

TUMBLING STUNTS

INTRODUCTION

Tumbling plays a significant role in a complete gymnastics program. Through a well-balanced and organized tumbling experience, each student is given an opportunity to mature and develop a wide range of physical fitness and perceptual motor components. The physical fitness components include strength, flexibility, balance, agility, and coordination. The perceptual-motor components include directionality, laterality, and spatial awareness. Together, the experiences and benefits derived from the physical fitness and perceptual-motor components help the student develop into a more physically educated individual.

Providing positive tumbling experiences contribute to the improvement of each student's self respect and self-confidence. Tumbling Stunts are self-centered and individually challenging. Each student is given opportunities to use the body to solve a wide range of movement experiences. Through improvement and/or mastering of each Tumbling Stunt a feeling of personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment is gained.

The individualized challenge of tumbling most always produces a variety of student ability levels. There are some students who learn tumbling skills quickly and easily. These students perform a near perfect Forward Roll or Backward Roll after the first few attempts. At the other extreme, there are students who find the simplest Tumbling Stunts a tremendous challenge, and even after numerous attempts and sincere effort, their end result is minimal. Because tumbling produces such a wide range of tumbling abilities, tumbling is an area in which "Values Education" can play a meaningful role within the physical education program. Such values as human worth and dignity, tolerance, responsibility, courtesy, and knowledge can add greatly to the student's acceptance of themselves and others, as well as, understanding and learning the tumbling concepts. The diversified tumbling skill levels of the students will help each student become aware of and accept their own ability level and the ability levels of others. The students will develop and display responsibility by listening carefully to the teacher's discussions and attending to the tumbling demonstrations. Students who excel will likely learn to accept the lower levels of their less capable classmates and be willing to offer assistance, and perhaps, give them extra turns. Courtesy will grow as all students begin to display feelings of caring, waiting one's turn, and complementing each other's attempts and accomplishments. Yes, it is true that we touch upon values throughout the physical education program on a daily basis, but let's begin to take advantage of teachable experiences and highlight those values we so often take for granted.

The Tumbling Stunts Chapter consists of 5 basic sections:

- 1) Teaching Suggestions
- 2) Safety Rules
- 3) Tumbling Stunts
 - a) Explanation
 - b) Specific teaching suggestions
 - c) Spotting hints
 - d) Variations
- 4) Assessment Instruments
 - a) Psychomotor domain
 - b) Cognitive domain
 - c) Affective domain
- 5) Motivational Ideas

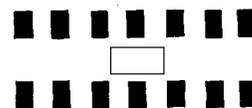
TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Teach tumbling as a separate unit and follow with apparatus activities. Keep tumbling as one of the gymnastic stations.
- 2) Locate all mats safe distances from walls and entranceways.
- 3) Provide unobstructed and adequate pathways between all mats.
- 4) Stress the safety reasons for walking in the pathways instead of crossing mats.
- 5) Arrange the mats to provide maximum student participation. The following are three examples of mat organizational patterns:

Make a circle or oval shape with the mats.
Place a demonstration mat in the center.



Make two lines of mats. Place a demonstration mat in the center between the lines of mats.



- 7) Give the students the responsibility of helping to keep the mats in their proper positions to ensure safety at all times.
- 8) Post tumbling rules and continually refer to them.
- 9) Post tumbling charts and related visual aids in full view of students.
- 10) Use tumbling audiovisual aids to supplement the lessons.
- 11) Create a colorful and attractive wall display to supplement the tumbling unit.
- 12) Develop and implement motivational/instructional ideas to supplement the tumbling unit, such as: a tumbling club, certificates, special programs, etc.
- 13) Teach the proper execution of each tumbling stunt by breaking it down to its component parts: starting position, performance, and finishing position.
- 14) Teach the correct starting and finishing position of each Tumbling Stunt.
- 15) Make the Tumbling Stunt introductions and follow up discussions concise and appropriate for the grade level and/or ability level of the students.
- 16) Teach the correct name for each Tumbling Stunt.
- 17) Use name cards or a chalkboard to reinforce the learning of the names of the Tumbling Stunts.
- 18) Make a list of Tumbling Stunts for each class and check off each stunt after the stunt is taught.
- 19) Review and reinforce the key elements of previously taught Tumbling Stunts throughout the tumbling unit.
- 20) Have all students travel in the same direction when tumbling.
- 21) Begin each class with a warm up activity to stretch muscles and body joints.
- 22) Use a demonstration mat that is in full view of all students.
- 23) Use self, student, and/or an audiovisual aid to demonstrate proper execution of each Tumbling Stunt. Follow up the demonstration with a brief discussion.
- 24) Combine a variety of Tumbling Stunts in each lesson. Break the practice of rolls with balance stunts.
- 25) Provide ample practice time.
- 26) Assist students, if necessary.
- 27) Use spotters with caution. Be certain each spotter is capable of handling the responsibility. Take time to instruct the spotters in proper spotting techniques and continually monitor the spotter's performance.
- 28) Give students opportunities to contribute ideas during the tumbling class discussions. Encourage the students to share their feelings about the tumbling activities.
- 29) Work with a select group of students at the end of the class who need additional assistance.
- 30) Work with a select group of students at the end of the class who are ready for advanced Tumbling Stunts.
- 31) Provide a show time at the end of selected lessons to give each interested student an opportunity to show a Tumbling Stunt that he/she has practiced or mastered. Encourage students to clap for each performer.
- 32) End the lesson with a special group tumbling activity or open practice time.
- 33) Work with students in need of help during a remedial tumbling class session.
- 34) Develop a positive and fair way to assess each student's performance.
- 35) Help each student to understand and accept his/her tumbling ability level.
- 36) Encourage the importance of trying, however, do not physically force a student to execute a Tumbling Stunt.
- 37) Praise all students regardless of skill level, when appropriate.
- 38) Respect individual differences and provide opportunities for all students to succeed.
- 39) Modify each Tumbling Stunt, if necessary, to meet the ability level of each student according to body weight, experience, physical limitations, etc.
- 40) Stress the importance of listening to and carefully observing class discussions and/or demonstrations.
- 41) Encourage students to be accepting and tolerant of the ability levels of others.
- 42) Encourage students to be supportive of other students' accomplishments.
- 43) Provide alternative or lead-up Tumbling Stunts to students who are fearful, overweight, and/or physically limited.
- 44) Encourage classroom teachers to periodically drop in during the tumbling unit to observe, offer words of encouragement, and to praise their students.
- 45) Give the intermediate level students a written test at the end of the tumbling unit to help assess their knowledge and understanding of the material that was covered. The test results can be used as part of the students' grades for the tumbling section of the gymnastic unit.
- 46) Teach Tumbling Stunts in conjunction with Fun Stunts in the primary grades (kindergarten, grade one, grade two, and/or grade three).
- 47) Perform Tumbling Stunts on well-padded mats.
- 48) Use the Tumbling Progression Chart (K-8) below, as a reference for the inclusion of Tumbling Stunts throughout the grades.

SAFETY RULES

- 1) Permit the use of tumbling mats -Only- when a competent adult who has been trained in gymnastics supervises the gymnasium.
- 2) Place each mat a safe distance from walls and entranceways.
- 3) Provide adequate space and pathways between mats to ensure safety to the tumblers and to the non-tumblers.
- 4) Check mats on a daily basis for tears and cleanliness
- 5) Keep mats clean and disinfect them periodically throughout the school year.
- 6) Use charts and/or audiovisual aids as possible teaching accessories. Be certain the charts and/or audiovisual aids coincide with your expectations and the students' ability levels.
- 7) Place charts and visual aids in safe and strategic locations. Do not place teaching aids in locations where students travel.
- 8) Organize a sequential progression of Tumbling Stunts to be taught throughout the grade levels (K-8).
- 9) Teach the Tumbling Stunts sequentially according to their difficulty.
- 10) Be knowledgeable of the Tumbling Stunts and be able to break down each Tumbling Stunt into teachable elements.
- 11) Use a lesson plan and/or checklist and check off the Tumbling Stunts taught within each class period.
- 12) Keep a record of absent students or students unable to participate and cover the missed material with them during the next class period.
- 13) Always place yourself in a position to be able to monitor the entire class even though you might be assisting a student.
- 14) Always provide an adequate warm-up session at the beginning of the lesson to stretch muscles and body joints.
- 15) Review important tumbling information and rules at the beginning of each lesson
- 16) Encourage students to wear loose fitting, comfortable clothing and permit tights and leotards for ultimate comfort, safety, and maximum performance.
- 17) Stress the importance of performing in proper foot wear. Encourage students to wear sneakers, tennis shoes, gymnastic slippers, or perform in bare feet. Check with local administration and/or Board of Education policy before giving students permission to participate in bare feet. Do not permit a student to perform in stocking feet.
- 18) Have students remove all objects from pockets and take off dangling jewelry, rings, hair combs, etc.
- 19) Do not permit students to chew gum or eat during the tumbling experiences.
- 20) Stress the importance of tumbling on the mats and not on the floor.
- 21) Emphasize the importance and safety of walking in the open pathways. Discourage students from crossing over mats.
- 22) Establish a specific direction for tumbling on a mat or group of mats to discourage possible student collisions.
- 23) Emphasize adequate space between the tumbler and the next student waiting his/her turn.
- 24) Limit the number of students tumbling on one mat at the same time.
- 25) Always provide a demonstration of the proper execution of the Tumbling Stunt by a skilled student tumbler, or an audiovisual aid during the introduction of the stunt. Continue to provide demonstrations periodically throughout the learning experience.
- 26) Stress the importance of being a responsible student by listening carefully to the tumbling instructions, rules, and directions.
- 27) Encourage each student to try, however, do not physically force a student to do a Tumbling Stunt he/she is afraid to attempt.
- 28) Emphasize the important safety precautions of each Tumbling Stunt in relation to proper hand placement, head position, appropriate body position, etc.
- 29) Provide ample practice time, however, do not over practice the students to the point of fatigue or strain. Break the instruction with student demonstrations, class discussions, and/or alternative activities.
- 30) Provide alternative tumbling Stunts or modify the Tumbling Stunts for students who are not successful due to overweight, fear, and/or a physical limitation.
- 31) Stress tucking the chin during **ALL** Rolls
- 32) Discourage students from walking, jogging, or running prior to a Forward Roll or Diving Forward Roll who have not totally mastered the stunt starting from a stationary position.
- 33) Encourage students to gradually increase the distance of a Diving Forward Roll as they develop confidence through repeated experiences. Do not allow a novice tumbler to dive forward in a manner that is potentially dangerous.
- 34) Emphasize proper placement of the hands for all Backward Rolls and explain the reason for it.
- 35) Teach the Backward Rocker as a lead-up to the Backward Roll.
- 36) Stress the importance of performing a Backward Rocker if unable to travel over on a Backward Roll. Do not permit a student who is stuck on his/her shoulders to try to force the body over. Quite often the student will take the hands away from the shoulders and forget to remain in a tuck position. The end result could be a potential neck injury.
- 37) Teach a beginning Cartwheel with one's body in the correct starting position with the hands on, close to, or a safe distance from the mat depending on the student's skill level. Do not expect a student to be able to do a Cartwheel with arms stretched overhead on the first attempt. Take the learning experiences slowly and safely
- 38) Encourage the Round-Off after the student has mastered a Cartwheel with the legs passing overhead.

