
TUMBLING BASICS

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Kathleen Ortiz



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Preface

So you think you might want to teach basic tumbling, but how? This book is an introduction for all people who may be teaching tumbling for the first time or have limited knowledge about the sport of gymnastics. It's also for more experienced teachers who need a refresher or are interested in using tumbling circuits to create an enjoyable and educational environment. Using circuits that enable full participation during the learning process will aid in students' development in a limited time. As a teacher of tumbling, whether in a K-12 school, private club, recreation program, cheerleading program, or dance program, you have a goal of creating a positive experience for students through an organized, developmentally safe, challenging program. Not only do you want to develop students' proficiency in tumbling, but you also want to educate them about physical well-being through skills that develop their strength, flexibility, balance, and agility. By working in small groups, students will develop cooperative learning skills required in their daily activities. Circuits are full of activities for exciting, energetic, safe classes.

Through the years, I have seen the development—physically, emotionally, and intellectually—that a sound tumbling program can produce in students. Teaching at the college level helped me realize that many future teachers, whether in physical education or other teaching environments, feel inadequate about teaching tumbling skills because they were never introduced to these movements as children. If you are a physical education teacher or are preparing to become one, you do not have to be able to demonstrate the skills in order to be an effective instructor, but you do need to understand the components of strength and flexibility and the breakdown of the skills into basic drills to aid in your students' development. This book provides you with the tools to do just that. It offers you the ability to develop proficiency in the analysis and spotting of basic tumbling skills and recognize the components necessary for optimal achievement.

The Descriptions of Tumbling Terms and Circuit Exercises section and the Circuit Exercises for Flexibility and Strength chart are extremely useful when teaching and using the circuits. The Descriptions of Tumbling Terms and Circuit

Exercises section contains an alphabetical list of all the skills and exercises used in the book. Not only are there written descriptions that break down the skills and exercises, but step-by-step photos show how to perform many of the skills. This is truly an excellent resource for finding all of the information you will need to better understand a particular skill or exercise. You may also use the photos to aid students in understanding your expectations of body positions and to visually express the elements involved in performing skills and exercises properly. The Circuit Exercises for Flexibility and Strength chart explains which exercises develop flexibility and muscular strength.

The tumbling skills are organized by chapters, starting with more rudimentary skills and progressing to more advanced skills. At the beginning of each chapter, you will find a brief description of the skill and the basic technique. Then you will learn how to teach the skill using visual cues, general cues, and the strength and flexibility required for performing the skill. Covered next are common errors that occur during skill performance, how to spot students performing the skill, and special safety concerns. Chapter 1 also offers basic information about safety, warm-ups, safe landing positions, use of the circuits, and spotting (physically assisting students) that can be applied to all tumbling lessons and circuits in the book.

The circuits developed for each skill make teaching tumbling easy and enjoyable. You will observe students develop physically, socially, and mentally as they improve their tumbling skills. Six circuits are presented in each of the skills chapters. Each circuit contains 12 to 15 stations. The circuits in a skill are developmental, meaning that each one has new aspects of development that are more challenging than the previous circuit described. Finally, rubrics are included in an appendix for each skill to help you identify your students' strengths and weaknesses and allow you to mentor them and evaluate their development.

Tumbling is a wonderful tool for guiding your students in becoming more confident and disciplined through multifaceted movements, increasing their self-esteem and improving coordination. As students explore movement through tumbling,

they become aware of their bodies and capabilities, allowing them to develop spatial awareness and strengthen their fundamental motor skills for all physical pursuits. Students will be able to follow multistep directions and demonstrate sequencing skills using the circuits presented in this book.

Tumbling teaches life skills and develops healthy bodies and stronger minds that become better wired for academic success. Stronger core muscles will enable students to sit upright longer, which will enhance their attention spans in academic classes. They will learn how to show respect for others' personal space as the result of increased self-awareness. These are all skills that

will affect students' lifelong ability to learn and interact with others.

In putting together this compilation of circuits and ideas to use in teaching basic tumbling skills, I have incorporated the physical aspects of strength and flexibility as well as progressions to guide students in their acquisition of skills in an enjoyable, safe, and educational environment. You can use many exercises to attain similar results and thus make the program truly yours. These are merely suggestions of stations and the development needs to stress. Good luck, and have fun.

Kathleen Ortiz

Acknowledgments

I want to thank the world of gymnastics for providing me with great educational experiences as well as practical applications. Many items mentioned in the book come from personal experiences, which originate from the plethora of articles from USA Gymnastics, including the Safety Certification Program and *The Rookie Coaches Guide to Gymnastics*. Also, I would like to thank Todd Gardner for sharing some of his knowledge with me and for allowing me the use of his facility, the Illinois Gymnastics Institute, and his athletes as models for the photographs in this book.

Without the teaching experience and support at William Paterson University in New Jersey, I never would have written this book. I received encouragement to complete this endeavor from both my peers and students.

I would also like to thank my editor, Ragen Sanner, and the staff at Human Kinetics for making this book better than I ever imagined. They helped me develop my ideas more fully and logically and created graphics and a layout that is awesome.

Finally, thanks to Paul, my husband and best friend, for supporting me throughout my gymnastics career.

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Descriptions of Tumbling Terms and Circuit Exercises



This icon designates tumbling skills.

Achilles stretch—Place one foot flexed up against a wall with the ball of the foot contacting wall. The other foot stands on the floor or mat about 18 inches (45 cm) from the wall. Lean toward wall, which stretches the leg of the flexed foot. This exercise stretches the lower legs.



Achilles stretch II—Stand 36 inches (91 cm) away from wall with feet together. Place hands on wall and bend arms slightly. Lift one heel at a time, stretching the leg of the foot that is flat. This exercise stretches the lower legs.



Achilles stretch III—Stand on hands and feet with buttocks lifted upward, like a bear crawl position with feet together. Lift one heel up, then lift other heel. This exercise stretches the lower legs.

Achilles stretch IV—Stand on edge of mat with toes on mat and heels on floor. Lift one heel at a time, stretching the leg of the flat foot. This exercise stretches the lower legs.



aerial—Skills performed without hands (airborne). Examples are aerial cartwheel and aerial front walkover.

airplane scale—Stand on one straight leg and lift other leg backward to horizontal with arms in side middle, as if you are flying.



alternating Superman—Lie on front and lift one straight leg upward as opposite straight arm lifts upward. This exercise strengthens the lower back.

ankle circles I—Sit on floor with one leg straight and other leg bent over the top of upper straight leg. Take the ball of the foot in your hand and turn it gently in a circle, rotating it in each direction. Repeat on other side. Ankle circles should feel easy and not vigorous. This exercise stretches the lower legs, especially the ankle region.

ankle circles II—Sit in pike position with legs slightly apart. Circle the foot from the ankle outward and inward. This exercise stretches the lower legs.

ankle walk—Bend forward, grasp ankles, and walk holding ankles. This exercise stretches the legs and lower back.



archy handstand—Kick to handstand with hands 18 inches (45 cm) from wall. Press shoulders open. This exercise stretches the midarms and upper body.



arm circles—Hold arms out horizontally. Make small circles emanating from the shoulder, not the elbow or wrist. They may be performed forward or backward (with palms up or down) and to the side of the body or in front. Large circles will not strengthen arms and could result in a shoulder injury. This exercise strengthens the midarms and upper body.



