

PERFECT

10

POSTURE

P10P

PAULA R. LORD

Perfect 10 Posture
(P10P)

*Applying Pilates and Posture Training
for Success in Gymnastics
(and other sports)*

Paula Lord, PMA-CPT

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ISBN: Softcover 978-1-4836-2869-1
 Ebook 978-1-4836-2870-7

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This document in general refers to gymnasts as feminine and coaches as masculine. Level references are based on the new Women's 2013 Junior Olympic program guidelines. These choices were made simply for ease of writing. The reader should infer that male/female designations are fully interchangeable.

Rev. date: 07/27/2013

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I decided to write Perfect 10 Posture in response to the many coaches and athletes I have worked with in clinic and camp setting through the years. This book is my answer to the questions, “Is this written down anywhere?” or “Do you have a handout?” My answer was historically “no” because I am a teacher who follows the lead of my students and what their bodies need in the moment. It is only now after many years of teaching and coaching that I have been able to identify some basic patterns and put them into a written format. Compiling the book has been a very difficult process as my teaching and cueing evolves daily with each different student and with my own expanding knowledge base. What I hope is that Perfect 10 Posture will help coaches develop a more well-rounded training program which has long-term athlete health at its foundation.

It is impossible to name all of the people and resources who have contributed to and inspired the existence of the Perfect 10 Posture program. Suffice it to say that every teacher, coach, colleague or client I have worked with over the last 45 years is represented here somewhere. Chronologically speaking...

Carol Crandall and Crandall's Physical Arts Center, teachers in the Pendleton schools, the physics department at Jacksonville University, Marina Davidovich and United Gymnastics Academy, Nora Campbell and USA Rhythmic Gymnastics, sports science staff at the U. S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Raymond Kurshals and the Pilates Institute, Chrissy Ruby and PHI Pilates, Miriam Resnick and Mindful Movement Studio, Joan DeVeau and DeVeau's School of Gymnastics, Wendy Cooper and ProMotion Fitness, Rebecca Leone the Pilates Nun, Lynn Moskovitz, Cindy Bickman and Chattooga Gymnastics, the Pilates Method Alliance, the Integrative Learning Center, Mary Kim-Garrity and BioCored, and the clients of BODY by GymRoots...

I thank you and my students thank you!

Testimonial Quotes:

“Paula Lord’s newest book, Perfect 10 Posture, is an excellent program guide that would benefit gymnastics competitors at all levels”

Gerald S. George, Ph.D.

“If a young man has trained his muscles and physical endurance by gymnastics and walking, he will later be fitted for every physical work If a person masters the fundamentals of his subject and has learned to think and work independently, he will . . . better be able to adapt himself to progress and changes than the person whose training principally consists in the acquiring of detailed knowledge”.—Albert Einstein

“The most complicated skill is to be simple.” Dejan Stojanovic

INTRODUCTION

Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) is a unique wholistic training program, designed to align and strengthen the body at its core, thereby enhancing gymnastics performance for athletes at all levels. When properly utilized it will unlock your gymnast's full potential, taking her far beyond what traditional gymnastics training can do. The program helps athletes to establish efficient postural movement patterns, which leads to increased strength and stability at a deep skeletal level. With greater strength and stability the athlete will progress more safely and learn gymnastics skills more easily. The faster and safer a gymnast acquires skills, the faster and safer she can achieve gymnastics success!

P10P is a 4-step training program borrowing from a number of tried and true methods. These movement training methods have proven to work together in the gymnastics setting to greatly enhance the athlete's gymnastics experience. When used as part of a well-rounded gymnastics training system, Perfect 10 Posture will maximize the athlete's time in the gym and, therefore, contribute to her forward progress and competitive success.

In summary the steps of **P10P** are as follows:

∞Step 1∞

40 exercises to help athletes develop healthy movement patterns

∞∞Step 2∞∞

35 exercises to establish core muscle awareness and strength, joint stabilization

∞∞∞Step 3∞∞∞

20 exercises to build flexible strength and strengthen flexibility

∞∞∞∞Step 4∞∞∞∞

15 exercises to balance repetitive movement patterns and undo associated imbalances

The 100+ exercises of Perfect 10 Posture are offered as a supplement to a strong gymnastics training regimen. P₁₀P is not meant to replace traditional conditioning programs or skill learning, but rather to inform coaches and prepare athletes for quicker and more efficient learning. The exercises of P₁₀P will organize the body and enhance the athlete's proprioception and kinesthetic awareness, thereby strengthening the mind-body connection. Athletes who are able to tap into the power of the mind-body connection are at a great advantage when it comes to performance. They also become much more connected to and appreciative of their sport in the process. One gymnast even described the work as being in "heaven" as she worked through the exercises!

Once a coach becomes familiar with the body and how it can work efficiently, he will find himself including the Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) exercises and concepts throughout the workout and the results will be dramatic. Here is a basic outline of how and when a typical competitive team program can implement the Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) program:

Note: Levels in the following outline are based on the 2013 USA Gymnastics Women's Junior Olympic Levels. P10P is not exclusive to competitive women's programming and can be adapted for recreational classes, men's programming, adult training, cheer programs, and so on. Most important is that anyone starting the program, whether a beginning gymnast or an elite athlete, should begin with Step 1 and master the exercises before moving on to Step 2.

Levels 2-3 training 4 hours/week = **P10P** 20 minutes/week

- 10 minutes of Step 1 exercises mixed with warm-up activities; 2X per week

Levels 4-5 training 10 hours/week = **P10P** 1 hour/week

- 20 minutes of Step 1-2 exercises included with warm-up and conditioning activities; 3X per week

Levels 6-7 training 15 hours/week = **P10P** 1.5 hours/week

- 20 minutes of Step 1-3 exercises included with warm-up and conditioning activities; 3X per week
- 10 minutes of Step 1-3 exercises included as cool down from specific events; 3X per week

Levels 8-10 training 20 hours/week = **P10P** 2 hours/week

- 30 minutes of Step 1-4 exercises included as warm-up; 2X per week
- 10 minutes of Step 1-4 exercises included as cool down from events; 3X per week
- 5 minutes of Step 1-4 exercises after intense repetitions; 6X per week

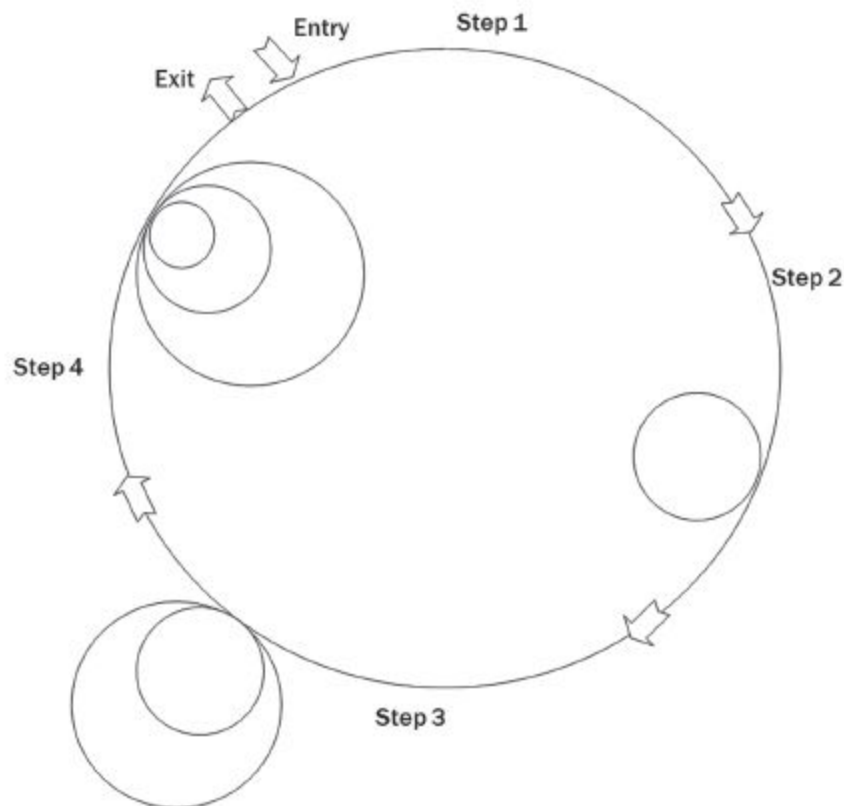
Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) is based on the educational concept of scaffolding. (Instructional scaffolding is a learning process that promotes a deeper level of understanding, with support tailored to each student's individual needs.) First we create basic movement patterns; next we make refinements as those patterns become more familiar to the athlete; third we strengthen the body using the familiar patterns; and finally we introduce new and more intricate movement patterns as we simultaneously revisit the most basic exercises, executing them with ever-increasing body awareness and precision. In this way the program is appropriate and beneficial for beginner and elite athletes alike.

It should be noted that the Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) exercises are meant to be mentally as well as physically challenging. The athlete must be in a mindful state to gain the most benefit. Therefore, it is recommended that the coach is always giving full attention to the athletes and is cueing the intricate subtleties of each exercise. This is not always easy in a gymnastics setting, but the small investment made here will reap great rewards for you and your program. ENJOY THE PROCESS!

The four cumulative steps of Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**), administered with care and attention to detail, will train the gymnast's body to follow its instinctual movement patterns. From a judge's point of view, many of the execution deductions taken (bent knees and elbows, slow tumbling, lack of amplitude) are directly a result of inefficient or hindered movement patterns and natural compensations for lack of joint mobility. With Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) every gymnast can become the one that "just does it

naturally.” Besides gaining points for increased amplitude and superior execution, the gymnast will begin to perform her sport with the ease and grace that define that elusive x-factor... artistry... adding another bonus to her final score.

PERFECT 10 POSTURE “CIRCULAR LEARNING”



Progress in gymnastics is often measured by the increasing number levels of the current competitive program. While it is necessary to declare a competitive level for the purpose of fairness and comparison, it becomes a very difficult thing to communicate exactly to athletes and their parents what needs to happen to “get to the next level” and many athletes, parents and coaches get caught up in this linear vision of progress. This depiction of Circular Learning will help give some vocabulary to coaches and understanding about gymnastics progress to their athletes and families.

Athletes at any level who are just beginning to work the P₁₀P program will begin with Step 1. Progression through the four steps must relate to the athlete’s ability to master the exercises and not just to her competitive

gymnastics level. Ideally athletes will begin training P₁₀P during her first day of class and progress through the P₁₀P steps as she progresses through the levels of gymnastics. Following is a description of how circular learning is used and demonstrates how each step in the program is constantly being reinforced and practiced.

Entry Point

This can either be the day a young person begins gymnastics classes or the first day an experienced gymnast begins the P₁₀P program. We should assume the body knows nothing and investigate begin to investigate the individual's movement patterns using the exercises from Step 1. Regardless if the child has a naturally ability to learn gymnastics skills, we are responsible to make sure their body is well prepared. It may take 2-3 years to fully work through all of the Step 1 exercises, and some exercises will require more work than others (although which exercises will be unique to each individual... "it's just their thing").

The gymnastics skills which correspond to Step 1 are all the basics... rolls, handstands, cartwheels, roundoffs, bridges, kickovers, etc. It will be time to transition when those basics are mastered to a point where they can be mixed together in any order, performed with a variety of rhythms, synchronized with a group... basically when they can be used in routines.

Transition—Step 1 to Step 2

This is the point when the gymnastics skills begin to require more speed and power and begin to involve flight. Smooth basic movement patterns have been established and the athlete's body is functioning well. It is time to introduce and work on the P₁₀P exercises of Step 2. Those exercises are designed to help the athlete become aware of their core and to strengthen joint stability so that the increasing forces are handled well by the body.

With all of the imperfections of the human body, we cannot expect to create a perfectly functioning body and have it stay perfect forever. Life happens and we must be able to adapt. This is where the concept of circular learning begins. After a gymnast transitions into Step 2, she may need to "circle back" to some of the Step 1 exercises that are particularly challenging for her. The reasons why certain exercises are difficult are too

many to list, but can result from things like genetic issues, illnesses, injuries, lifestyle, etc. So coaches... keep paying attention to those basic movement patterns from Step 1 with your athletes that are working on Step 2... and be ready to take time to “circle back.” You will only lessen frustration in the long run!

Transition—Step 2 to Step 3

At this point the mechanics of creating speed and power are established and the athlete needs to challenge her bodies full potential. This is a period when the gymnast is adding twists and rotations to her “power basics” and when she is developing her own gymnastics personality. She must be able to be strong at the limits of her flexibility and to be flexible with her power. The exercises of Step 3 are designed for this purpose.

This is also the most critical time to circle back to the basics of Steps 1 and 2 and keep the healthy movement patterns active. It is a wonderful thing to go back to simple movements with the increased awareness and ability and to rediscover the joy of movement. T.S. Eliot wrote “We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.” Coaches and athletes alike can prolong their enjoyment of the sport if we keep this idea foremost in our minds.

Transition—Step 3 to Step 4

The athlete who arrives at this level is truly gifted. She has learned the value of hard work, understands that her body is her own and unique from anyone else, and needs to respect and preserve her body so she can fully enjoy her sport. The exercises of Step 4 are designed to help her undo the stresses of daily training and support the repetitive movements that are required for successful performance. All of the exercises from Steps 1-3 should be “circled back to” as part of a comprehensive training plan.

Exit Points

There is no right or wrong “exit point” from gymnastics, and we should celebrate anyone who can make it “full circle.” The fact is that everyone leaves the sport at some time. The goal of Perfect 10 Posture is that EVERY BODY leaves the sport with functional, healthy movement patterns and a

continued desire and ability to be active in life. Coaches, you have a difficult job and I wish you all the best. Hopefully, your job will be a little easier using Perfect 10 Posture!

THE BODY AT ITS CORE

Safe Spine First



Note: The illustrations in this section are artist renderings and may not be exactly medically accurate. The drawings are meant to convey the notion that the body is not defined by its exterior appearance, but that the exterior appearance is a function of the underlying structures.

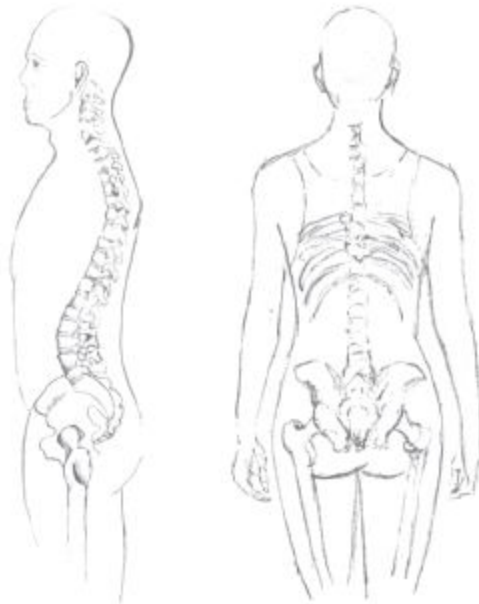
Gymnastics is inherently hard on the body and requires movement which is hard on the spine, especially when deep core strength is not fully developed. A fundamental goal of Perfect 10 Posture is to support spinal health. Only with carefully controlled incremental steps can the athlete gain the necessary deep core strength to perform the exercises properly and in a way which will truly support the stresses of gymnastics training. Any exercises which cause pain or strain in and around the spine should be modified either by reducing the range of motion or the speed of movement. Those modifications must then be practiced until the body is strong enough to progress through the next small increment. Safe spine work requires patience from both the coach and the athlete, but will ultimately produce stonger, healthier, and happier athletes.

What is the CORE?

P₁₀P uses the following definition of “CORE FITNESS” as its basis: *The **balanced** development of the deep and superficial muscles that stabilize, align, and move the trunk of the body.* P₁₀P exercises train the balanced

stability, flexibility, and coordination of the torso from pelvis to shoulder girdle in order to achieve a healthy postural alignment and allow for strong, efficient movement and use of the extremities, (arms and legs).

Perfect 10 Posture is a “CORE” training program in every sense of the word. The exercises in each of the four steps should be at the core of any gymnastics program. In addition the exercises, when done correctly, will activate and strengthen the body’s true “CORE”.



See Beneath the Surface

EVERY BODY is different. But EVERY BODY is built on the same structure... the skeleton. As coaches we need to begin seeing bodies in motion at the skeletal level and give cues designed to make skeletal adjustments as opposed to focusing on the silhouette of the athlete. Making this shift will help us preserve the health of our athletes over the long term, helping them excel not only during their gymnastics years but throughout their lifetimes.

When the skeleton is properly aligned, the body moves more efficiently. Efficient movement means that the muscles, connective tissue, fascia and neural systems are working together in harmony... stretching, working and stabilizing with total coordination. When a body achieves this level of efficiency, it can better produce and withstand the maximum potential

forces necessary to perform gymnastics. In addition an efficiently moving body will have fewer execution deductions, greater consistency, increased amplitude, and a capacity for artistry.

Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) is designed to help coaches to identify the most critical alignment issues and offers verbal cues to help young athletes make the appropriate alignment corrections. The program is NOT designed to be a diagnostic tool offering specific remedies for injuries. **P10P** is a holistic approach to body preparation which will lessen many of the common postural issues associated with gymnastics training.

TRAINING YOUR EYE

Understanding Anatomy

Gymnastics is by far the most complex sport with regard to refinement and control of the body. As coaches we expect young gymnasts to understand and perform complex skills with ease and grace. It is extremely difficult to teach efficient movement efficiently without at least a basic understanding of the body's anatomy and kinesiology or biomechanics. Coaches are encouraged to seek out any of the great many anatomy resources that exist with diagrams and illustration of the skeletal and muscular systems in the body. By educating ourselves we can better share information with our athletes. Sharing an understanding of the body's anatomy and biomechanics with our young athletes will help build a vocabulary between coach and athlete. The better we understand each other, the better our relationships and the better the outcomes!

Looking at the Skeleton



The information presented in the following table is much easier to convey in the setting of a clinic or workshop. Here I have attempted to present some basic alignment checkpoints and corrective cues as a way for coaches to begin familiarizing themselves with the body's underlying skeletal structure. The positions described are the ideal for the body to practice Perfect 10 Posture exercises.

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BODY POSITION	CHECKPOINT	CUES
Standing or vertical	Feet	Stand with second toes parallel to one another Feet 2" apart so heels align with ischial tuberosities Weight balanced between ball of foot and heel Weight spread evenly from inner to outer sole of foot Ankles centered over heel from side to side Lifted arch with big toe and ball of foot flat against floor
	Legs	Tibia bones vertical and aligned with heel and second toe Patella pointed directly forward Femur bones parallel and vertical Crease at hip joint fully open
	Pelvis	Landmarks which define the "Pelvic Clock" vertically aligned (pubic symphysis = 6:00, anterior superior iliac spine = 9:00 & 3:00, navel = 12:00)
	Ribcage	Full ribcage stacked vertical directly over pelvis Lower ribs drawn inward and funneled toward pelvis Upper ribs lifted and open Scapulae flat against ribcage
	Arms	Under arm muscles active to draw shoulders down Humerus bone rotated outward Palms facing in toward body
	Head	Base of skull drawn back and lifted Ear aligned with mid-line of body
	SPINE	The spine should be elongated up the back from tailbone to base of the skull. There should be a gentle lordotic curve in the lumbar and cervical spine with a kyphotic curve in the thoracic region. Flattening or extra curvature of the spine in any area is an indication of some type of alignment issue and needs to be addressed.
Supine lying (on the back)	Pelvis	Pelvic clock (see pelvis description for standing) level with floor
	Legs	Femur bones drawn back toward floor Legs straight with heels reaching toward wall Second toes parallel

	Ribs	Stacked directly on the side and aligned with pelvis No anterior or posterior tilt No twist from upper to lower ribs Lower ribs funneled toward pelvis Upper ribs open with scapulae flat against ribs
	Bottom arm	In a comfortable position for head support Under arm muscles active for strong stable shoulder
	Top arm	Centered with top side of ribcage OR Placed on floor in front of navel for stability
	Head	Aligned with spine in all directions with relaxed neck
	SPINE	The spine should be elongated up the back from tailbone to base of the skull. Along with the proper lordotic/kyphotic curves, also look for any rotation or side bending of the spine. Side lying spinal alignment is the most challenging and requires much practice and kinesthetic awareness to perfect.
Split Position	Pelvis	Pelvic clock (see description for pelvis standing) can and must have a slight degree of rotation and forward tilt to accommodate healthy function of the hip joint. The gymnast should actively work to keep the pelvic clock vertical, aligned under the ribcage, and as square as possible without assistance from the hands
	Ribcage	Full ribcage stacked vertical directly over pelvis Lower ribs drawn inward and funneled toward pelvis Upper ribs lifted and open Scapulae flat against ribcage
	Legs	Front leg is aligned with navel with kneecap pointed up Back leg is aligned with tailbone with kneecap pointed down Proper pelvic/ribcage alignment allows the hips to relax and proper stretching to occur
	SPINE	The spine should be elongated up the back from tailbone to base of the skull. Proper spinal elongation allows for healthy rotation of the lumbar spine, which is required to achieve the split position.

