



USA GYMNASTICS.

FITNESS PROGRAM



2015 ADMINISTRATOR'S HANDBOOK

THE USA GYMNASTICS FITNESS PROGRAM

Everything your gym club needs to start the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program is included in this handbook. The 2015 USA Gymnastics Fitness Program features updated fitness and conditioning exercises for three fitness levels, new cardio games, baseline measurements for fitness progression, and a sample fitness zone. The program also includes important nutrition handouts, which highlight portion size and healthy food options.

Register online at www.usagym.org/fitness to download the entire 2015 handbook.

Just A Click Away

The entire contents of this handbook are available for download at www.usagym.org/fitness as well as additional web-only materials.

It's Important

Our society has begun to refocus on fitness, especially in regard to healthy, active lifestyles for children. Today's youth have replaced climbing trees, jumping rope and playing tag with video games, computers, television and texting. These sedentary activities are a major reason the fitness message is important.

Children run and play from an early age, and they don't realize what they do for fun is also exercise. Exercise is important for complete health, both physically and mentally. Because inactive children are likely to

become inactive adults, introducing exercise at a young age can result in long-term benefits.

For example, increased physical activity in children has been linked to longer life expectancy and decreased cardiovascular disease. It also helps control weight, reduce blood pressure, raise HDL ("good") cholesterol and reduce

the risk of diabetes and some forms of cancer. Physical activity also increases bone mineral density, which lowers a child's risk of osteoporosis.

Exercise has also been shown to have a beneficial effect on mental health, decreasing anxiety and depression symptoms; and increasing self-esteem and self-confidence. Moreover, it helps kids cope better with stress. Organized sports add to these benefits by teaching important lessons such as sharing, teamwork and conflict resolution.

General corrective exercises, such as the exercises in this program, can minimize the risk of injury. Developing a good fitness foundation for young children sets the groundwork for a lifetime of fitness.

Gymnastics is Fitness!



KEY 2015 DATES

Year-Round... Use the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program in your gym club to create activities promoting health and wellness for athletes at all levels.

Sept. 19 Join the Worldwide Celebration on National Gymnastics Day!

Participate in the following:

- "Show Your Salute" Challenge at 1:00 p.m. in relative time zones around the world.
- Grant opportunities available for USA Gymnastics Member Clubs
- Register your event on the USA Gymnastics website where athletes and families can search for a celebration in their city
- Use the toolkit to help plan and promote your event! Resources can be found at usagym.org/ngd

THE USA GYMNASTICS FITNESS PROGRAM

QUICK FACTS

What

The USA Gymnastics Fitness Program is a year-round initiative that encourages conditioning and physical fitness with an emphasis on strength training, cardiovascular exercise, flexibility and good nutrition. The 2015 edition also features scales of measurement and additional movement training exercises, as well as exercises for beginner, intermediate and advanced students.

Who

The program is geared toward children 3-16 years old in recreation, club and team classes. It is designed for year-round use to foster a physically active lifestyle for today's youth.

Where

The USA Gymnastics Fitness Program can be held at any gymnastics club, youth organization, school or community center. Interested parties can find a local club by calling 1-800-345-4719 or visiting www.usagymclub.com.

When

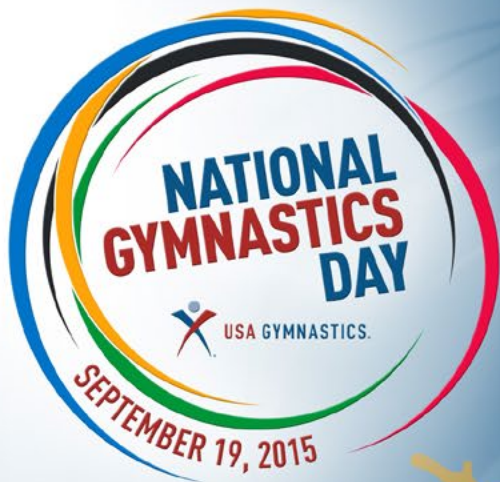
While the program is designed to be year-round, it also works well as part of enhanced conditioning during summer training. Each year, National Gymnastics Day (Sept. 19, 2015) is a platform for clubs to:

- Host demonstrations of the program
- Display philanthropic efforts to create outreach programs that include youth from underprivileged communities in gymnastics, while teaching the power of sport and play
- Expose new children to the joys of gymnastics.

WHY

- Conditioning is the core of any fitness plan and the basis of any sport.
- Today's children are considered the most inactive generation in history.
- Gymnastics clubs are a fun and safe environment with fitness-related activities and classes.
- Approximately one in five kids is overweight, a percentage that has more than doubled in the last 30 years. Childhood obesity is considered the most common nutritional disorder of U.S. children. (*American Obesity Association*)
- Gymnastics provides a solid foundation for becoming physically fit and preparing to participate in other activities and sports.





— #NGD2015 —

Goals for National Gymnastics Day:

- ★ Promote the sport of gymnastics and its fitness benefits
- ★ Create a global celebration of the sport
- ★ Encourage Member Clubs to create activities centered on gymnastics as means of fitness, education and inclusion of all interested in participating
- ★ Clubs may participate in the “Show Your Salute” challenge at 1:00 p.m. in relative time zones around the world.
- ★ Clubs and individuals will share celebrations on social media using #NGD2015 with posts and photos on the USA Gymnastics Facebook Page
- ★ Clubs can apply to receive grants

Visit usgym.org/ngd for more information on the 2015 National Gymnastics Day!

2014 Highlights

- 34 Member Clubs received grants totaling over 25K
- 101 Scholarships awarded
- Partnered with Right to Play
- Co-Chairs Gabby Douglas and Jonathan Horton
- 5,068 unique visitors to the NGD page on Sept 20th
- 1,594 photos submitted on Facebook and 9,442 participates reported
- #NGD2014 was used 2,620 times on Instagram and 1,739 times on Twitter

2013 Highlights

- Partnership with Right To Play initiated
- Theme: "Show us how you play"
- Ambassadors: Gabby Douglas, Jonathan Horton, Alicia Sacramone named as co-chairs
- Grants awarded to 24 clubs
- Social media celebration: 937 photos shared on Facebook, 1,200 uses of the hashtag #NGD2013 on Twitter and 1,910 on Instagram
- Donations contributed to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals total more than \$140,000

2012 Highlights

- 43,901 participants joined together to turn upside down simultaneously at 1pm on September 22nd
- Celebrated the 6 medals brought home by Team USA in the 2012 Olympic Games in London
- Raised \$221,890 for Children Miracle Network, totaling more than \$1.8 Million raised since 2001
- Promoted the 2012 Kellogg's Tour of Gymnastics Champions
- Theme: Turn the World Upside Down

2011 Highlights

- Set a World Record for most handstands performed simultaneously with 20,478 participants
- Raised \$120,050 for Children's Miracle Network, adding to the cumulative total of \$1.5 million since 2001
- Theme: The Year of the Handstand

2010 Highlights

- \$116,000 was raised for Children's Miracle Network, totaling \$1.3 Million since 2001
- Tyson Fitness Challenge was held, which is sponsored by Tyson Foods, for the fourth consecutive year

2009 Highlights

- Held Tyson Fitness Challenge, sponsored by Tyson Foods, to encourage physical fitness and proper nutrition
- Raised \$140,000 for Children's Miracle Network

2008 Highlights

- Offered the Tyson Fitness Challenge, which is sponsored by Tyson Foods, for the second year and had more than 10,000 participants
- Appeared on the Today Show with world medalists and local gymnasts doing the Tyson Fitness Challenge
- Secured state, FIG and USOC proclamations
- Raised more than \$200,000 for Children's Miracle Network to reach and pass our million dollar goal!

2007 Highlights

- Offered the Tyson Fitness Challenge, which is sponsored by Tyson Foods, for the second year and had more than 10,000 participants

- Appeared on the Today Show with world medalists and local gymnasts doing the Tyson Fitness Challenge
- Secured state, FIG and USOC proclamations
- Raised \$171,000 for Children's Miracle Network for a total of more than \$816,000 toward our million dollar goal

2006 Highlights

- Secured USOC and State Proclamations and FIG endorsement
- Offered the Tyson Fitness Challenge to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network
- Provided exposure by utilizing services of NAPS (A media syndication service) in over 10,000 media publications across the country
- Theme: Celebration of Fitness
- Sponsor: Tyson Foods
- Appeared on "The Today Show" with Bela Karolyi featuring a local gymnast doing the Tyson Fitness Challenge

2005 Highlights

- Secured 50 State Proclamations the USOC and FIG Endorsement
- National Co-Chairs Bela Karolyi and Mary Lou Retton
- Encouraged Cartwheel-A-Thons and fundraisers for the Children's Miracle Network
- Secured Celebrity endorsements to convey the National Gymnastics Day message
- Encouraged clubs to host USA Gymnastics Fitness sample classes open to the public on NGD
- Provided national exposure by utilizing services of NAPS (A media syndication service) in over 10,000 news publications across the country

2004 Highlights

- Secured 50 State Proclamations and USOC Proclamation
- National Co-Chairs-Bela Karolyi and Shannon Miller
- Pep Rally in 37 cities to sign banners to send off Team USA to the Olympics
- Encouraged cartwheel-a-thons and fundraisers for the Children's Miracle Network which raised over \$129,000
- Appeared on the Today Show with Bela Karolyi, Olympic Parents and local gymnasts
- Secured Celebrity endorsements to convey the National Gymnastics Day Message
- Promoted the 42 city post-Olympic T.J. Maxx Tour of Gymnastics Champions

2003 Highlights

- Secured 50 State Proclamations, USOC and FIG endorsements
- National Co-Chairs-Mary Lou Retton and Bela Karolyi
- Appeared on the Today Show with Bela Karolyi
- Raised \$134,333 for the CMN doing Mrs. Smith's Flip-A-Thon's
- Promoted World Championships and the "Longines 10 Perfect Moments in Time"
- Theme: Begin Here. Go Anywhere
- Sponsor: Mrs. Smiths

2002 Highlights

- Secured all 50 State Proclamations and the USOC Proclamation endorsements
- NGD Honorary Chairs: Kim Zmeskal, Peter Vidmar, Kurt Thomas, and Bela Karolyi

- Increased the number of youth organizations who celebrated National Gymnastics Day providing a wider range of participation
- Cartwheel-a-thons were held for the Children's Miracle Network and we raised \$65,774.40
- Appeared on the "Today Show" with Bela Karolyi and introduced Sports Acro
- Sought celebrity endorsements that relayed National Gymnastics Day messages
- Theme: Gymnastics, A Great Foundation

2001 Highlights

- Secured 47 State Proclamations for National Gymnastics Day
- Mary Lou Retton and Bela Karolyi were our Co Chairs
- Partnered with Children's Miracle Network and raised over \$50,000.00
- Created a Site Coordinators Guide to help clubs plan events and cartwheel-a-thons
- Created a celebrity testimonial poster to help promote the benefits of gymnastics
- Partnered with 6 organizations to promote NGD
- More than 2,100 clubs across the country participated in National Gymnastics Day
- Theme: Gymnastics, A Great Foundation

2000 Highlights

- Secured 27 State Proclamations
- Bela Karolyi Chairman for NGD and national team athletes appeared on "The Today Show" and "Later Today" to promote the sport
- A half-page ad appeared in "USA Today" in a joint effort between USA Gymnastics and the United States Olympic committee. The message of the ad tied National Gymnastics Day with the 2000 Olympic Games.
- The National Association for Health and Fitness partnered with USA Gymnastics to integrate state government involvement with local gymnastics clubs
- Disneyland hosted a gymnastics exhibition in celebration of National Gymnastics Day
- More than 1,500 clubs across the country participated in National Gymnastics Day
- Theme: Get in the Gym

1999 Highlights

- Bela Karolyi, the most successful coach in the USA Gymnastics history, was named inaugural chairman of National Gymnastics Day
- Olympians and national team members traveled to over 20 major markets in the United States to promote National Gymnastics Day
- Bela Karolyi and top national team member's appeared on "The Today Show" and "Live with Regis and Kathie Lee." A gymnastics exhibition was staged in Rockefeller Plaza in conjunction with the shows. Other visibility included Bart Conner and Nadia Comaneci appearing on "Good Morning American" from Norman, Oklahoma
- A gymnastics exhibition took place at an Oakland A's game as part of the Bay Area's National Gymnastics Day celebration
- More than 1,000 clubs participated in the 1st National Gymnastics Day!
- Theme: Get in the Gym

THE USA GYMNASTICS FITNESS PROGRAM

The USA Gymnastics Fitness Program is designed to supply year-round fitness curriculum to meet the needs of any gymnastics club, physical education class, or group fitness plan. It can be staged alone or incorporated into existing programs or camps. The program focuses on core gymnastics moves built upon the fundamentals of fitness – cardiovascular exercise, movement, strength training, flexibility and nutrition – and features three fitness levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced.

