hand apparatus actions with already well-established body actions.
- The possibility of hand apparatus going astray.
- The worksheet challenges.
- Trios practically explore body and hand apparatus action combinations identifying successful combinations with a line linking those actions on the worksheet.
- Each participant selects and refines one idea ready for sharing.
- Share body and hand apparatus action combinations with observers identifying the body and hand apparatus actions they see performed.

Consider using the actions in the warm up as a starting point for exploring ways to involve hand apparatus in the performance of body actions.

Save exploring hand apparatus actions more relevant to the second item e.g. hula with a hoop.

Work collaboratively as a trio to come up with individually performed combinations.

Keep the worksheet and pencil away from the floor mat area.

To be able to focus on maintaining good control of the hand apparatus, participants will need to explore ideas involving body actions that they can already perform consistently well.

Stop practical exploration until nearby stray hand apparatus has been safely collected.

Can each trio account for each type of body and hand apparatus action at least once in the exploration and add and account for further action ideas in the empty boxes?

Select an idea they can consistently perform with control of the body and hoop or ball.

Look out for ideas that participants can try when they begin exploring the second item of hand apparatus.

Development

- Swap the hoops and balls over between the trios.
- Trios review their worksheets to identify which body actions and hand apparatus actions they need to focus on exploring next with their new hand apparatus item.
- Trios practically explore body and hand apparatus action combinations involving their second item of hand apparatus. Share original/creative ideas.

Cool down

- Trios select a whole body stretch or mobilisation activity that each gymnast can perform whilst maintaining contact with the group's hoop/s or rolling the group's ball/s between them e.g. standing straddle shapes in a circle each holding onto the hoop in the middle or rolling the ball between sitting straddle shapes. Swap hoops or balls between groups.
- Reflect on the exploration to highlight the infinite number of body action and hand apparatus action combinations that can be created.
- Lead trios to pack away their mats and hand apparatus.

Hold each stretch for 5 seconds.

What successful combinations did each trio come up with that involved body and/or hand apparatus actions that were added in the empty boxes on the worksheet?

Straddle shape 1

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

11

Objective

Participants develop their ability to perform gymnastics actions showing the straddle shape with consistently good technique.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

None required

Equipment:

A whiteboard titled "The straddle shape"
A whiteboard titled "Straddle shape actions"

Board pens
A paper cup per pair
Floor mats

Delivery

Introduction

- Participants recall teaching points for the perfect straddle shape.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter to record teaching points on the "The straddle shape" whiteboard e.g. straight back, straight legs with ankles stretched and toes pointed, right angle at the hips, knees face upwards, arms stretched out sideways etc.

Warm up 1

- Lead a warm up game of "traffic lights" with the following commands/responses:
 - Green = individually jog around the hall space
 - Red = sitting straddle shape
- Traffic jam = sitting straddle shape one behind the other in a line down the middle of the hall
- Tunnel = standing straddle fold facing another gymnast with hands resting palm to palm
- Lane closed = sitting straddle shape back to back with another gymnast.

Warm up 2

- Lead stretch and mobilisation activities that prepare, show and are performed in the straddle shape such as:
 - Low lunges with both legs – sideways
 - From standing star shape, fold at the hips into standing straddle shape (1)
 - Side stretches in sitting straddle shape
 - Japana to 45° or flat

Teaching & safety points

Focus on showing all the whiteboard teaching points in each straddle shape.

Slow down jogging to a stop to join the back of the traffic jam line safely.
Aim to show a straight back in straddle fold so the tunnel has a flat top.
From above, legs should make an X shape, which is the motorway symbol for "lane closed".

- (1) Are participants showing a right angle at the hips and a flat back? Test a partner by trying to balance a paper cup on their back once they're in their final position.
- Keep back and legs straight with knees pointing upwards. Fold forwards from the hips to hold your final position at a point that is comfortable.

Straddle shape 1

Main activity

- Organise pairs then lead to set out one mat in a space.
- As a group explore basic straddle shape gymnastics actions such as:
 - An action performed in the straddle shape e.g. rock backwards and forwards in straddle
 - An action adapted to show straddle e.g. straddled V-sit with hand support.
- Draw or write the straddle shape actions explored together on the “straddle shape actions” whiteboard then explore, create, develop and add to the whiteboard their own ability relevant actions that are performed in or adapted to show a straddle shape.
- During the exploration, support the group by giving them ideas as necessary for ability relevant actions that show or are performed in the straddle shape such as:
 - Bunny jump with straddled legs
 - Shoulder stand with hips supported showing straddled legs
 - Teddy bear roll progressing to back to back with a partner
 - Headstand with lever entry through the straddle position and/or showing straddled legs in the final position.
 - Straddled half lever
 - Straddle jump
 - Forward roll to straddle stand
 - Backward roll to straddle stand

Take it in turns to work practically on the floor mat. When observing, provide partner with feedback to help them refine the precision of the straddle shapes shown in their actions using the teaching points on the whiteboard.

Account for different types of actions in exploration. Can participants find a way to show a straddle shape when rolling, balancing, travelling, jumping, spinning etc.?

When a gymnast sees their partner performing a straddle shape with good technique in each new action they explore, suggest that idea is ready to be added to the whiteboard.

Lift the hips high to have time to show the straddle shape at the highest point.

Establish a vertical shoulder stand then straddle the legs and fold hips to a right angle.

Hold straddle and roll sideways onto a shoulder, across to the other and back up.

Maintain a stable triangle base position throughout.

From straddle sit, press on flat hands between legs to lift hips, legs and feet into lever.

Participants will need a strong take off to show straddle in flight. Land in a safe landing position.

Straddle the legs late in the roll then press on your hands between your legs to stand.

Straddle the legs late so you maintain the momentum to keep the roll moving to stand.

Development

- Select and refine performance of 2 or 3 ability relevant actions that show or are performed in a straddle shape.
- Link 2 or 3 straddle shape actions into a short movement sequence.
- Shuffle the pairings so everyone has a new partner. Perform sequences in turn to their new partner. After observing, provide the performer with feedback related to the straddle shapes shown.

Select different types of actions e.g. a rotation, a balance and a spring.

Continue to work one at a time - mentally plan and refine sequence between attempts.

When observing a partner's sequence, identify the action they perform with the best straddle shape technique. At the end of their performance, tell them why that was the best straddle shape, making reference to the teaching points on the whiteboard.

Cool down

- Pairs join mats to make groups of four.
- Groups create a straddle shape group balance— each gymnast performs a different static straddle shape making contact with at least one other group member.
- Review the ‘straddle shape actions’ whiteboard to reflect on the variety of actions explored and created. Introduce that this will be developed further in the next session by involving apparatus in the performance of straddle shape actions.
- Lead groups to pack away their mats.

Select basic straddle shapes so the group balance can be held safely for 5 seconds.

Keep the contact basic i.e. no more than resting on/against the adjoining straddle shape.

Objective

Identify, create, and develop a variety of actions using symmetrical body shapes.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

N/A

Equipment:

- Floor mats
- Whiteboard
- Board pens
- Tablets if available

Delivery

Introduction

- In small groups, gymnasts consider what is meant by “body symmetry”.
- Introduce the session theme and objective. Invite participants to share their theories and practical ideas about “body symmetry”.
- Draw a selection of the symmetrical basic shapes shared onto a whiteboard. Add on the lines of symmetry to support the explanation that body symmetry is when each side of the body matches.

Warm up 1

- Gymnasts travel individually around the space using basic symmetrical, pulse-raising actions of their choice e.g. bounce, slide from tuck sit to pike sit, bunny jumps, egg rolls etc. (1)
- Add a range of the symmetrical body actions shown in the warm up to the whiteboard. (2)

Warm up 2

- Organise gymnasts into similar ability pairs and set up a floor mat in a space.
- Demonstrate the following warm up sequence:
 - Sitting tuck shape
 - Lower slowly to dish
 - Roll sideways to arch (1)
 - Press up to front support
 - Lift bottom into down dog (2)
 - Return to front support and turn to back support
 - Lower to sitting pike shape
 - Rock backwards and forwards in a tucked position to finish in sitting tuck shape or roll up to a standing finish.
- Each partner takes it in turns to perform the warm up on their mat with the observing partner providing feedback to improve the symmetry in each action.