	Ribs	Lower ribs drawn wide and into floor Upper ribs and clavicle open
	Arms	Under arm muscles active to draw shoulders down regardless of working arm position
	Head	Chin tipped down slightly
	SPINE	The spine should be elongated up the back from tailbone to base of the skull. Watch for extra lordotic curve in the lumbar due to posterior tilt of the ribcage. Also watch for flattening of the lumbar curve due to posterior tilt of the pelvis. Correct supine spinal alignment is difficult and can only be achieved with disassociation of the pelvic and thoracic regions.
Prone lying (on the belly)	Pelvis	Pelvic clock (see pelvis description for standing) flat against floor with pubic symphysis 6:00 acting as the anchor
	Legs	Front of hip open Femur bones drawn back into hamstrings and rotated parallel to one another
	Ribs	Lower ribs funneled toward pelvis Upper ribs relaxed Scapulae drawn wide and flat against ribs
	Arms	Under arm muscles active to draw shoulders down regardless of working arm position
	Head	Forehead press toward floor to lift chin
	SPINE	The spine should be elongated up the back from tailbone to base of the skull. Watch for extra lordotic curve in the lumbar due to anterior tilt of the pelvis, most likely caused by tight hip and thigh muscles. Also watch for extra kyphotic curve of the thoracic, often caused by tight chest and shoulder muscles. Prone lying spinal alignment becomes easier as the balance of strength and flexibility in the front and back of the body is improved using the P10P exercises.
Side lying	Pelvis	9:00 & 3:00 of pelvic clock (see description for pelvis standing) stacked directly vertical No anterior or posterior tilt of pelvic clock
	Legs	Stacked parallel OR bottom leg bent for stability Front of hip open Femur bones drawn back into hamstrings and rotated parallel to one another Heels reaching toward wall with second toes parallel

Wholistic Posture Awareness

Posture is not just a position, it is a way of life. When Perfect 10 Posture is well-trained and becomes second nature to the athlete, there will be a noticeable freedom of motion in the head/neck, shoulders/arms, hips/legs. As coaches we need to understand where and when tension should be applied and when NOT. This will help us to help our athletes avoid the pitfalls of overworking their bodies to the point of rigidity and inflexibility.

The photos in this next section illustrate a few of the many possible alignment issues common to gymnasts in training. Coaches should understand that this is not meant to be an “injury diagnosis” section, but rather is meant to be used and applied to normal, healthy athletes. Alignment issues are usually seen in combination and require a carefully trained eye to identify all the issues that are present. Trying to assess everything that is happening with a body can be an overwhelming task, so the Perfect 10 Posture program takes a wholistic approach to body preparation. There is always more than one access point to create positive change in postural alignment. Sometimes an alignment change at the pelvis will fix the ribcage; sometimes an alignment change at the knee will fix the neck. It is all connected so it all needs to work well! When we don’t know quite where to begin, we at least begin somewhere!

Pelvis/Hip

The top of the thigh bone (femur) should be free to move within the socket of the pelvis. Lack of mobility in the joint itself causes the pelvis to compensate during all kicks and leg swings, pikes and backbends, take offs and landings.

Tightness in the front of the hip causing...

- Anterior tilt of pelvis
- Increased lordotic lumbar curve
- Posterior tilt of ribcage
- Weakness in hip transferring load to knees
- Limited ankle flexion



Tightness in the hamstrings causing...

- Loose front of hip
- Top of femur bone forward of ankle
- Ribcage behind pelvis transferring load to lumbar



Lack of hip joint mobility causing...

- Tight or short hamstrings
- Inability to create crease at the hip
- Load transfer to spine in pike position



Lack of space in hip joint or “jammed” hip joint causing...

- Improper muscle firing patterns around hip joint
- Indentation on side of glutes due to inactive muscles

- Loss of power through the hip joint to the legs



Pelvis/Lumbar Spine

“You are only as strong as your weakest vertebra” is one of the most influential quotes from Joseph Pilates. For gymnasts one of the areas most susceptible to overuse and injury is the lower (lumbar) spine and its articulation with the pelvis (sacrum). This joint becomes stressed not only with arching skills, but also with forward bending or flexion. Gymnasts with lack of control or postural awareness are at risk for bone and disc injuries at the lumbosacral junction and throughout this lumbar spine.

Weak lower abdominals causing...

- Anterior tilt of pelvis
- Extra lordotic curve in the lumbar spine
- Posterior tilt of ribcage
- Forward head
- Lack of stretch through front of back leg



Weak abdominal core causing...

- Pelvic instability
- Twisted spine
- Uneven or rotated pelvis
- Side to side muscular imbalances



Lower Ribcage

The diaphragm covers the bottom of the ribcage and is responsible for helping us breathe. Breathing is, of course, essential to life and is something we generally do not have to think about. The ability to breathe properly, however, is elusive and is worthy of its own exercise regimen. Many people become chest breathers and lose lung capacity as they age. This can happen when the lower ribcage becomes misaligned or rigid due to postural compensation or injury. Practicing Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) will aid in the maintenance of proper diaphragmatic breathing and keep athletes on a path to health.

Weak upper abdominals causing...

- Lower ribs protruding to the front
- Anterior tilt of pelvis
- Strain on lumbar musculature



Lack of shoulder, hip or thoracic mobility causing...

- Spinal hinge points in the cervical and lumbar spine
- Transfer of load to hinge points

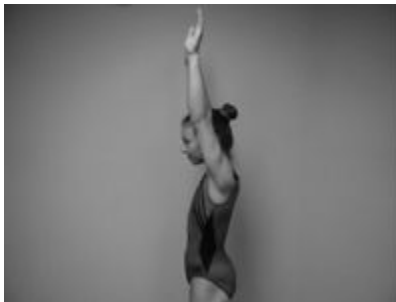


Upper Ribcage/Shoulder Blades/Collarbones

“Stand up straight” is a common command in today’s society. Unfortunately, this posture correction is generally made with an unhealthy compensation (tipping the ribcage backward) due to weak middle thoracic muscles. Modern inventions have made keeping in touch with friends and doing work much easier, but have cost us a large degree of physical health. The activities with which we spend most of our time support a slouched posture. We work at the computer, talk on the phone, watch TV, etc. Many of us end up aging with an unattractive and painful hump in our upper ribcage and our head sitting in front of our body.

Tight latissimus dorsi muscles causing...

- Lack of shoulder mobility
- Forward head, shortened neck, lifted shoulders
- Posterior tilt of the ribcage



Tight pectoral muscles causing...

- Shoulders rounded forward
- Hollowed chest

Arm and Leg Checkpoints

The following section provides more clues to helping your athletes achieve their Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**). Sometimes the first pain stemming

from postural compensations will be in the arms and legs. While the alignment issue may ultimately be in the torso, these arm and leg checkpoints can alert us to a potential issue before it becomes problematic.

Sometimes it is difficult to assess alignment issues in a static position. As gymnastics coaches we are uniquely qualified to see the shape of a body in motion, and therefore we should be very good at assessing dynamic postural issues. This is especially true when looking at the alignment of the legs. Noting some of the common issues while the gymnast is performing gymnastics skills will lead us to exercises in **P10P** that will create greater positive results.

Weak arches causing...

- Flat foot
- Ankles rolled in
- Load transfer to knees



Tight feet causing...

- High arches
- Narrow foot
- Lack of mobility in foot
- Difficulty with balance and power transfer through the floor



External rotation of leg and forward position of the hips causing...

- Tight IT band
- Overuse and weakness in gluteal muscles
- Ribcage behind pelvis
- Load transfer to sacrum and lumbar spine
- External rotation of feet
- Loss of power transfer through the floor



As with the legs it is often easier to see postural issues in the arms when they are bearing weight and supporting the body. Many gymnastics skills happen very quickly, making it difficult to see clearly all the different movements happening in the upper extremities. Making dynamic assessments in slower moving activities such as push-ups or handstands is a great place to start. When training **P10P** for the arms it is always best to keep the weight support just to the point where the athlete can hold proper form. Anything more will simply exacerbate the compensatory patterns and lead to further injury.

Weak upper back causing...

- Winging shoulder blades
- Forward head
- Load transfer to lumbar spine



Weak arms causing...

- Shoulder instability
- Elbows locked out
- Load transfer to wrists
- Loss of power through upper extremities



A Final Note Before You Begin

Often when we begin focusing on one specific issue, an accompanying compensation pattern will surface and require attention. It is important to continue to address the most prevalent issues but to also be open to moving in unexpected directions. The beauty of Perfect 10 Posture is that it addresses these common issues in a wholistic manner. By performing and practicing the exercises as a complete system, postural corrections will simply spread throughout the body and many specific diagnostic interventions will become unnecessary.

Remember... alignment issues are not things the gymnast is doing “wrong.” It is simply the way that unique body is put together and wired. Addressing issues should be approached in a way that encourages efficiency and health beyond the level of scoring points—that will be the icing on the cake for you and your athletes!

Coaching gymnastics is a lifelong process where we work with bodies at the limits of human capability—it is exciting! Now I encourage you to focus a little more into the future... beyond places or scores at the meet... and see the kind of amazing human bodies you are capable of producing. ENJOY THE PROCESS!

STEP 1 OVERVIEW & PHILOSOPHY

STEP 1

Movement Goal: Pattern movement for healthy joint mechanics

of exercises: \approx 40

Student Level: Day 1 through Level 3

Establish a Relationship with your Athlete

It should be the goal of every gymnastics coach to enhance their students' lives through the sport we all love. Relationships between gymnastics coaches and students are incredibly unique in the sporting world. We must be close enough physically to spot a variety of skills. We must be close enough emotionally to earn each student's trust ("If I say I'll be there, I will" or "If I believe you can do it, you can"). We must also know a lot about the human body and what makes it move in order to help our diverse set of students learn how to turn upside down over and over again safely. So why not delve a little deeper and try to understand what physical limitations a child may have that could prevent her from being able to complete basic gymnastics skills successfully? We just might unlock a whole new world of potential for that child.

From day one of a young person's experience in gymnastics, we should pay attention to the student's most basic movement patterns. We can never know which of our ever-appearing new students will truly have the ability to be an elite athlete, so we should make sure every beginning student is given the tools to achieve her greatest potential. Using Step 1 of the Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) program creates efficient movement patterns while our students are young and pliable, lessening the chance for common compensations seen in advanced gymnasts. Without those habitual compensations, the body is less prone to chronic pain, imbalance and stress injuries.

Examples of how Step 1 works

Movement A: Knee bends (plié)

Dysfunctional Patterns: feet turn in or out, ankles roll in or out, knees track in or out, pelvis tips forward or backward

Correction: balance tension in muscles, tendons and fascia that cross the hips, knees and ankles by strengthening and stretching using the Step 1 exercises

Any of these dysfunctional patterns can be observed when an individual performs simple knee bends. When any one of these dysfunctions is present, it means the body is out of coordination and stress is being placed on muscles and joints not equipped to handle that stress. Since bending the knee is required for every leap or jump, every tumbling skill, and every landing, it is important to first make sure the body is handling the forces in the most efficient way. Over time and with many repetitions the muscles and joints being called on to compensate for the basic dysfunction will wear out and fail.

Movement B: Pike stretch

Common Dysfunctions: limited mobility at the hip joint causing rounded spine, legs rolling in or out, feet uneven due to pelvic rotation

Correction: release the femur bone inside the hip joint, allowing the deep hip rotator and gluteal muscles to stretch

Dysfunction in the hip joint should be identified on the gymnast's first day of training and intervention begun immediately. The body compensations due to hip problems are almost endless, but the benefits to improving hip function are just as profound. To name a few:

- Increased hamstring flexibility for splits and kicks
- Better muscular coordination for speed and power
- Better landing joint coordination for stability

The good news is that these dysfunctions are easy to identify and correct. It just takes a little bit of time on the coach's part to educate himself and explain to each athlete how important it is for their health and gymnastics

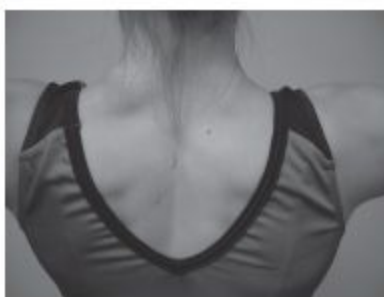
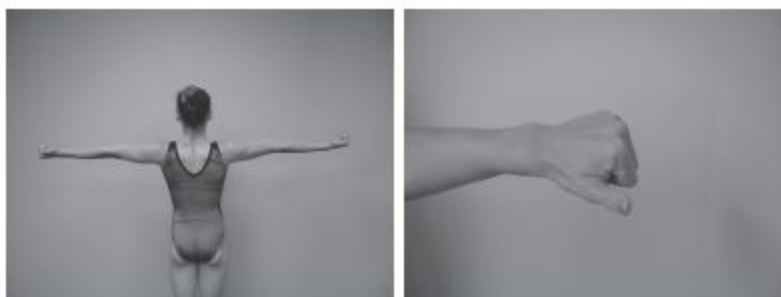
future to do these Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) exercises exactly right. Then he will be able to make a big difference for our athletes.

STEP 1—40 exercises— Establishing proper movement patterns

∞ Standing ∞

Small side arm circles—50 forward circles, 50 backward circles

Begin with correct standing posture, arms extend directly out to sides at shoulder level. Close the fingers and point thumbs to the front. Hold the body quiet and make small, quick circles forward with the arms. Circles should be centered around the shoulder joint, not performed entirely in front of or behind the body. Point thumbs to the back to perform small, quick circles backward.



Elbow open and close—10X

Begin with correct standing posture. Place fists against temples, with fingers closed and thumbs pointed to the ground. Start with elbows pointed out to the sides. Keep the shoulders pulled down and close elbows together in front of face. Return to open position.



Demi Plié with parallel and 1st leg positions—8X each position

Begin with correct vertical posture in parallel and 1st positions. Bend the knees in line with the second toe for each position. Allow the knees and feet to soften and plié as far as the heels can remain in contact with the floor. Return to stand with straight legs. Maintain vertical pelvic clock alignment and activate the outer thigh muscles to create turnout in 1st position.



Grande Plié in 1st position—4X

Begin with correct vertical posture in 1st position. Bend the knees as in demi plié then continue to lower, allowing the heels to come up from the floor. Keep hips off the heels in the lowest position. Return to demi plié position pushing the heels down into the floor, then return to stand with straight legs. Maintain vertical pelvic clock alignment and activate the outer thigh muscles to create turnout in 1st position.



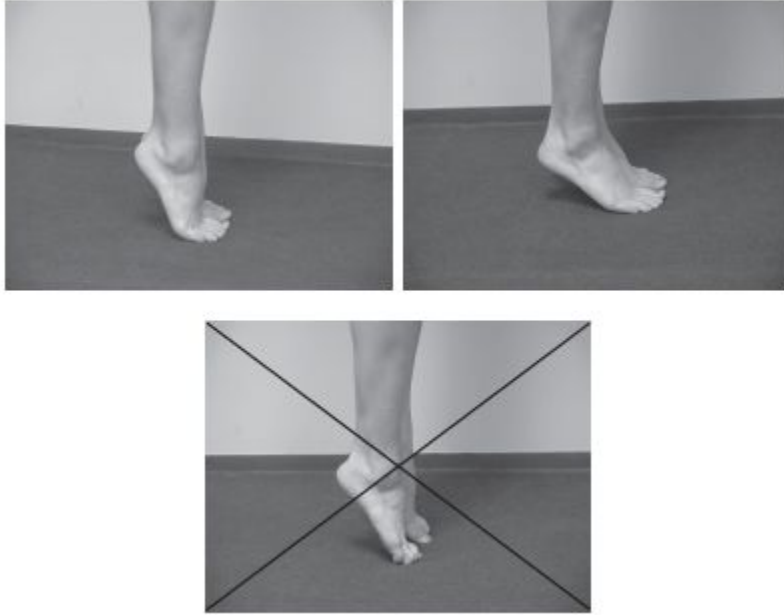
Demi and Grande Plié in 2nd position—4X

Same as previous except the heels remain on the floor for both demi and grande plié in second position. The grande plié in 2nd position lowers until the hips are level with the knees. Demi plié in 2nd position is halfway to the grande position.



Relevé with parallel, 1st and 2nd leg positions—8X each position

Begin with correct vertical posture in parallel, 1st and 2nd positions. Press into the floor and spread the ball of the foot to elevate the heels. Legs remain straight with the front thigh muscles active. The ankle and the toes are the only moving parts; do not allow the knees to bend during the relevé. Maintain vertical pelvic clock alignment. Utilize the muscles surrounding the top of the thigh bone, rather than squeezing the buttocks, to create turnout in 1st and 2nd positions.



Squat stand—10 to 20 second hold

Begin with feet parallel and bend knees to lower hips as far as possible. Balance with the heels on the floor in the squat position. Use the hands for assistance if needed by pushing on the floor behind the hips. Limiting factors for this exercise are short or tight calves and Achilles tendon OR weak foot flexors along the sides of the shin bone.



Pike stand—4X

Begin in parallel squat position with hands on floor in front of body. Push into the floor with heels of hands and feet to extend legs. Push the 6:00 or tip of tailbone upward and activate fronts of thighs. Weight should be centered around the flip flop spot of the foot. Top of the head drops toward the floor.



∞ Seated ∞

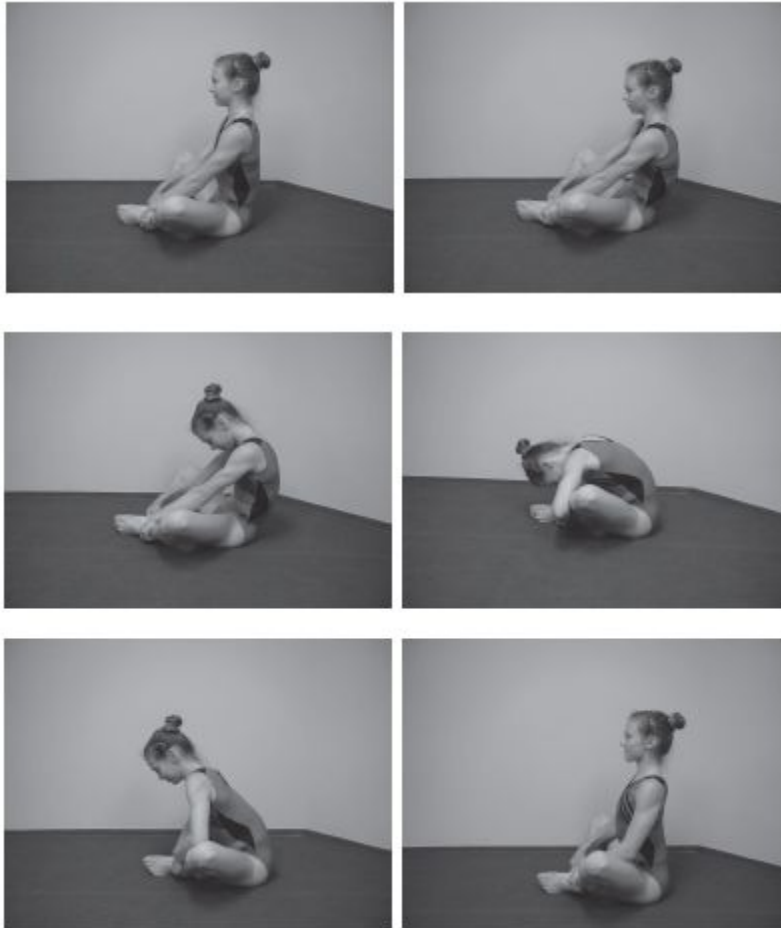
Butterfly sit

Begin seated with feet together and knees apart. Hold ankles with the hands and bring pelvic clock to vertical posture position. Activate the outer thighs to increase open angle of thighs. Make the sitz bones heavy to elongate the spine in proper vertical posture.



Butterfly sit—Spine flexion and extension 4X

Start from butterfly sit. Activate the lower abs to tilt pelvic clock backward, pull ribs behind the 12:00 (navel), elongate abdominals in curl position. Curl upper body forward bringing top of head toward feet. Tip pelvic clock forward and allow spine to stretch forward to extension, opening the thigh angle. Lift front of chest toward ceiling to sit up with spine extended.



