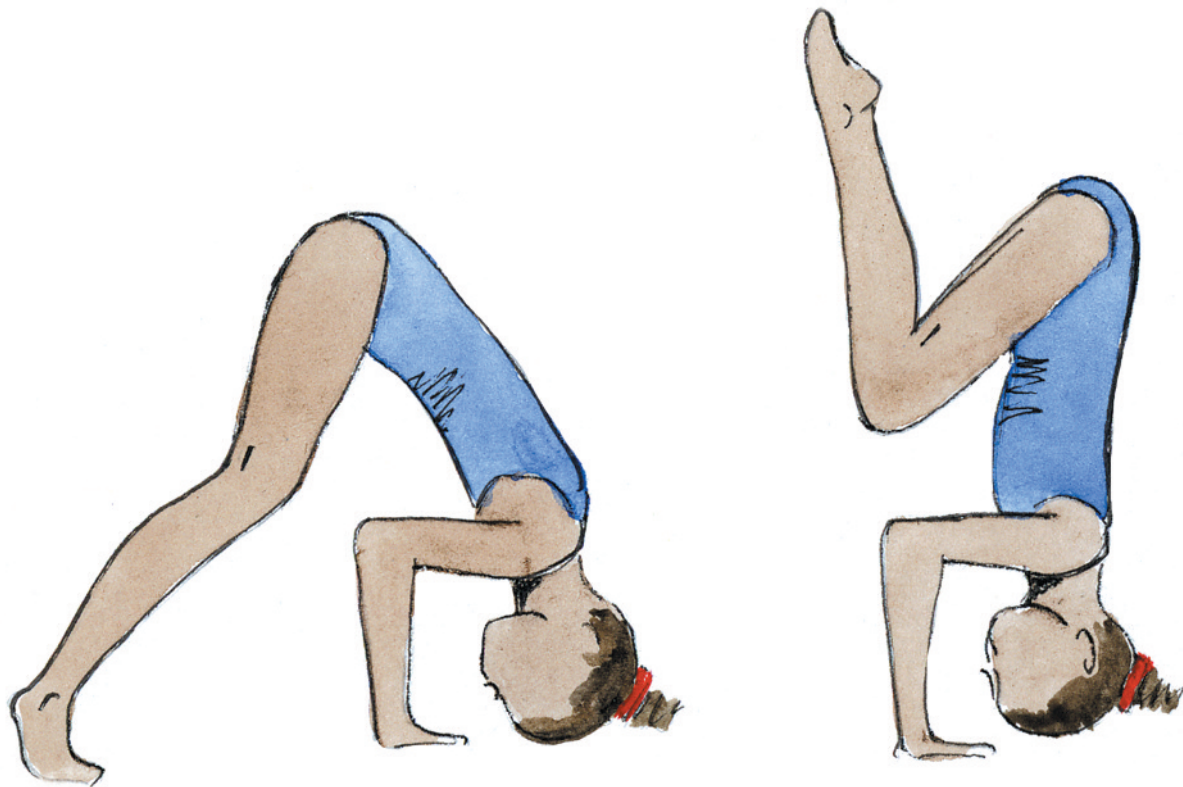


4.1

Bent Leg Head Stand

LEVEL 4 • SKILL CARD 1



Guidance Notes

1. The bent 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 and to protect the neck in this weight bearing position. Good whole body tension is also required.
3. Place the hands on the floor, flat and shoulder width apart, fingers pointing forward. Put the top of the head (hairline) on the floor forwards of the hands to form a triangle shape. Once the support points have been established walk the feet up to take the hips directly above the head and shoulders. From here the knees are tucked into the chest creating the correct curl in the lower back, and feet are pointed to the roof.