- 39) Stress the importance of mastering a stationary Cartwheel or Round-Off prior to moving to perform the stunt. Do not permit a student to walk, jog, or run to do a Cartwheel or Round-Off who has not mastered the stunt starting from a stationary position.
- 40) Give a student permission to practice the Headstand after observing the student properly executing the Frog Headstand for a designated period of time.
- 41) Encourage the students to return safely to the starting position after executing a Headstand or Handstand, however, teach the correct way to tuck the chin and perform a Forward Roll, if the student falls backward.
- 42) Teach the beginning Handstand with hands placed on the mat and have the student kick up to get the feeling of the body weight supported by the arms and hands. Next, if ready, have the student hold the hands 3 to 5 inches above the mat then place the hands on the mat performing the kick-up motion. Gradually lift the hands to reach the overhead position. Do not expect a student to stand with arms overhead and bend down to place the hands on the mat to kick up into a Handstand on the first attempt. Give all students sequential lead-up experiences. Take the learning experiences slowly and safely.
- 43) Carefully monitor overweight students. Make a professional judgment if it is absolutely necessary to restrict an overweight student from attempting to perform a stunt that could place undue strain on body parts and/or joints, especially the head and neck. Be fair and above all... be careful!
- 44) Encourage the students to ask and wait for help if unable to perform a tumbling stunt.
- 45) Discipline students, in a fair way, who fail to follow the tumbling rules and guidelines. Do not give a student a senseless opportunity to injure one's self or others. Increase the disciplinary procedure each time the student violates the rules and guidelines.
- 46) Control the tempo of the tumbling lesson so students do not become fatigued. Stop the lesson periodically to review safety procedures, discuss key elements of specific tumbling stunts, and give student opportunities to demonstrate and/or share tumbling related material.
- 47) Permit spotting by adults who are totally responsible and who have been properly trained. Monitor the spotters closely and carefully.
- 48) Make certain you or any teacher designated spotter understands and uses the proper body position when spotting so as not to place undue pressure and/or weight on the lower back or other potentially weak areas of the body.
- 49) Discourage student spotters. Encourage the students to rely upon their own performances.
- 50) Encourage students to help keep mats in correct positions to ensure safety at all times.
- 51) Stress the importance of being honest and realistic about one's tumbling ability.
- 52) Encourage students to be accepting and tolerant of others and discourage students from ridiculing the attempts and mistakes of others.
- 53) Encourage each student to tell you when an injury occurs, whether it is minor or serious.
- 54) Follow the school policy concerning the reporting of all injuries.
- 55) Use discretion in assisting students who appear to have a serious injury. Send for the school nurse when in doubt.

EGG ROLL

STARTING POSITION

Lay in a tuck position on the back across the mat. Tuck the chin to the chest, grab the shins, and position the heels close to the buttocks.

PERFORMANCE

Do a 360° sideward roll in a tuck position along the mat. Complete the Egg Roll by returning to the starting position.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a tuck position on the back across the mat. The chin is tucked to the chest, the hands are grabbing the shins, and the heels are close to the buttocks.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Egg Roll and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with an Egg Roll chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Emphasize the importance of tucking the chin to the chest in the starting position and throughout the Egg Roll.
- 4) Stress the necessity to remain in a tight, tuck position throughout the Egg Roll.
- 5) Use the teaching cue "hug the legs" to help the students understand and maintain the proper tuck position.
- 6) Challenge the students to perform the Egg Roll in a continuous movement.
- 7) Emphasize the importance of performing the Egg Roll along the center of the mat to insure the student's safety.
- 8) Encourage the students to attempt and/or practice the Egg Roll on the wedge/- incline mat.
- 9) Use the Egg Roll as an alternative Tumbling Stunt for students who are unable to perform the Forward Roll, Forward Straddle, and/or Diving Forward Roll.
- 10) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

Stand bending over in a forward straddle leg position or assume a kneeling position beside the student. Make certain the student is in the correct starting position. Place one hand on the near arm and the other hand on the near hip. Gently push the student sideward. Continuously reposition your hands to move across the back, opposite arm, hip and shins of the legs. Travel forward as the student performs the Egg Roll. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undo pressure upon you're lower back. Do not over spot. Instead, have the student perform the Egg Roll by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. If possible, encourage the student to practice the Egg Roll without assistance either on the flat mat or the wedge/incline mat.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Egg Rolls.
- 2) Perform an Egg Roll and, without stopping or changing the body position on the mat, reverse the Egg Roll to return to the starting location.

FORWARD ROLL

STARTING POSITION

Assume a forward squatting position on the mat with the knees and feet together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, and the hands shoulder-width apart with the fingers or finger tips touching the mat and facing forward.

PERFORMANCE Tuck the chin to the chest and round the back. Roll forward in a tuck position lifting the hips and pushing with the balls of the feet. Use the arms and hands to support the body so the back of the neck barely touches the mat. Roll forward onto the shoulders, rounded back, buttocks, and feet. Remain in a tuck position throughout the Forward Roll by grabbing the shins, and keeping the heels close to the buttocks.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a forward squatting position on the mat with the head up, knees and feet together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, and the hands shoulder-width apart with the fingers or finger tips touching the mat and facing forward.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Forward Roll and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Forward Roll chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Emphasize the importance of tucking the chin to the chest and rounding the back throughout the Forward Roll.
- 4) Encourage the students to lift the hips and push off with the balls of the feet at the beginning of the Forward Roll.
- 5) Stress the necessity of staying in a tight, tuck position throughout the Forward Roll.
- 6) Use the teaching cue "hug the legs!" to help the students understand and maintain the proper tuck position.
- 7) Encourage the students to attempt and/or practice the Forward Roll on the wedge/incline mat.
- 8) Use the Forward Roll as a lead-up stunt to the Diving Forward Roll and the Forward Straddle Roll.
- 9) Use the Forward Roll as an alternative Tumbling Stunt for students who are unable to perform the Diving Forward Roll.
- 10) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

Assume a kneeling position beside the student. Make certain the student is in the proper starting position. Ask the student to tuck the chin to the chest. Place your front hand on the back of the student's head and place your back hand under the thigh of the student's near leg. Ask the student to roll forward in a tuck position. Use your front hand to help the student tuck the chin to the chest and use your back hand to help the student lift the hips. Once the student starts to roll onto the shoulders, pull out your front hand. Continue to use your back hand to help lift the student's hips. Release your back hand when the hips pass above the shoulders. Then, encourage the student to complete the Forward Roll by grabbing the shins and rolling through in a tight, tuck position to the proper finishing position. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undo pressure on your lower back. Instead, have the student perform the Forward Roll by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. If possible, encourage the student to practice the Forward Roll without assistance either on the flat mat.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Forward Rolls.
- 2) Perform the Forward Roll with the feet crossed.
- 3) Complete the Forward Roll to a feet and knees together squatting position then rising to a standing position.
- 4) Perform the Forward Roll on the wedge/incline mat. Start with the feet on the flat mat.
- 5) Perform a modified Forward Roll by starting in a feet and knees together squatting position on the mat and finishing in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat (Forward Roll into a Forward Straddle Roll).
- 6) Perform a modified Forward Roll by starting in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat and finishing in a feet and knees together squatting position on the mat (Forward Straddle Roll into a Forward Roll).

BACKWARD ROCKER

STARTING POSITION

Assume a backward squatting position on the mat with the feet and knees together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, and the hands shoulder-width apart with the finger tips, fingers, or hands touching the mat. The chin is tucked to the chest and the back is rounded.