This year's program includes new measurement metrics so that you can track the physical progress of each participant. All exercises are designed to condition and meet the needs of children performing at any level of fitness. The levels allow components of the program to be used from rec. to team and for children to advance within the program based on their development. Refer to the "Determining levels of fitness" section on page 7 to learn which level of exercise to use for each participant.

Clubs have found that the success of stand-alone fitness classes depends on individual markets. Some locations fill one or two classroom sessions with fitness alone; others incorporate general components of the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program into their existing class sessions. The provided information is valuable for all children and may be relayed effectively in any class setting.

Gym club owners or program administrators need to determine what works best for their location. A structure example for both types of sessions – stand-alone and integrated – are outlined to the right. To assist you with your sessions, this handbook is filled with targeted strength training, flexibility exercises, nutritional handouts, movement workouts and cardio games, which can be downloaded at www.usagym.org/fitness.

Stand-alone Fitness Class

60-minute USA Gymnastics Fitness Program class structure

- 10 minutes: Review goals and fun fitness facts on nutrition, warm-up major muscles
- 10 minutes: Cardiovascular games
- 10 minutes: Movement training
- 20 minutes: Strength training exercises
- 10 minutes: Flexibility, stretching and discussion about nutrition, distribution of nutritional handouts

INTRODUCTION

- Overview of the fundamentals of fitness
- Goal setting and fitness level testing
- National Gymnastics Day and Children's Miracle Network Hospitals fundraiser
- Handouts needed:
 - ChooseMyPlate.gov (pg. 31)
 - Daily Exercise Log (pg. 38)
 - Progress Log (pg. 40)

OTHER NUTRITION HANDOUTS can be found on pages 32–37 and include:

- Healthy Plates (pg. 32), Healthier Kid Meals (pg. 33), Decreasing Sugar Intake (pg. 34), Veggies (pg. 35), Improving Your Meals (pg. 36), Perfecting School Day Meals (pg. 37)

Integrated Program Sessions

Incorporate the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program into your daily gym routine! It's a great conditioning base.

- Warm-up: Use the games (pages 13–15) to increase cardiovascular endurance.
- During rotations to different apparatus: Have stations set up at each apparatus incorporating the strength training and flexibility exercises (pages 17–29).
- After each class: Hand out a nutritional page (pages 31–40).
- Fitness Zones: Host a Fitness Zone at your community events. (pages 11–12).



Click Here for
St. Vincent Health Tips



STARTING THE USA GYMNASTICS FITNESS PROGRAM

The following information will help you plan and incorporate the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program at your club.

Equipment List

Any of these items you may not already have in your gym may be found at your local department or sporting goods store.

- Carpet square
- Chalk
- Exercise balls
- Foam ball
- Panel mats or
- Pedometers
- Floor exercise mat
- Hula hoops
- Cones
- Stop watch
- Stretch bands

Determining levels of fitness

During the first session, an instructor needs to assess whether the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program participants are best suited to perform at a beginner, intermediate, or advanced level. Observing their facial expressions during exercise is one way to measure their fitness capacities; another is to use baselines.

The overall goal is to encourage children to improve and push themselves. The 10-20 repetition rule is a good guideline to use when teaching strength training. Participants should be able to complete 10 repetitions, but be encouraged and challenged to complete 20. Depending on how they perform each repetition, you may have to adjust their exercise level.

Coach the kids to do as many repetitions as they can until they cannot do one more. Encourage them to push themselves to do, for example, five more jumping jacks or two more minutes of cardiovascular exercise. Record their progress for them so that they can see their own improvement.

To help improve overall cardiovascular fitness, encourage children to keep their feet moving between exercises by doing things like hopping in place or jumping jacks. Always remember to keep the environment fun, safe, challenging and positive.

Use charts to measure progress! The

USA Gymnastics Fitness Program includes a downloadable participant's progress chart so that you can record measurements for each child. Establishing baselines for these exercises is critical in helping kids set achievable goals and measure their success at the end of the program. Below are some general baselines.

BASELINE MEASUREMENTS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Ages 3-9

- ___ Number of completed 30-second prone plank holds
- ___ Number of completed sit-ups in 30 seconds
- ___ How far participant reached on a seated toe touch**
(use chalk to mark how far participant is able to reach on the floor.)
- ___ 45 degree angle box pushups completed in 30 seconds

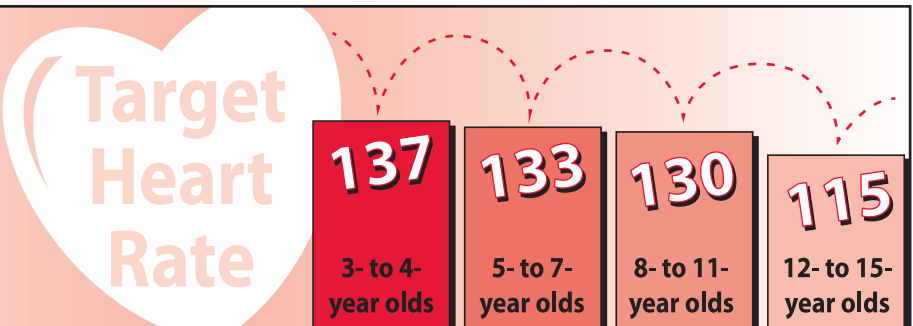
Ages 10-16

- ___ Number of completed 1-minute prone plank holds
- ___ Number of completed sit-ups in one minute
- ___ Ability to do a seated toe touch**
(use chalk to mark how far participant is able to reach on the floor.)
- ___ Pushups completed in 1 minute
- ___ Vertical Jump *(Have athletes maximally raise their hands and extend their arms and mark with chalk where their fingertips are.) The athletes then jump and mark with chalk the highest point they touch. Measure the distance from the bottom to the top chalk mark.)*
- ___ Dot Drill for Agility *(Measure a 4' x 4' square and mark each corner of the square with a different letter [A top left, B top right, C bottom left, D bottom right]. Mark the inside center of the square with a dot. Begin in the center of the square, facing forward. In fact, the athlete should face forward, towards A and B, throughout the entire challenge). The athlete jumps with both feet over to A and back to the middle, then over to B and back to the middle, then to C and back to the middle, and then to D and back to the middle. This is equal to one (1) circuit. On "Go," start a stopwatch or timer and stop when three (3) circuits are completed. Record the time and repeat the procedure two (2) more times to determine the best time. Record best time from the three (3) attempts.*
- ___ 20 yard dash *(record the amount of time it takes athletes to get from start to finish)*

** A seated toe touch is when the child performs a V-sit on the ground and with straight legs, bends at the waist trying to touch their toes.

Measuring your heart rate (beats per minute) can tell you how hard your heart is working. You can check your heart rate by counting your pulse for 15 seconds and multiplying the beats by 4.

* The target heart rate for children depends on their age, but on average, it's 137 for 3- to 4-year-olds, 133 for 5- to 7-year-olds, 130 for 8- to 11-year-olds and 115 for 12- to 15-year-olds.



* Courtesy of www.livestrong.com

SETTING FITNESS GOALS

In addition to determining fitness levels during the first session of the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program, instructors need to work with each participant to develop personal fitness goals. Establishing these goals is an integral part of a child's success. As they progress through the sessions, the participants should begin to see changes in their ability to execute the exercises.

The goals should be achievable and tailored to each individual. The "movements" may include tracking steps using pedometers with the target of completing 100 movements by the end of a determined time. It is fun and rewarding for instructors and participants to see their progression and the completion of their goals.

REMEMBER...

Now the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program is year round and can be continued and restarted at any time, be sure to encourage all students at your gym.

Examples of goals

- I will take part in three hours of physical activity (sports or playing outside) every day.
- I will increase my number of prone plank holds and sit-ups during the next ____ weeks of the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program.
- Each week, I will spend two days practicing a new activity that I want to learn (basketball, baseball, etc.).
- I will put on my pedometer first thing in the morning and take 11,000 steps each day.
- I will eat five half-cup servings of fruit and vegetables each day.

Instructor tips

- During the first session, ensure the participants understand the need for completing the daily exercise logs, how to measure their heart rate, how to use a pedometer, and why nutrition is important.
- Have participants keep a record of their fitness activities by bringing in their completed forms or emailing them to you at the end of each week. It's important that children stay active!
- Use a progress chart and show the children participating in the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program their improvements.
- Download and distribute the nutritional handouts to your class at the end of each session. Encourage children and parents to talk about the handouts at home.

- Visit USA Gymnastics' website for updates and information at www.usagym.org/fitness.
- If you would like to show off your program, send in your photos from your USA Gymnastics Fitness Program. Be sure to list each student's name and teacher's name in your email and include high resolution photos. Email: clubservices@usagym.org.

Possible class activity to help with fitness goals

Hold a personal best (PB) contest or designate one exercise per session as the personal-best exercise. Participants are encouraged to "max out" on, or during, the PB exercise. For example, if lunges are the PB exercise, have each child do as many lunges as they can in two minutes.

Did your participants reach their goals?

At the end of your USA Gymnastics Fitness Program, it is important for the instructors to recap the goals and objectives of the program. Use the following checklist to ensure that you've covered all of the important information before the last day of the program.

- Recap the importance of the fundamentals of fitness and other key concepts covered during the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program.
- Repeat initial fitness level testing from the first session and calculate improvements to see if participants have reached their goals. Be sure to compare their performance during the final session to their initial scores from the first session.
- Talk about the importance of continuing what they have learned on a daily basis.
- Revisit your gym's plans for National Gymnastics Day and encourage all of your students to participate.

FUNDAMENTALS OF FITNESS

Cardiovascular Exercise

What is cardiovascular exercise?

Cardiovascular exercise is any activity that uses large muscle groups as opposed to sitting or lying down. Increasing the heart rate is the main goal of cardiovascular exercise. By doing this, kids strengthen their hearts and lungs. The heart is the main muscle that is used to move oxygen to the rest of the muscles and organs in the body. Running, jumping, climbing, walking and tumbling are all examples of cardiovascular exercise.

Why is it important?

Cardiovascular exercise is very important for the heart and lungs. Anytime the heart beats faster and harder, the body's most important muscle is getting exercise. Any exercise that makes the heart beat faster will help the heart work better. This means more oxygen can be taken into the lungs, exchanged in the heart, and pumped to the rest of the body. People with strong hearts and lungs can do more physical activity for longer periods of time without getting tired.

How much should they do?

Children younger than 18 years old should exercise for at least 60 minutes a day or

track at least 11,000 steps daily on a pedometer. Exercising can include participating in sports, walking the dog or jumping rope.

Use games to improve cardiovascular strength!

The cardiovascular goal of the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program is constant motion and elevating heart rates. One way to keep children active and interested is to use games as exercise. Be creative by using your gym equipment and making up your own games or use the ones found on pages 11-13!

Why is movement training important?

Movement training is important for a variety of reasons. One of the most significant reasons is that gymnasts must be able to perform basic functional movement patterns before advanced "sport-specific" movements. Therefore, movement training should be incorporated into all gymnast workouts to ensure that they can perform a variety of foundational athletic movements with technical soundness and biomechanical efficiency. When gymnasts take the time to work on basic movement patterns, they are then able to realize greater benefit from the proceeding advanced movement patterns.

Aerobic conditioning is a core component of fitness because the cardiovascular system must be able to deliver blood (and thus oxygen) to the working muscles in a timely and efficient manner to realize athletic success. Athletes who never take the time to train their aerobic system are missing out on a vital aspect of athletic development. In gymnastics, there are many times a gymnast must be able to perform a variety of skills over an extended period of time. Consequently, gymnasts who have their aerobic system functioning at a high level will be more likely to realize their full potential.

Strength Training

What is strength training for kids?

Strength training can be as complicated as lifting weights or as simple as doing sit-ups and push-ups. Both types of training help make muscles stronger. Strength training is a very important part of any fitness program. Not only does it help strengthen muscles, but it also helps strengthen tendons, ligaments and bones. One of the many benefits of having strong muscles, bones and other parts of the body is reduced risk for injury.



FUNDAMENTALS OF FITNESS

Big muscles vs. strong muscles

When they hear the words “strength training,” many people automatically think of weightlifting and big muscles. This is not the only result of strength training. Different exercise programs and routines yield different results for everyone. The goal for strength training should be to increase overall strength and power. These goals do not necessarily require that muscles increase in size, but it can happen for some people. Everyone’s muscles grow and develop differently. Just because they don’t see their muscles getting bigger does not mean that they are not getting stronger.

Simple strength exercise

Many people think strength training can only be accomplished in a gym or workout center. Although many people workout there, children can strength train at their gymnastics club or even at home. Everyday items can be turned into strength training fitness equipment. For example, an empty milk jug can be filled with water or sand and used for resistance or a can of soup can be used as a dumbbell.

