

6.1

Straight headstand

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 1



Guidance Notes

1. The straight leg headstand must now be performed unsupported, and held still for 3 seconds.
2. The hands and head form a triangular base of support within which the centre of gravity must remain in order to stay balanced, good whole body tension is also required to keep the centre of gravity constant, and to protect the neck in this weight bearing position.
3. Place hands on the floor, flat and shoulder width apart, fingers pointing forwards. Place the top of the head on the floor in front of the hands to form a triangle shape. Once the support points have been established walk the feet in to take the hips directly above the head and shoulders. The knees are then tucked in to the chest, creating the correct curl in the lower back, the legs are slowly extended upwards until straight with feet pointing to the roof, or alternatively as shown in the drawing, push from toes to raise straight legs into vertical position.

Teaching Points

Body

Tight body, top of head on floor, head shoulders hips and legs in one straight line

Legs

Legs tight together, straight leg to finish, feet pointed

Arms

Flat hands shoulder width, push through arms to keep body up, angle at elbows is 90°

Timing

Hold steady for 3 seconds

Common Faults

Legs apart

Hands pointing outward

Forehead on floor

Falling over onto back

Arched back

Cannot get hips up high enough

Possible Cause

No leg tension, weak adductor muscles

Incorrect hand placement

Incorrect head placement

Hands and head in line

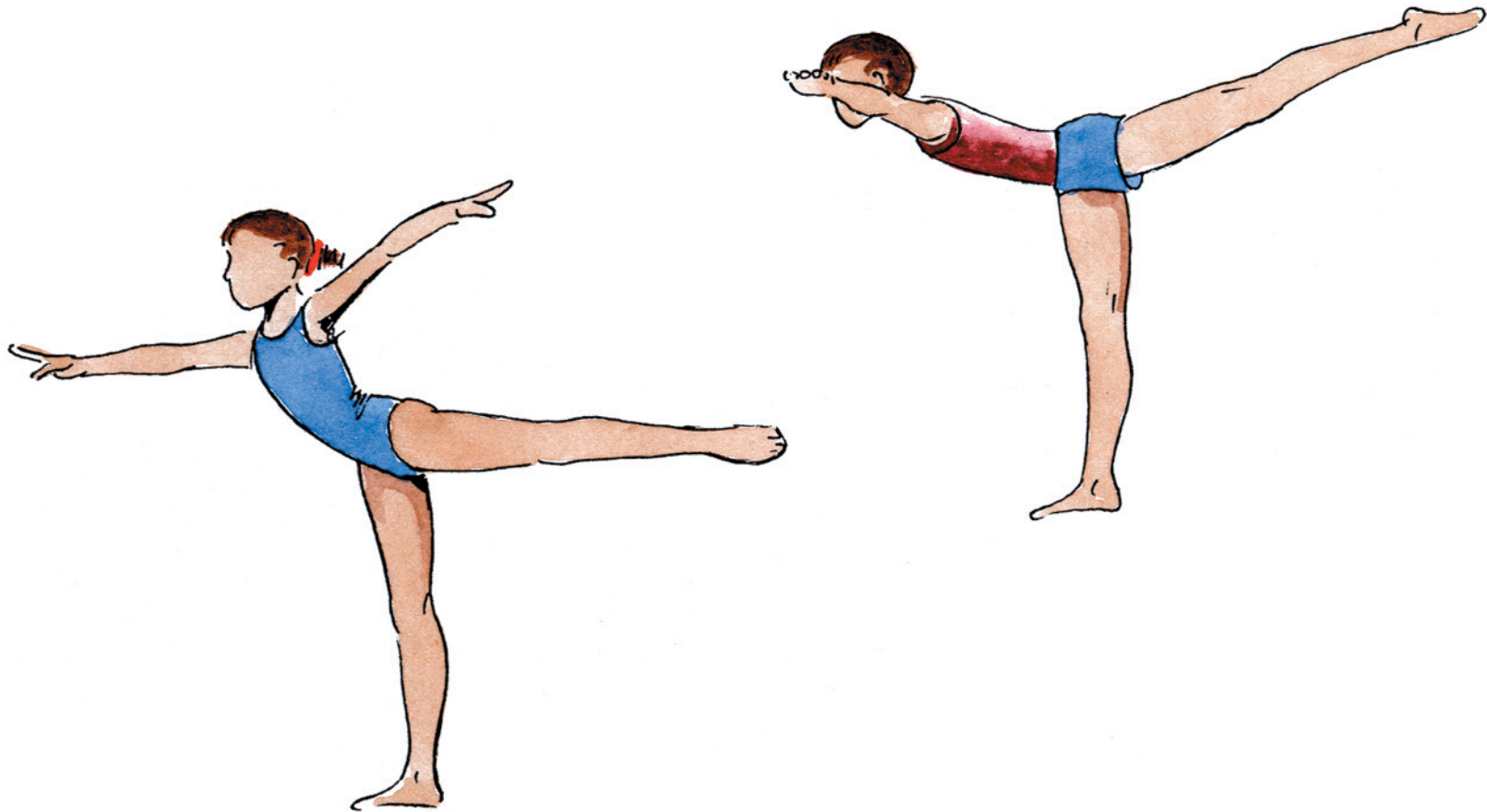
Knees raised too high

No push through arms

6.2

Arabesque

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 2



Guidance Notes

1. From standing, raise one leg behind body to 45° above horizontal creating a slight arch in the back, keep head up, hold arms straight with fingers stretched, and hold the raised leg for 3 seconds.
2. The support leg should remain strong and straight with a flat foot and slight turnout of the knee.
3. The chest drops forward slightly to compensate for the raising of the back leg. Keep the leg straight and foot pointed.