PERFORMANCE

Roll backward in a tuck position while placing the hands in an open, palms-up position with the fingers pointed backward above the shoulders. Roll onto the shoulders in a tuck position with the palms of the hands touching the mat. Complete the Backward Rocker by returning to the starting location. Roll back to the feet in a tuck position.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a backward squatting position on the mat with the feet and knees together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, and hands shoulder-width apart with the finger tips, fingers, or hands touching the mat. The chin is tucked to the chest and the back is rounded.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Backward Rocker and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Backward Rocker chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Emphasize the importance of tucking the chin to the chest and rounding the back throughout the Backward Rocker.
- 4) Stress the necessity of staying in a tight, tuck position throughout the Backward Rocker.
- 5) Discuss the role the hands and arms play in helping to protect the neck.
- 6) Teach the Backward Rocker as a lead-up stunt to the Backward Roll.
- 7) Use the Backward Rocker as an alternative Tumbling Stunt for students who are unable to perform the Backward Roll, Backward Straddle Roll, and Backward Pike Roll.
- 8) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

Stand bending over in a sideward straddle leg position or assume a kneeling position beside the student. Make certain the student is in the correct starting position. Have the student roll backward in the tuck position. Be certain the student places the hands in the correct position above the shoulders. Reach across the student with your front hand to grasp the far hip so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back and simultaneously grasp the near hip with your back hand so that your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back. As the student rolls backward, gently lift the hips until the student has reached the proper tuck position on the shoulders. Make certain the student's palms are touching the mat. Maintain your grip on the hips and allow the student to remain in the tuck position on the shoulders for a few seconds. (Quite often a student needs to experience the feeling of the inverted tuck position in order to be successful with the Backward Rocker). Continue spotting as the student rolls back toward the starting location. Release the spot when the student begins to roll onto the lower back. Then, encourage the student to complete the Backward Rocker by rolling back to the proper finishing positioning. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over-spot. Instead, have the student perform the Backward Rocker by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful, and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. If possible, encourage the student to practice the Backward Rocker without assistance, Do not physically force a student to perform the Backward Rocker to perfection, if the student is afraid. Instead, let the student decide how far he/she is able to roll backward. Encourage the student to perform and spot him/her to the desired backward position. Continue to give individualized assistance and challenge the student to roll farther backward with each attempt. If possible, encourage the student to practice without assistance.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform two or more continuous Backward Rockers.
- 2) Perform the Backward Rocker with the feet crossed.

BACKWARD ROLL

STARTING POSITION

Assume a backward squatting position on the mat with the head up, feet and knees together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, and the hands shoulder-width apart with the finger tips or fingers touching the mat.

PERFORMANCE

Tuck the chin to the chest and round the back. Roll backward in a tuck position while placing the hands in an open, palm up position with the fingers pointed backward above the shoulders. Roll onto the shoulders in a tuck position with the hips above the shoulders and the palms of the hands touching the mat. Push down on the mat with the hands to help the body pass over the shoulders and to help the body land on the balls of the feet. Tell the students to point the toes toward the mat to improve the chances of landing on the feet. Do not allow the knees to touch the mat. Remain in a tuck position throughout the entire Backward Roll.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a backward squatting position on the mat with the head up, feet and knees together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, and hands shoulder-width apart with the finger tips or fingers touching the mat.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Backward Roll and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Backward Roll chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Teach the Backward Rocker as the lead-up stunt to the Backward Roll (see Backward Rocker stunt beginning on page 108 for teaching guidelines).
- 4) Do not permit a student to attempt a Backward Roll until the student has successfully mastered the Backward Rocker (see teaching guidelines for Backward Rocker beginning on page 108). Give permission to students to practice the Backward Roll on an individual basis after observing and assessing their performance of the Backward Rocker.
- 5) Emphasize the importance of tucking the chin to the chest and rounding the back throughout the Backward Roll.
- 6) Stress the necessity of staying in a tight, tuck position throughout the Backward Roll.
- 7) Discuss the role the hands and arms play in helping to protect the neck.
- 8) Tell the student to push down on the mat with the hands to help the body pass over the shoulders and to help the body land on the balls of the feet.
- 9) Do not permit a student who is stuck on the shoulders to attempt to force the body over. Instead, insist that the student roll back to the starting location thus performing a Backward Rocker (see Backward Rocker on page 108 for teaching guidelines). Quite often a student will place undue pressure on the neck by opening the body and/or moving the hands away from the shoulders while attempting to force the body over.
- 10) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

The following spotting hints are for a student who is able to roll onto the shoulders in the proper tuck position. He/she is very close to being able to roll over the shoulders. I do not recommend helping a student perform a complete Backward Roll if the student is unable to roll onto the shoulders in the proper tuck position by himself/herself. Instead, the student should practice the Backward Rocker (see Backward Rocker beginning on page 108 for Spotting Hints and teaching guidelines). Stand bending over in a sideward straddle leg position or assume a kneeling position beside and behind the student. Make certain the student is in the correct starting position. Have the student roll backward in the tuck position. Be certain the student places the hands in the correct position above the shoulders. As the student rolls onto the upper back and shoulders, reach across the student with your front hand to grasp the far hip so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back and simultaneously grasp the near hip with your back hand so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back. Gently lift the hips so the student is able to successfully pass over the shoulders and land on the balls of the feet. Make certain the student pushes down on the mat with both hands. Let go of the student when he/she has passed over the shoulders and has placed the balls of the feet on the mat. Then, encourage the student to complete the Backward Roll by placing the body in the proper finishing position. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over spot. Instead, have the student perform the Backward Roll by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Backward Rolls.
- 2) Perform the Backward Roll with the feet crossed.
- 3) Complete the Backward Roll to feet and knees together squatting position then rising to a standing position.
- 4) Perform a modified Backward Roll by starting in a feet and knees together squatting position on the mat and finishing in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat (Backward Roll into a Backward Straddle Roll).
- 5) Perform a modified Backward Roll by starting in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat and finishing in a feet and knees together squatting position on the mat (Backward Straddle Roll into a Backward Roll).
- 6) Perform a modified Backward Roll by starting in a knees and feet together squatting position on the mat and finishing in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the legs and feet together (Backward Roll into a Backward Pike Roll).
- 7) Perform a modified Backward Roll by starting in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the legs and feet together and finishing in a knees and feet together squatting position on the mat (Backward Pike Roll into a Backward Roll).

FORWARD STRADDLE

STARTING POSITION

Assume a forward standing straight leg straddle position on the mat with the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body.

PERFORMANCE Bend forward at the waist and place the hands palms down and shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers spread apart and facing forward. Slowly and carefully fall forward as the arms bend slowly to help lower the head and shoulders to the mat in a safe manner while keeping the legs in the straight leg straddle position. Tuck the chin to the chest and round the back. Use the arms and hands to help support the body so the back of the neck barely touches the mat. Roll forward onto the shoulders and the rounded back while lifting the feet off the mat. Carry the legs over the body and keep them in the straight leg straddle position. Roll through to a sitting straight leg straddle position. Place the hands in a palm down position on the mat between the legs and close to the body with the fingers spread apart and facing forward. Lean forward at the waist and push down on the mat with the hands to lift the body to position the hips above and between the feet. Then, take the hands off the mat and lift the upper body to assume an upright position.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a forward standing straight leg straddle position on the mat with the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Forward Straddle and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Forward Straddle chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Teach the Forward Roll as a lead-up stunt to the Forward Straddle.
- 3) Discourage any attempt to do a Forward Straddle if the student is unable to perform a Forward Roll. Instead, have the student continue to practice the Forward Roll.
- 4) Discuss the role the hands and arms play in the beginning of the Forward Straddle to help protect the neck.
- 5) Emphasize the importance of tucking the chin to the chest and rounding the back throughout the rolling motion of the Forward Straddle.
- 6) Stress the importance of keeping the legs in a straight leg straddle position throughout the entire Forward Straddle.
- 7) Discuss the importance of placing the hands palms down on the mat between the legs and close to the body to help attain a standing straight leg straddle position after completing a roll.
- 8) Stress that the farther the legs are apart in the straight leg straddle position the easier it is to stand up.
- 9) Encourage the students to perform the Forward Straddle in a continuous movement. Often a little extra speed will help a student attain the proper standing straight leg straddle finishing position.
- 10) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

The following spotting hints are in two sections. The first section gives spotting hints for a student who needs assistance performing the initial rolling movement. Quite often this type of student is fearful of lowering his/her head and body to the mat. The second section contains spotting hints for a student who is able to successfully roll through to the proper sitting straight leg straddle position on the buttocks but finds it difficult to stand up. A student who finds it difficult to perform the initial rolling movement of the Forward Straddle usually needs some "hands on" assistance to help him/her overcome the fear of lowering the head and body to the mat. Stand bending over in a sideward straddle leg position or assume a kneeling position beside and slightly in front of the student. Make certain the student is in the correct starting position. Reach behind the student with your front hand to grasp the far hip so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back and simultaneously grasp the near hip with your back hand so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back. Instruct the student to bend forward at the waist to place the hands on the mat and slowly and carefully fall forward while tucking the chin and rounding the back. Give the student assistance by gently lifting the hips so the student's fall to the mat is slow and controlled. Let go of the student and step or move backward as soon as the student successfully performs the fall and starts to roll onto the shoulders. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method but each time give less and less lift until the student is able to successfully and safely perform the initial rolling motion without assistance. A student who is able to successfully roll through to the proper sitting straight leg straddle position on the buttocks, but is unable to stand up, usually needs a little extra lift. Have the student roll through to the proper sitting straight leg straddle position on the buttocks with the hands in a palm down position on the mat between the legs and close to the body. Stand bending over in a forward straddle leg position or assume a kneeling position behind and close to the student. Instruct the student to lean forward and push down on the mat with the hands to lift the hips off the mat. Assist the student by grasping the hips and gently lifting the hips to help the student attain a standing position with the hips above and between the feet. Let go of the student as soon as he/she has maintained a balanced standing straight leg straddle position with the hips above and between the feet. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over-spot. Instead, have the student perform the Forward Straddle by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Forward Straddles.
- 2) Perform a modified Forward Straddle by starting in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat and finishing in a feet and knees together squatting position on the mat (Forward Straddle into a Forward Roll).
- 3) Perform a modified Forward Straddle by starting in a feet and knees together squatting position on the mat and finishing in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat (Forward Roll into a Forward Straddle).

