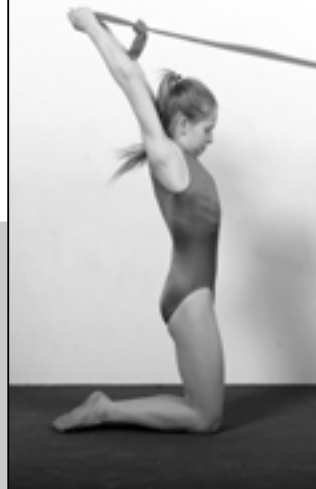


GetFit

BRIAN BAKALAR is one of Region IV's emerging coaches. He is the owner and head coach of Gymnastics Revolution of Bethel, Connecticut. Brian and his staff credit the success of their competitive teams to drills such as these, which are a part of the training program used every day.



Hollow Body Board Drill

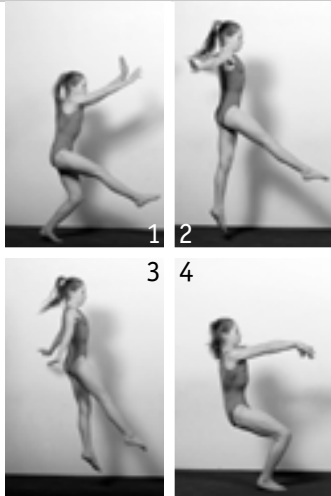
All forward entry vaults should approach the vaulting table with the hands in a low-forward position, and a hollow body. One way to facilitate the position is through the use of an arm circle.

How To:

A simple drill, the gymnast steps forward with one leg, lifting the opposite knee. As the gymnast jumps into the air, joining the knees, the arms circle backward around, ending in a diagonal-low position. The feet are in front, the body leans backward, the torso is hollow.

Key Concepts:

With beginners, use cues such as "scoot the rug forward with your feet," to emulate the approach to the spring board. The arm circle can also be described as a "backward jump rope circle."



Shoulder Pulls with Therabands

This drill is a must for all beginning backward tumblers, and is also heavily used for Yurchenko vaults.

How To:

keeping the arms straight, pull the theraband backward-upward overhead, to the limit of the shoulder's flexibility. Slowly, allow the arms to return. Exercise is "fast-up, slow-down." Head position can be altered to simulate individual skills.

Key Concepts:

The head should be neutral when practicing for tumbling skills, and "in" when working on vault positions.



Press Handstand

Few skills have the relevance across events as the Press Handstand. There is no substitute for spotting when training this skill and drill. This is a combination of balance, strength, and flexibility, and is not to be overlooked when developing young gymnasts. This is also a relatively safe skill for athletes to practice at home.

How To:

There are several variations to help the athlete learn a Press Handstand. The opposite, a "Press Down" works many of the same muscle groups. Slowly lower from a handstand to a straddle stand, or a straddle L. To drastically reduce the stresses on the shoulders, try the Press Handstand with the shoulders against a wall. The greater the shoulder angle, the more the hips and stomach will be isolated.

Key Concepts:

Do not underestimate the importance of flexibility in this skill. Many coaches feel that this skill is more about flexibility and balance than strength!