Teaching & safety points

Can the group identify and show one basic still body shape to illustrate?

Imagine the line of symmetry in each shape as a mirror and that one side of the body should therefore show a precise reflection of the other.

(1) Focus on matching each side of the body in each action.

(2) Can you identify where the line of symmetry is in each action?

The sequence is made up of basic symmetrical actions.

(1) Keep the lower back pushed into the floor.

(2) Place head between arms and push heels into the floor.

If you're finishing in a standing position, can you rise up onto your tiptoes and hold your body still?

Does your partner show symmetry throughout the sequence, even when transitioning between the still shapes?

Main activity

- Gymnasts take it in turns to work on the mat as a performer to explore and develop further gymnastics actions showing body symmetry. The observing partner provides feedback to the performer to improve the symmetry of their body. Access to a tablet to photograph or record their partner to support visual feedback would have a positive impact. (1)
- Midway through, lead gymnasts to reflect on the nature of the body symmetry actions they've developed so far to encourage further variety in their exploration going forward. (2)
- Gymnasts select and refine three of their most successful actions with a focus on matching the two sides of the body. (3)

- (1) Add new successful body symmetry actions to the whiteboard as you explore. Can you draw on the line of symmetry?
- (2) Have you discovered a rolling action that shows a symmetrical body shape? What about a jump, turn, slide, balance etc.? Look at the ideas others have shared on the whiteboard to help you explore different types of actions.
- (3) Can you select and refine three different types of symmetrical action e.g. a roll, a balance and a jump?

Development

- Continuing to work in turn on their mat, gymnasts link their three symmetrical actions into a short sequence. The observing partner provides the performer with ideas on transitioning from one action to the next, so they maintain symmetry throughout the sequence.
- If possible, distribute tablets so participants can record each other's sequences. Participants can watch their sequence back to identify any moments where they may not have been symmetrical.

Cool down

- In a safe floor or mat space, gymnasts individually select and perform 3 – 4 symmetrical whole-body shapes. (1) For example:
 - Standing star shape
 - Crouching tuck shape
 - Sitting straddle shape
 - Lying straight shape
- Reflect on the range of actions on the whiteboard to highlight the many ways in which the body can move symmetrically. (2)
- As a final reflection, ask participants to consider how else the body can move i.e. if we can move symmetrically, we can also move asymmetrically. (3)

- (1) Focus on maintaining a symmetrical body shape in every action and transition.
- (2) Can you find basic symmetrical whole body shapes that are performed on different levels?
- (3) Consider what moving asymmetrically could mean so you are ready to explore the concept in a future session.

Axes of rotation

Objective

Explore, create and develop gymnastics actions that move around the three axes of rotation on the floor and involving benches.

Is your session inclusive?

Preparation:

Put a cocktail stick through three jelly babies to show the imaginary lines that form the axes of rotation - one going through from head to toe, one going through from front to back and one going through from side to side. Repeat so there is a set of three Jelly Babies for every pair.

Equipment:

Floor mats
Benches
Jelly Babies
Cocktail sticks

Delivery

Introduction

- Set out a mat per pair individually spaced in the hall.
- Discuss what it means to rotate in gymnastics.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter. Conclude on a rotation definition such as “to move around an imaginary line that runs through our body”.

Warm up 1

- Participants move around the hall space between the mats using a basic travel action of their choice e.g. march, jog, gallop
- Demonstrate an egg roll and a log roll then organise in to pairs. Pairs find a mat on which they can take it in turns to practice these rolling actions.
- Return to the travelling activity with the addition of using either an egg or log roll to negotiate each free mat they come to.
- Show one set of three jelly babies to introduce the three imaginary lines running through our body around which we rotate. Pick out the jelly baby with the stick running from head to toe. Lay the Jelly Baby down on its front and rotate the stick to show that the imaginary line from head to toe is the axis around which we rotate when performing egg and log rolls.

Warm up 2

- Working a pair to a mat, take it in turns to learn and perform the following warm up sequence (1):
 - Lying straight shape on front
 - Arch shape
 - Half or full spin on front (2)
 - Push up to front support
 - Turn through side support to back support
 - Lower to tuck sit
 - Rock backwards and forwards in tuck or in pike then straddle (3)
- Distribute a set of jelly babies showing the three axes of rotation to each pair (4).
- Altogether identify the three rotational actions in the warm up sequence then challenge pairs to identify which jelly baby shows the axis around which the body moves during each of these actions. Manage feedback to conclude (5):
 - Spin on front = front to back axis
 - Turn from front to back support = head to toe axis
 - Rock backwards and forwards = side to side axis

Teaching & safety points

These imaginary lines that run through our body are called axes on.

Egg roll = from and to a kneeling down tuck shape, roll sideways across your back.
Log roll = from a lying straight shape, roll sideways in the straight shape.

Check spacing carefully before starting each roll i.e. make sure no other participants are about to arrive at the mat to start a roll at the same time as you!

The Jelly Baby is stuck in a straight shape, so imagine that it can make a tuck shape for the egg roll

- (1) When observing, stand off to the side of the mat and watch a partner to identify which of the actions in the warm up sequence rotate.
- (2) Aim to maintain the arch shape during the spinning action.
- (3) Check there is plenty of mat space behind before rocking.
- (4) Place the jelly babies off to the side of your mat so there is no risk of contacting them when working.
- (5) Rotate the cocktail sticks to see if you can spot which jelly baby can perform the spin, which can perform the turn and which can perform the rock. Continue to imagine that the jelly baby can change shape for actions that don't occur in the straight shape and think about rotating the jelly babies when they're lying down horizontally as well as standing up vertically to find the answers.

Axes of rotation

Main activity

- Pairs work together at their mat to come up with further ability relevant individual actions for each of the three rotational axes. For example:
 - Front to back axis = transfer weight from one foot to the other, cartwheel
 - Head to toe axis = half or full turn on tiptoes, move sideways from dish through arch, jump half turn, jump full turn
 - Side to side axis = shoulder stand with hips supported, forward roll, backward roll

Take it in turns to work practically on the mat exploring rotational actions relevant to ability level. Between turns, move off the mat and rotate the jelly babies in horizontal and vertical positions to inspire the next practical idea remembering that the rotational actions explored do not have to complete a full circle.

Ask participants to find any actions which rotate around two axes e.g. a teddy bear roll starts with a rotation on the front to back axis before rotating round the head to toe axis as it moves across the back before coming back up on the front to back axis.

Development

- Collect in all Jelly Babies then lead the group to layout the available benches. Sit an equal number of participants on the floor by each bench.
- Participants individually select 1 - 2 ability relevant rotational actions they performed on the floor to explore ways of adapting them to involve the bench e.g. full turn on tiptoes on the bench or cartwheel ¼ turn dismount from the bench.
- Ask individuals to show one of their ideas for involving the bench in performance of a rotational action and challenge the observers to identify which axis or axes the chosen action rotates around.

Move the floor mats to potential landing areas around the benches.

All jumps from or over the bench must land on a mat in the safe landing position. Be considerate of others working at benches and wait as necessary for ample space to try each idea. Plan the next idea if waiting.

Move to sit away from the bench area before participants display their work.

Cool down

- Introduce that we can rotate individual body parts as well as the whole body.
- Pairs identify ways in which we can rotate individual body parts e.g. arms, feet, wrists, hips, shoulders etc. Refer to the joint types where possible e.g. compare the range of rotation at a hinge joint compared to a ball and socket joint.
- Reflect on rotation to come up with examples of other sporting actions that rotate around the three axes or involve individual body parts rotating at joints.

Such actions do not rotate around the axes of rotation but instead happen because of the different ways our bones meet at our joints.

Work in a safe floor or mat space away from the benches.

How is the body rotating when you do a high jump, bowl in cricket, pivot in netball, swim front crawl, push a ball wide of the football goal etc.?

Values - respect

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

14

Objective

Participants identify and take opportunities to be respectful to positively enhance the exploration, creation and development of pair and counterbalance shapes.

Is your session inclusive?

Preparation:

Source images of example pair and counterbalance shapes relevant to the ability level of the group.

Equipment:

Floor mats
A whiteboard titled "Ways of showing respect" & board pens
Images of pair counterbalances.

Delivery

Introduction

- Discuss what it means to be respectful.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter gathering ideas such as to appreciate, be considerate of and value property, yourself and others.

