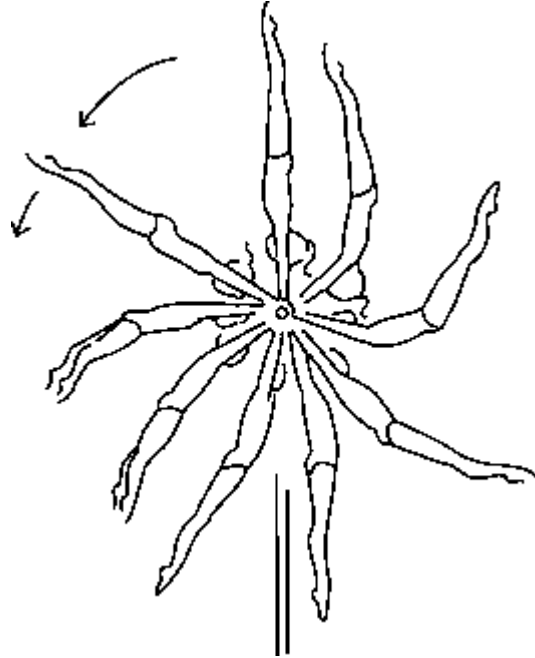

Giant Swing

by John Geddert, Twistars in Lansing, Michigan
 Illustrations by Dr. Larry Nassar



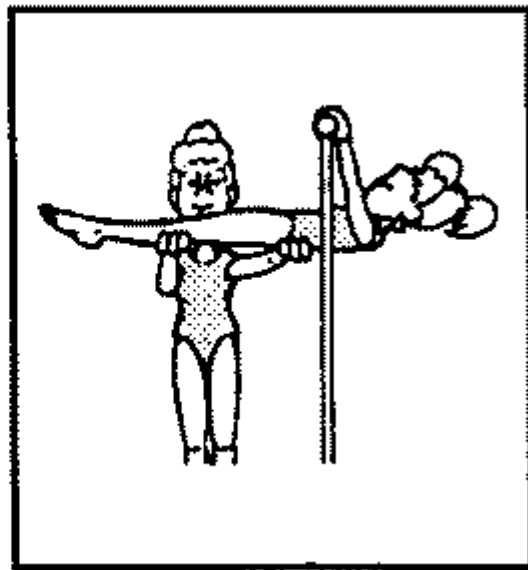
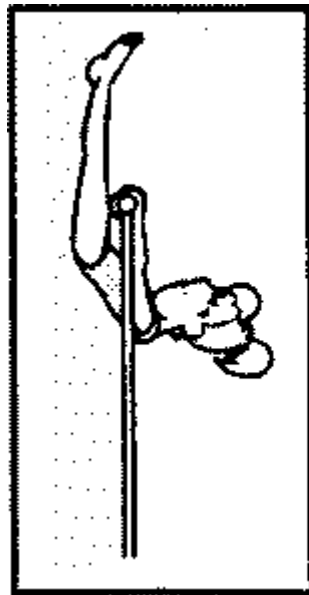
It is becoming increasingly more evident that the "Giant Swing" should be in the category of BASIC BAR SKILLS. Although it is certainly important to be sufficiently conditioned in order to achieve advanced skills on bars:

SWING is absolutely essential.

The following are a few progressions for the BACK GIANT:

1. TAP SWING (WHIP SWING)

The easiest way to get an athlete to understand the concept of the tap swing is to have the coach hold them in a hollow position while they hang on the high bar.



The head should be neutral and the hollow should be a rounding (sucking in) of the chest. After this position is achieved the coach simply releases the gymnast. The gymnast simply RELAXES and the tap will take care of itself.

