
To Beam or Not to Beam

by Kristen Augspurger

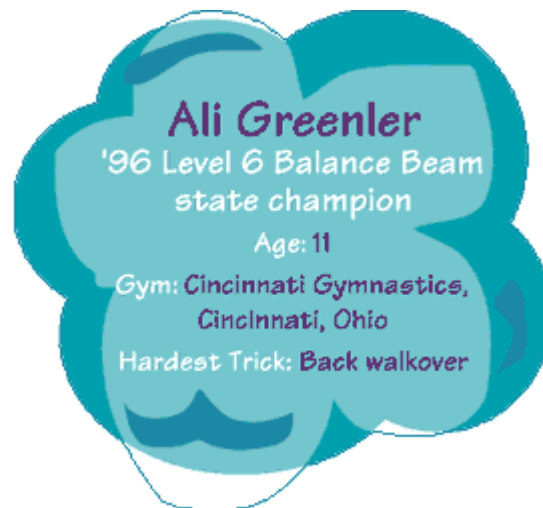
Some live for the moment.

Some close their eyes and pray to stay on.

It is the ever so famous balance beam that can make or break a gymnast in a matter of seconds.

The four-inch wide, sixteen-foot long apparatus that stands in the way of many gymnasts, can bring out the best in some of the most fearless competitors.

Every gymnast at some point has been afraid to get up and perform tricks on the balance beam. We asked some beam experts across the country how they get over their fears and what it takes to be successful on this event.



Ali Greenler, a gymnast from Cincinnati, Ohio, says at times she is afraid when trying new tricks on the balance beam but not for long.

"The way I get over my fear is to stay calm and think through what I am doing," said Greenler.

When in competition on the balance beam, Greenler concentrates on pointed toes and showing off to the judges.

"I am confident when I do my routine. I try to be the best I can be and get the highest score."

Jessica Stevenson, who is from Louisville, Kentucky, trains for her competitive tricks by blocking her fears out and being aggressive.

"I tell myself I can do it and then I just go for it," said Stevenson. "When I am competing, I don't hold anything back. I go for everything 100 percent of the time."



Amy Chow, a member of the United

States senior national team is known for her amazing tricks on the balance beam. She takes every step to be perfect.



"When I am on the balance beam, I say to myself the corrections that I've heard from my coaches," said Chow. "Reciting my problems helps me correct my mistakes."

Amy's tips for improving on the balance beam: Be confident, have total concentration and always strive for improvement.

All of the gymnasts agreed that the balance beam is a challenging event and can be a lot of fun if the challenge

is accepted.

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