Tuck and roll—holding legs 4X

Begin in a balanced tuck sit position, lightly holding shins with hands. Hold position with the pelvic clock tipped backward to create a curved spine position. Relax the neck and shoulders, allowing head to complete the curve of the spine. Initiate roll by tipping pelvic clock backward more (lift the 6:00 in front of body). Exhale to allow body to return to balanced tuck sit. Hold the exact tuck shape throughout the movement, do not allow legs or hips to open and close during the tuck and roll. Head does not touch the floor during the roll.



Tuck and roll—without holding legs 4X

Same as previous except extend the arms forward beside legs. This variation requires more abdominal strength. Avoid changes in the tuck shape or movement of the arms or legs.

Tuck and roll—elbows on top of knees 4X

Same as previous except place the elbows bent on top of the knees. This variation requires the most abdominal strength. Maintain the elbow to knee connection throughout the roll.



Pike sit—against wall 30-60 seconds

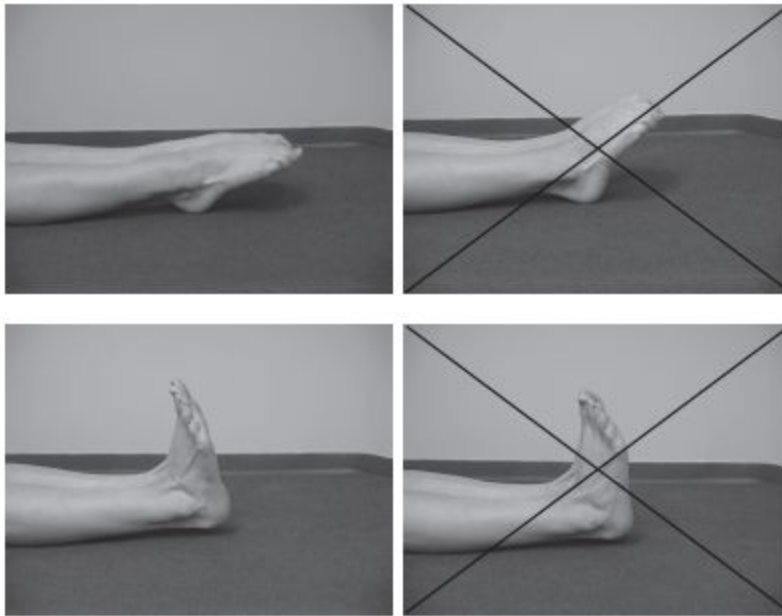
Begin sitting in pike position with pelvic clock in vertical alignment against a wall. Hold the torso in correct vertical posture with the lower ribs, shoulder blades and back of head against the wall. Press the thigh bones into back of the legs. Legs are parallel, sitz bone distance apart, with the second toes facing directly upward (feet flexed).



Pike sit—flex and point 8X

Maintain correct pike sit position as previous, either against the wall or free. Flex the feet sending heels forward past toes and pulling top of foot toward shin bone. Pull back evenly with the big toe and pinky toe. Point the

feet by pushing forward through middle of foot. Keep second toe in line with the shin bone.



Pike sit—Spine stretch 4X

Begin in correct pike sit position as previous, either against the wall or free. Flex the upper ribcage forward, keeping the lower back in proper vertical alignment. Head follows curve of the spine and arms stretch forward to horizontal. Return to sitting by stacking vertebra up the spine one by one.



Pike sit—Hamstring stretch 4X

Begin in correct pike sit position as above, either against the wall or free. Extend arms overhead to open armpit angle. Tip pelvic clock forward (pushing 6:00 backward) to stretch with straight back. Relax body down onto legs or return to sitting position.



∞ Lying down ∞

Supine lying ribs—open and close ribs 8X

Begin with proper supine lying position with arms overhead. Open or expand the lower ribs, arching the back and lengthening the abdominal muscles. Close the lower ribs, shortening the tummy muscles and pulling the chest away from the chin. Maintain flat pelvic clock alignment (do not allow 6:00 to lift when closing down the ribs) with thigh bones pulled to the back of the legs. Keep arms straight pushing open the armpit angle as much as possible. *This closed rib position is the correct shape for all handstands!*

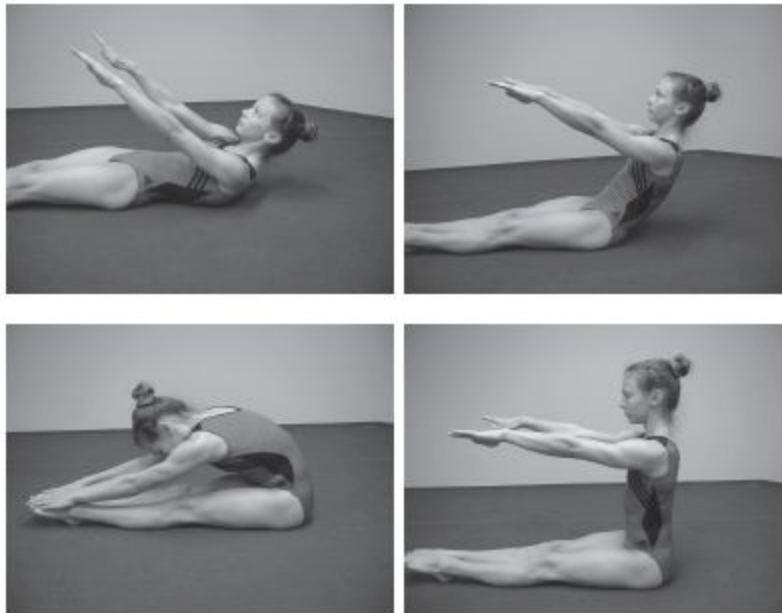


Spinal articulation—roll ups and roll downs 4X

Begin with proper supine lying position. Start roll up by closing the ribs and bringing arms in front of body. Start to curl up by widening the mid and

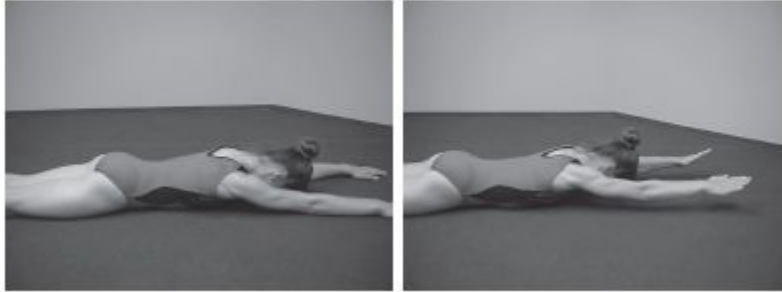
lower back into the floor. Turn the thighs slightly inward to keep legs heavy on the floor. If necessary to maintain proper form, use the arms by pushing hands against the outer thighs. Roll up into a spine stretch forward and complete the exercise by bringing the pelvic clock to vertical and stacking the spine in proper vertical alignment (pike sit).

From the pike sit begin the roll down by tipping the pelvic clock backward. Roll down the spine one vertebra at a time, focusing on lengthening rather than “crunching” the ribs. If the legs continually lift off the floor, hold a foam block between the shin bones. This will help to activate the inner thighs and hamstrings and to deactivate the hip flexors.



Prone lying—Arm lifts overhead 4X

Begin with correct prone lying position, forehead hovering 1” above the floor. Stretch the arms overhead forward and lift arms off the floor. Focus on moving the upper arm bone without pinching the neck or shoulder blades together. Keep the arms straight and in line with body.



Prone lying—Arm lifts out to sides 4X

Same as previous with arms directly out to sides in line with shoulders.

Prone lying—Leg lifts 4X

Begin with correct prone lying position with legs parallel, hands stacked under forehead. Stretch legs long then lift the thighs up behind body. Keep legs straight and parallel and do not squeeze the glutes. Hold the pelvis completely quiet as even a small movement can irritate the lower back. Stress lifting the abdominal wall (belly button) off the floor while opening and stretching the front of the hips into the floor.



Prone lying—Superman 4X

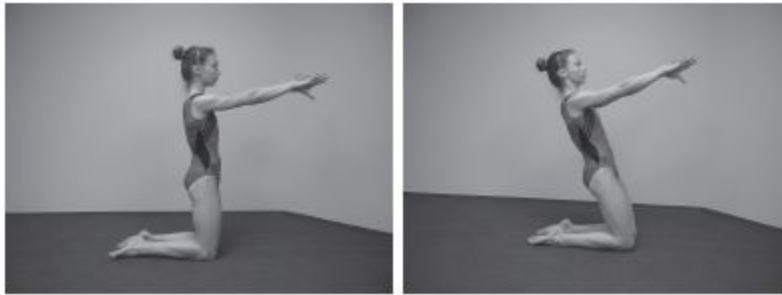
Same as previous, lifting the arms and legs at the same time.



∞ Kneeling ∞

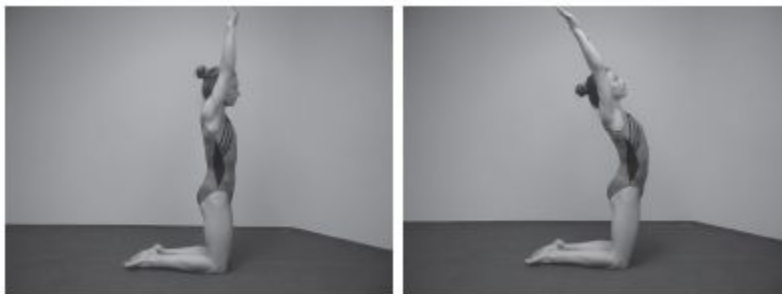
Thigh stretch—arms low 3X, arms high 3X

Begin kneeling with correct vertical posture. Hold body in a straight line and lean back, bending at the knee joint only. Return to vertical position. Move slowly into and out of the lean, relaxing fronts of thighs for better stretch.



Arm and chest extensions 4X

Begin kneeling with correct vertical posture. Lengthen arms overhead and press back to open armpit angle. Open upper ribcage toward ceiling to create upper spine extension. Return to vertical. Maintain closed rib position with short tummy muscles.



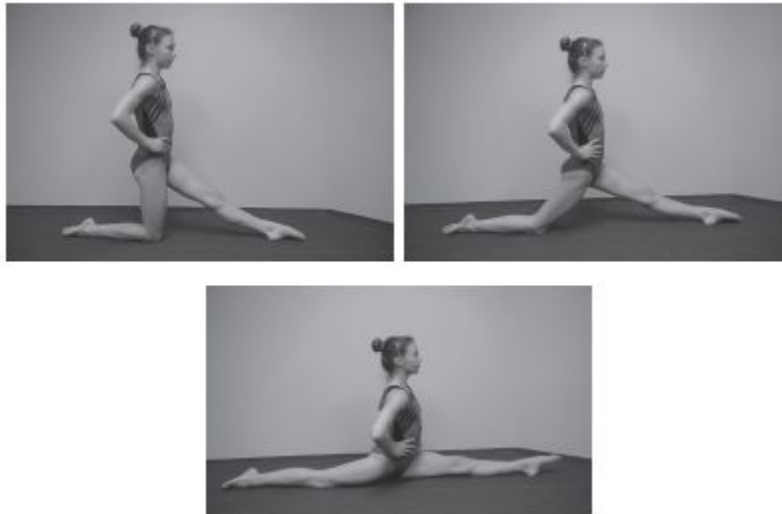
Half knee backbend—4X

Begin same as previous with arm and chest extension. Continue to arch backward by opening hips but keeping ribs closed. Return to vertical by stabilizing pelvic clock, shortening tummy, and lifting upper ribcage. Arms remain overhead with open armpit angle. Arch further only when the previous level has been demonstrated with control.



Slow slide to split—4X each leg

Begin kneeling with one leg extended forward. Extend the back leg to push the body forward into a correct split position. Focus on maintaining forward ribcage orientation with a vertical pelvic clock. Allow the legs to relax into the split and hold for 5-10 seconds. Hands may lightly touch the floor beside the hips or be placed at the waist.



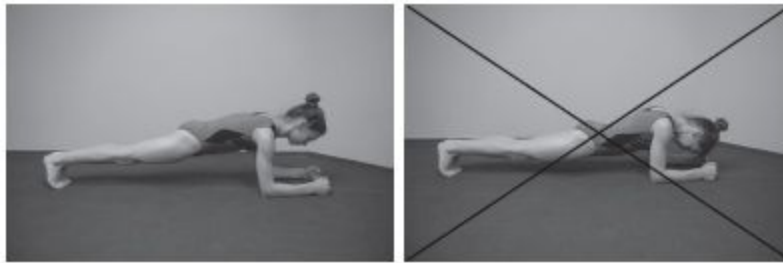
∞ Core strength and stability ∞

Plank holds on elbows—2 x 30 seconds each—front, side and back

Achieve and maintain pelvic, torso and head alignment in each position

Front Plank begins from all fours with elbows directly under armpits, forearms parallel and weight distributed evenly from elbow to hand. Stabilize the torso with clock and ribs in proper alignment. Extend one leg at a time behind the body to open front of hip, strongly holding the pelvic alignment. Neck and head should continue the line of the spine; the head should not be hanging down. Heels should be active and stretching away

from the body. Thigh bones should be lifting into the back of the leg muscles.



Back or Reverse Plank begins from pike sit. Lean back onto hands or elbows keeping the spine straight, not flexed forward. Legs are parallel with feet pointed. Press into the ground with heels to open front of hips and lift body into reverse plank position. Stabilize the shoulder joint to feel a lifting of the body “through the collarbones” keeping the head and neck in line with the spine. Work should be felt in the hamstrings; the buttocks should not be squeezed during this exercise.

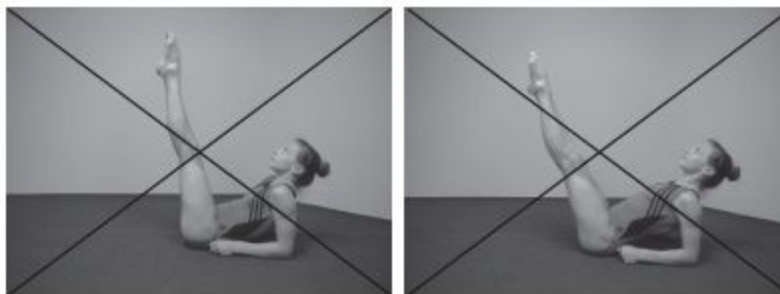


Side Plank is the most challenging of the plank positions as the base of support is the smallest. Begin this exercise with the feet split one ahead of the other, then progress to stacking the feet on top of each other. The pelvic clock and shoulder girdle face directly forward without rotation toward the front or back AND they must be aligned so that both sides of the waist are equally long. Head and neck complete the line of the spine and the shoulder is stabilized to give the feeling of spine elongation.



Elbow leg lifts—2 x 15 each single leg and legs together

Begin leaning back on elbows from pike sit. Maintain closed ribs throughout the exercises. Create correct hip joint articulation by holding pelvis and spine stable and moving legs from the thigh bone. Feel lift from top of foot with thighs active to eliminate bent knees.



∞ Locomotor Exercises ∞

For ALL locomotor exercises, first allow attempts to achieve the basic movement pattern before offering technical corrections, and then offer only one thought at a time.

Bear walk

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

4 Bear walk steps

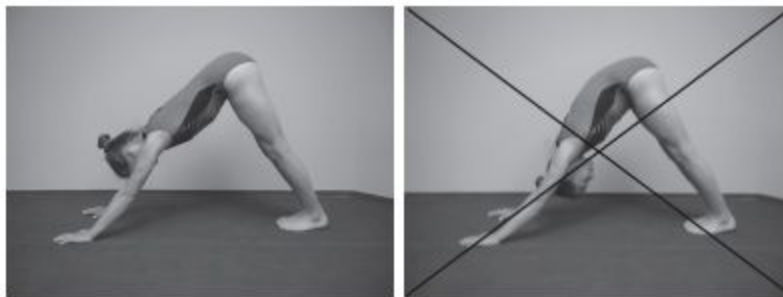
Stop and hold Down dog shape

2 slow Relevés

Point feet and pike press legs in to pike stand

RPT across floor

Keep pelvic clock stable and oriented with 6:00 pointing upward. Elongate the spine and avoid spinal flexion as in seated hamstring stretch. Move the thigh bones and not the pelvic clock during the bear walk steps. Legs are straight and “zipped up” throughout the exercise. Heels stay connected during relevé and press. Armpit angle remains opens with head between arms, not pushed through with the shoulders unstable.



Crab or Tabletop walk

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

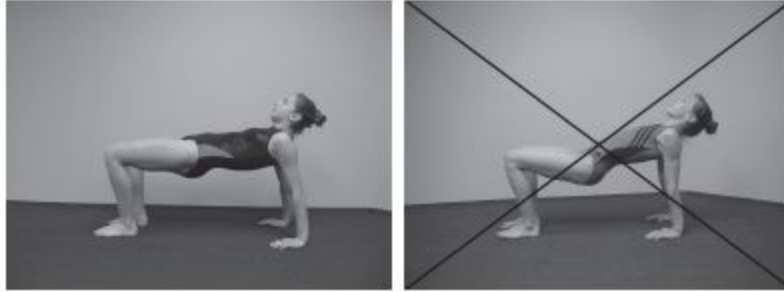
4 Crab walk steps

Stop and hold tabletop shape 4 counts

Kick one leg 4 times

RPT across floor, alternating kicking leg

Open hips to create a flat tabletop, where 6:00 is highest point of the pelvis. Keep ribs closed and wide with fingers facing toward feet. Maintain shape and hold pelvic clock level during kicks.



Backbend walk

Preparation to backbend:

1. Standing, open only armpits and top of ribcage, return to stand.
2. Continue upper body and hip extension to furthest position with straight legs and vertical pelvic clock, return to stand.
3. Hold #2, then continue armpit extension and slowly lower to backbend
with least amount of knee bend possible and keeping heels on the floor.

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

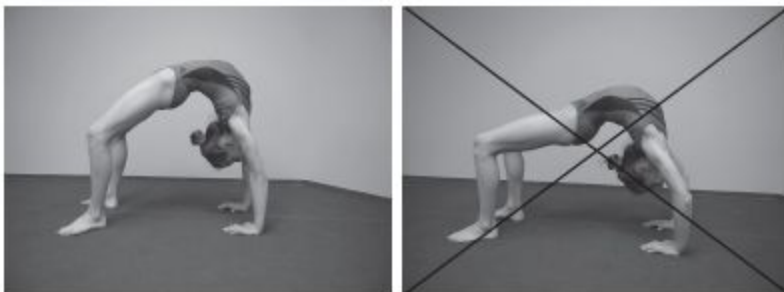
4 Backbend walk steps

Stop and hold bridge position with armpit and hip stretch

Kick one leg 4 times

RPT across floor, alternating kicking leg

Maintain rib connection and short tummy throughout the exercise. Do not allow the pelvic clock to tip forward at any time. Keep feet parallel and feet flat on the floor, making sure the armpits lead the walking steps and not the hands. Hold strong bridge shape during kicks.



Step kicks

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

Step L, Kick R to horizontal (middle)
Step R, Kick L to horizontal (middle)
Step L, Kick R to high
Step R, Kick L to high
RPT across floor

Walk forward to do kicks forward
Walk backward to do kicks backward

Keep heels on floor with weight centered around flip flop spot of foot. Hold pelvis still while leg moves during the kick. Support leg stays straight. Maintain proper torso alignment throughout the exercise. Balance tight muscles (standing leg, top of kicking leg, torso, and arms) with relaxed muscles (buttocks and underneath kicking leg)



2-foot bounces

Bounce preparation

1. Stand with arms overhead with proper standing posture
2. Begin slow relevés with knees straight and good ankle articulation
3. Speed up the relevés maintaining proper posture
4. Increase speed until bounces begin naturally

Articulate only the ankle joint and push through ball of foot to create forward moving bounces. Keep heels together and maintain correct posture

with arms overhead throughout exercise.