Teaching Points

Body

Very tight body, slightly arched back and head raised keeping hips square

Legs

Straight, turnout of knees, foot pointed, back leg raised 45° above horizontal

Arms

Held straight either forwards or out to the side

Timing

Hold for 3 seconds

Common Faults

Unable to lift leg high

Bent raised leg

'T' shape in body rather than 'Y'

Turnout of hips

Possible Cause

Lack of flexibility or strength

Lack of tension in leg

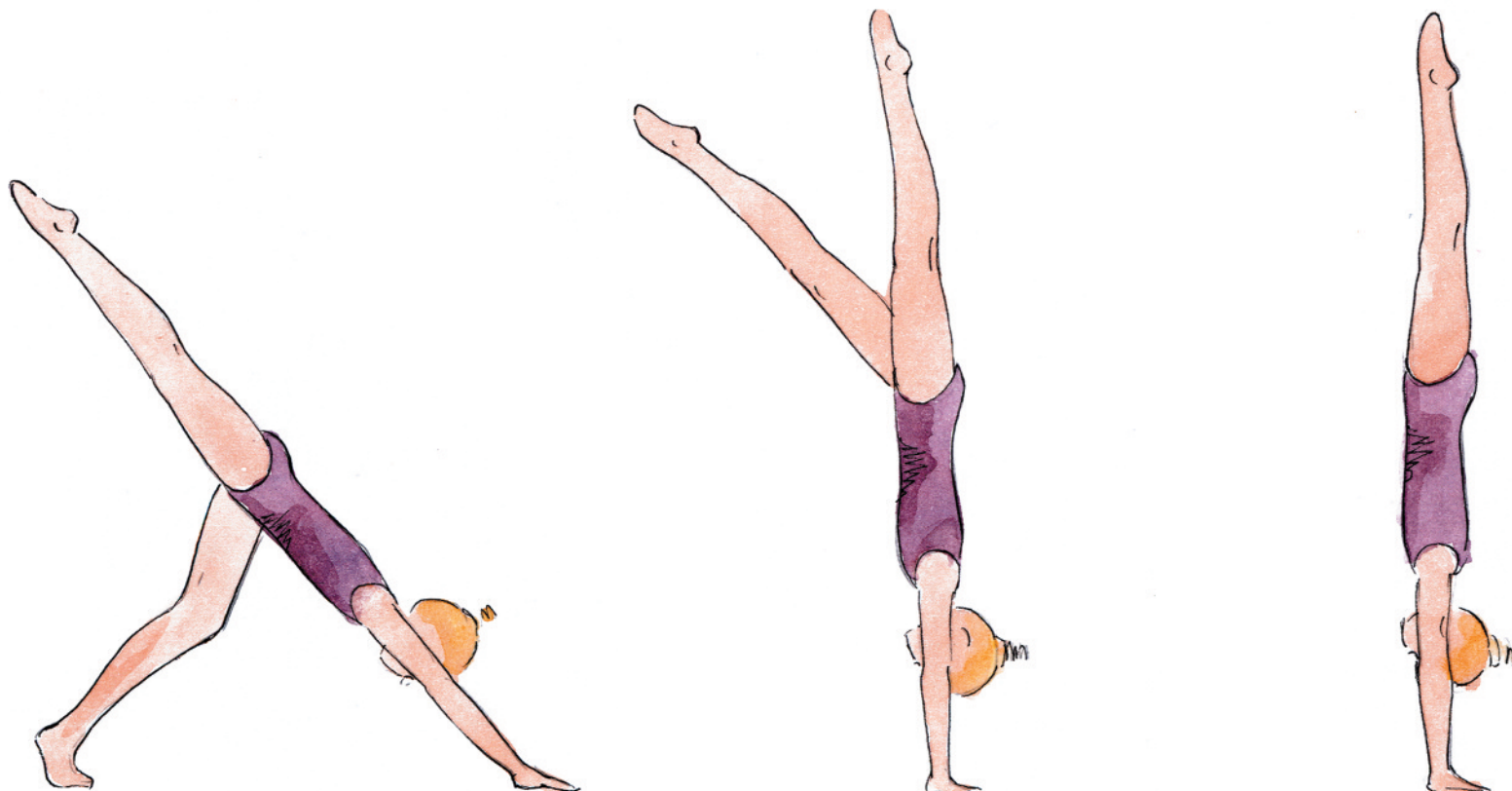
Weak back muscles

Lifting leg higher than gymnast's flexibility allows

6.3

Kick to handstand position

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 3



Guidance Notes

1. From standing, with arms up and foot pointed in front, lift the lead leg and step forward into a deep lunge. Simultaneously reach forward and down with the arms, placing hands on the floor, fingertips first then palms, with wide fingers firmly gripping the floor. Hands are shoulder width apart with index finger pointing forwards.
