

Coaching Resources & Considerations

Clubs/Coaches need to realize the importance to take it slow. Your athletes are not returning from a 2-week summer vacation and getting back into it with the rest of their group. Everyone has had a significant de-training over the past 10-12 weeks. Your gymnasts will want to come into the gym and begin to flip and twist like they did in February. The coaches' biggest challenges will be to pace the return and keep the participants from advancing too quickly. Overuse injuries, new quickly progressing chronic injuries should be your biggest concern. Sore wrists, ankles, knees, torn hands, etc. could become your new reality and no one wants that. Remember, it is not a race to get back to what you think normal is. When your athletes return, it will be a transition phase in an annual athlete development plan.

Listed below are a couple of Physical Preparation Tools that can be adapted and used for coaches and athletes:

- [GymCan National Team Return to Training Guidelines](#)
- [CANADA: COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Framework](#)
- [USA Gymnastics: Physical and mental health guidance for a safe re-integration of gymnastics after COVID-19 restrictions from training](#)
- [Australian Institute of Sports: COVID-19 and sporting activity](#)
- AGF held several informative webinars during the period of shut down. If you and/or staff were unable to watch them live, it is suggested you check them out in the [AGF Calendar of Events](#) and follow the instructions for obtaining a copy of the recorded session.
- Clubs may want to consider the use, or continued use, of outdoor space for programming. With outdoor spaces being well ventilated, they can provide a better place for high intensity training. Being outdoors, you will still need to remain in your cohort, practice physical distancing and adhere to the [Alberta Government Outdoor Recreation guidelines](#).

Suggested contents for individual gym bags (final list should be provided to families by your club):

- Mask
- Full water bottle
- Personal chalk and chalk bag
- Grips / safety straps / wrist bands
- Athletic tape
- Thera bands / tubing
- Ankle weights
- Skipping rope
- Yoga mat
- Socks / gym shoes
- Personal hand sanitizer
- Hair ties

Apparatus-Specific Ideas

It is important to remember that all equipment will need to be thoroughly cleaned between cohorts and at the end of each day. Due to this, activities and training will need to be modified to help reduce the points of contact to the equipment within cohorts. Below is a list of possible apparatus-specific activity suggestions and modifications.

Foam Pit Area

If your gym is equipped with a Resi-Pit set up, you may add mats on top that are easy to sanitize after use. You may choose to cover your usage area with a large tarp to avoid incidental contact with the Resi-Pit.

Consider covering foam pits with a tarp (tucked in around the foam) with mats placed on top of the tarp to allow for proper cleaning.

If you have a loose foam pit area:

- Determine which areas of the pit you would like to use, guaranteeing no entry into the actual cubes.
- Bring the area up to floor level.
- Consider covering an area larger than a mat with a large tarp (IE: using a 5' x 10' x 20cm safety mat could use a 15' x 20' or 20' x 30' painters' tarp).
- Place your mats on top of the tarp in the area you wish to use.
- Consider extending the matted area with extra mats to reduce the likelihood of falling onto the tarp.

Floor

- Use personal yoga mats for single skills, handstand work on floor, etc., and ask athletes to clean their mats daily, after each training session.
- Consider using sting mats (4' x 6' - 10 cm) on the floor (vinyl side up) – easier to clean.
- Chalk use should be avoided.
- Implement leg conditioning drills before tumbling.
- Front tumbling is easier on the Achilles tendon, so will have less stress on ankle joints to start.
- Leaps, turns, dance - wear socks/avoid bare feet.
- Series tumbling on soft surfaces.
- No loose foam pit entry - place mat on top of foam.
- Group dance/choreography with physical distancing.

Bars

- Use strap bars and ask participants to bring their own knit gloves and straps.
- No spitting on hands or grips, do not use honey on the bar.
- Athletes should have a personal stock of chalk in a bag large enough to fit their hands. Eliminate communal chalk boxes.
- Using straps, work on basic swings.

Trampoline

- Participants must wait away from the edge of the trampoline and avoid excessive contact with the equipment; however, spotters should be close enough if needed.
- Define one entry/exit point to minimize cleaning area.
- No loose foam pit entry - place mat on top of foam.
- Use throw mat for safety, avoid stomach/face first landings - wipe down the mat between people.

Vault

- Use this time to improve the run! Do running drills for arm and leg alignment/technique.
- Chalk should be avoided.
- No stomach landing (avoid droplet spread).

Parallel Bars

- Avoid using same spot on bars.
- Set bars wide at one end and narrow at other: gymnasts can find the spot they fit for basics.
- Athletes should have a personal stock of chalk bag large enough to fit their hands. Eliminate communal chalk boxes.
- Upper arm/shoulder strength - not gripping bars.
- Long swing work done without honey/extra stick.
- Work on basic support swing.
- Use parallettes for strength and handstand drills.

DMT/Fast Track

- Allow only one inversion skill per pass.
- Basic dismount skills (to start).
- Soft landings for dismounts - roll out to avoid ankle injuries.
- No loose foam pit entry - place mat on top of foam.

Beam

- All participants must maintain a physical distance of two meters while using beams. If beams are less than two meters apart, alternate usage.
- Use personal yoga mats on beam, etc., and ask athletes to clean their mats daily, after each training.
- Work on floor 'line work' for confidence building.
- Avoid chalk on hands and feet – at least at the beginning.

Rings

- Athletes should have a personal stock of chalk in a bag large enough to fit their hands. Eliminate communal chalk boxes.
- Athletes will need significant shoulder flexibility and strength work upon returning to rings.
- Work on basic swing and simple static strength.

Pommel Horse

- Lots of wrist strength/preparation on floor
- Small numbers to avoid overuse pain (mushroom/horse) - wipe down mushroom between gymnasts.
- Great time for pendular swing prep on floor.
- Athletes should have a personal stock of chalk in a bag large enough to fit their hands. Eliminate communal chalk boxes.