DIVING FORWARD ROLL

STARTING POSITION

Assume a forward squatting position on the mat with the knees and feet together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, hands shoulder-width apart with the fingers or finger tips touching the mat, and eyes focused on a spot on the mat in front of the body.

PERFORMANCE Reach forward toward the spot on the mat with arms, hands, and fingers while pushing off the mat with the balls of the feet. The entire body becomes airborne and bent at the waist with legs extended and toes pointed diagonally backward. Immediately after the fingers and hands contact the mat, tuck the chin to the chest and gently roll onto the back of the head, neck, and shoulders. The arms bend, and with the hands, are used to absorb the body weight to make the landing of the Diving Forward Roll a safe one. Continue to roll on the rounded back while bending the legs to assume a tight, tuck position. Remain in a tuck position throughout the remainder of the Diving Forward Roll by grabbing the shins and keeping the heels close to the buttocks.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a forward squatting position on the mat with the head up, knees and feet together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, and the hands shoulder-width apart with the fingers or fingertips touching the mat.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Diving Forward Roll and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Diving Forward Roll chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Teach the Forward Roll as a lead-up stunt to the Diving Forward Roll (see Forward Roll beginning on page 106 for teaching guidelines).
- 4) Do not permit a student to attempt a Diving Forward Roll until the student has successfully mastered the Forward Roll (see Forward Roll beginning on page 106 for teaching guidelines). Give permission to students to practice the Diving Forward Roll on an individual basis after observing and assessing their performance of the Forward Roll.
- 5) Because some students may not be physically or mentally ready to perform the Diving Forward Roll, tell them it is wise to continue practicing the Forward Roll.
- 6) Make certain the students begin the Diving Forward Roll from a squatting position.
- 7) Encourage the students to reach forward toward their specific spot on the mat.
- 8) Discuss the role the hands and arms play in the beginning of the Diving Forward Roll to help protect the neck.
- 9) Emphasize the importance of tucking the chin to the chest immediately after contact is made on the mat with the fingers and hands when coming out of the airborne position.
- 10) Encourage the students to "hug the legs" while rolling through in the tuck position.
- 11) Monitor the distance of the Diving Forward Roll for each student to make certain the student sets a realistic distance to match his/her ability level.
- 12) Challenge advanced skilled students to increase the distance of their Diving Forward Rolls.
- 13) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

Assume a kneeling position beside and in front of the student. Be equal or close to the distance of the student's focal point on the mat for the Diving Forward Roll. Make certain the student is in the proper starting position. On your signal, have the student perform the Diving Forward Roll. At exactly the time the student's fingers touch the mat coming out of the airborne position, place your front hand on the back of the student's head and place your back hand under the thigh of the student's near leg. Use your front hand to help the student tuck the chin to the chest and use your back hand to help the student lift the hips. Once the student starts to roll onto the shoulders, pull out your front hand. Continue to use your back hand to help lift the hips. Release your back hand when the hips pass above your shoulders. Then, encourage the student to complete the Diving Forward Roll by grabbing the shins and by rolling through in a tight, tuck position to the proper finishing position. (Important notes: Be ready to physically grab the student to lift the student if the student fails to tuck the chin to the chest. Also, be ready to move closer to the starting location to spot the student if the student is unable to reach the anticipated focal point on the mat.) Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over-spot. Instead, have the student perform the Diving Forward Roll by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. If possible, encourage the student to practice the Diving Forward Roll without assistance.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Diving Forward Rolls.
- 2) Give advanced skill level students permission to perform the Diving Forward Roll on a flat mat from a semi-crouched starting position.

BACKWARD STRADDLE

STARTING POSITION

Assume a backward standing straight leg straddle position on the mat with the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body.

PERFORMANCE

Bend forward at the waist and place the hands between the legs with the palms of the hands facing backward. Slowly and carefully sit backward keeping the legs in the straight leg straddle position. Tuck the chin to the chest and round the back. The palms of the hands contact the mat followed by the buttocks. Use the hands to help absorb the fall. Immediately begin to roll backward onto the rounded back while maintaining the bend at the waist and the straight leg straddle position. Remain in this position throughout the entire Backward Straddle (do not allow the legs and feet to go upward into an extended, inverted position). Simultaneously, take the hands off the mat and place them in an open, palms up position with the fingers pointed backward above the shoulders. Roll onto the shoulders with the palms of the hands touching the mat. At this point, the hips pass above the shoulders and the legs and feet are extended diagonally outward in front of the hips. Push down on the mat with the hands to help the body pass over the shoulders. Continue to push down on the mat to place the feet on the mat while maintaining the straight leg straddle position. Push down on the mat until the arms are extended and the hips are positioned above and between the feet. Then, take the hands off the mat and lift the upper body to assume an upright position.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a backward standing straight leg straddle position on the mat with the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Backward Straddle and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Backward Straddle chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Teach the Backward Roll as a lead-up to the Backward Straddle.
- 4) Discourage a student from attempting a Backward Straddle if the student is unable to perform a Backward Roll. Instead, have the student continue practicing the Backward Roll. (Note: Sometimes a student finds success with the Backward Straddle prior to success with the Backward Roll. If so, individualize the instruction for the student by allowing him/her to reverse the learning progression.)
- 5) Make certain the students place their hands between their legs to help cushion the fall when they sit back.
- 6) Discuss the role the hands and arms play in helping to protect the neck.
- 7) Emphasize the bend at the waist and the straight leg straddle position throughout the entire Backward Straddle.
- 8) Discuss the important role the hands play to push down on the mat to help the body pass over the shoulders and to help the body land on the feet.
- 9) Do not permit a student who is stuck on the shoulders to attempt to force the body over. Instead, insist that the student roll back to assume a sitting straight leg straddle position. Quite often a student will place undue pressure on the neck by extending the legs upward and/or moving the hands away from the shoulders while attempting to force the body over. Assure the student that it is all right to roll back into a sitting straight leg straddle position until skill and strength allow for completion of the roll.
- 10) Make certain the students give themselves enough mat space to be able to perform the entire Backward Straddle on the mat. Sometimes the students misjudge and accidentally hit their heads on the floor while rolling backward.
- 11) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

The following "spotting hints" are for a student who is able to roll onto the shoulders with the proper bend at the waist and the proper straight leg straddle position. He/she is very close to being able to roll over the shoulders. I do not recommend helping a student perform a Backward Straddle if the student is unable to roll onto the shoulders with the proper bend at the waist and the proper straight leg straddle position by himself/herself. Instead, the student should practice rolling backward working toward the proper Backward Straddle position on the shoulders. Stand bending over in a sideward straddle position or assume a kneeling position beside and behind the student. Be certain you are far enough away so that you do not interfere with the student's leg nearest to you. Make certain the student is in the correct starting position. Have the student sit back with the proper bend at the waist and the proper straight leg straddle position. Be certain the student places the hands first between the legs and then in the correct position above the shoulders. As the student rolls onto the upper back and shoulders, reach across the student with your front hand to grasp the far hip so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back and simultaneously grasp the near hip with your back hand so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back. Gently lift the hips so the student is able to successfully pass over the shoulders and land on the feet. Make certain the student pushes down on the mat with both hands. Let go of the student when he/she has passed over the shoulders and has landed in a balanced straight leg straddle position with the arms extended and the hands ready to leave the mat. Be ready to grasp the student if balance is lost and the student falls forward. Encourage the student to complete the Backward Straddle by placing the body in the proper finishing position. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over-spot. Instead, have the student perform the Backward Straddle by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Backward Straddles.
- 2) Perform a modified Backward Straddle by starting in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat and finishing in a feet and knees together squatting position on the mat (Backward Straddle into a Backward Roll).
- 3) Perform a modified Backward Straddle by starting in a feet and knees together squatting position on the mat and finishing in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat (Backward Roll into a Backward Straddle).
- 4) Perform a modified Backward Straddle by starting in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat and finishing in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together (Backward Straddle into a Backward Pike Roll).

BACKWARD PIKE ROLL

STARTING POSITION

Assume a backward standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together and the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body.