2. Swing the rear leg up and push off the lead leg. The swing and push of the legs create the required momentum to lift the hips above the hands. To bear the weight on the hands, the arms must straighten and push into the floor to extend the shoulders. As the hips arrive above the hands there should be a deceleration by pushing firmly from the hands up through the body. The whole body should be held in extension, eyes looking down to see fingers. Fine control movements in balance are made through sensitive adjustments in pressure on the hand/ fingertip area.
3. From the inverted position, there should be a gradual release of tension in the abdominal muscles to allow the legs to be lowered to the floor.

Teaching Points

Body

Stretched tight body, head tilted slightly to see hands, suck and tuck

Legs

High lead leg lift, lunge step, swing and push, legs tight together in air, feet pointed

Arms

Flat hands, shoulder width apart, place fingers first then palms

Timing

Smooth entry, show position

Common Faults

Arched back
Bent legs, legs apart
Unable to reach vertical

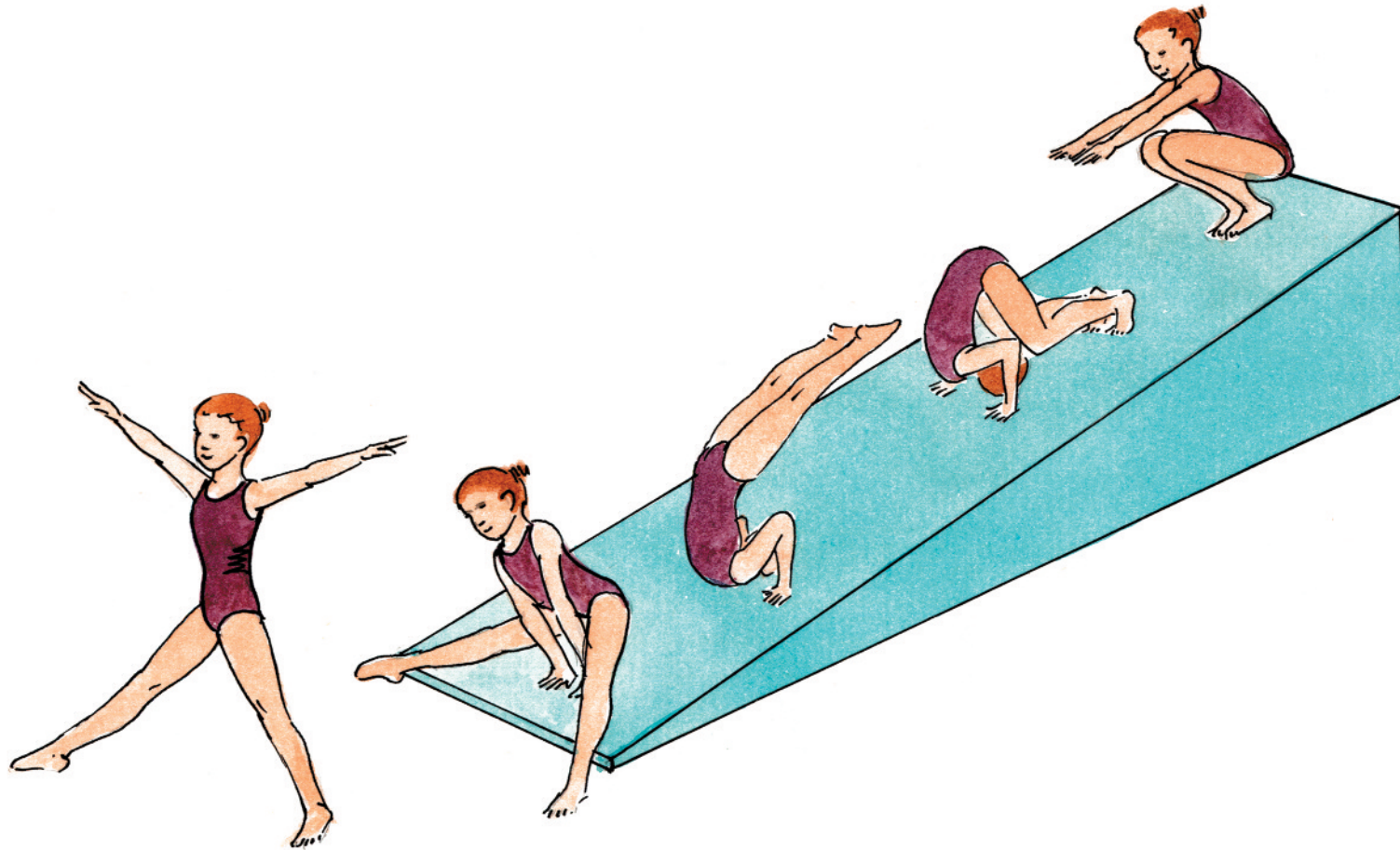
Possible Cause

No “suck and tuck” shape used
Lack of leg tension
Not moving shoulders over wrists