Warm up 1

- Organise participants into similar height pairings. Participants then separate to jog individually and freely around the hall space.
- Introduce clapping commands – on the first clap, participants jog to their partner and continue side by side. On the next clap, return to jogging alone. Repeat until participants show smooth transitions between individual and pair work.
- Identify examples of how participants showed respect to one another during this activity noting ideas on the "Ways of showing respect" whiteboard.

Warm up 2

- Teach the following warm up sequence:
 - Standing straight shape
 - Lower to crouching tuck shape
 - Walk hands forward into front support position
 - Turn over to back support
 - Lower to sitting pike shape then fold the upper body towards the legs.
- Lead each pair to set out one or two mats together in a space.
- Share ideas for how they showed their partner respect e.g. let them go first, kept off the mat, gave positive feedback etc. Add ideas to the whiteboard.

Teaching & safety points

For the purpose of our session, we'll define respect as "thinking and acting in a way that shows others you value them and care about their feelings and well-being."

How did you act in a way that showed you care for your partner? Did you slow down your jog at any point? Why? Did you show anyone else you care about their well-being? How? Did you always take the shortest route to reach your partner? Why not?

If participants are well balanced, suggest rising on to tiptoes.

Stretch up tall before folding and keep back and legs straight throughout.

Which of the ideas we've noted on the board so far have positively impacted on our partner's gymnastics ability and performance?

Values - respect

Main activity

- Teach pairs how to perform a kneeling up counterbalance:
 - 1) Kneel up facing one another on your mat with your knees in close together
 - 2) Grip each other's wrists and bend your arms so your upper bodies are close
 - 3) Simultaneously lean back and straighten your arms
 - 4) Once all four arms are straight, hold the position for 3 seconds then bend your arms back in simultaneously before parting.
- Teach pairs V-sit back to back as an introduction to counterbalance:
 - 1) Sit back to back on your mat with your bottoms far apart
 - 2) Simultaneously lean backwards and lift your legs into V-sit coming to rest against one another's back for 3 seconds before lowering.
- Emphasise that these pair shapes only truly show counterbalance if both end up in positions they couldn't hold alone. Repeat the kneeling and V-sit counterbalance to analyse their final positions.
- Participants work at their own ability level on their mat to explore ideas for pair counterbalance shape, checking that they need their partner present to be able to hold each. Use the images of example balances as necessary to inspire ideas.

If one of you crosses your arms over, you'll have a stronger grip.

You must move at the same time to be sure you take equal weight and stay balanced!

Your bodyline should be straight in the final position i.e. no dishing or arching.

Without your partner, you could not hold these end positions!

Without testing it, discuss whether you'd fall over if one of you moved or let go? If the answer is no, you haven't achieved a point of counterbalance.

Success in this activity relies on being respectful to partners so add further ways of showing how you're caring for them to the whiteboard as you work.

Development

- Reflect on how achieving counterbalance depends on showing they value their partner e.g. only suggest ideas using actions you can both perform safely, listen to other's ideas, work out how to make contact to keep each other safe, constantly communicate to move in and out of the shapes.
- Pairs continue exploring counterbalance ideas. If not naturally occurring, raise the possibility of creating counterbalance ideas in which each member of the pair shows a different shape.

What new ideas do you see that have been added to the whiteboard during the practical exploration? Do you have any further ways in which you and/or your partner showed you value and care for each other during the activity to add to the board?

Choose one or two ways of showing respect that we've noted on the whiteboard to focus on as you continue exploring with the aim of increasing your pair's range of successful counterbalance ideas.

Cool down

- Lead pairs to show respect in how they pack away their mats.
- Pairs walk round the hall having a conversation to identify a counterbalance idea that they progressed from unsuccessful to a point of success.
- Pairs carry out whole body stretches e.g. low lunges with both legs – forwards and sideways whilst continuing their conversation to identify how they each showed respect to reach a point where they could balance that counter position.

Reflect on all the ideas we've noted on the board to help you identify how you respected one another when refining that counterbalance idea.

Values - responsibility

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

15

Objective

Participants carry out an individual responsibility to contribute positively to the creation of a group sequence.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

None

Equipment:

Floor mats

Delivery

Introduction

- Set out individual floor mats in the hall with space around each.
- Discuss what it means to have a responsibility.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter. Conclude on a working definition for responsibility such as “having a duty to satisfactorily perform or complete a task.”

Warm up 1

- Organise in to pairs. Pairs stand in a floor space between the mats. (1)
- Take it in turns to lead their partner, who has their eyes closed, safely around the hall in between the mats.
- Reflect on the responsibility involved in this activity by asking: (2)
 - What was your duty in this activity?
 - What did you do to complete that duty satisfactorily?
- Discuss the idea that duties can be carried out responsibly resulting in a positive impact or irresponsibly resulting in a negative impact. Ask if anyone is prepared to admit that they weren't entirely responsible when leading their partner and identify the potential negative consequences e.g. the leader tried to cut off corners when negotiating the mats and this could cause a trip. (3)

Warm up 2

- Join pairs to make groups of four. Each group creates a floor mat area by joining together their equal share of the available mats.
- Give each group the collective responsibility to create a short warm up sequence consisting of three basic actions showing three different shapes.
- Groups review how responsible they were in creating their sequence by considering:
 - Did your group have a positive result i.e. did your group fulfil their duty?
 - If yes, how did you demonstrate responsibility to achieve a positive result?
 - If no, can you recognise any ways in which you may have been irresponsible and may have contributed to the task not being satisfactorily completed?

Teaching & safety points

- (1) Move around the space side by side, physically leading a partner gently by the arm. Start at a walking pace and build up to a jogging pace as confidence grows.
- (2) Keeping yourself and others safe is a big factor in being a responsible person.
- (3) To admit irresponsibility and appreciate any negative impact you had is a start to taking responsibility for your actions.

Throughout this activity, consider how you can have a positive impact on how your group works and the sequence you're creating.

Did you successfully and safely create a short sequence of three different still shapes?

Take responsibility for yourself i.e. avoid blaming others and think about how you could behave differently to contribute more positively going forward.

Values - responsibility

Main activity

- Introduce that groups will be extending their warm up in to a longer sequence with each group member having their own responsibility to contribute to the development of that sequence.
- Participants number themselves 1 – 4 in their group. Bring together all number 1s, all number 2s etc. to result in four new “responsibility groups”. Allocate each responsibility group with one of the following duties:
 - 1) Make sure your group sequence includes a rotation, a spring and a balance.
 - 2) Make sure the group sequence shows moments with unison.
 - 3) Make sure each group member performs actions appropriate for their ability.
 - 4) Make sure each group member is safely spaced throughout the sequence.
- Responsibility groups discuss and share ideas for how they could go about implementing their duty when they return to their group.
- Return to their sequence groups and begin to extend their warm up as guided by each group member’s responsibility.

Unison = performing the same actions in the same way at the same time.

Group members do not have to perform the same rotation, spring and balance.

Remember some gymnastics actions can be safely performed on the floor around the mat area or consider using cannon if lots of space is needed for an action.

Development

- Responsibility groups rejoin to review the impact they’re having in delivering their responsibility so far. Guide the discussions by asking members to:
 - Share what they’ve asked their sequence group to do so far.
 - Consider whether that’s having a positive impact on the group’s sequence.
 - Discuss what they could do more of or differently to maximise the positive impact of carrying out their duty when they return to their sequence group.
- Return to their sequence groups to continue developing their sequences.
- Groups perform their sequences in turn.

How can you tell whether you’re having a positive or negative impact?

What ideas have you heard others in your responsibility group share in this discussion that you could go back and try with your sequence group?

Draw upon the learning from the review discussion you just had in your responsibility group to identify a focus for how you will implement your responsibility going forward.

Cool down

- Give each sequence group the responsibility to use flat body shapes to represent an equal number of letters of the word “Responsibility”.
- As a final reflection on responsibility, ask the ways in which the group feel they had the most positive impact on their group sequence. Challenge them to look for opportunities to take on responsibilities in the coming week.

Can we show collective responsibility to mark out the whole word across the middle of the hall recognising how we might need to re-arrange the mats to do this safely?