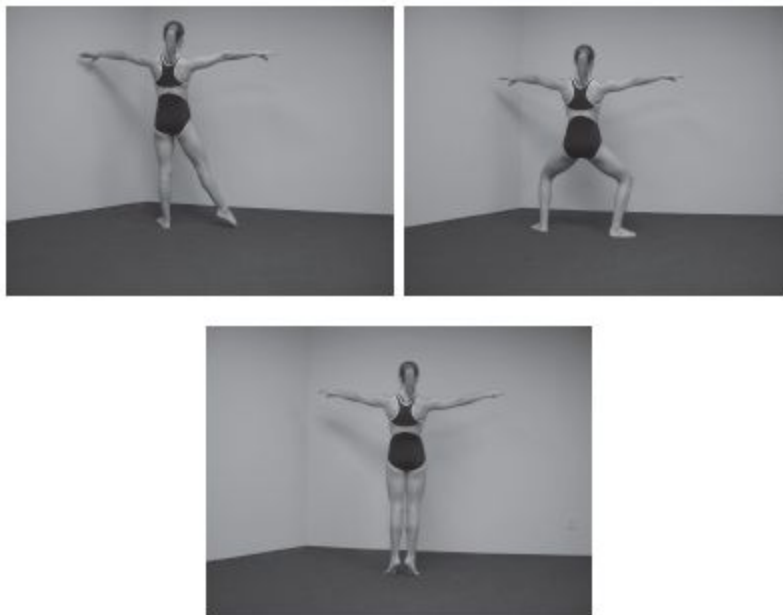


Chassé

Preparation for Side Chassés across the floor:

1. Stand in first position with proper posture.
2. Step out to 2nd position demi plié.
3. Close second leg in to 1st position relevé.
4. Continue and increase speed until flight phase begins naturally.

During Chassés across the floor keep torso aligned and quiet with arms held still in position. Show turned out demi plié on the floor phase. Show legs zipped together and straight during flight phase.



Skipping—Passé, Coupé, Leg behind (arabesque)

Preparation for Skipping across the floor:

1. Practice standing position with proper posture

2. Practice single hops in place while holding the standing positions.

During Skipping across the floor maintain proper posture. Quickly establish the leg shape, push down strongly with the support leg to create flight, and hold shape during flight phase. Land with control using demi plié of support leg, keeping the pelvic clock vertical and not collapsing the torso. Step forward with stretched foot for next hop.



Fwd roll stretch jumps

FUN GROUP CHALLENGES:

1. Try to do 4 repetitions in unison with a small group
2. Try to “stream” 4 repetitions with a small group
3. Try to combine unison and streaming with up to 60 gymnasts!!!

Move through squat position with feet flat on floor. Jump directly vertical, not forward, quickly achieving proper posture in the air.

Cartwheel and Chassé series

CHALLENGES:

1. Individuals do 4 cartwheels separated by side chassés—in a straight line
2. Individuals do 4 cartwheels with chasses on their non-dominant side—in a straight line

3. Try the FUN GROUP CHALLENGES listed with forward roll stretch jumps!!!

Keep body facing sideways and move in a straight line. Maintain proper posture with arms overhead and open armpit angle throughout the series. Zip legs together and show good flight during side chasse.

STEP 2 OVERVIEW & PHILOSOPHY

STEP 2

Main Goal: Establish core awareness
and core strength, Stabilize joints

of Exercises: ≈ 75 (40 from Step 1 + 35 from Step
2)

Student Level: Levels 4 & 5

*The Relationship grows, FASTER, HIGHER, STRONGER (CITIUS,
ALTIUS, FORTIUS)*

These are the levels where gymnasts first learn and perform aerial skills (front and back tucks, flyaways). The athletes are beginning to build speed and strength into their movements. This is the period when coaches need to make sure the athlete's core is strong not only in a static position, but also that the athlete can maintain a strong core position during movements and skills.

Step 2 of Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) includes exercises which challenge the body to hold a strong core position while the arms and legs work to create movement. In Step 2 we also learn about tightening and relaxing different body parts at the same time, a very important concept leading toward ease of performance and artistry. Athletes who are "too tight" and constantly grip their muscles will ultimately lose mobility and flexibility and will subject their bodies to more stress than is necessary.

The best teachers of movement are those who continue to work with their own bodies. Only through continued activity can we consistently make new discoveries and develop new imagery and vocabulary to convey those ideas to our students. Challenge your own concept of "faster, higher, stronger" by committing to your own physical training program that includes Pilates, yoga or another mind-body exercise concept.

Example of Step 2 at work

Movement A: Sit up—using spinal flexion

Common Dysfunction: a portion of the spine does not articulate (remains flat) during the roll up or roll down OR the spine compresses rather than elongates during the flexion

Correction: release the locked up portions and stabilize the hypermobile portions of the spine by activating the abdominal and back core muscles at the level of the affected area using exercises from **P10P** Step 2.

“We are only as strong as our weakest vertebra” was one of Joseph Pilates most influential quotes. Young athletes do not necessarily feel pain associated with improper flexion of the spine... often it feels good to “overround” the back and stretch some of the lumbar muscles. Breakdown of the discs and vertebrae due to improper flexion may not show up for years, but left unattended the spine will ultimately lead to career ending injuries and pain. Take time to work with your athletes so they can continue gymnastics for years and achieve the total fitness and strength they need for maximum performance.

Movement B: Knee backbend—using spinal extension

Common Dysfunction: pelvis tips forward and/or shoulder angle remains closed causing extreme hinge of the low back

Corrections: strengthen the upper and lower abdominals; stretch the hips and thighs; strengthen the upper back; stretch the upper ribcage and overhead arm position... exercises are found in Steps 1 & 2

The knee backbend shows coaches exactly where a gymnast’s spine will be vulnerable during gymnastics skills. If the gymnast cannot show proper movement into and out of knee backbends, she will be at risk for spine injury during all variations of handsprings at all levels. As with the Step 1 example of knee bends, the deterioration process occurs over time and with repetition of poor movement patterns. Many of the overuse injuries and joint problems seen in high level gymnasts can be traced back to poor mechanics left uncorrected at this level of participation.

Compulsory level coaches especially have a responsibility to understand how skeletal function can prevent a young gymnast from attaining true strength and affect her future in the sport. Learning this should motivate

compulsory level coaches to learn and apply as much as possible with Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**). How strong is our commitment to our athletes' well-being?

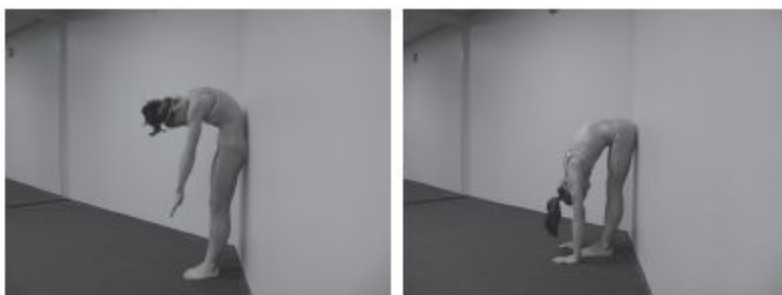
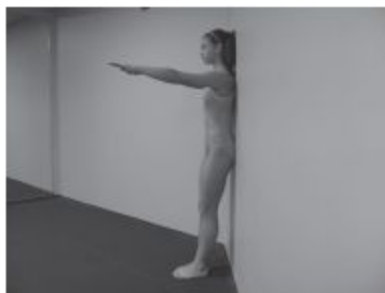
STEP 2—35 exercises— Establishing core awareness and strength

∞∞ PILATES Prep ∞∞

Standing Roll Down and Up—Against a wall

Stand with feet 6-8” away from the wall. Pelvis and upper body maintain proper vertical posture against wall. Arms hang at sides of body. Begin with spine stretch forward as in Step 1 seated exercise. Continue to reach for floor, peeling spine away from wall one vertebra at a time to arrive at pike stand as in Step 1 standing exercise.

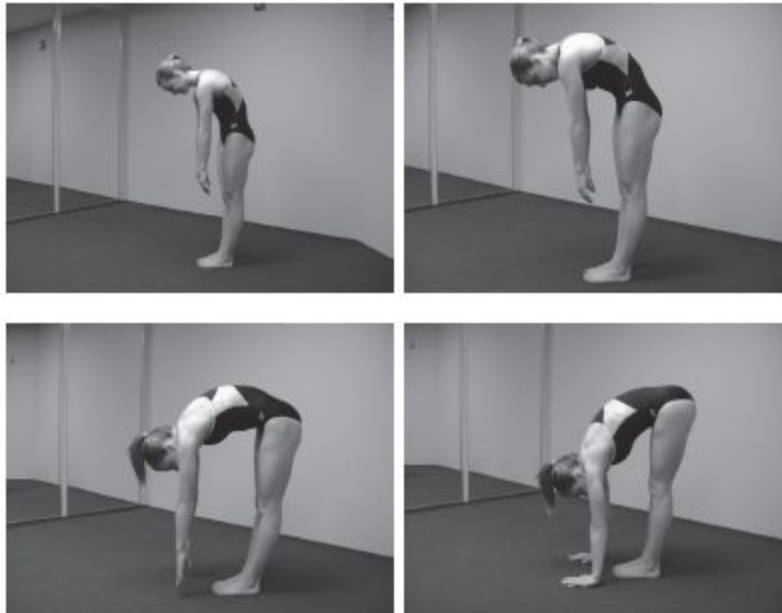
Initiate the roll up by bringing pelvic clock back to vertical position. Allow head and arms to hang freely. Continue the roll up bringing each vertebra back to touch the wall in order from bottom to top of spine. Maintain long abdominals throughout and finish with strong vertical posture.



Standing Roll Down and Up—free standing

Begin with correct standing posture. Execute roll down and up as above. Keep the legs aligned vertically with the hip over the ankle joint. Weight is

distributed evenly on the bottom of the foot. Athletes with tight calves will have difficulty keeping the heel in contact with the floor. Athletes with overextended knees need to keep more weight on the ball of the foot.



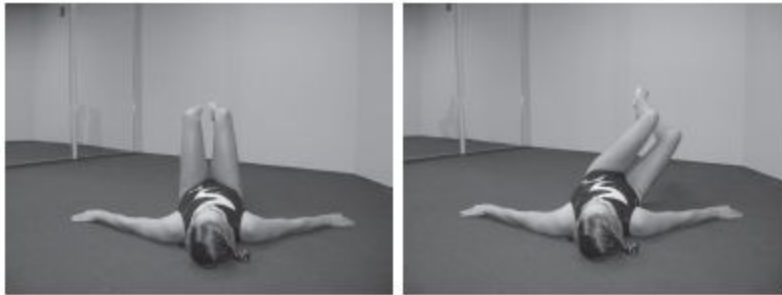
Tabletop legs—Dips 6-8X

Begin with correct supine lying posture. Bend knees 90° and lift legs to create a “tabletop” with the shin bones. Knee joint is directly over the hip joint so the thigh bone is perpendicular to the floor. Legs maintain sitz bone distance apart. Send the thigh bones away, holding the 90° knee angle, to open the hip joint and “dip” feet toward the floor. The legs move only as far as the torso position can remain stable. Return to starting tabletop leg position.



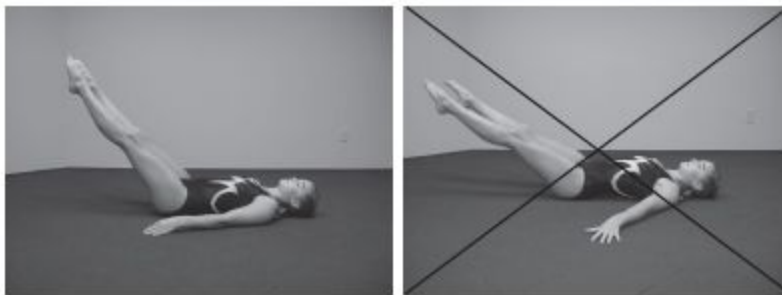
Tabletop legs—Side to Side 4X

Start with tabletop legs. Arms directly out to sides. Tip pelvic clock toward the 9:00 to move thigh bones to the right. The ribcage remains stationary. Draw the pelvic clock back to center position, bringing legs back to tabletop position.



Tabletop legs—Leg extensions 6-8X

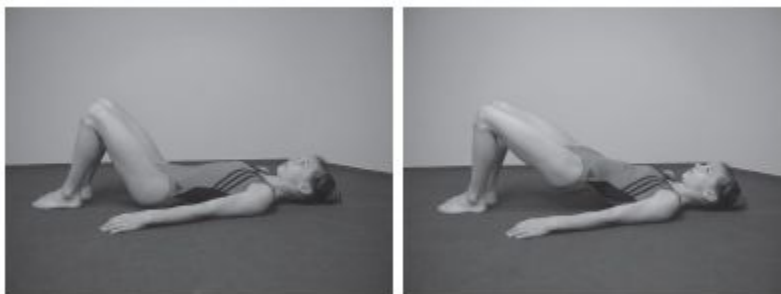
Start with tabletop legs. Arms down to sides. Flex feet into 1st position and squeeze knees together. Extend legs away from body as if making a footprint on the wall. Legs move only as far as the torso remains stable. Return to starting position.



Shoulder bridge—4X

Begin lying supine with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Legs are separated sitz bone distance apart. Start the spinal articulation by tipping the 6:00 upward. The 9, 3 and 12:00 points will move toward the floor and the lower back will become wider and flatter. Stretch the knees away from the body to begin lifting the hips off the floor. Continue lifting one vertebra at a time to the shoulder bridge position. The chest pulls away from the chin, weight is centered around the ball of the foot, the glutes are relaxed, and the legs remain parallel. A proper shoulder bridge will stretch the hip flexors and fronts of thighs, not put pain in the lower back. If pain is felt, tighten the middle chest and lower hips to a comfortable height.

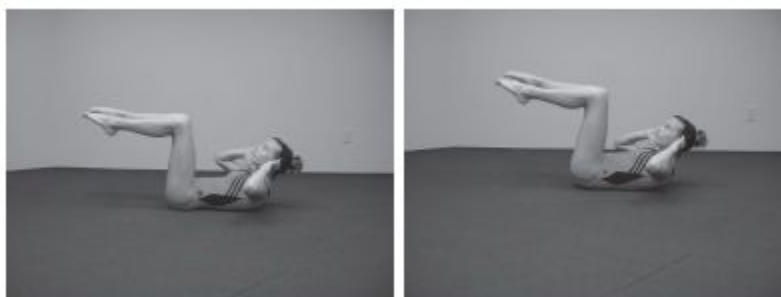
Roll down from the bridge by lengthening the spine and placing one vertebra at a time on the floor. Finish by bringing the pelvic clock back to level in the starting position.



C-curve—Pelvic clock tips 8X

Begin lying supine with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Press middle and lower back wide and down into the floor to lift upper chest into c-curve position. Arms stretch to sides of thighs and head sits vertical on top of shoulders. Activate the armpits down the sides of the body to keep neck and shoulders open and relaxed. Hold the upper body in c-curve and begin pelvic clock tips. Alternately rock the 6:00 up and toward the body, then rock the 6:00 down and away from the body. Practice finding neutral position with the hips relaxed and pelvic clock level to the floor.

Look for the belly to remain flat and wide throughout the exercises. A thickness in the center of the belly area is a sign that the torso and pelvis are unstable and the abdominal core is weak.



C-curve—Hundreds breath 1 set

Establish c-curve position with neutral pelvic clock. Hold position while breathing in five short sniffs then breathing out five short puffs. Do this 10 times to make the full Hundreds breath.



C-curve—Single leg stretch 8 each leg

Begin in c-curve position with tabletop legs. Using the hands like a “garage” for the knee, extend one leg away from body. Keep the feet level with the knees while alternating legs slowly. Keep the pelvic clock neutral, the torso stable in c-curve, and the breath continuous.



C-curve—Double leg stretch 5X

Begin in c-curve position with tabletop legs. Place hands to sides of knees. Extend legs and arms away from center of body, maintaining the c-curve in the torso. Pull knees back and circle arms around to sides to return to start position. Legs and arms open only as far as the torso can remain stable. Exhale during the one phase of movement, inhale during the other phase.



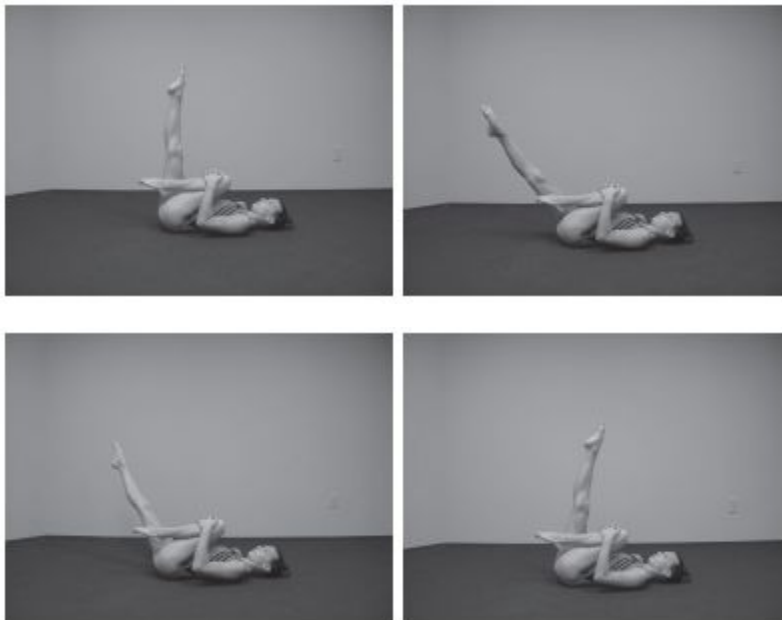
C-curve—Scissors 8 each leg

Begin in c-curve position with tabletop legs. Extend both legs to the ceiling and reach for one ankle with both hands. Lower the free leg, pressing the top of the thigh bone toward the floor. Hold and pulse one time, then switch legs and repeat. Practice breathing in 2 sniffs on one leg, and exhale 2 times on the other. Change the breath pattern halfway through the exercise.



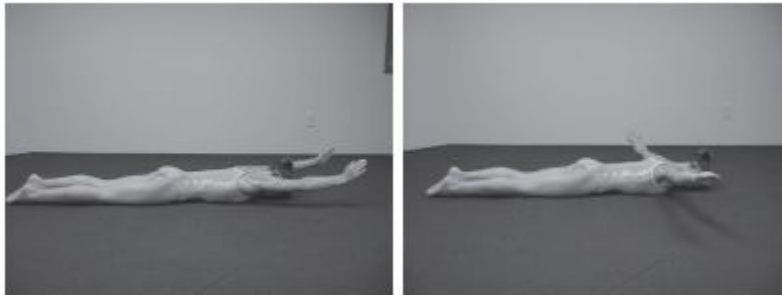
Supine Lying—Piston leg circles 5 each leg

Begin lying supine. Hug one leg to chest and extend the other leg to the ceiling. Move the extended leg in circles first crossing the center line, lowering the leg away from body, opening out to the side, and returning to the vertical start position. Keep the pelvic clock, torso, and bent leg stable. The size of the circle depends on the stability of the rest of the body. The goal is to free up the articulation of the leg bone in the hip socket.



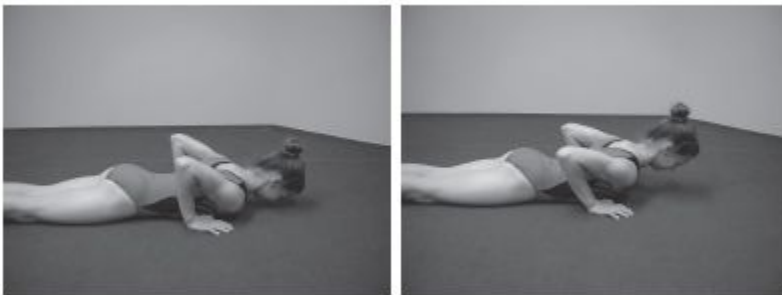
Prone lying—Arm Movements

Begin in Superman position from Step 1 exercises. Move arms out to sides in a T position then back toward hips. Return to start position. Keep palms facing floor throughout the exercise. Maintain the correct prone lying position and keep the neck and shoulders open and relaxed. Look for the glutes to be active without being squeezed together.



Prone lying—Chest lift 3X

Begin in correct prone lying position. Bend elbows and point toward ceiling to place hands on floor beside lower ribcage. Draw the elbows back toward hips and lengthen the front of the chest to create an arc in the upper ribcage. The head follows the line of the spine. Lower the body keeping the pelvic clock flat to the floor (do not let the 6:00 lift).