6.4

Forward roll to straddle down slope

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 4



6.4

Forward roll to straddle down slope

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 4

Guidance Notes

1. This is a further development of the forward roll. It is also useful to be confident in all forward rolling actions to avoid injury when landing forwards and over-rotating.
2. Start in crouch at the top of a slope, with arms stretched forward, chin up and eyes looking forward and down, keep feet together. Bend knees and lower arms to place hands on the slope. Feel weight on the balls of feet.
3. Take off by pushing through the legs, reach forward and place hands flat and shoulder width apart on the slope. The gymnast should keep the body curled, head tucked in. Back of the head may touch the floor. Keep body rounded and legs drive straight into the roll.
4. Approximately half way through the roll the gymnast should straddle the legs to 90° and reach forwards through the legs, to place hands on the slope (slightly inside shoulder width) fingers pointing forwards.
5. On completion of the roll the gymnast will jump feet together and swing arms up to show a straight standing position.

Teaching Points

Body

Keep tight, chin tucked in, rounded back

Legs

Push with legs into roll, legs straighten, feet pointed, late straddle of legs about halfway through roll, drive heels into floor

Arms

Flat hands, fingers point forwards, shoulder width apart thrust through shoulders when shoulders are forward of hands

Timing

Straddle legs late

Common Faults

Straddle legs too early

Bent legs in straddle

Far too wide straddle

Fingers pointing outward/inwards

Possible Cause

Poor timing

Lack of tension in legs

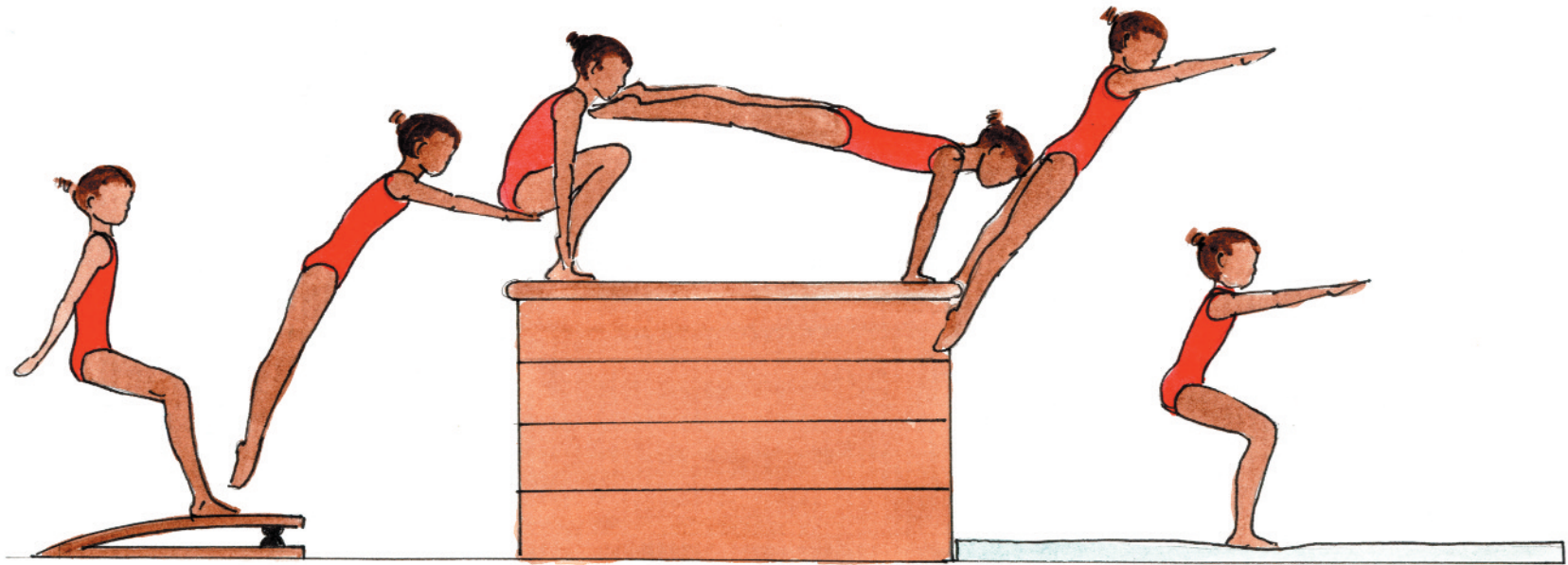
Incorrect foot position

Incorrect hand position

6.5

Squat on – straddle off (Cat spring)

