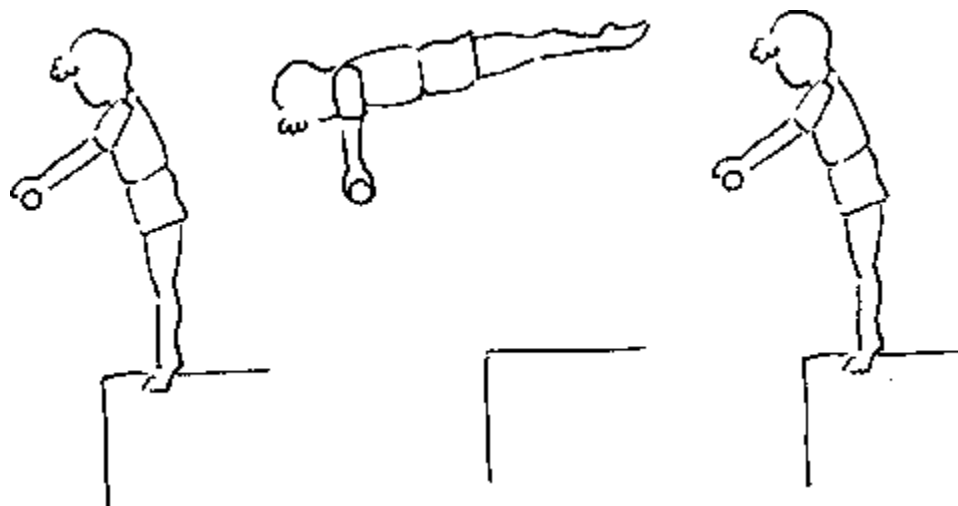

Clear Hip Circle

By Michael T. Jones
B.S. Exercise & Health Science

I have found the following drills to be very effective in teaching the Clear Hip Circle, both from a technical and educational standpoint. With each drill overlapping, thus reinforcing the previous drill, I have found that the gymnasts have an easier time understanding this simplistic approach. Each drill should be thought of as a skill in and of itself and should be mastered before the next drill is introduced. Spend time on the mastery of each drill. This may seem like a long time, but be patient, and in the long run you will have a technically correct Clear Hip Circle. The Clear Hip Circle to handstand takes time and a lot of repetitions, so again be patient and always reinforce each of the drills when working on Clear Hips. Good Luck!

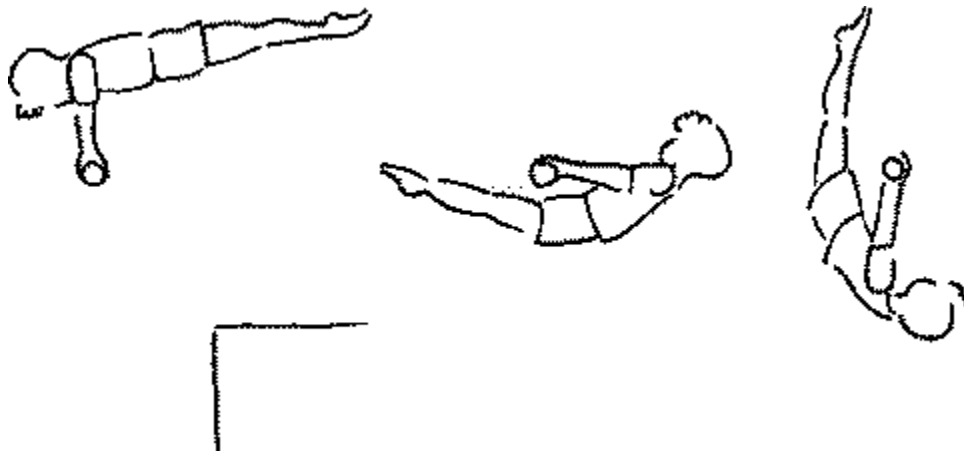
Drill #1

From a stand, with the bar about thigh height, the gymnast jumps to a planche position. The planche should possess hollow, pushed out shoulders and flat hips (see diagram). He/she then returns to the standing position. Be sure that the body reaches a horizontal position before the next drill is introduced. This will teach the gymnast how to drop his/her shoulders back from a horizontal cast.



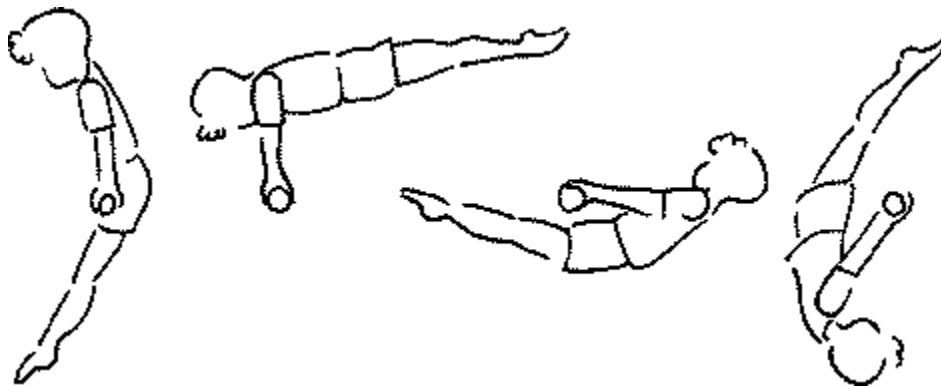
Drill #2

From the same start as Drill #1, the gymnast jumps to a planche, but instead of falling to the feet, he/she will fall into a hollow body candlestick performing an undressing release (not shown). After achieving the candlestick position, the gymnast should drive his/her heels into an arch in order to land on both feet.



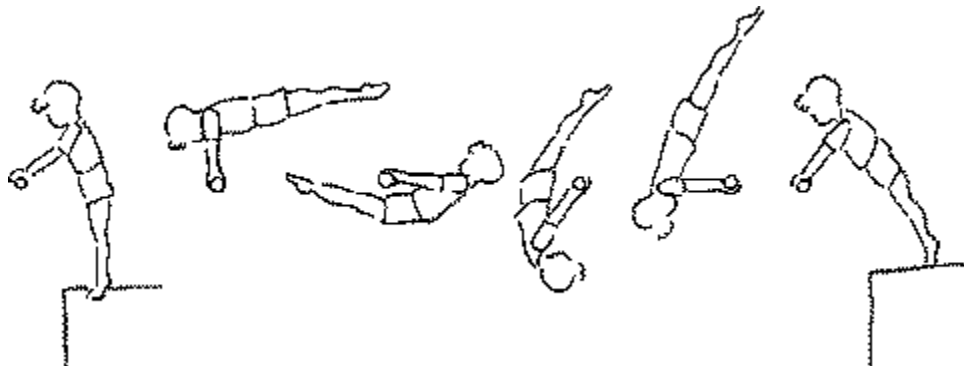
Drill #3

Now, the gymnast will perform the same underswing release from a horizontal cast (planche) position. Make sure that the shoulders are pushed out and the hips are flat. This will teach the gymnast how to drop his/her shoulders back from a cast.



Drill #4

From a jump (1), the gymnast will now perform the candlestick position (2) without releasing the bar. Instead of letting go, the gymnast will turn his/her body over to the start position, keeping the arms straight the entire time (3).



Drill #5

**Finally, combine Drill #3 with Drill #4 and you have a
CLEAR HIP CIRCLE!**

This article is reprinted from the November/December 1997 *USA Gymnastics* magazine.