Safety

Some parents may worry about the safety of young children doing this kind of exercise. However, if old enough to participate in organized sports or activities, kids are old enough to strength train. There is little risk of injury during this kind of training as long as it is supervised to ensure proper technique and form. It is also a myth that strength

training will stunt a child’s growth. As long as sub-maximal weights are used (less than the maximum weight the child can lift) for 10-20 repetitions, strength training can be incredibly beneficial for children. Examples of strength training exercises are found beginning on page 15.

Flexibility

What is flexibility?

Flexibility is having the ability to move through a normal range of motion for a given joint without pain or hindrance. Flexibility exercises, or stretching exercises, help increase the range of motion for a given joint or set of joints. Flexibility allows muscles and joints to avoid becoming stiff. Flexibility is not something a child either has or doesn’t have. Rather, flexibility is measured in degrees. For example, a gymnast or dancer would be considered more flexible (higher range of motion through their joints) than a basketball player.

Guidelines for stretching/flexibility exercises

Flexibility should be approached with a great deal of caution. Muscles should always be stretched after they have been warmed up. This means some kind of cardiovascular exercise needs to be done before any stretching occurs. As you have read, cardiovascular exercise gets blood and oxygen pumping through the body faster, allowing muscles to work better. Children should always be instructed on proper form and technique for any kind of stretching. Stretching too much at the beginning of class when muscles aren’t warm can lead to joint injuries.

Light stretching may be done at the beginning of the workout to help warm up joints and prepare them for the workout ahead. However, any stretching to improve flexibility should be done at the end of the workout when muscles are warm and less likely to be injured.

Stretching should never hurt. Make sure you help the children understand the difference between muscle resistance felt when stretching properly and pain from improper stretching. Stretches should be held for 20-30 seconds, breathing deeply to relax into the stretch. The body’s natural response to stretching is to resist it, so gently working into a stretch is the safest approach. Examples of flexibility exercises are found beginning on page 23.

Nutrition

What is nutrition?

Nutrition is how food nourishes the body. More than 40 nutrients are found in foods and each has a specific and unique job to help keep kids active and reduce the risk of certain diseases. There are six groups of nutrients: carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals and water. Choosing nutritious and flavorful foods on a daily basis will help fuel the body and promote good health.

Why is nutrition important?

Good nutrition can help lower the risk of certain diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, certain cancers and high blood pressure. All of these health problems have contributed significantly to disability and death in the United States. By developing and maintaining good nutritional habits at a young age, children can help to reduce their risk of these diseases.

The USA Gymnastics Fitness Program has an overall health theme. Because a healthy and balanced diet is important to overall fitness, proper nutrition is a key to providing the fuel kids need to complete the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program. To make the nutrition section interesting and easy to understand, handouts are provided in this handbook as well as fun facts and challenges for kids and their families to try. Make sure you make copies of the handouts to distribute to the kids. Handouts begin on page 31.

THE USA GYMNASTICS FITNESS AND NUTRITION ZONE

USA Gymnastics is proud to introduce the instructions for creating a Fitness Zone. In the zone, gymnasts and enthusiasts practice the basics of cardio, strength, flexibility and balance while learning about the benefits of maintaining an active lifestyle. The fitness team works to teach children exercises and facts promoting healthy choices.

Promoting fitness and the USA Gymnastics brand allows those who may not be elite gymnasts to experience the many ways gymnastics develops a healthy body. The fitness zone is featured at major USA Gymnastics events. Member Clubs can sanction a Fitness Zone with USA Gymnastics. All movements and activities should be modified based on age and skill level, or in relation to the event.

Fitness Zone Organizational Staff

The Fitness Zone Coordinator is responsible for reading and viewing online videos, distributing information and communicating job responsibilities to participating coaches/teachers. A team of 5-10 instructors is needed to work throughout the zone. A primary responsibility is to assist with the setup of the zone and distribution of items, if applicable. The coordinator will oversee the coaches working activity in the zone and ensure delivery of kid friendly tips after the exercise is completed.

Fitness Zone Details

Zone 1 – Cardio

Each child will have a mini trampoline to do the Cardio zone.

Cardio Zone Coaches:

Instruct the “freeze or stop” movement; Bend the knees and stop on command. Start with straight jumps, tuck, straddle and split jumps. Have participants feel their heart beat and talk about how you need to keep your heart healthy for life and through good cardio workouts.

Cardio kid friendly tips:

Your heart is the biggest muscle in your body. It is constantly pumping oxygen rich blood through your veins. Cardiovascular exercise is important because it causes the heart to beat faster and harder, helping this muscle to be very fit and healthy! When your heart beats faster, your body temperature rises and you become hot because your body is burning off the sugar/fat that you have eaten; You are burning calories. Keep your heart healthy so it can feed your muscles nutritious oxygen rich blood, to grow bigger and stronger.



Zone 2 – Strength

Each child will have a set of parallettes and a large physio ball.

Strength Zone Coaches:

Instruct children to reach down to hold the parallettes in a push up position and lift their legs up onto the physio balls. Have them hold the front support and instruct the following moves: tuck ups, pike ups and single leg raises.

Strength kid friendly tips:

Strength – You can build your muscles with proper sleep, nutritious food and challenging yourself with exercises that uses your own muscle strength. You have over 600 muscles in your body. When your heart pushes nutrient rich blood through your muscles, the blood is feeding the muscles. The more you use your muscles, the stronger they become. We use muscles for pushing, pulling and jumping. Move your arm, leg, waist... feel the muscles! What do they do? Gymnasts build bigger and stronger muscles by using their own body weight. You take your body with you everywhere!

Zone 3 – Flexibility

Each child will have a thera band.

Flexibility Zone Coaches:

Hold the band in hands in front of the body, creating tension in the band. Lift the band over the head and return, slowly. Next, do this bending over in a standing pike position. Then, sit down and do the same stretch with the band. Take the band and place it over one foot, sitting in a pike position. Lift that leg and try to see how close participants can get their nose to their knees while lifting their leg, one at a time; Repeat on the other leg. Then both legs to a sitting V sit and roll back to back and forward back in the a V sit. Repeat a few times.

Flexibility kid friendly tips:

Stretching out- After you have warmed up your muscles, performed strength exercises, and let blood flow through them, it is time to “Stretch Out.” We stretch out our muscles after exercising because they tighten up and shorten during the exercise, moving like a rubber band. Joints that connect to your muscles such as knees, ankles, elbows, wrists and hips. The more you stretch, the more flexible you will be because you are lengthening out the muscles. When you have slowly worked your way through the different levels of flexibility, you will find that you can bend, reach and jump further than before. You will have a greater “range of motion.” What are some examples of being flexible?



THE USA GYMNASTICS FITNESS AND NUTRITION ZONE

Zone 4 – Balance Zone

Each child will be on a balance beam while holding a weight ball.

Balance Zone Coaches:

Instruct the students to stand on one foot with leg in front, to the side, and to the back in a scale position. Move the ball around as you balance and bend forward and backward.

Balance Kid friendly tips:

Learning balance helps with body awareness, coordination and concentration. Just like on the balance beam, you have to stay focused when trying to keep your balance. When we are unbalanced or falling, we adjust what we are doing and keep trying. It is importance to maintain a healthy balance of many things we do in life including sleep, work, and athletics.

Zone 5 – Nutrition Zone

Each child will receive fitness or nutrition related information or items.

The nutrition zone is used as a time to share facts about healthy eating and distribute related materials. Games can be used as a means of sharing information. Prizes focused on healthy living may be awarded.

This is the time to connect the importance of exercise and healthy eating.

The Nutrition Zone is the conclusion of the series so it is important to ensure that the participating children find their parent or guardian before exiting.

Example game and Nutrition facts:

TRUE OR FALSE TRIVIA:

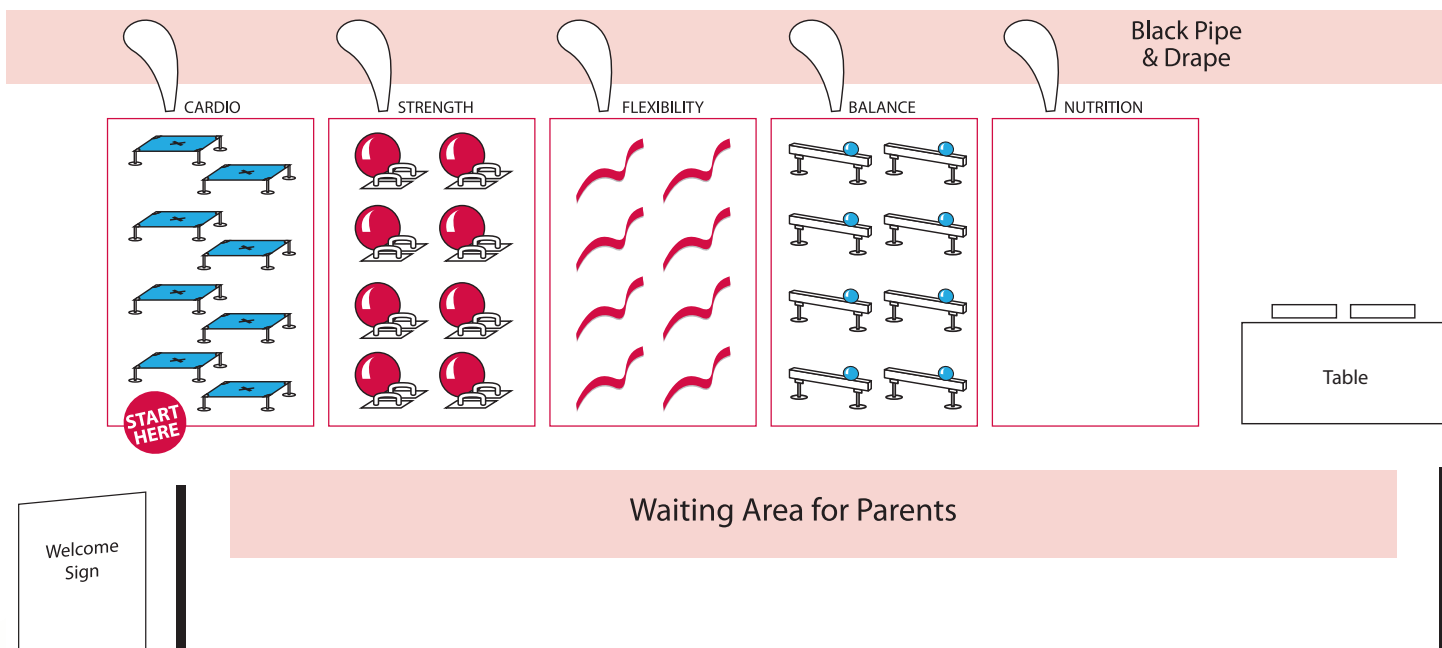
1. Calcium and vitamin D are necessary for helping to build strong bones and teeth? **True**
2. Breakfast helps provide fuel to start your day? **True**
3. Skipping breakfast can help you get more vitamins and minerals? **False**
4. The Dynamic Duo of cereal with 1 cup of milk helps you get nutrition that is sometimes hard to get like fiber, calcium, vitamin D and potassium? **True**
5. Adding fruit to your breakfast cereal is not a good idea? **False**
6. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day? **True**



Nutrition Facts:

- Nutrition and breakfast are an important part of your day. Choosing what you eat for breakfast can be very important part jumpstarting the morning and getting the energy you needed for activities like gymnastics!
- Skipping breakfast can lead kids to miss out on vitamins and minerals their growing bodies need.
- Cereal + milk provides important nutrients kids often don't get enough of including calcium, potassium, fiber and vitamin D—all of which are important for growing bodies.

FITNESS & NUTRITION ZONE



CARDIOVASCULAR GAMES

*games from pecentral.org



Fruit Loop Kicks

MATERIALS NEEDED: Deck rings of various colors. I would suggest one ring for every 4 or 5 students.

Spread the deck rings throughout the gym floor area. The different colored rings look like "fruit loops" laying on the ground.

On 'go' signal (or music start) have the students move throughout the general space kicking the rings with inside of foot to slide across the floor. The goal is to try and hit someone's foot/feet with the ring while avoiding having your's hit.

If hit with a ring, that student performs 10 reps of previously determined (or student choice) exercise before rejoining the game.

Clogged Arteries

MATERIALS NEEDED: 5 wrist bands or scrimmage vests, 2 or 3 red hula hoops

Choose 5 students to be the taggers. These students wear the wrist bands. Place 2 or 3 red hula hoops outside of the playing area to represent an artery.

If a student is tagged, he/she becomes a piece of cholesterol and goes over to an artery. When there are 3 pieces of chole-

sterol in an artery (this means it is clogged), the students join hands, jump and say "I am heart smart". Once they do this three times, they are back in the game. This symbolizes that exercise can help reduce cholesterol levels.

Change taggers every few minutes and do a pulse check.