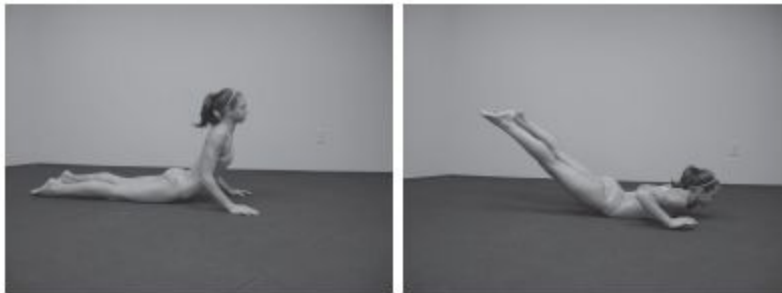
Prone lying—Chest lift with arm push 3X

Perform the chest lift same as previous. Push with the hands and continue pulling with the upper back to further extend the spine. The front of chest continues to reach forward and upward. Lower back to starting position.



Prone lying—Swan dive and catch 3-5X

Perform the chest lift with arm push same as previous. Hold the body shape and release hands from the floor. Allow body to rock forward and back. Catch with hands on floor in the chest lift with arm push starting position.



Side lying legs—Abduction 8X

Begin lying on the side with underneath arm extended overhead in line with body. Use the second arm for balance or place on hip for pelvic clock awareness. With legs parallel lengthen and lift the top leg toward the ceiling. Focus on pressing the side of the thigh bone upward. Lower the leg to starting position. Maintain the pelvic clock alignment while the leg is moving.



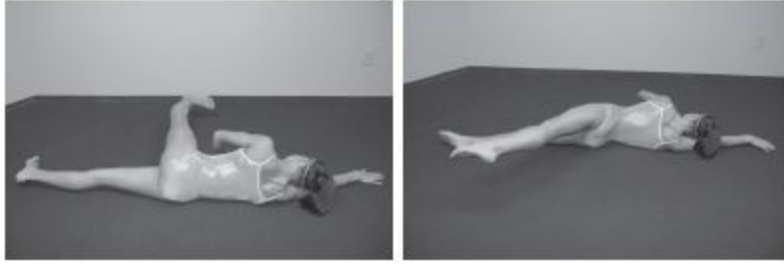
Side lying legs—Adduction 8X

Begin with top leg lifted same as previous. Hold the top leg stable then lengthen and lift the bottom leg. Focus on squeezing the two thigh bones together. Hold for 3 counts then release to starting position.



Side lying legs—Side kick 4X

Begin with top leg lifted same as previous. Flex the foot and swing top leg forward, closing the hip toward 90°. Point the foot and swing top leg backward, opening the hip joint as far as possible with the pelvis and torso stable. For more challenge, perform the side kicks while supported on the forearm.



∞∞ Kneeling ∞∞

Back extension—full knee backbends 3X

Start with correct vertical posture, kneeling with legs parallel and hip distance apart. Arms start overhead with open armpit angle. Perform back extension as in Step 1 Exercises and continue to stretch fingertips to lightly touch floor. Return to vertical as in Step 1, adding speed and keeping the pelvic clock aligned vertical.



Single leg balance—leg horizontal forward 3X each leg

Start kneeling with correct vertical posture, legs together. Arms may be out to the sides or with hands on waist. Lift one knee forward to hip level then extend the leg to horizontal balance position. Return leg to kneeling position. Make sure to keep the moving leg aligned with the center of body.

Keep the supporting thigh vertical and press into the foot of the support leg to assist with balance.



∞∞ Basic strength ∞∞

Plank Position

Strong shoulder stability and alignment coupled with flexibility of the wrist and proper use of the hand is necessary to diminish wrist discomfort.

Static Holds 2 x 30 seconds each—front, side and back—then add movements, 8 of each

Movements are performed with the extremities only, holding the torso stable at all times.

Front Plank begins from all fours with hands directly under armpits, arms straight but not locked out at the elbows, and ribcage lifted. Chest should be neither hollow nor “saggy”; shoulder blades should be situated flat on back of ribcage. Extend legs behind body to plank position, opening front of hips and maintaining proper torso alignment. Neck and head continue the line of the spine, heels are active, and thigh bones are lifted to back of leg.



MOVEMENTS in Front Plank Position:

1. Ankle articulation—rocking the body forward and back

2. Elbow flexion (push-ups)—lowering the upper body and returning to position

This movement is especially challenging to maintain the shoulder blades in a stable position against the ribcage, not allowing winging or pinching during the movement.

Reverse Plank begins from pike sit. Lean back with straight torso to place hands on floor behind with fingers facing toward the body. Stabilize the shoulders and press heels into floor with parallel legs to open front of hips and lift into reverse plank position. Neck and head continue the line of the spine, upper hamstrings are active, buttocks is not squeezing.



MOVEMENTS in Reverse Plank Position:

1. Leg rotations—internally and externally rotate the thigh bones
2. Knee bends—moving the body forward then back to start position
3. Single leg passé—bend one leg at a time to passé position in front of the body

Side Plank starts with legs split and one foot in front of the other, then progresses to legs stacked. Shoulder must be stabilized, torso and pelvic clock aligned and directly forward, both sides of waistline even.

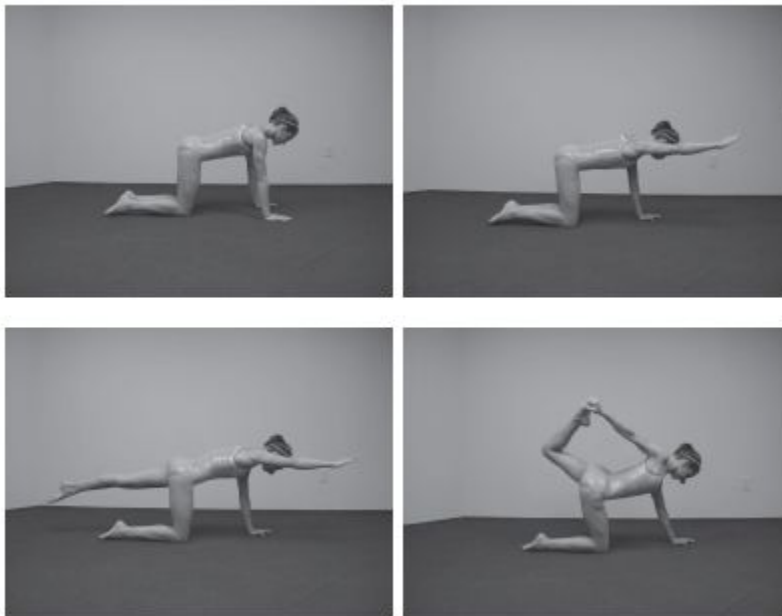


MOVEMENTS in Side Plank Position:

1. Hip dips—lower pelvis and lift to start position maintaining shoulder stability
 2. Leg lift to star—extend top leg and arm out to side of body and hold
- All-Fours Position

Static Holds 2 x 30 seconds each—leg and arm extension, ring balance

All-Fours begins with hands directly under armpits, arms straight but not locked out at the elbows. Chest should be neither hollow nor “saggy”; shoulder blades should be situated flat on back of ribcage. Knees are aligned directly under the hips with 90 degree angles at the hip and knee joints. Neck and head continue the line of the spine.



MOVEMENTS in All-Fours Position:

1. Arm extension—slide arm forward and lift in line with body
2. Leg extension—slide opposite leg backward and lift in line with body
3. Ring position—reach around and bend knee to grasp big toe and lift behind body

∞∞ Standing Exercises with and without the Ballet Barre ∞∞

Use a balance beam for support if no ballet barre is available. Maintain correct standing posture while performing the exercises at any speed.

Additional Standing position—5th position—plié and relevé

With proper standing posture, rotate legs using the upper thigh muscles without squeezing the buttocks. Distribute weight evenly on the bottom of the foot and achieve the crossed-leg position using the inner thigh muscles.



Footwork—8 each front, side and back—1st, 2nd, and 5th positions

Tendu—straight leg slide ends with foot pointed and connected to the floor, slide straight leg back to position

Dégagé—straight leg slide with slight detachment of the foot from the ground, snap back to position

Battement—straight leg slide to horizontal kick, return to position through the tendu

Focus on sending energy into the floor using proper foot articulation. Close legs back into position using the strong inner thigh muscles.



Leg Extensions (Developpé)—4 each front, side and back—5th position

Maintain strong support leg and proper posture, draw one foot up to the knee (turned-out passé position). Lead with the ankle bone to extend the leg horizontal and hold. Close to 5th position through the tendu. Hold pelvic clock vertical throughout exercise to allow the thigh bone to move freely from the hip joint.



Turn Preparation (Promenade)—4 each side, parallel and turned out

Stand on one leg with the free leg in passé position. Keeping weight centered on the flip flop spot, “scoot” heel of foot around in a circle making a 360° turn toward the support leg. Promenade is initiated with rotation of the upper thigh while the pelvic clock remains stable. Rest of the body maintains correct postural alignment.



∞∞ Locomotor ∞∞

For ALL locomotor exercises, first allow attempts to achieve the basic movement pattern before offering technical corrections, and then offer only one thought at a time.

Flat back walks

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

4 steps with back flat in tabletop position, arms reach overhead

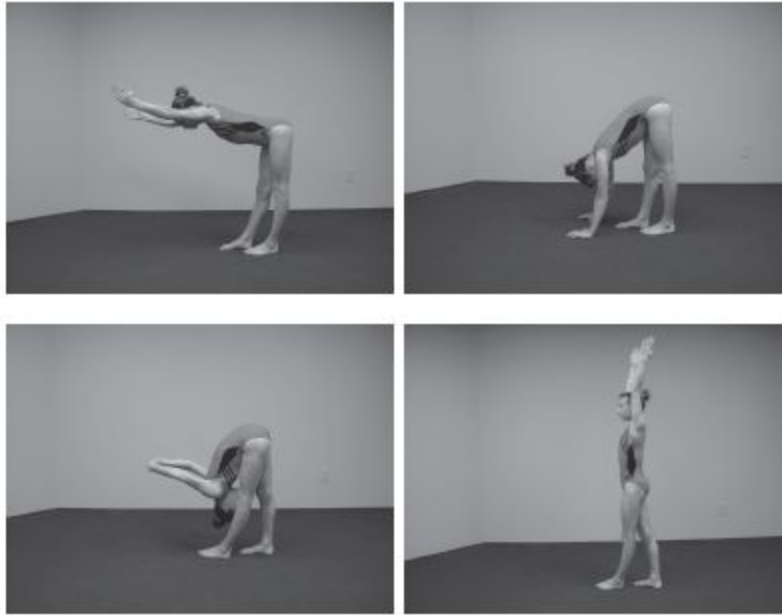
4 steps touching the floor with hands in pike stand position

4 steps with arms stretching over behind back, pike position

4 steps standing vertical, arms overhead to armpit extension

RPT across floor

Make tabletop and pike positions with movement of the pelvis, rather than flexion of the spine. Legs are straight and strong with weight distributed evenly on the sole of the foot. Keep ribs closed in tabletop position and while stretching arms overhead.



Light running across the floor or in a circle—8 of each

VARIATIONS:

Single arm circles backward, right and left

Double arm circles backward

Swimming or alternating arm circles forward

Keep the pelvic clock vertical while running. Maintain the rib connection at all times. Circle the arm using the upper arm bone. Stretch for a larger circle by rotating the upper chest, not by lifting the shoulder or turning the whole body. Try to keep a smooth run while the arms move in circles (coordination).

Bear walk

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

4 Bear walk steps

Stop and hold down dog shape

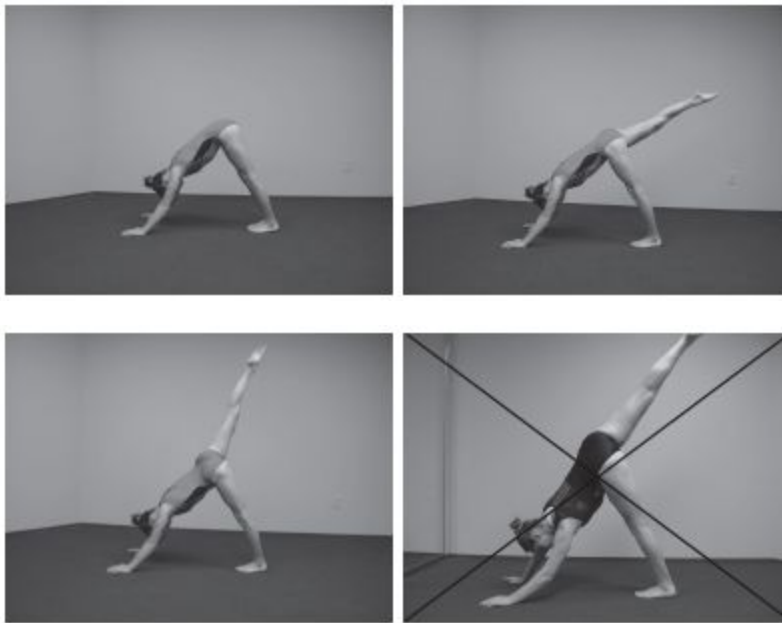
Single leg lift behind body to hold

3 Leg pulses and close

RPT across floor, alternating kicking leg

Keep pelvic clock square with 6:00 pointing upward during the leg lift. Keep moving leg straight and press the thigh bone to the back of the leg.

Reach support heel toward floor. Maintain armpit angle with neck and head in line with spine.



Crab walk

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

4 Crab walk steps

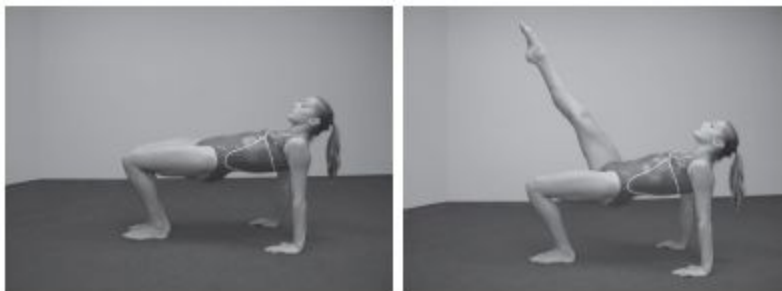
Stop and hold tabletop shape 4 counts

Kick one leg 2 times

Circle leg up, out and around

RPT across floor, alternating kicking leg

Same as Step 1 Crab walk exercise with challenge to pelvic stability during leg circle. Reminders: open front of hip, ribs closed, fingers forward and stretch through collarbones.



Backbend walk

Preparation to backbend:

1. Kick to handstand
2. Hold shape and open armpits to initiate movement
3. Slowly lower legs to bridge keeping ribs closed and armpits open

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

4 Backbend walk steps leading with feet

Stop and hold bridge position

Kick one leg 2 times

Hitchkick with support on arms

Same as Step 1 Backbend walk exercise with challenge to shoulder stability during hitchkick. Reminders: feet flat, ribs connected to short tummy, 6:00 lifted and legs parallel.



Step kicks

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

Step R, Kick L front

Step L, Kick R side with $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to left

Step R with $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to left, Kick L back

Step L, R with $\frac{1}{2}$ turn to left

RVS and RPT across the floor

Do this pattern on flat feet with arms side and leg horizontal, then progress to high kicks on relevé with arms overhead. Increase speed and dynamics while maintaining proper postural alignment throughout. Reminders: keep pelvic clock stable allowing freedom of movement with the leg, balance tight supporting muscles with relaxed stretching muscles.



Chassé and hop combinations

VARIATIONS across the floor:

1. Chassé R, hop on R; chassé L, hop on L; RPT—using passé, leg front and arabesque positions
2. Side chassé R, hop on R with $\frac{1}{2}$ turn to right; side chassé L, hop on L with $\frac{1}{2}$ turn to left; RPT
3. 3 side chasses to hop with $\frac{1}{2}$ turn—swinging arms alternately out and across chest

Leaps

Progressions for Leaps across the floor:

1. Stand with leg horizontal in front, plié on one leg, push forward to leap, land in arabesque on plié
2. Step leaps 3 in a row, starting small and increasing amplitude
3. Chassé R, run R, L, leap R, step L and close to finish

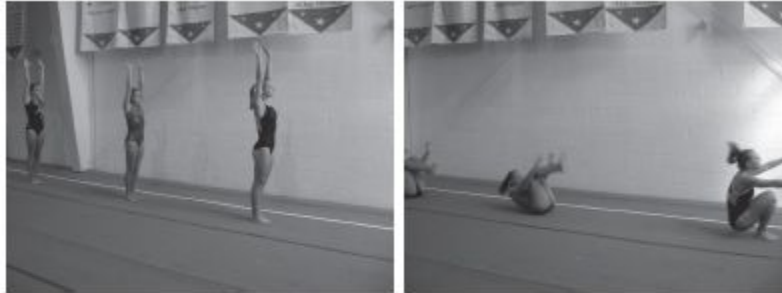
Always work to keep the pelvic clock vertical. Push with the support leg to lead the flight with the 6:00 rather than the ribs or shoulders. Increase the split angle and speed of take off as the proper postural alignment is achieved.



Forward roll, jump $\frac{1}{2}$ turn, backward roll, jump $\frac{1}{2}$ turn

Try this with the FUN GROUP CHALLENGES from Step 1:

1. In unison with a small group
2. Streaming with a small group
3. Streaming and in unison with the whole team!



Cartwheels

PATTERNS and VARIATIONS:

1. 4 cartwheels with $\frac{1}{2}$ turn step to alternate sides
2. 4 cartwheels with increasing speed, passing through 2nd position plié
3. 4 cartwheels: 2 hands, 1 hand near-arm, 1 hand far-arm, 2 hands or NO hands!

Any open ribs, unstable shoulders or tipping clocks will result in crooked or crashing cartwheels. Coach should be able to see the issue and communicate with postural cues to fix the problems.

Handstand walk

PATTERN or RHYTHM:

Kick to Handstand

4 Handstand walk steps

Stop and hold handstand with extra stretch

Forward roll to stand

CHALLENGES:

Add pirouettes, back extension and backbend entries to make the pattern more difficult. Who can keep up with the rhythm? Probably the gymnasts with the best handstand posture!



STEP 3 OVERVIEW & PHILOSOPHY

STEP 3

Main Goal: Build flexible strength and strengthen flexibility

of exercises: ≈ 95 (40 from Step 1 + 35 from Step 2 + 20 from Step 3)

Student Level: Levels 6 & 7

Who takes responsibility for a Flexible Relationship

In general, gymnastics coaches are great at developing their athlete's GLOBAL muscles... the big muscles that move body parts... like the biceps, pectorals, rectus abdominus, quadriceps, hamstrings. By contrast the LOCAL muscles... muscles that hold the joints together... seem to be a mystery to the majority of us. When global muscles are allowed to do all the work the local muscles simply shut down and atrophy. Creating a good balance between the strength and flexibility of opposing global muscle groups is another challenge that is difficult to accomplish. This imbalance leads to muscles becoming over or underused and tight or rigid. Both of these scenarios correlate to a loss of power in the joint, compensation in a less capable joint, and great potential for pain and injury.

Coaches at this level must be much more sophisticated with their communication and instructions to their gymnasts. The individuality of the gymnast's natural movement pattern and her personality must be taken into account when directing and correcting gymnasts at this level. Every coach wants their gymnast to get "full credit" for amplitude, and every gymnast wants to get "full credit" for her skills. The trick is to identify the limiting factors for each individual gymnast and find the best way to communicate and push back those limitations.

As hard as it may be for us coaches to remain patient, we must always try to reinforce proper mechanics during skill performance... we must remain

flexible in our relationships with our athletes. This may mean allowing insufficient amplitude in favor of healthy body mechanics for a longer period of time than we desire. Only if we take the necessary time will the gymnast achieve her maximum potential, retain a healthier body, and be a happier athlete. An added bonus of adhering to the patient process of Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) training... many of the most common execution deductions simply disappear and winning becomes a much more common occurrence!

Example of Step 3 at work

Movement A: Switch leap

Common Dysfunction: the gymnast's static split is less than 180 degrees, but she is able use momentum to force her split past 180 degrees during a switch leap... this leads to muscle pulls, tendon tears, pelvic compensations and poor landing positions

Corrections: find the limiting factors in the static split (tight or rigid hip flexors and quadriceps, short or rigid hamstrings, weak low abdominals, weak hamstrings) and work extra to correct the imbalance

Movement B: Handstand pirouette

Common Dysfunction: the gymnast has a good handstand, but does not have the shoulder flexibility or strength to maintain the shape during the one-arm phase of the pirouette... resulting compensations cause crooked and out of balance pirouettes

Corrections: continue working the **P10P** exercises for shoulder and core stability while training the pirouettes; increase the speed of the exercises to the point of instability, then slow and review when the pattern breaks down.