Teaching Points

Body

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

Legs

Legs together, knees bent tucked into chest, feet pointed

Arms

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

Timing

Held steady for 3 seconds

Common Faults

Knees apart
Hands pointing outward
Falling over onto back
Arched back
Can't get hips up high enough

Possible Cause

No leg tension
Incorrect hand placement
Hands and head placement in line
Knees raised too high
No push through arms

4.2

Crouched Balance

LEVEL 4 • SKILL CARD 2



Guidance Notes

1. The crouch balance on the floor should be held steady for 3 seconds.
2. Place the hands on the floor flat and shoulder width apart, index finger pointing forward, other fingers spread out to side, wide fingers. Bend the elbows no more than 90° and push through the arms bearing the bodyweight on the arms only.
3. The legs can be positioned in two different ways: For the 'squat balance' place the knees just outside and on top of the bent elbows, tucking knees tight into body and pointing feet at the back, tucking heels into seat. The shins should be raised and held at horizontal. Alternatively, a more difficult leg position is to tuck the knees in together between the arms not touching the arms for support. The arms may have to be straighter in order to achieve this and greater push through the arms is required to hold this shape.
4. The hands form the support base within which the centre of gravity must remain in order to stay balanced, good strength in the arms is required to maintain this weight bearing position.

Teaching Points

Body

Tight body, head naturally in line with body

Legs

Knees tucked up, knees on top of elbows or tight together, shins at horizontal level, feet pointed

Arms

Bent elbows, strong push through arms, flat hands shoulder width apart

Timing

Slowly enter position, hold for 3 seconds

Common Faults

- Knees sliding off elbows
- Falling over onto head
- Falling to side
- Unable to hold position