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 5



Guidance Notes

1. From a short run to a springboard, use the hurdle step as previously learned in Level 3 to bounce from two feet, place both hands on top of the box or medium height movement table, and squat the feet onto the box in order to perform a cat spring along the box top and straddle off to land safely on the floor.
2. To perform the squat action the hips should be raised high enough to allow the knees to be tucked in to the chest, the arms push strongly thrusting through the shoulders to counteract the over-rotation caused by the hip and leg lift.
3. The arms swing and reach forwards along the box top to arrive in support as the legs drive straight, stretching the body out, lifting the hips slightly higher than the shoulders and heels slightly higher than hips.
4. Drive legs straight into the straddle off, swinging the legs round the outsides of the box. The gymnast must lean the shoulders forward slightly on take off in order to travel upwards and away from the box top. The shoulders thrust downwards and the arms swing up to stop just in front of the ears to transfer some momentum to the body to give flight. Keep the body tight in the air.
5. During flight, the gymnast should join the legs together quickly and stretch the body out for landing.

Teaching Points

Body

Held tight head in line with body throughout, high hips

Legs

Tuck knees into chest strong drive into cat spring, straddle legs round the side point feet

Arms

Thrust through shoulders, arm swing forward and up into jump

Timing

Shoulder thrust creates a counter-rotation, on thrust-off

Common Faults

- Legs bent
- Landing on knees on squat
- Knees passing elbows in support
- Hitting bottom at end of box
- Sitting on box top

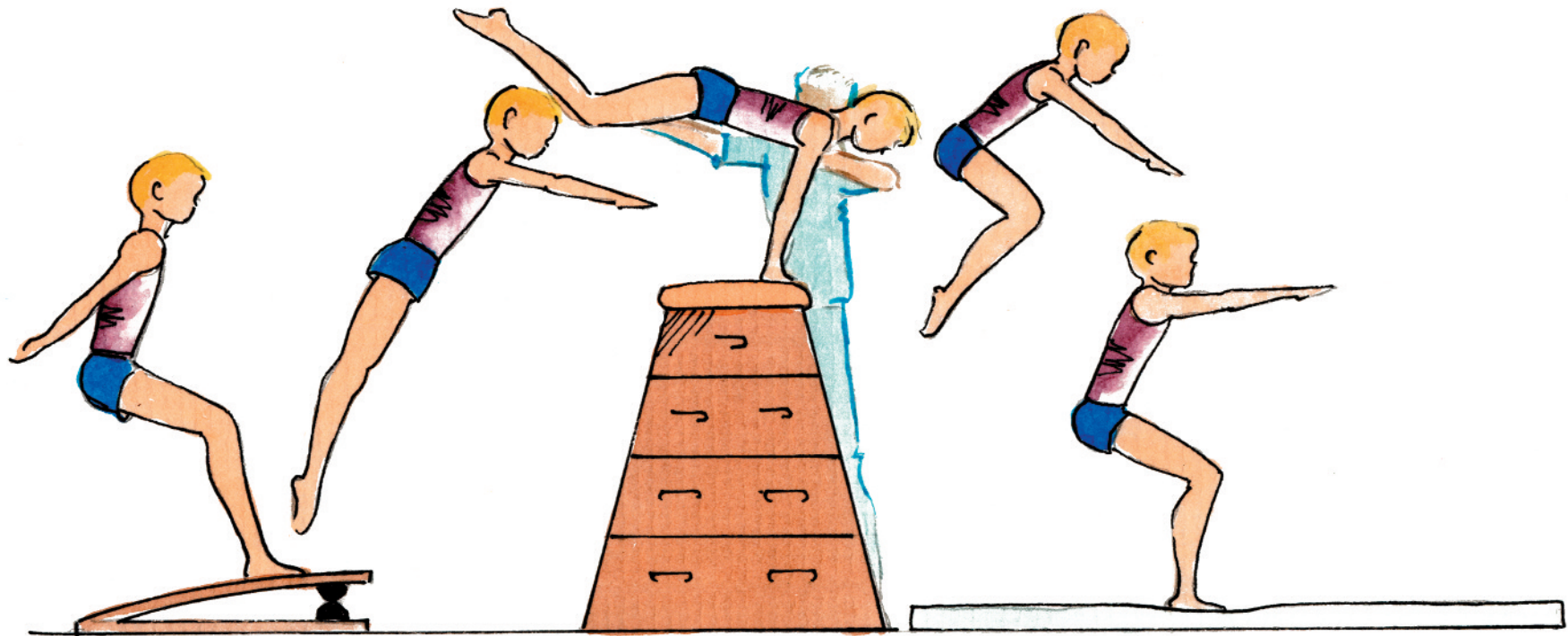
Possible Cause

- Lack of flexibility
- Hips too low
- Lack of thrust through shoulders
- Shoulders not far enough forward
- Cat spring too short