back extension roll—Perform a backward roll that extends to a handstand position midway through the skill. The push to the handstand occurs as the hands contact the mat. Body will extend through a shoulder stand position before reaching a handstand. The exit from the skill may be to a pike, two-foot landing, or step-out position. This skill may also be performed with straight arms, but that is more difficult. Extend the hips as early as possible.



back handspring—Jump backward through a handstand position and snap the legs down to finish in a stand. It is a fast-moving skill with flight to the hands and to the feet. It may also be performed with a step-out but still needs to show flight from the hands to the feet.





back limber—Start in a standing position with the feet about shoulder-width apart or closer and arms straight above the head. The arms stretch backward to finish in an arch support on hands and feet (a backbend). A rocking motion will occur where there is a shift in weight from the feet toward the hands. Legs lift simultaneously from the mat, passing through a handstand position. Pike down, placing feet on mat, and lifting arms above head. This is a slow, continuously moving skill.

backbend—From a stand, stretch backward to finish in an arch support on hands and feet (bridge). This skill requires good flexibility.



backbend kickover—Start in a standing position with feet about shoulder-width apart or closer and arms straight above head. Arms stretch backward to finish in arch support on hands and feet (backbend). Once in a backbend position, kick with the dominant leg while pushing from mat with the other foot. The body passes through handstand split. Step down one leg at a time.



back-up handstand—See *spider handstand*.



back walkover—Execute a backbend from one leg. Other leg lifts and kicks over. As hands contact the floor, push off the support leg, resulting into a handstand split position. Step down one leg at a time to finish in lunge.



backward barrel roll—Arch your back over octagonal mat, place hands on the floor with straight arms, and pull legs over to finish.



backward roll—A backward motion performed on the mat. Tuck the body and use hands to facilitate rotation of the body to the feet.



barrel roll over folded mat—A sideward movement used as a drill for cartwheels. Start by standing on one side of a folded mat. Place hands on the folded mat and kick over the mat one leg at a time, back and forth; hands remain in contact with the folded mat.



backward tuck jump—Jump backward in a tucked position from a folded mat to safe landing position.

bear walk—Like crawling, but using hands and feet. Buttocks are lifted upward and movement may go in any direction. This exercise strengthens the midarms and upper body.

bent-body arm stretch—Clasp hands behind back, bend forward, swing arms upward, and stretch. This exercise stretches the midarms and upper body.

big rock—Lie on back. Bend knees and place hands on mat with fingers pointed toward feet. Push belly upward, lifting head off mat to a bridge. Rock back and forth over feet and hands, lifting feet off mat into the air, and then lift hands off mat. This exercise stretches the lower back.

bounce, bounce, straighten—From squat stand, place hands on floor in front of feet. Do two small bounces in squat phase, then straighten legs slowly with head as close to knees as possible. You might not be able to straighten the legs completely without the hands leaving the floor. You should feel a stretch but not pain.

bridge—Lie on back. Bend knees and bring feet to buttocks. Place hands by shoulders, flipping palms of hands under shoulders so the fingers point toward feet. Push belly upward and lift the head from the mat. The body should look like a horseshoe or rainbow. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, upper body, and lower back.



bridge with hopping legs—Lift to bridge, hold one leg up slightly from mat, and hop from foot to foot. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, upper body, and lower back.

bridge push-up—Assume a bridge position with the eyes looking toward the hands, then lower gently to top of head by bending arms, followed by a straightening of the arms. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

bridge single-leg hold—Lift into a bridge, straighten legs, then lift one leg in the air straight and balance. Repeat on the other leg. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



bridge walk—Push up into a bridge and move hands and feet to walk in bridge forward, backward, or sideways. This is different from a crab walk because of the arched position of the back. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

bunny hop—Begin in a squat stand with hands on the mat in front of the feet. Jump with hands and feet at the same time, either forward or backward. This exercise strengthens the legs.

butterfly stretch—Sit with legs bent and soles of feet together. Open knees as wide as possible. Stretch forward, bringing head toward feet. Hands should rest on feet without pulling so that undue stress is not placed on the lower extremities. This exercise stretches the upper legs.

candlestick jump—Start in a shoulder stand, roll forward to feet, then perform a straight jump. Roll back to shoulder stand, and repeat. This exercise strengthens the legs.



cartwheel—A sideward movement that goes through a vertical inverted position. The body looks like an X and rotates like a windmill. It has an even 4-count rhythm: hand, hand, foot, foot.



cat and cow stretch—Stand on hands and knees, lift back upward like an angry cat, then arch back downward like a saggy old cow. This exercise stretches the lower back.

center of gravity—The point in the body where the weight is evenly dispersed.

circle cartwheel—A drill used to reinforce the direction of hand and foot placements for a cartwheel. Stand on the predrawn circle with the torso facing the center of the circle. Bend to one side, placing hands on circle. Hop off the feet in a sequential motion, landing on the circle past the hands. Torso remains facing the center of the circle the entire time.



cool-down—Exercises performed at the end of a class to lower the heart rate and stretch muscle groups that have been activated during the lesson.

crab walk—Sit on buttocks with legs bent and soles of feet contacting mat. Reach hands behind buttocks and lift hips to support the body on hands and feet with back toward mat. Walk in any direction. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

cradle—A tucked and rounded position on back. The arms are either folded across the chest or bent as when going into a backward roll.

crocodile crawl—Lie on front with forearms and elbows on the mat above chest. Pull body forward by alternately walking forearms and dragging the body. This exercise strengthens the midarms and upper body.

cross and stretch—Sit in pike position with legs straight in front of body. Bend and cross one leg over thigh of straight leg, twist upper body in opposite direction of straight leg, and hold. Repeat on other side. This exercise stretches the abdominals.

cross-leg lift—Sit on floor in a butterfly position with legs crossed at ankles. Push body and legs off the mat. This also improves balance. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



crossed pike stretch—Stand with one leg crossed over other. Reach toward mat and hold. Return to stand and repeat with other leg crossed in front. This exercise stretches the upper legs.

crunch—Lie on back with knees bent and feet flat on mat. Arms may be in your choice of position; note that the higher the arms, the more difficult the exercise. Lift head from the mat to rounding the upper body. Contract abdominals, slightly lifting the upper body. Never pull with the head or neck; only the abdominals should be working. Press the back flat to the mat. Do not place arms behind head because that position encourages pulling the neck. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

curl-up bicycle—Lie on back and lift shoulders and head off mat. Rest arms beside torso or rest on forearms placed behind hips. Lift tucked legs off mat and alternately straighten legs about 6 inches (15 cm) from the mat, as if bicycling legs. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

curl-up climb—Lie on back with feet flat on mat. Lift head from mat, round upper body, and contract abdominals. Move your arms as if you are climbing a rope, which works the side obliques as well. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

curl-up double-leg extension—Lie on back and lift shoulders and head off mat. Rest arms beside torso. If you lack strength and need lower-back support, rest on the forearms placed behind the hips. Lift tucked legs off mat, extend legs together, pause in extended position, return to tuck, and repeat. Keep back flat to the mat during extension phase. Do only a partial extension if you lack strength. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

curl-up leg circle—Lie on back and lift shoulders and head off mat. Rest arms beside torso. If you lack strength and need lower-back support, rest on the forearms placed behind the hips. Lift legs straight off of mat about 6 inches (15 cm) and circle legs together each direction. Keep back flat to the mat during extension phase. If you lack strength, do only a partial extension or circle one leg at a time with the resting leg bent and the sole of the foot on the mat. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

