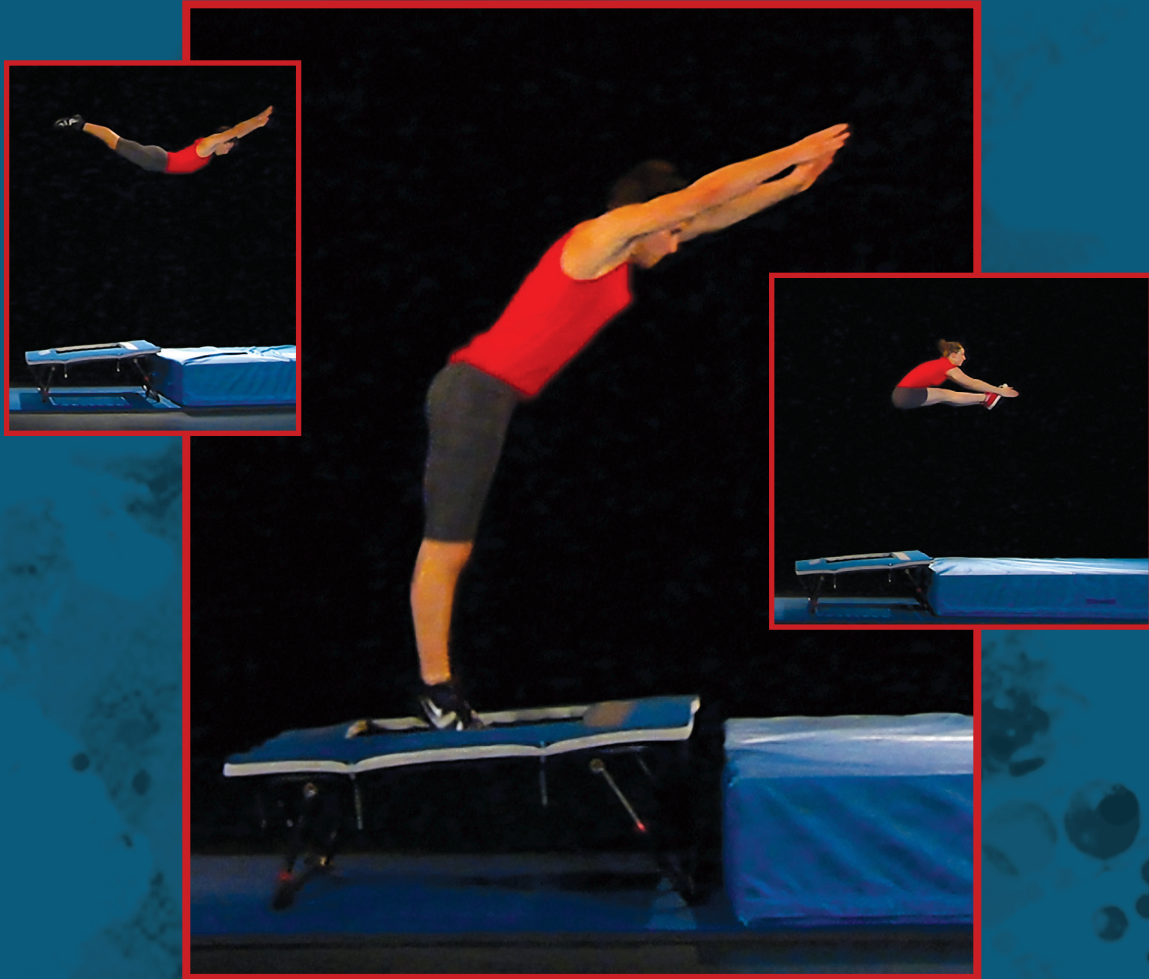


BASIC TECHNIQUES IN CIRCUS ARTS



MINI-TRAMPOLINE



FONDATION
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL™



CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

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Legal deposit: Summer 2011

* The masculine form is used in this text generically and for readability purposes only.

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FOREWORD

NATIONAL CIRCUS SCHOOL

Based in Montreal, the National Circus School is an institution for secondary and higher education whose primary mission is to train circus artists. It is the only institution in North America to offer a complete training cycle in circus arts, starting with the preparatory program, followed by the Circus and High School Studies program, and culminating in the higher education program (leading to the Diploma of Collegial Studies in Circus Arts). Since 1981, more than 400 artists have been trained at the School. A pioneer in the revival of circus arts in Canada and North America, the School has contributed to the emergence of Quebec's great circuses, which were to become *Cirque du Soleil*, *Cirque Éloïze* and *The 7 Fingers*, and has lent a helping hand to numerous foreign circus companies.

Today, the National Circus School enjoys a unique position in the world of circus arts instruction. With a team of more than 60 teachers providing a wealth of educational and artistic experience in circus arts, acrosports, performing arts and education, the School is regularly invited to share its expertise at educational exchanges, meetings and symposia in Canada and abroad, especially those organized by the International Network for Social Circus Training (INSCT), the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC), the European Youth Circus Organisation (EYCO) and the American Youth Circus Organization (AYCO).

With the enthusiasm for social circus, the spread of circus arts as a recreational activity and the overwhelming demand for qualified personnel, the School believed it was essential to support the development of services providing high-quality, safe introductory courses and training programs in the circus arts. Since 2004, its Instructor and Trainer programs – leading to an Attestation of Collegial Studies and recognized by Quebec's Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) – have trained some 100 teaching professionals. These teachers are actively involved in all areas of circus instruction, the education of young people, leisure activities, social circus and even the specialized training of professional artists.

In addition to the skills needed to introduce circus techniques, the role of a circus arts instructor – whether for recreational activities or social outreach purposes – requires particular knowledge of safety issues and of an individual's stages of motor, psychological and social development as well as the ability to organize and manage a class. This manual is intended as a useful and relevant educational tool, but it certainly does not replace actual training for teaching the circus arts. Although these techniques are essential for performing circus arts, these disciplines also need creativity and poetry in order to be truly artistic and meaningful, and this is true at both the professional and amateur levels.

On behalf of the teachers and professionals who were so enthusiastic and thorough in putting together the content of this manual, I would like to thank *Cirque du Soleil* for its generous contribution to the development of an educational work of this magnitude. By taking part in circus arts and with the help of qualified personnel, it will certainly help a great number of young people to achieve their potential more easily.

Daniela Arendasova
Director of Studies
National Circus School
Montreal



INTRODUCTION

The practice of circus arts implies knowledge of and proficiency in one or several techniques, which usually requires progressive and ongoing learning. Use of these techniques opens up a wide range of possibilities intended to develop physical abilities, as well as creative potential and social skills.

Today, there is growing interest in using circus arts for purposes other than performance and shows. Professionals involved in the fields of leisure and recreation, humanitarian development, mental health and physical rehabilitation are watching the development of current initiatives with great interest.

As the learning of these techniques is set to develop in various areas, and with rising interest in circus arts as a recreational pursuit, it seems appropriate at this time to develop a document that fulfils the need for technical knowledge, while also ensuring that learning is done in safety and progressively, according to the basic techniques in the circus arts.

We also believe that this document will be useful to all those organizations involved in the teaching of circus techniques. Circus schools, recreational circus programs, acrobatic gymnastics federations and the educational sector in general can use the knowledge and information contained here to improve their own teaching.

Collaboration between National Circus School and *Cirque du Soleil*

This multimedia educational kit brings together 17 circus disciplines and 177 technical elements. Written with the help of teachers at the National Circus School, it recommends and outlines the principles of teaching basic circus arts techniques. Illustrated by NCS students, this work recommends gradual development of skills and the mastering of various basic circus techniques.

The work comprises two main parts: written documents and video documents.

Written documents: The written part of *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* comprises 17 chapters, each corresponding to a colour-coded discipline. Every chapter is divided into two sections. The first section introduces the terminology specific to the discipline, the equipment required and, specific information, as well as advice about safety and the prevention of injury. The second section illustrates in detail the different technical elements that constitute the discipline. This section comprises a description of the technical elements, detailed explanations of the movement, educationals enabling step-by-step learning of each component, tips for manual aids, corrections and corrective exercises addressing the most common mistake and variants of the movement.

Video documents: The video part of *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* is intended to promote a better understanding of the written material and to provide a visual aid to learning. To make it easier to find information, the colours used for the disciplines in the written documents correspond to those on the video documents. Similarly, the photos shown alongside the explanations of the movement, the educationals and the variants are taken from the video documents. When necessary, close-ups and slow motion are used to make it easier to understand more complex technical positions and quick sequences. When movements are displayed, extra information or warnings about safety or injury prevention will pop up onscreen.



For practical reasons, the section on “Common Mistakes” is not included on the DVDs so that the focus is on showing the correct way of performing the movements. The educationals required for learning the various technical elements however, are presented in the video documents. In any case, the written document must be consulted to see the complete list of educationals.

All the exercises contained in the written documents and videos are presented in such a way so as to ensure they are performed as safely as possible (ideally under the supervision of an instructor or coach), with proper preparation and using the right equipment.

The written and video documents included in *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* are complementary: they were designed to be used together. The written documents contain information that is not available on the video documents. Likewise, the video documents allow a fuller understanding of the movements that is not possible from consulting the written documents alone.



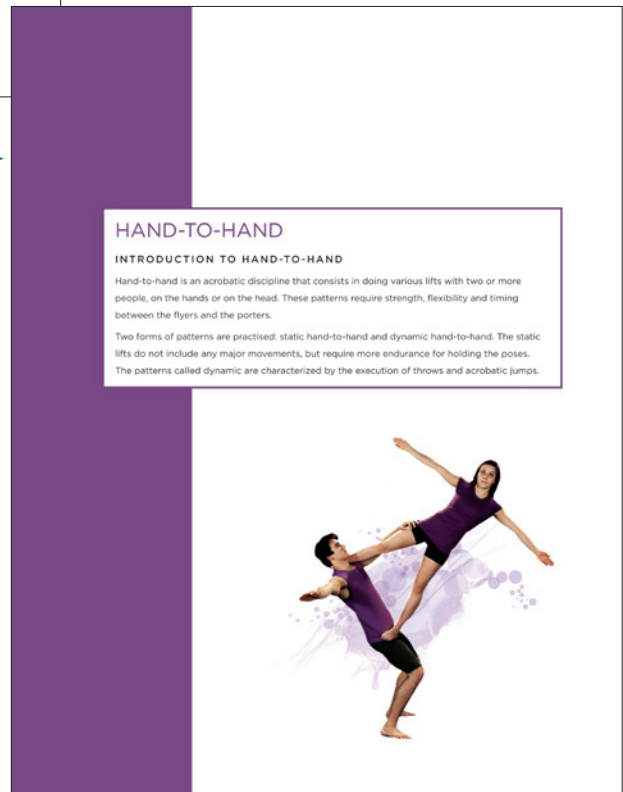
INSTRUCTIONS - WRITTEN DOCUMENTS



Introduction

The first page of each chapter describes in general terms the specifics and characteristics of each discipline.

Each discipline is colour-coded. The different colours, corresponding to those used on the video documents, make it easier to find what the user is looking for.



TERMINOLOGY

Centre of mass (COM)
Point in an individual's body where the body mass is considered to be concentrated and where the three axes of rotation meet.

Closed foot
Position with the foot straight on the wire.

Demi-pointe
Maintaining a standing position on the balls of the feet.

Frame
A-shaped structure that allows anchoring the wire while lifting it off the ground.

Open foot
External rotation of the foot of approximately 45°.

Retirés
Action of flexing a leg, bringing the foot up and placing it on the knee of the opposite leg.

Wire
Cable on which one walks.

EQUIPMENT

- A cable (the wire) to walk on;
- Two A-frames to anchor the cable;
- Side cables;
- A hand-operated winch to tighten the wire;
- A spring;
- Shackles for assembly;
- A floor mat the length of the wire and at least 1.40 m wide.



Side cables A-frame

2 Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - TIGHTWIRE - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil

Terminology

The technical terms essential to understanding the elements specific to each discipline.

In-depth terminology research was carried out in conjunction with teachers at the National Circus School in Montreal to determine the most commonly used expressions and terms in circus and acrobatic communities.

Equipment

The equipment needed to practise the different disciplines covered.