PERFORMANCE

Bend forward at the waist to assume a straight leg pike position and place the hands beside the buttocks with the palms of the hands facing backward. Slowly and carefully sit backward keeping the legs together and straight. The palms of the hands and the buttocks contact the mat approximately at the same time with the hands helping to absorb the fall. Tuck the chin to the chest and round the back. Immediately begin to roll backward onto the rounded back while maintaining the bent at the waist/straight leg pike position. Remain in this position throughout the entire Backward Pike Roll (do not allow the legs and feet to go upward into an extended, inverted position). Simultaneously, take the hands off the mat and place them in an open, palms up position with the fingers pointed backward above the shoulders. Roll onto the shoulders with the palms of the hands touching the mat. At this point, the hips pass above the shoulders and the legs and feet are extended directly in front of the hips. Push down on the mat with the hands to help the body pass over the shoulders. Continue to push down on the mat to place the feet on the mat while keeping the legs together and straight. Push down on the mat until the arms are extended and the hips are positioned above the feet. Then, take the hands off the mat and lift the upper body to assume an upright position.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a backward standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together and the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Backward Pike Roll and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Backward Pike Roll chart and/or related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Teach the Backward Roll as a lead-up to the Backward Pike Roll.
- 4) Discourage a student from attempting a Backward Pike Roll if the student is unable to perform a Backward Roll. Instead, have the student continue practicing the Backward Roll.
- 5) Make certain the students place their hands beside their buttocks to help cushion the fall when they sit back.
- 6) Discuss the role the hands and arms play in helping to protect the neck.
- 7) Emphasize the bent at the waist straight leg pike position throughout the entire Backward Pike Roll.
- 8) Discuss the important role the hands play to push down on the mat to help the body pass over the shoulders and to help the body land on the feet.
- 9) Do not permit a student who is stuck on the shoulders to attempt to force the body over. Instead, insist that the student roll back to assume a sitting straight leg pike position. Quite often a student will place undue pressure on the neck by extending the legs upward and/or moving the hands away from the shoulders while attempting to force the body over. Assure the student that it is all right to roll back into a sitting straight leg pike position until skill and strength allow for completion of the roll.
- 10) Make certain the students give themselves enough mat space to be able to perform the entire Backward Pike Roll on the mat. Sometimes the students misjudge the distance and accidentally hit their heads on the floor while rolling backward.

SPOTTING HINTS

The following "spotting hints" are for a student who is able to roll onto the shoulders in the proper bent at the waist/straight leg pike position. He/she is very close to being able to roll over the shoulders. I do not recommend helping a student perform a Backward Pike Roll if the student is unable to roll onto the shoulders with the proper bent at the waist/straight leg pike position by himself/herself. Instead, the student should practice rolling backward working toward the proper Backward Pike Roll position on the shoulders.

Stand bending over in a sideward straddle position or assume a kneeling position beside and behind the student. Make certain the student is in the correct starting position. Have the student sit back with the proper bent at the waist/straight leg pike position. Be certain the student places the hands first beside the buttocks and then in the correct position above the shoulders. As the student rolls onto the upper back and shoulders, reach across the student with your front hand to grasp the far hip so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back and simultaneously grasp the near hip with your back hand so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back. Gently lift the hips so the student is able to successfully pass over the shoulders and land on the feet. Make certain the student pushes down on the mat with both hands. Let go of the student when he/she has passed over the shoulders and has landed in a balanced straight leg position with the feet and legs together with the arms extended and the hands ready to leave the mat. Be ready to grasp the student if balance is lost and the student falls forward. Encourage the student to complete the Backward Pike Roll by placing the body in the proper finishing position. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Backward Pike Rolls.
- 2) Perform a modified Backward Pike Roll by starting in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together and finishing in a feet and legs together squatting position on the mat (Backward Pike Roll into a Backward Roll).
- 3) Perform a modified Backward Pike Roll by starting in a knees and feet together squatting position on the mat and finishing in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together (Backward Roll into a Backward Pike Roll).
- 4) Perform a modified Backward Pike Roll by starting in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together and finishing in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat (Backward Pike Roll into a Backward Straddle).
- 5) Perform a modified Backward Pike Roll by starting in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat and finishing in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together (Backward Straddle into a Backward Pike Roll).

BACK EXTENSION

STARTING POSITION

Assume a backward squatting position on the mat with the head up, feet and knees together, arms lightly touching the outside of the legs, and the hands shoulder-width apart with the finger tips or fingers touching the mat.

PERFORMANCE

Tuck the chin to the chest and round the back. Roll backward in a tuck position while placing the hands in an open, palm up position with the fingers pointed backward above the shoulders. Roll onto the shoulders in a tuck position with the hips above the shoulders and the palms of the hands touching the mat. Push down on the mat vigorously and shoot the legs and feet vertically upward until the arms are completely extended to assume a Handstand position. Then, bend quickly at the waist to snap the legs and feet downward while pushing off the mat with the hands to lift the upper body. Land on the balls of the feet on the mat in an upright position with the knees slightly flexed.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a backward standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together and the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Back Extension and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Back Extension chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Teach the Backward Roll and the Handstand as lead-up stunts to the Back Extension.
- 4) Do not permit a student to attempt a Back Extension who is unable to successfully perform a Backward Roll (see #3 above for referral) and a Handstand (see #3 above for referral). Give permission to students to practice the Back Extension on an individual basis after observing and assessing their performance of the Backward Roll and the Handstand.
- 5) Discuss the role the hands and arms play in helping to protect the neck.
- 6) Stress the necessity for remaining in a tuck position until the body is correctly positioned above the shoulders before extending the body vertically upward.
- 7) Discuss the importance of timing the legs and feet to shoot vertically upward the instant the hands push down on the mat.
- 8) Tell the students to perform the Back Extension in continuous movement.
- 9) Do not permit a student who is stuck on the shoulders to attempt the Back Extension. Instead, insist that the student roll back to the starting position thus performing a Backward Rocker (refer to Backward Rocker beginning on page 108 for teaching guidelines). Encourage the student to try again.
- 10) Challenge the students to hold the Handstand position for an instant before bringing the legs and feet down to the mat.
- 11) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

Stand bending over in a sideward straddle leg position beside and behind the student. Have the student roll backward in the tuck position. Be certain the student places the hands in the correct position above the shoulders. As the student rolls onto the upper back and shoulders, grab the student's ankles and help the student lift his/her body vertically upward until the body is in the fully extended Handstand position. Then, immediately let go of the student's ankles to allow the legs and feet to begin their downward movement toward the mat. Encourage the student to place the body in the correct finishing position. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over-spot. Instead, have the student perform the Back Extension by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. Encourage the student to practice the Back Extension without assistance.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Back Extensions.
- 2) Perform a modified Back Extension by starting in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together, and the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body. Perform the beginning of a Backward Pike Roll then shoot the legs and feet vertically upward while pushing down on the mat with the hands. End in a backward standing straight leg position on the mat with the feet and legs together and the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body (Backward Pike Roll into a Back Extension).

FROG HEADSTAND

STARTING POSITION

Assume a forward squatting position on the mat with the feet and knees apart, elbows touching the inside of the knees, and hands shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers open and facing forward.

PERFORMANCE

Lean forward slowly and carefully maintaining the starting body position so the feet leave the mat and the head (hairline in most cases) contacts the mat in front of and between the hands. The head and hands make a three point equilateral triangular shape on the mat. The body is in an inverted position with the hips above the shoulders and the knees on the elbows. Complete the Frog Headstand by returning to the starting location while maintaining the proper body position. Slowly and carefully lower the feet to the mat allowing the head to leave the mat.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a forward squatting position on the mat with the feet and knees apart, elbows touching the inside of the knees, and hands shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers open and facing forward.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Frog Headstand and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Frog Headstand chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Discuss the importance of leaning forward slowly and carefully when placing the head on the mat to ensure safety to the neck.
- 4) Stress placing the hairline on the mat (in most cases). Make necessary modifications on an individualized basis, if necessary.
- 5) Make certain the students understand the importance of maintaining balance using the three point equilateral triangular base.
- 6) Emphasize the importance of keeping the head and hands in the proper three point equilateral triangular base.
- 7) While in the inverted position, stress positioning the hips above the shoulders and placing the knees on the elbows.
- 8) Reversing the performance of the Frog Headstand to return to the starting location is the safest way to recover from the Frog Headstand position. However, instruct the students to tuck the chin to the chest and perform a Forward Roll when balance is lost and they begin to fall backward.
- 9) Discuss the meaning of balance and the important role it plays in performing the Frog Headstand.
- 10) If necessary, use professional judgment when allowing students to practice the Frog Headstand without your assistance. Some students may need spotting at all times, especially students who are fearful, overweight, or have a physical handicap. Strive to be fair, honest, humanistic, and above all... safe. Make safety your number one priority.
- 11) Consider marking a three point equilateral triangular diagram on the mat using tape, shoe polish, magic marker, etc. Encourage the students who are learning to do a Frog Headstand to use the marking as a reference for proper head and hands placement. Keep in mind that a standard size triangle will not fit all students' needs. If necessary, make triangles of varying sizes.
- 12) Teach the Frog Headstand as a lead-up stunt to the Headstand.
- 13) Use the Frog Headstand as an alternate Tumbling Stunt for students who are unable to perform the Headstand.
- 14) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

