

# gym tiME Tumbling Philosophy

## *Tumbling classes at gym tiME...what to expect?*

***Common Questions...Why are there PRE- REQUISITES for each level? I thought they would be throwing more Back handsprings in class? Why do they only throw the skill at the end, how will they learn how to do it unless they are constantly throwing it?***

### ***How long does it take to learn..?***

As the owner, I've received numerous questions as to why we teach our classes the way we do. My philosophy is based on a curriculum that I have designed based on the class and then broken down to each individual student (tumbler, gymnast). **My philosophy is to teach skills using proper building blocks.** To be a successful coach I must always strive for growth, specifically growth in knowledge, there are no "correct" ways to teach. Most coaches determine their philosophy through trial and error. Every child is different and every child learns in different ways. It is important when coaching to keep that in mind. Learning how to breakdown a skill maybe require different approaches based on your tumbler's cognitive or physical abilities.

For almost two decades, I have had the opportunity to coach multiple sports; sports I have personally achieved great accomplishments in, as well as sports I have never personally played. However, as a coach my success in motivating and progressing my athletes has always been exemplary. This, as a result, directly correlates to my academic accomplishments. I am a career COACH! I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Science as well as a Master of Education degree in Health & Physical Education. My studies focused on learning the human body; how it works, what muscles cause what reactions, anterior vs posterior. In athletics we study the angles of the body and the torque and/or power it needs to move effectively. In gymnastics, the entire body is your most crucial tool. Your strength, flexibility, balance and control determines how easily and quickly the body reacts to movement. However, the ability to cognitively apply that correction appropriately will determine your growth.

So to answer the question, "why do you do what you do at gym tiME"? It's because I have learned that your body will only perform when it is ready and able to handle what you are asking it to do. If you want to run faster (outside of fixing technique) the first change you need to do is to strengthen your hamstrings. An example would be your body knows it will only go as fast as your body is capable of slowing down, and your hamstrings are your breaks! Here at gym tiME we do not skip steps, we are simply using building blocks to master the technique. I do not believe that throwing an incorrect back handspring will benefit a gymnast in anyway. All it does is make incorrect muscle memory for your body to use. It makes our job harder when we have to re-teach proper technique as the similar muscle memory is difficult for your brain to decipher which one to use when asked, the proper technique or the incorrect technique.

Beware of the coach or gym that tells you they can teach your child a back handspring in a month or two when your child has had no tumbling training. It is not uncommon for a parent to express to us that their child almost has their Back handspring as they've been spotted before, but when assessed, we find that the spotter is doing all the work. We have parents that don't understand why their child can perform a back handspring on a trampoline, but not on a mat. We know that the trampoline takes place of the required jump and a shoulder pop is needed to perform if on the ground.

Usually around the same time of year, right before cheerleading tryouts, we are flooded with calls from anxious parents wanting their child to master a certain skill quickly. What they don't understand is that a back handspring comes from precise building blocks leading up to this popular skill. If you skip bridges, backbends, and handstands you are less likely to be successful, at the very least, tumblers will develop bad habits when it comes to technique. Poor technique leads to safety issues, overuse injuries, and the inability to progress past the back handspring to perform more advance skills in the future.

If your legs are not strong enough to propel your body properly during a jump, then you will not have enough power to complete your back handspring. We have found that a vertical jump of a least 10 inches is a fairly good indicator of enough lower body power.

If you do not have the flexibility to perform a proper bridge with open shoulders, then your center of gravity will not be moving in the correct direction which as a result will find your tumbler on their head.

The “sit and lean” technique must be correct, or the jump will be too high or too low which will result in an undercut or worse flat on their back or neck.

Trying to learn a back handspring in a hurry with taking short cuts or simply “just throwing it”, will most likely lead to technical flaws, and can be extremely dangerous.

### **There are NO SAFE SHORTCUTS!!!**

Here at gym tiME we are a “Building Block” philosophy tumbling program where tumblers are taught each phase of the skill they are looking to perform. When each phase is perfected the skill will come together and be successful. Repetition is required for successful results. We are never looking to hold a tumbler back, there is nothing personal to that, we don’t benefit from lack of progression. The knowledge we have only makes up 10% of the outcome, the other 90% comes from within the tumblers themselves, their ability or inability to apply physiological corrections and/or make cognitive decisions.

What you may see in our classrooms may not make sense to you all time, but there is a complete thought process behind it all. Always feel free to speak to your tumbling coach as they would be more than willing to discuss their thought process on your tumblers progression.

gym tiME prides itself on our tumblers progression, as we have seen amazing growth amongst our clients. Progression happens quickly based on building blocks. On average, our tumblers can master their round off back handspring within two weeks of mastering their back handspring. One reason being we train round offs and back handsprings at the same time. We also see huge growth between back tucks, layouts and twists all based on the tumblers ability to set using the proper arms. However, learning the back tuck takes far more time because the concept of setting is so difficult to grasp. Every child learns at their own pace – the body is no different. Tumbling requires patience, consistency and perseverance.

**The following are required phases per skill, which are used when a coach is determining what training drills to utilize, which is based on the tumblers weakness or experience level. A beginning tumbler will train with all drills to teach each phase. A coach may use a specific drill based on a phase the**

**tumbler may be having trouble executing.**

#### **Round off Phases:**

1. Hurdle
  - a. Run Approach
  - b. Jump, jump, Step (arms up)
  - c. Proper Lean
  - d. Push thru hurdle foot kick hard back for power
2. Fast Rotation – inside arm under and outside arm over reach beyond the ear
3. Straight Body passing thru handstand (Head in – core long – leg together)
4. Shoulder Pop – Hip Rotation mid air
5. Hips open Arms up connection
6. Proper Rebound

#### **Back handspring Phases:**

1. Sit and Lean
2. Jump Back to open arch
3. Arch/Hollow pull from the core for starting snap
4. Shoulder Pop
5. Rebound

**Back Handspring Back Tuck Connection Phase:**

1. The ability to change directions – BHS is long and Back Tuck goes up
2. Rebound out of BHS to ensure proper set

**Back Tuck Phases:**

1. Proper Back Handspring Back Tuck Connection Phases:
2. Pulling Set
  - a. Shoulder forward
  - b. Jump through straight legs and toes
3. Proper Rotation
  - a. Knees in first
  - b. Hips rotate around the body
4. Hip pull under – chest tall on landing