

# Gymnastics (Mat Work)

## Body Movement Patterns While Using Equipment.

### ELEMENTARY - INTRAMURAL 2023

- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- The safety standards for this activity must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed in the safety standards. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).

## Equipment

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- Determine that all equipment is safe for use (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters). Students must be encouraged to report equipment problems to the teacher.
- Regularly check mats for wear and tears.
- Mats with velcro must be attached together when multiple mats are used to make a larger mat surface.
- General utility mats (5cm/2") are to be used for floor work and tumbling and landing on feet from a low controlled height. When general utility mats (5cm/2") are used, a student must not jump from a height higher than their own chest height.
- General utility mats (5cm/2") must be:
  - situated around/under apparatus such that mats must not overlap or have open spaces.
  - composed of the following types of shock absorbing foams:
    - closed cell/cross-linked polyethylene foam 5cm (2")

- open cell polyurethane foam (100 Indentation Force Deflection (I.F.D.) minimum) 5cm (2")
- dual density foam 5cm (2")
- mats of equivalent compaction rating as determined by manufacturer

Refer to the [First Aid](#) section for first aid equipment requirements.

## Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

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- Appropriate clothing and footwear must be worn.
- Bare feet, running shoes or gymnastic slippers must be worn.
- No sock feet are permitted.
- No jewellery is permitted.
- Tie back long hair and remove hair clips.
- Secure or remove eyeglasses.
- Students must not participate when the length of fingernails poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

## Facilities

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- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the teacher.
- Playing surface and surrounding area must be free of all obstacles and must provide safe footing and traction.
- Floor plan must allow enough space from walls and from pieces of apparatus for safe movement.
- Allow for movement landings at safe distances away from walls and other equipment.
- Walls, stages, equipment, trees, and posts must not be used as turning points, finish lines, end zones, or boundaries. Establish a clearly delineated boundary line away from the hazards, using visual

markers (for example, lines, pylons), to prevent contact/collision.

- Consult [General Safety Standards for Facilities](#) for the opening and closing of gymnasium divider doors/curtains.
- When running takes place off school site for a warm up:
  - Teachers must do a safety check 'walk through' in order to identify potential problems prior to initial use of route or course.
  - Teachers must outline to the students the route or course (for example, notice of areas to approach with caution) before the start of the run.
  - Teachers must determine that students are not crossing busy intersections unless directly supervised.

## Special Rules/Instructions

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- Be aware of students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion, orthopaedic device) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).
- Students must not participate in the activity until they receive information on concussion prevention specific to the activity, inherent risks of the activity (for example, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks), and procedures and rules for safe play. Students must receive instruction on the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Refer to school board policies and procedures (i.e., transportation, excursion/field trip) for communication with parents/guardians, the location of an off-site activity, means of transportation, supervision ratios, and parent/guardian permission.
- Activities must be modified according to the age, ability level, language, and experience of students, number of participants, and the facility available.
- Previous training, fitness level, and the length of time and intensity of physical activity must be taken into consideration.
- Activities must be based on skills that are taught.

- Skills must be taught in proper progression.
- A proper warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- While moving, students must not be required to close their eyes or be blind-folded.
- Emphasize controlled movement when requiring students to walk or run backwards. Backward-running races are not permitted.
- Students must be instructed not to attempt:
  - aerial somersaults
  - extended dive rolls (for example, dive rolls for distance, diving over bodies)
  - front handsprings
  - back handsprings
  - back head rolls
  - headstands
- Mat work must precede apparatus.
- Observe that students demonstrate control of basic movement before moving to higher level skills (for example, rotations on mats before performing on apparatus, and perform landings before working on elevated equipment).
- Inversions permitted following teacher instruction, and after student has demonstrated skill progressions.
- Mats must be placed on floor soft-side up.
- When mats are placed end-to-end, they must be securely fastened on Velcro strips.
- When a student displays hesitation (verbally or non-verbally) with participating, the teacher must determine the reason(s) for doubt. If the teacher believes that a potential hesitancy during the skill could put the student at risk, the student must be directed toward a more basic skill, or be permitted to select a role within the activity at their comfort level, including the choice to not participate.