The following "spotting hints" are for a student who is able to put his/her body in the inverted Frog Headstand position with the hips close to being above the shoulders and the knees close to being placed on the elbows, or for a student who is doing everything correctly, but needs a little assistance to maintain balance. Stand bending over in a sideward straddle leg position or assume a kneeling position beside and slightly in front of the student. Make certain the student is in the correct starting position. Stress the proper execution of the Frog Headstand. Before the student leans forward or as the student leans forward, reach across the student with your front hand to grasp the far hip so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back and simultaneously grasp the near hip with your back hand so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back. Maintain the grip and help the student balance as the hips are placed directly above the shoulders and the knees are positioned on the elbows. Make certain your grip is a firm one in case the student is unable to maintain the inverted Frog Headstand position and begins to fall sideward or backward. Permit the student to hold the assisted Frog Headstand position for a few seconds. Continue to spot the student while returning to the starting location. Once again, stress the proper body position. Release the spot immediately after the student has safely returned to the starting location. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over-spot. Instead, have the student perform the Frog Headstand by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. Encourage the student to practice the Frog Headstand without assistance.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Challenge the advanced skill level students to hold the Frog Headstand position for a specific period of time. Start with three seconds. If successful, continue to challenge these students by increasing the time. Add an additional second to the challenge each time the student successfully attains the previous challenge. Work up to a maximum of ten seconds.
- 2) Teach advanced skill level students to complete the Frog Headstand by tucking the chin to the chest and performing a Forward Roll (Frog Headstand into a Forward Roll).
- 3) Consider lowering the standards for certain students who may be unable to perform a proper Frog Headstand due to fear, overweight, or a physical handicap. Have them begin in a forward crawling position on the mat. Encourage these students to place their head and hands on the mat making the three point equilateral triangular base. Then, ask them to try taking their knees off the mat while lifting the hips but keeping the feet/toes on the mat. If possible, challenge the students to slowly walk their toes up toward their hands. This will help lift the hips to their correct position above the shoulders. Make certain these students keep their feet/toes on the mat. Give the students continual assistance, praise, and encouragement. Through your guidance, challenge these students to perform to their maximum.

HEADSTAND

STARTING POSITION

Assume a forward squatting position on the mat with the feet and knees beside each other, arms touching the outside of the knees, and the hands shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers open and facing forward.

PERFORMANCE

Lean forward slowly and carefully maintaining the starting body position so the feet leave the mat and the head (hairline in most cases) contacts the mat in front of and between the hands. The head and hands make a three point equilateral triangular shape on the mat. The body is in an inverted position with the hips above the shoulders and the knees lightly touching the inside of the elbows. Slowly lift the knees away from the elbows while maintaining balance and keeping the hips above the shoulders. Tighten the abdominal and buttocks muscles as the legs move upward. Continue to lift the legs and feet until the legs are together and straight with the toes pointed upward. The triangular base supports the body weight. Complete the Headstand by reversing the preceding steps (proceeding from right to left as per the above illustration). Bend the waist and knees slowly maintaining balance to return the knees to the inside of the elbows. While maintaining the proper body position, slowly lower the feet to the mat allowing the head to leave the mat.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a forward squatting position on the mat with the feet and knees beside each other, arms touching the outside of the knees, and the hands shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers open and facing forward.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Headstand and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Headstand chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Teach the Frog Headstand as the lead-up stunt to the Headstand (refer to the frog Headstand). Give permission to students to practice the Headstand on an individual basis after observing and assessing their performance of the Frog Headstand.
- 5) Make certain each student practices and/or performs the Headstand in a location on the mat, which provides adequate padding on all sides. In most cases, the center of the mat is the best and safest location.
- 6) Discuss the importance of leaning forward slowly and carefully when placing the head on the mat to ensure safety to the neck.
- 7) Stress placing the hairline on the mat (in most cases). Make necessary modifications on an individualized basis, if necessary.
- 8) Make certain the students understand the importance of maintaining balance using the three point equilateral triangular base. (See illustration at right.)
- 9) Emphasize the importance of keeping the head and hands in the proper three point equilateral triangular base and not moving them.
- 10) While in the inverted position, stress positioning the hips above the shoulders.
- 11) Make certain the students understand the importance of lifting the legs and feet slowly to attain the straight leg, toes pointed inverted position.
- 12) Encourage the students to tighten up all muscles throughout the body when the Headstand position is attained.
- 13) Reversing the performance of the Headstand to return to the start location is the safest way to recover from the Headstand position. However, instruct the students to tuck the chin to the chest and perform a Forward Roll when balance is lost and they begin to fall backward.
- 14) Discuss the meaning of balance and the important role it plays in performing the Headstand.
- 15) Consider marking a three point equilateral triangle on the mat using tape, shoe polish, magic marker, etc. Encourage the students who are learning to do a Headstand to use the marking as a reference for proper head and hands placement. Keep in mind that a standard size triangle will not fit all students' needs. If necessary, make triangles of varying sizes.
- 16) Use spotters with caution make certain the spotters are very responsible and knowledgeable concerning their responsibilities. Do not permit a spotter to over spot a performer by physically holding or grabbing the performer's legs and/or feet in the inverted position. Instead, use spotters to help guide without grabbing, the performer's legs and/or feet toward the proper inverted position. Once in the proper inverted position, instruct the spotter to help the performer steady his/her body in the balanced, inverted position. Place the responsibility for performing the Headstand on the performer. Note: I do not allow student spotters. I spot students who are in great need of help or students who are very close to mastering the Headstand.
- 17) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

The following spotting hints are for a student who is able to perform an unassisted Frog Headstand. I do not recommend allowing a student to attempt a Headstand if the student is unable to perform an unassisted Frog Headstand. Instead, the student should practice the Frog Headstand and not the Headstand (refer to Frog Headstand). Stand bending over in a sideward straddle leg position or assume a kneeling position beside and slightly in front of the student. Begin spotting the student when the student is in an inverted position with the hips above the shoulders and the knees lightly touching the inside of the elbows. Stress the proper execution of the Headstand. Place your front hand on the student's lower back. Use this hand to help the student maintain the inverted balanced position and to stop the student from failing backward. Simultaneously, place your back hand on the front of the student's nearest thigh, or if possible, across the front of both thighs. Use this hand to help the student guide his/her legs to the proper inverted position. Do not physically grasp the student's thigh(s), unless it is necessary as a way to stop the student from failing to prevent injury. Place the responsibility to perform the Headstand on the student, however, make certain you remain in contact with the student, in the event you have to grasp the student. Once the student has attained the proper inverted position and the legs are together and straight with the toes pointed upward, permit the student to hold the assisted Headstand position for a few seconds. Continue to spot the student while returning to the inverted position with the hips above the shoulders and the knees lightly touching the inside of the elbows. Then, take your hands away from the student allowing the feet to return to the mat while lifting the head off the mat to return to the starting location. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over-spot. Instead, have the student perform the Headstand by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. Encourage the student to practice the Headstand without assistance.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Challenge the advanced skill level students to hold the Headstand for a specific period of time. Start with three seconds. If successful, continue to challenge these students by increasing the time. Add an additional second to the challenge each time the student successfully attains the previous challenge. Work up to a maximum of ten seconds.
- 2) Teach advanced skill level students to complete the Headstand by tucking the chin to the chest and performing a Forward Roll (Headstand into a Forward Roll).
- 3) Use the Frog Headstand position as the starting position for the Headstand (refer to the Frog Headstand). Then, follow the teaching suggestions for the Headstand beginning with lifting the knees upward from the elbows.
- 4) Challenge advanced skill level students to perform a Headstand, and then lower the legs to place them in a Tuck Position, Straddle Position, and Pike Position.
- 5) Challenge advanced skill level students to perform a Headstand, and then lower the legs to place them in a Split Position and Stag Position.
- 6) Teach the "drag-up" Headstand to advanced skill level students. Start with the body lying face down on the mat with the head and hands placed in the equilateral triangular position. The legs are together and straight with the toes pointed. Slowly lift the hips while dragging the toes across the mat keeping the legs together and straight. When the hips are positioned above the shoulders and the back is straight, lift the straight legs upward until the body is in an inverted position with the legs together and straight and the toes pointed upward. Finish by reversing the preceding steps to return to the starting location, or if possible, tucking the chin to the chest and performing a Forward Roll.

TIP-UP

STARTING POSITION

Assume a squatting position on the mat with the feet and knees apart, arms pressed against the inside of the knees, and hands shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers open and facing forward.

PERFORMANCE

Lean forward slowly and carefully maintaining the starting position so that the feet leave the mat. Use the elbows to press against the inside of the knees and balance the body above the hands. Look directly downward at the mat. Complete the Tip-Up by returning to the starting location. Slowly lower the feet to the mat while maintaining the proper body position.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a squatting position on the mat with the feet and knees apart, arms touching the inside of the knees, and hands shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers open and facing forward.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Tip-Up and follow up with the demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Tip-Up chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Explain the importance of pressing the inside of the knees against the elbows and vice versa while in the starting position and in the balanced Tip-Up position.
- 4) Discuss the importance of leaning forward slowly and carefully
- 5) Discuss the meaning of balance and the important role it plays in the performance of the Tip-Up.
- 6) If necessary, use professional judgment when allowing students to practice the Tip-Up without your assistance. Some students may need spotting at all times, especially students who are fearful, overweight, or have a physical handicap. Strive to be fair, honest, humanistic, and above all make safety your number one priority!
- 7) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

Stand bending over in a sideward straddle leg position or assume a kneeling position beside the student. Make certain the student is in the correct starting position. Stress the proper execution of the Tip-Up. Before the student leans forward or as the student leans forward, reach across the student with your front hand to grasp the far hip so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back and simultaneously grasp the near hip with your back hand so your fingers point across the abdomen and your thumb points across the lower back. Maintain the grip and provide assistance by steadying the student in the balanced Tip-Up position. Make certain your grip is a firm one in case the student is unable to maintain the Tip-Up position. If so, immediately provide a forceful upward lift to the hips to stop the fall. If the student is able to maintain the balance Tip-Up position with your assistance, continue to spot while the student returns to the starting location. Once again, stress the proper body position. Let go of the student when the feet return to the mat assuming the student has total body control. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over-spot Instead, have the student perform the Tip-Up by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. If possible, encourage the student to practice the Tip-Up without assistance. Do not physically force a student to perform the Tip-Up to perfection. If necessary, let the student decide how far he/she is able to lean forward. Give the student encouragement and provide spotting to the desired position. Continue to give individualized assistance and challenge the student to lean farther forward with each attempt. If possible, encourage the apprehensive student to practice without your assistance.