Specific Information

Specific information needed to practise the discipline and essential for performing the technical elements properly, bringing together such topics as identifying the dominant side when performing twists and body positions in aerial phases.

Safety

Essential information to consider when training with the aim of minimizing the risk of injury.

These points are specific to each discipline and are of the utmost importance. They concern both the instructor's role and the work environment.

TERMINOLOGY

Aerial silks
Fabric rigging, generally made of Lycra, folded in half and hung from an anchoring point, on which the acrobat executes various acrobatic patterns.

Flexed feet
Position with the ankle in flexion.

Hip flexion
Action of bringing the legs and the upper body together, or decreasing the torso/leg angle.

Iliac crest
Flat bone forming the upper edge of the pelvic bone.

Pike inverted hang
Hip flexion in the inverted position.

Rope
Aerial rigging made up of a twisted or braided cotton rope with a diameter of 3 to 5 centimetres, positioned vertically and from which the acrobat executes various acrobatic patterns.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The rope and silk practice is performed on a vertical axis, which requires sustained physical endurance. The participant is constantly subjected to gravity; the challenge is to limit the loss of height while executing placements and to find combinations that limit the necessary manipulations and the inevitable need to climb back up again.

The practice of these two disciplines requires general muscular endurance and develops good muscle tone. It specifically requires upper body strength in the arms, shoulders and abdominals, as well as grip strength.

Note: In order to simplify the text, the word "rope" will be used in the descriptions to designate both rope and silk, except for the parts specifically dedicated to silk.

SAFETY

As rope and silk allow plenty of room for freedom, creativity and exploration, safety remains the only real rule. Consequently, the equipment must be in good condition and properly installed. Also, it is essential to always use a landing mat. The instructor should be aware of his limitations and be able to assess those of the participants.

Rope and silk are practised without a lunge or safety device, but with a landing mat. It is therefore necessary to ensure that an element can be performed completely, which includes controlling both the movement and the release. During the descent, despite the use of a landing mat, the possibility of deliberately falling should never be considered.

Since rope and silk can cause abrasion burns, it is recommended to wear suitable clothing that covers the legs and torso as much as possible. Despite these precautions, it is normal for people new to these disciplines to experience some discomfort. The rope and silk may cause cramping of the feet, thighs and torso, and may sometimes cause minor burns to the feet or other exposed parts. In order to increase grip and limit involuntary sliding, a resin powder is used, applied to the hands and, if necessary, to the feet and back of the knees.

2 Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - ROPE AND SILK - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil



ACROBATICS
MENICHELLI

Technical Element Description
Rotating 180° around the transversal axis, going into a handstand and finishing with a walkout.


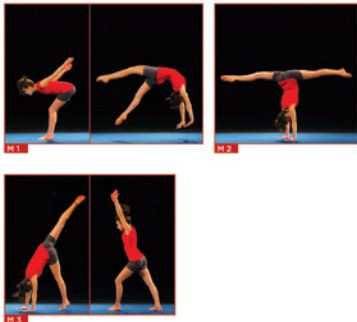
Prerequisites

- Back walkover.
- Handstand with stride split.
- Walkout.

Explanation of the Movement

- From the standing straight position with the arms on either side of the head, rock backwards slightly and lower the arms. Flex the arms until they are in line with the body and extend the legs and hips. **M 1**
- Transfer the COM over the hands and go into a handstand with the legs in a stride split, with the gaze on the hands. **M 2**
- Walk out and get back to the standing straight position, with the gaze forward. **M 3**

Note: Once the leg push is finished, the arms should remain aligned with the body.

Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - ACROBATICS - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil

Technical Element Description

A concise description explaining the nature or the key movements of the technical element in question.

Prerequisites

Figures, body patterns and technical skills to master before starting to learn the element.

Explanation of the Movement

A detailed description of the different sequences of movements making up the element.

Identified by the icon **M**

These explanations are illustrated by one or more photos. The use of numbers added to the letter **M** allows the user to follow the sequences represented visually: **M 1**, **M 2**, etc.

Safety Notice

In addition to the information provided in the first section, the safety notices set out essential aspects to consider when performing the movement in order to avoid injury.

PYRAMIDS
EGYPTIAN PYRAMID

Technical Element Description
Seven-person pyramid.



Prerequisite

- Flyer standing on a porter in a sumo pike position.

Explanation of the Movement

- Four porters are positioned next to one another in a sumo pike position, interlacing their legs with those of neighbours so as to stabilize the base of the pyramid and form a straight line. Their backs must be horizontal and all at the same height. **M 1**
- A first flyer gets up on the two central porters' supporting himself with his hands on their backs, ascending either directly or by stepping on a porter's thigh. Once up, the flyer puts one foot on each of the central porters' pelvises and rests his hands on their shoulder blades. Two other flyers repeat this sequence, one positioned on the left porters' backs and the other on the right porters' backs. **M 2**
- When the three flyers are stable, they lift their torsos so as to have their backs horizontal. Simultaneously, porters and flyers extend their arms out to the side, resting on their neighbours' shoulders, if they have a neighbour. The porters complete the sequence by straightening their legs. **M 3**
- During the descent, the flyers again put their hands on the porters' shoulder blades, then jump backwards one after the other, from the centre, avoiding any sudden movement.

Safety Notice: It is important to have a landing mat behind the pyramid in case of falls. In this case, the participant should fall on the person below. This way, the speed and height of the fall will be reduced.

Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - PYRAMIDS - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil



Educationals


1. One person holds the diabolo with his hands and moves it so that the participant practises corrections with the handsticks. The diabolo is corrected with the hand that provides the rotation speed, that is, the right hand. While correcting it, continue to give it speed by making up-and-down movements with the right hand. ED 1

Three corrections:

1. Stand facing the diabolo; if it turns, follow it.
2. If the diabolo leans inward toward the feet, move the right hand forward; the string will then rub the diabolo's cup and the diabolo will straighten out.
3. If the diabolo leans toward the outside, move the right hand back; the string will then rub the diabolo's cup and the diabolo will straighten out.

Corrections should be made more quickly with practice and therefore should become increasingly smaller.

2. Roll the diabolo along the ground using the handsticks and lift it into the air.



Manual Aid

- The spotter stands behind the participant and manipulates the handsticks with him, providing the rotation speed and applying the corrections.

Common Mistakes	Corrections and Corrective Exercises
1. From the beginning, the participant places the diabolo on the wrong side on the ground.	1. Placing the diabolo on the correct side. If the participant wishes to manipulate it with the right hand, it is placed on the right side.
2. The participant is badly positioned.	2. Staying facing the diabolo.
3. The participant waits too long to make a correction.	3. Correcting the diabolo from the first signs of instability. With practice, one will be able to anticipate corrections.
4. The diabolo becomes unstable and loses speed.	4. Always providing speed when applying the correction.
5. The participant overcorrects and tips the diabolo.	5. Making small correction movements.

6 Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - DIABOLO - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil

Educationals

Step-by-step exercises and sequences of movements recommended to successfully perform the technical element. They make the principle of progressive learning easier, focusing on coordination and physical preparation as well as concentrating on the movements.

Identified by the icon **ED**

These educationals are often illustrated by one or more photos. The use of numbers added to the letters **ED** allows the user to follow the sequences represented visually: **ED 1**, **ED 2**, etc.


Manual Aid

Assistance that the instructor or the spotter should provide when teaching the movements. The images allow the user to see the movements to make and the actions to take to ensure learning is carried out safely.

Identified by the icon **MA**

Manual Aid

- To assist the participant, the instructor stands with his arm solidly extended into a fist in front of the participant. The participant supports himself on the fist, trying to let go of it for as long as possible. MA 1
- The instructor should not hold the participant by the hips, because he will not control his balance.



Common Mistakes	Corrections and Corrective Exercises
1. The participant's arms drop during the half turn.	1. Developing the reflex of lifting the arms during the half turn. EX
2. The participant puts too much weight on the right foot.	2. Keeping the COM over the left foot. The right foot must assist in the turn.
3. The participant bends his body.	3. Bending the knee of the left leg more, lifting the arms.

Variants


1. Sequence: Walking, half turn at the end of the wire, walking.
2. Sequence: Four half turns in the middle of the wire.

23 Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - TIGHTWIRE - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil



HANDSTAND
THE "L" SIT

Technical Element Description
Sitting up straight with the legs extended with support on the hands.



Explanation of the Movement

- Press the hands into the ground with the index finger facing forward and the COM over the palms of the hands. Keep the legs together and outstretched with the feet pointed. Press with the arms while contracting the abdominals and bring the pelvis slightly backwards.

Educationals

- "L" sit on canes or on parallel bars.
- "L" sit with the legs tucked.


Manual Aid

- Watch out for possible backwards falls, especially when the exercise is done with balancing canes or when the participant lifts the legs very high.

Common Mistakes	Corrections and Corrective Exercises
1. The participant cannot lift the legs.	1. Performing strengthening exercises for the abdominal muscles. EX
2. The participant cannot keep the arms straight.	2. Turning the hands toward the outside, the index finger facing front.

Variant

- "L" sit with legs in a straddle position. V 1



Basic Techniques in Circus Arts • HANDSTAND • © 2011 Cirque du Soleil

Common Mistakes

The most common mistakes to avoid.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

Modifications to make either by correcting movements or by corrective exercises.

The corrective exercises are identified by the icon EX

Variants


Images illustrating the technical elements give the user the opportunity to progress and to vary his learning.

Identified by the icon V

Manual Aid

- The instructor puts his hand on the participant's ankle to make sure the angle of his knee does not exceed 90°, otherwise the participant could fall. MA 1



Note: Avoid pressing too hard on the leg; the angle should not be tighter than that of the double knee hang position. If the trapeze is higher, the instructor puts his hands under the participant's shoulders.



Common Mistakes	Corrections and Corrective Exercises
1. The participant lets the free hip and leg fall and has difficulty returning the knee to the bar.	1. Keeping the hips even throughout the movement.
2. The participant stays in a pike position and has difficulty maintaining a secure knee angle.	2. Opening the hips by tightening the buttocks and pressing the pelvis forward, pulling the heels toward the buttocks.

Variants

- Front leg to the side in a split. V 1
- Arabesque: Leg to the back, foot pulled toward the head. V 2

Basic Techniques in Circus Arts • FIXED TRAPEZE • © 2011 Cirque du Soleil



INSTRUCTIONS - VIDEO DOCUMENTS

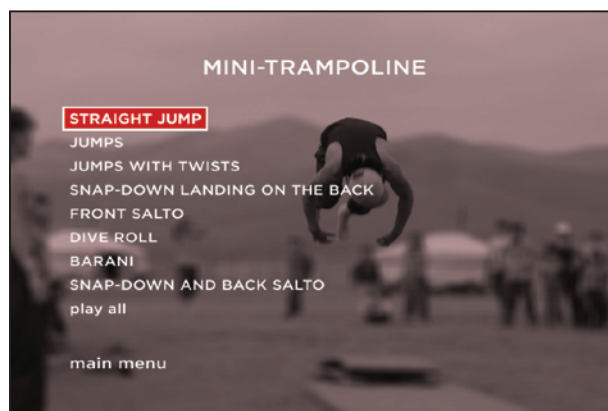


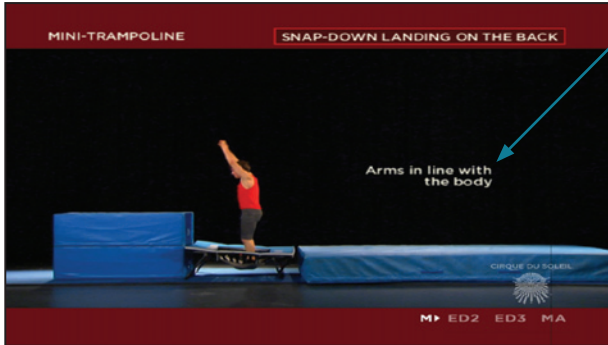
Main Menu

After the opening sequence, a first window presents the disciplines covered on the DVD.

Elements Menu

Once a discipline has been selected, a second window allows the user to go from one technical element to another. The “play all” button, at the bottom of the window, provides the option to watch the elements one after the other.