curl-up, single-leg press-out—Lie on back and lift shoulders and head off mat. Rest arms beside torso. If you lack strength and need lower-back support, rest on the forearms placed behind hips. Lift tucked legs off mat and alternately straighten legs about 6 inches (15 cm) from the mat, pausing during each leg switch. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

curl-up straddle cross—Lie on back and lift shoulders and head off mat. Rest arms beside torso. If you lack strength and need lower-back support, rest on forearms placed behind hips. Lift legs straight off mat about 6 inches (15 cm) and straddle, then return back together, but crossing legs; alternate the leg crossed on top. If you lack strength, bend the legs slightly. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

dips between folded mats—Place two stacks of mats parallel to one another. Support yourself between mats on your hands, with body free from floor mat. Bend arms to lower the body and then straighten. If you have parallel bars or tables, you can use those. If you have problems supporting yourself, work on holding yourself in a support without bending the arms. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



dive forward roll—A forward roll performed with flight before hand contact. It requires good arm strength and knowledge of rolling with kinesthetic awareness.



dive cartwheel—A cartwheel performed with flight before hand contact, often preceded by a hurdle.

donkey kick—Stand straight. Jump, bending forward to place hands on mat. Proceed from hands to feet to hands. Feet and hands are never on the mat at the same time. May be performed forward or backward. You might prefer to start in a three-quarter handstand and snap the legs down to create momentum. Either start is acceptable. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, upper body, and legs.

dowel roll—Take a dowel with a string attached to a small weight in the middle of the dowel. Hands are in a forward grip. Roll the dowel one hand at a time, winding the string around the middle so that the weight moves all the way up, and then roll it the other direction to wind the string and weight back down. You may also perform this without a weight and just rotate the dowel by moving hands singularly. This exercise strengthens the forearms and wrists.



dryer—Clasp hands together and alternately circle wrists. This exercise stretches the forearms and wrists.

elephant swing—Clasp hands in front of body, bend forward, and swing arms sideways, like an elephant trunk. This exercise stretches the abdominals.

elevator walk—Walk by lowering to a semisquat and then rising to tiptoes. Usually performed moving four steps down and then four steps up. This exercise stretches the lower legs.

feet positions—Sit in a pike position. Flex both feet upward, then curl the toes, still flexing the feet. Then point the toes, extending all the way through the ankles; repeat. This can be performed quickly to a 1-2-3-4 count. This exercise stretches the lower legs.

flank support hold—A balance position held sideways on one arm and one foot. Body is stretched with legs together.



flexed feet—When the feet are pulled upward as much as possible, producing a right angle with the leg and foot.

flexibility—The ability to bend easily, facilitating movement and easing stress on various joints in the body.

flexor back stretch—Lie on front in stretched position with arms overhead. Reach bent leg behind toward opposite side. The heel is parallel to buttocks. Press bent knee toward mat. This exercise stretches the lower back, quadriceps, and hip flexors.



flyspring—A variation of a front handspring. The takeoff is from two feet. Body is in hollow position before hand contact; the skill continues the same way as a front handspring. This exercise is only for more advanced students.

forward barrel roll—Place abdomen on barrel with arms next to ears. Push off feet, contact hands on mat on opposite side, tuck head, and slowly bend arms. Back of head contacts floor mat and body follows in a rounded shape.



forward roll—Tuck the head (chin to chest), push from feet, and rotate body to move in a rounded shape, like a ball.



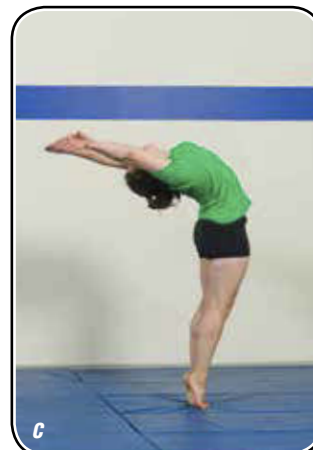
free straddle hold sit—Sit in a straddle with hands on mat between legs. Pushing the hands against the floor, lift legs and body off mat and hold. This exercise strengthens the legs and arms and helps with balance.

frog jump—Place hands on floor between feet. Legs are in a squat stand with feet pointing straight ahead or slightly turned out, about 18 inches (45 cm) apart. Jump with hands and feet at the same time. This exercise strengthens the legs.

frog stand—A tuck stand with feet apart; often used when students are learning the backward roll to avoid contact between their faces and knees.



front handspring—A fast-moving, forward-moving, hand-supported element that has flight to feet. A kick is required to start the skill, and the body rotates forward in a stretched position.

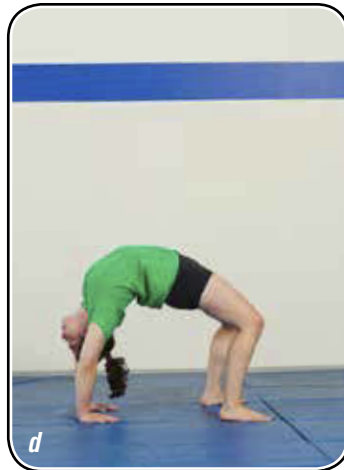




front handspring step-out—A variation of a front handspring. Instead of landing on two feet, land one foot at a time.



front limber—Kick to a handstand, followed by a bridge position, and then a stand.



front walkover—Kick to a handstand split. Arch the back and continue to a backbend with one leg up and continuously rising on the one support leg to a stand. Movement is slow and continuous with good flexibility.



gainer back handspring—This skill has a different entry than a standard back handspring. Step forward and swing the dominant leg upward, causing a one-leg push-off into the back handspring. Usually performed into a one-foot landing; there is still flight before and after hand contact.

grapevine—A sideward locomotor movement alternating stepping in front and then in back of the lead foot.



handstand—This skill is the basis for many tumbling skills. An inverted balance on the hands. Usually it is performed in a straight body position but may be held with various leg positions.



handstand to flat back—Kick to a handstand on a folded mat. Keeping your body straight, push from the shoulders and land flat on your back on an 8-inch skill cushion.



handstand forward roll—Kick up to a straight handstand. Perform a forward roll out of the handstand by bending the arms and tucking the head. A more difficult variation involves leaning the handstand beyond vertical, maintaining straight arms, rolling off the fingertips, tucking the head, and rolling down the vertebrae sequentially.

handstand march—Hold a handstand against the wall and lift one hand at a time as if marching in place. If you don't have enough strength, hold the handstand. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

handstand pirouette—A balance in the handstand position. Walk the hands in a circle, causing the body to turn.

handstand push-up—Hold a handstand position against a wall. Lower head to almost touch the mat by bending the arms, then straighten back to handstand position. If you don't have enough strength, hold the handstand. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

handstand shrug—Hold a handstand position against a wall. Push up and down through shoulders, like a pogo stick. May be modified by leaning straight-armed against the wall and pressing in and out of shoulders without inverting body. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

headstand—A balance skill supported on the head and two hands placed in a triangular pattern. Hands are about a foot apart in a line parallel to the head. The body is balanced vertically between the hands and head. Legs are usually straight and together but may be placed in various positions. Lift the legs slowly so you are able to maintain balance. If you are falling over, tuck the head forward, round the body, and roll.



hissy snake—Lie on front. Place hands on mat by chest and push chest up, straightening arms. Bend arms to return to starting position. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

hollow position—A body shape that is stretched with contracted abdominals, producing slight rounding of the body.