Values - resilience

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

16

Objective

Develop resilience in working towards achievement of gymnastics actions.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Source a "Path to success" image showing that progress is not linear.
Copy the "My pathway to success graph" (Resource 16). x 2 per participant.
Write each participant's name on two graphs and a skill they're developing
Plan an equipment and/or floor mat layout to accommodate the development and repetition of the skills identified.

Equipment:

Path to success image
My pathway to success graphs (Resource 16) and pencils
Floor mats
Equipment layout plan and relevant apparatus

Delivery

Introduction

- Set out the session equipment layout.
- Show and discuss the meaning of the "Path to success" image.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter concluding that dips, obstacles and setbacks are to be expected when learning new skills.

Warm up 1

- Pair up each participant with another who is due to develop the same or a similar skill to them in the main activity.
- Pairs jog on the spot side by side in a floor or mat space away from apparatus.
- Give the letter command 'R' then count down 10 seconds in which time pairs are expected to form an R/r shape. After 10 seconds, gymnasts continue jogging then repeat this activity for the letters E, S, I, L, I, E, N, C and E.
- Whole group review of the warm up activity prompted by questions such as:
 - What was the hardest letter to form in 10 seconds?
 - How did you react when you didn't form a letter in 10 seconds?
 - Did any pairs struggle to form an 'E' the first time but go on to form a successful 'E' by the third command? What helped you eventually succeed?
 - Why do you think I deliberately only gave 10 seconds to form each letter?
 - What does resilience mean, and did you show any in the warm up? How?
 - If not, how could you deal with challenges more resiliently going forward?

Warm up 2

- Lead a head to toe stretch sequence building up to japana flat, bridge and splits.
- Participants share the challenges they faced during the stretching episode. Find out how they responded when it got tough to hold japana, bridge or splits as near to the final position as they could get. Conclude on who will have made the most progress out of the gymnasts who worked through the difficulties and those who gave up as soon as they found the skills tough to hold.

Teaching & safety points

Dips, obstacles and setbacks are a key part of everyone's journey to success because these are the point at which most learning occurs to move us forward!

Use low/flat body shapes making basic contact to form letters i.e. no weight taking.
Continue jogging after 10 seconds even if you've not finished forming a letter.

What emotion did you feel? Did you feel annoyed, frustrated or not bothered?
Maybe it was difficult to shake off frustrations or did it make you more determined to succeed?

What was I testing? Did anyone notice the word that the letter commands spelt out?
Resilience means "to endure and bounce back from a challenge or setback".
The more resiliently you face a challenge, the quicker you'll succeed!

Take it in turns to use the mats as necessary for the more complex stretches.
Think about how you can show resilience as the stretches become more challenging.
Participants require flexibility to perform the final versions of japana, bridge and splits successfully so developing these skills provides a challenge.

Values - resilience

Main activity

- Distribute a blank line graph and pencil to each gymnast and send each pair to the place in the hall where they will work to develop their first named skill.
- Explain that participants will plot their own 'path to success' line graph for the skill identified on their sheet. Identify a volunteer to perform the first two repetitions of their named skill and agree a score out of 10 for each repetition. Use their graph to show how to plot each score and join the points with a line.
- Highlight:
 - Take it in turns in your pair to use the working space. Plot your results when your partner is working so you have natural rest breaks between repetitions.
 - Keep all pieces of paper and pencils away from the working area.
 - Perform up to 15 repetitions.

The horizontal axis numbers the skill repetitions up to 15 and the vertical axis shows a score up to 10 for each repetition with grid lines allowing for the plotting of half marks.

Ask for help if you need support to plot your scores!

If you don't take those natural rests your performance will start to dip as you tire.

Ten repetitions will be enough to review your path to success.

Input teaching points relevant to the skills the gymnasts are developing.

Development

- Bring the graphs together to analyse the "paths to success". Identify that very few show a perfect linear line and what this has to do with resilience i.e. if we accept setbacks are a natural part of learning then we'll find it easier to face challenges.
- Distribute a second blank line graph naming a further ability relevant skill. Adapt partnerships and the equipment layout as necessary to facilitate for second round of skills and send each pair to their new working area.
- Participants work on their second skill and plot a line graph.

Avoiding challenge completely or allowing our frustrations to take over when faced with a setback will result in little or considerably slower progress being made.

Aim to bounce back quickly and positively after each setback attempt.

Cool down

- In a safe floor or mat space, pairs repeat a choice of the basic stretches from the warm up whilst comparing their level of resilience in the pulse raising activity to now.
- As a final reflection on resilience, review the second set of graphs to identify that, despite dips, most showed a general upward trend in performance.

Aim to observe how you respond to challenges when you're learning something new in another setting such as the classroom or at home. Focus on remembering that dips and setbacks are key parts of learning to help you face challenges with resilience.

Objective

Explore, create and perform clear group shapes to represent a variety of natural shelters.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Source images of various man made and animal shelters that use natural materials e.g. igloo, den, nest, burrow and naturally existing shelters e.g. cave, tree canopy. and collate them in a format to display.
Source images of snowflake shapes and collate them in a format to display.

Equipment:

Floor mats
Tablet (if available)
Various apparatus e.g. boxes, benches, agility tables, wall bars
Images of natural shelters and snowflakes

Delivery

Introduction

- In pairs, play a co-operative word list memory game based on types of weather.
- Manage feedback from the session starter by collecting an idea for a type of weather from each pair.

Warm up 1

- Pairs jog round the hall in follow my leader formation. Add a “change” command upon which the follower comes to the front to become the new leader.
- Introduce weather-based commands and responses such as:
 - Gust = the leader initiates a faster jog before slowing back down
 - Rain = jog on the spot side by side
 - Breeze = return to the original jog and pace
 - Thunderstorm = side bump then “high ten” with partner
 - Sun = Any basic star shape balance
- Question why we see lightning before hearing thunder?

Warm up 2

- Teach the following pair warm up sequence:
 - Tuck sit facing partner about a metre apart
 - V-sit with hand support touching feet with partner
 - Return to tuck sit
 - Straddle legs into sitting straddle shape
 - Japana to 45° reaching forward to rest hands palm to palm
 - Return to straddle sit
 - Twist into front lying straight shape facing away from each other
 - With hands flat on the floor under your shoulders, straighten arms to lift chest
 - Lower back into a front lying straight shape finish.

Teaching & safety points

The first participant says a type of weather e.g. “rain” then their partner repeats it before adding another weather type e.g. “rain and sun”. Return to the first and repeat the list, adding weather types until the pair has a long list they can repeat.

What was the most unusual weather type your pair thought of when you played the memory game?

The leader is responsible for negotiating their pair safely around the other pairs and through the space.

Jog as fast as you can to create a pitter-patter sound.

Bump the side of the hips gently
Why a star shape? The sun is a star.
Light travels faster than sound so we see the flash before hearing the thunderclap.

Work together in a safe floor space away from the other pairs.

Sit with a tall straight back with legs straight and wide.
Knees point to the ceiling throughout.

You both need to go to your right or both to your left so you part to individual spaces.
This can be done on your elbows instead of your hands for a smaller stretch.
Stretch as long as you can in this final position.

Natural explorers

Main activity

- Identify which of the warm up sequence actions could represent a type of natural shelter e.g. the V-sit joined at the feet could represent a cave entrance or the linked japana could represent a mud hut with a thatched roof.
- Display and discuss the images of further types of natural shelters asking to suggest ideas for additional shelters that are natural in some way.
- Join pairs into fours and lead each group to set up a floor mat area in a space.
- Explain that each group will now explore creating whole group balances to represent natural shelter shapes. Highlight:
 - Each balance should involve every group member.
 - All group members must work at their own ability level.
 - You can involve apparatus if it helps you to form the shelter shape you're trying to represent.
 - Consider how to best position mats.
 - Remember safety considerations if balances involve weight taking.
- Groups explore balance shelter ideas. As they work, encourage variety in exploration by guiding each group to identify if the shelters they're creating represent man and/or animal made shelters that are built from natural materials and/or naturally existing shelters.

Think about the types of shelter that animals and/or humans could seek out if needing protection from predators or extreme weather such as that listed in our memory game.

Base your balances on the shelter images displayed or come up with your own ideas to represent shelters that naturally exist or are made using natural materials.