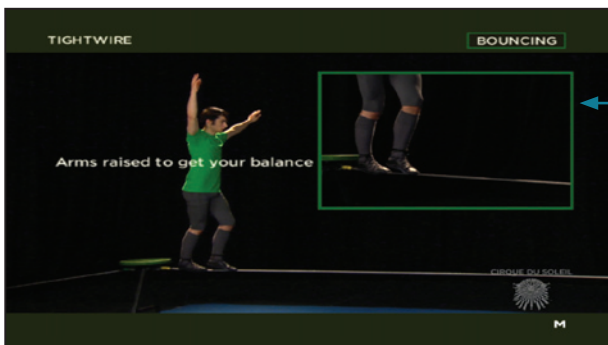


Warnings

Extra information or warnings about safety or prevention of injury pop up onscreen at key moments while the movements are being viewed.

Icons

When highlighted, the icon corresponding to the one in the written document indicates the technical element component being played.



Close-ups

In some cases, special attention is given to an image, part of the body or manual aid as a movement is being demonstrated by showing a close-up or by showing the movement from a different angle.

Technical Notes

The different parts of the element may be viewed out of sequence using the “Skip” function to select the icons at the bottom of the screen. The slow-motion function, available on most DVD players, also allows the user to watch each movement more closely.



MINI-TRAMPOLINE

INTRODUCTION TO THE MINI-TRAMPOLINE

A discipline derived from gymnastics, the mini-trampoline allows executing various acrobatic patterns and jumps. Made up of an elastic canvas, it facilitates jumping movements and is one of the tools for learning patterns on the floor with minimum impact on the knees and other joints.



TERMINOLOGY

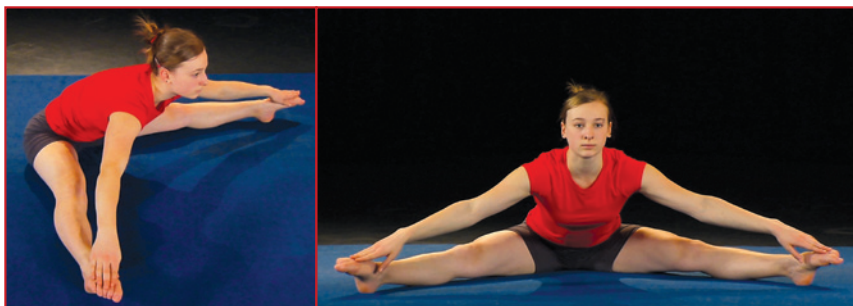
Tuck position



Pike position



Straddle position



Centre of mass (COM)

Point in an individual's body where the body mass is considered to be concentrated and where the three axes of rotation meet.

Handstand

Balancing on the hands in a standing straight position with the arms on either side of the head.

Hip extension

Action of moving the legs and the upper body away from each other, or increasing the torso/leg angle in the standing straight position or a handstand.

Hip flexion

Action of bringing the legs and the upper body together, or decreasing the torso/leg angle in the standing straight position or a handstand.

Hurdle

Movement that allows transition from a run to either a takeoff or any other acrobatic movement.

Landing

Action of absorbing a movement upon contact of the hands or feet with the floor. In order to stabilize and control the landing, the arms or legs should be flexed.

Longitudinal axis

Imaginary line through the body from the head to the feet.

MT

Mini-trampoline.

Spotter

Individual who manually assists the execution of a movement or a position.

Takeoff

Action of pushing the body upward from contact of the feet with the floor, extending the legs and raising the arms.



Twisting techniques

Flat back

Outstretched position of the back, with the body in a horizontal position.

Nutation

Transfer of a part of the angular momentum from one axis to another induced by an asymmetrical movement of the arms or hips.

- Asymmetrical arm movement

Sequence where the arms are not in the same position, one being alongside the body and the other being extended over the head, in order to execute a nutation.

- Asymmetrical hip movement

Sequence where the hips are not in the same position, one being higher than the other, in order to execute a nutation.

Torque

Twist initiated during contact with the canvas.

EQUIPMENT

Landing mat

Cushioned surface for absorbing the shock of landing.

Mini-trampoline (MT)

Device made up of a canvas attached to a frame by springs on which jumps and acrobatic patterns are performed.

Platform

Surface providing raised support.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

It is very important that twists be done in the same direction for all movements, whether on the mini-trampoline, floor, trampoline or other. With this in mind, the dominant side in twists must be identified before learning saltos with twists. There are several ways to determine the natural direction of twists; one way is to practise simple movements on the floor, such as half-twist jumps and jumps with twists. Practise these movements by twisting to the right and left on a landing mat. Thus, participants will find the most natural way for them to twist.

SAFETY

The mini-trampoline can be a dangerous apparatus if it is misused because a height of 2 to 3 metres can easily be reached. The activity must be well-supervised and it is necessary to make sure the landing mats are appropriate and there is no space between the mat and the MT.

In order to guarantee a minimum mastery of the apparatus, insist on controlling the height and emphasize the importance of cushioning landings. The participant should keep the legs shoulder-width apart and slightly flex the knees in order to avoid injury.



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MINI-TRAMPOLINE STRAIGHT JUMP

Technical Element Description

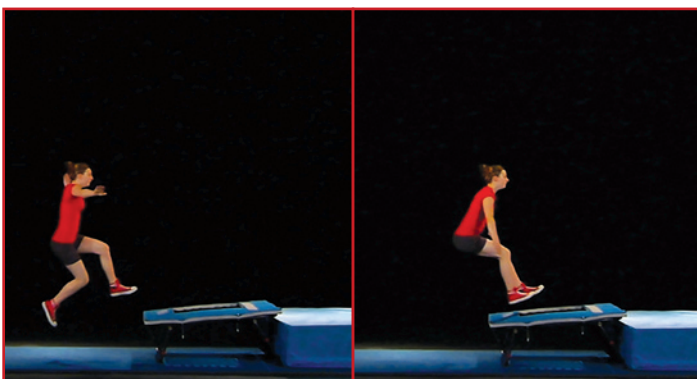
Jumping with complete extension of the body and landing on both feet.

Prerequisites

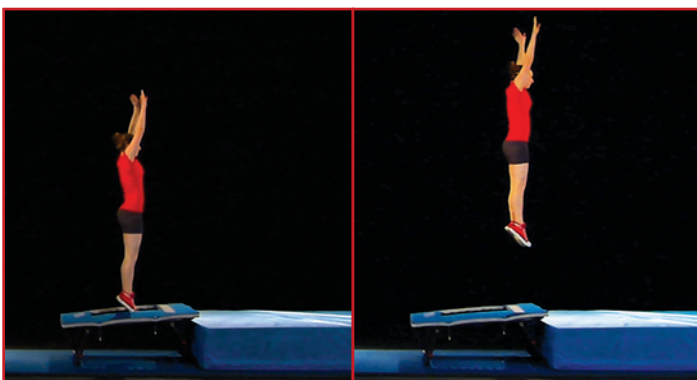
- Extended position of the body standing upright.
- Straight jump on the floor.

Explanation of the Movement

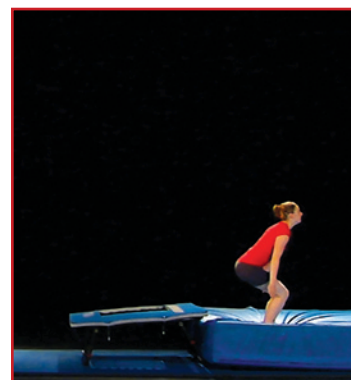
- Run up quickly and jump simultaneously with both feet on the MT, legs slightly bent. **M 1**
- Completely extend the legs as soon as the canvas comes back up. Extend the arms up and lower them for the descent. **M 2**
- When landing, the legs are shoulder-width apart with the arms by the sides. **M 3**



M 1



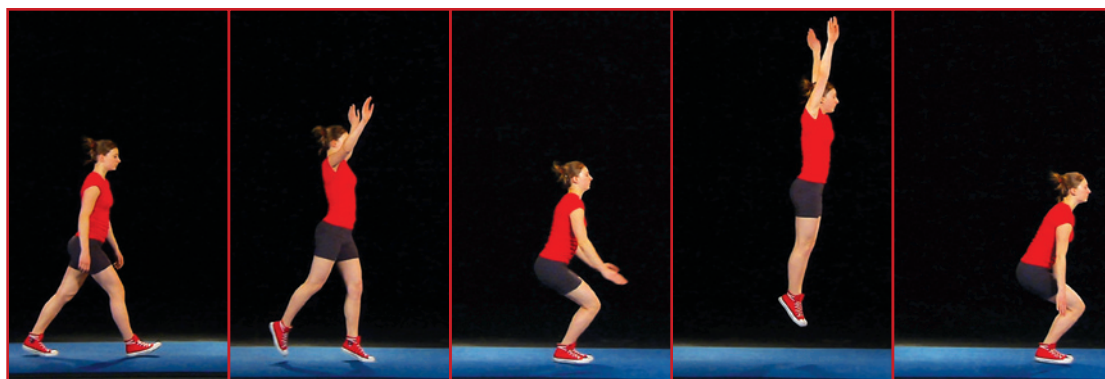
M 2



M 3

Educationals

1. Do consecutive bounces with travelling on the floor.
2. Do a hurdle for takeoff before jumping on both feet. **ED 2**
3. Do bounces on the MT with manual aid. **ED 3**
4. From a slightly raised surface, do a jump onto the MT. **ED 4**



ED 2



ED 3



ED 4

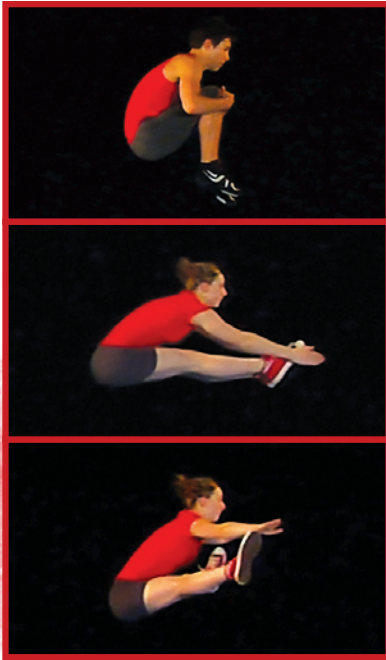
Common Mistakes

1. The participant lands with the feet off centre on the MT.
2. The participant's body leans forward when landing on the landing mat.
3. The participant has trouble moving forward in the straight jump.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Practising the straight jump for takeoff on the floor with an approach and then on the MT. **EX**
2. Keeping the head up and the torso vertical during the extension.
3. Running up faster. Moving the pelvis slightly forward when pushing off.





MINI-TRAMPOLINE TUCK, PIKE, STRADDLE JUMPS

Technical Element Description

Tuck, pike or straddle position during the aerial phase.

Prerequisites

- Performing the positions on the floor without bouncing.
- Straight jump from the MT.

Explanation of the Movement

- Do three jumps after a complete extension of the body, except for a slight flexion of the shoulders, and finish them before landing on the landing mat.