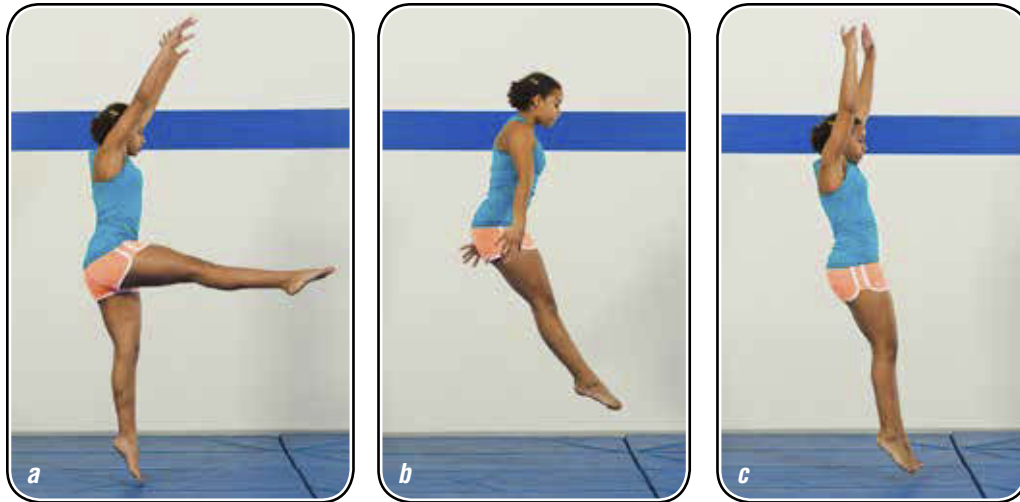
hollow hold—Lie on back and lift shoulders and head off mat. Lift legs straight off mat about 6 inches (15 cm). Most difficult position is arms held by ears; the easiest is arms by sides. Hold or pulse. If the exercise is too difficult, work the upper body, then the lower body. Do not place arms behind head because that encourages pulling on the neck. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

hollow hold side reach—Lie on back and lift shoulders and head off of mat. Lift legs straight off mat about 6 inches (15 cm), slide hand of same side down toward knee, and return and repeat on other side. Bend knees if you lack strength. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

hurdle 1—A single-leg hurdle initiates from a run culminating with a skip, lifting the dominant leg forward and upward, then stepping forward with the dominant leg.



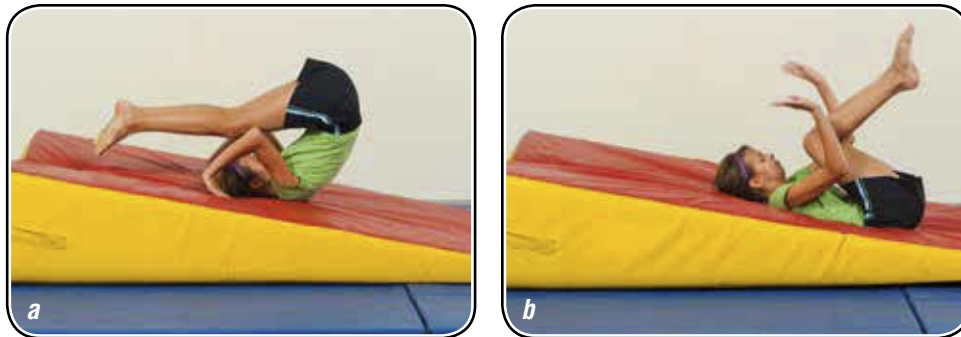
hurdle II—A two-foot hurdle initiates from a run. On the last step, the nondominant leg swings forward and the feet assemble together before landing.



inchworm—Stand with feet together. Bend forward, placing hands on mat. Walk hands away from feet, then walk feet toward hands and stretch. Legs should be straight. If you are less flexible, use slight knee bends, but you should feel a stretch. This exercise stretches the upper legs.



incline mat roll—A forward or backward roll that descends down an incline mat.



inside-out—Start in a bridge with the back facing the mat. Lift one arm and leg on same side of body and rotate 180 degrees sideways to hands and feet so that your front is facing the mat, as in a bear crawl position. Lift the other hand and foot to rotate back to a bridge. The movement travels the same direction, then reverses. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

jump—A takeoff from two feet, landing on two feet. It may have various body positions as well as various vertical axes of rotations. This exercise strengthens the legs.

jump full turn—A straight jump with a 360-degree turn in the air. May also be performed in other body-shaped positions (i.e., tuck, straddle, pike).

jump half turn—A straight jump with a 180-degree turn in the air. May also be performed in other body shaped positions (i.e., tuck, straddle, pike).

jump over folded mats—A plyometric exercise requiring explosiveness from the legs. Jump over a mat, land on the feet, and immediately jump over a second mat, then a third mat. Do a jump with a 180-degree turn in place and jump over the mats again. If overweight or lacking in strength, do an alternative exercise like jumping in place. You should be at least 10 years old and in good physical condition before doing this exercise. This exercise strengthens the legs.

jump up and down to and from folded mats—This may be done with a single mat or mats placed in a row. Jump from the floor mat and land on top of the folded mat and then jump down from the mat. If overweight or lacking in strength, perform an alternative exercise like jumping in place. You should be at least 10 years old and in good physical condition before doing this exercise. This exercise strengthens the legs.



kick-up handstand—Facing a wall, step forward with the dominant leg, place hands on mat a few inches from wall, and swing the nondominant leg upward to join the other leg in an inverted straight position against the wall.



kip—A ninja turtle to an upright standing position.

knee-out pose—Kneel on one knee. Front leg is straight and back leg (kneeling leg) is bent. Then lunge the front leg forward and straighten the back leg.



knee roll—Perform a forward roll by kneeling on the edge of a folded mat and placing hands on the mat about 1 foot (30 cm) from the folded mat in front. Lift the hips while tucking head. Bend arms, gently contacting the back of the head and rolling in a rounded position. It is a drill for the forward roll that aids in lifting the hips during the onset of the roll.



knee scale—A balance on three body parts. In a crawling position, extend one leg backward and upward, lifting the head up.



kneeling backbend—Kneel and arch backward, head toward feet as close as possible. Return to upright kneeling position. You should not feel discomfort or pain while performing this exercise. Do not lower as far or perform a different stretch where you would lie on your front. Lift your chest and look back while bending legs. Reach toes toward head. This exercise stretches the lower back.

kneeling flexor stretch—From single-leg kneeling lunge, press body weight over front foot and bend back leg lifting foot toward buttocks. Use hand to help pull foot toward buttocks, keeping chest upright. Repeat on other leg. When bending front leg, be sure that front knee does not bend past front foot. This exercise stretches the upper legs.

kneeling hamstring stretch—Kneel on one knee. Place front leg forward and straight and bend body over forward leg. Works best with flexed foot. This exercise stretches the hamstrings.

kneeling lunge jump—Kneel on one knee and place other foot in front of body. Jump to opposite single-knee position. This exercise strengthens the legs.

