

GYMNASTICS GENERAL GUIDELINES

ALL GRADES

The Basic Movement Pattern (BMP) approach to gymnastics used in the Saskatchewan physical education curriculum is such that safety considerations are built into the program. By teaching landings - one of the basic movement patterns - teachers prevent injuries. Many injuries that occur in a gymnastics context - and in other physical activities - are the result of landing incorrectly. Teach students how to land safely in a variety of situations and have students practice landings regularly so they are learned to the point of becoming reflex reactions.

Spotting - manual assistance provided to participants while performing skills on the floor or on equipment - is not appropriate in the elementary gymnastics program. Many gymnastics injuries are the result of attempting skills that students are not ready to perform. If the student needs spotting, this is a good indication that the student lacks the necessary physical or motor skills. Rather than have the student attempt the skill with a "spot", more activities that lead up to the skill can be provided. Not only does this approach prevent the tendency for students to become dependent on a spotter, it reflects the reality that in a large group setting the teacher cannot spot all the students.

Don't force students to perform skills that are beyond their level of ability. When a student displays hesitation verbally or non-verbally, discuss the reason(s) for doubt with the student. After the discussion, if the teacher believes that a potentially hesitancy during the performance of the skill could put the student at risk, the student can be directed toward a more basic skill.

Mat work comes before use of equipment. A teacher who is unfamiliar with any gymnastics equipment can seek assistance from appropriate support staff/or refrain from using the equipment until help is received.

Skills are best taught in a logical progression from simple to complex. Student who demonstrate control of basic movement patterns are ready to go on to more complicated skills. For example, a landing on the feet should be performed with control on the floor before working on an elevated surface such as a box horse.