Tuck Jump

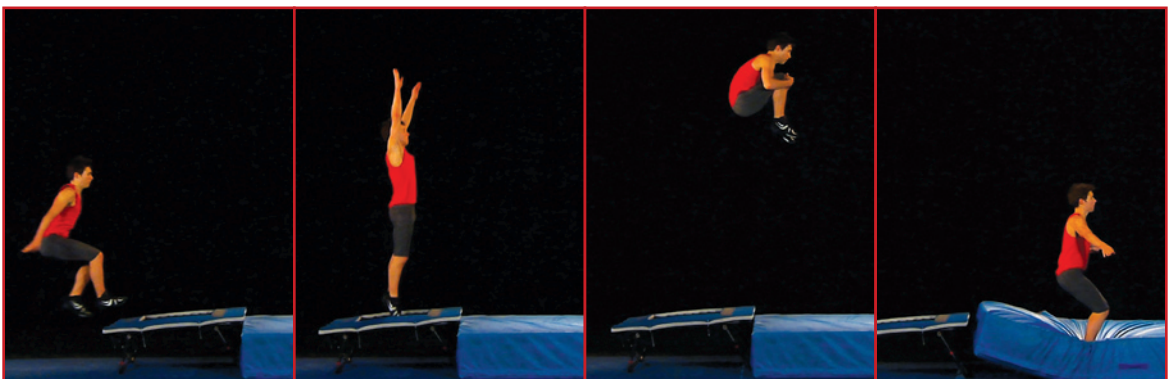
- The hands must touch the legs below the patellae (kneecaps). The angle between the legs and the torso as well as the calves and the hamstrings is less than 90°. **M 1**

Pike Jump

- The hands must touch the top of the feet, which are pointed, when the position is taken. The legs are kept together and lifted to an extended horizontal position. **M 2**

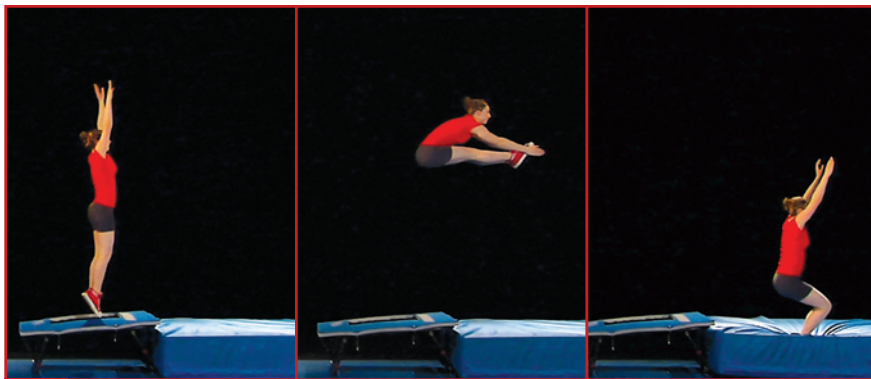
Straddle Jump

- The same instructions as for the pike jump apply, except that there should be a minimum opening of 90° between the legs. **M 3**

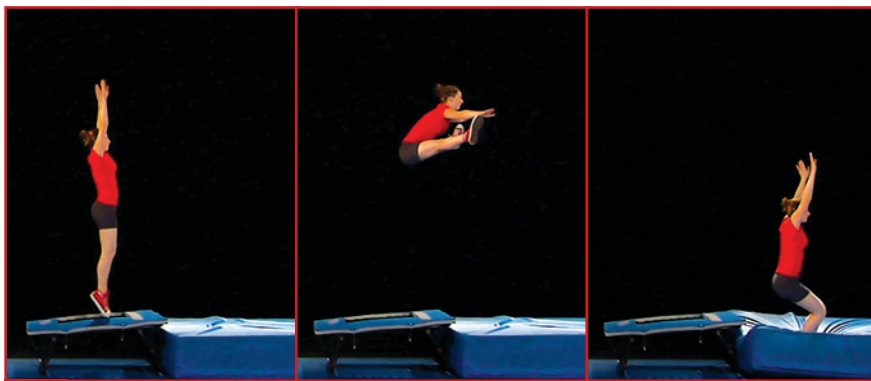


M 1





M 2



M 3

Educationals

1. Perform jumps on the floor with manual aid. **ED 1**
2. Perform jumps on the MT and master them perfectly before executing maximum-height jumps.



ED 1



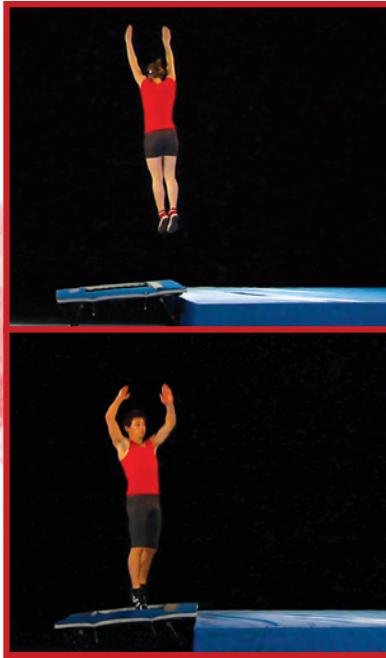
Common Mistakes

1. The participant leans forward when landing.
2. The participant leans backwards when landing.
3. During the pike and the straddle jumps, the legs are not completely horizontal.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Keeping the head straight during the flight in order to avoid creating an imbalance toward the front. Since rotation is created during contact with the canvas, the COM should remain over the base of support when pushing off.
2. Keeping the arms slightly forward, in order to avoid leaning backwards during flight. Since rotation is created during contact with the canvas, the COM should remain over the base of support when pushing off.
3. Performing flexibility exercises. **EX**





MINI-TRAMPOLINE JUMPS WITH TWISTS

Technical Element Description

Half-twist jump:

Straight jump with a 180° rotation around the longitudinal axis.

Jump with twist:

Straight jump with a 360° rotation around the longitudinal axis.

Prerequisite

- Straight jump on the MT.

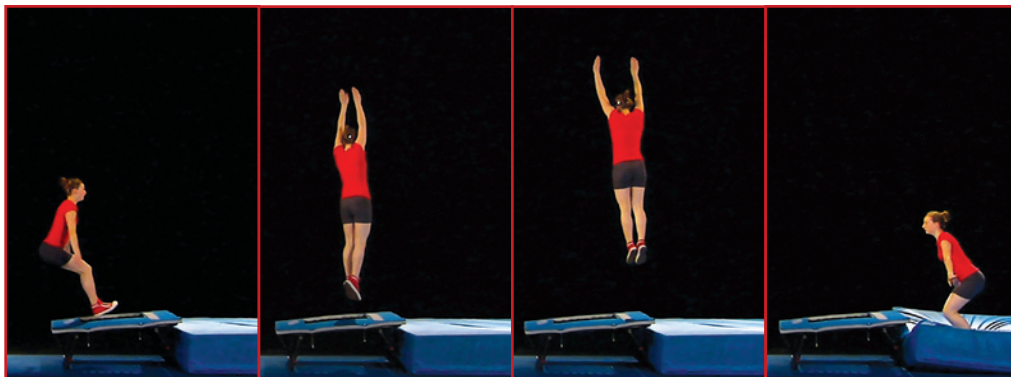
Explanation of the Movement

Half-twist jump

- Jump on the MT and, while the canvas is coming back up, slightly turn the shoulders to one side using the arms while exerting a pressure on the canvas by contracting the leg muscles.
- While jumping, lift the arms and spread them apart while descending to slow down the speed of the half-twist. **M 1**

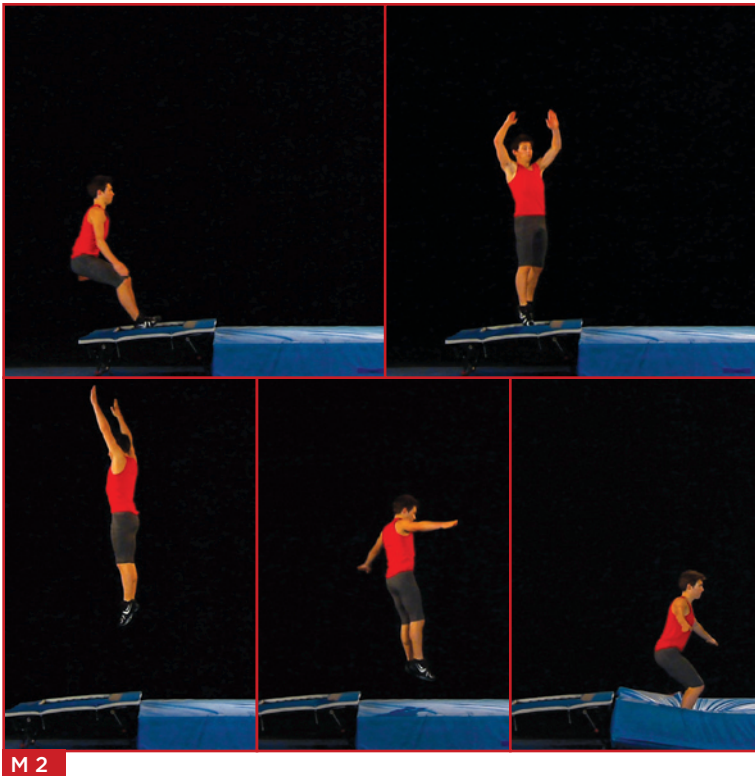
Jump with twist

- Apply the same technique as for the half-twist, but turn the shoulders further during the contact with the canvas. The arms can be bent and brought to the inside in front. **M 2**



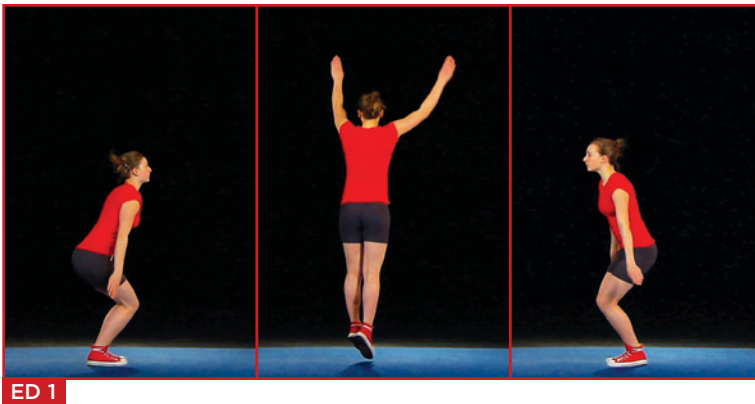
M 1





Educationals

1. Jump with half-twist and twist on the floor. **ED 1**
2. Perform jumps on the MT and master the movement perfectly before executing maximum-height jumps.



Common Mistakes

1. The participant is unbalanced when landing.
2. The participant does not twist enough.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Keeping the head straight during contact with the canvas and during the aerial phase. Making sure the twist is done to the dominant side.
2. Turning the shoulders further while coming up from the canvas and keeping the body's muscles tensed.

Variant

1. One and a half twist and two twists: Once the twist is mastered, the participant can execute one and a half or two twists, increasing the torque when in contact with the canvas.





MINI-TRAMPOLINE SNAP-DOWN LANDING ON THE BACK

Technical Element Description

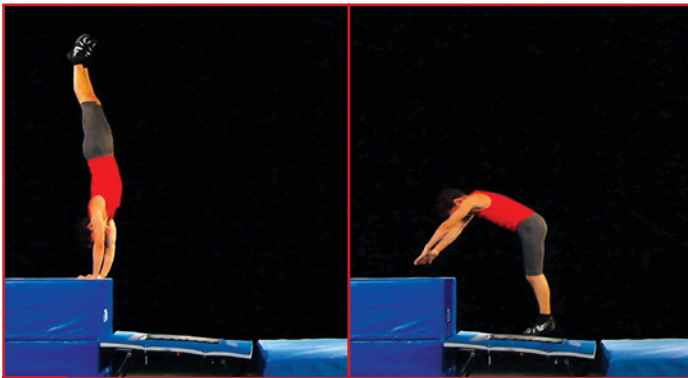
Snap-down and bounce, landing flat on the back on a mat from a handstand on a raised platform.

Prerequisites

- Handstand on the floor. (See *Handstand, Acrobatics*, p. 13.)
- Snap-down on the floor. (See *Snap-down, Acrobatics*, p. 18.)
- Landing on the back on a mat.
- Straight jump on the MT.