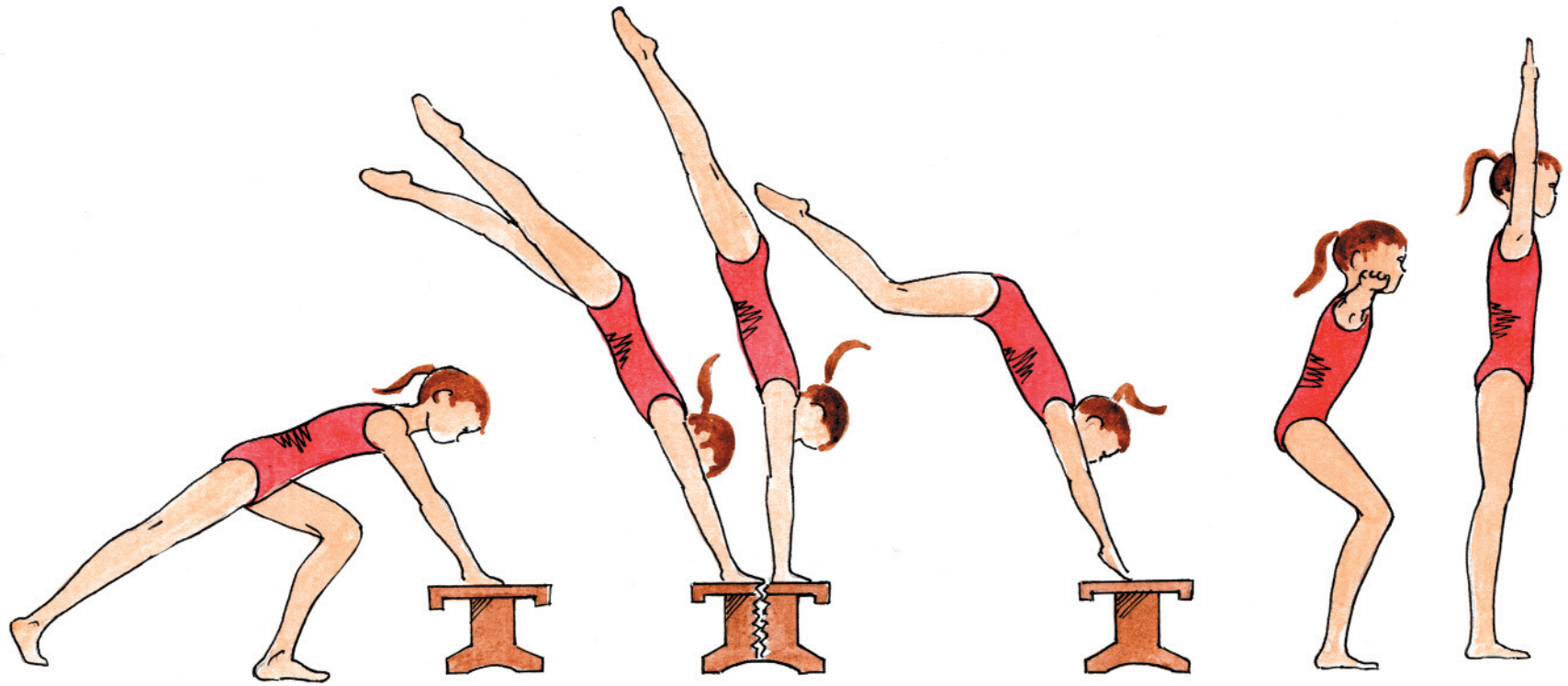
Possible Cause

- Arms too straight
- Not pressing with fingertips
- Hands too close together

4.3

Donkey Kick

LEVEL 4 • SKILL CARD 3



Guidance Notes

1. The 'Donkey Kick' should be performed with the aid of a bench. The 'Donkey Kick' is an important skill to learn as it is the landing action of many skills such as the round off back flip
2. The hands are placed on the bench, flat and shoulder width apart and forming the pivot point around which the body will rise up to almost vertical handstand. As the body descends, the arms push away from the bench to return to standing
3. Enter into this skill by stepping forward into a lunge and place hands on bench. Drive off the lead leg to lift hips high and swing the rear leg strongly, joining legs together quickly in the air to show a straight and inverted body shape. The body stops just short of vertical and begins the descent
4. The body gains momentum on the way down and this is accelerated by the snapping down of both legs, coupled with a strong push through the arms creating flight from hands to feet. Both feet land at the same time

