

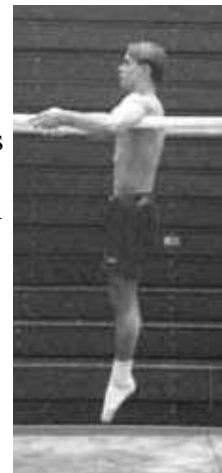
Front Uprise on Parallel Bars

by *The Junior National Team Coaches*

The front uprise at parallel bars is a fundamental transition skill which the gymnast will utilize from the earliest optional routine development through elite routine construction. Proper technical development can greatly enhance a gymnast's performance as well as increase the options for high level skill selection and routine construction. Both beginning and more advance front uprise development are highlighted in this Coaches Corner.

Physical Preparation:

The key to successful and safe development of the front uprise is the physical preparation of the athlete. Physical readiness, especially when working with young athletes, must be addressed before serious training of the front uprise can begin. The front uprise should be introduced as an athlete prepares for optional competition, but the physical preparation should begin long before the skill is actually taught. Athletes should already be well into a general physical preparation program which includes upper body strengthening, flexibility training and body positioning/ tightening drills. In addition to the ongoing physical preparation program, some specialized preparation and development drills would include:



- **Beginning--Upper Arm Dips:**

This exercise begins in a raised upper arm hang on the parallel bars (figure 1). From this position the gymnast lowers himself as far as possible between the bars (figure 2) and then returns to the starting position to complete one dip. Concentrate on maintaining body tightness throughout the exercise. The hands should be placed as far from the shoulders as the gymnast can control.



- **Beginning to Advanced--Upper Arm High Swings:**

This exercise simply involves doing a set of high upper arm swings which progress as close to vertical in both the front and back swing as possible. Again, body tightness should be stressed and the hands should be as far from the shoulders as possible. Good physical preparation will be evident in this drill.

- **Intermediate to advanced--Dip swings forward:**

In this exercise the athlete executes a standard dip while swinging. The dip should be initiated at the beginning of the forward swing with maximum arm bend occurring at the middle of the swing. The dip is then completed at the top or end of the front swing. The finishing position of the dip swing should show a extended body, front swing, position.



- **Intermediate to advanced--**

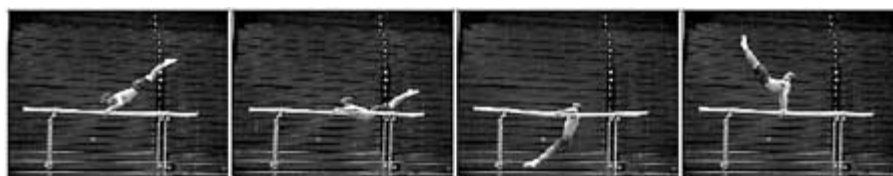
Upperarm Dip from a Prone Support Position:

The athlete begins this exercise in a prone support on the parallel bars (figure 3). While maintaining a position with the feet on the bars the gymnast lowers to an upperarm support position (figure 4) and then returns to the beginning position. Body tightness and the distance between the hands and shoulders should be stressed.

- **Advanced--Half Rise:**

In this exercise the gymnast executes a series of partial front uprisers from continuous upperarm swing in which the arms just leave the bars in the front swing. The execution concepts listed below are stressed in this exercise.

Execution of the Front Uprise:



1. **Bail to upper arm position** (figure 5): In the back swing, emphasize a tight and slightly hollow position on the bail to upperarm position. The arms should ideally be open, with an arm bend of less than 90°; when the arms contact the rails. Important note: Young gymnasts may need to begin with a more closed arm position showing an arm bend of 90° or more in the upper arm support position. The distance between the shoulders and hands should be increased as the gymnast's strength and experience dictate. Also, a natural arching in the upper back will occur in the bail as the gymnast moves to the upper arm position. This arch is both natural and important to the skill, however, the emphasis to the athlete should be on executing a tight and slightly hollow bail.
2. **Contact with the bars:** (figure 6) As the gymnast contacts the bars with his arms, the emphasis should be on maintaining good pressure against the bar with the arms and on beginning the kick through. The kick should not come from the hips, but rather use the entire body moving from the natural arch position to a hollow position. Body tightness is essential.
3. **Acceleration phase:** (figure 7) During this portion of the front uprise it is important to emphasize pressure on the bars by "pulling" the bars while maintaining the arm angle. This can best be described to the gymnast as pulling the bars so as to move the shoulders over the hands without letting the shoulders get any closer to the hands. The kicking action should be directed forward toward the end of the bars with an open hip angle as opposed to kicking up and allowing the hip angle to close.
4. **Completion of the skill:** (figure 8) The front uprise should end in a good front support swing position. Finishing the skill in an extended position and not a closed or Manna position should be emphasized.

Additional Front Uprise Tips:

- **Safety:** Care should be taken, especially with young gymnasts, to avoid shoulder or chest injuries. Physical preparation is essential to safe development. Swing and bail height should be closely monitored and should match the athletes preparation and experience level.
- **Watch for excessive arching in the bail to upper arm support phase.** Some arching is necessary but should not be coached, especially in the early stages, as it will occur as a natural consequence of the swing positions.
- **Beginning gymnasts can learn a good kick through position by doing a front uprise to a straddle support position on the rails.** In this drill encourage the gymnast to develop both the kick and the pull by finishing in an extended straddle support position with the shoulders in front of the hands.
- **The ultimate goal of the gymnast should be to spend as little time as possible in the upper arm position.**

Remember, a technically sound front uprise will really increase the successful development of parallel bar sequences and skills from beginner to elite. **Good Luck!**

COACHES:

Please submit your coaching ideas to:

Coaching Corner, c/o USA Gymnastics, Pan American Plaza, 201 S. Capitol Ave., Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN 46225.

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