ASSESSMENT IDEAS:

Review the terms cholesterol, heart rate, and artery. Ask the following questions during your cooldown time:

1. What do the hula hoops represent with students in them? **Ans: Clogged arteries**
2. Why did I have you do an exercise in the artery to get back in the game? **Ans: Exercise is one way to reduce high cholesterol.**
3. What is another way to reduce high cholesterol? **Ans: Eating healthy foods.**
4. Is running good for your heart? **Ans: Yes, it is a good cardiovascular activity which helps strengthen the heart muscle.**

Capture the Running Flag

MATERIALS NEEDED: 2 to 4 flag football flags or sheets of cloth approx. 2 inch x 1 foot, 6 - 8 cones to mark boundaries

Mark off boundaries in activity area with cones.

Select 2 to 4 flag holders. Each one has

a flag tucked into back pocket or waist band with flag exposed down to at least the knee. Once the flag is in pocket they can no longer touch flag. The goal for the non-flag holders is to get the flag from a classmate and place it in their pocket. Then they must avoid having their flag stolen.

Teacher calls out a form of locomotion - walk (start with this), jog, gallop, skill.

VARIATIONS:

Have flag holders perform one locomotion skill while the rest perform a different skill. Every 30 sec or so switch locomotion skills with each group.

Beanbag Freeze Time

MATERIALS NEEDED: 1 or more "taggers" (made from swim noodles)

1. Choose 1 or more students to be the taggers.
2. Taggers use the swim noodle "taggers" in which to tag (or touch) other students.
3. Disperse the beanbags to the other students.
4. The taggers count down for 5 seconds before starting.
5. Taggers may tag anyone.
6. If a student is tagged, they are frozen and can only become unfrozen if a beanbag is thrown TO them, NOT at them. If the bean bag is caught, the student becomes



CARDIOVASCULAR GAMES

unfrozen (or is free). If the beanbag is dropped, and falls to the floor, the frozen student CANNOT pick it up. (This is done to prevent the student from going down to get the beanbag while a tagger is attempting to intercept it). If a tagger picks up a dropped beanbag or catches one thrown in the air, then the beanbag is given to the teacher and taken out of circulation.

7. Students with beanbags are given immunity from being tagged or frozen. Students who have a beanbag must get their beanbag to “frozen” students or any student being pursued by a tagger (beanbag must be airborne, not handed off!) in a reasonable amount of time (10-30 seconds).
8. Alternate taggers every couple of minutes.

Excuse Me

MATERIALS NEEDED: *Small playground cones (half as many cones as players); beanbag, foam balls, or yarn balls for the taggers.*

Randomly disperse cones around a marked off fairly large playing area. Put out half as many cones as students. One student is “the tagger.” (If you have a large class, more than one person can be “the tagger.”) The tagger holds an object (like a beanbag or yarn ball) in their hand to signify they are the tagger. They attempt to move through the playing area attempting to tag other players with their beanbag. If a player is tagged, he or she takes the beanbag and becomes “the tagger.”

To avoid being tagged, players can stand over a cone, with one foot on each side. When they are at a cone, they are “safe” from being tagged. Only ONE student is allowed to be at a cone at a time. The last child to arrive at the cone gets to stay until another child arrives. The child arriving at the cone must say “excuse me.” This signifies that the child currently at the cone must leave. He or she may not come back to that cone until he or she has been to another one first.



Snake

MATERIALS NEEDED: *A stop watch and at least one cone for every student*

For every 10 students in your class set up a row of cones. Each row should have at least 10 cones about 2-3 feet apart. Have the students get into groups (approximately 10-12 students in a group). Have each group find a row of cones and have them line up at one end of the row.

On the teacher’s “GO” signal, the first student in line “snakes” around the cones. To “snake”, students weave in and out of the cones by walking. When the first student reaches the third cone, the second student in line begins to “snake”. When the second student in line reaches the third cone, the third student begins to “snake”, etc. until all group members are “snaking”. When the first student comes to the last cone in the row, he/she must “snake” back to the beginning. Students will begin moving in and out of the cones in one direction while other students are coming in the other direction.

Students have to figure out how to get

around each other. They may not skip a cone, touch a cone, or bump into another student. If any group member does so, the entire group must start the activity over. Have groups see how long they can keep the activity going or time each group individually to see how long it takes for them to “snake” through the cones from one end to the other and then back to the beginning. Challenge each group to improve their time.

Note: All students must travel the same path. For example, if the first student begins by “snaking” to the right, then all students must begin by “snaking” to the right.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS:

Have the students walk first. Then change the locomotor movement to skipping, running, crab walking, etc. when the class has successfully “snaked” by walking.

Gradually combine the groups, until the entire class is “snaking” through one set of cones.

Time the class and have them try to improve their overall class time.

CARDIOVASCULAR GAMES

Under The Bridge

MATERIALS NEEDED: *Cones for boundaries, pinnies to designate taggers*

Before students arrive, set up cones or designate boundaries to determine the activity area. Designate 2-4 taggers with pinnies (or other means like them holding a yarn or foam ball in hand) and have the remaining students scatter in the activity area. On your signal have the students begin to move in general space using your chosen locomotor movement (i.e. walking, skipping, galloping, etc.) If tagged, students must place themselves in push up position, either on two hands and two feet with flat

back and bottom, or in modified position with knees on the floor. Student must hold that position until one of their classmates crawl underneath their body ("under the bridge"). The tagged person is then free to get up and resume playing again. Change taggers every couple of minutes.

Defrost

MATERIALS NEEDED: *5 scarves of one color, 8 scarves of another color, cones for boundaries*

Have some students be the Taggers. They carry one color scarf. Have the other

majority of the students be the Defrosters and they carry the other color scarf. Use any type of locomotor skill to move in the tag game. When a student is frozen, they must raise their hand. To get unfrozen a Defroster must come by and they must tell a cue (e.g., step with the opposite foot for throwing, bend knees when jumping and landing). Change the Taggers and Defrosters and play again. This activity can be used to reinforce a lot of ideas.



USA GYMNASTICS
FITNESS
PROGRAM

EXERCISE &
STRETCHING



Movement Exercises

SPRINT MECHANICS



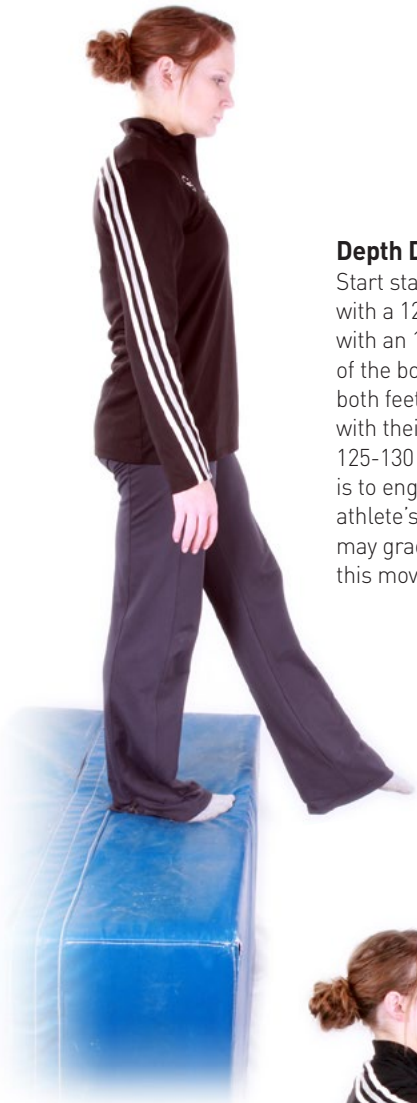
LATERAL MOVEMENTS



PLYOMETRICS

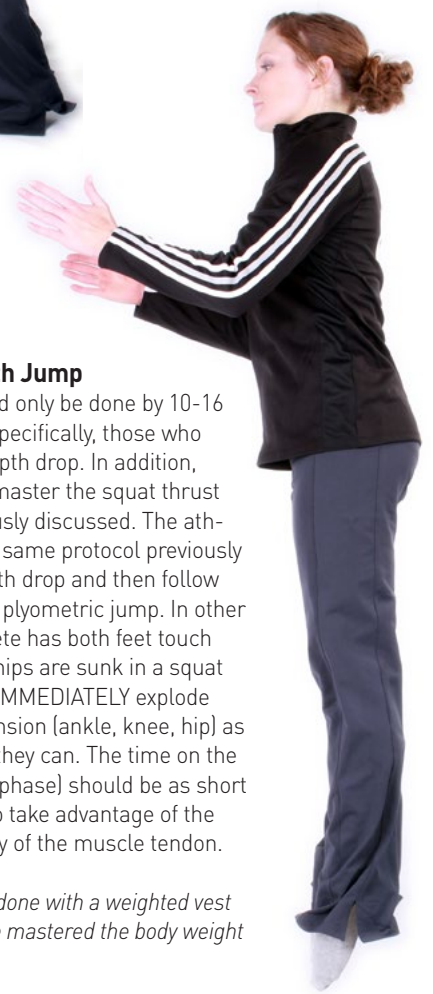
Depth Drop

Start standing on a box (ages 4-9 should start with a 12 inch box, ages 10-16 should start with an 18 inch box). The athlete will step off of the box with one foot first and land with both feet at the same time in squat position with their heel-knee-hip angle at roughly 125-130 degrees. The purpose of this drill is to engrain eccentric motor control in the athlete's neuromuscular system. Box height may gradually be raised as athletes master this movement.



Pogo Jumps

Athletes will jump up and down while maintaining complete hip and knee extension. The movement is initiated through the ankles. Athletes should focus on having as little time on the ground as possible and explode through the toes each jump.



Depth Drop to Depth Jump

This movement should only be done by 10-16 year olds, and more specifically, those who have mastered the depth drop. In addition, athletes should also master the squat thrust jump that was previously discussed. The athlete should follow the same protocol previously discussed for the depth drop and then follow this movement with a plyometric jump. In other words, when the athlete has both feet touch the ground and their hips are sunk in a squat position, they should IMMEDIATELY explode and create triple extension (ankle, knee, hip) as they jump as high as they can. The time on the ground (amortization phase) should be as short as possible in order to take advantage of the stretch-reflex property of the muscle tendon.

** This exercise can be done with a weighted vest on teenagers who have mastered the body weight depth jump.*

Strength Training Exercise Progressions

Exercises provided by Lisa Martin, MS, LAT, ATC, CSCS, and Jeff Richter, CSCS of St. Vincent Sports Performance.

While push-ups, sit-ups, planks and wall squats have been staples in the gym for strength training, the following exercises will provide an opportunity to incorporate a greater variety of strength exercises for participants at different fitness levels.

Progression can come in a variety of ways: changing your weight, repetitions, intensity, speed, duration, exercises and more. The bottom line is, once you master something, you need to do something to make it harder. One way to do that is to try new variations of traditional exercises. The exercises below have three levels of progression – basic, intermediate and advanced – to best meet the needs of all your students.

CORE PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

BRIDGE

Starting position: Lie on back with knees bent at 90-degree angle, toes pointed up and only heels touching floor. Bend elbows at 90-degree angles and let arms rest in this position.

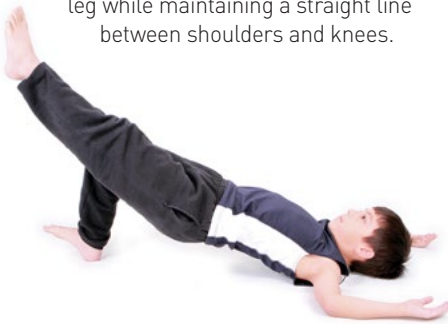
Basic

Brace abdominals and squeeze glutes, lifting hips to form straight line from shoulder to knees.



Intermediate

Start in basic bridge position. Straighten one leg while keeping knees together. Hold position for up to 30 seconds on each leg while maintaining a straight line between shoulders and knees.



Advanced

Start in intermediate bridge position. Without moving hips, swing raised leg one foot away from other leg and return to start. You can also lift and lower hips to ground in a pulsing motion while holding one leg out straight. Hips should remain level and not shift.



CORE PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

LATERAL PLANK

Starting position: Lie on side, stack feet and place flexed elbow directly under armpit. Point toes toward nose. Rest on edge of foot, not on side of ankle.

Basic

Brace abdominals and lift up from hips to form a straight position through midline.



Intermediate

Start in basic lateral plank position. Without letting hips drop to floor (no sagging), lift up top leg about 12 inches. Foot of top leg should face same direction as bottom leg.



Advanced

Start in a basic lateral plank position. Bring your top leg forward and backwards in a continuous yet steady motion. The movement always starts with the top leg directly above the bottom leg and should go out no further than 2 feet. While the movement for the top leg takes place your torso should remain stable and your chest should resist rotation while maintaining an upright position.



CORE PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

MEDIAL PLANK

Starting position: Lie on side and flex bottom leg at knee.

Basic

Wrap foot of bottom leg around top leg and raise hips to lateral plank position.