Teaching Points

Body

Tight, head slightly back to see hand placement

Legs

Join together quickly in the air, snap down legs, legs tight together

Arms

Arms strong and straight, push through arms, arms stay by ears on recovery

Timing

Fast snap down action showing flight

Common Faults

No flight from hands to feet
Bent Legs
Unable to reach near handstand
Legs apart

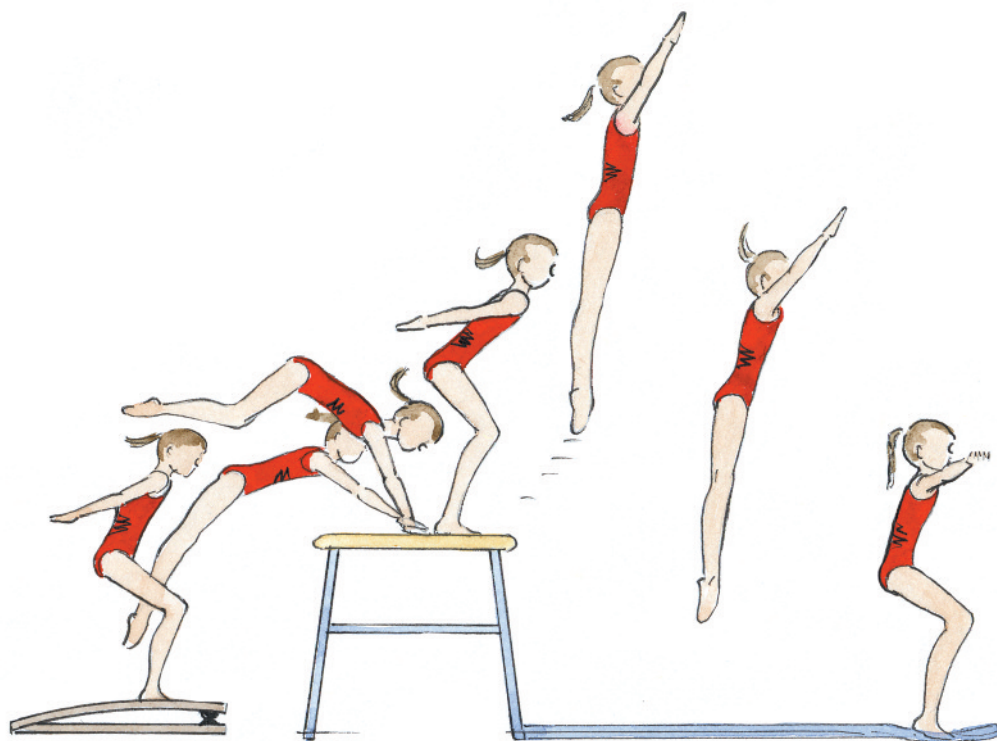
Possible Cause

No thrust through arms
Kicking from knees
No drive off legs
Loss of body tension when inverted

4.4

Squat On Jump Off

LEVEL 4 • SKILL CARD 4



Guidance Notes

1. From a short run to a springboard or a long bench, 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 onto the box in order to perform a shape jump such as star, straddle or tucked into air and 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 into the chest the arms push strongly thrusting through the shoulders to counteract the over rotation caused by the hip and leg lift
3. The arm thrust and reach forward **not** allowing knees to pass when in support, to arrive forward at horizontal as feet land together on the box or table top. The feet land where the hands have been.
4. Drive legs straight into the jump off, pressing the balls of the feet into the box. The gymnast must lean forward slightly on take off in order to travel upwards and away from the box top. The arms swing up to stop just in front of the ears to transfer some momentum to the body and facilitate flight. Keep the body tight in the air
5. At the top of the jump the gymnast should take the star, straddle or tucked jump shape quickly and stretch the body out again for landing

Teaching Points

Body

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

Legs

Tuck knees into chest, strong drive into jump, point feet

Arms

Thrust through shoulders, arms swing forward and up into jump

Timing

Shoulder thrust creates a counter-rotation, shape at top of jump

Common Faults

Knees apart
Landing on knees
Knees passing elbows in support
Jumping legs round the side