Explanation of the Movement

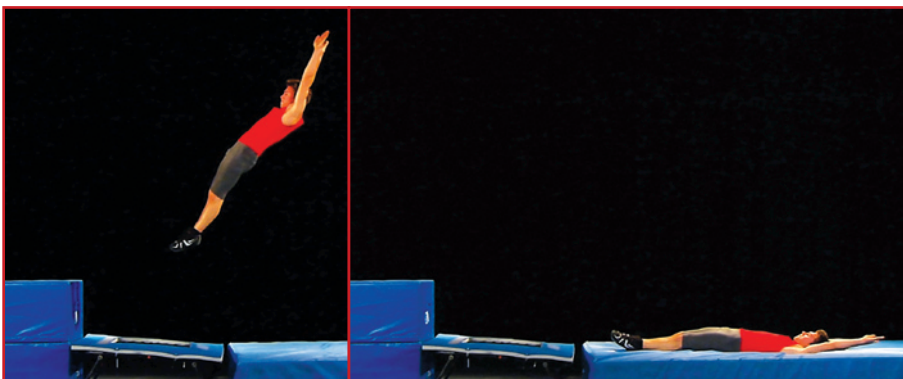
- Bounce on the MT with the hands on a raised platform to lift up into the handstand.
- Execute a snap-down. **M 1**
- Land on the MT with the feet slightly forward of the pelvis to cause a backwards movement. **M 2**
- Extend the hips when the canvas comes up and keep the body extended during the aerial phase, keeping the gaze forward. The landing is done in the flat back position, entire body extended, on the raised mat. **M 3**



M 1



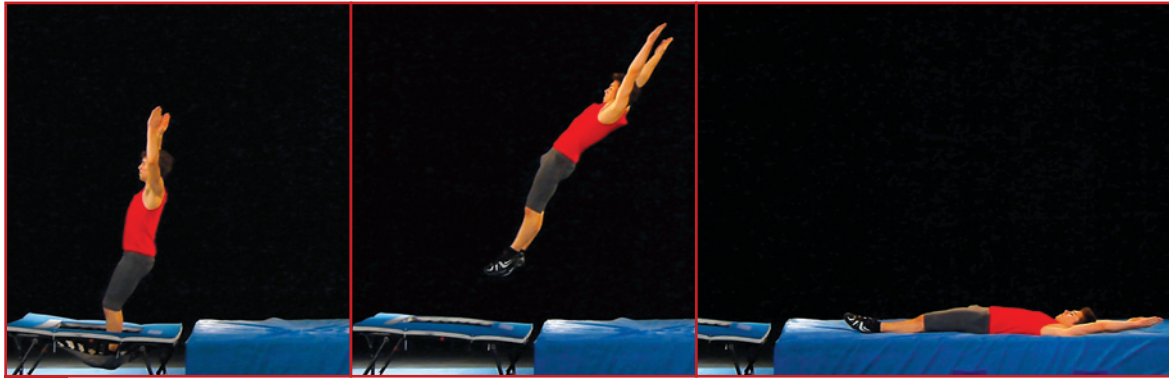
M 2



M 3

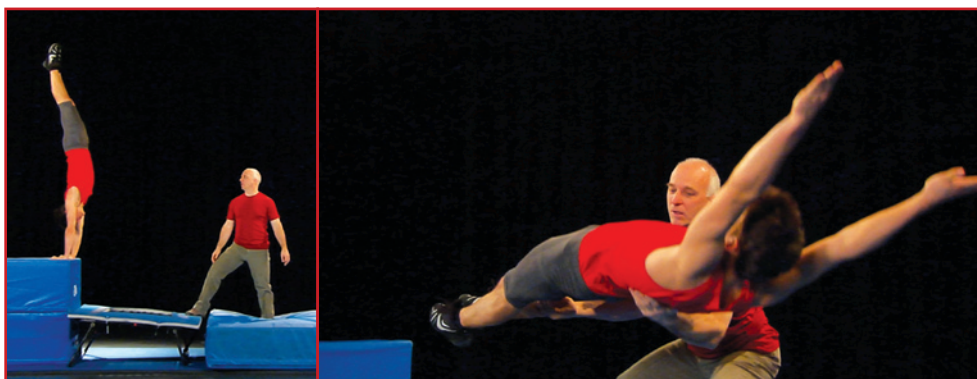
Educationals

1. Flat back on a landing mat from a static position.
2. From the MT, jump with flat back, landing on a mat. **ED 2**
3. From the MT, jump into a handstand and lock the movement to prevent a backwards fall. **ED 3**



Manual Aid

- The spotter stands on the side between the MT and the landing mat and makes sure the travelling is sufficient to land on the landing mat. He monitors the rotation and mainly protects the head in case of excessive rotation. **MA 1**



Common Mistakes

1. The jump is not high enough.
2. The travelling is not sufficient during the flat back movement.
3. There is not enough rotation during the flat back landing.
4. There is too much rotation during the flat back landing.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Making sure to get up to an almost vertical handstand before doing the snap-down. The body should be nearly vertical when landing on the MT.
2. Putting the feet slightly forward of the pelvis when landing on the MT.
3. Extending the hips more during the push-off from the canvas for the flat back flight.
4. Keeping the gaze forward during the entire aerial phase of the flat back. Lowering the arms only in the descending phase.





MINI-TRAMPOLINE TUCK FRONT SALTO

Technical Element Description

Jumping with 360° forward rotation in the tuck position.

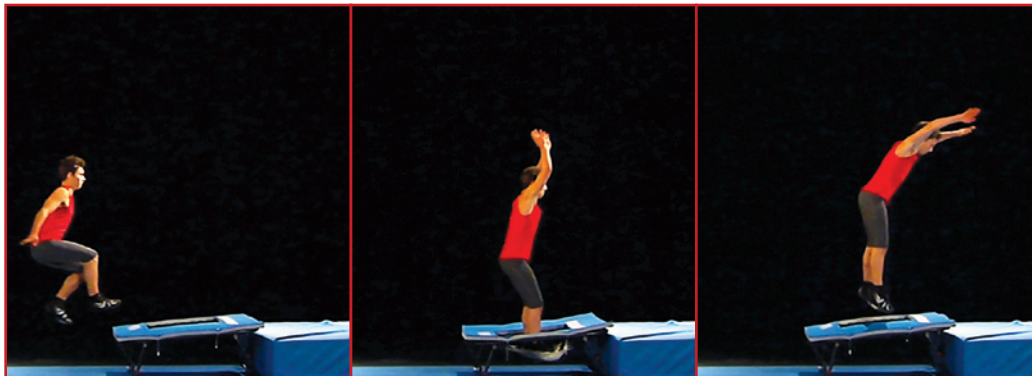
Prerequisites

- Straight jump on the MT.
- Front roll on the floor. (See *Front roll, Acrobatics*, p. 23.)
- Tuck jump on the MT.

Explanation of the Movement

- Jump on the MT with the arms extended. When the canvas comes back up, contract the muscles of the entire body and slightly pike the body in order to move the COM forward and produce a rotation. Upon leaving the canvas, the body should be completely extended. **M 1**
- During the aerial phase, take the tuck position and extend the body again before landing on the mat. Hold the head straight and keep the gaze forward. **M 2**
- Keep the gaze forward when taking off from the canvas, when opening the salto and when landing.

Note: It is important to understand that while the tuck position accelerates the speed of the rotation, it is the forward movement of the COM while in contact with the canvas that produces the rotation.



M 1

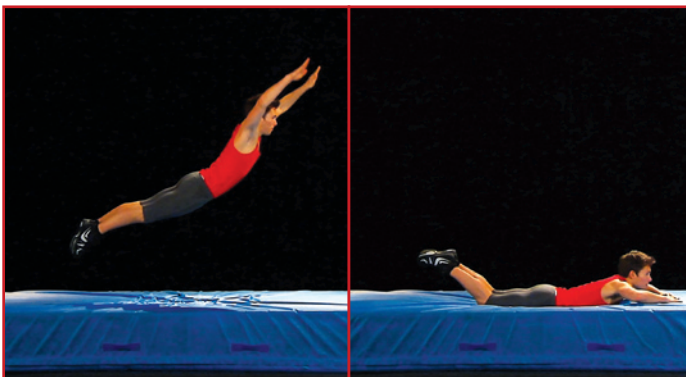




M 2

Educationals

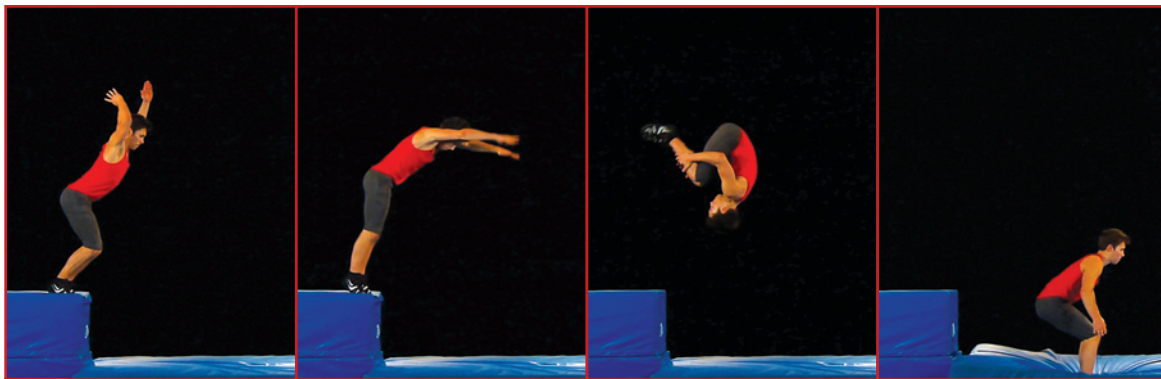
1. Standing, jump onto a mat and land on the stomach. **ED 1**
2. From a stopped position, do a jump roll onto an incline mat and stand up. **ED 2**
3. Front salto from a platform, landing on a landing mat. **ED 3**
4. Front salto on the floor starting from a stopped position, and landing on a mat. **ED 4**



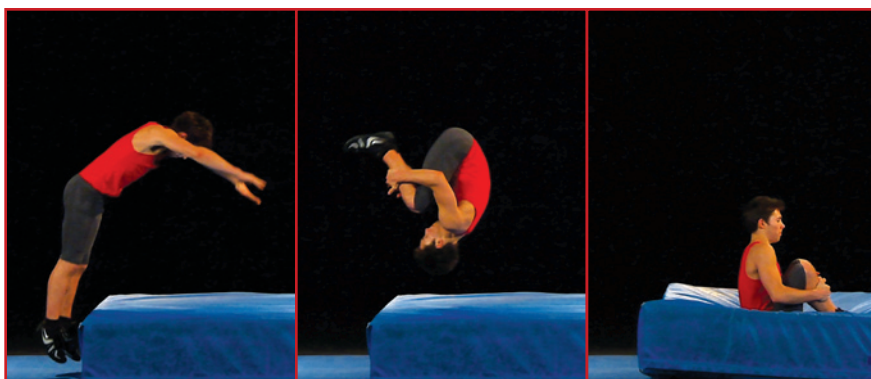
ED 1



ED 2



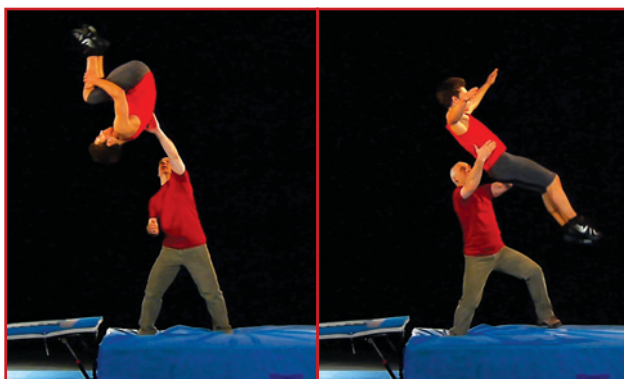
ED 3



ED 4

Manual Aid

- The spotter holds the participant's arm with one hand and puts the other on his hips in order to help him move his COM during contact with the canvas. He then secures the landing.
- The spotter increases the participant's rotation speed by pressing on his shoulder blades during the aerial phase and secures his landing by holding his hips. **MA 1**



MA 1



Common Mistakes

1. The jump is not high enough.
2. The participant's position is not tucked enough and the rotation is excessive.
3. The participant's rotation is insufficient.
4. The participant's rotation is excessive.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Extending the body more when taking off from the canvas, keeping the head straight and the gaze forward, in order to avoid moving too soon.
2. Extending the body more during the flight. Reducing the support on the toes to prevent the pike position on the canvas from being too pronounced.
3. Moving the COM over the toes when taking off from the canvas and extending the arms upward to create more rotation. Making sure the tuck position is fully closed to increase the rotation speed.
4. Extending the body more when taking off from the canvas and maintaining a visual reference point during the extension. Maintaining the tuck position only briefly. The instructor could also give an audible signal for starting the salto. **EX**





MINI-TRAMPOLINE PIKE FRONT SALTO

Technical Element Description

Jumping with 360° forward rotation in the pike position.

Prerequisites

- Front roll starting from the pike position on the floor.
(See *Front roll, Acrobatics*, p. 23.)
- Pike jump on the floor and on the MT.
- Tuck front salto on the MT.