Intermediate

Start in basic medial plank position. Let bottom leg hang freely without touching floor. Reach bottom foot from front to back of midline and tap floor with toes at each endpoint.



Advanced

Start in intermediate medial plank position. Reach up with top arm then reach under body, creating a rotation pattern. For more support, wrap bottom leg around top leg.



CORE PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

PRONE PLANK

Basic

Balance on elbows and balls of feet. Elbows should be directly under shoulders and hips should form a relatively straight line from shoulders to knees. Imagine "tucking your tail" slightly between legs, which will help activate abdominals and keep lower back from doing most of the work.



Intermediate

Start in basic prone plank position. Lift one leg slightly off floor without shifting or sagging hips. Either hold for time or move leg slightly away from body for repetitions. Keep toes pointed toward floor and do not let foot rotate out.



Advanced

Start in a basic prone plank position. Place feet shoulder width apart. From this point you will rotate an arm up to the side while twisting your torso. Keep your elbow at a 90 degree angle. Hold for a second at the top position and return to the bottom and then alternate the arm that rotates.



GLUTE TRAINING

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

Training of the gluteal muscles is crucial in assisting knee control during landing. A knee's inability to stay in line with the hip and ankle is directly related to ACL injuries.

Starting position for basic, intermediate and advanced: Place small band around ankles and slightly bend knees. Keep tension on band throughout movement.

Basic (lateral step)

Turn in toes slightly. Walk sideways in one direction. Toes never should turn out. Keep body upright without any side leaning or swaying.



Intermediate

Keep feet wide with toes straight ahead. Walk backward, but do not let hips swing from side to side.



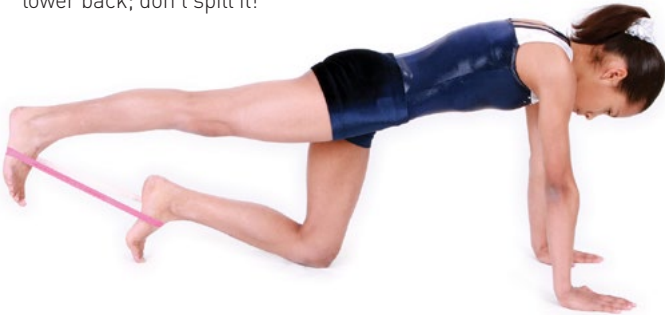
Advanced (jumping jacks)

Slightly turn in toes. Do a jumping jack. Make sure heels contact floor as knees slightly flex.



Quadruped extensions

Place small band around arches of feet. Put hands and knees on floor so knees are directly below hips and hands are directly below shoulders. Brace abdominals and extend one leg straight out behind by pushing with heel (feet should be flexed). Do not move low back; only move extending leg. Imagine a glass of water on your lower back; don't spill it!



Hip flexions (static)

Lie on back with band around arches of feet. Keep one leg straight, bend other leg at knee and lift bent knee toward chest. Point toes toward nose in flexed position. Slowly do this movement and lower with control back to starting position.



Hip flexions (dynamic)

Lie on back with band around arches of feet. Keep both legs straight and bring one leg up at a time so the knee is flexed at a 90 degree angle while in hip flexion. Hold for 2-3 seconds and return to the leg extension position with both heels on the ground. Repeat with opposite leg.



SQUAT PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

SIT BACK SQUAT

Starting position: Place feet shoulder-width apart with toes straight ahead. Heels should be slightly in front of and not touching box. Hold arms out in front of body as counterbalance.

Basic (high squat/quarter squat)

Sit back, leading with glutes. Touch glutes to box and return to starting position. Heels should not lose contact with floor and chest should be up.



Intermediate (medium squat)

Hold small weight or medicine ball in front of body with elbows slightly flexed. Hinge at hip and sit back with glutes, trying to achieve 90 degrees of flexion at knee. Touch glutes to box and return to starting position. Heels should not lose contact with floor and chest should be up.



Advanced (low squat)

Hold small weight or medicine ball in front of body with elbows slightly flexed. Sit back to full squat position (lower than 90 degrees). Heels should not lose contact with floor and chest should be up.

SQUAT PROGRESSION

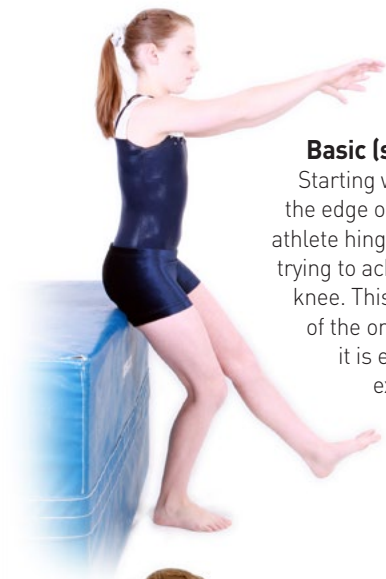
Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

ONE-LEG SQUAT

Starting position: Place feet shoulder-width apart with toes straight ahead. Heels should be slightly in front of and not touching box. Lift one foot off floor and bend knee at 90-degree angle. Hold arms out in front of body as counterbalance.

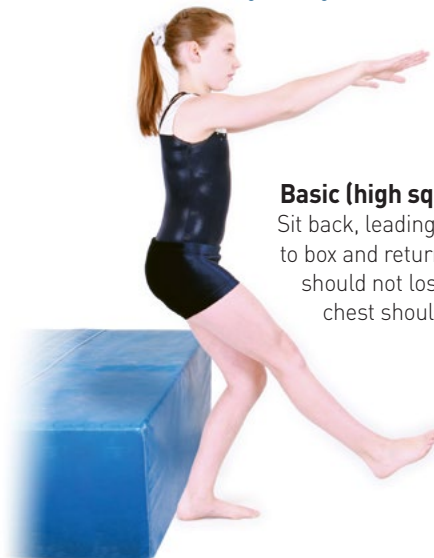
Basic (starting with beam/box)

Starting with one foot firmly planted on the edge of a box/balance beam – have the athlete hinge at hip and sit back with glutes, trying to achieve 90 degrees of flexion at knee. This can be done at the beginning of the one-leg squat sequence because it is easier to maintain opposite knee extension and hip flexion due to the fact that your body is elevated off the ground.



Basic (high squat)

Sit back, leading with glutes. Touch glutes to box and return to starting position. Heels should not lose contact with floor and chest should be up.



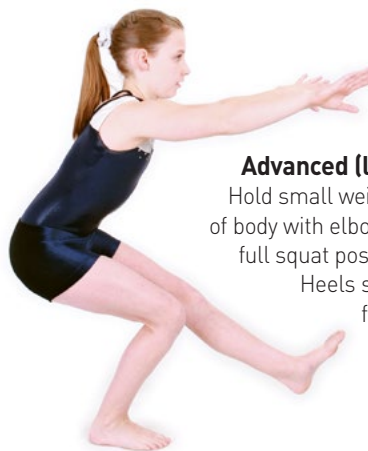
Intermediate (medium squat)

Hold small weight or medicine ball in front of body with elbows slightly flexed. Hinge at hip and sit back with glutes, trying to achieve 90 degrees of flexion at knee. Touch glutes to box and return to starting position. Heels should not lose contact with floor and chest should be up.



Advanced (low squat)

Hold small weight or medicine ball in front of body with elbows slightly flexed. Sit back to full squat position (lower than 90 degrees). Heels should not lose contact with floor and chest should be up.

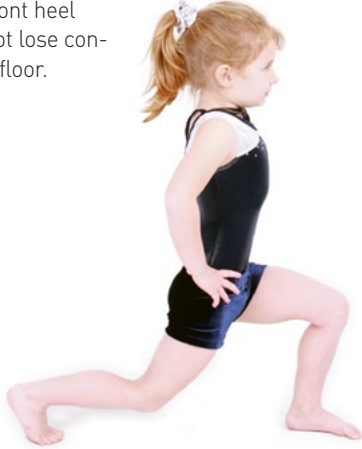


LUNGE PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions on each leg.

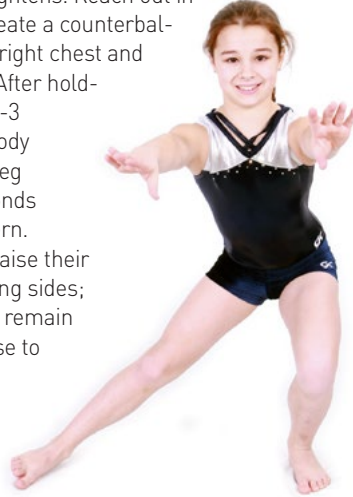
Basic (linear/step back)

Stand with feet apart, a width of less than two fists. Maintain width while stepping either forward or backward and lunge until shin of front leg is vertical and knee is at a 90-degree angle. Do not let rear foot turn out while executing lunge. Front heel should not lose contact with floor.



Intermediate (lateral) Lunge to Cossack Squats

From a standing position, take a large step to the side. Sit down and back, keeping both feet straight ahead. Shift bodyweight over support leg as other leg straightens. Reach out in front with arms to create a counterbalance. Maintain an upright chest and braced abdominals. After holding this position for 2-3 seconds, shift your body over to the opposite leg and hold for 2-3 seconds using the same pattern. Athletes should not raise their hips up while switching sides; however, they should remain low with the hips close to the ground. To make this more advanced (higher intensity) use a light weight or medicine ball.



Advanced (scorpion/curtsey)

From a standing position, step behind support leg and place top of foot on ground as support leg flexes. Shift weight back and down while maintaining support leg. Reach out in front with arms to create counterbalance.



PUSH-UP PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

Basic (45 degree angle)

Grasp a box or elevated beam with feet on the ground. Brace abdominals and do a push-up while keeping body in straight line and not dropping hips. Ideally, athletes would be at a 45 degree angle as their chest touches the box. Athletes should use this position if the basic push-up has technical flaws.



Basic

Begin in push-up position with bodyweight supported by hands and balls of feet. Do a push-up while keeping body in straight line and not dropping hips. For variety, stagger hand position, point toes or slightly extend one foot off floor.



Intermediate (decline)

Begin in push-up position with feet elevated on a box or mats. Do a push-up while keeping body in straight line and not dropping hips. For variety, stagger hand position, point toes or slightly extend one foot off floor.



Advanced (handstand)

Begin in handstand position. Do a normal push-up action (use spotter if needed). Change hand placement for added variety.



PULL-UP PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

Basic (horizontal)

Grasp a bar with feet supported by a box or mat. Brace abdominals, slightly squeeze shoulder blades and pull body up to bar at chest level. Make sure to keep body in straight line. Variations include changing kind of grip (i.e., overhand, underhand, alternating), width of grip and height of box. You can also lift one leg off support.



Intermediate

Grasp a bar. Brace abdominals, slightly squeeze shoulder blades and pull body up to bar at chest level. Variations include changing kind of grip, width of grip and adding external weight.



Advanced (slides)

Grasp a bar. Brace abdominals, slightly squeeze shoulder blades and pull body up toward one hand on bar. Without going back down, slide upper body across to other hand and return to down position. Do this in both directions. Variations include changing kind of grip, width of grip and adding external weight.



TOTAL BODY PROGRESSION

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

Basic (jumping jacks/long striders)

Do traditional jumping jacks. Be sure heels contact ground at each position, and knees and hips are slightly bent. Long striders are linear versions of jumping jacks. Swing straight arms (opposite arm/foot) from shoulder as feet split forward and backward in opposition.



Intermediate (squat thrusts)

From standing position, squat to balanced crouch position. Explode out to push-up position by forcefully extending hips and kicking heels out to straight position on balls of feet. Do not let hips drop to floor. Jump back to crouch position then stand.



Advanced (squat thrust jumps)

Same motion as intermediate squat thrust, but once you return to crouch position, jump as high as possible before returning to standing position.



Static Flexibility Exercises

Exercises provided by Lisa Martin, MS, LAT, ATC, CSCS, and Jeff Richter, CSCS of St. Vincent Sports Performance.

Hold each position for 20-30 seconds.

GLUTE PIRIFORMIS

Pretzel stretch

Sit on floor with left leg flexed at hip. Bend left knee so it is in line with left hip. Extend right leg behind you until top of foot is touching ground and leg is straight. While trying to achieve level hips, lean forward and place center of chest over left knee.



STATIC FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Hold position for 20-30 seconds.

HAMSTRING

Linear

Lie on back. Grasp right hamstring, keeping it straight, and pull toward chest. Keep left leg straight with toes pointed up and heel pressed down.



Lateral

Same position as linear, but turn out foot of leg pulled toward chest.



Medial

Same position as linear, but slightly turn in foot of leg pulled toward chest.



