

THE RISK OBSERVER

GYMNASTIC STUDENT'S SAFETY CHECKLIST

Maintaining personal safety in gymnastics is *your* responsibility. To minimize accidents and protect yourself from injury, conduct your own personal safety check at the beginning of every practice session using the outline given below.

BEFORE PERFORMING: CHECK YOUR CLOTHING

- Remove all jewelry, including rings and earrings.
- Be sure your hair is worn so that it does not block your vision or the vision of your spotter.
- Be sure to wear the appropriate footwear. Heavy sneakers or shoes can be extremely dangerous to you and your spotter.
- NEVER chew gum or have anything in your mouth while you are performing.
- Wear clothing that is comfortable, but not baggy. Baggy clothing can impede the ability of the spotter to assist you.
- Be sure that your clothing is free of buckles, buttons, rivets, or zippers.
- If eyeglasses must be worn, be sure they are secured to your head.

BEFORE PERFORMING: CHECK THE AREA

- Be sure the area is sufficiently matted for the skill you are going to perform. As a general rule, the less familiar you are with the skill and/or the more difficult the skill, the more matting you should have.
- Check the matting to be sure that it is not slippery and that it is free of faults such as rips or gashes.
- If using more than one mat, be sure that they are securely fastened together.
- Check the landing surface to be sure that it can absorb the weight of a landing or fall.
- Be sure you place your tumbling strip or individual mat in such a way as to permit ample space for travel or spotter movement.
- Be sure that mats are located a sufficient distance from walls or other apparatus.
- Check the area to be sure it is free of small equipment such as balls or ropes that can cause you to trip.
- Be sure the pathway you have chosen for your tumbling run does not interfere with someone else's pathway.
- When you are not performing, be sure to yield the right-of-way to those who are.



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BEFORE PERFORMING: SCREEN YOUR SPOTTERS AND YOURSELF

- Do not attempt a skill with a student spotter unless your instructor has given you permission to do so.
- Be sure to use two spotters at all times unless two spotters will interfere with the free flow of the movement.
- Be sure you have a thorough understanding of the skill before you make your first attempt.
- Determine whether you are in the proper physical condition to safely execute the skill. Be sure your body is well conditioned in regard to strength, flexibility, and muscular and cardiovascular endurance.
- Do not attempt a skill, which requires a level of fitness beyond your present physical ability.
- Be sure you know the problems you may encounter when attempting this skill.
- Be sure you understand the proper progression.
- Be sure your spotters know what skill you would like to try and that he/she knows how to spot it.
- Be sure you know the problems you may encounter when attempting this skill.
- Be sure that the spotters are strong enough to spot a person of your size and ability level.
- Be sure you trust your spotters and that your spotters are confident in supporting you.
- Attempt new skills at the beginning of the workout session before you become fatigued.

AT THE TIME OF PERFORMANCE: CHECK YOURSELF

- Be sure to warm up sufficiently so that your muscles and joints are ready for the demands you are about to make on them.
- Stop and rest when you or your spotter is tired. Your body cannot perform as well when you are tired and you may cause yourself serious injury.
- Follow the progression step by step just as the instructor has outlined.
- Only attempt skills in which you have received instruction. Instructions given to another individual do not apply to you.
- Perform at your level and not above. Do not try something because of a dare or because someone else says that it is easy. Know your limitations and abide by them.
- Always use a spotter.
- Follow a skill through to its completion; never change your mind in the middle of a movement. You can seriously injure yourself or your spotter if you do.
- Be sure your spotter knows exactly when you intend to begin. Have a signal that you have arranged between the two of you so that there is no doubt in anyone's mind that you are ready to begin.



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