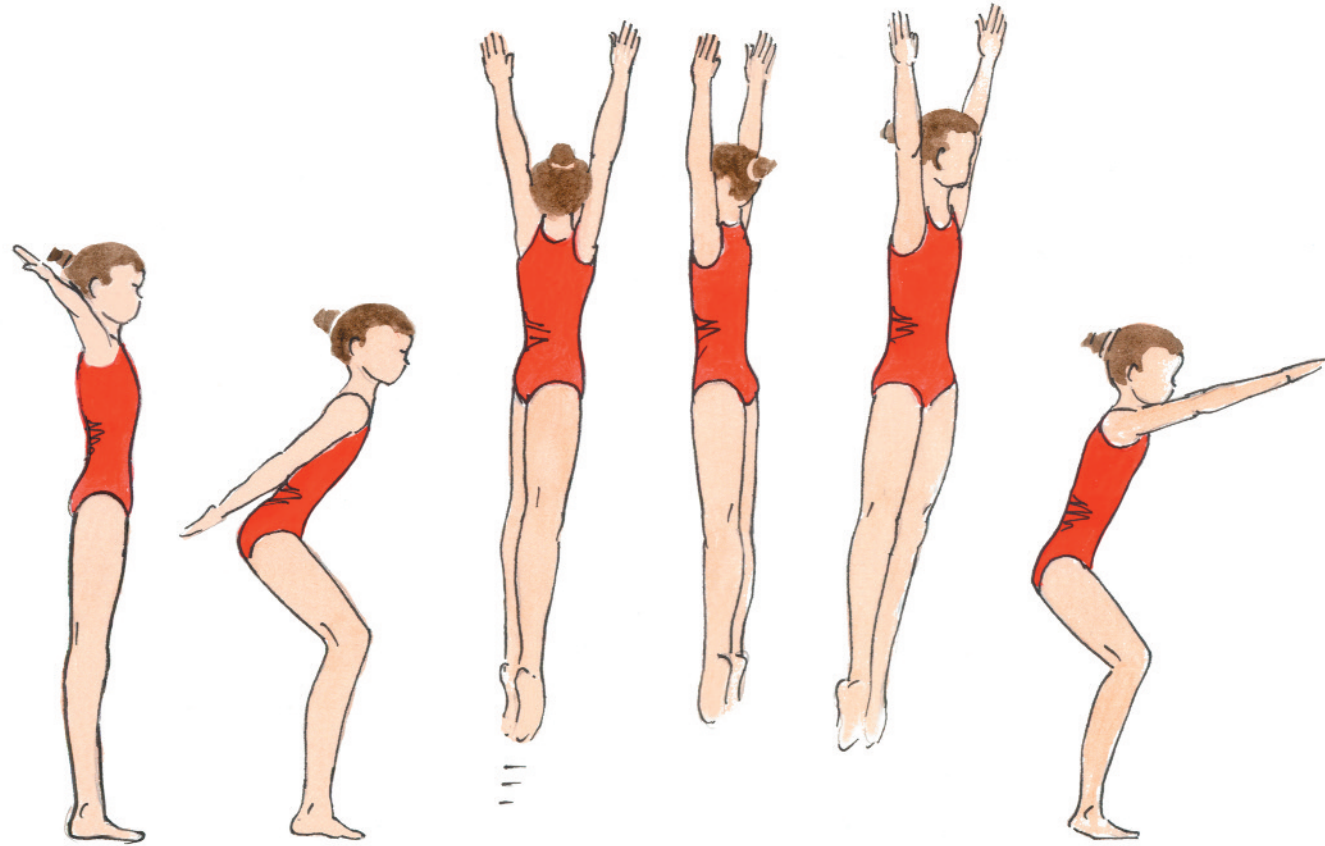
Possible Cause

Weak abdominal muscles
Hips too low
Lack of appreciation of squat technique

4.5

Jump Full Turn

LEVEL 4 • SKILL CARD 5



Guidance Notes

1. This is an important skill to learn to avoid injuries when landing from twisting skills, it is known as a 'Direct Twist' as it is created by pushing directly against the floor.
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 looking forward and down.
3. Stand with legs straight in preparation, feet slightly apart (about 15cm), flat and parallel. To prepare, bend knees half way (angle at knees and ankles is 45°), knees over the toes showing 45° hip angle.
4. Drive legs straight at knees, and press balls of feet into floor in the opposite direction of desired twist, causing the heels to leave the floor. The toes are the last part of the foot to leave the floor in the jumping action. Keep body tight in the air, with arms stretched, turn head and shoulders slightly in direction of turn. It is important to remain straight throughout to facilitate the turn.
5. Land toes first, balls of feet, heels and bend knees under control to land safely, landing in the same position as described in the preparation phase. Straighten legs to stand
6. The arms begin from sideways shoulder level position, and circle backward and downward in preparation. The jump action of the legs is complemented by the forward and upward arm swing, which is held slightly wide to allow the body rotation to be increased. From sideways the arms can be brought by the ears, down by the sides or wrapped into the chest, then out sideways to shoulder level to control balance on landing

Teaching Points

Body

Totally straight and tight, head and shoulders turn in direction of twist

Legs

Straighten legs quickly, to absorb landing. Land toes, heels, bend forward over toes, land feet parallel

