

Technique

How to Master the Perfect Handstand Through the Use of Proper Body Mechanics

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I. Shoulder Strength

A. Side Lying Manual Scapular Resistance

1. Elevation/Depression
2. Protraction/Retraction
3. Upward/Downward Rotation

B. Shoulder Extension (prone)

Lay face down (prone) with arms to sides. Raise up 6-8 inches with thumbs pointing down. Hold top position for five seconds, then slowly lower down. A weight (1-5 pounds) may be held in each hand.



Perform ____ Sets of ____ Repetitions

C. Shoulder Flexion (prone)

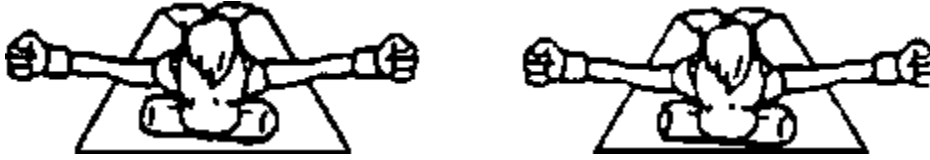
Lay face down (prone) with arms over the head at a 30 degree angle from the head. Raise arms up 6-8 inches with thumbs pointing up. Hold top position for five seconds, then slowly lower down. A weight (1-5 pounds) may be held in each hand.



Perform ____ Sets of ____ Repetitions

D. Prone Flies

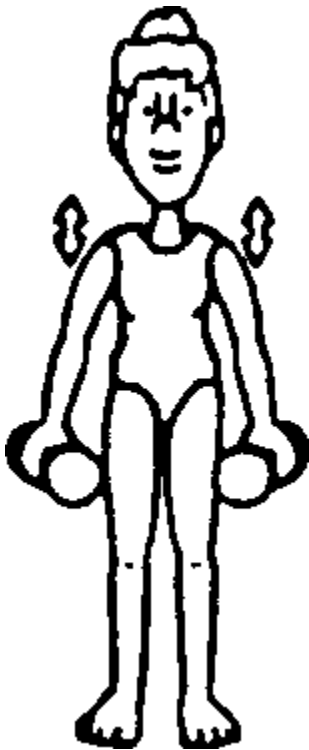
Lay face down (prone with arms straight out from the sides (perpendicular with thumbs pointing up). Raise arms up 6-8 inches. Hold top position for 5 seconds, then slowly lower down. A weight (1-5 pounds) may be held in each hand.



Perform _____ Sets of _____ Repetitions

E. Shoulder Shrugs

With arms next to sides, shrugs shoulders up on a 2-count and lower on a 2-count. Hold a weight in each hand or use rubber tubing.



Perform _____ Sets of _____ Repetitions

F. Shoulder "Extension through the Fingers"

G. Shoulder "Extension through the Fingers " with resistance

II. Upper Extremity Proprioceptive Exercises

Begin this series of exercises once able to perform floor press-ups pain free. Progress from

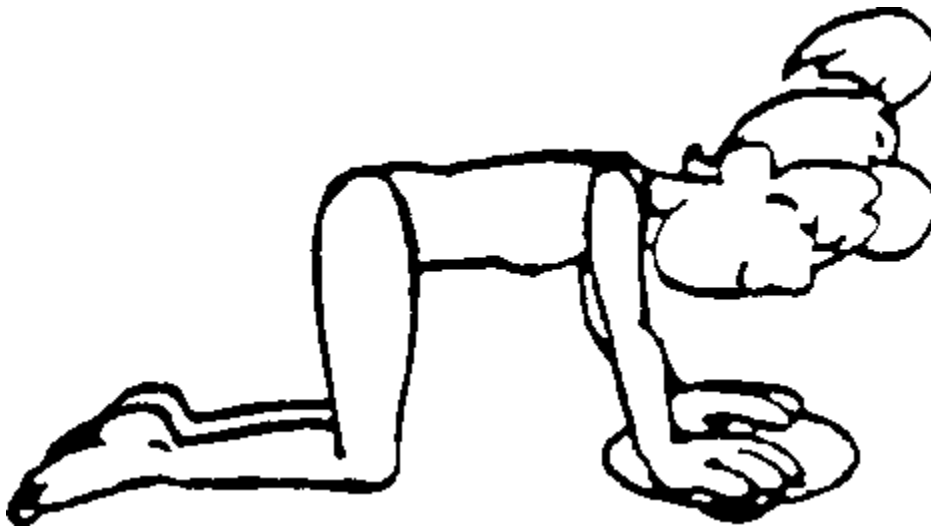
exercise 1 through 5. Start each exercise with eyes open balancing for 15 seconds. Gradually increase the balance time until the drill can be performed for one minute. Once able to perform the skill for one minute with the eyes open, then attempt the exercise with the eyes closed. After being able to balance for one minute with eyes closed, then progress to the next exercise. It is recommended that five to ten repetitions of each exercise be performed three to five times per day.