6.6

Squat through vault with support

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 6



Guidance Notes

1. From a short run to a springboard, use the hurdle step as previously learned in Level 3 to bounce from two feet, placing both hands on top of the box or medium height movement table, and squatting the feet over the box in order to perform a squat through vault, with support, to land safely on floor.
2. To perform the squat action the hips should be raised high enough to allow the knees to be tucked in to the chest. The arms push strongly, thrusting the shoulders forwards and upwards to counteract the over rotation caused by the hip and leg lift.
3. The arms swing and reach forwards as the legs drive straight stretching the body out and lifting the hips slightly higher than shoulders. The heels are slightly higher than hips in the first flight from springboard to box/table top.
4. When the gymnast has stretched out in the air, the hands thrust from the box top creating enough lift to allow space for the knees to tuck through. The gymnast must lean shoulders forwards slightly on take off, in order to travel upwards and away from the box top. The shoulders thrust downwards and the arms swing up to stop just in front of the ears to transfer some of the momentum to the body to give flight. Keep the body tight and tucked in the air.
5. During flight, the gymnast should stretch the legs out for landing.

Support:

The supporter in the early stages should stand on the same side of the box as the springboard and support the hips through. As ability develops, the supporter may stand at the side of the box and take the shoulder and bottom of the gymnast. Finally support may be given from the far side of the box by taking the upper and lower arm to aid the thrust phase.