VARIATION

Challenge the advanced skill level students to hold the Tip-Up position for a specific period of time. Start with three seconds. If successful, continue to challenge these students by increasing the time. Add an additional second to the challenge each time the student successfully attains the challenge. Work up to a maximum of ten seconds.

HANDSTAND

STARTING POSITION

Assume a standing position on the mat with one foot in front of the other and arms and hands extended overhead. The front leg is slightly bent and the back leg is straight. The palms of the hands face forward with the fingers spread apart.

PERFORMANCE

Bend forward at the waist and move the arms and hands downward. Begin to lift the back leg. Continue the movement and place the hands shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers spread apart and facing forward. Look down at the mat between the hands. Push off the front foot and begin to lift the front leg. Continue to lift the back leg. The front leg catches up with the back leg and the body assumes an inverted, slightly arched, balanced position directly above the shoulders and hands. The body is completely stretched with the arms and legs straight and the toes pointed upward. Complete the Handstand by reversing the preceding steps. Bend at the waist to bring the front leg downward toward the mat. Immediately follow with the back leg. As soon as the front foot contacts the mat, take the hands off the mat and begin to lift the upper body, arms, and hands. Continue to bring the back leg downward while lifting the upper body, arms, and hands. The back foot contacts the mat and the body is in an upright position.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a standing position on the mat with one foot in front of the other and arms and hands extended overhead. The front leg is slightly bent and the back leg is straight. The palms of the hands face forward with the fingers spread apart.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Handstand and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Handstand chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Do not permit a student to attempt a Handstand until the student has successfully mastered the Mule Kick. Give students permission to practice the Handstand on an individual basis after observing and assessing their performance of the Mule Kick. Teach the Mule Kick as the lead-up stunt to the Handstand. Do not permit a student to immediately move from the Mule Kick position to the standing Handstand starting position. Instead, instruct the student to gradually lift the hands and arms away from the mat each time the modified Handstand is successfully performed. The final goal is to perform the Handstand beginning in an upright standing position with arms and hands extended overhead.
- 4) If necessary, use professional judgment when allowing students to practice the Handstand without your assistance. Some students may need spotting at all times, especially students who are fearful, overweight, or have a physical handicap. Strive to be fair; honest, humanistic, and above all safe make safety your number one priority
- 5) Make certain each student practices and/or performs the Handstand in a location on the mat, which provides adequate padding on all sides. In most cases, the center of the mat is the best and safest location.
- 6) If necessary, make certain the students understand the necessity for following the proper performance progression for the Handstand as noted in teaching suggestion number three. Discuss with the students safety to the head and neck while practicing and performing the Handstand.
- 7) Stress the importance of placing the hands shoulder-width apart on the mat with fingers spread apart and facing forward.
- 8) Stress looking down at the mat between the hands.
- 9) Encourage the students to tighten up all muscles throughout the body when the Handstand position is attained.
- 10) Reversing the performance of the Handstand to return to the starting location is the safest way to recover from the Handstand position. However, instruct the students to tuck the chin to the chest while bending the arms slowly to perform a Forward Roll or step down with a quarter turn when losing balance.
- 12) Do not allow student spotters. Spot students who are in great need of help or students who are very close to mastering the Handstand yourself. Use only ONE spotter. Do not over spot a performer by physically holding the performer's legs and/or feet in the inverted position. Instead, use spotters to help guide the performer's legs and/or feet to the proper inverted position. Once in the proper inverted position, steady his/her body in the balanced inverted position. Place the responsibility for performing the Handstand on the performer.

SPOTTING HINTS

The following spotting hints are for a student who is able to perform an unassisted Mule Kick and has progressed through the steps discussed in teaching suggestion number 3 to an instructional level where he/she is in an upright starting position with arms and hands extended overhead. I do not recommend allowing a student to attempt an upright starting position Handstand if the student is unable to perform an unassisted Mule Kick and the lead-up steps discussed in teaching suggestion number 3. Instead, the student should practice the Mule Kick and the lead-up steps to the Handstand. Stand in a stride position, with the front leg slightly bent and the back leg straight or kneel close to and in front of the position on the mat where the student will place his/her hands. Be ready to relocate the spotting position if the student places the hands at a different location on the mat. On your signal, instruct the student to perform a Handstand. Gently grasp the back of the upper legs to allow the student to assume the proper Handstand position. Immediately release the grip to allow the student to independently perform the Handstand, however, be ready to re-grasp the legs if the student loses balance and begins to fall backward or sideward. If necessary, help the student reverse the Handstand steps to return to the starting position. A gentle nudge on the legs is usually enough to begin the reverse steps. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. Do not over spot. Instead, have the student perform the Handstand by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. Encourage the student to practice the Handstand without assistance.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Teach advanced skill level students to finish the Handstand by tucking the chin to the chest, bending the arms slowly, and performing a Forward Roll (Handstand into a Forward Roll).

CARTWHEEL

STARTING POSITION

Assume a standing position on the mat with one foot in front of the other and arms and hands extended overhead. The palms of the hands face forward with the fingers spread apart.

PERFORMANCE

Bend forward at the waist and move the arms and hands downward while bending the front/trail leg. Begin to lift the back/lead leg. Continue the movement and place the hands on the mat one at a time, one in front of the other, and both directly in front of the front/trail foot. The hands are shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers spread apart and facing outward. Look down at the mat between the hands. Push vigorously off the front foot and begin to lift the front/trail leg. Continue to lift the back/lead leg. The body assumes an inverted, slightly arched, balanced straddle leg Handstand position with the hips directly above the shoulders and hands. The arms and legs are straight with the toes pointed diagonally outward. Note: This position is part of the continuous motion of the Cartwheel. Bend quickly at the waist to bring the back/lead leg and foot down to the mat. Keep the leg straight. The ball of the foot contacts the mat directly in front of the second hand placed on the mat. The foot is facing the starting location. Simultaneously, continue the movement of the front/trail leg while lifting the first hand placed on the mat. Bring the front/trail leg down to the mat. Keep the leg straight. The ball of the foot contacts the mat directly behind the back/lead foot. The foot turns to face the starting location. Simultaneously, lift the second hand off the mat and lift the arms, head, and upper body to assume an upright position.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a standing position on the mat with one foot in front of the other and arms and hands extended overhead. The body has made a half turn and is facing the original starting location. The palms of the hands face forward with the fingers spread apart.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Cartwheel and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Cartwheel chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Do not expect each student to be able to perform a Cartwheel beginning with the arms in the extended overhead position. Many students need to practice the Cartwheel starting with the arms and hands below the extended overhead position. In fact, some students may choose to start in a bent over semi-crouched position with the hands a few inches off the mat. Through practice, the students will gradually begin to lift their hands and arms away from the mat. Give these students encouragement and praise.
- 4) Make certain students who are fearful, overweight, or who have a physical handicap understand their limitations and approach the performance of the Cartwheel in a safe and cautious manner. Strive to be fair, honest, humanistic, and above all make safety your number one priority.
- 5) Give each student the opportunity to select the first hand to be placed on the mat. If the student is undecided, ask the student to try leading with the dominant hand. In most cases, the student will make the appropriate decision based on personal preference and how it feels.
- 6) Emphasize the necessity to have the same foot in front in relation to the first hand to be placed on the mat.
- 7) Discuss the importance of starting with the arms and hands extended overhead with the palms of the hands facing forward and the fingers spread apart.
- 8) Stress the importance of placing the hands on the mat one in front of the other and directly in front of the front/trail foot with the fingers spread apart and facing outward.
- 9) Emphasize the importance of placing the hands shoulder-width apart on the mat.
- 10) Stress keeping the arms straight throughout the Cartwheel so the head does –not touch the mat.
- 11) When in the inverted position, discuss the importance of looking down at the mat between the hands.
- 12) Stress the importance of having the hips pass directly above the shoulders, arms, and hands.
- 13) Encourage the students to push vigorously off the front/lead foot to gain momentum.
- 14) Discuss how the body rotates throughout the Cartwheel to make a one half turn.
- 15) When working with advanced skill level students, stress the importance of starting with the arms and hands extended overhead with the palms of the hands facing forward and the fingers spread apart.
- 16) Challenge advanced skill level students to perform the Cartwheel with the legs straight except for the front/trail leg when it bends in the beginning of the Cartwheel.
- 17) Draw a straight line on a mat and challenge the advanced skill level students to perform a Cartwheel with both hands and feet contacting the line.

