

## Determining Direction of Twist

By Larry Gleason



In order for tumblers and trampolinists to be competitive at the advanced and elite level, it is necessary for them to learn multiple somersaults with multiple twists. This task becomes much more difficult, if not impossible, when they perform their front and back somersault twists in opposite directions. Therefore, it is critical for coaches to make sure that their athletes are twisting in the same direction.

One of the apparent causes of this problem is confusion over the twisting direction of a cartwheel and the practice of teaching a barani from an aerial cartwheel. To avoid this, athletes and coaches must realize that **a cartwheel initiated with the RIGHT foot forward and the RIGHT hand down first is actually considered a LEFT twisting skill**. Secondly, the barani should be taught as a front somersault with a late twist. Baranis that are taught from an aerial cartwheel tend to twist too early and usually have a distinct, awkward appearance.

Another common problem is that, even though coaches begin to teach their athletes to twist in the proper direction early in the learning process, athletes will sometimes switch the direction of one of their twists without being aware of it.

Therefore, it is necessary for coaches to periodically check the direction of BOTH front and back twists. It can save a lot of time and trouble in the future.

To check twisting direction, stand to the side of athlete. Have them perform a barani and then an immediate back half or full. If they are twisting all in one direction, you will see their stomach on the barani and then see their back on the first half twist of the back somersault. Or you will see their back and then their stomach if they are twisting in the other direction. **If they turn their BACK toward you at the beginning of BOTH TWISTS, or if they turn their STOMACH toward you at the beginning of BOTH TWISTS, they are twisting in opposite directions and you have a problem.**

If you discover that you have an athlete who is twisting in opposite directions, you must decide to change either their back twisting or their front twisting direction. Although deciding which to change is rather arbitrary, usually it is easier to go back and re-learn the barani rather than the back full.



Seeing this is not always easy and a lot of coaches have trouble seeing direction until they have had some practice. If you are not sure, have another coach help you determine the direction of twist.

Let's get our athletes started out in the right direction!