Levels 6 & 7 begin the gymnast's foray into optional routines and her first steps toward training more independently. The gymnast at these levels must take some responsibility for maintaining her Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) from Steps 1 & 2 so she can build on that foundation in Step 3. For the first time in her career the FIG Code of Points designates which skills a gymnast can use in her routines to gain point credit. The Code requires the athlete to demonstrate exceptional amplitude in flexibility and flight in order to receive full point credit for those chosen skills. If the athlete wishes

to gain maximum points from the judges, she simply must stretch more, and be stronger in that stretched position.

Those athletes who have failed to achieve the goals from Steps 1 & 2 will now begin to make major compensations as they work to make their skills get credit from the judges. It is time now for the coach to balance his obligation to compose high-scoring routines with his obligation to the long-term health of his athlete.

STEP 3—20 exercises— Building flexible strength and strengthening flexibility.

∞∞∞∞ PILATES exercises ∞∞∞∞

C-curve—Hundreds—1 set

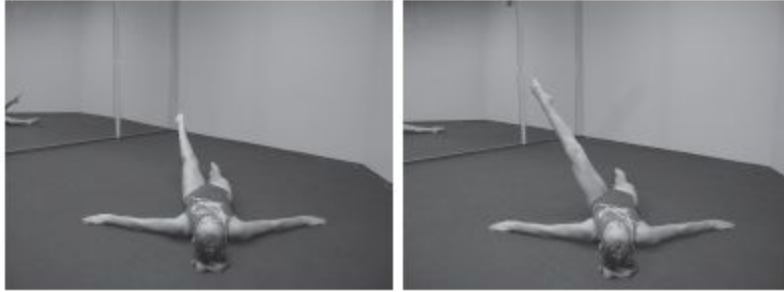
In the basic C-curve position from Step 2, pump extended arms rapidly up and down. Breathe in for 5 pumps and exhale for 5 pumps... 10 sets equals 100! Begin with legs in tabletop position. Progress to extended and lowered leg positions as form is stabilized.



Supine lying—Leg circles—6 each direction

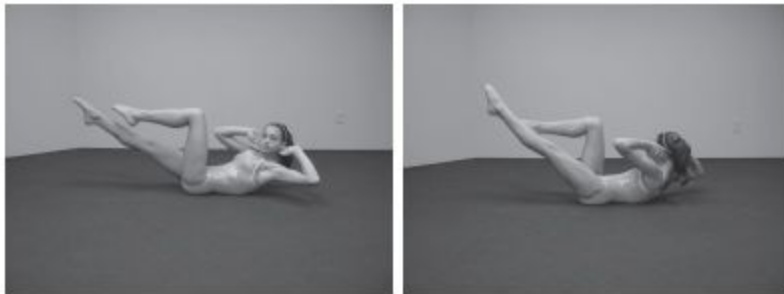
Same as piston leg circle from Step 2, but with non-working leg extended along the floor. Circle the working leg keeping the rest of the body stable and freeing up the hip joint. Increase the speed and dynamic quality of the circles as pelvic stability is achieved.





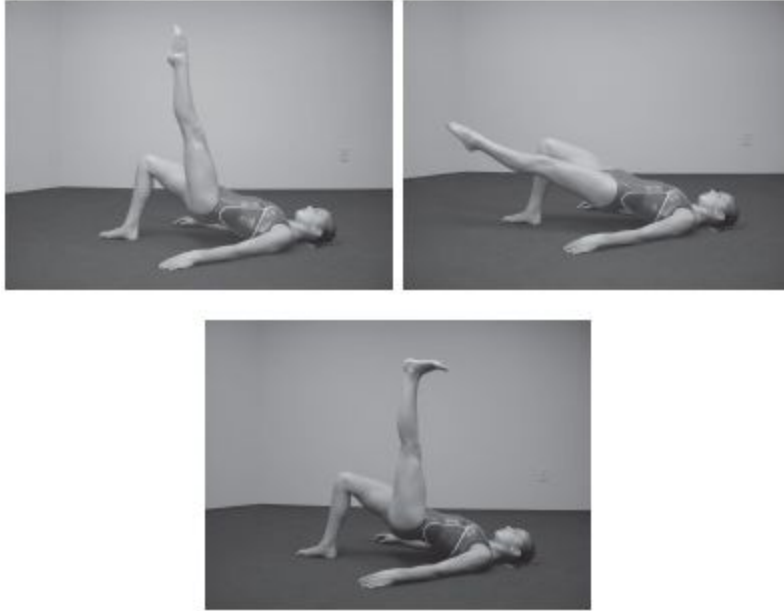
C-curve—Criss cross—6 each side

Same as single leg stretch from Step 2, with the addition of upper body rotation. Place hands behind head while maintaining proper C-curve position. Extend R leg and rotate ribcage while reaching R elbow toward **R ankle**. Reverse and repeat 8 times in each direction. Upper body should not rock from side to side, and the head should not be pulled by the hands. Begin slow and increase speed only when the C-curve stability is achieved.



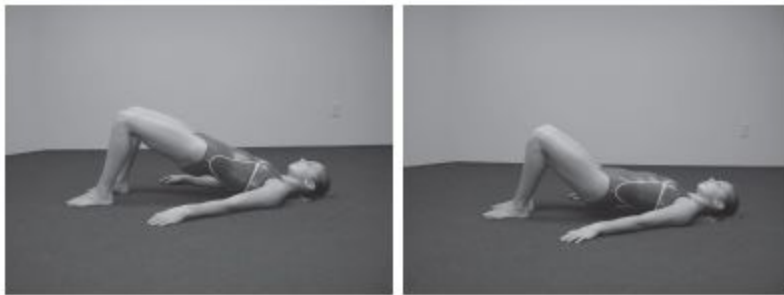
Shoulder bridge—Single leg kicks—4 times each leg

While holding the shoulder bridge (from Step 2), extend one leg vertical to ceiling. Lower the leg with a pointed foot, then lift back to vertical with a flexed foot. Hold pelvic clock stable during the leg kicks, opening the front of the hip and keeping clock level.



Shoulder bridge—hinge—4 times

While holding the shoulder bridge from Step 2, maintain spine and torso alignment and hinge from the hips to lower down and lift up. Maintain correct position of feet on the floor, keep middle chest strong, and avoid squeezing the buttocks.



Seated—Spine Twist—4 times each side

Begin in pike sit with arms out to side middle. Rotate ribcage to right or left and return to center. Maintain vertical pelvic clock alignment with no rotation side to side. Ground the body through the sitz bones for greater spinal extension and rotational ability.



Seated—Saw—4 times each side

Begin in seated position with legs and arms open in a 90° angle. Rotate ribcage right or left and curl spine into spine stretch position, reaching arms in opposite directions to open front of chest. Roll up and return to center. Ground the body through the sitz bones and aim pinky finger toward opposite pinky toe.



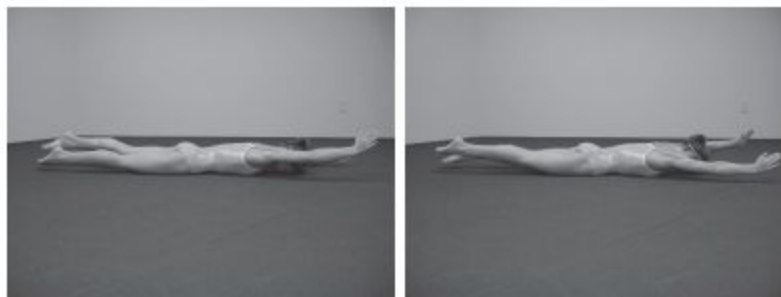
Open leg rocker—4X

Begin in a balanced tuck position holding front of ankles with hands. Extend spine while straightening and opening legs to a V position. Tip the pelvic clock to initiate the rock backward. Maintain the shape with long abdominals and push hands against shin bones to rock forward, returning to upright V position.



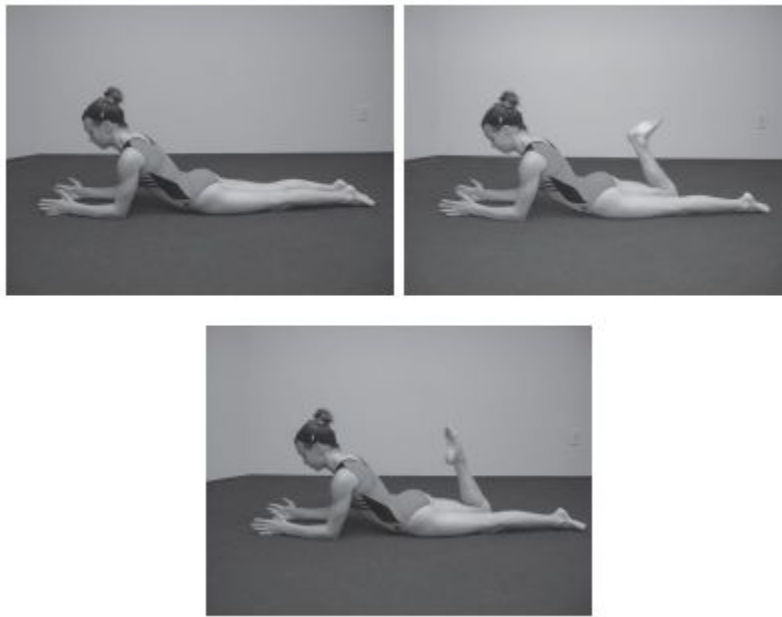
Prone lying—Swimming—8 breaths

Begin in Superman position from Step 1 Exercises. Alternately lift the opposite arm and leg toward the ceiling. Begin slowly and progress to faster movement as the torso is able to remain stable. Maintain the correct prone lying position with the neck and shoulders open and relaxed. Make sure the legs and arms stay straight so the upper arm and thigh bones are the active movers.



Prone—Single leg kicks—4 each leg

Begin with support on elbows with forearm bearing weight evenly through the wrist and palm. Legs are parallel and sitz bone distance apart. Elongate the spine keeping the middle chest strong and 6:00 into the floor. Bend one knee bringing heel toward the hip in two pulses... one flex, one point. Extend leg and alternate sides.



Prone lying—Swan dive—4 times

Begin as swan dive catch from Step 2. Release the hands and reach arms forward overhead as in Superman position from Step 1. Keep momentum in the rocking motion by driving alternately the upper arm bones and thigh bones up and behind the body. Maintain elongation of the spine and stabilize the pelvis throughout the exercise.



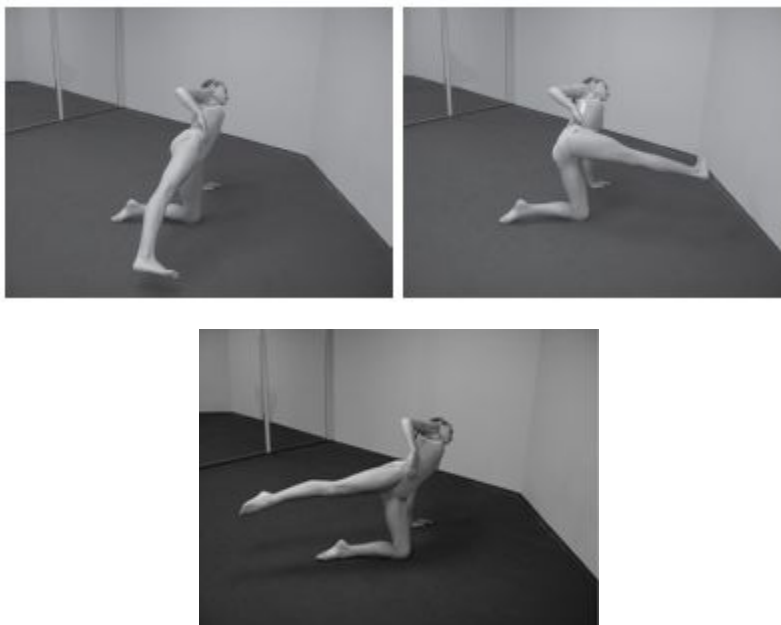
Kneeling—Side bends—4 each side

Start with proper kneeling posture with arms out to sides. Stretch the spine and flex the ribcage to bend the upper body to the right. Keep the pelvic clock vertical and hold the arms as if steering a car using a giant steering wheel. Return to vertical position. Repeat to the other side.



Kneeling—Side legs—4 kicks front and back each side

From a kneeling position extend left leg to side and place right hand on floor to side. Left leg to horizontal in parallel position with knee facing forward. Swing leg forward to 90° hip angle with flexed foot, then swing leg backward to hip extension with pointed foot. Pulse the leg two times at each end point front and back. Keep torso stable with correct postural alignment including the head, and maintain support leg in vertical position. Place as little weight as possible on the floor with the hand.



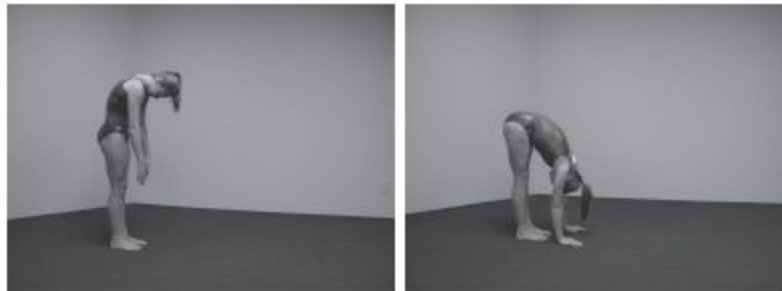
Pilates Push-ups—4 times

RHYTHM (4 counts each part... alternate inhale and exhale with each piece)

1. Stand and do plié then relevé



2. Roll down to place hands on floor



3. Walk hands forward to front plank position



4. Hold front plank



5. Bend elbows to lower body



6. Extend elbows to raise body



7. Walk hands backward to return to pike stand

8. Roll up with articulating spine



∞∞∞∞ Standing Exercises with and without Ballet Barre ∞∞∞∞

These exercises can also be included in the workout as part of a beam complex.

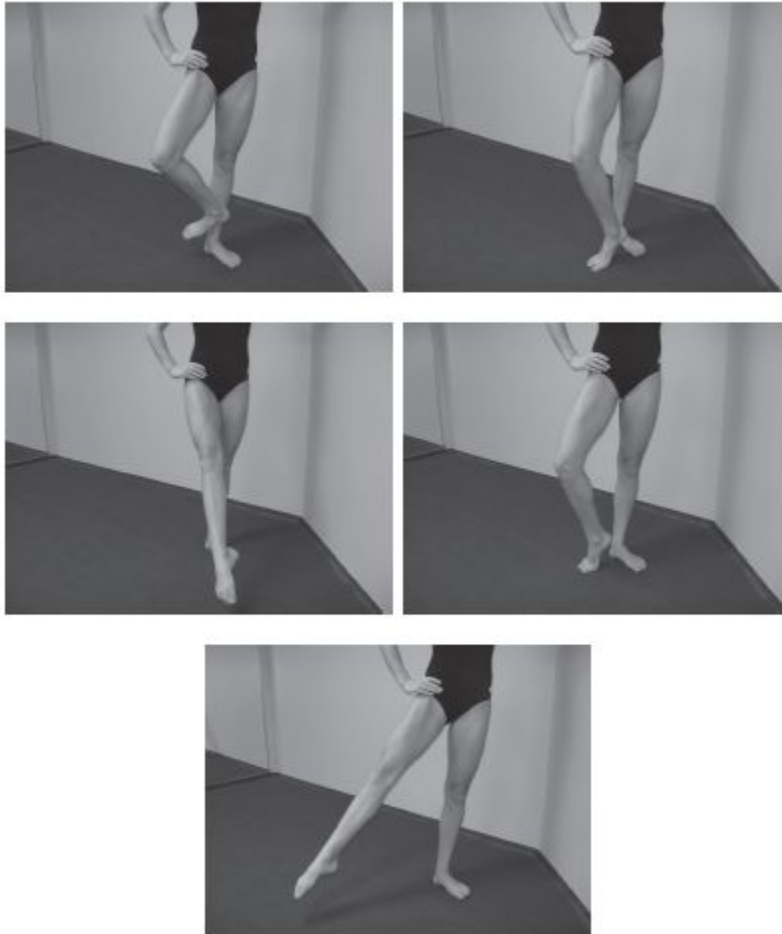
Petit battement (small beats)—8 counts of beats while holding flat or relevé position

With free foot pointed at ankle (coupé) and support leg in flat or relevé position, beat the lower leg out and in with movement from only the knee joint. Beats should be as quick as possible while the body remains stable and quiet in the proper standing posture.



Frappé (floor strike)—8 times each to the front, side and back; flat or relevé position

Begin from tendu position from Step 1. In the first movement bend the free knee and flex foot at ankle. In the second movement extend the leg and foot at the same time, striking the floor and finishing in a degage position; Work for sharp and dynamic strikes while holding a strong standing posture.

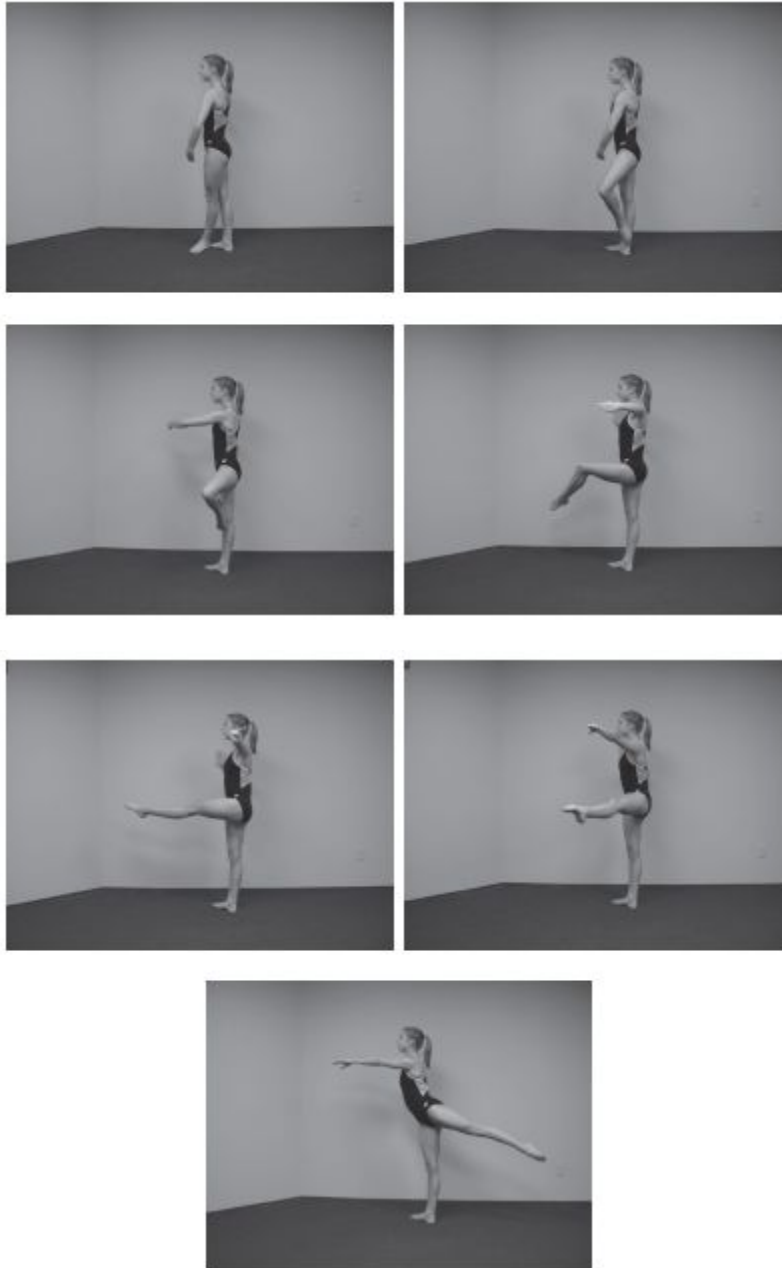


Horizontal leg holds (Developpé)

VARIATIONS from Step 2 basic

1. Add plié and relevé 4 times while leg is extended at horizontal
2. Move leg from front to side, side to back, back to side, and side to front while leg is extended at horizontal (Rond de Jambe)
3. Use hand to assist leg to high position then stretch and release to hold high leg position

Maintain strong support leg and proper posture throughout the exercises. Hold pelvic clock stable to allow the thigh bone to move freely in the hip joint. Solid grounding of energy through the support foot will help the body with upward extension and stability.



Turn Development (Promenade)

VARIATIONS from Step 2 basic

1. Promenade while holding leg extended at horizontal front, side and back
2. Balance on relevé in passé position, then remain in relevé to promenade

Reminder: Keep weight centered on the ball of the foot, “scoot” heel of foot around in a circle making a 360° rotation in direction of the supporting leg. Promenade is initiated with rotation of the upper thigh while the pelvic clock remains stable. Body maintains correct postural alignment.