kneeling round-off—Kneel on one knee with the dominant foot forward and the knee bent. Kick the back leg strongly rearward while pushing from the front leg to perform a round-off. This strengthens the leg swing and push-off.

kneeling wrist stretch—Sitting on heels, place hands on mat and point fingers toward body. Alternate placing palms and backs of hands on mat. This exercise stretches the forearms and wrists.

lean-back—Kneel and lean backward with a straight body as far as possible, hold, then return to upright position. This exercise strengthens the legs.

leap—A locomotor movement resulting in a push upward and forward off one foot to land on the other foot showing a stride leg position in the air.

leg lift—Lie on back. Lift legs 6 inches (15 cm) off of mat. Hold arms vertically toward ceiling, lift straight legs to fingers, and return to starting position. An easier modification is to lift one leg at a time. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

leg swing—Stand on one leg. Swing other leg forward, sideward, or backward a specified number of times, then on last kick hold leg up for a specified count. You may need to hold on to something for balance. This exercise stretches the upper legs.



limber over barrel—A lead-up for learning a front limber. The barrel offers support for the back.



log roll V-up—Lie on back. Hold head, shoulders, and feet off mat with arms up, like bunny ears (hollow hold). Roll to front and arch back to keep head and feet from contacting mat. Roll again to hollow position and lift legs and upper body to touch toes with fingers. Return to hollow and repeat. Ensure log roll occurs in both directions. This exercise strengthens the lower back and abdominals.



lower-back roll—Lie on back, lift legs up and over head, bend knees by shoulders, hold position, then straighten legs and hold position. This exercise exerts pressure on the neck; do not perform it if you have sensitivity in this area. This exercise stretches the lower back.

lower-leg lift—Lie on side with forearm support. Cross top leg in front of lower leg and lift lower leg toward ceiling. This exercise strengthens the upper legs.

lunge—Legs are in a stride position with front leg bent. Back foot may be turned outward for better balance.



Mexican hat dance bridge—In a bridge position, hop from one foot to the other.

modified hurdle stretch—In a pike sit, bend one leg to touch opposite inner knee with sole of foot, turning knee outward, like butterfly. Reach forward over straight leg. This exercise stretches the upper legs and hips.

modified push-up—A push-up performed with the knees contacting the mat. Body should be tight and straight. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

monkey jump—A sideward jumping motion. Start in a standing position next to a folded mat. Place hands on the folded mat and jump over the mat back and forth while hands remain in contact with folded mat.



mountain climber—Place legs in a lunge. Reach and place hands about 1 foot (30 cm) in front of feet on mat, turning rear leg forward so heel lifts from mat. Jump rear leg forward to opposite lunge position and repeat. This exercise strengthens the legs.

muscular endurance—The muscles' ability to repeat movements over time. This is important in performing longer, aerobic-type activities, such as hiking, and assists in muscle toning. Slow-twitch muscle fibers are more activated during these movements.

muscular strength—The muscles' ability to exert and receive force. This is associated with shorter, more anaerobic activity that develops bulkier muscles. It uses fast-twitch muscle fibers. The exertion is used in lifting a heavy weight or during plyometric exercises. Tumbling skills requiring power rely on this type of strength.

neck forward and back—Bring chin toward chest, then lift head backward with mouth closed. This exercise stretches the neck.

neck look—Look hard to right and then to left. This exercise stretches the neck.

neck hold—Drop ear to shoulder and hold. Move head forward and hold. Then move head to other shoulder and hold. Repeat, moving head in opposite direction. This exercise stretches the neck.

neck side to side—Reach head to one side, ear to shoulder, then repeat to other side. This exercise stretches the neck.

needle kick walk—Step forward and reach downward with hands to mat as back leg swings upward. Lift arms up as leg comes downward and steps forward to repeat motion on other leg. Arms are by ears the entire time. May also be performed by reaching to a folded mat and with steps in place. Using the mat requires less flexibility. This exercise stretches the upper legs.



ninja turtle—Lie on back with legs piked overhead. Place hands in a bridgelike position. Whip legs upward to a shoulder stand position. Continue by arching and pushing with hands and arms to finish in a bridge. It is common to not lift the hips, which results in the feet slamming into the mat. Look back at hands while pushing into the bridge. Tucking the head may result in falling on the back.



one-arm back handspring—A back handspring performed with one arm for support.



one-arm cartwheel—Performed like a cartwheel. It uses only one arm. You may place the first arm down (near-arm cartwheel) or the second arm down (far-arm cartwheel) on the floor. It's common to get the feet and hands mixed up, especially when performing the far-arm cartwheel.



one-arm walkover—A forward or backward walkover performed with one arm for support.

overhead leg lift—Lie on back, keeping it flat to the mat. Lift legs 6 inches (15 cm) off mat. Pull legs overhead to touch mat above head. Return to starting position. Depending on flexibility, legs might not actually touch the mat. Pulling the legs over the head develops the lower abdominals and does not stress the hamstrings or lower back. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

pike—A shape bending the body forward with legs straight. Must have at most a 90-degree angle. May be performed in a jump, inverted, upright, seated, or in a clear upright position.





pike forward roll—Start in a straight stand, then bend forward maintaining straight legs and perform a forward roll from this position without ever bending the legs.

pike sit—A pike performed while seated.



pike sit arm stretch—Sit with legs straight in front of body. Reach hands together behind body with fingers pointing away from body. Pull hips as far as possible from hands. At this point rock or lift legs into a V-sit for maximum stretch. This exercise stretches the midarms and upper body.



pike stretch—Sit with legs straight and together. Stretch upward and bend forward, folding body over legs and reaching for toes, which may be pointed or flexed. This exercise stretches the hamstrings.

pike walk—Bend forward on all fours. Place legs in a pike position, lean shoulders forward past hands, and drag or lift feet toward arms. Move hands forward and repeat action. The straddle position tends to be easier. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



planche—A position similar to the plank. The hands are placed on the floor, and the head and shoulders are positioned ahead of the hands. It's a landing error that often occurs in landing the back handspring when strength in arms and shoulders is lacking.

plank—The beginning of a push-up position. Torso should be tight and straight.



plank hold—Hold the push-up position with straight arms and a tight body. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

plank hold marching hands—Assume a plank position with straight arms and tight body. Lift one hand at a time as if marching. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

plank jump—Hold body in a tight push-up position and push through shoulders to leave mat. You may also jump both hands and feet at the same time, but it is much more difficult. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

plank walk up and down a mat—In push-up position with straight arms and tight body, step one hand at a time onto a folded mat up, up; then step down one hand at a time down, down. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

point—When the foot is fully extended through the ankles and the toes are curled. It should appear as a straight line from the top of the leg to the toes.

popcorn—Sit with legs tucked, balancing on buttocks with arms lightly around legs. Pop open, extending arms sideward and legs straddled, then pull back to tuck, open, close. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

prone hip lift—Lie on front with hands placed on mat beside chest. Straighten arms and lean forward with the majority of weight on hands (similar to a plank). Lift buttocks upward, then slide tops of toes toward hands. As the hips go higher, a pike occurs. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.



pronounced walk—Emphasize walking heel (toes point upward), ball (foot is flat), toe (up on toes). This exercise stretches the lower legs.



push-off cartwheel—A cartwheel performed with a quick push from the floor mat, showing flight from hands to feet.

