

## TUMBLING TIPS

### **Attend Class on a Regular Basis:**

Attending class every week is very important. When athletes miss a class, it can set them back three weeks! Missing just one class means that two weeks will have passed before they are back in the gym. Then, they spend that first class back knocking off the rust and working to get back to where they were. After that, the next time they are in the gym, it will have been three weeks since their last consistent class. Now, they are just getting back to where they were before they missed class several weeks before. It is vital that they are consistent with class attendance to promote consistent progression.

### **“Perfect” Practice Makes Perfect:**

Attending class only once a week is not enough to progress at a fast pace. When given the opportunity (in a safe environment), athletes need to practice the skills they are perfecting that do NOT require a spot. When doing this, they need to do so to the best of their ability, just as they would in tumbling class. If they are practicing incorrectly, it will actually cause them to pick up bad habits, which can be difficult to correct when they are back in the gym for their regular tumbling class. Sloppy practice can cause negative results instead of the athlete making gains. This philosophy is also relevant during their tumbling class. They need to pay close attention to the coaches and try to make the corrections that are given to them. If they do not understand the instructions they are given, it is imperative that they let their coaches know. This will allow the coach to explain things from a different perspective. A key factor in progression is for athletes to understand what is being asked of them.

### **Perfection Before Progression:**

For many athletes, there will be times during their training when they feel that they are ready to move on to the next skill, but their coach is still having them repeat their current skills over and over. In fact, it is possible that they may even be able to physically “throw the next skill” but just because they “could” doesn’t mean they “should”. Unfortunately, progression is a slow process. Perfecting each skill to the best of their ability, before moving on to the next, will help ensure success when performing advanced skills. Attempting skills before they’re mentally AND physically ready can result in bad technique, prevent them from acquiring advanced skills, and create the potential for injury. Train hard. Master each skill. And, above all, be patient. It will pay off in the end!

### **Conditioning and Flexibility:**

Being in top physical condition will give an athlete a competitive edge on gaining skills. Exercises, such as push-ups, sit-ups, and running, are essential. There are literally hundreds of different exercises that can be done to help one become a better athlete. Get creative here. Exercising can be fun!

One of the most important aspects of tumbling is flexibility. Without it, an athlete will only progress so far. Regular performance of the stretches that are done at the beginning of every tumbling class is essential. These stretches should be performed on a daily basis. One of the most neglected stretches is the bridge. This particular stretch provides athletes the back and shoulder flexibility that is required to obtain their backbend, front walkover, back walkover, back handspring, etc. All stretches should be held for a minimum of 30 seconds and should be pushed to the limit of flexibility WITHOUT causing pain. When stretching, there will be some slight discomfort, but there should never be pain. We want our athletes stretching to prevent injury and not become injured because of stretching.

### **Take Additional Classes or Private Lessons:**

Taking additional classes each week or adding private lessons will definitely speed up an athlete’s progression. The additional training will not only increase their efforts but will also keep their skills sharper. The less time there is between each tumbling class, the more muscle memory they will develop. This is one of the best ways to speed up the progression of tumbling.

### **Trust the Coaches (Attention Parents):**

This tip is specifically for the parents. We understand that you want your child to progress quickly. That is our goal, as well. Please let the coaches do the coaching. More times than not, when parents try to coach from the waiting area, spot their child at home, get angry at them because they aren’t “getting that back handspring”, compare their child’s tumbling to Suzie Q, and remind them how much money they are spending for tumbling, they are actually causing unneeded pressure and anxiety for their child, which results in the athletes doing poorly in class. The best thing that parents can do is believe in their children, encourage them to always give their best effort, tell them to have fun, and let them know that they are loved. They will progress much faster if you do this.

We hope you have found these tips useful. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask your child’s tumbling coach. We look forward to seeing your children succeed in their goals!!!