

Step Forward Plan

Coaching at a social distance

Whilst social distancing measures are in place, regular training plans and coaching practises may need to be adapted. It may seem challenging to plan for, and coach, some gymnastics disciplines more than others. To help, here are some suggestions that you may want to use within your sessions.

Focus on dance and choreography elements



- > Work on the execution of dance movements.
- > Explore new dance styles and techniques. You could watch videos of different styles of movement and see which ones your gymnasts really resonate with.
- > Work on artistry, with a focus on facial expressions, musicality, amplitude, and the ability to convey emotion.
- > Continue to work on timing, rhythm, and the creative elements of routines. This can be done in individual routines or as a pair, trio or group.
- > Explore new formations, levels, and movement patterns in choreography.
- > Introduce a 'Dance style of the week'. Ask gymnasts to choose a different style each week to focus and learn something new.

Use this time to improve and develop individual skills



- > Work together with your gymnasts to set tasks which rebuild, develop, and improve their range of individual skills.
- > Highlight rhythm and timing as a focus. Think about entries and exits of individual skills or within a pair, trio, or group routine.
- > Introduce a 'Skill of the week' as a focus. This could be a skill the gymnasts can already do, with a focus on improving specific detail or technical aspects.
- > To maintain motivation, create a skills chart or an individual record that gymnasts can use to monitor their own progress.
- > Challenge gymnasts to use their creativity and build their own routines and sequences based on set skills or movements.

Focus on fitness



- > Set weekly fitness challenges which could be done at home or in the gym, such as skipping, distance running or sprinting. You could create a leader board or record individual scores and challenge gymnasts to beat their personal best.
- > Replace contact partner skills with a conditioning exercise during a pair, trio, or group routine run-through to fill the time that the skill would take.
- > Try something new like Zumba, HIIT or circuits. Ask gymnasts to pick a workout that they will enjoy, or the pick the playlist they can work out to.
- > Utilise British Gymnastics GymFit cards within your sessions. Gymnasts could create their own workouts and take it in turns to lead.



Targeted strength and conditioning

- > When your gymnasts return to training, conduct a needs analysis for each gymnast and create individualised training programmes which include strength and conditioning.
- > Plan your conditioning to focus on certain areas and ensure gymnasts are aware of the muscle groups they are working, and the correct technique, to get the most out of the exercise.
- > Working safely, you could utilise specific discipline strength exercises that you have been trained to utilise, such as block work for Acro tops.



Developing flexibility and range of movement

- > Work with your gymnasts to set tasks to develop and improve their flexibility. Where possible, record any goals and the progress made towards reaching these so gymnasts feel motivated and can see their achievements.
- > Focus on specific areas and demonstrate to the gymnasts how improving this range of movement would help with their skill progression.
- > Pick a flexibility 'Skill of the week'. This could be the same for a group of gymnasts or each gymnast could have a different skill they select each week.



Working with your younger gymnasts

- > Within Preschool sessions, you may require parents or carers take part in the activity. Factor this into your activity, space and equipment planning and ensure that you amend your ratios accordingly to meet the government guidelines for groups.
- > Prepare parents or carers with as much detail as possible for them to discuss with their gymnasts before attending the session.
- > If parents and carers are active within the session, ensure they are also aware of the safety and social distancing measures that you have in place. These would include procedures for safely arriving and leaving the gym and moving around the space.
- > Allocate any hand apparatus or props to gymnasts individually and use equipment that can be cleaned quickly and easily between sessions.
- > Show gymnasts where they keep their own belongings or apparatus. You could use markers or pictures to help them to remember. Where possible, keep this the same at every session.
- > The more engaged your gymnasts are, the more likely they are to stay on task. Create short, exciting activities which are quick to get started and easy to understand.



Coaching without physically supporting skills

- > Plan with safety as the priority and avoid coaching new or existing skills to gymnasts where supporting or close spotting is vital.
- > Break down skills into appropriate progressions which can be safely taught without the need for supporting or close spotting.
- > Ensure gymnasts can perform the progressions competently before moving onto further progressions.
- > Provide additional matting, where appropriate, on or around equipment to ensure that gymnasts can perform skills safely and confidently, without the need of supporting or close spotting.
- > Consider utilising lower pieces of equipment, where applicable to reduce the need to support.
- > Show gymnasts videos of the progression or skill being performed to explain body positioning and to provide feedback.

It is important to consider:

- > How you adapt your activities to suit all ages.
- > How you apply these in your specific environment.
- > How you ensure your activities are suitable and inclusive for all individuals. Consider different learning styles or disabilities in your preparation*
- > Ensure equipment and hand apparatus are cleaned in line with our [SFP Cleaning Guidance Document](#)

* Further resources that offer support on adapting the above for individuals with additional needs can be found on the [British Gymnastics Inclusive Gymnastics Page](#).