∞∞∞∞ Locomotor and Dance ∞∞∞∞

For ALL locomotor exercises, first allow attempts to achieve the basic movement pattern before offering technical corrections, and then offer only on thought at a time.

Rolls and handstands—Pirouette combinations

PATTERN CHALLENGES:

1. Handstand walk 4 steps/stop and hold 4 counts/full pirouette/forward roll out
2. Handstand walk 4 steps/half pirouette/straddle press down to back extension roll/step down
3. Back extension roll/handstand walk 4 steps/half pirouette/roll out/jump half turn

FUN GAMES

How many variations can the coach come up with?

How many variations can the gymnasts come up with?

Add on another piece and see how many gymnasts can complete the pass.

Walkovers—Balance and promenade combinations

PATTERNS and VARIATIONS:

1. Kick leg forward and catch in front split with hands/180° promenade/release leg and hold/back walkover to needle/180° promenade/front walkover to catch leg in front split...
2. Arabesque/front walkover to leg hold horizontal/180° promenade/back walkover to arabesque/180°promenade

Encourage more flexibility from the gymnasts who are keeping good postural alignment. Encourage more alignment from the gymnasts who are emphasizing flexibility at the cost of good form. Many gymnasts will benefit from pushing the flexibility out of perfect alignment, then working to return to postural alignment from there.

Chassé and hop combinations

ADVANCED VARIATIONS across the floor

1. Chassé, arabesque hop; chassé, leg front hop
2. Chassé, leg front hop; chassé, arabesque hop; chassé Wolf hop; chassé passé hop 360°
3. Side chassé hop ½ turn with body movements

Vary the amplitude and speed requirements of the combinations to challenge the gymnasts' ability to control the body. Assign various arm positions to maximize the number of choreographic variations.

Leaps across the floor:

All leap passes begin and end with standing balance in relevé, arms to the side. The entry for each type of leap should be one chassé and two running steps.

1. Switch Leap
2. Ring Leap
3. Turning Leaps
4. Tour Jeté (Begins from a side chassé with only one step for takeoff.)

Free leg should be horizontal at take off. Pelvis and torso should remain stable throughout the leap, with the legs demonstrating ease of movement to the gymnast's maximum range of motion. If a gymnast is unable to

passively stretch to or beyond a 180° split, then the leap should not hit this position. Gymnasts at this level are very strong and can do quite a bit of damage to their muscles, joints and connective tissue by using momentum in the leap to overstretch legs.

STEP 4 OVERVIEW & PHILOSOPHY

STEP 4

Main Goal: movement pattern maintenance
of exercises: $\approx 100+$ (40 from Step 1 + 35 from Step 2 + 20 from Step 3 + 15 from Step 4)
Student Level: Levels 8, 9 & 10

Building a Mature Relationship

As we human beings grow and age our bodies are in a constant state of change. This fact alone makes each Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) exercise feel different in our bodies from day to day. Coaches should be aware of the Conscious Competence Learning Matrix with respect to both the athlete's development and their own teaching ability. Having this awareness will help keep a strong and dynamic relationship between the two:

Unconscious Incompetence—the athlete doesn't know something is wrong, and therefore cannot make a correction

Conscious Incompetence—the athlete is aware of a problem, but cannot yet make the correction

Conscious Competence—the athlete is aware of the problem and can make adjustments to correct

Unconscious Competence—the correct movement has been committed to muscle memory and is automatic

Reflective Competence—the correct movement can be described and communicated to others—so this is where the coach should be!

Example of Step 4 at work

Movement: Raising the arms—a movement basic to all inversions

Common Dysfunction: inability to open the shoulder angle (armpit) or inability to stabilize the shoulder joint using the local muscles of the shoulder girdle. Use of only the global muscles causes a transference of

forces to the spine followed by a hinging of specific vertebral joints rather than the desired spinal stability with shoulder extension. Repetition of skills which utilize this improper movement pattern without intervention with supporting exercises will inevitably lead to serious overuse injuries.

Corrections: find the correct balance between repetitions of skills and recovery/core exercises for the individual

Perfect 10 Posture (**P10P**) is an ongoing and cumulative exercise program, addressing the need for ongoing body maintenance to deal with the physical stress that high-level gymnastics training demands. Exercises from previous steps must be practiced and maintained to achieve the most positive total health outcome for our athletes. In young gymnasts the body is still developing and is infinitely pliable and adaptable in both positive and negative ways. Coaches of these young high level athletes must always remember to step back and check for movement pattern issues which may influence or effect healthy and efficient skill performance. When a potential problem is identified, the coach should quickly intervene and instruct the athlete to returning to previous Step 1, 2 or 3 exercises to correct the issue.

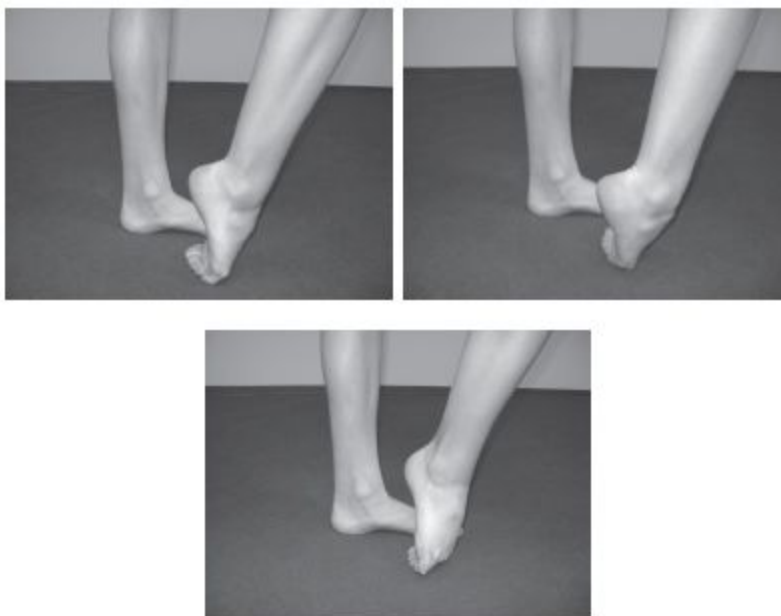
STEP 4—15 exercises—
Maintaining the body, undoing and
supporting daily training stresses

∞∞∞∞∞∞ “Undo it” Stretches ∞∞∞∞∞∞

Ankle warm-up—6X each position, each leg

NOTE: perform this warm-up on any soft surface.

Begin standing with one foot beside or behind the body, top of foot resting on the floor. Bend the standing leg and press the back foot gently into the soft surface. Return to standing. Repeat the exercise with the back foot resting first on the inner blade (big toe side), second on the top of the foot, and finally on the outer blade (pinky toe side).



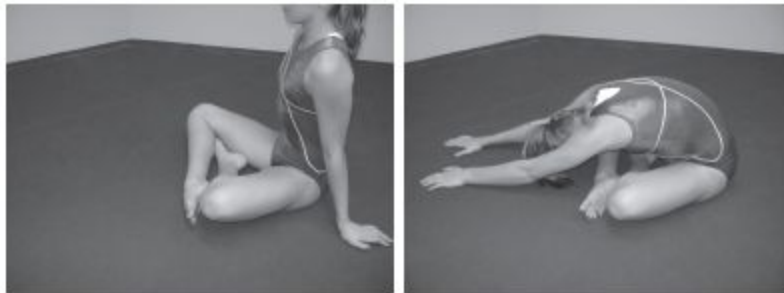
Internal Hip Rotation—30 to 60 seconds each leg

Sit with feet on floor, knees bent and hands behind body. Separate feet wider than the hips and bring knees together. Allow one knee to drop toward the floor. Keep the pelvic clock facing forward and maintain an elongated spine.



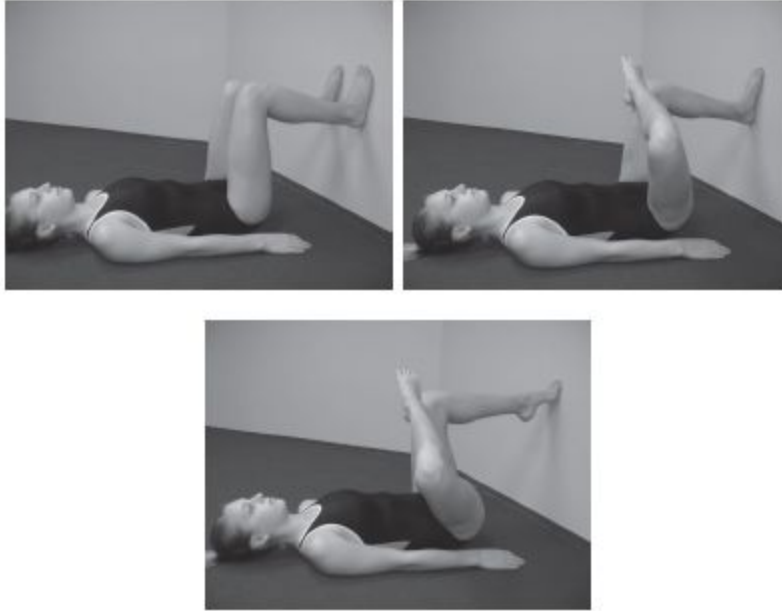
Cross-legged forward stretch—30 to 60 seconds each leg

Sit with legs folded together in front of body. Do not stack the legs. Spine stretch forward and maintain vertical pelvic clock alignment. With good hip function the thighs will rest on or near the floor and the head and forearms will rest on the floor in front of the shins.



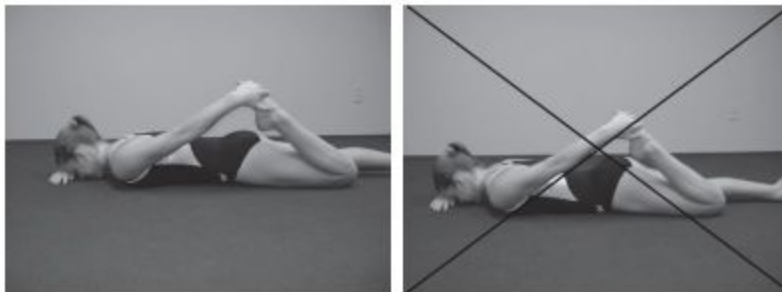
Piriformis stretch at wall—30 to 60 seconds each leg

Lie supine with legs in tabletop position and feet against wall. Cross R leg over L with R ankle near the L knee. Maintain pelvic clock in horizontal alignment and stretch sitz bones toward the wall. Press top of R thigh away from the torso. Lift L heel away from wall and lower to create maximum stretch.



Hip flexor/thigh stretch—30 to 60 seconds each leg

Begin with correct prone lying posture. Bend one knee and reach back to hold the foot. Stretch the thigh keeping the hip open and the pelvic clock properly aligned. Maintain the rib to hip connection.



Side-lying abduction—8X each side

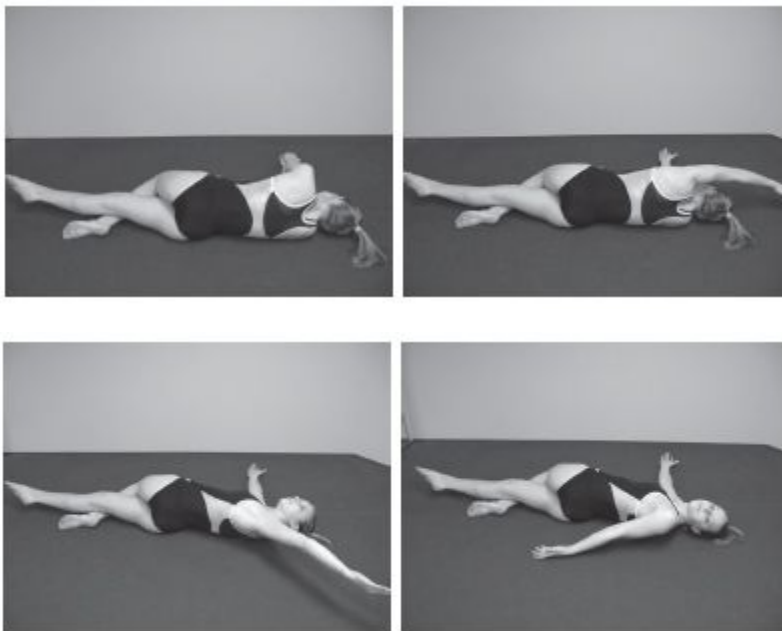
NOTE: this exercise requires a partner.

Begin in side lying position with partner holding top leg at 30° angle. Lift body in to side lying bridge by pushing down with top leg. Hold and lift bottom leg off floor. Lower hips and leg together to return to start position.



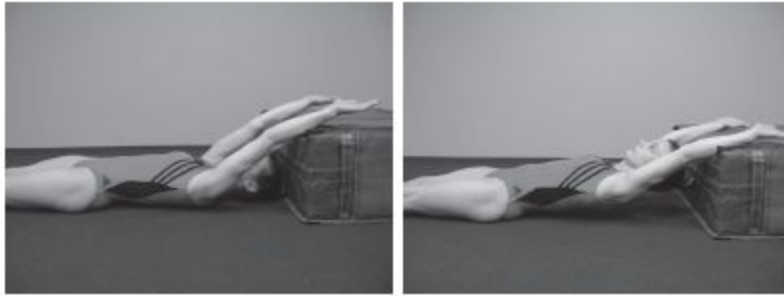
Chest (pectoralis minor) stretch with spine twist—4X each side

Cross R leg over the L and lie on the left side to lock hips into side lying position. Arms begin extended in front of chest. Circle the R arm up and overhead in a semi-circle along the floor. Continue moving the R arm and allow the chest to turn as the arm reaches down to the R hip. Reverse the R arm semi-circle to return to start position.



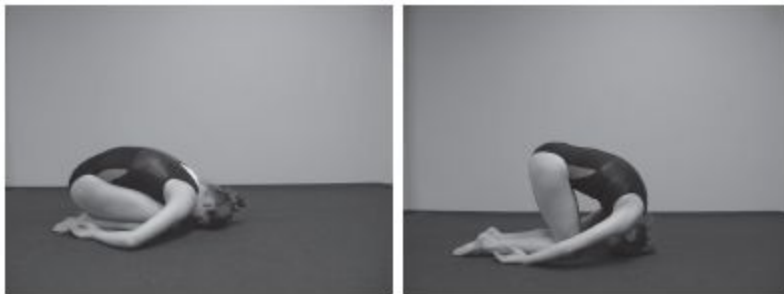
Shoulder Opening—6X

Lie supine with arms overhead resting on a minimum 12” mat. Press arms back into mat to lift upper body off the floor. Maintain the proper torso alignment, bending only at the hip joint. Be careful not to lift with the head, ribs or abs.



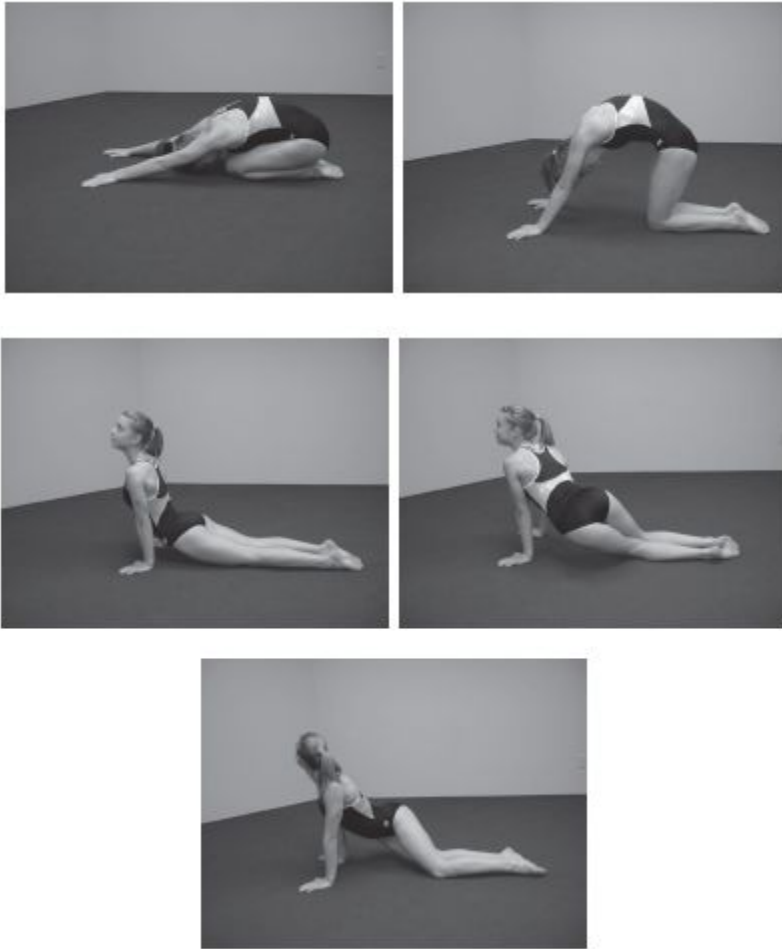
Child's Pose with Breath and Neck Stretch—4X

Kneeling, sit on heels with body folded forward and head on floor in front of knees. Hands rest on floor beside ankles. Inhale and exhale in the position to feel ribs and back relax and expand with the breath. On the inhale lift the pelvic clock and roll over the top of the head. Press backs of hands in to floor to open the upper back. On the exhale return to the start position.



Cat Stretch—2X each side

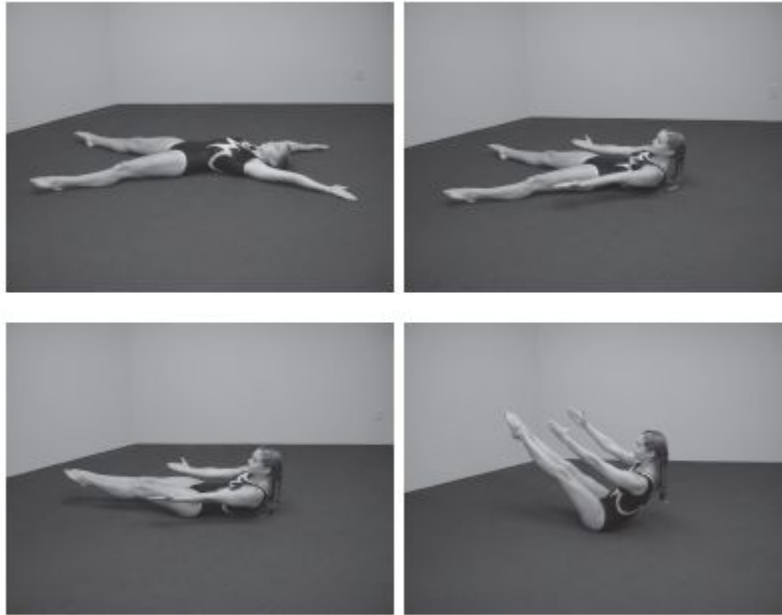
Begin in Child's Pose. Swing arms out to sides and extend in front of body. Lift the pelvic clock and push the hips forward to spine extension with hand support. Open the chest to R upper diagonal. "Wiggle" and pull the hips back to start position.