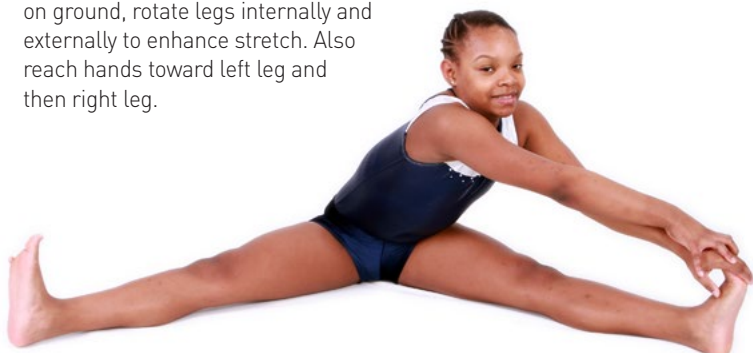
STATIC FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Hold position for 20-30 seconds.

GROIN

V-sit and reach

Sit up with legs apart and toes up. Do not round lower back. Reach forward with hands. If you can lay your torso and head on ground, rotate legs internally and externally to enhance stretch. Also reach hands toward left leg and then right leg.



Frog double

Lie on floor on stomach. Slide both knees along floor, bringing them as high as possible toward the chest. Extend legs to achieve a split single position. Roll hips internally and externally to change angle of stretch.

QUAD/HIP FLEXOR

Lunge with twist

Place elbow (same side of rear leg) outside front thigh of lunge leg. Use this arm to press on thigh and create rotation through core. Without arching low back, shift weight forward to stretch front of rear leg. Attempt to create a straight line from rear knee through each thigh to front knee.



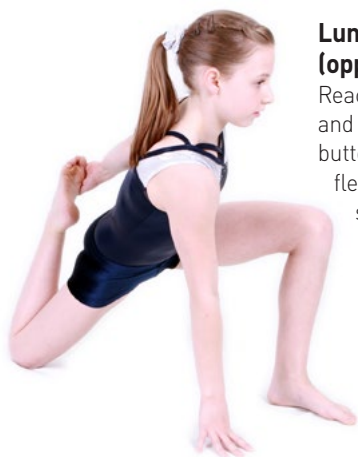
Lunge with elbow down

Place elbow (same side of rear leg) next to inside foot of lunge leg. Collapse core to create thigh separation from rear leg to front leg. Shift weight forward to stretch front of rear leg and back of front leg. Relax and breathe deeply because exhaling increases depth of stretch. Attempt to create a straight line from rear knee through each thigh to front of knee.



Lunge with reach back (opposite side)

Reach back with opposite arm of rear leg and grasp rear foot. Pull foot up toward buttocks for a front side quad and hip flexor stretch. Without arching back, shift weight forward to stretch front of rear leg. Attempt to create a straight line from rear knee through each thigh to front of knee.



Lunge with reach back (same side)

Reach back with arm of rear leg and grasp rear foot. Pull foot toward buttocks for a front side quad and hip flexor stretch. Without arching back, shift weight forward to stretch front of rear leg. Attempt to create a straight line from rear knee through each thigh to front of knee.

QUADRATUS LUMBORUM

Physio ball

You may need a spotter so you can relax and maintain position on physio ball. Lie on left side with ball under hip. Relax on ball and extend right arm and leg. Keep hips stacked on top of each other then slightly roll right shoulder toward ball.



Individual

Start in beginning position of V-sit with hands behind head. Lean to one side and place elbow along knee. Use elbow on thigh to press, causing rotation as you look up to ceiling.



Partner

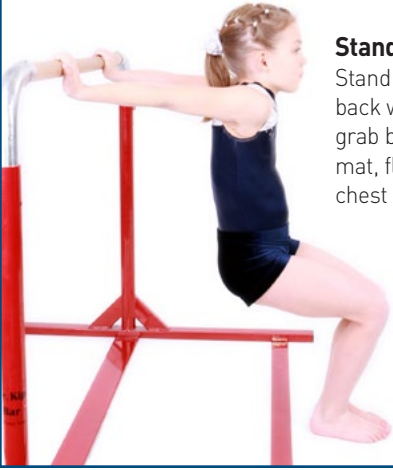
Same as the individual, but a spotter stands behind you and presses a hand on your shoulder blade. Spotter then uses other hand to reach under armpit and grasp front of shoulder. Spotter pulls gently, causing rotation as you look up to ceiling.



STATIC FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Hold position for 20-30 seconds.

ANTERIOR SHOULDER



Standing hands back bar stretch

Stand facing away from bar or mat. Reach back with palms down toward floor and grab bar. Move slightly away from bar or mat, flex at knees and slowly squat. Keep chest up and abdominals tight.

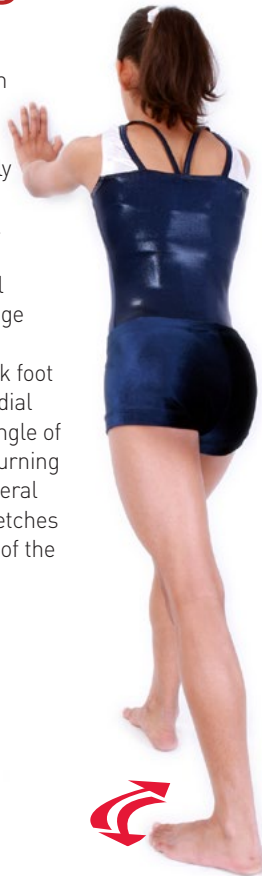
STATIC FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Hold position for 20-30 seconds.

CALVES

Gastrocnemius

Lean against wall in lunge position with back leg straight and front leg slightly flexed. Place both feet straight ahead. Lean into wall and do not let back heel leave ground. Change angle of stretch by slightly turning back foot in toward body (medial gastroc). Change angle of stretch by slightly turning back of foot out (lateral gastroc). These stretches hit all three angles of the gastrocnemius.



Soleus

Same as the gastrocnemius, but slightly bend knee of back leg



STATIC FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Hold position for 20-30 seconds.

ANTERIOR CHEST



Door stretch/ parallel bars

With hands up and elbows flexed to 90 degrees, lean into door frame or parallel bars. Keep elbows slightly below or even with shoulders. Keep chest upright and abdominals tight.

Partner chest stretch

Sit on floor with hands up and elbows flexed at 90 degrees. Have partner stand behind you and reach down to your inside forearm and grab inside upper arm at elbow. The partner should place his/her leg along your spine. As you relax, your partner will assist in bracing your core and gently pulling back on arms. If the elbows are higher, the stretch is centered higher on the chest muscle. Keep chest upright and abdominals tight.



STATIC FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Hold position for 20-30 seconds.

WRISTS



Flexion/extension

Grasp one hand and gently pull out and down. Alternately pull out and press back.



Medial/lateral

Grasp one hand and gently pull out and in. Alternately pull and press out.



Rolls

Roll wrists in circles in both directions.

STATIC FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Hold position for 20-30 seconds.

BALANCE PROGRESSION

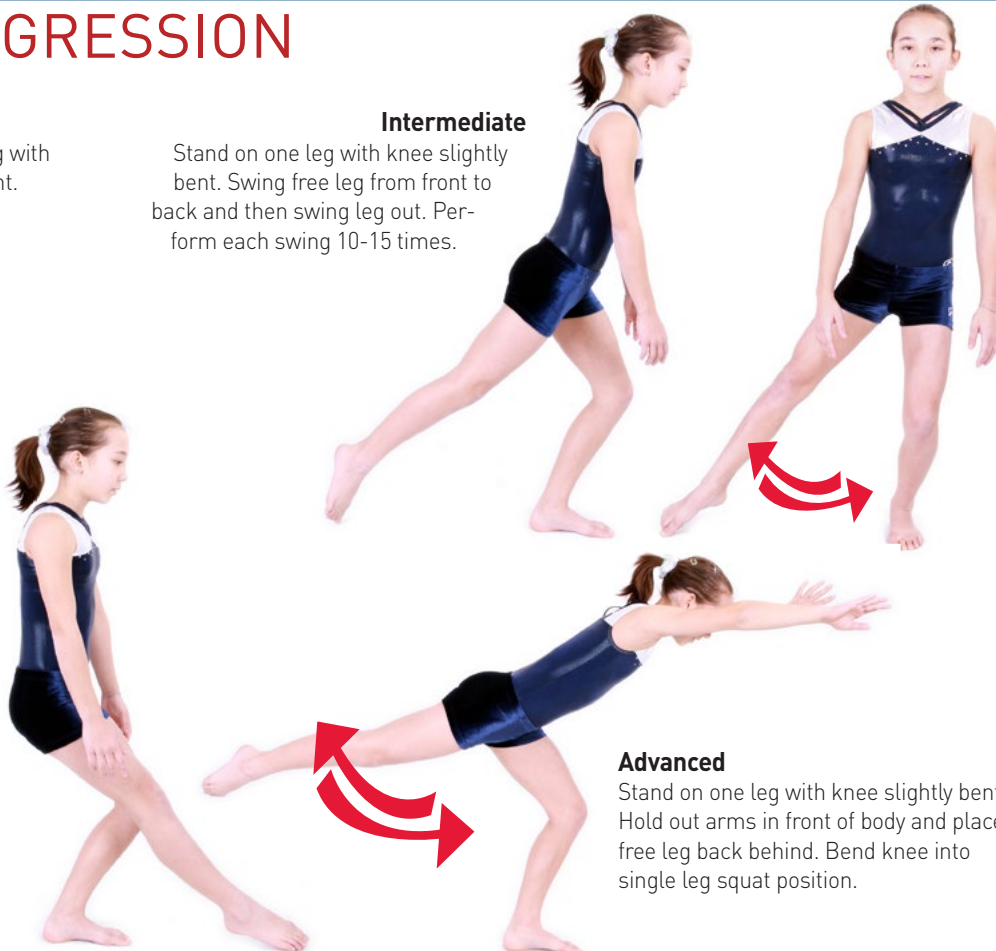
Basic

Stand on one leg with knee slightly bent.



Intermediate

Stand on one leg with knee slightly bent. Swing free leg from front to back and then swing leg out. Perform each swing 10-15 times.



Advanced

Stand on one leg with knee slightly bent. Hold out arms in front of body and place free leg back behind. Bend knee into single leg squat position.

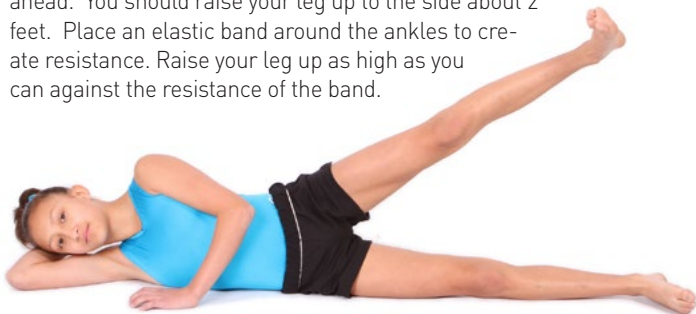
GLUTE PROGRESSIONS

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions

SIDE LYING GLUTE STRENGTHENING

Beginner (side lying glute single leg raises)

Lie on your side with a neutral back and hips fully extended. Raise the leg up-and-down while keeping the toes point straight ahead. You should raise your leg up to the side about 2 feet. Place an elastic band around the ankles to create resistance. Raise your leg up as high as you can against the resistance of the band.



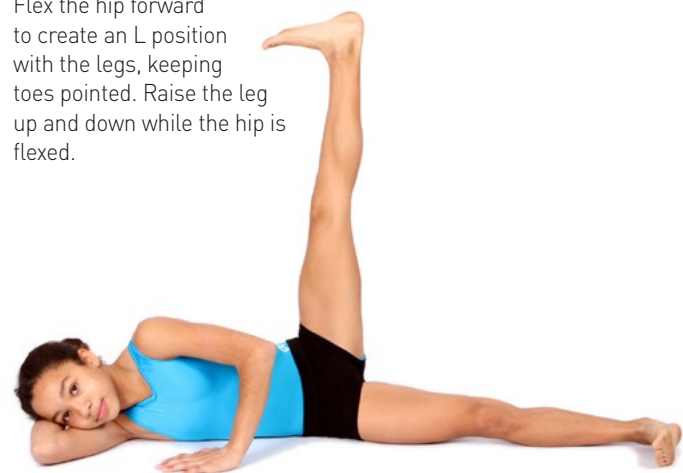
Intermediate (side lying leg circles)

Lie on your side with a neutral back and hips fully extended. Raise the leg up, to the front, down and to the back creating a circular motion, then reverse. Toes point straight ahead throughout the exercise.



Advanced (side lying hip flexion/leg raises)

Lie on your side with a neutral back and hips fully extended. Flex the hip forward to create an L position with the legs, keeping toes pointed. Raise the leg up and down while the hip is flexed.



CORE PROGRESSIONS

Do 1-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions

AB-HOLD POSITION PROGRESSIONS

Beginner (ab-hold position)

Lie on your back and bend your knees to align over the hip. The heel and knee should be parallel to the floor. Bring your shoulder blades off the ground so you are in a core flexion position. Maintain neutral neck with the lower back against the floor and hold.