Another series of drills that may be attempted are wobble board circles. Try to rotate the board so that the edges of the board touch the ground in clockwise and counterclockwise circles. The elbows are to remain straight. The movement comes from the shoulders. Perform the circles for one to three minutes in each direction. Attempt this with eyes open to start and progress to eyes closed. Once able to successfully complete three minutes of circles clockwise and three minutes counterclockwise with the eyes closed, then progress to the next exercise. These circles can be performed three to five times per day.

Other proprioceptive exercises have been performed for the upper extremity. For example, balancing on a 48 inch diameter therapeutic ball or a mini trampoline in addition to the wobble board is routinely performed. However, we feel that the wobble board was the most effective and safest drill to present here. For further explanation of proprioception training, see the discussion on this topic in the lower extremity rehabilitation section of our book.

A. Kneeling Wobble Board Balance/Circles

While kneeling on the floor, balance upper body on a wobble board. Keep shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.



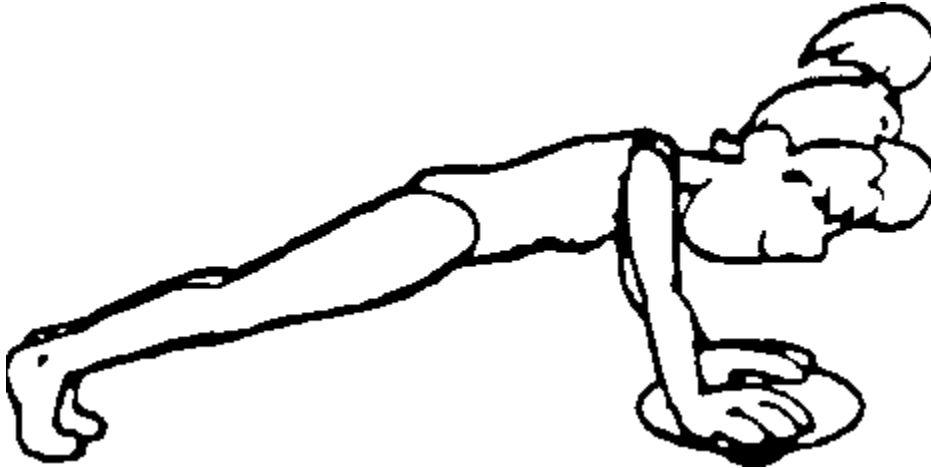
Perform _____ Sets of _____ Repetitions

While keeping shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board, use your shoulders to circle the board clockwise then counterclockwise. Make sure the edges touch throughout the entire circle. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.

Perform _____ Sets of _____ Repetitions

B. Push-up Wobble Board Balance/Circles

While in a push-up position, balance your upper body on a wobble board. Keep shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.



Perform _____ Sets of _____ Repetitions

While keeping shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board, use your shoulders to circle the board clockwise then counterclockwise. Make sure the edges touch throughout the entire circle. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.

Perform _____ Sets of _____ Repetitions

C. Elevated Push-up Wobble Board Balance/Circles

While in an elevated push-up position, balance your body on a wobble board. Keep shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.

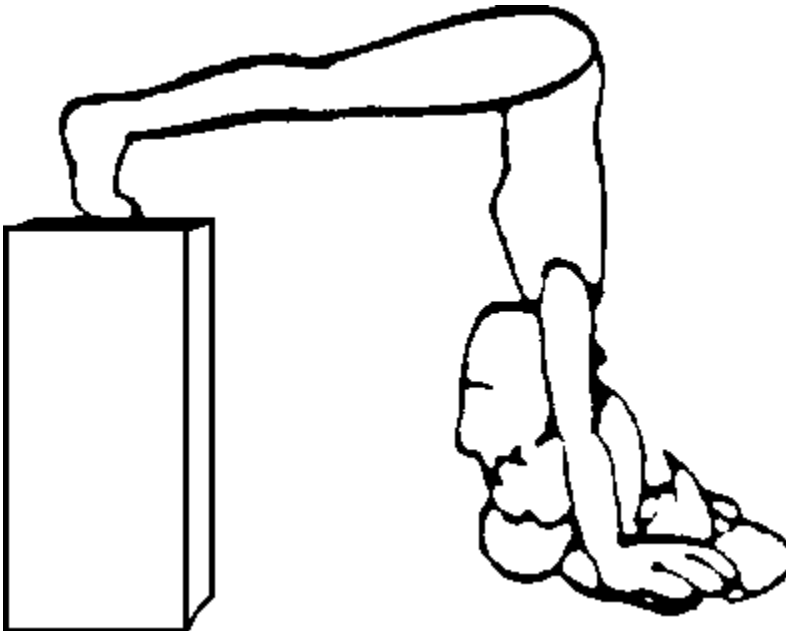


Perform ____ Sets of ____ Repetitions

While keeping shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board, use your shoulders to circle the board clockwise then counterclockwise. Make sure the edges touch throughout the entire circle. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.

D. Piked Handstand Wobble Board Balances/Circles

While in a piked handstand position, balance your body on a wobble board.



Keep shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.