Arms

Swing up by ears. Arms horizontal forwards to control landing

Timing

Turn quickly

Common Faults

Over-rotation of twist
Loss of balance
Arms too wide

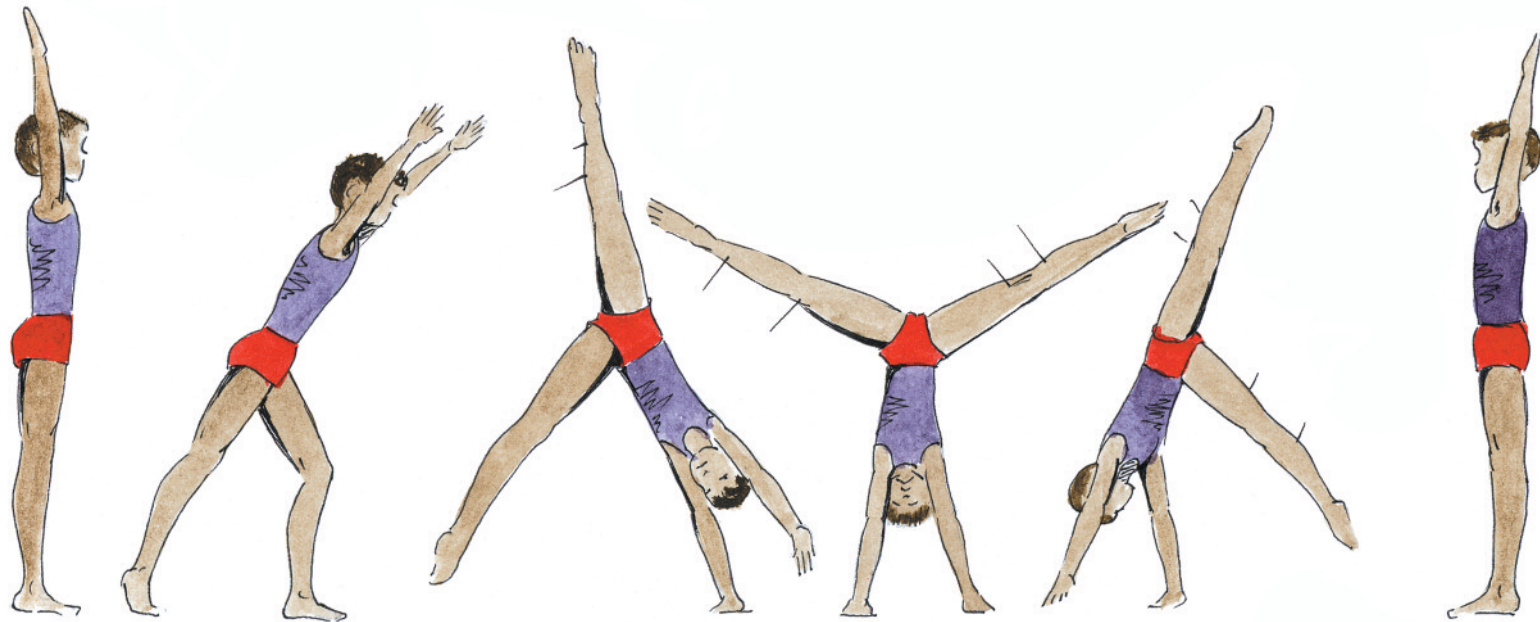
Possible Cause

Trying too hard
Unequal arms
Lack of body tension

4.6

Cartwheel ¼ Turn In (Front to Back)

LEVEL 4 • SKILL CARD 6



Guidance Notes

1. The 'front to back' cartwheel is very important to learn as it turns the gymnast backwards as they are moving forwards whilst creating an accelerating effect.
2. Start facing forward, one foot pointed out in front, showing slight turnout of the knee. The arms are raised up by the ears, chin up.
3. Lift the lead foot forwards and up to between knee and waist level and then step forward into a lunge. Lean forward and make a quarter turn with the body to place the near hand on the floor, followed by the far away hand as it reaches over the top. Drive off the first leg and swing the other leg over the top. The legs continue to pass over the top of the body with a further quarter rotation to land on the first foot and then the second. The cartwheel action should be smooth and demonstrate the Hand - Hand - Foot - Foot sequence.
4. As the chest drops forward and down it should look as though the gymnast is about to enter a handstand, however the body turns late to place the near hand on the floor, fingers pointing sideways. The second hand placed rotates inward to point the fingers at the first hand, this allows the natural wrist alignment in order to push more efficiently through the arm.
5. On recovery it should look as though the gymnast is landing from a handstand.