push-up—Support body on hands and feet with belly facing mat. Body is extended and held straight. Bend arms to lower chest toward mat, then straighten arms, maintaining a straight body position the entire time. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

push-up against wall—Stand 18 to 24 inches (45-60 cm) away from the wall. Put hands on wall and bend and straighten arms, bringing chest close to wall during arm bend. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

push-up clap—Perform a push-up, but when straightening the arms, push off the floor to clap hands. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

push-up to head—Place legs on top of two folded mats or a block. Bend forward, placing hands on floor mat. Lower top of head to lightly touch mat, then push to straighten arms. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.

rear support—Support body weight on hands and feet. Keep body straight and back-side facing mat, like a reverse plank position.



rearward shoulder stretch—Stand with back toward wall an arm's-length away. Place hands on wall with fingers up. Bend knees with hips open, stretching shoulders. This exercise stretches the midarms and upper body.



retracted joggle—Place fingers behind neck. Retract head (like being hit with a pie in the face). Lift head back and wiggle head to loosen neck. This exercise stretches the neck.

reverse butterfly—Lie on front with legs fully bent and soles of feet together. This exercise stretches the upper legs.

rocking bridge—Lie on back and bend knees. Place hands on mat with fingers pointed to feet. Push belly upward, lifting head off mat, then rock back and forth over feet and hands while firmly planted to the mat. This exercise stretches the lower back.

roll-back—The beginning of a backward roll. Begin in a squat stand with hands slightly above the shoulders, palms upward facing the ceiling, and fingers pointing to direction of travel. Practice rolling backward in a rounded position with the head tucked forward. Hands are placed on the mat at the end of the roll-back. Palms are against mat with fingers pointing toward starting location. There is no flipping of the hips.



round-off—A variation of a cartwheel. The feet close together before landing. Often preceded by a run.



scale—A balance on one leg. Other leg is extended backward and the body may tilt slightly forward to reach the leg higher. Both legs are straight.



scissor hop—Hopping from foot to foot with straight legs, swinging either forward or backward. This exercise strengthens the legs.

seal walk—Lie on front. Lift chest with straight arms and walk hands, dragging body in the direction you choose. This exercise strengthens the midarms and upper body.

seal wrist stretch—Lie on front and push chest up on straightened arms. March hands, turning them inward and outward. This exercise stretches and strengthens the forearms and wrists.



seesaw—Place arms in a high position by the ears. Legs are in lunge position. Place hands in front of you on the mat while kicking the back leg upward. A push by the other leg results in a three-quarter handstand with split legs. Step back down on the same forward leg, finishing in a lunge with arms high by the ears.



short-person walk—Bend knees 90 degrees and walk. This exercise strengthens the legs.

shoulder press—Place hands together on wall waist high. Step backward with head between arms and press shoulder angle open. This exercise stretches the midarms and upper body.



shoulder shift—The action used in a front limber while in a handstand with shoulders opened straight in line with the body. As the body begins to arch in its descent, it pushes the shoulders open more in order to maintain most of the support over upper back.



shoulder shrug push-up—Lean against wall with straight arms and press in and out of shoulders. This may also be performed in a plank position on floor. This exercise strengthens the midarms and upper body.

shoulder stand—A balance on the upper back with body as straight as possible in vertical position and toes pointing to the ceiling. Assist by placing hands on lower back and elbows on mat for balance.



side bend—Stand with legs wider than shoulders. Place hand on hip of side that's bending and reach other arm above head. Bend sideways toward hand on hip. Repeat on other side. Pulse for four counts, which are slight and gentle, then hold for four counts. The pulses should not be forceful. This exercise stretches the abdominals.

side crunch—Lie on side of body, fully extended, with arm touching mat, fully extended. Lift upper body, then lift lower body. A more difficult variation is to lift upper and lower body together. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

side scale—A balance element. Lift a straight leg sideways while supporting yourself on the other straight leg. There may be a sideward body tilt.



side lunge—Stand with legs wider than shoulder-width apart (straddle stand). Bend one leg to a squat position while placing hands on mat in front of body, and stretch leg that is straight. Repeat on other side. The knee should never bend over the toes or past 90 degrees. This exercise stretches the upper legs.



side roll—A sideward motion. Duck the shoulder under and roll sideways to back and onto knees. You may start from a stand or from knees. When first learning the skill, start from the knees.



single-leg hold—Lift one straight leg at horizontal in the forward, sideward, or backward position. Body is held erect without any forward tilt. Hold for prescribed time with or without supplementary support. This exercise strengthens the legs.

single-leg stand and sit—Start in single-leg stand, holding free leg straight and forward at horizontal. Lower body to a sit, performing a single-leg squat. Used as an entry into a backward roll. This is used often when moving the backward roll to the balance beam.



single-leg squat—Hold one leg forward at horizontal. Bend other leg 90 degrees and then straighten. You may need to hold on to a wall or stable device to assist with balance. This exercise strengthens the legs.

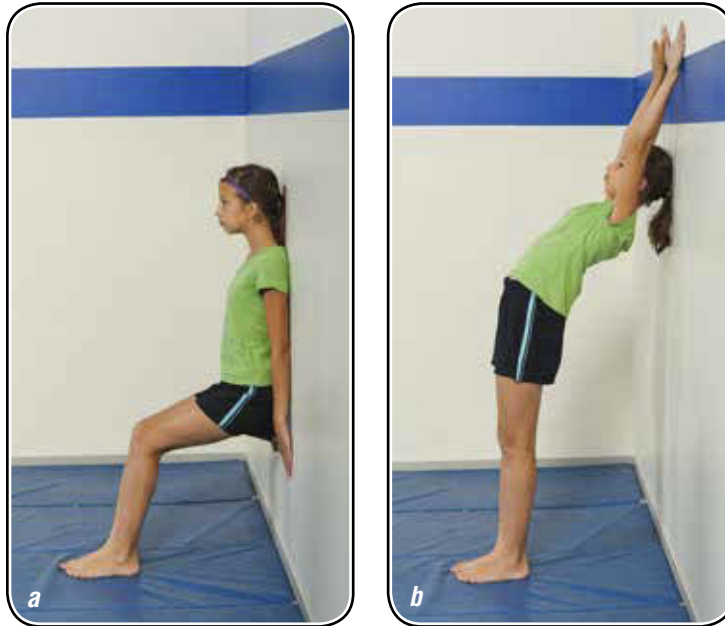
single-leg step-out—After a skill, separate legs, landing one foot at a time, with support predominantly on the first foot to contact the mat; then step forward to other foot.



single straight-leg lift—Support body on knees and forearms in modified crawling position. Lift one straight leg backward up and down. This exercise strengthens the legs.

sit and stand—Place a folded mat behind you. Sit on the mat and return to a stand. This exercise strengthens the legs.

sit-back—The beginning of the back handspring and a drill performed against the wall to reinforce the concept of transferring weight backward, arm swing, and hip opening. Stand 12 to 18 inches (30-45 cm) away from wall with back facing wall and arms high. Act as if sitting back into a chair. The wall catches the back; simultaneously the arms swing forward and downward to contact wall. After this action, swing arms forward and upward to contact wall above head while simultaneously straightening legs and opening hip angle, thrusting hips away from wall. Upper back is still in contact with wall.