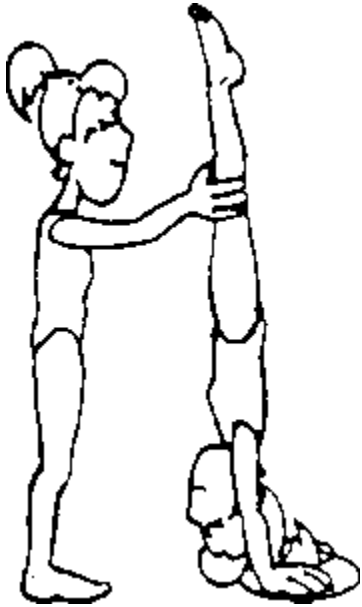
Perform ____ Sets of ____ Repetitions

While keeping shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board, use your shoulders to circle the board clockwise then counterclockwise. Make

sure the edges touch throughout the entire circle. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.

E. Handstand Wobble Board Balance/Circles

While in a handstand position, balance your body on a wobble board. Keep shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.



Perform _____ Sets of _____ Repetitions

While keeping shoulders, elbows, and wrists aligned straight over the board, use your shoulders to circle the board clockwise then counterclockwise. Make sure the edges touch throughout the entire circle. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart or slightly greater than shoulder width apart. Keep eyes open/closed.

III. Trunk Progression - Pelvic Stabilization

A. Pelvic neutral with hips flat

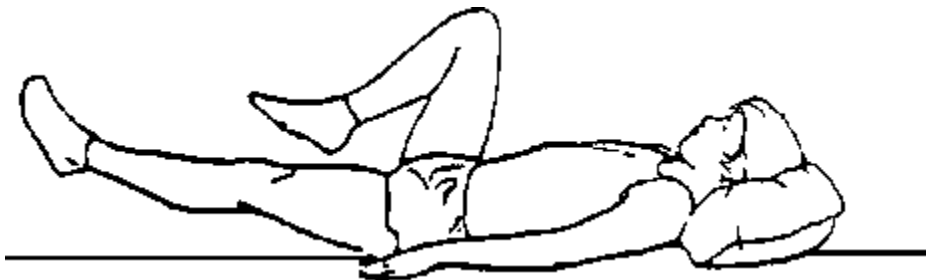
1. Ribs rounded inward* while the thoracic spine presses back (into floor) - arms should be next to side
2. Ribs rounded inward*, thoracic spine presses back, scapula upwards rotated, with arms and shoulders pressed back (into floor) - arms should be over the head, elbows next to the ears



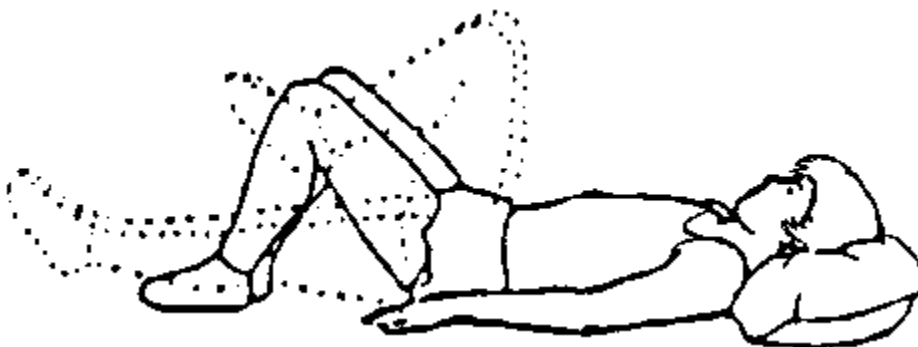
B. Pelvic neutral with one inch single leg raise

Start with both knees bent, then extend one leg out so that the heel is only one inch from the floor. Hold for five seconds. Repeat using the opposite leg.

1. Ribs rounded inward while the thoracic spine is pressed back (into floor) - arms next to the sides
2. Ribs rounded inward while the thoracic spine is pressed back (into floor), scapula upwards rotated, with arms and shoulders pressed back (into floor) - arms next to ears
3. Same as "b" plus: "hip extension through toes" with and without tubing or resistance



B. Pelvic neutral with one inch double leg raise



Same as exercise "B" except using both legs. Begin with knees bent then slowly bring both knees toward chest keeping stomach tight. Then extend legs without touching feet to floor.

**Use upper abdominal muscles to round the ribs inward.*

How to Master a Perfect Handstand Through the Use of Proper Body Mechanics

I. Evaluation of the gymnast's body mechanics

II. Evaluation of the gymnast's technique

III. How to make a correction

A. Flexibility

B. Strength

C. Endurance

D. Proprioception (body awareness)

Functional Training for the Handstand

I. Holds

A. Floor

B. Beam: with and without splits (English and side)

C. Bars

II. Walks and Hops (block drills)

A. Floor

B. Beam

C. Trampoline

III. Arm Lifts (taps and arm lifts)

A. Floor

B. Beam

C. Bars

IV. Pirouettes

A. Floor

B. Beam

C. Bars

V. Band Work

A. Scaling in and out

B. Skills

There are five video tapes available from the authors.

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