

Basic Trampoline - The Beginning Steps

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**Not only is trampoline an international sport,
but it is now an Olympic sport in 2000.**

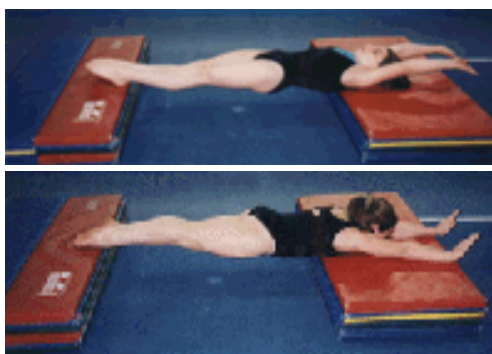
**Is the trampoline for you?
YES, trampoline is for everyone.**

This article is a teaching aid to precede the Jr. Olympic program for competitive trampoline. In addition, it is a tool that can be tremendously helpful for both men and women's artistic gymnastics programs. Trampoline is not only helpful for improving gymnastics difficulty, but will also make gymnastics safer.

Videos are being produced to help develop trampoline programs. These videos will take you from the first steps of trampoline through the most advanced double and triple somersaults with twists. This article is based on the first video Basic Trampoline - The Beginning Steps. The video covers basic trampoline, from jumping technique, basic drops, positions, physical preparation and safety. It is a must for individuals just beginning to coach trampoline for competitive or recreational gymnasts.

Physical Preparation

The beginning preparation for leg strength includes: running and jumping on both legs or on each leg, skipping, and chasses; all done on the floor. Work straight body holds between mats on both stomach and back to strengthen the middle body, both front and back.



By using a small jogging trampoline as a station, arm positions, body tightness, push through the toes, and inner thigh strength can be developed.



Using a theraband station to develop the push through the feet is also beneficial. The gymnast assumes a pike position, lying on her back and places both feet on the theraband. Then the gymnast flexes the feet, then points the feet with toes still flexed. Then the gymnast points the toes, flexes

the toes, then returns to flexed feet. Repeat this sequence 10 times.

In the early stages of learning to bounce, all jumps on the trampoline are done with arms in various positions. The first position is straight up with the shoulders covering the ears. The second position is straight forward. The third position is out to the side, and finally with the arms straight down. In all of these positions, the arms are straight and remain straight. They do not bend when the body feels the G-force as the feet touch. The body is very tight and the focus is on a tight body during the bounce. This is very important for creating the strength and forming the body for beginning to advanced skills. The gymnast must keep the hips flat in all jumps, body straight and flat. When the arms are up, this is the take off position, the beginning and ending position. We call this the #1 position: hips flat, hands in the same direction as armpits, and fingers joined together. It is important to form the body from day one.



The take off position is a straight body, so train this position against the wall: arms up covering the ears, rib cage in, back pressed against the wall. Everything is very tight and stretched. Every body part is as flat as possible, pressed against the wall.

A jogger gym can be used as a station for extra preparation and as a first experience to jumping. During the first experience, hold the child under the armpits at first, and actually do the jumping for them. Then progress to holding their hands. These drills will be covered in a future video for preschoolers.

Develop leg strength by jumping on one leg on the jogging trampoline and the fast track. However, because of the slowness of the trampoline, **do not ever** bounce on one leg at a time on the trampoline because this could cause injury to the knee.

Work the positions on the floor as statues before even attempting them on the trampoline. Try to pull legs apart and push at different body parts to help the gymnast understand the tightness of each skill. The statues are:

Seat Drop: The gymnast sits in a pike, legs together, and toes pointed, back flat, hands on the floor by the hips, fingers facing the feet.

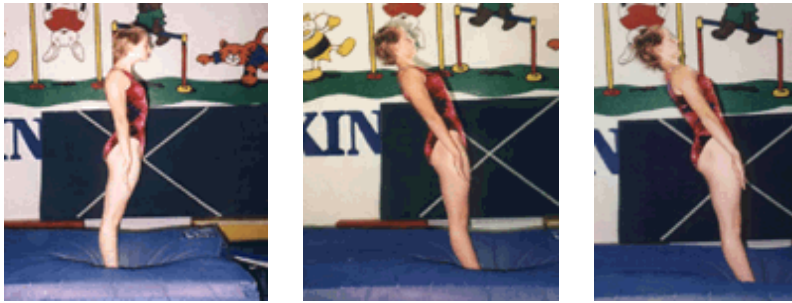
Hands and Knees: The gymnast is on hands and knees with a 90-degree angle in the armpits. The back is flat, neck is straight, with the face toward the floor. Head is in the military chin position.

