

General Gymnastics

Getting Adults Involved in General Gymnastics

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If you have started a Performance Team based on General Gymnastics principals, you know that the sport is based on "Gymnastics for Everyone," but how do you involve adults? Getting started is the hardest part since most adults don't want to be the guinea pigs in your new experiment. You may need to start with members of your coaching staff so that the adults in your gym see other adults performing.

Hint: When you start, make the adult part fun and simple. The adult who watches and may want to join your team may not necessarily have a gymnastic background, and difficult stunts may scare them off.

Another Rule of Thumb: Moms don't want to wear leotards and most adults don't want to flip (with the exception of a few old crazy coaches).

One of the best ways to get adults in, is to start a family General Gymnastics class where mom and dad can take a class with their children. Parents are always seem to be more committed to their children than to themselves-so make sure you have a class for the whole family.

To keep adults interested, you need to make the class fun. As the adults master the basics and overcome their natural inhibitions to perform they will want more challenges. You will need to add complexity to the routine, but always keep those simple parts for new adults. Parents make great bases ("bottom standers") and spotters for pyramid and other partner stunts. If you get the whole family involved, you can even work on family stunts. Parents love interacting with their own children. An added plus to parents working with their own children is that they will probably be more aware of their own child's safety so they make excellent base for their own child.

In order to keep your whole team focused you will need to plan to perform. We try to have a performance about every two months. This gives us time to add new items to the routine, but still have an event close enough that everyone wants to work hard to look good. We try to combine performance with fun family activities. Last February (1996) we took more than 100 performers (about 20 were adults) and 150 spectators to a local amusement park for a performance. After the performance we rented a hall and had a private lunch with entertainment for all 250 people. After lunch everyone enjoyed the park. This was a very popular event. During the lunch we had several inquiries from other adults about joining the team.

As you build the base of participating adults, it becomes easier and easier to recruit more. You will be surprised by the energy and enthusiasm adults add to your performances.

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