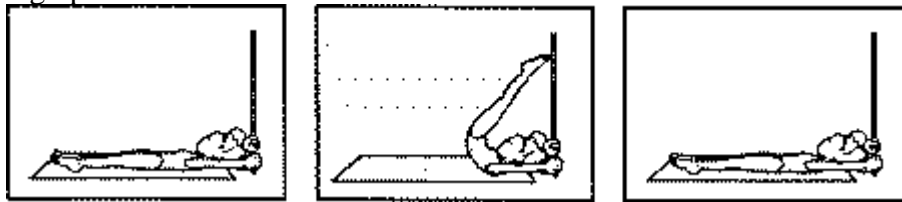
There are 3 positions to progress through in the tap swing:

1. Hollow
2. Slight Hyperextension through a hanging vertical and
3. Lever Up or the acceleration to the up swing.

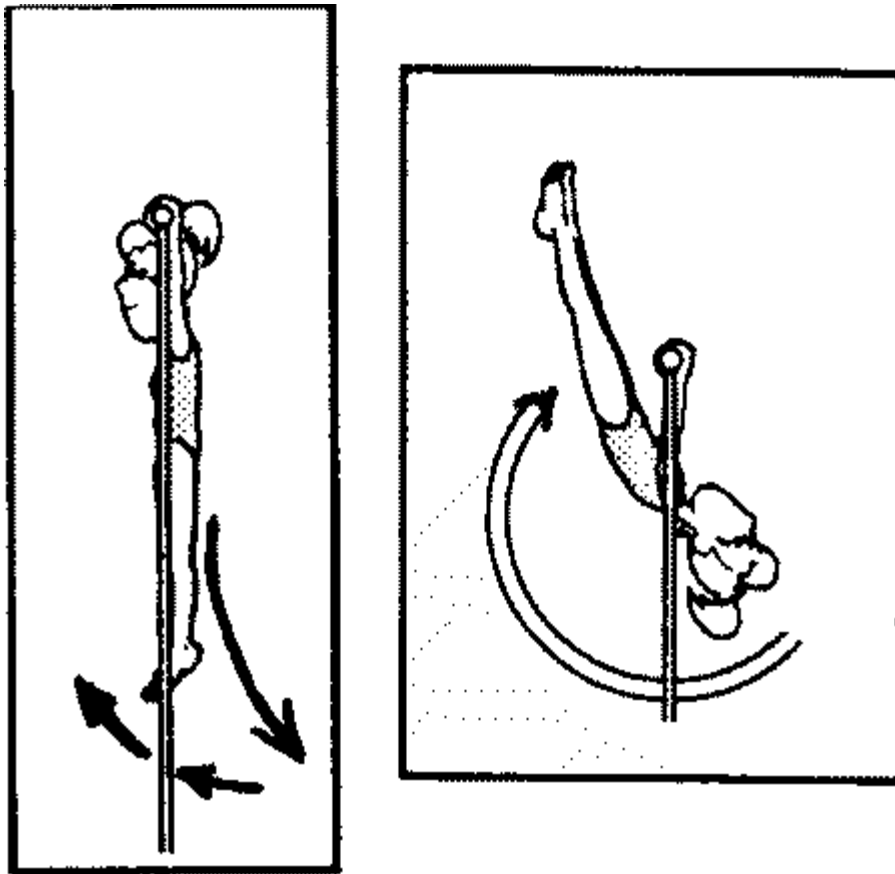
2. LEVER UP

This is the phase where the gymnasts are fighting gravity and thus strength plays an important role. The following are some different ways to strengthen the Lever Up action.

- A. **Prone Lever Ups-** Have the athlete lie on her back while grasping a stationary object with arms extended over head. Initiate the Lever Up action with a slight pike, while pulling from the chest and arms. The body should remain as straight as possible but remember that beginners will rely on piking up more than the advanced athletes.