Back Drop: The gymnast is lying on the back with head on the floor, arms straight on the floor, covering the ears with the shoulders and legs straight up at 90 degrees.

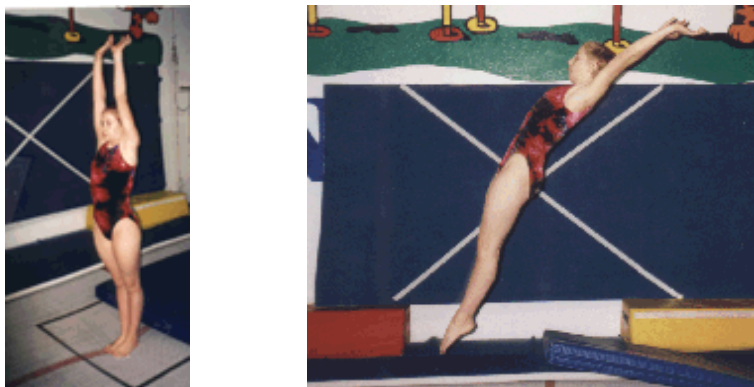
Front Drop: The gymnast is lying in a prone position, flat from her knees to her chest. The knees are bent 90 degrees with the feet aiming up to the ceiling. Elbows are down on the floor, with hands on the floor, slightly in front. The neck is straight with the face looking toward the floor. Head is in the military chin position.

Flat Back: This position is the #1 position done on the floor with the arms extended both above the head and also beside the body.

The head position is important at the very beginning stages of trampolining. Do not throw the head back by lifting the chin because for every action, there's a reaction. This head action causes the lower body to go in the opposite direction. If the head is down, with chin on the chest, the gymnast is dragging the head. Since head weight is 7 to 9 pounds, the head in this position acts as an anchor. So, we have a simple drill for the head. Stand in front of a soft mat and stick the chin out. Then by pulling the chin in (military chin), lead with the head and fall flat on the back. Stay straight and tight with no bend in the hips. Let the head create the movement. This is called the Huff and Puff drill because the young gymnasts stand in front and huff and puff to blow each other down.



This drill leads into the back drop. The back drop, if done correctly, is a skill that helps create correct backward rotation for the future. It also develops the correct habit for the head. In this drill, the gymnast stands in front of a tall soft mat with the arms extended straight above the head, with shoulders covering the ears. The gymnast could stand at the edge of the pit with a mat in the pit, or in front of a mat on the trampoline, as depicted in picture #8. The gymnast jumps backwards with body straight and tight and feels the 45-degree angle before lifting the legs to a 90-degree angle. As the legs are lifted, do not lift the upper body, but rather continue to let the head and upper body go in the same direction. The head must touch the bed at the same time as the back when arriving at the back drop position that was trained on the floor as a statue. This is the first step in training the X-Factor. The body is trained to see and feel itself through the 45 degrees, which in all directions forms an X.





To create forward rotation without piking first, have the gymnast stand on a mini-tramp with her back toward a soft mat that is approximately the same height or slightly lower than the mini-tramp. A coach or teammate stands in front of the gymnast holding her hands, ready to support her upon landing. The gymnast simply jumps backward onto the mat to finish in a stand with a forward incline of 45 degrees without piking. Remember, whether jumping forward or backward, it's up and through the 45 degrees of the X in both. This drill can also be performed on the floor to assist the gymnast in learning to jump backward, keeping the hips flat and arriving at the 45 degree angle. You can vary this drill by jumping backward off low mats to finish at a 45 degree angle.

The above is the first step in learning a front drop. But in order to create the action without bending the hips, the following drill must be added: practice bouncing on hands and knees, then go down to the front drop position prior to attempting a front drop from a standing position or a bounce.

The best way to teach trampoline is by setting up stations. You can set up 3 rotations that include drills for a specific trick or have a station for strength, such as theraband or have a station on a soft mat to work body positions. In a later article, specific lesson plans for creating stations will be presented.

Remember to always check the safety of the trampoline and surrounding area. Remind the gymnast that only one person at a time can jump on the trampoline. A coach must be present at all times when the gymnast is on the trampoline. The gymnast must never jump onto the trampoline when the rotation is over-always walk around the trampoline, never on the trampoline (if class has been given on an in-the-ground tramp.) Coaches should always stay focused and in control of the group. Coaches should never workout at the same time they are coaching.

Trampoline develops air sense, spacial awareness, strength and it's lots of fun. Enjoy! Jump! Jump! Jump!

Basic Trampoline - The Beginning Steps video by Judy Wills Cline and Tammy Biggs is available through the USA Gymnastics Merchandise department for \$20, item #2407. **Call 1-800-345-4719.**

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