



Bar Talk!

OK, let's start out with the fact that not all bars are created equal. High bars, uneven Bars, and single bars have many similarities in appearance and in function, but they are created for specific and unique purposes. The most common misuse I see is of single bar trainers. Single bars, in most cases are designed to flex in two directions. They are made for skill development of up and down moves. Beginning drills for kips, casts, and component drills of larger skills. Just because you can connect a competitive cross bar to the apparatus doesn't mean the apparatus should be used for competitive routines. If the mounting collars for the bar are not designed to swivel 360 degrees, then that piece of equipment should not be used for multiple giants or release moves. There are Uneven bars that are designed so that you can remove the low rail and the top bar will still work properly for all competitive tricks and sets, and there are single bars that are designed with collars that rotate 360 degrees. Knowing which bar to use for which athlete and which skill is critical.

The key is proper purposing.



Once you are sure of the purpose the key in keeping the bars safe is attention to detail. The sport of gymnastics has changed dramatically in the past 10 years and we need to keep our inspections and



maintenance up to date. The first good habit is to mark each bar or set of bars with the date that it was first put in use. Based on data supplied by the FIG Safety Symposium, AAI strongly recommends that horizontal bars and collars be replaced every three years to reduce the possibility of bar breakage. Most uneven rails are covered with a very thin veneer that depending on use will wear down. The more you use the bar or sand the bar, the faster you will wear through the veneer. Once the veneer is worn, it is not recommended that the athletes perform on the fiberglass core.

The next thing to check on the bar(s) is the anchoring. Several years ago most manufacturers switched their recommendation from $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " tie downs. With the advancement in the sport and the increased participation by larger athletes it's very logical the anchors should be upgraded. Following the manufacturers specifications is your best safety precaution. Never use over the counter anchors in your gym and always verify with your installer that they are installing anchors approved and recommended by a gymnastics equipment manufacturer.

Additional details to check are cable wear, proper positioning of quick links, and properly used turnbuckles and cable tighteners. With cables, once you see a broken strand (even just one) you should replace the cable.



All cable ends should be secured with mechanical crimps, not cable clamps. Vibration causes the nuts on cable clamps to loosen, and gymnastics causes lots of vibration. Closely inspect all cables wherever they make a change of direction. That means if you are using a space reducing system you have more places to check. Drop forged turnbuckles are the safest as the ends do not elongate under extreme tension. If you see the eye at the end of a turnbuckle starting to elongate, it's time to replace it.



Quick links, although the smallest piece of your bar system, are critical. They should always be installed so that the tightening nut always tightens down. If they are installed upside down then gravity will be working to loosen them.



As they say the devil is in the details. A daily inspection of these items should help keep your bars in good working condition and keep your gymnasts safe. Thanks for looking out for our kids. Make it a great day. #Gymcare

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