Teaching Points

Body

Held tight, head in line with body throughout, high hips

Legs

Tuck knees in to chest, legs tight together, stretch out for landing, point feet

Arms

Thrust through shoulders, arms swing forward and up

Timing

Shoulder thrust creates a counter – rotation, on – thrust - off

Common Faults

Hands remaining on box top on landing

Landing on knees on squat

Knees passing elbows in support

Hitting bottom on end of box

Possible Cause

No thrust from box top

Hips too low

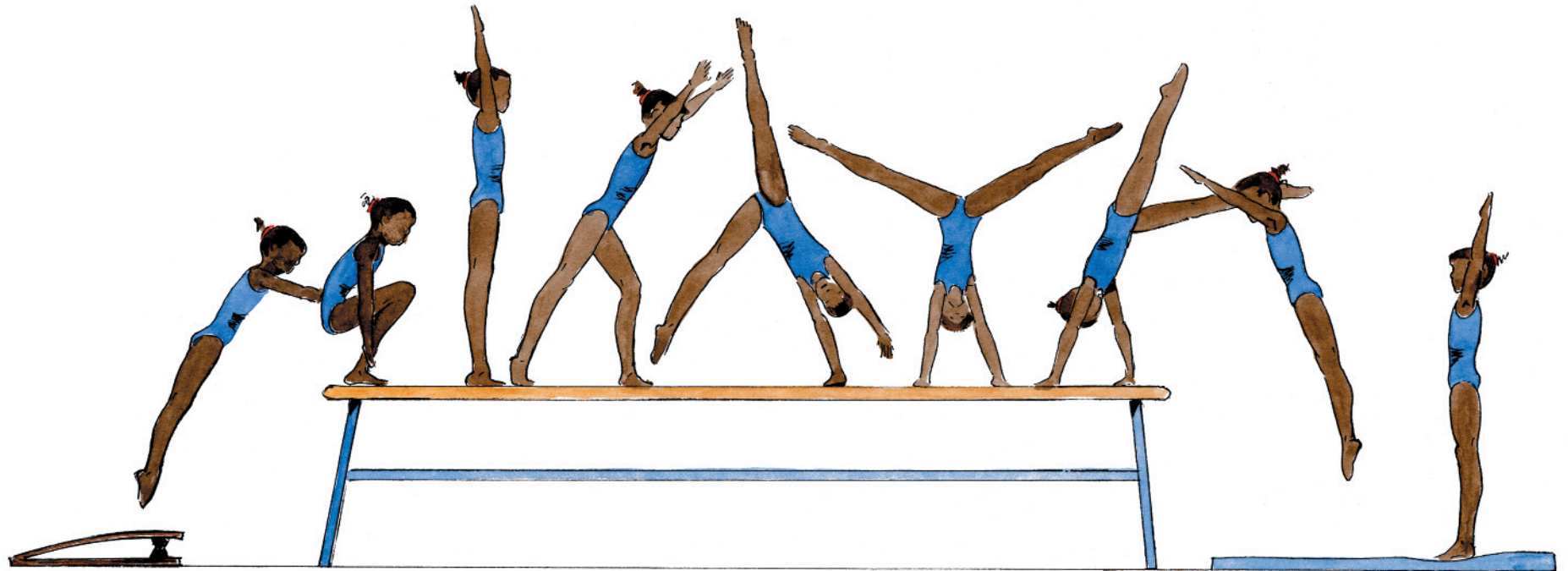
Lack of thrust through shoulders

Shoulders not far enough forward

6.7

Squat on - cartwheel dismount

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 7



Guidance Notes

1. From a short run to a springboard, use the hurdle step as previously learned on Level 3 to bounce from two feet, placing both hands on top of the box or medium height movement table, and perform a squat on.
2. The 'front to back' cartwheel can now be used as a dismount from the box. It is very important to use this particular technique as it turns the gymnast backwards as they are moving forwards whilst creating an acceleration effect.
3. From standing straight facing forwards along the box, one foot pointed out in front, showing slight turnout of the knee. The arms are raised up by the ears, chin up.
4. Lift the lead foot forwards between knee and waist level, then step forwards into a lunge along the box. Lean forwards and make a quarter turn with the body to place the near hand on the box, followed by the far away hand as it reaches over the top to place near the end of the box. Drive off the first leg and swing the other leg over the top of the body and begin to join legs together in the air, with a further quarter rotation to land on both feet at the same time on floor. The cartwheel action should be smooth with the feet reaching up and away from the box for landing.
5. As the chest drops forwards and down it should look as though the gymnast is about to enter a handstand on the box. However, the body turns late to place the near hand on the box, fingers pointing sideways. The second hand placed rotates inwards to point the fingers at the first hand. This allows the natural wrist alignment in order to push more efficiently through the arm.
6. During flight off the box, the gymnast should use the 'donkey kick' action as learned in Level 4 to snap both legs down together for landing.

Teaching Points

Body

Tight body, quarter turn in quarter turn out, head back slightly to see hand placement on box/table

Legs

Strong swing with the back leg, and drive off the front leg, legs straight throughout, join legs in air, reach away with legs, feet pointed

Arms

Strong and straight, turn far hand inward, hands shoulder width apart

Timing

Legs joined together before landing. Flight from hands to feet

Common Faults

- Landing on one foot
- Landing deviating from straight line
- No push off far hand
- Bent legs
- Falling backwards on landing

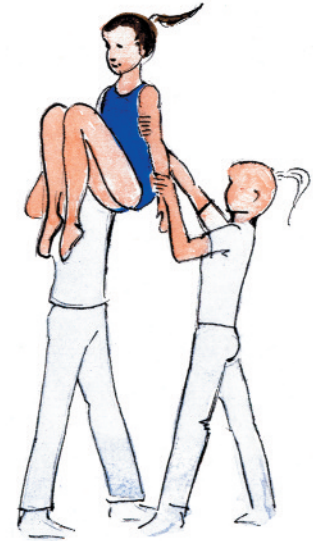
Possible Cause

- Joining of legs too slow
- Arched back or legs round the side
- Twisted wrist
- Feet flexed for landing
- Hips falling behind feet

6.8

Assisted flight

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 8



Guidance Notes

1. This is an important pair's skill to learn. It is known as Assisted Flight and many basic shapes can be made in the air.
2. Keep the back flat and straight throughout by using the 'suck' and 'tuck' shape. There will be a slight bending at the waist to prepare the jump, and then again on landing. Head remains naturally in line with body, eyes look forwards and down.
3. Feet together with legs straight in preparation. To prepare, bend knees halfway (angle at knees and ankles is 45°), knees over the toes showing 45° hip angle. Partner may stand in front or behind to support arms or waist firmly.
4. Drive legs straight at knees, and press balls of feet into floor. The toes are the last part of the foot to leave the floor in the jumping action. Partner gives assistance by firmly lifting the gymnast higher into the air than could be achieved otherwise. Keep the body tight in the air, with arms stretched by the ears. It is important to remain straight on entry into the jump and any shapes are made at the top of the jump.
5. Land toes first, balls of feet, then heels and bend knees under control to land safely. Land in the same position as described in the preparation phase. Straighten legs to stand. Partner should support the landing.
6. The arm action begins from a sideways shoulder level position and circles backwards and downwards in preparation. The jump action of the legs is complimented by the forward and upward arm swing, and supporters additional lift.

NB: Examples of assisted flight are shown on card.

Teaching Points

Body

Totally straight and tight, shape made at top of jump

Legs

Straighten legs quickly. Absorb landing. Land toes, heels, knee bend forward over toes