Weight taking considerations:

- The most stable balances cover large surface areas with many points of contact.
- Only show positions within your group contact shapes that you can hold alone.
- Place hands, knees and/or feet shoulder width apart in relevant base positions.
- Grip each other's wrists to make any arm connections.
- Plan an exit method for each contact shape.
- Take others' weight within your strength capabilities.
- Check the base position is stable before applying weight.
- Apply weight over the base's contact points and never in the middle of the back.
- Enter and exit contact shapes slowly and with control.

Development

- Groups select their favourite shelter balance to be photographed so they can evaluate and refine the performance.
- Lead each group to perform their refined balance to the other groups with observers identifying the type of shelter on show.

Does the balance clearly show the shape of the shelter you are aiming to represent? Which parts of the shape do you particularly need to refine to show your idea clearly?

Would the shelter being represented be man or animal made using natural materials or would it exist naturally?

Cool down

- Display the snowflake shapes and challenge groups to work at their floor area to copy 1 - 2 of the shapes as a group.
- Encourage participants to look around them when they're in natural settings going forward to notice naturally existing and man or animal made shelters.

Use basic actions and basic contact to replicate the shapes you select.

Points of contact

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

18

Objective

Explore, create, develop and link positions of stillness on one, two, three and four points of contact.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

N/A

Equipment:

Floor mats
A beanbag per person
A whiteboard divided into four sections for recording position of stillness ideas on one, two, three and four points of contact

Delivery

Introduction

- Think about all the different body parts on which they can balance.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter by collecting ideas for the different body parts on which we can balance e.g. feet, tummy, bottom, back, knees etc.

Warm up 1

- Participants travel individually around the hall using a basic action of their choice.
- Introduce number commands “one”, “two”, “three” and “four” upon which participants pause in a space to hold a basic position of stillness on the corresponding number of body parts.
- Identify that the body parts touching the floor in positions of stillness are called points of contact then continue the activity using the ideas shared in the session starter to show variety in the points of contact they use.

Warm up 2

- Teach the following warm up sequence:
 - Sitting pike shape
 - Tucked or piked V-sit with hand support
 - Sitting pike shape
 - Turn over sideways to front support
 - Lift bottom into down dog then return to front support
 - Turn to side support on one arm then return to front support
 - Turn to side support on the other arm then return to front support
 - Walk the feet in to crouching tuck shape
 - Uncurl slowly to standing
 - One foot stand
 - Standing straight shape finish.
- Identify how many points of contact each action had. Select participants to draw or write up each action onto the corresponding section of the whiteboard.

Teaching & safety points

Hold each position of stillness for 3 seconds before continuing travelling action.

For each “one” command, can you balance on a different single body part?
For each “two”, “three” and “four” command, can you use a different body part for each point of contact?

Work individually in a floor space and hold each position for 3 seconds.

Place head between arms and push heels into the floor.

Lift the head last.
Choose any basic one foot balance e.g. T balance

The warm up sequence included actions on one, two, three and four points of contact.

Points of contact

Main activity

- Set up the floor mats with one per individual or one mat between two if needed.
- Work at their individual ability level to explore, create and develop further positions of stillness on one point of contact. Suggest actions to suit the range of abilities as necessary e.g. bent leg dish, dish and arch, V-sit with no hand support, single knee balance. Invite participants to add each new idea to the whiteboard if it was held for 3 seconds.
- Repeat to explore, create and develop further positions of stillness on two points of contact giving a range of suggestions as necessary e.g. standing star shape, low lunges with both legs – forwards and sideways, frog balance, front support with one arm and the opposite leg lifted, half lever, handstand.
- Repeat to explore, create and develop further positions of stillness on three points of contact giving a range of suggestions as necessary e.g. back support raising a leg at a time towards the vertical, shoulder stand with hips supported, headstand with knees bent, half lever with one foot only raised etc.
- Repeat to explore, create and develop further position of stillness on four points of contact giving a range of suggestions as necessary e.g. front and back support, headstand with one leg raised into position, bridge etc.

If sharing a mat, take it in turns to work practically. Use waiting time to add the previous idea to the whiteboard and/or plan the next idea.

Which different body parts can you safely use as a single point of contact? Can you come up with a position of stillness for each?

Encourage participants to seek inspiration from the whiteboard.

How many positions of stillness can you find that balance on two different points of contact?

How many positions of stillness can you find that balance on three different points of contact?

How many positions of stillness can you find that balance on four different points of contact?

Can you find any positions of stillness that balance on five or more points of contact?

Development

- Individually select their favourite position of stillness on one, two, three and four points of contact to link into a sequence.
- Organise into pairs to share their sequences with one another. When in the observing role, check the performer's sequence for a position of stillness on one, two, three and four points of contact and provide feedback on the position of stillness that they thought was the most original.

Select ideas that you can consistently hold for 3 seconds and that use a range of different body parts as the points of contact.

Take it in turns to perform and observe in your pair with the observer sitting in a safe place off the mat.

Which of your partner's position of stillness was the most interesting? Why?

Cool down

- Collect a beanbag to balance on their head in a space before moving slowly through a basic position of stillness on one point of contact to a basic position of stillness on two, three then four points of contact.
- Repeat the activity balancing the beanbag on a different body part.
- As a final reflection, verbally share ideas for their favourite position of stillness on one, two, three and four points of contact.

Aim to keep the beanbag balanced whilst holding and transitioning to each position. Can you also move back through the positions of stillness on three then two then one point of contact before removing the beanbag from your head?

Can you balance the beanbag on a shoulder, your back, a hand, a foot etc.?

By thinking about using different body parts as points of contact we've created many new and original positions of stillness.

Pair composition

Objective

Compose pair sequences and develop them using compositional devices such as unison, cannon, matching, mirroring and relationships.

Is your session inclusive?

Preparation:

Copy and cut up sufficient slips showing the different types of gymnastics actions (Resource 19) for each pair to be able to select four slips at random.

Equipment:

Floor mats
Types of gymnastics actions slips (Resource 19)

Delivery

Introduction

- Organise in to matching ability pairs and lead each pair to set out a floor area of one or two mats in a space.
- From sitting tuck shape side by side on their mats, straighten one leg forward in a way that matches their partner and then in a way that mirrors their partner.
- Introduce session them and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter to conclude that matching means to copy a partner exactly and mirroring means to shows a reflection of their position.

What is the difference between matching and mirroring your partner?
In this example, straighten the same leg to match whereas mirroring involves both straightening either the inside or outside leg so you reflect each other.

Warm up 1

- Come up with various pulse raising actions that can be performed on the sport. E.g. march, jog, hop, jumping jacks.
- Pairs select three ideas to link in to a repeatable warm up sequence. E.g. 8 x march, 4 x jumping jack, 2 x hop on each foot and repeat.
- Introduce unison as two or more people performing the same action at the same time and challenge participants to refine the performance of their warm up sequence to show unison throughout.
- Share techniques used to improve their ability to perform in unison. E.g. counting facing each other so they can watch for timing.

Work side by side on mats spaced out sufficiently to perform your actions.
Think about what techniques you can use to improve your pair's ability to perform in unison.

Warm up 2

- Invite each pair to collect four types of gymnastics action slips at random.
- Pairs create a warm up sequence of four basic gymnastics actions by linking one of each action shown on the slips. For example, if slide, turn, roll and shape are picked, the warm up sequence could be a slide from sitting tuck shape to sitting pike shape, push to back support and turn to front support, lower to front lie and log roll once to finish in a stretched front lying straight shape.

Select basic actions that work to stretch the whole body.

Consider spacing in relation to partners and mats at all times. Slides might be more effectively performed on the floor space around your mat.

Keep the types of gymnastics actions slips off the floor and return them as soon as they are memorised or accounted for in your sequence.

Pair composition

Main activity

- Pairs choose a gymnastics skill to link into their sequence. E.g. cartwheel.
- Pairs refine their ability to perform the sequence in unison.
- Pairs use the learning from the session starter to also incorporate moments of matching and mirroring into their sequence.

Select a skill reflective of your ability that you can both perform with good quality.

Draw upon the techniques shared for perfecting unison at the end of warm up 1.

To match effectively, check that you're performing the relevant actions the same down to the finest details such as hand positions.

To mirror effectively, work out where the imaginary mirror sits between you in the relevant actions so you can reflect each other accurately.