Teaching Points

Body

Tight body, quarter turn in quarter turn out, head back slightly to see hand placement

Legs

Strong swing with the back leg, and drive off the front leg, legs straight throughout, feet pointed

Arms

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

Timing

Hand - Hand - Foot - Foot

Common Faults

- Near hand turned inwards
- Cartwheeling off line
- No push off far hand
- Bent legs

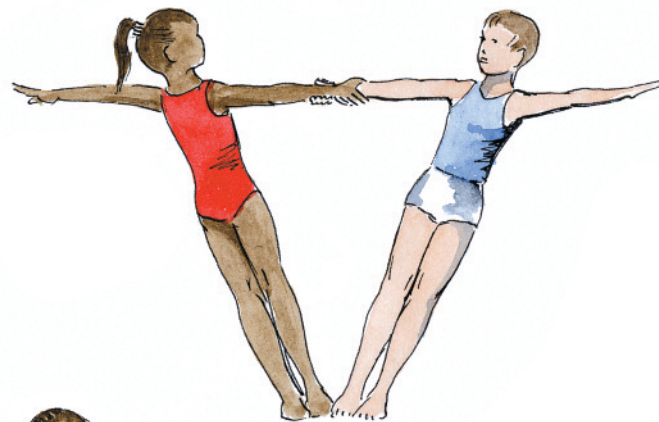
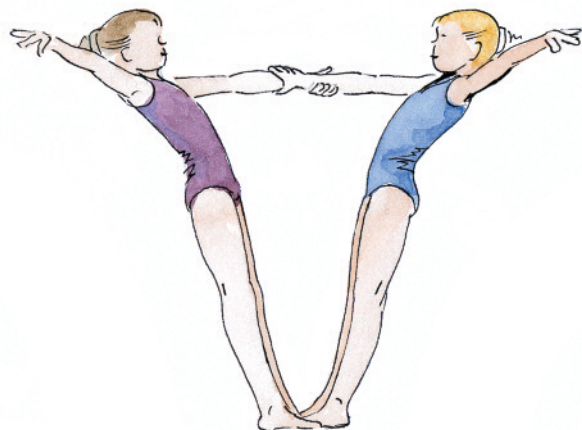
Possible Cause

- Arched back or legs round the side
- Wrong hand placement
- Lack of body tension

4.7

Counter Balance

LEVEL 4 • SKILL CARD 7



Guidance Notes

1. With a partner it is possible to obtain and maintain an off balance position which is counter balanced by linking one or two hands with a partner.
2. Stand with a partner feet positioned close together and link one or two hands using a wrist to wrist grip, either facing each other, or one partner facing away or both sideways on. Lean away from each other straightening the support arms.
3. Both gymnasts lean away taking their centre of gravity outside the base of support, but are prevented from falling due to the counter balancing effect. Free arms can be held stretched, and the position held for 3 seconds.