- 18) Use the teaching cue, "hand-hand-foot-foot", to help students grasp the concept of one body part contacting the mat at a time.
- 19) Use the teaching cue, "turn to face the starting location", to help the students attain the proper one half turn rotation.
- 20) Place the responsibility for performing the Cartwheel on the performer. Note: I do not spot students who have demonstrated the proper hand, arm, head, and shoulder placement and have the ability to lift the legs and feet to carry them through the motion of the Cartwheel even though the feet may barely pass over the mat. These students are performing a Cartwheel but at the beginners level. Through practice, the hips will raise above the shoulders, as the hips, legs, and feet are lifted higher and higher. Give these students encouragement and praise. I do not allow a student to practice a Cartwheel who has not learned the proper hand, arm, head, and shoulder placement. Students unable to safely support their bodies by themselves while performing a Cartwheel are taking an unnecessary risk to injure themselves. Give these students individualized assistance until you and the students are certain that they have the ability and confidence to perform the Cartwheel without your assistance. Once again, make safety your number one priority!
- 21) Assist students, if necessary.

SPOTTING HINTS

These spotting hints are for a student who is totally unable to perform a Cartwheel. The student is not learning proper hand, arm, head, and shoulder placement accompanied with leg and hip movement. In the beginning, the student must decide the first hand to be placed on the mat and the corresponding sideward directional motion of the body. Make certain the student places the same foot up front in relationship to the first hand to be placed on the mat. Stand or kneel behind and slightly forward of the student. Grasp the student at the waist with a crossed-armed position so your fingers point across the student's abdomen and your thumbs point across the lower back. Do not spot in front of the student because you are putting yourself and the student in a vulnerable position to become injured. If the student's sideward motion is to the right then the crossed-armed position is right over left. If the student's sideward motion is to the left then the crossed-armed position is left over right. Ask the student to assume a bent over semi-crouched position with the hands a few inches off the mat. Then, have the student attempt a beginner Cartwheel. Your hands will become uncrossed as the student performs the Cartwheel. If the student performs the beginner Cartwheel with proper hand, arm, head, and shoulder placement accompanied with hip and leg movement then loosen your grasp and give the student as much freedom as safety permits to allow the student to perform the Cartwheel alone. Continue spotting the student with less and less assistance until the student is capable of safely performing the beginner Cartwheel without help. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure on your lower back. From that point on, it is the responsibility of the student to independently practice the Cartwheel in order to perfect it. Through practice, the student will gradually lift the hands and arms to assume the proper starting position. Also, the hips and legs will rise higher and higher until they pass above the shoulders and hands. Practice is the key to success with the Cartwheel. Reinforce the independent practicing with encouragement and praise.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Cartwheels.
- 2) Perform a side Cartwheel. Start in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat with the right or left side of the body facing down the mat and the arms and hands extended diagonally upward. The outstretched body resembles the letter &. Bend to the side, which is facing down the mat and in sequence place the four body parts, hand, hand and foot, foot on the mat one directly in front of the other. Finish in a standing straight leg straddle position on the mat with the same side of the body facing down the mat and the arms and hands extended diagonally upward. Again, the body resembles the letter -X.
- 3) Teach advanced skill level students to perform the Cartwheel beginning with an acrobatic skip. The teaching cue could be, "step, hop, step" into a Cart-wheel.
- 4) Encourage advanced skill level students who have mastered the acrobatic skip to add a few walking steps prior to the acrobatic skip. Challenge the students to increase the number and speed of the steps as the students continue to master the approach technique.
- 5) Encourage advanced skill level students to perform a Cartwheel leading with the other hand and other side of the body.
- 6) Perform a one handed Cartwheel. Encourage the students to place the first hand on the mat and do a Cartwheel without using the other/second hand. Some students may choose to place the second hand on the mat and do a Cartwheel without using the other/first hand. If so, it is permissible to allow this variation.
- 7) Perform a switch leg Cartwheel. Switch leg positions while traveling through the inverted position. Thus, the front/trail foot is the first foot to contact the mat coming out of the Cartwheel.
- 8) Perform a diving Cartwheel. Challenge advanced skill level students to place their hands farther in front of the front foot to perform a diving Cartwheel. A diving Cartwheel requires a forward and upward push off the front/trail foot. Then stretch to reach forward with the arms and hands to perform a diving Cartwheel.

ROUND-OFF

STARTING POSITION

Assume a standing position on the mat with one foot in front of the other. The arms and hands are extended overhead with the palms of the hands facing forward and the fingers spread apart. The front leg is bent and the back leg is straight.

PERFORMANCE

Bend forward at the waist and move the arms and hands downward. Begin to lift the back/lead leg. Continue the movement and place the hands on the mat one at a time one in front of the other and both directly in front of the front/trail foot. The hands are shoulder-width apart on the mat with the fingers spread apart and facing outward. Look down at the mat between the hands. Push vigorously off the front foot and begin to lift the front/trail leg. Continue to lift the back/lead leg. The front/trail leg catches up with the back/lead leg and the body assumes an inverted, slightly arched, balanced Handstand position directly above the shoulders and hands. The body is completely stretched with the arms and legs straight with the toes pointed upward. Perform a one-quarter turn Handstand. Note: The Handstand position is part of the continuous motion of the Round-Off. Bend quickly at the waist to bring both legs downward while continuing the turning motion of the body. Push vigorously off the mat with the shoulders, arms, and hands to lift the head and upper body. The balls of the feet contact the mat simultaneously with the legs slightly bent and the body moving into position above the feet. Keep the legs and feet beside each other. The body has made a one half turn throughout the Round-Off and the body lands facing the starting location. Continue the movement until the body is in a bent leg upright position above the feet with the arms and hands extended forward.

FINISHING POSITION

End in a standing straight leg position on the mat with the legs and feet beside each other and the arms and hands lightly touching the sides of the body.

IMPORTANT TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Take time in the introductory lesson to discuss the mechanics of the Round-Off and follow up with a demonstration of the stunt by a skilled student. If possible, reinforce the discussion and demonstration with a Round-Off chart and/or a related audiovisual aid.
- 2) Take time in the introductory lesson to individually assess the proper starting position for each student and make necessary changes.
- 3) Do not permit a student to attempt a Round-Off until the student has successfully mastered the Handstand and the Cartwheel. Teach the Handstand and Cartwheel as lead-up stunts to the Round-Off. Give permission to practice the Round-Off on an individualized basis after observing and assessing the students' performance of the Handstand and Cartwheel.
- 4) Discuss the importance of starting with the arms and hands extended overhead with the palms of the hands facing forward and the fingers spread apart.
- 5) Stress the importance of placing the hands on the mat one in front of the other and directly in front of the front/trail foot with the fingers spread apart and facing outward.
- 6) Emphasize the importance of placing the hands shoulder-width apart on the mat.
- 7) When in the inverted position, discuss the importance of looking down at the mat between the hands.
- 8) Encourage the students to push vigorously off the front/lead foot to gain momentum.
- 9) Emphasize a quick downward movement of the legs and feet out of the Handstand position.
- 10) Encourage the students to push vigorously off the mat with the shoulders, arms, and hands to lift the head and upper body.
- 11) Stress the importance of keeping the legs and feet beside each other throughout the remainder of the Round-Off following the Handstand position.
- 12) Emphasize landing on the balls of the feet with the legs and feet beside each other and the knees slightly bent.
- 13) Discuss how the body rotates throughout the Round-Off to make a one half turn.
- 14) Use the teaching cue, "the legs and feet come together above the shoulders and hands", to help the student master the timing of bringing the legs and feet together to attain the proper Handstand position.
- 15) Use the teaching cue, "turn to face the starting position", to help the student attain the proper one half turn rotation.
- 16) Use spotting with caution. Make certain the spotters are very responsible and knowledgeable concerning their responsibilities. Place the responsibility for performing the Round-Off on the performer. Note: do not spot the Round-Off unless the student is very close to mastering it.

SPOTTING HINTS

These spotting hints are for a student who needs assistance bringing the legs and feet together in the Handstand position and find it difficult to master the one-quarter turn out of the Handstand. Stand or kneel behind and slightly forward of the student. Do not spot in front of the student because you are putting yourself and the student in a vulnerable position to become injured. Once you are in the proper position, have the student perform the Round-Off. Gently grasp the student's back/lead leg in the outside area of the upper thigh with your front hand. Then, gently grasp the student's front/trail leg in the outside area of the upper thigh with your back hand. In so doing, you are helping the student attain the proper Handstand position. Give the student's upper thighs a gentle twist with your hands to begin the one-quarter turn out of the Handstand. Immediately release your grip so the student can independently continue the turning movement. Make certain you position yourself properly so as not to place undue pressure upon your lower back. Do not over spot. Instead, have the student perform the Round-Off by providing a minimum amount of spotting necessary to allow for a successful and a safe performance of the stunt. Continue to give individualized assistance using the preceding method. Encourage the student to practice the Round-Off without assistance.

VARIATIONS

- 1) Perform a series of two or more continuous Round-Offs.
- 2) Land on the balls of the feet with arms and hands extended overhead instead of forward.
- 3) Encourage advanced skill level students to jump/rebound backward instead of finishing in a stationary position.
- 4) Teach advanced skill level students to perform the Round-Off beginning with an acrobatic skip. The teaching cue could be, "step, hop, step" into a Round-Off.

