

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.