Teaching Points

Body

Held tight and strong, head in line with body

Legs

Tight and together, feet flat

Arms

Strong wrist grip, straight arms

Timing

Enter position carefully, hold still for 3 seconds

Common Faults

Falling out of position

Unable to hold hands

Unable to hold balance shape

Possible Cause

Unequal counter balance position

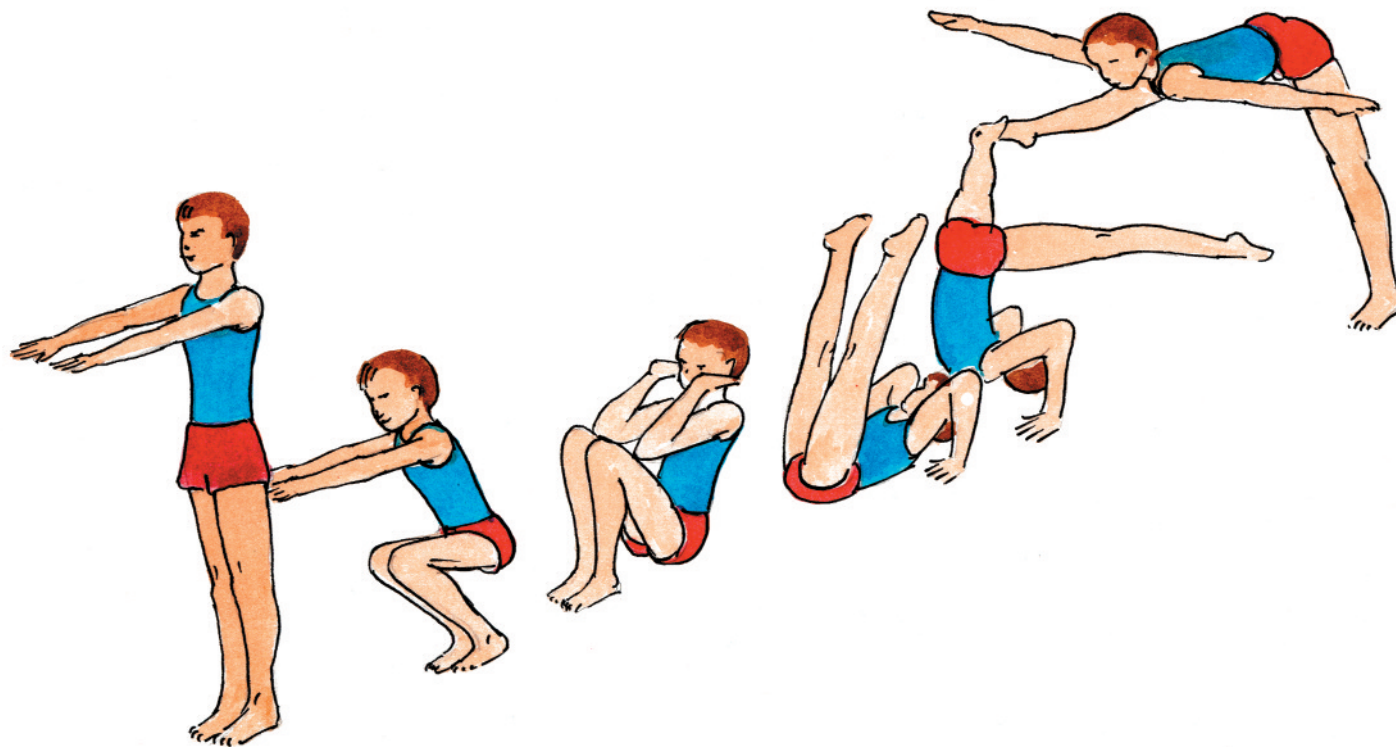
Incorrect grip technique

Lack of body tension

4.8

Backward Roll To Straddle

LEVEL 4 • SKILL CARD 8



Guidance Notes

1. This is a further development of the backward roll. It is also useful to be confident in all backward rolling actions to avoid injury when landing backwards and over-rotating.
2. From standing tall with arms stretched up by the ears, chin up but eyes looking forward and down, legs straight and feet together. Bend knees all the way down and lower arms to place thumbs close to the ears, creating a slight curl in the spine with shoulders falling behind hips. Feel weight on heels.
3. Take off by pushing through the legs. Fingers tuck under shoulders placing hands flat shoulder width apart. The gymnast should keep the body curled, head tucked in, back of head may touch floor. Keep body round and the knees tucked into chest throughout the roll.
4. Approximately half way through roll the gymnast should push strongly through the arms to clear the head off the floor, simultaneously straddling the legs to place feet on the floor for landing.
5. On completion of the roll the gymnast will rise and jump feet together, arms up to show the same shape as described in the starting position.

Teaching Points

Body

Keep tight, chin tucked in, rounded back

Legs

Push with legs into roll, knees tight together, feet pointed. Late straddle of legs. About half way through roll, feet reach for floor

Arms

Flat hands, thumbs close to ears, tuck fingers under shoulders, shoulders width apart, push to clear head off floor

Timing

Straddle legs late, about half way through roll

Common Faults

- Feet kicking out to roof
- Bent legs in straddle
- Far too wide straddle
- Elbows falling on floor during push

Possible Cause

- Lack of tension in legs
- Incorrect foot placement
- Weak arm and shoulder muscles