Development

- Introduce cannon as two or more people performing the same action or sequence at different times, typically one after the other.
- Pairs also incorporate 1 or 2 moments of cannon into their sequence.
- Recap that participants were asked to work side by side in their pairs when creating the warm up sequence and may have since performed facing each other to aid performing in unison. Introduce that side by side and facing are different examples of pair relationships that can be shown.
- Ask participants to identify and demonstrate any other pair relationships they've automatically included when composing their sequence or that they can think of. E.g. back to back, in a queue.
- Pairs evaluate and adapt their sequences to show at least two different relationships.
- Pairs repeat the final sequence to help them memorise it in readiness for further development in the following session.

It could be that an individual finishes an action or sequence of actions before the next starts or one could start an action or sequence of actions immediately followed by the second.

If you've automatically included changes, can you adapt your sequence to deliberately include another?

The final sequence should include the four actions inspired by the types of actions slips you picked, the one additional gymnastics skill chosen in your pair, moments of clear unison, cannon, mirroring and matching and two or more different relationships.

Cool down

- Lead group to pack away the mats safely.
- In a large circle facing inwards or one straight line side by side, explore ideas for performing whole body stretches in cannon. E.g. step into a low lunge on right leg with each person holding their position for three seconds before stepping back to standing then repeating on the left leg.
- As a final reflection, pairs consider which movement pattern they most enjoyed exploring when developing their sequence. Choose pairs to share their thoughts.

Aim to create a rhythm in the movements around the circle or along the line like in a Mexican wave!

Can you explain why you particularly enjoyed exploring your chosen movement pattern?

Group composition

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

20

Objective

Compose group sequences and develop them using compositional devices such as cannon, formations and copy, complement and contrast.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

N/A

Equipment:

Floor mats

Delivery

Introduction

- Organise in to the pairs they worked in during the pair composition session and lead each pair to set out a floor area of one or two mats in a space.
- Pairs mentally and verbally recall their final sequence from the pair composition session. (1)
- Introduce session theme and objective.

Warm up 1

- On mats, march or jog on the spot in unison with their partner in a chosen relationship (side by side or facing)
- Add in gym shape commands i.e. “straight”, “star”, “tuck”, “pike” and “straddle” upon which pairs respond by performing that shape at the same time for 3 seconds before resuming their march or jog. (1)
- Explain that participants have so far copied each other and that copy makes up one of the ‘3Cs’ with the other two being complement and contrast. Ask what complement and contrast could mean when working in pairs and give gym shape examples. Conclude complementing means to perform different but related actions whilst contrasting means to perform completely unrelated actions. (2)
- Return to the warm up activity replacing gym shape commands with “copy”, “complement” and “contrast”. Pairs choose gym shapes to use in response. (3)

Warm up 2

- Give a stretch or mobilisation activity for pairs to perform showing copying e.g. eight arm circles forwards on each side then pairs think of their own stretch or mobilisation activity to perform in copying.
- Give a stretch or mobilisation activity for pairs to perform showing complementing e.g. one folds from standing straight shape into pike fold with the other folding from standing star shape into standing straddle shape then pairs think of their own stretch or mobilisation activity to perform in complementing.
- Participants select one final stretch or mobilisation activity to perform in contrast to their partner and then swap to perform their partner’s stretch.

Teaching & safety points

(1) The sequence included four different types of gymnastics actions e.g. jump, turn, roll and balance, one additional gymnastics skill chosen in your pair, moments of clear unison, cannon, mirroring and matching and two or more different relationships.

- (1) Keep the actions basic and show variety in the ways you perform the shapes e.g. if you show a standing pike shape in response to a “pike” command, can you show the next shape kneeling, sitting or lying down on your front, back or side?
- (2) Using the context of our warm up activity as an example, if a “complement” command is given, you and your partner could respond by performing the same gym shape in a different way e.g. you could perform a standing star shape if your partner performs a lying star shape whereas, if a “contrast” command is given, you and your partner would respond by performing different fun gym shapes.
- (3) Continue to use basic gym shape actions in response to the 3C commands.

Aim to show a flat back in pike or straddle fold.

Select an activity that stretches or mobilises a muscle group or joint not covered by the stretch and mobilisation activities implemented so far.

Group composition

Main activity

- Pairs practically recall their sequence composed in the pair composition session.
- Join pairs and their mats into groups of four. Each pair within the new group shows their sequence to the other pair then all four work together to incorporate the most effective parts of both the pair sequences into a new group sequence.
- Select a group to help demonstrate how to explore cannon more creatively now they're in fours. Show how they could move out of the order in which they're positioned (one could move followed by four then two then three). Groups then adapt or add a moment of cannon to their sequence to reflect their learning from the demonstration.
- Groups use the learning from the warm up activities to check they have moments of copying in their sequence and then adapt the sequence to add moments of complementing and contrasting.
- Identify the difference between relationships and formations i.e. relationships are how individuals position themselves in relation to one another such as facing or back to back whereas formations are the shapes the whole group makes (line, zigzag, triangle, circle). Challenge groups to adapt the formations in their sequence to work in at least two different whole group shapes.

Focus on safely spacing the new sequence and make sure it includes four different types of actions, one additional gymnastics skill you can all perform with good quality, moments of clear unison, cannon, mirror and match and two different relationships.

You can even show cannon with more than one group member moving at a time (e.g. one could move followed by four and two together followed by three).

This allows each group member to choose actions to include e.g. adapt a unison standing star shape to show complementing by all doing different star shape actions such as standing star, side support in star, headstand with star legs and cartwheel.

If your group naturally included a change in the group formation when constructing the new sequence, adapt it to incorporate a third whole group formation. Also, you can be extra creative by thinking about the different relationships you can show in each new formation e.g. in a line, you could be side by side or one behind the other etc.

Development

- Groups go through their sequence to improve the performance quality ready for showing the other groups.
- Organise groups to show their sequences with observers sitting in a safe space away from the performers. After each performance, observers provide feedback on the compositional device they felt the group used most effectively.

It's important for each participant to memorise their role within the sequence so the whole group can show off their use of compositional devices to best effect.

Which compositional device do you think the group used most effectively? How did they use it? Why was this effective?

Cool down

- Pack away the mats.
- Rearrange into groups of six then give a whole body stretch to perform in a chosen group formation (e.g. low lunges on both legs – forwards and sideways in a diagonal line formation). Repeat twice with groups selecting a different group formation in which to perform each stretch.
- As a final reflection on composition, highlight the varied sequences resulting from groups having the same set of tasks and the extent to which they therefore become more interesting through the exploration of compositional devices.

Can you also perform each stretch showing a different relationship in each new group formation e.g. three pairs back to back in a diagonal line, face one another in a circle and work side by side in a line? Perhaps you could also move into your stretches in cannon in a way other than one at a time in a logical order.

Weight on hands 1

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

21

Objective

Participants explore, create and develop their ability to perform gymnastics actions that involve taking weight on their hands.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Source images of various gymnastics actions in a format that can be shared with the group.

Equipment:

Floor mats
Images of gymnastics actions

Delivery

Introduction

- Participants view the images of gymnastics action to pick out the floor skills in which more than half the gymnast's weight is taken on their hands.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter to verbally share and/or point out examples of weight on hands actions taken or adapted from those in the images.

Warm up 1

- Move individually around the hall space using a basic travel action of their choice e.g. march, jog, skip.
- Add in a "freeze" command upon which participants hold a basic static shape using both hands among the contact points for 3 seconds before travelling again.
- Select and share a range of response actions in which at least half of the body weight was clearly taken on the hands.

Warm up 2

- Teach the following warm up sequence: (1)
 - Sit in pike shape implementing wrist mobilisation activities
 - Piked V-sit with hand support
 - Lower and push up to back support (2)
 - Turn through side support to front support
 - Walk the feet in to crouching tuck shape
 - Bunny jump (3)
 - Uncurl to standing straight shape (4)
 - Any basic one-foot balance.
 - Standing straight shape finish
- Altogether analyse each of the warm up sequence actions to identify those that involved taking more than half of the body weight on their hands.
- Repeat the sequence adapting 1 - 2 of the other actions to take more than half their weight on their hands e.g. lift the hips off the floor in sitting pike shape by pushing down on the hands placed on the floor either side of the legs. (5)

Teaching & safety points

Can you spot any actions that could be adapted to take more than half the gymnast's weight on their hands e.g. single knee balance placing the hands on the floor in front?