Explanation of the Movement

- Jump on the MT with the arms extended. When the canvas comes back up, contract the muscles of the entire body and slightly pike the body in order to move the COM forward and produce a rotation. Upon leaving the canvas, the body should be completely extended. **M 1**
- During the aerial phase, take the pike position and extend the body again before landing on the mat. Keep the head straight and the gaze forward during flight and when landing. **M 2**

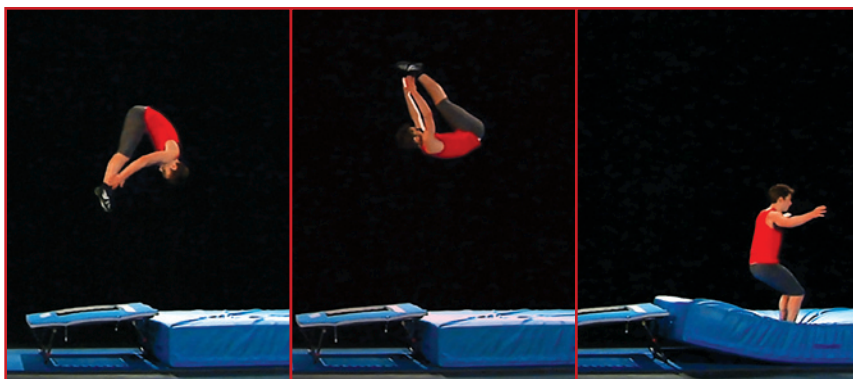
Note: It is important to understand that while the pike position accelerates the speed of the rotation, it is the forward movement of the COM while in contact with the canvas that produces the rotation.

Safety Notice: The rotation speed of a pike front salto is slower than that of a tuck front salto; therefore, it is important to create more rotation initially.



M 1





M 2

Educationals

1. Standing, jump onto a mat and land on the stomach.
2. Pike front salto with manual aid.

Manual Aid

- The spotter holds the participant's arm with one hand and puts the other on his hips in order to help him move his COM during contact with the canvas. He then secures the landing.
- The spotter increases the participant's rotation speed by pressing on his shoulder blade during the aerial phase, and secures his landing by holding his hips.

Common Mistakes

1. The jump is not high enough.
2. The participant is too piked when he is on the canvas and the rotation is excessive.
3. The participant's rotation is insufficient.
4. The participant's rotation is excessive.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Extending the body more when taking off from the canvas, keeping the head straight and the gaze forward.
2. Extending the body more during flight and reducing the support on the toes.
3. Moving the COM over the toes when taking off from the canvas and extending the arms upward to create more rotation. Making sure the pike position is fully closed to increase the rotation speed.
4. Extending the body more when taking off from the canvas and maintaining a visual reference point during the extension. Maintaining the pike position only briefly. The instructor could also give an audible signal for starting the salto. **EX**



MINI-TRAMPOLINE DIVE ROLL

Technical Element Description

Jumping with 180° forward rotation finishing by a roll on a landing mat.

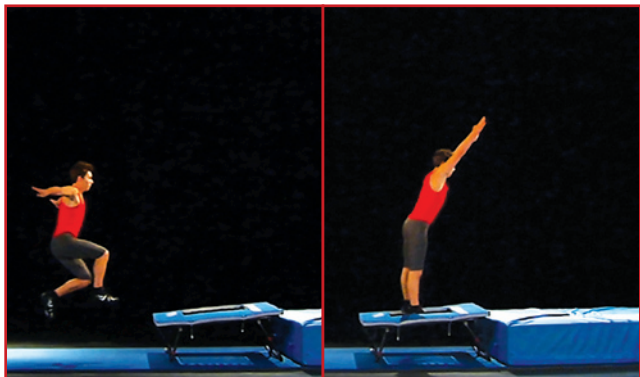
Prerequisites

- Front roll on the floor. (See *Front roll, Acrobatics*, p. 23.)
- Tuck front salto on the MT.

Explanation of the Movement

- Jump on the MT with the arms extended. When the canvas comes back up, contract the muscles of the entire body and slightly bend the body in order to move the COM forward and produce a rotation. Upon leaving the canvas, the body should be completely extended. **M 1**
- During the aerial phase, maintain the extended position and keep the head straight by keeping the gaze on the landing mat. **M 2**
- Flex the hips only when the hands hit the landing mat. **M 3**

Notes: The degree of rotation cannot be changed during the aerial phase. Only the rotation speed can be changed. If there is a lack of rotation during the takeoff from the canvas, the body must adopt a pike or tuck position in the aerial phase in order to ensure a safe landing.

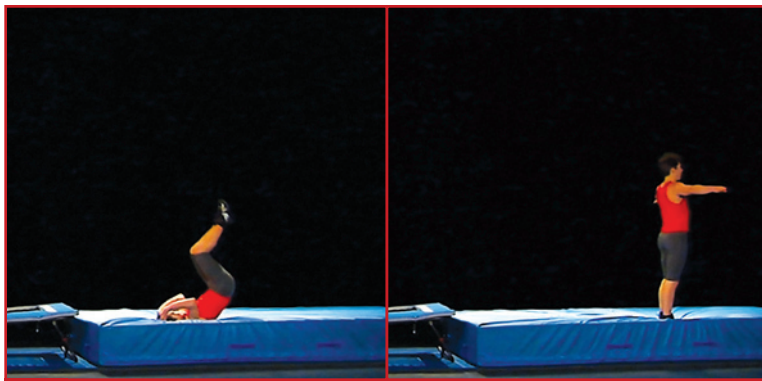


M 1



M 2

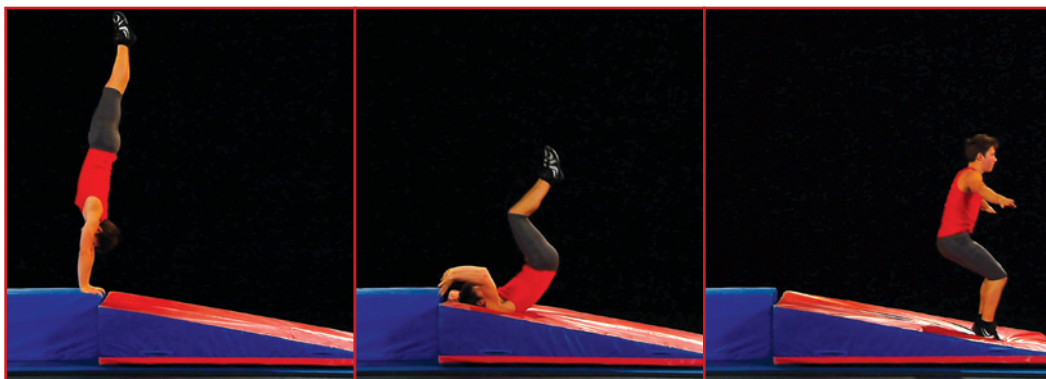




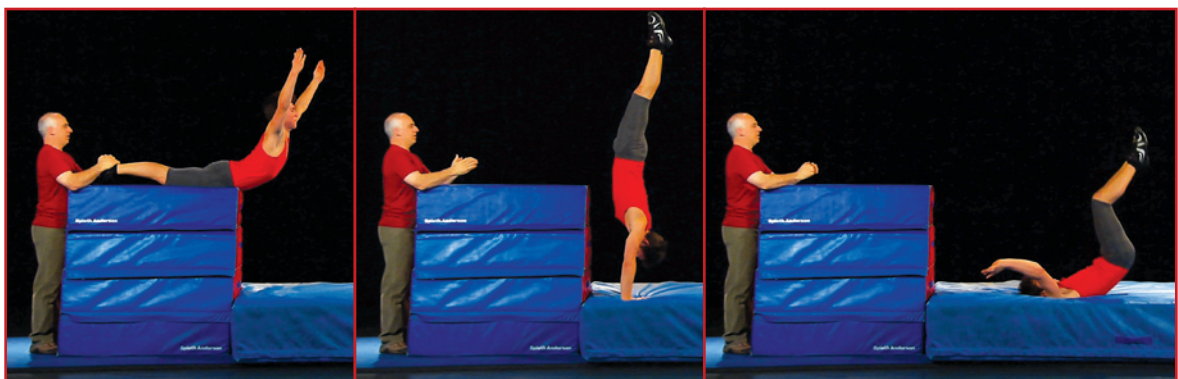
M 3

Educationals

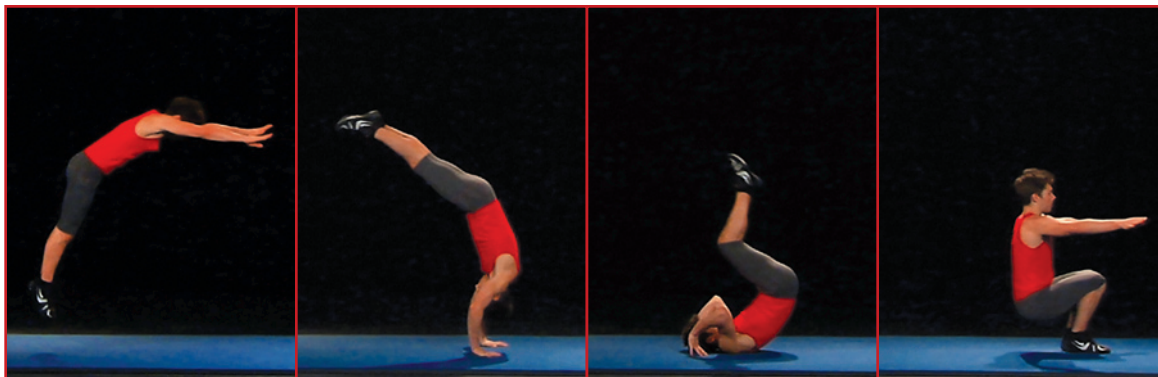
1. Handstand, front roll on an incline surface. **ED 1**
2. Stomach lying on a platform, keep the gaze forward and swing up, then roll onto a landing mat. **ED 2**
3. Dive roll on the floor. **ED 3**
4. Dive roll on the MT with manual aid.



ED 1



ED 2



ED 3

Manual Aid

- The spotter stands on the side between the MT and the landing mat. During the aerial phase, he supports the participant with one hand on his stomach and the other on his thighs in order to help maintain an extended position. He also helps adjust his rotation speed if necessary to ensure a safe landing on the landing mat. **MA 1**



MA 1

Common Mistakes

1. The participant has trouble with the roll at the end of the dive.
2. The rotation is excessive during the landing.
3. The participant makes an overpronounced travelling.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Creating more rotation during contact with the canvas by moving the COM more.
2. Decreasing muscle contraction when taking off from the canvas.
3. The shoulders are outside the base of support during contact with the canvas. The participant must keep his COM over the toes during the jump on the MT.





MINI-TRAMPOLINE PIKE BARANI, TUCK BARANI

Technical Element Description

Front salto with a half-twist at the dead point of the aerial phase.

Prerequisites

- Determining the dominant side for the twist.
- Tuck front salto.
- Pike front salto.
- Half-twist jump.