Arms

Swing up by ears, arms sideways to control landing

Timing

Jump and assisted lift at same time, sink into landing

Common Faults

Mistiming jump and lift
Loss of balance on landing
Lack of height

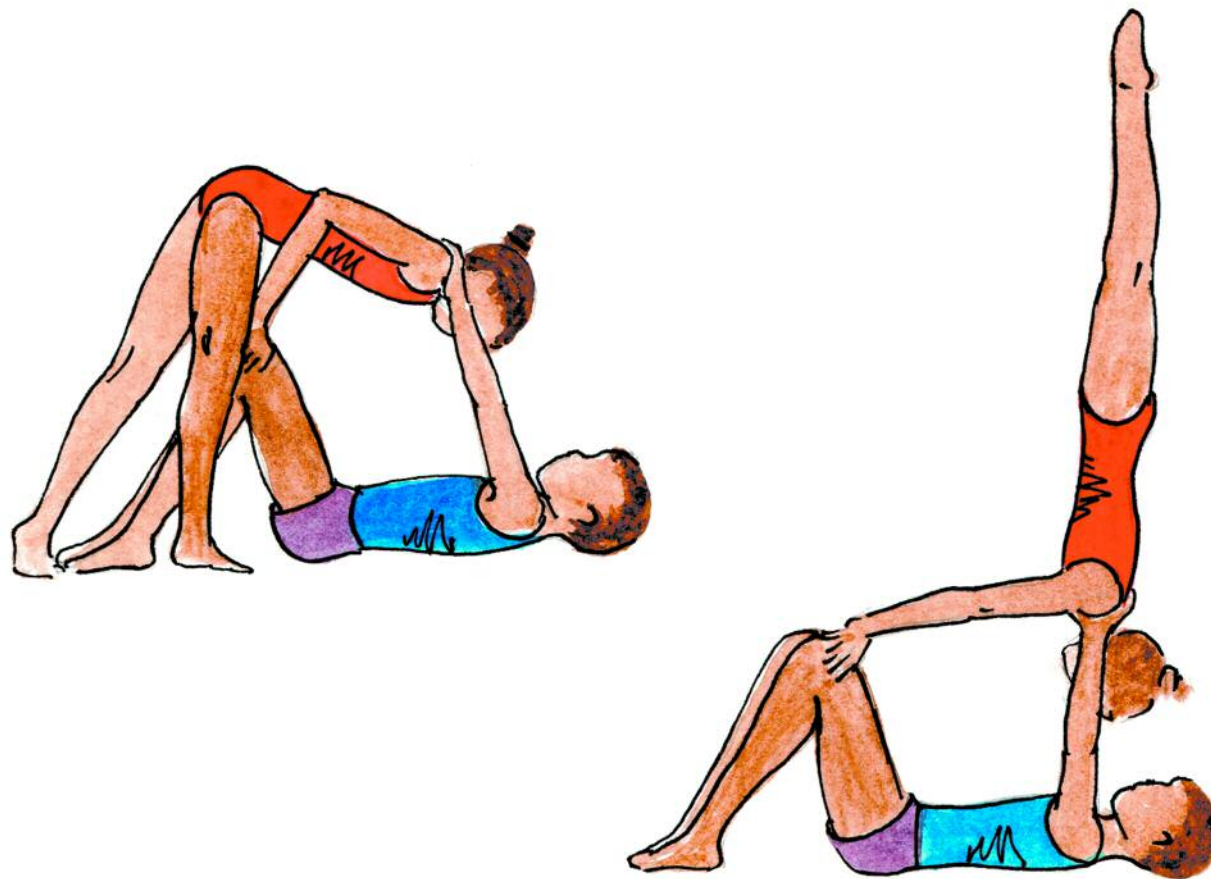
Possible Cause

Not knowing when to go
Centre of gravity travelling outside support base
Weak supporter or gymnast too heavy to lift

6.9

Hand/Knee Balance

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 9



Guidance Notes

1. With partner it is possible to obtain and maintain a balance position, which is created by one partner bearing the weight of the other.
2. The supporter or base person lies flat on back, knees bent, feet flat with legs slightly apart. The supporter's arms are stretched out to hold the partner's shoulders as the top person moves forward.
3. The top person, places their hands on partner's knees and leans their shoulders forward into supporter's hands. Once a stable grip is achieved, the top gymnast pushes from their legs, straightens the arms, and lifts the hips and legs to a vertical position.
4. The top gymnast's centre of gravity must remain above the base of support provided by the partner's arms. This is achieved by good body tension by the top and the strong arms of the base.

Teaching Points

Body

Held tight and strong, head in line with body

Legs

Tight and strong in support, tight and straight in the air

Arms

Strong straight arms for weight bearing

Timing

Hold for 3 seconds

Common Faults

Falling out of position
Unable to reach vertical

Possible Cause

Weak support balance position
Fear of inverting, lack of body tension

6.10

Handspring preparation

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 10



6.10

Handspring preparation

LEVEL 6 • SKILL CARD 10

Guidance Notes

1. From standing straight, with arms up and foot pointed in front, lift the lead leg and step forwards into a deep lunge up the springboard. Simultaneously reach forward and down with the arms, placing hands, fingertips first then palms flat, with wide fingers, firmly on top of the box top, shoulder width apart with index finger pointing forward.
2. Swing the rear leg up and push off the lead leg. The swing and push of the legs create the required momentum to lift the hips above the hands. To bear the weight on the hands, the arms must straighten and push into the box top to extend the shoulders. As the hips pass over the hands there should be a thrust through the shoulders by pushing firmly from the hands up through the body. The whole body should be kept straight, head back slightly to see fingers.
3. The thrust is made just after the handstand phase as the body is falling over onto back to take the body upwards and away from the box showing some flight before landing flat on the back on a safety mat at the same height as box top.

Teaching Points

Body

Totally straight and tight, head back slightly to see hands throughout

Legs

Join quickly before vertical and stay together, feet pointed

Arms

Thrust through shoulders just after handstand phase, straight arms

Timing

Common Faults

- Legs not joining before vertical
- Bent arms in support
- Rolling over onto back
- Bent legs
- No thrust off

Possible Cause

- Lack of speed in legs
- Lack of understanding of thrust action
- Tucking head in
- Lack of tension
- Weak shoulder muscles