Can you show a different shape using both hands among the contact points each time the command is given?

- (1) Work individually in a floor space.
- (2) Lift the hips upwards.
- (3) Keep knees and feet together throughout.
- (4) Lift the head last.
- (5) Some of the actions in the sequence involve taking about half the body's weight on the hands. Can you adapt any of those actions so they clearly involve taking more than half the body's weight on the hands e.g. lift a leg in front or back support?

Weight on hands 1

Main activity

- Set up the floor mats so they can each work at an individual mat (or one mat between two).
- Lead the group through progressions for any recognised gymnastics actions involving more than half the body's weight being taken on the hands that would be safe for all the group members to develop e.g. frog balance, forward roll, headstand with knees bent, bridge, backward roll, half lever.
- Individually explore and create further ability relevant gymnastics actions in which more than half of the body's weight is taken by the hands.
- Highlight/share original ideas to inspire further creativity.

Participants sharing a mat will need to take it in turns to work practically with the other observing and providing feedback.

Give teaching points as relevant to each action explored.

Draw upon the ideas from the introduction and warm up. Think about adapting actions which don't take more than half the body weight on the hands e.g. those that can do front splits or are close to the full position could hold the action with the hips just off the floor by pushing down on the hands on either side.

Development

- Choose to either:
 - 1) Continue developing ability relevant recognised gymnastics actions in which more than half of the body's weight is taken on the hands.
 - 2) Continue creating original gymnastics actions in which more than half of the body's weight is taken on the hands.
 - 3) Link gymnastics actions in which more than half of the body's weight is taken on the hands into an individual or pair sequence.

Can you incorporate recognised gymnastics actions and actions you've created?
If working in pairs, make sure you space the sequence on and around the mats.

Cool down

- Perform a variation of the warm up sequence:
 - Sit in pike shape implementing wrist cool down activities
 - Tucked V-sit with hand support
 - Lower and push up to back support
 - Turn through side support to front support
 - Lift the bottom into down dog
 - Return to front support and walk the feet in to crouching tuck shape
 - Uncurl to standing straight shape
 - Rise on to tiptoes and hold.
- As a final reflection, individuals verbally describe their favourite weight on hands actions that they developed or created in this session to another gymnast.

Work individually in a floor or mat space.

Place the head between the arms and push heels down towards the floor.

Stretch as tall as possible.

Weight on hands 2

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

22

Objective

Participants explore, create, develop and link different ways of involving apparatus in the performance of weight on hands gymnastics actions.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Plan a safely spaced equipment layout for the session using the full range of available apparatus.

Equipment:

Various gymnastics apparatus (boxes, benches, agility tables, wall bars, floor beams, floor mats)
A whiteboard titled "Involving apparatus in the performance of weight on hands actions"
Board pens

Delivery

Introduction

- Set out the session equipment layout.
- Participants recall their favourite action that takes more than half the body weight on their hands from the first weight on hands session.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter, verbally sharing ideas for performing their favourite action involving the apparatus. For each idea, record on the whiteboard the way in which the apparatus would be used (e.g. note 'on' if a frog balance on a table top is shared or "dismount" if a participant suggests a cartwheel ¼ turn off the end of a bench).

Warm up 1

- Participants choose a basic whole-body action to do on the spot e.g. march or jog.
- Give the commands 'front support', 'back support', 'bunny jump' and 'V-sit with hand support'. Upon each command, participants involve an apparatus item in performing that action before continuing the whole-body action in a space. Note any new ways the apparatus is used e.g. "obstacle" if a front support is shown with the feet on the floor on one side of a bench and the hands on the floor the other side or "along" if a gymnast travels along a floor beam using bunny jumps.

Warm up 2

- Highlight the new ways to involve apparatus and how all the actions given as commands came from the last session's warm up sequence.
- Participants use their favourite ideas from the warm up activity to reconstruct the weight on hands session arm up sequence to involve the apparatus: (1)
 - Sit in pike shape implementing wrist mobilisation activities
 - Piked V-sit with hand support (2)
 - Lower and push up to back support
 - Turn through side support to front support
 - Walk the feet in to crouching tuck shape
 - Bunny jump
 - Uncurl to standing straight shape
 - Any basic one-foot balance (3)
 - Standing straight shape finish.
- Note and highlight new ways of involving the apparatus as they arise.

Teaching & safety points

When you've remembered your action, look around the apparatus layout to consider how you could perform that action involving the different pieces of apparatus.

Our combined aim for the session is to find at least ten different ways of involving the apparatus in the performance of our weight on hands actions.

Work individually in safe floor or mat space.

Take responsibility for safely spacing ideas. Consider whether there is a safe space to perform if others are working at the piece of apparatus. If there isn't enough space, move to a piece of apparatus that does have space and adapt ideas for that action accordingly.

(1) Work individually, moving freely. Look for a safe space when using the apparatus and floor space.

(2) Use any combination of floor and apparatus adding in basic actions to travel across the floor space in between.

(3) In the previous weight on hands session, we adapted some of the sequence actions, so they took more than half the body's weight on the hands. Try to add in these adaptations.

Weight on hands 2

Main activity

- Explore adapting the ability relevant actions developed in the main activity of the previous weight on hands session to involve the pieces of apparatus in different ways. Highlight, share and note any new ways they involve the apparatus e.g. note “hang” if a participant holds onto a wall bar and lifts their legs into a tuck, pike or straddle lever position, “over” if forward rolls over a floor beam onto a mat or “part weight” if a static action partly in contact with the floor and partly in contact with the apparatus is performed.
- Part way through the activity, review how many ways of involving apparatus in the performance of weight on hands actions have been noted on the whiteboard to further inspire exploration.

Mats are there to cushion parts of the body as needed during your weight on hands actions. Ask for a mat to be added/moved if there isn't one where you want to explore.

Work individually, moving freely around the layout, remembering to find a safe space when using the apparatus and floor space.

Start by exploring the idea you thought of in the session starter activity and use the growing whiteboard list of ways to involve the apparatus to inspire further ideas.

Development

- Challenge the group to individually link 2 – 4 weight on hands actions involving apparatus in different ways into a sequence using additional actions to move between the apparatus as necessary.

Work individually, moving freely around the layout, remembering to find a safe space when using the apparatus and floor space.

Cool down

- Sit along one side of the space to observe a participant demonstrating their sequence. Analyse the ways in which they involved the apparatus in performance of their weight on hands actions and whether the way in which they involved the apparatus increased or decreased the amount of weight taken on their hands.
- In pairs, march on the spot facing each other sharing how they involved the apparatus in performance of their weight on hands actions in their sequence.
- Lead whole body stretches and wrist mobilisations whilst sharing with a partner how the amount of weight taken on their hands in each sequence action was changed by the way they involved apparatus.

Can we tick off or add the ways they involved the apparatus to our whiteboard list?

For example, if a gymnast performs front support with feet on a bench and hands on the floor, the weight taken on the hands increases whereas performing it with hands on a bench and feet on the floor reduces the weight taken on hands to less than half.

Think about the amount of weight taken on the hands when performing each action fully on the floor. When you then involved apparatus in performing that action, did the amount of weight on the hands comparatively increase, stay the same or decrease?

Spells & potions

Objective

Participants “cast spells” to develop their own and others’ performance quality of gymnastics sequences.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Source various children’s books featuring spells and potions
Source images of various gymnastics actions in a format that can be shared with the gymnasts e.g. the British Gymnastics POW! Academy.
Consider a way to display “The neatest gymnast spell” (Resource 23) within the session.

Equipment:

Floor mats
Images of various gymnastics actions
Paper and pencils
Children’s books featuring spells and potions
A way of displaying “The neatest gymnast spell”

Delivery

Introduction

- Set out one floor mat per person individually spaced in the hall (one between two if needed).
- Identify books that feature spells or potions (The Worst Witch, Oliver Moon, Harry Potter, Room on the Broom)
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter to list children’s books featuring spells or potions and show some examples. Identify various outcomes of storybook spells and potions (turn people into frogs, fix broken objects, unlock doors, make people do the opposite, locate lost items).