sit-up—Lie on back with legs bent and feet flat on mat. Arms may be in your choice of position (the higher the arms, the more difficult). Curl the body up, one vertebrae at a time, to a seated position, and then return one vertebrae at a time. Do not bounce; use a controlled movement. Do not place arms behind head because you do not want to encourage pulling on the neck. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

sitting bicycle—Sit on edge of folded mat. Bicycle legs, bringing opposite elbow to knee. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

sitting reach—Sit on edge of folded mat. Tuck legs so they are fully bent and reach to each side with hands together. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.



slide roll—A drill for the forward roll. Lie on front on top of two stacked mats. Reach hands about 1 foot (30 cm) from stacked mats onto the floor mat, causing a hip bend of close to 90 degrees. Tuck head forward so you can see stacked mats. Bend arms while softly placing back of head on floor mat and sliding hips forward to produce a forward rolling action.



slow back handspring—Spot a student slowly through the basic body positions performed during the execution of a back handspring. This provides a better understanding of the body position changes that occur while performing a back handspring.

snap-down—A drill for back handsprings. The action produced by having the legs together in an archy handstand and swiftly bringing them downward from an inverted position with flight to the feet as a result of a strong push from the mat through the shoulders. Hands are off the floor before feet land. May be simplified by having three-quarter handstand performed on a folded mat.



spider handstand (also called back-up handstand)—Stand with back against wall. Bend forward, placing hands comfortably on mat. Walk feet up the wall (like a spider). Once the legs are up, if you are strong enough, walk toward wall with hands to a more vertical position, increasing strength in the handstand position. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



spotting—Physically assisting with a skill.

springboard—A board used in gymnastics. It has springs under a nonslip-surface board that allows you to achieve extra height. Only students with good body control should use a springboard.

squat stand—A standing position with legs fully bent.



squat thrust—Squat down, placing hands on mat in front of feet. Jump feet backward to a push-up position, jump back to squat, and rise to a straight jump. A four-count move: squat down, jump back, jump in, jump up. This exercise strengthens the legs.

squeeze ball—Take a soft ball (such as a Nerf ball) or clay and squeeze it using the hands. This exercise strengthens the forearms and wrists.

standing pike stretch—Stand with feet together and reach toward floor. This exercise stretches the hamstrings.

standing quadriceps stretch—Stand on one leg. Bend free leg toward buttocks and reach back with hand to pull foot to buttocks. Place free knee behind support knee and hold. This exercise stretches the upper legs.

standing straddle stretch—Stand with legs wider than shoulder-width apart. Reach to stretch over one leg, then to middle between legs, and then to other leg. This exercise stretches the upper legs.

stride split—A split position with straight legs (one forward and one backward).

standing wrist stretch—While standing, hold arm straight in front of body. Use opposite hand to pull fingers up and down. This exercise stretches the forearms and wrists.

standing step pike stretch—Stand with legs together and straight. Walk hands 8 counts down legs toward floor. Hold pike position 8 counts, then walk hands 8 times back up legs to return to stand. This exercise stretches the hamstrings.

step-up—Using a folded mat, step up to the mat starting with right and then left foot, then step back down to start again with right and then left foot. Perform the action quickly. This exercise strengthens the legs.

straddle—A shape performed with legs straight to each side. It may or may not have piked hips and may be performed in a jump, inverted, upright, seated, or in a clear upright position.

straddle sit—Sit with legs straight and apart.



straddle sit reach—Sit in a straddle and reach hands forward past knees on mat. Lift one leg at a time or lift both legs at the same time. It is more difficult to do both legs. You may hold or pulse. This exercise strengthens the legs.

straddle stand—Stand with legs wider than hip-width apart. Often used before a forward roll or handstand and at the finish of slower tumbling skills. Also a position used in exercises.



straddle stand roll-back—Stand in a straddle and reach through legs to sit and roll back to backward roll.

straddle stretch—Sit with legs straight and as wide apart as possible. Stretch upward and reach to one side over leg, either with belly toward leg or side of body toward leg. Also stretch to the middle between legs. This exercise stretches the upper legs.

straddle walk—Bend forward on all fours. Place legs in straddle stand position, lean shoulders forward past hands, and drag or lift feet toward arms. Move hands forward and repeat action. The straddle position is often easier than the pike. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



straight jump—A jump in a straight body position.

straight stand—The body is in a straight position, with buttocks and abdomen tight, feet together, and arms high by the ears. Focus forward.



stride stand—A standing position where one leg is forward and one is backward; both are straight and on mat.



Superman—Lie on front and lift legs and chest off mat, arms preferably by ears, but easier clasped behind head. May be performed as holds or pulses (small bounces). This exercise strengthens the lower back.

Superman rock—Lie on front and lift legs and chest off mat, arms preferably by ears, but easier clasped behind head. Rock forward and backward in arch position. This exercise strengthens the lower back.

Superman walk—In an upright position, step forward, lifting other leg straight and backward as opposite straight arm lifts forward. There is a slight lean forward with the torso. This exercise strengthens the lower back.

supported log roll—Start in plank position with body tight. Lift one arm and rotate body to a straight rear support. Body is tight with support on feet and hands and back toward mat. Lift opposite arm to rotate back to plank position. You should be able to move in the same direction and then repeat to opposite direction. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



switch-leg walkover—A variation of a walkover performed forward or backward with a switch to the opposite split in the handstand phase.



switcheroo—Arms begin in a high position by the ears and legs are in lunge position. Place hands on the mat while kicking back leg upward. Push with other leg, resulting in three-quarter handstand with split legs. Then switch leg positions and step back down on opposite leg, finishing in a lunge with arms high by ears.



tabletop—Sit with legs bent and soles of feet contacting mat. Reach hands behind buttocks and lift hips to support the body on all fours.

three-leg hop—On two hands and one foot, move by hopping the foot toward the hands and then move the hands forward, alternating foot and hand movements. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



three-quarter handstand—A handstand position that doesn't reach vertical. It can be used as a drill for developing leg kick and performed onto a folded mat or an 8-inch mat.



three-quarter handstand hop—Kick to three-quarter handstand, push off hands, and do a hop to land back on hands. Step out of three-quarter handstand and repeat. This exercise strengthens the forearms, wrists, midarms, and upper body.



tic-toc—Begin executing a walkover in one direction. Just as the first foot starts to land, reverse the direction.

tight arch—A body position that is executed during the performance of front and back handsprings that appears similar to a Superman position, but performed during upright and inverted positions.



tight arch stand—A stand with feet shoulder-width apart, buttocks and abdominals tight, upper back slightly arched with arms in high position by ears, and eyes focusing on hands.

triceps stretch I—Bring arm across chest and use opposite forearm to press arm to chest. This exercise stretches the midarms and upper body.

triceps stretch II—Lift elbow up and behind head and place opposite hand on raised elbow to stretch the triceps. Repeat on other side. This exercise stretches the midarms and upper body.



tripod—A balance skill performed on the head and two hands placed in a triangular pattern. Hands are placed about a foot apart in a parallel line to the head, producing a 90-degree bend at the elbows. The body is balanced on the hands and head with the knees on the elbows.



trunk rotation—With hands on hips, rotate sideward, forward, to other side, and backward; reverse the order of rotation. This exercise stretches the abdominals.

tuck—A body shape with a maximum 90-degree bend in the hips and knees. Knees are bent tightly to chest. May be performed in a jump, inverted, upright, seated, or clear upright position.



tuck headstand—A headstand with the legs tucked towards the chest, it is similar to the tripod except the legs are together instead of apart and resting on the elbows.

tuck jump—A jump with the legs tucked with a maximum of 90-degree openings in the hips and knees.

tuck and open—Lie on side and support upper body on forearm. Bottom leg is tucked and top leg extended. Free arm is behind head. Contract body toward top leg as it bends toward chest. Elbow of free arm contacts knee. Return to start. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

tuck and roll—From a tuck sit, place same-side hand on each knee. Roll back with knees together and return to starting position. This is a good lower-back stretch, and it works the sit-up part of a forward roll.



tuck sit—A seated position with legs bent toward chest. Hip angle is closed.