Explanation of the Movement

Pike barani

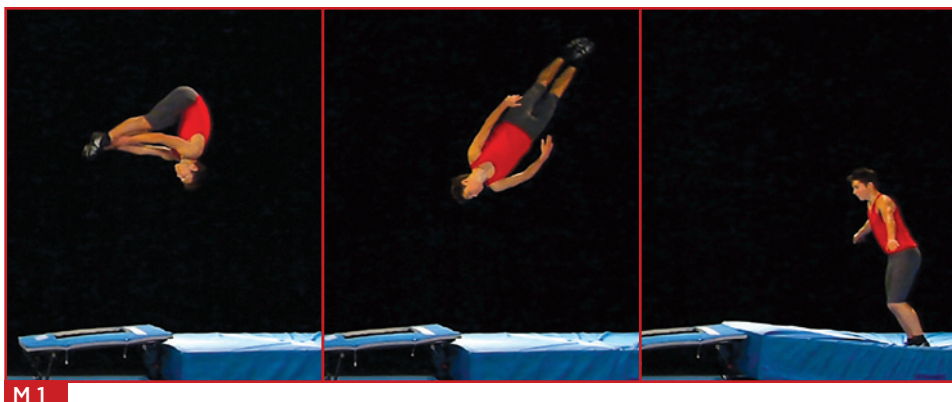
- Jump on the MT. After taking off from the canvas, take the pike position. Then, with the arms parallel to the body, extend the body by making an asymmetric movement of the hips and keep the gaze on the landing mat.
- Flex the hips and lift the arms perpendicular to the body just before landing on the mat. **M 1**

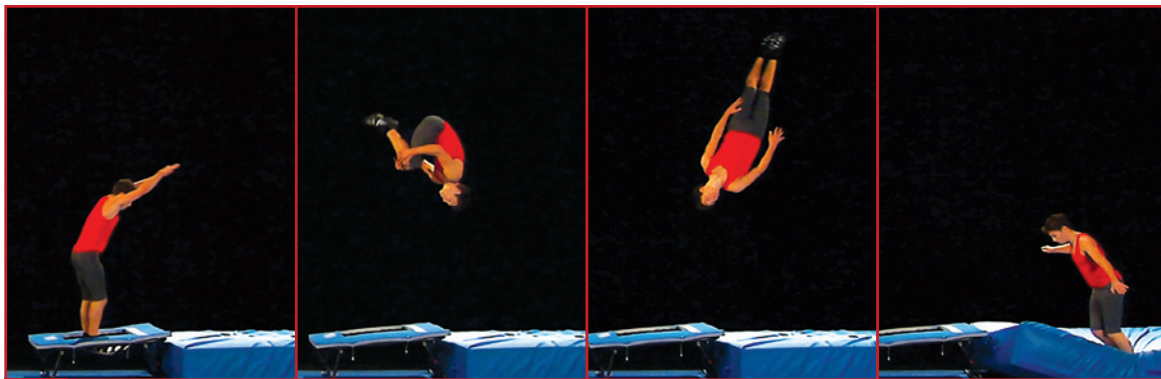
Tuck barani

- Jump on the MT. After taking off from the canvas, take the tuck position. Then, with the arms parallel to the body, extend the body by making an asymmetric movement of the hips and keep the gaze on the landing mat.
- Flex the hips and lift the arms perpendicular to the body just before landing on the mat. **M 2**

Notes: Since the same technique applies to the tuck barani and the pike barani, it is recommended to first learn the pike barani since it promotes learning to execute the half-twist at the right moment.

- The landing on the canvas from the barani, whether tuck or pike, is identical to that from a front salto. However, since the opening is earlier in the case of the barani, the rotation speed decreases more quickly. Therefore, it is necessary to create more rotation initially.

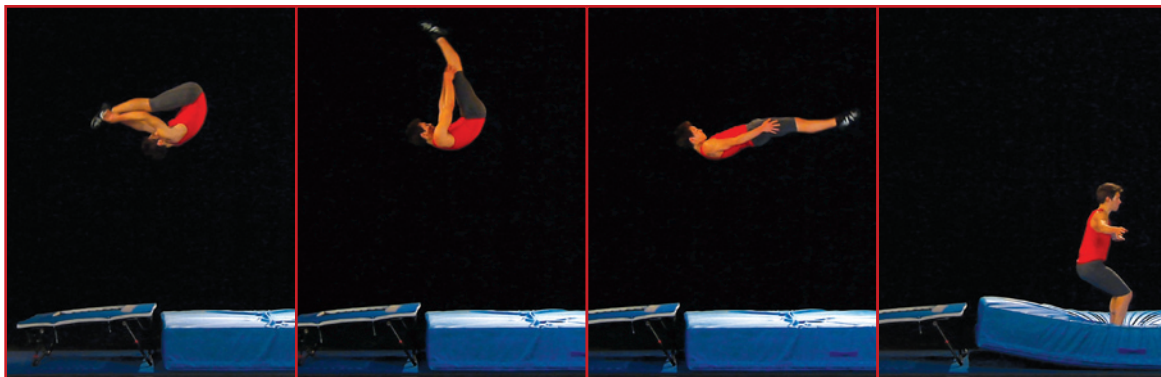




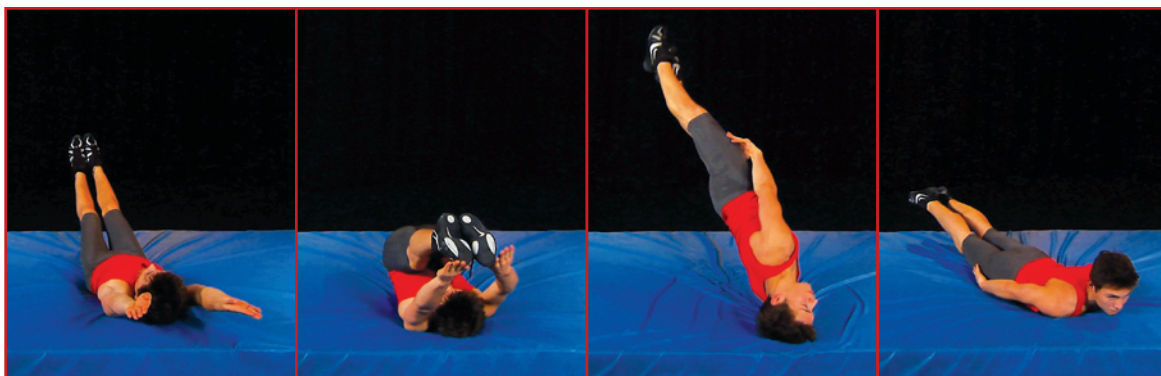
M 2

Educationals

1. Pike front salto with opening. ED 1
2. Repeat the aerial sequence on a landing mat. ED 2
3. Barani with manual aid.



ED 1



ED 2



Manual Aid

- The spotter turns the participant by putting his hands on the participant's hips when starting the salto. **MA 1**



MA 1

Common Mistakes

1. The participant deviates to the side.
2. The participant loses his visual reference points during the aerial phase.
3. The participant has trouble twisting.
4. The participant's rotation is insufficient.
5. The participant rotates too much. The COM is forward of the base of support during contact with the canvas.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Avoiding starting the half-twist too soon. Emphasizing the flight and the pike position, and producing the twist with the asymmetric movement of the hips, and not from the canvas.
2. Keeping the head straight in order to keep the gaze on the landing mat, or executing the half-twist earlier.
3. Working on the hip action to produce the half-twist on the floor. **EX**
4. Executing the half-twist later; the emphasis will be on the rotation during contact with the canvas.
5. Keeping the head straight initially and feeling the COM over the toes. Not holding the tuck or pike position too long or the head toward the inside.



MINI-TRAMPOLINE STRAIGHT BARANI

Technical Element Description

Front salto and half-twist during the aerial phase.

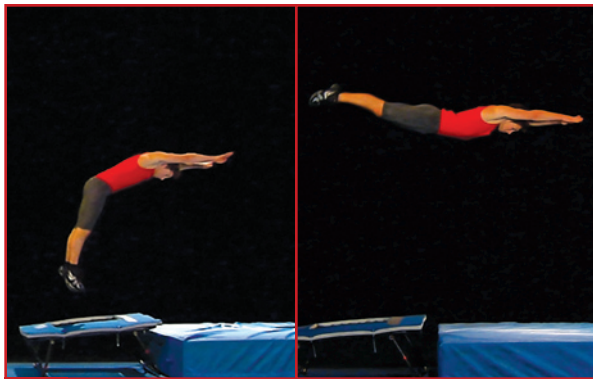
Prerequisites

- Pike front salto.
- Pike barani.

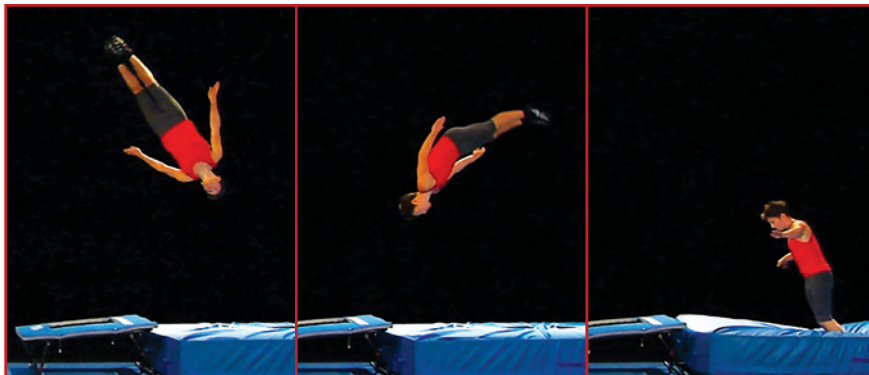
Explanation of the Movement

- Jump on the MT with the arms extended. Take off from the canvas in the same way as for a pike barani but produce more rotation since the body remains extended throughout the aerial phase. Keep the arms extended up to the dead point. **M 1**
- Do an asymmetric movement of the arms by bringing them alongside the body to produce the half-twist. Once the half-twist is completed, spread the arms apart and land on the mat, with the feet shoulder-width apart. **M 2**

Note: It is important to keep the gaze on the landing mat throughout the movement and to do the half-twist after the dead point.



M 1



M 2



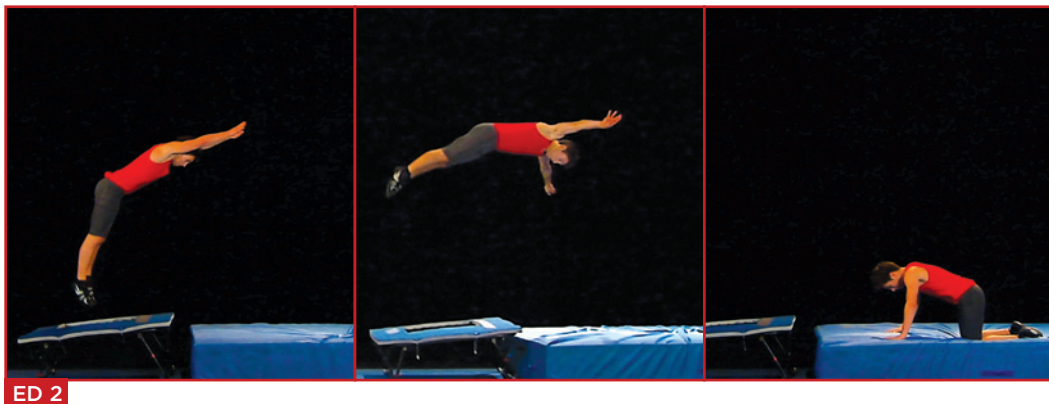
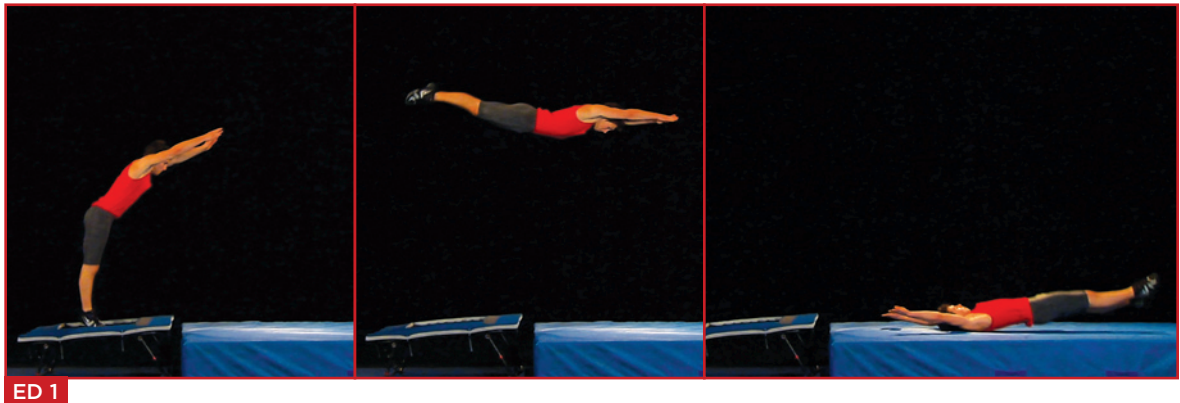
Educationals

1. Flat back dive roll onto the landing mat. **ED 1**

2. Start for the flat back dive roll and half-twist, landing on all fours. **ED 2**

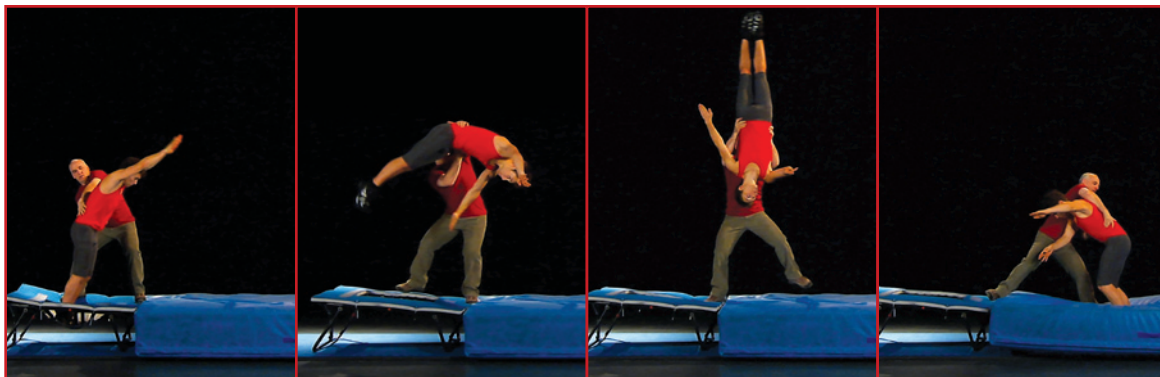
Note: It is important to do the half-twist after the dead point and to keep visual contact with the landing mat.