Warm up 1

- Identify if any of the spells or potions discussed inspire a warm up activity. For example, maybe cast an ‘opposite spell’ so gymnasts have to respond to all warm up instructions in an opposite manner (if the instruction is to move on the mats, gymnasts could respond by moving between the mats or they could move in a star shape where the instruction is to move in a straight shape).

Warm up 2

- Teach the following warm up sequence:
 - From standing star shape, low lunge to the right then low lunge to the left
 - Standing star shape
 - Step in to standing straight shape and rise onto tiptoes
 - Lower to crouching tuck shape
 - Walk the hands forwards into front support position
 - Bend the arms to lower into arch shape
 - Lift into box shape on hands and knees
 - Lower the bottom onto the heels to finish in child pose.
- Identify various ways in which book characters cast spells (with a wand, a magic word, a twitch of the nose, a stare of the eyes). Each select a method for role playing the casting and releasing of a spell.
- Arrange into pairs and allocate a mat to work on.
- Gymnasts take it in turns to perform the sequence to their partner with the observer regularly “casting” a spell to turn the performer into stone. When the observer casts a spell, the performer holds the position they’re in until the spell is released.

Teaching & safety points

Work individually moving freely around the hall space.
Your “opposite” responses should involve a basic pulse raising action.

Work individually on a mat or in a floor space.
In the final position, the knee of the lunging leg should be in line with the ankle.

Stretch up as tall as possible.
Can you stay on your tiptoes as you lower to crouch?

Push off from the hands under the shoulders to transfer from arch to box shape.
Keep the hands on the floor so the arms stretch long in front of you.

Tell your partner how you’re going to cast and release the spell before they start. Cast the spell regularly at sensible moments in the sequence to encourage the performer to hold their shapes making sure to release each spell after no longer than 5 seconds.

Spells & potions

Main activity

- Display “The neatest gymnast spell” and the images of gymnastics actions.
- Explain they’ll cast the spell on themselves by turning each of lines 2 - 11 into a corresponding gymnastics action to result in a sequence. Give examples such as line 2 “place your hands shoulder-width apart” could be answered with a box shape, front support, bridge or handstand. Highlight:
- They must work at their own ability level to respond to each line.
- The images of gymnastics actions are displayed to help find actions that answer each line of the spell if they’re stuck for a response.
- Ask for help to interpret each line of the spell if needed.
- Work individually on a mat.
- Set gymnasts off casting their spells.

Each line of the spell refers to a way in which we can show good performance quality in gymnastics so the aim of meeting the spell requirements is to turn yourself into the neatest gymnast!

If and where there is a need for you to share a mat with your partner, take it in turns to practically explore a line of the spell with the partner gathering ideas for how they could respond to the next line.

Development

- As each sequence is finished, challenge to add their own performance quality-based rhyming couplet to the spell and then respond to it by extending their sequence to include corresponding gymnastics actions. Utilise paper and pencils to write down ideas.
- In pairs, take it in turns to perform their spell sequence. The observing gymnast assesses if the performer meets the requirements of each line.

What performance quality words and phrases don’t yet feature in the spell? Could you include a line about showing a horizontal line, a straight back, a precise right angle, pointing fingers towards the toes or knees to the ceiling etc.?

Keep the pencil and paper off your mat and well away from all working gymnasts.

Can you give your partner “a star and a wish” (Identify a line of the spell for which they showed great performance quality and an idea for how they could respond to another line in an even better way next time)?

Cool down

- Identify books that feature potions resulting in the drinker growing or shrinking (George’s Marvellous Medicine, Alice in Wonderland).
- Alternately cast “grow” and “shrink” spells to which participants individually respond in a safe floor or mat space then cast a “silencing spell” that causes the group to lie down, close their eyes and listen to their breathing.
- As a final reflection, review how spells and potions from storybooks have inspired us to improve our performance in this session (hold shapes for longer, stretch more, show control, keep a straight bodyline).

Can you grow in a different direction each time the spell is cast (along the floor, upwards, outward)?

As you read such storybooks going forward, can you spot and share any further possible movement ideas arising from the spells, potions and/or their outcomes?

Obstacles 1

British
Gymnastics

Partner
school
session

24

Objective

Participants work with a partner to explore, create and develop obstacle and negotiation ideas using a range of gymnastics actions.

Is your session
inclusive?

Preparation:

Not applicable

Equipment:

Floor mats

Delivery

Introduction

- Gymnasts think of words and phrases that mean the same as and/or define the terms “obstacle” and “negotiation”.
- Introduce session theme and objective.
- Manage feedback from the session starter to deepen understanding of the terms “obstacle” e.g. define it as a problem, barrier, blocked path etc. and “negotiate” e.g. explain it as to sort out, get around, find a way through.

Warm up 1

- Organise into similar ability pairings then ask partners to number themselves before moving independently from each other around the hall using a basic travel action of their choice (jog, skip, march).
- Add in number commands ‘1 & 2’ upon which the individual of the number called adopts a lying straight shape on their back for their partner to locate, travel to and negotiate using a basic action e.g. leap over their partner before both members of each pair return to travelling independently around the space.
- Develop the activity by adopting a front support position obstacle when their number is called.
- Develop the activity by choosing their own obstacle shapes for their partner to negotiate when their number is called.

Warm up 2

- Teach the following warm up sequence:
- Sitting pike shape
- Back support
- Lower to sitting tuck shape
- Lower to dish
- Roll to arch
- Push up to front support
- Jump feet to crouching tuck shape
- Uncurl to standing straight shape
- Step out into standing star shape
- Low lunges on both legs – sideways

Teaching & safety points

If your number is called, move into a safe space before adopting your obstacle position and check around you once your partner has safely negotiated the obstacle before getting up to continue travelling.

How can you move under, over or around the front support position using basic gymnastics actions? Can you find a different way to negotiate the shape each time?

Remember that all obstacle and negotiation ideas need to involve basic actions at this stage of the session.

Work individually in a safe floor space.

Lower slowly and under control into the dish position.

Place hands under your shoulders to push up and keep a straight bodyline as you lift.

Lift the head last.

In the final position, the knee of the lunging leg should be in line with the ankle.

Obstacles 1

Main activity

- Lead gymnasts to set up one or two floor mats per pair.
- Identify the warm up sequence actions that could form obstacle shapes for exploring negotiation ideas e.g. sitting pike shape, back support, dish, arch, front support, standing star shape and low lunges.
- Pairs explore ideas for negotiating the flat/low obstacle shapes from the warm up sequence such as the sitting pike shape, arch, dish and/or back support.
- Pairs explore ideas for negotiating the standing/high obstacle shapes from the warm up sequence such as the standing star shape and/or low lunges.
- Pairs explore their own increasingly complex ability relevant obstacle and negotiation ideas.
- If pairs are working responsibly and ready to move on, introduce the idea that the obstacles could be moving. Give them the idea to jump over a log rolling obstacle as a starting point before allowing free exploration.

In your pair, swap regularly between the obstacle and negotiator roles. Remember to:

- Only adopt obstacle shapes that you can hold safely for 5 – 10 seconds.
- Both consider the best positioning on the mat area for each new obstacle shape.
- Check your partner is stable and safe in each obstacle shape before negotiating.
- Only use actions you are proficient at performing to negotiate obstacles.
- Check any negotiation ideas that will involve contacting the obstacle with an adult before trying it out.
- Aim to find different ways of negotiating each obstacle shape.

Make sure you're both clear on how each obstacle will move and be negotiated and agree a plan for safely timing the movement of each action before trying each idea.

Development

- Pairs select two of their favourite obstacle and negotiation ideas to link into a sequence using additional actions to move fluently from one idea to the other.
- Organise for pairs to perform their sequences half at a time with observers watching from a safe position. After pairs perform, manage feedback so observers describe a selection of the most effective or original obstacle and negotiation ideas seen.

Make sure the two selected ideas involve each of you having a chance to be the obstacle and negotiator.

When observing, select one pair to watch throughout their sequence and focus on picking out their most effective or original obstacle and negotiation idea.

Cool down

- March side by side on a mat in pairs. Take it in turns to adopt a whole body stretch obstacle position for their partner to negotiate before both returning to the marching action.
- As a final reflection, highlight the range of obstacle and negotiation ideas that pairs have created in this session and how more ideas can be created when participants work in larger groups in the next session.

Make sure your partner has safely adopted the obstacle before you begin negotiating the shape.