∞∞∞∞∞∞ Pilates exercises ∞∞∞∞∞∞

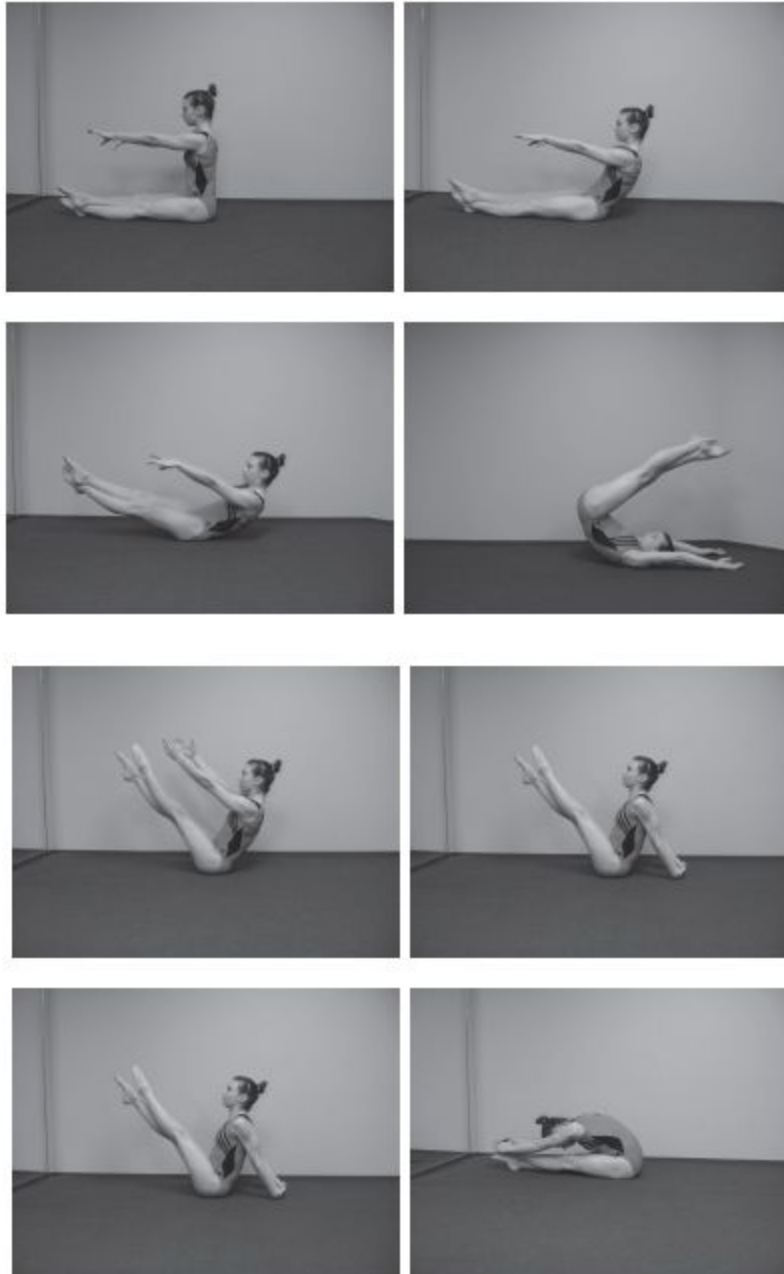
Teaser—4X

Begin lying supine (on the back) with arms and legs extended and open so the body is in an “X” shape. Scoop the arms and legs downward and together as the upper body comes to a c-curve position. Press back into the floor with the 9 and 3:00 to “float” the legs and body up into a balanced “V” position. Roll down the spine and slowly lower the legs back to the start position.



*Boomerang—4X

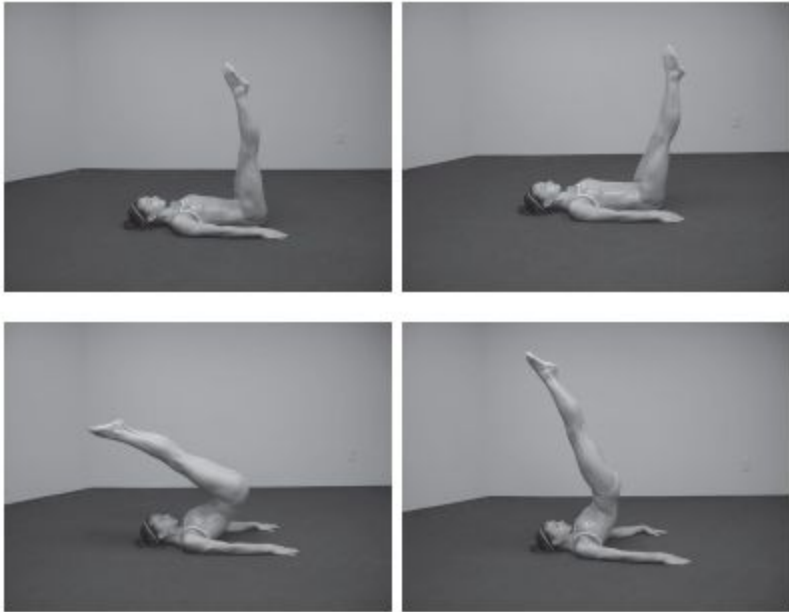
Begin from pike stretch forward with one leg on top of the other. Roll down spine and begin to lift legs as the upper body comes to c-curve position. Press the arms against the floor and continue to lift legs up into overhead position on the shoulders. Switch the crossed legs while balanced on the shoulders. Roll down spine and up into teaser position. Hold teaser position and reach arms behind back to clasp the hands and extend the chest. Lower the legs, release the hands, and circle the arms around to return to start position.



***Jackknife—3X**

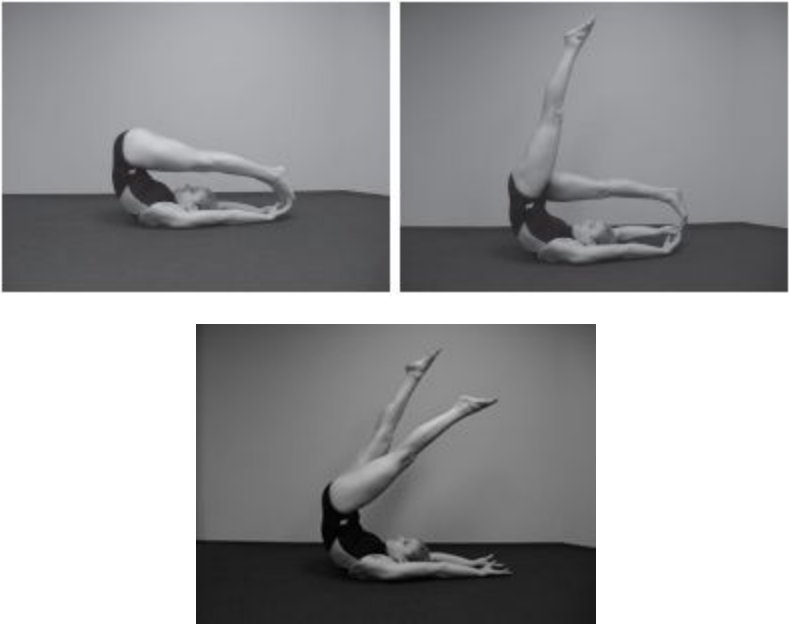
Begin lying supine with legs extended upward. Stretch legs away from the body and return to 90° hip angle with pelvic clock in proper horizontal position. Continue moving legs and tip pelvic clock toward the face into overhead position. Legs should be parallel to the floor with space between the thighs and stomach. Remain balanced on the shoulder blades, then extend the hips to send legs toward the ceiling. Press with arms against the

floor to slowly roll down the spine, keeping the legs as vertical as possible and returning to start position.



*Control Balance—4X each leg

Begin with roll over with arms overhead. Hold the toes with both hands. Remain balanced on the shoulder blades and extend one leg up toward the ceiling. Pulse the thigh bone into the hamstrings 2X. Switch legs mid-air to perform pulses with the other leg.



Leg Pull Front—4X each leg

Begin with front plank position as in Step 2. Release and lift one leg behind the body. Flex the support foot to rock the body back, then extend the foot to return. Lower the leg to the starting plank position.



Leg Pull Back—4X each leg

Begin with reverse plank position as in Step 2. Maintain stable pelvic clock and parallel legs, then one leg upward. Lower the leg to starting position.



EXERCISE SUMMARY TABLE

STEP 1 Exercises—establishing proper movement patterns

∞ Standing ∞

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Small side arm circles	50 circles forward and backward	Arms directly out Body still
Elbow open and close	10X	Shoulders relax
Demi and Grand Plié	8X each position: Parallel 1 st position 2 nd position	Pelvic clock vertical Soften ankles Footprint evenly Thigh bones apart
Relevé	8X each position: Parallel 1 st position 2 nd position	Pelvic clock pulled back Legs straight Energy through heels “Tushy” relaxed Ankle movement only
Squat stand	10-20 seconds	Heels on the floor Straight spine Hands may assist
Pike stand	4X squat to straight	Hands and feet flat 6:00 or “tail” points up Heavy head Strong thighs, kneecaps lift

∞ Seated ∞

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Butterfly sit	Hold 30 seconds	Sit up on sitz bones Pull thighs apart Melt ribs down to clock
Spine flexion and extension	4X through series	Lead with 9:00 & 3:00 Elongate spine to curl back Relax shoulders Stretch through collarbones
Tuck and roll variations	4X each	6:00 starts the roll

	1) holding legs 2) without holding 3) elbows on knees	Be still as a statue Relax neck and shoulders
Pike sit at wall	Hold 30-60 seconds	Come up into sitz bones Back points against wall Thigh bones to back of legs
Pike sit	8X flex and point	Pelvic clock still Energy through heels Thigh bones flat FLEX: Push heels past toes Pinky toe even with big toe POINT: 2 nd toe align with shin bone
Pike sit with Spine stretch	4X	Curl above the mid back line Shoulders relax Activate “rib abs”
Pike sit with Hamstring stretch	4X for 8 counts	Straight spine Arms and head in line Tip clock forward Knees straight

∞ Lying down ∞

EXERCISE	VARIATIONS	CUES
Supine lying ribs *this is the correct body shape for all handstands*	8X open and close	Relax legs and “tushy” 9:00 & 3:00 up toward ribs Ribs melt toward clock Armpits open Shoulder blades working
Spinal articulation	4X up and down	Close ribs to begin Widen back into the floor Connect inner thighs Relax shoulders Use hands if needed
Prone lying—Arms	4X overhead 4X out to sides	Open “low back drawer” Lengthen to lift Move upper arm bone Arms straight Shoulder blades separate

Prone lying—Leg lifts	4X	Open “low back drawer” Fronts of thighs connect Lengthen to lift Lift thigh bone to back of leg Legs straight Relax “tushy”
Prone lying – Superman	4X	Open “low back drawer” Lengthen thighs Open hip flexors and armpit Keep “jewelry drawer” open

∞ Kneeling ∞

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Thigh stretch	3X Arms low 3X Arms high	Hold P10P kneeling Move only at knee joint Slow movement
Extensions	4X Arms and chest	Open armpits and lift chin Lift 9:00 & 3:00 to open hips Hold “rib abs” Strong legs Return UP not FORWARD
Half knee backbend	4X	Same as extensions Go only as far as stable
Slow slide to split	4X each leg	Hold vertical pelvic clock Ribcage square forward Thighs in line with center *Clock may turn slightly to side, but may not “spill” out of body*

∞ Core strength and stability ∞

EXERCISE	VARIATIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Plank holds on elbows	2 x 30 seconds Front and Back	9:00 & 3:00 lift to ribs Open “jewelry drawer” Come through collarbones Energy through heels
Plank hold on elbows	2 x 30 seconds	Strong support shoulder

	Side	Hips & shoulders stacked Hold P10P
Elbow leg lifts	2 x 15 each Single leg Double leg	Activate thighs and “rib abs” Pelvic clock stable Lift from top of foot

∞ Locomotor ∞

EXERCISE	PATTERN	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Bear walk	4 steps Down dog hold 2 Relevés Press pull legs in	Stretch heels to floor 6:00 up to ceiling Long spine Open armpits Head between arms Heels connected
Crab walk	4 steps Tabletop hold Kick 4X	9:00 & 3:00 to ribs Ribs wide and flat Fingers toward feet Pelvic clock stable
Backbend walk	Backbend prep THEN: 4 steps Bridge hold Kick 4X	Hold short tummy Lead with armpits Feet parallel with heels down Hold P10P during kicks
Step kicks	2 middle 2 high Forward & backward	Heels on floor Push through flip flop spot Hold P10P during kicks Straight leg “swing”
2-foot bounces	Prep with relevés THEN: Move across floor	Maintain P10P Open armpits Articulate feet only Heels together Push through flip flop spot
Side Chassé	Slow preparation THEN: Move across floor	Maintain P10P Turn out demi plié Legs zip and straight Arms hold still
Skipping Passé Coupé	FIRST: Standing position Hop in place	Maintain P10P Quickly establish shape Strong push with support leg

Leg behind	THEN: Move across floor	Hold arms still
Fwd roll stretch jumps	GROUP WORK: 4X in unison Streaming	P10P in the air Heels down in squat position Jump vertical Stay in rhythm
Cartwheel series	4X with chassé	P10P facing side Armpits open “Rib abs” active Stay in a straight line

STEP 2 Exercises—establishing core awareness and strength

∞∞ Pilates exercises ∞∞

EXERCISE	VARIATIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Standing Roll Down/Up	Against wall 3X Free standing 3X	Each vertebra takes a turn Head and shoulders relaxed Strong and long legs
Tabletop legs	8X Dips 4X Leg extensions	Stabilize pelvic clock Bottom ribs flat and wide
Tabletop legs	8X Side to side	Clock tips side to side Ribs do not turn
Shoulder bridge	4X with articulation	Energy through feet Stretch spine to articulate Each vertebra takes a turn Knees stretch away Open hips and close ribs
C-curve	8X Pelvic clock tips Hundred arms 8X Single leg stretch 4X Double leg stretch 8X Scissors	Bottom ribs flat and wide Arms and neck long Pelvic clock flat and stable
Piston leg circles	8X each leg	P10P supine lying Pelvic clock stable during leg circles Long strong leg
Prone lying	Swimming Chest lift Chest lift with tricep Swan dive catch	P10P prone lying Extend only upper ribcage Spine through collarbones Lift thigh bones to back “bottom drawer” open
Side lying legs	Adduction Abduction Swing front and back	P10P side lying Maintain parallel legs Movement only in hip joint Pelvic clock stable

∞∞ Kneeling ∞∞

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Full knee backbends	4X	Set up extension with P10P Lightly touch floor with back of hands Arms stay behind head to return to vertical
Single Knee balance— leg horizontal forward	4X each leg	Keep support leg parallel Support hip open

∞∞ Basic strength ∞∞

EXERCISE	VARIATIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Plank holds	2 x 30 seconds Front, Back, Side	Maintain P10P with extra attention to ribs and clock Stabilize shoulder Rotate elbows out of hyperextension
All fours balance	Leg extension Arm extension Ring balance	Maintain P10P with attention to rotational stability

∞∞ Ballet Exercises ∞∞

EXERCISE	VARIATIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Additional Ballet Leg positions	5 th position	Rotate and cross the thigh bones with front of hips open Lift arches of feet
Tendu	8X each Front, Side, Back 1 st then 5 th	Maintain P10P Keep foot connected to floor Open behind knees to move thigh bone
Degagé	8X each Front, Side, Back 1 st then 5 th	Same as tendu Release foot from floor 2” or less
Battement	8X each Front, Side, Back 1 st then 5 th	Same as degage Release leg to horizontal
Developpé	2-4X each	Start from 5 th position

(5 th —coupé—passé—extend leg—tendu—close)	Front, Side, Back	Maintain strong support leg and thigh bone turnout with P10P
Promenade—flat foot	3-4X each side Parallel Passé	Keep weight centered on flip flop spot “Scoot” heel of standing leg in a circle around the flip flop spot (turn 360° toward standing leg) Maintain P10P with arms extended horizontal

∞∞ Locomotor ∞∞

EXERCISE	PATTERN	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Flat back walks	4 ct. flat back 4 ct. down 4 ct. arms behind 4 ct. vertical	Keep hips over ankles Elongate spine with ribs in Strong, long legs and arms
Runs with arm circles	Single arm back Both arms back Swim forward	Lift arches when running with quiet feet Keep clock vertical Arm brush ear and ribs
Single leg down dog	Bear walk Lift leg to square hips Rotate hips to split Return to square Close legs	Elongate spine Relax neck and shoulders to maintain neutral head Heels of hands and feet press into floor
Crab walk	Same as Step 1 Add leg circle after kicks	Maintain stable pelvis with leg circle
Backbend walk	Same as Step 1 Add Hitchkick	Maintain armpit extension with hitchkick
Forward and backward roll combo	GROUP WORK: Create pattern and work in unison	Maintain P10P while focusing on unison rhythm
Handstand walk	Walk 4 steps Hold 4 cts. Pirouette 4 cts. Fwd roll out	Maintain Inverted P10P while staying in rhythm
Step kicks	Side kick prep THEN: Kick front, side, back with ¼ turn on each step	Keep hips over ankles Stable pelvis Open knees to move thigh bones
Chassé and hop	Alternating legs: Passé	Maintain P10P with increasing complexity of arms and legs

	Leg extend front Leg extend back	
Leaps	Both legs Begin leap series from chassé Stride Split Stag	Maintain P10P with increasing complexity of arms and legs Show rise of pelvis and control of landing

STEP 3 Exercises—Building flexible strength and strengthening flexibility

∞∞∞∞ Pilates exercises ∞∞∞∞

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Hundreds	Breathe in 5, out 5 10X	Maintain strong c-curve Strong ribs to relax neck
Leg circles	8X each leg	Stabilize pelvic clock Release leg in hip joint
Criss cross	Breathe in 2, out 2 8X	Maintain strong c-curve Rest head in hands
Shoulder bridge	Single leg kicks 4X each leg Hinge hips 8X	Stretch knees up and away Keep 6:00 highest point
Seated spine twist	4X each direction	Keep sitz bones stable Float ribcage to twist
Saw	4X each direction	Twist then spinal flexion
Open leg rocker	4X	Initiate roll with pelvic tilt Keep spine lengthened
Swimming	Breathe in 4, out 4 8X	Lift arm and leg Maintain prone P10P
Single leg kicks	8X each leg	Extend upper 6 ribs Lengthen femur to bend knee
Swan dive	4 rocks 4X	Maintain good spine extension with rib support Drive thigh bones back
Side bends	4X each side	Maintain pelvic stability Flex and extend the ribs
Side legs	8X each side	Maintain side P10P Keep supporting hip open Light weight on hand
Pilates Push-ups	4X full series	Let the body's natural rhythm take over

∞∞∞∞ Ballet Exercises ∞∞∞∞

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
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Petit battement—coupé	16 cts. Each leg	Keep support ankle stable
Frappé	8X each Front, Side, Back	Articulate the foot Stretch leg to extension
Single leg series	Developpé Rond de Jambe Promenade	Hold at height where good form can be maintained
Promenade on Relevé	2X each leg Parallel Passé Passé Leg extend low	Keep weight centered on flip flop spot

∞∞∞∞ Locomotor and Dance ∞∞∞∞

EXERCISE	PATTERN	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Roll and handstand pirouette combinations	4 walks 4 ct. pirouette Fwd roll out	Maintain inverted P10P while following the rhythm
	4 walks ½ pirouette Straddle down Bk extension roll	
	Bk extension roll 4 walks bk ½ pirouette Roll out to jump	
Walkover combinations	Front split assist ½ promenade Bk walkover Needle hold ½ promenade Ft walkover RPT	Stabilize supporting leg allowing free leg to stretch Strong torso P10P
	Arabesque hold Ft walkover Front leg hold ½ promenade Bk walkover Arabesque hold ½ promenade RPT	Work both sides!!!

Chassé and hop combinations	Alternate arabesque and leg front hops	Show amplitude on chassé and hops Maintain P10P during flight phase
	Add wolf hop and passé 1/1	
	Side ½ turn hops with body movements	
Leaps and jumps	Switch Ring Tour Jeté Turning Leap	Work vertical amplitude before split position

STEP 4 Exercises—Maintaining the body, undoing and supporting daily training stresses

∞∞∞∞∞ “Undo it” Stretches ∞∞∞∞∞

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Ankle stretch	6 presses each position	Softly press the foot Spread the bones of the foot
Internal hip rotation	30-60 seconds each	Allow the thigh bone to drop
Cross-legged forward	30-60 seconds each leg	Keep sitz bones planted Relax and breath Eyes closed
Piriformis at wall	30-60 seconds each leg	Maintain supine P10P Relax hips
Quad/hip flexor	30-60 seconds each leg	Maintain prone P10P Thigh bones parallel Elongate thigh of bent knee
Side-lying abduction	8X each side	Hold strong P10P Thighs parallel
Pectoralis minor	4X each side	Relax to elongate spine Strong ribs to twist
Shoulder opening	6X	Hold bottom 6 ribs strong Relax hips
Child’s Pose	4X	Elongate neck Lift with 9:00 & 3:00
Cat stretch	2X each side	Transform into a cat!

∞∞∞∞∞ Pilates exercises ∞∞∞∞∞

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	CUE THE GYMNAST TO...
Teaser	4X	Press 9 & 3 down to float body upward Use low abs and strong ribs
Boomerang	4X	Work with long spine throughout

		Strong ribs to stretch arms behind
Jackknife	3X	Elongate spine throughout Keep weight on shoulder blades
Control Balance	4X each leg	Press pelvis upward Keep weight on shoulder blades
Leg pull front	4X each leg	Maintain Plank P10P Strong ankle movement
Leg pull back	4X each leg	Maintain stable reverse plank