3. Straight barani with manual aid.



Manual Aid

- The spotter, positioned to the side between the MT and the landing mat, helps to turn the participant's hips during the aerial phase. **MA 1**



MA 1

Common Mistakes

1. The participant deviates to the side.
2. The participant twists to the wrong side.
3. The jump does not have enough rotation.
4. The participant moves forward too much.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Avoiding starting the half-twist too soon. Emphasizing the flight and producing the half-twist with the asymmetric movement of the arms in the aerial phase, and not from the canvas.
2. Working on the flat back dive roll and including the half-twist as late as possible in the movement, near the dead point. **EX**
3. Concentrating on the initial rotation to avoid executing the half-twist too early.
4. Keeping the COM over the base of support during contact with the canvas by keeping the head straight initially.





MINI-TRAMPOLINE SNAP-DOWN AND BACK SALTO

Technical Element Description

Snap-down, bounce and tuck back salto, landing on a mat from a handstand on a raised platform.

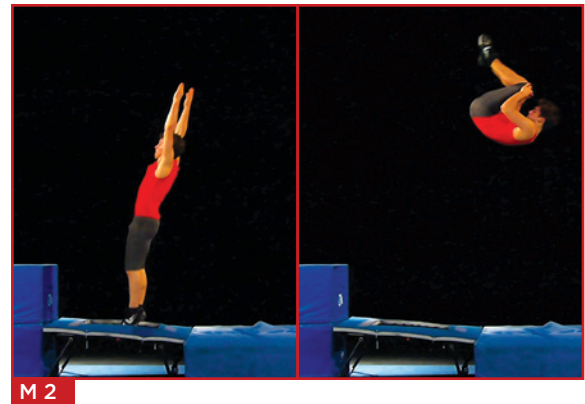
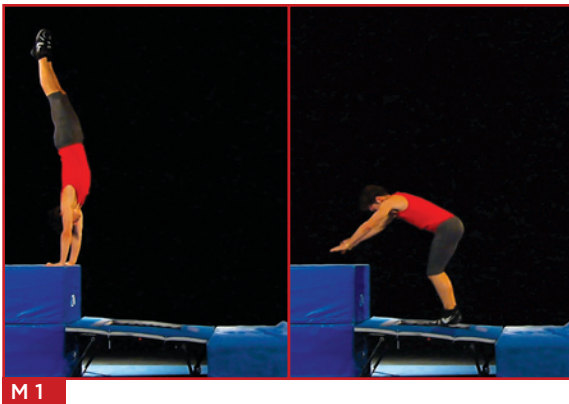
Prerequisites

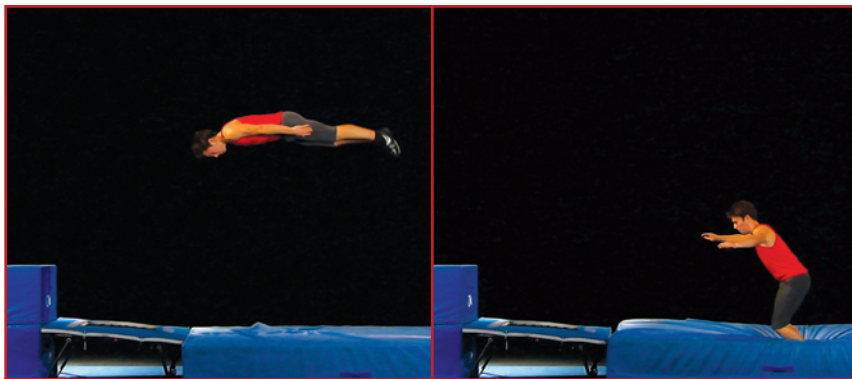
- Back roll on the floor. (See *Back roll*, *Acrobatics*, p. 42.)
- Snap-down on the floor. (See *Snap-down*, *Acrobatics*, p. 18.)

Explanation of the Movement

- Bounce on the MT with the hands on a raised platform to get up into the handstand, the body open and not completely vertical. Get into hollow chest position, with the upper body rounded, during the descent. Land on the MT with the feet slightly forward of the pelvis to cause a backwards shift. **M 1**
- Arch the body slightly just before reaching the canvas in order to shift the COM. Extend the hips while rising, and tuck during the aerial phase. **M 2**
- Produce a sufficient rotation to extend the body and allow visual contact with the landing mat during the descent. The head remains neutral throughout the movement. **M 3**

Note: It is important to keep the gaze forward initially.

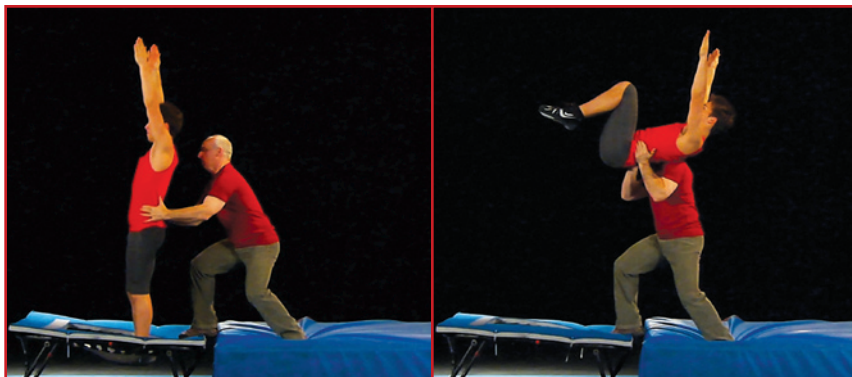




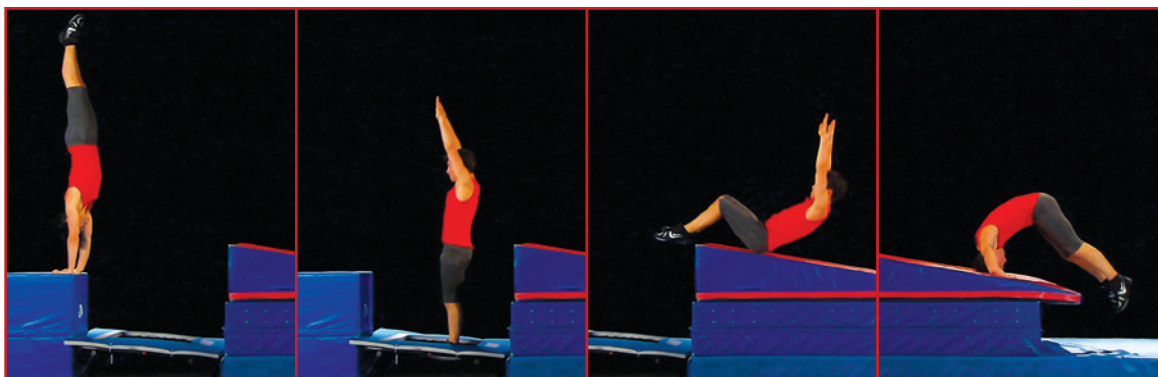
M 3

Educationals

1. Flat back snap-down onto the landing mat.
2. From bouncing on the MT, with the help of a spotter, jump in the back position and take the tuck position at the dead point. **ED 2**
3. Snap-down from a platform, landing on the back on an incline surface, then sequence with a back roll. **ED 3**
4. Tuck back salto from the MT with manual aid. **ED 4**
5. Back salto on the floor with manual aid. **ED 5**
6. Back roll from a raised surface, with landing on the floor.



ED 2

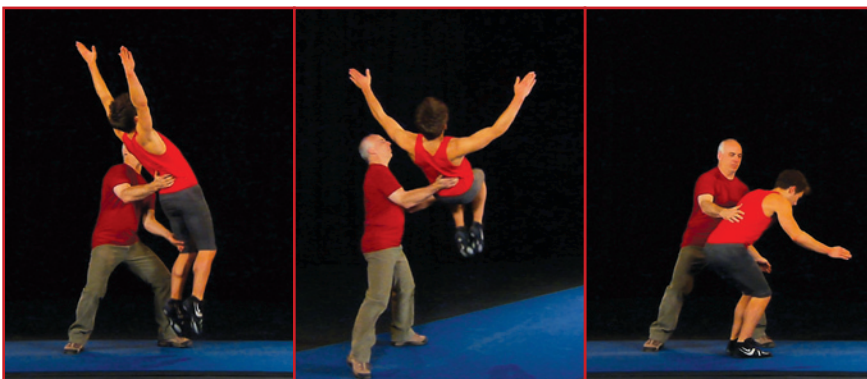


ED 3





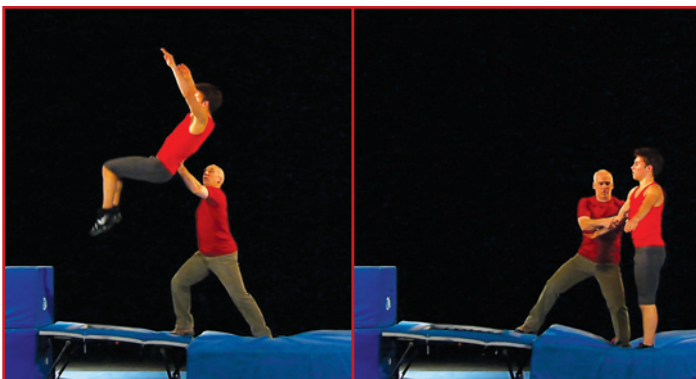
ED 4



ED 5

Manual Aid

- From the snap-down on the MT, the spotter holds the participant's pelvis and legs during the salto, adjusting his rotation speed, if necessary. **MA 1**



MA 1

Common Mistakes

1. The participant moves backwards too much.
2. The participant does not move backwards enough.
3. The participant's rotation is insufficient.
4. The participant's jump height is insufficient.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Keeping the gaze forward initially to prevent the head from being pulled back.
2. Making sure the feet are slightly forward of the pelvis when landing on the MT.
3. Making sure the hips are extended during contact with the canvas. Keeping the extended position while coming up from the canvas so that the COM is behind the vertical thrust. Getting into the tuck position once in the aerial phase.
4. Making sure the participant's hips are over the base of support when landing and that he exerts muscle pressure until the taking off from the canvas. The legs should also be completely extended.



The mission of *Fondation Cirque du Soleil™* is to promote the circus arts as a development tool to help disadvantaged groups, especially at-risk youth, increase their creative potential, social skills and physical capacity. The foundation also ensures that all revenues from the distribution of *Cirque du Soleil™* educational material will be reinvested in the company's social and cultural programs.

Produced in collaboration with the National Circus School, and translated into multiple languages, *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* aims to introduce the public to circus arts. As both a technical guide and an educational tool, this document illustrates 177 technical elements drawn from 17 basic circus arts disciplines. Accompanied by video documents, this work offers in-depth expertise and technical content that will enable the delivery of progressive and specialized instruction in a safe environment.

In collaboration with



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