- Prior to participation, the teacher must reference and apply their school board's policy on equity and inclusion as it affects student participation and makes appropriate accommodations/modifications to provide a safe learning environment. Consult the Intent subsection within the [About section](#).
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.

## Spotting

- Spotting is initially the role of the teacher, and then may progress to students who have been trained by the teacher.
- Responsibilities vary with the age, strength and experience of the student.
- Grades 1-3: students are involved in non-contact spotting only (for example, keeping approach and landing areas clear).
- Grades 4-6: students are involved in non-contact spotting as above, as well as giving verbal cues and checking placement of mats and stability of equipment. Students can also help peers maintain a non-inverted static balance on benches/ boxes/mats.
- Grades 7-8: students can do all of the spotting that students in grades 1 to 6 can do, plus help peers maintain balance on mats and simple vaults on hip-high horses.

## Supervision

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- All activities must be supervised.
- Mat work requires on-site supervision.
- The level of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, and environmental conditions.
- A volunteer could assist in the supervision of physical education activities. Examples of volunteers are educational assistants, retired teachers, co-op students, parents/guardians, early childhood educators, and teacher candidates. Refer to your school board's policy regarding volunteers. These volunteers

must be accompanied by a supervisor.

- A teacher who is providing instruction and is unfamiliar with the activity (for example, no recent experience) must refrain from teaching the activity until assistance is provided by an appropriately trained staff or training is received.

## First Aid

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- A fully stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible. (Consult [Sample First Aid Kit](#))
- A working communication device (for example, cell phone) must be accessible.
- Follow the school's first aid emergency response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)) and the school board's concussion protocol (consult [Concussions](#)).
- An emergency action plan and response to deal with evacuations and lock downs must be followed and communicated to students.

## Definitions

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- **In-charge Person:**
  - Some activities refer to an "In-Charge" person. While the teacher is in-charge and responsible for the overall safety and well-being of students under their care, sometimes there are other personnel who must be identified as "In-Charge" related to specific situations (for example, a pool lifeguard). In activities where an "In-Charge" person is designated, that person, in consultation with the teacher, must make final decisions regarding safety of the students
- **Supervision:**
  - The vigilant overseeing of an activity for regulation or direction. Activities, facilities, and equipment have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.

- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education designate three categories of supervision, Constant visual supervision, On-site supervision, and In-the-area supervision. The categories take into consideration the risk level of the activity, the participants' skill level and the participants' maturity. The three levels of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that an activity requires and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.

- **Supervisor:**

- A supervisor is defined as a teacher, vice-principal or principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board. The supervisor is legally responsible for the students.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Constant Visual Supervision:**

- Constant visual supervision means that the teacher is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring "Constant visual" supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For high jump, the teacher is at the high jump area and is observing the activity.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For parachute, the intramural supervisor is at the event and is observing activity.

- **In-the-area Supervision:**

- In-the-area supervision means that the teacher could be in the gymnasium while another activity is taking place in an area adjacent to the gymnasium. In-the-area supervision

requires the teacher to be readily accessible.

- In-the-area supervision occurs:
    - in activities in which students may be out of sight for periods of time and the location of the teacher is not nearby (for example, alpine skiing, cross-country running). At least one of the following criteria must be in place:
      - The teacher is circulating
      - The location of teacher has been communicated to students and volunteers
    - in single activities and those that may be combined (for example, other in- the- area activities such as badminton, table tennis, handball – wall) with the following criteria in place:
      - The teacher must be circulating between the activities and readily accessible
      - The teacher informs students of the location of the activities
  - Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For distance running, the students are running around the school and at times may be out of sight.
  - Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For a scavenger hunt, the students are running around the school grounds and at times may be out of sight.
- **On-site Supervision:**
- On-site supervision entails teacher presence but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity. Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (for example, equipment room) to the gym is considered part of “on-site supervision”.



- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For a relay, the students are practising on the track and can be seen by the teacher who is with the high jumpers.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For relay games, the students are participating on the playground and can be seen by the intramural supervisor.

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