- B. **Prone Lever Ups with Weights-** Once the athlete can execute 2 or 3 sets of 10 with a completely straight body then it is time to add resistance. Execute the same exercise with the addition of 2-5 pound ankle weights. Never sacrifice body position (form) when adding weights.
- C. **Hanging Lever Ups-** Here the gymnast attains an inverted hang position on a low bar. With assistance she lowers down to horizontal and then pulls back to vertical while maintaining a tight hollow body. The head should remain neutral throughout the exercise. As the athlete progresses in strength the coach can reduce the amount of assistance and or add ankle weights.
- D. **Swinging Lever Ups-** Here the gymnast hangs on a high bar in a slight hyper extended position. The object of this exercise is to violently snap from this shape all the way to the bar: finishing in an inverted hang. From the inverted hang they SLOWLY lower themselves back to the hanging position and repeat.



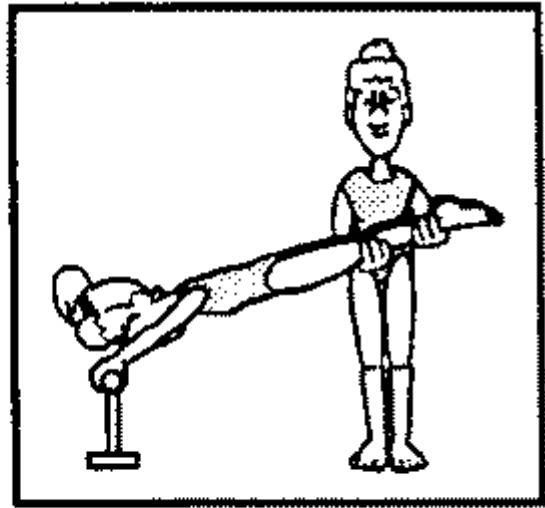
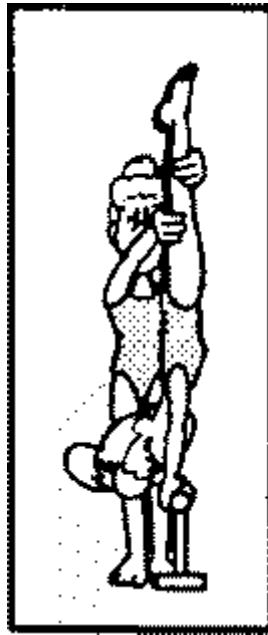
3. Five Point Technique

In teaching a quality back giant it is important that every phase be mastered before adding the individual parts together. The following are five different parts of the back giant:

- A. **Straight body fall**- The initial phase of the giant is establishing momentum. This is accomplished by elevating in the shoulders, pushing the bar away and maintaining a straight body for as long as possible before having to deal with the low bar or the tap swing phase. The body should remain straight for at least 45-90 degrees of swing. Obviously smaller athletes can maintain this position longer than taller ones.

DRILLS

1. Place a floor bar in front of an eight inch skill cushion. From a handstand on the bar, the gymnast practices falling to her belly.
2. From a handstand on a low bar, the gymnast practices falling to horizontal where a coach catches the gymnast in a straight body position.



- B. **Pass as close to the low bar as possible** - Maintain a hollow body past the low bar while passing it as closely as possible. This phase often presents the biggest obstacle for athletes: basically there is a fear of hitting the low bar.

DRILLS

1. Pad the low bar
 2. Tape foam strips to the low bar and have the athlete try to hit them with their feet as they pass by. Gradually reduce the size of the strips as they become more proficient.
- C. **Pass through a hyper extended position by or through vertical**- (see tap swing above) Debate exists as to what is the PERFECT tap swing timing. "Late Tap Swings" maintain the hyperextended position longer and thus the lever up phase is later in the swing: This generally creates more speed over the top, but unless you are careful, it can create a jerky or unsmooth appearance in the giant.
- D. **Lever up** - (see lever up above)
- E. **Late wrist shift at the top** - Shifting the wrists too early has a tendency to slow the giant and thus result in sacrificing body position over the top (belly out: arching).

DRILLS

Grasp a floor bar while laying on your back, lever up with the assistance of a spotter. As the spotter lifts the gymnast to a handstand the gymnast emphasizes a late wrist shift while maintaining a hollow body position.