Intermediate (ab-hold position with single leg push out)

Lie on your back and bend your knees to align over the hip. The heel and knee should be parallel to the floor. Bring your shoulder blades off the ground so you are in a core flexion position. Maintain neutral neck with the lower back against the floor. Push the heel out so one knee is extended. Hold the leg above the ground. Switch legs and repeat the motion. Lightly tap the heel to the ground to increase difficulty.



Advanced (ab-hold position with double leg press)

Lie on your back and bend your knees to align over the hip. The heel and knee should be parallel to the floor. Bring your shoulder blades off the ground so you are in a core flexion position. Maintain neutral neck with the lower back against the floor. Push both heels out with the feet together and knees extended. Hold both legs above the ground. Repeat the bend and straight motion. Lightly tap heels to the ground to increase difficulty.



USA GYMNASTICS
FITNESS
PROGRAM

NUTRITION
HANDOUTS





What's on your plate?



Before you eat, think about what and how much food goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl.

Over the day, include foods from all food groups: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods.



Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.



Make at least half your grains whole.



Switch to skim or 1% milk.



Vary your protein food choices.

Vegetables	Fruits	Grains	Dairy	Protein Foods
<p>Eat more red, orange, and dark-green veggies like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli in main dishes.</p> <p>Add beans or peas to salads (kidney or chickpeas), soups (split peas or lentils), and side dishes (pinto or baked beans), or serve as a main dish.</p> <p>Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables all count. Choose "reduced sodium" or "no-salt-added" canned veggies.</p>	<p>Use fruits as snacks, salads, and desserts. At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas or strawberries; add blueberries to pancakes.</p> <p>Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or 100% juice), as well as fresh fruits.</p> <p>Select 100% fruit juice when choosing juices.</p>	<p>Substitute whole-grain choices for refined-grain breads, bagels, rolls, breakfast cereals, crackers, rice, and pasta.</p> <p>Check the ingredients list on product labels for the words "whole" or "whole grain" before the grain ingredient name.</p> <p>Choose products that name a whole grain first on the ingredients list.</p>	<p>Choose skim (fat-free) or 1% (low-fat) milk. They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories.</p> <p>Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt.</p> <p>If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk or fortified soymilk (soy beverage).</p>	<p>Eat a variety of foods from the protein food group each week, such as seafood, beans and peas, and nuts as well as lean meats, poultry, and eggs.</p> <p>Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.</p> <p>Choose lean meats and ground beef that are at least 90% lean.</p> <p>Trim or drain fat from meat and remove skin from poultry to cut fat and calories.</p>

For a 2,000-calorie daily food plan, you need the amounts below from each food group.
To find amounts personalized for you, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov.

<p>Eat 2½ cups every day</p> <p>What counts as a cup? 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice; 2 cups of leafy salad greens</p>	<p>Eat 2 cups every day</p> <p>What counts as a cup? 1 cup of raw or cooked fruit or 100% fruit juice; ½ cup dried fruit</p>	<p>Eat 6 ounces every day</p> <p>What counts as an ounce? 1 slice of bread; ½ cup of cooked rice, cereal, or pasta; 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal</p>	<p>Get 3 cups every day</p> <p>What counts as a cup? 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or fortified soymilk; 1½ ounces natural or 2 ounces processed cheese</p>	<p>Eat 5½ ounces every day</p> <p>What counts as an ounce? 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 egg; 1 Tbsp peanut butter; ½ ounce nuts or seeds; ¼ cup beans or peas</p>
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Cut back on sodium and empty calories from solid fats and added sugars



Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy. Compare sodium in foods and choose those with a lower number.

Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Eat sugary desserts less often.

Make foods that are high in solid fats—such as cakes, cookies, ice cream, pizza, cheese, sausages, and hot dogs—occasional choices, not every day foods.

Limit empty calories to less than 260 per day, based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Be physically active your way

Pick activities you like and do each for at least 10 minutes at a time. Every bit adds up, and health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.

Children and adolescents: get 60 minutes or more a day.

Adults: get 2 hours and 30 minutes or more a week of activity that requires moderate effort, such as brisk walking.



U.S. Department of Agriculture • Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
August 2011
CNPP-25
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10 tips

Nutrition Education Series

choose MyPlate

10 tips to a great plate



Making food choices for a healthy lifestyle can be as simple as using these 10 Tips.

Use the ideas in this list to *balance your calories*, to choose foods to *eat more often*, and to cut back on foods to *eat less often*.

1 balance calories

Find out how many calories YOU need for a day as a first step in managing your weight. Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to find your calorie level. Being physically active also helps you balance calories.

2 enjoy your food, but eat less

Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it. Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Use them to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough.



3 avoid oversized portions

Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish, or take home part of your meal.

4 foods to eat more often

Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health—including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.



5 make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as dessert.

6 switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.



7 make half your grains whole grains

To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product—such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice.

8 foods to eat less often

Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. They include cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

9 compare sodium in foods

Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added.”



10 drink water instead of sugary drinks

Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar, and calories, in American diets.

10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

kid-friendly veggies and fruits

10 tips for making healthy foods more fun for children



Encourage children to eat vegetables and fruits by making it fun. Provide healthy ingredients and let kids help with preparation, based on their age and skills. Kids may try foods they avoided in the past if they helped make them.

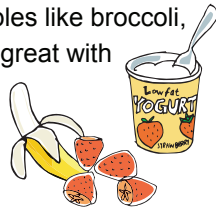
1 smoothie creations

Blend fat-free or low-fat yogurt or milk with fruit pieces and crushed ice. Use fresh, frozen, canned, and even overripe fruits. Try bananas, berries, peaches, and/or pineapple. If you freeze the fruit first, you can even skip the ice!



2 delicious dippers

Kids love to dip their foods. Whip up a quick dip for veggies with yogurt and seasonings such as herbs or garlic. Serve with raw vegetables like broccoli, carrots, or cauliflower. Fruit chunks go great with a yogurt and cinnamon or vanilla dip.



3 caterpillar kabobs

Assemble chunks of melon, apple, orange, and pear on skewers for a fruity kabob. For a raw veggie version, use vegetables like zucchini, cucumber, squash, sweet peppers, or tomatoes.

4 personalized pizzas

Set up a pizza-making station in the kitchen. Use whole-wheat English muffins, bagels, or pita bread as the crust. Have tomato sauce, low-fat cheese, and cut-up vegetables or fruits for toppings. Let kids choose their own favorites. Then pop the pizzas into the oven to warm.

5 fruity peanut butterfly

Start with carrot sticks or celery for the body. Attach wings made of thinly sliced apples with peanut butter and decorate with halved grapes or dried fruit.

6 frosty fruits

Frozen treats are bound to be popular in the warm months. Just put fresh fruits such as melon chunks in the freezer (rinse first). Make “popsicles” by inserting sticks into peeled bananas and freezing.

7 bugs on a log

Use celery, cucumber, or carrot sticks as the log and add peanut butter. Top with dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, or cherries, depending on what bugs you want!

8 homemade trail mix

Skip the pre-made trail mix and make your own. Use your favorite nuts and dried fruits, such as unsalted peanuts, cashews, walnuts, or sunflower seeds mixed with dried apples, pineapple, cherries, apricots, or raisins. Add whole-grain cereals to the mix, too.

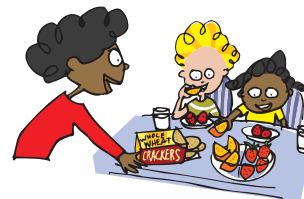


9 potato person

Decorate half a baked potato. Use sliced cherry tomatoes, peas, and low-fat cheese on the potato to make a funny face.

10 put kids in charge

Ask your child to name new veggie or fruit creations. Let them arrange raw veggies or fruits into a fun shape or design.



10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

cut back on your kid's sweet treats



10 tips to decrease added sugars

Limit the amount of foods and beverages with added sugars your kids eat and drink. If you don't buy them, your kids won't get them very often. Sweet treats and sugary drinks have a lot of calories but few nutrients. Most added sugars come from sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, juice drinks, cakes, cookies, ice cream, candy, and other desserts.

1 serve small portions

It's not necessary to get rid of all sweets and desserts. Show kids that a small amount of treats can go a long way. Use smaller bowls and plates for these foods. Have them share a candy bar or split a large cupcake.

2 sip smarter

Soda and other sweet drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories. Offer water, 100% juice, or fat-free milk when kids are thirsty.



3 use the check-out lane that does not display candy

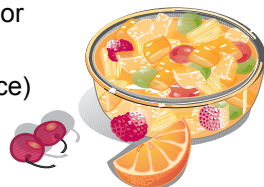
Most grocery stores will have a candy-free check-out lane to help moms out. Waiting in a store line makes it easy for children to ask for the candy that is right in front of their faces to tempt them.

4 choose not to offer sweets as rewards

By offering food as a reward for good behavior, children learn to think that some foods are better than other foods. Reward your child with kind words and comforting hugs, or give them non-food items, like stickers, to make them feel special.

5 make fruit the everyday dessert

Serve baked apples, pears, or enjoy a fruit salad. Or, serve yummy frozen juice bars (100% juice) instead of high-calorie desserts.



6 make food fun

Sugary foods that are marketed to kids are advertised as "fun foods." Make nutritious foods fun by preparing them with your child's help and being creative together. Create a smiley face with sliced bananas and raisins. Cut fruit into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

7 encourage kids to invent new snacks

Make your own snack mixes from dry whole-grain cereal, dried fruit, and unsalted nuts or seeds. Provide the ingredients and allow kids to choose what they want in their "new" snack.



8 play detective in the cereal aisle

Show kids how to find the amount of total sugars in various cereals. Challenge them to compare cereals they like and select the one with the lowest amount of sugar.

9 make treats "treats," not everyday foods

Treats are great once in a while. Just don't make treat foods an everyday thing. Limit sweet treats to special occasions.

10 if kids don't eat their meal, they don't need sweet "extras"

Keep in mind that candy or cookies should not replace foods that are not eaten at meal time.

10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

add more vegetables to your day



10 tips to help you eat more vegetables

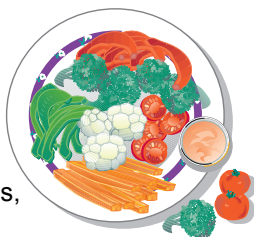
It's easy to eat more vegetables! Eating vegetables is important because they provide vitamins and minerals and most are low in calories. To fit more vegetables in your meals, follow these simple tips. It is easier than you may think.

1 discover fast ways to cook

Cook fresh or frozen vegetables in the microwave for a quick-and-easy dish to add to any meal. Steam green beans, carrots, or broccoli in a bowl with a small amount of water in the microwave for a quick side dish.

2 be ahead of the game

Cut up a batch of bell peppers, carrots, or broccoli. Pre-package them to use when time is limited. You can enjoy them on a salad, with hummus, or in a veggie wrap.



3 choose vegetables rich in color

Brighten your plate with vegetables that are red, orange, or dark green. They are full of vitamins and minerals. Try acorn squash, cherry tomatoes, sweet potatoes, or collard greens. They not only taste great but also are good for you, too.

4 check the freezer aisle

Frozen vegetables are quick and easy to use and are just as nutritious as fresh veggies. Try adding frozen corn, peas, green beans, spinach, or sugar snap peas to some of your favorite dishes or eat as a side dish.

5 stock up on veggies

Canned vegetables are a great addition to any meal, so keep on hand canned tomatoes, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, mushrooms, and beets. Select those labeled as “reduced sodium,” “low sodium,” or “no salt added.”



6 make your garden salad glow with color

Brighten your salad by using colorful vegetables such as black beans, sliced red bell peppers, shredded radishes, chopped red cabbage, or watercress. Your salad will not only look good but taste good, too.



7 sip on some vegetable soup

Heat it and eat it. Try tomato, butternut squash, or garden vegetable soup. Look for reduced- or low-sodium soups.

8 while you're out

If dinner is away from home, no need to worry. When ordering, ask for an extra side of vegetables or side salad instead of the typical fried side dish.

9 savor the flavor of seasonal vegetables

Buy vegetables that are in season for maximum flavor at a lower cost. Check your local supermarket specials for the best-in-season buys. Or visit your local farmer's market.



10 try something new

You never know what you may like. Choose a new vegetable—add it to your recipe or look up how to fix it online.

10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

liven up your meals with vegetables and fruits



10 tips to improve your meals with vegetables and fruits

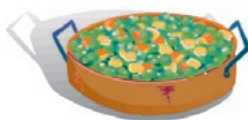
Discover the many benefits of adding vegetables and fruits to your meals. They are low in fat and calories, while providing fiber and other key nutrients. Most Americans should eat more than 3 cups—and for some, up to 6 cups—of vegetables and fruits each day. Vegetables and fruits don't just add nutrition to meals. They can also add color, flavor, and texture. Explore these creative ways to bring healthy foods to your table.

1 fire up the grill

Use the grill to cook vegetables and fruits. Try grilling mushrooms, carrots, peppers, or potatoes on a kabob skewer. Brush with oil to keep them from drying out. Grilled fruits like peaches, pineapple, or mangos add great flavor to a cookout.

2 expand the flavor of your casseroles

Mix vegetables such as sauteed onions, peas, pinto beans, or tomatoes into your favorite dish for that extra flavor.



3 planning something Italian?

Add extra vegetables to your pasta dish. Slip some peppers, spinach, red beans, onions, or cherry tomatoes into your traditional tomato sauce. Vegetables provide texture and low-calorie bulk that satisfies.

4 get creative with your salad

Toss in shredded carrots, strawberries, spinach, watercress, orange segments, or sweet peas for a flavorful, fun salad.

5 salad bars aren't just for salads

Try eating sliced fruit from the salad bar as your dessert when dining out. This will help you avoid any baked desserts that are high in calories.

6 get in on the stir-frying fun

Try something new! Stir-fry your veggies—like broccoli, carrots, sugar snap peas, mushrooms, or green beans—for a quick-and-easy addition to any meal.

7 add them to your sandwiches

Whether it is a sandwich or wrap, vegetables make great additions to both. Try sliced tomatoes, romaine lettuce, or avocado on your everyday sandwich or wrap for extra flavor.



8 be creative with your baked goods

Add apples, bananas, blueberries, or pears to your favorite muffin recipe for a treat.

9 make a tasty fruit smoothie

For dessert, blend strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries with frozen bananas and 100% fruit juice for a delicious frozen fruit smoothie.



10 liven up an omelet

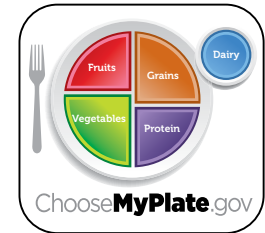
Boost the color and flavor of your morning omelet with vegetables. Simply chop, saute, and add them to the egg as it cooks. Try combining different vegetables, such as mushrooms, spinach, onions, or bell peppers.

10 tips

Nutrition Education Series



the **School Day**
just got
Healthier
United States Department of Agriculture



Nearly 32 million children receive meals throughout the school day. These meals are based on nutrition standards from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. New nutrition standards for schools increase access to healthy food and encourage kids to make smart choices. Schools are working to make meals more nutritious, keep all students hunger-free, and help children maintain or reach a healthy weight.

1 healthier school meals for your children

Your children benefit from healthier meals that include more whole grains, fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, lower sodium foods, and less saturated fat. Talk to your child about the changes in the meals served at school.

2 more fruits and vegetables every day

Kids have fruits and vegetables at school every day. A variety of vegetables are served throughout the week including red, orange, and dark-green vegetables.



3 more whole-grain foods

Half of all grains offered are whole-grain-rich foods such as whole-grain pasta, brown rice, and oatmeal. Some foods are made by replacing half the refined-grain (white) flour with whole-grain flour.



4 both low-fat milk (1%) and fat-free milk varieties are offered

Children get the same calcium and other nutrients, but with fewer calories and less saturated fat by drinking low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk. For children who can't drink milk due to allergies or lactose intolerance, schools can offer milk substitutes, such as calcium-fortified soy beverages.



5 less saturated fat and salt

A variety of foods are offered to reduce the salt and saturated fat in school meals. Main dishes may include beans, peas, nuts, tofu, or seafood as well as lean meats or poultry. Ingredients and foods contain less salt (sodium).



6 more water

Schools can provide water pitchers and cups on lunch tables, a water fountain, or a faucet that allows students to fill their own bottles or cups with drinking water. Water is available where meals are served.

7 new portion sizes

School meals meet children's calorie needs, based on their age. While some portions may be smaller, kids still get the nutrition they need to keep them growing and active.

8 stronger local wellness programs

New policies offer opportunities for parents and communities to create wellness programs that address local needs. Talk with your principal, teachers, school board, parent-teacher association, and others to create a strong wellness program in your community.

9 MyPlate can help kids make better food choices

Show children how to make healthy food choices at school by using MyPlate. Visit ChooseMyPlate.gov for tips and resources.



10 resources for parents

School meal programs can provide much of what children need for health and growth. But for many parents, buying healthy foods at home is a challenge. Learn more about healthy school meals and other nutrition assistance programs at www.fns.usda.gov.

Daily Exercise Log

Participant's Name _____

Gym Club _____

Date Started _____

Week _____	Activities	#of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
Mon		
Tues		
Wed		
Thurs		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
GOALS		

Week _____	Activities	#of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
Mon		
Tues		
Wed		
Thurs		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
GOALS		

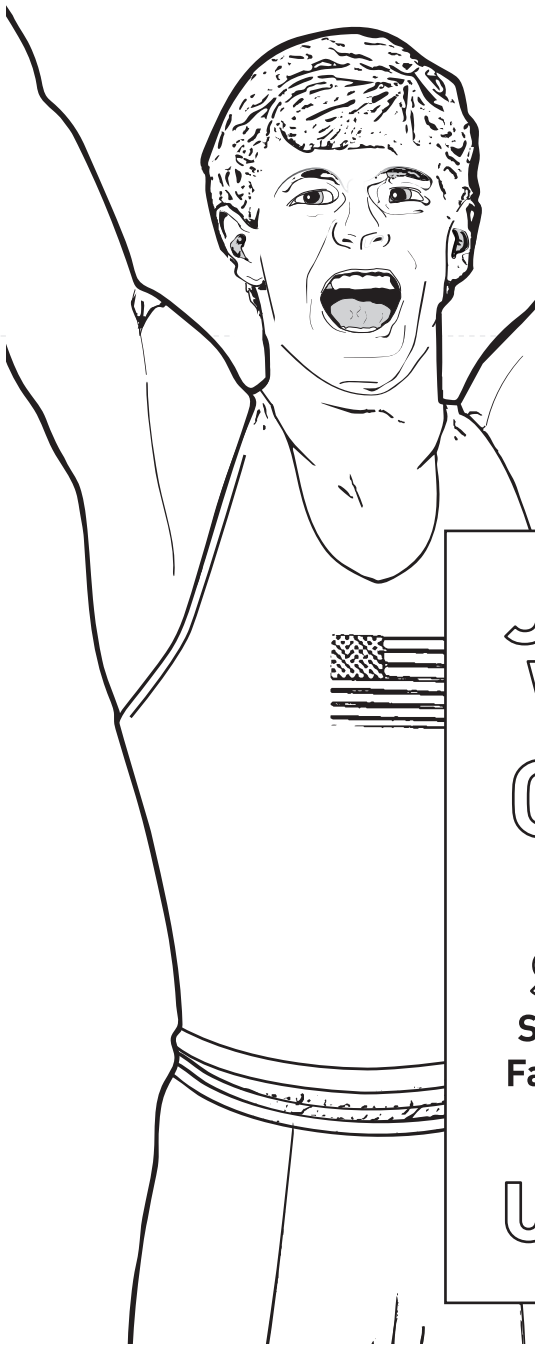
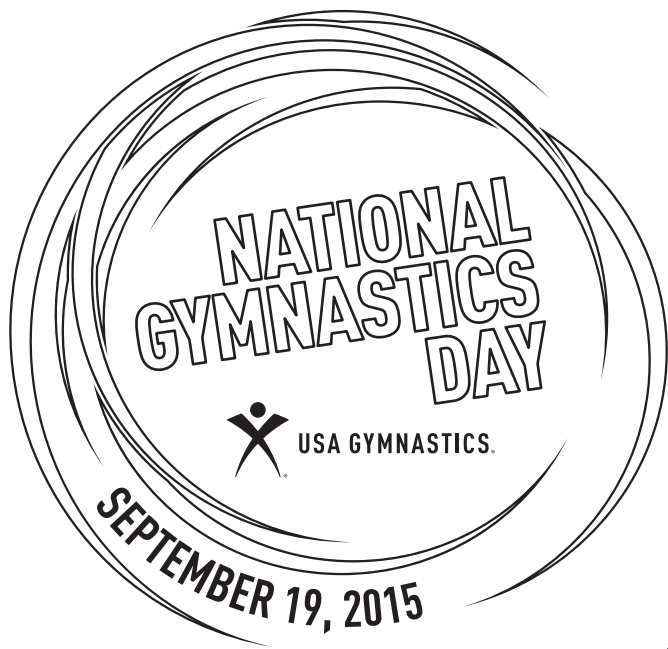
Week _____	Activities	#of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
Mon		
Tues		
Wed		
Thurs		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
GOALS		

Week _____	Activities	#of Minutes or Pedometer Steps
Mon		
Tues		
Wed		
Thurs		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
GOALS		

Fitness and Nutritional Goals _____

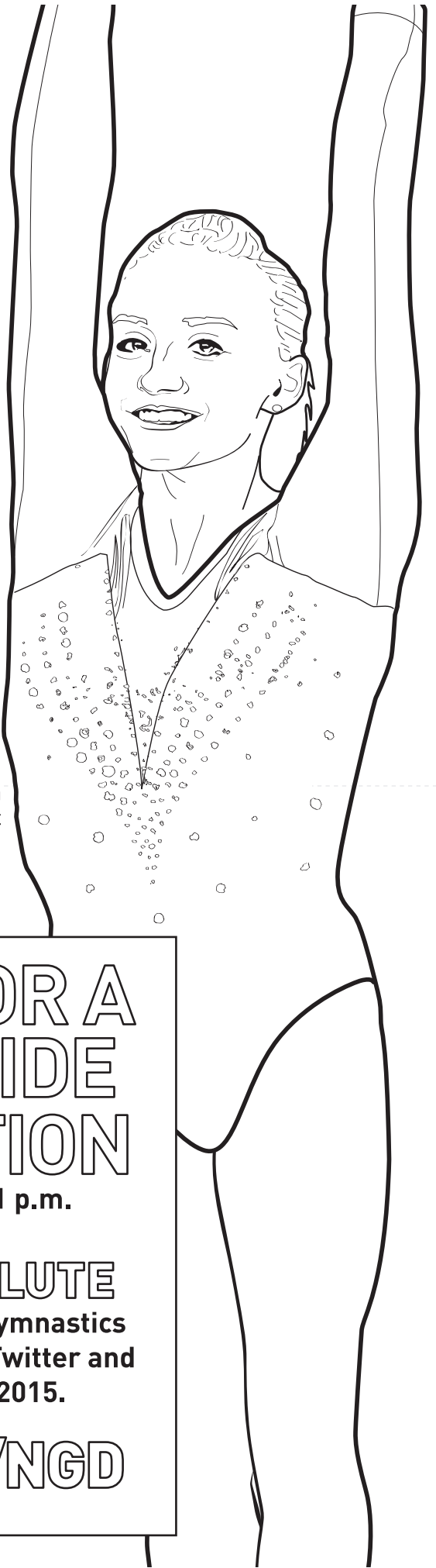


www.usagym.org/fitness



Nastia Liukin
2008 Olympic Gold Medalist

Peter Vidmar
1984 Olympic Gold Medalist



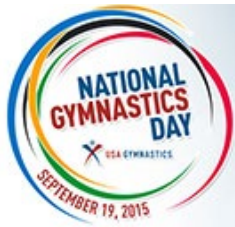
JOIN US FOR A WORLD WIDE CELEBRATION

September 19, 2015 at 1 p.m.

SHOW YOUR SALUTE

Submit photos to the USA Gymnastics
Facebook page and post on Twitter and
Instagram using #NGD2015.

USAGym.org/NGD



CELEBRATE National Gymnastics Day!



Celebrate National Gymnastics Day with USA Gymnastics!

Mark your calendar for the 16th annual National Gymnastics Day taking place Sept. 19, 2015. All gymnasts, coaches, gymnastics clubs and fans are invited to celebrate the sport with USA Gymnastics!

USA Gymnastics is proud to partner with Member Clubs across the country to highlight the impact fitness through gymnastics and play for kids.

Hosting events at your club will:

- Draw media coverage of philanthropic activities as corporate promotion
- Provide national recognition of participating advocate clubs
- Create a direct impact in the immediate community near the club
- Create a club mission
- Provide a day of play without a team commitment/ liability
- Generate new interest for new participants in gymnastics classes

Visit usagym.org/ngd

THANK YOU!

By hosting the USA Gymnastics Fitness Program, you have taken an active role in your community merely by doing something you love: teaching gymnastics. The skills your students learn in this program will provide a basis for them to participate in other sports and activities. In addition, these kids will gain not only healthy lifestyle habits, but also self-confidence and socialization skills.

Please visit www.usagym.org/fitness for additional resources related to this program. Thank you once again for your participation in the 2015 USA Gymnastics Fitness Program. We hope that helping children through this program will be a tradition in your gym club for years to come.

Acknowledgements

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