Valdez—A back walkover initiated from a sitting position. The kicking leg is sometimes extended. If the right leg is the kicking leg, the left hand is on the floor behind the body pointing backward. The right arm starts parallel to the extended leg and swings upward over the head and reaches backward toward the floor as the hips lift to a bridge with a single leg up. That leg kicks over and the other leg pushes from the floor mat to perform the back walkover.



visual cues—Verbal and visual reminders used in focusing on elements of a skill. An example is “watch legs pass over face in a roll.”

V-mat roll—Folded mats are placed in the shape of a V (one end closed and the other end open about 15 inches (38 cm)). Sit on the closed end of the mats. Tuck head forward and begin rolling backward, placing head between mats and each hand on top of a folded mat. Pull hips over the head using abdominal muscles. Land on the knees or feet between the folded mats, or land straddled with feet on top of folded mats. This is a drill for the backward roll that reduces stress to the head and neck.



V-sit—Sit with hands behind you for balance. Lift legs straight upward so that the body and legs form the letter V. If possible, lift arms sideward to balance without hands. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.



V-up—Lie on back and lift shoulders and head off mat. Lift legs straight off mat about 6 inches (15 cm). The most difficult variation is with arms by ears; by sides is easiest. Lift upper and lower body to form the letter V, then return to hollow position. You may also straddle legs in V-up position. This exercise strengthens the abdominals.

walking leg kick—Take steps by kicking front leg forward, sideward, or backward. This exercise stretches the upper legs.

walk on heels—Walk only with heels touching the floor and toes pointing upward. This exercise stretches the lower legs.

wall backbend—Stand two feet away from wall and face away from wall. Reach up and over the head, reach back to wall with arms by ears, walk down the wall as far as possible, then walk back up. To make this easier, place a folded mat against wall to shorten the distance traveled. This exercise stretches the lower back.



wall bridge kickover—Push up into a bridge with feet against a matted wall. Walk feet up wall and kick with dominant leg while pushing off the wall with nondominant leg to finish in a lunge.

wall sit—Stand with heels about 1 foot (30 cm) away from wall. Lean back against wall and bend knees 90 degrees and hold. Knees should never bend forward of feet. This exercise strengthens the legs.

wall squat—Stand with heels about 1 foot (30 cm) away from wall. Lean back against wall and bend knees 90 degrees and then straighten. Knees should never bend forward of feet. This exercise strengthens the legs.

warm-up—Exercises that raise the core body temperature and prepare the body for the activities in the lesson. It should consist of at least 5 minutes of aerobic-type movement followed by a general stretch. Warm-ups are important because warm muscles are looser with better blood flow and therefore less prone to injuries and soreness.

washing machine—Clasp hands together with elbows down. Twist wrists back and forth. This exercise stretches the forearms and wrists.

wrist circles—Put hands in soft fists and circle in both directions. This exercise stretches the forearms and wrists.

wrist curl—May be performed with forearm facing up or down. Place forearm in opposite hand, providing support. Holding a light weight, move wrist up and down. This exercise strengthens the forearms and wrists.

wrist roller coaster—Clasp hands together. Hold forearms parallel to mat and make waving motions with elbows, forearms, wrists, and hands in both directions. This exercise stretches the forearms and wrists.

wrist stretch with wall—Lean at a 45-degree angle toward wall and place hands on wall with straight arms, then walk hands inward and outward on wall. This stretches the forearms and wrists.

Y-scale—A balance position. Stand on a straight leg and lift a bent leg sideways and grasp the foot by reaching between the legs (same hand as foot). Straighten the leg sideways and lift the free arm diagonally upward, forming the letter Y with the arm, lifted leg, and support leg. A modification due to flexibility constraints puts the hand on the leg instead of the foot.



Circuit Exercises for Flexibility and Strength

This chart will help you ascertain what areas of the body are enhanced through the performance of a specific exercise and whether that exercise increases flexibility or strength. By understanding an exercise's benefits, you will be able to recognize similar exercises that may provide the same results. This allows you to substitute an exercise in a circuit that may better fit your facility or your students' abilities.

Many of the muscle names may be unfamiliar to you, but a couple of good sites to help familiarize you with them are: http://homepage.smc.edu/wissmann_paul/anatomy1/1muscles.html and www.human-body-facts.com/human-body-muscle-diagram.html. An appreciation of the exercises used to develop needed strength and flexibility will help your students develop skill achievement more quickly.

Area worked	Flexibility exercises	Muscular strength exercises
<p>Forearms and wrists Many muscles, ligaments, and tendons work together in the forearms, wrists, and hands. Tumbling presents unique situations for these soft tissues because of the support and inversion that add pressure to these areas. Some of the muscles that will need attention are pronator teres, brachioradialis, flexor carpi radialis, flexor carpi ulnaris, extensor carpi radialis brevis, extensor carpi radialis longus, anconeus, extensor digitorum, and extensor carpi ulnaris.</p>	<p>Dryer Kneeling wrist stretch Seal walk Seal wrist stretch Standing wrist stretch Washing machine Wrist circles Wrist roller coaster Wrist stretch with wall</p>	<p>Bridge Bridge with hopping legs Bridge push-up Bridge single-leg hold Bridge walk Crab walk Cross-leg lift Dips between folded mats Donkey kick Dowel roll Handstand march Handstand push-up Handstand shrug Hissy snake Inside-out Modified push-up Plank hold Plank hold marching hands Plank jump Plank walk up and down a mat Push-up Push-up against wall Push-up clap Push-up to head Seal walk Spider handstand (or back-up handstand) Squeeze ball Straddle or pike walk Supported log roll Three-leg hop Three-quarter handstand hop Wrist curl</p>

(continued)

(continued)

Area worked	Flexibility exercises	Muscular strength exercises
<p>Mid-arms and upper body Flexibility and strength in the shoulders and midarms are important because inverted tumbling skills are supported on the arms. The muscles that need strengthening are scalene, trapezius, deltoid, pectoralis major, biceps brachii, brachialis, teres minor, teres major, triceps brachii, and latissimus dorsi. Many of the exercises are also used to strengthen the forearms and wrists.</p>	<p>Archy handstand Bent-body arm stretch Bridge Bridge with hopping legs Bridge push-up Bridge single-leg hold Bridge walk Pike sit arm stretch Rearward shoulder stretch Shoulder press Triceps stretch I Triceps stretch II</p>	<p>Arm circles Bear walk Bridge Bridge with hopping legs Bridge push-up Bridge single-leg hold Bridge walk Crab walk Crocodile crawl Cross-leg lift Dips between folded mats Donkey kick Free straddle hold sit Handstand march Handstand push-up Handstand shoulder shrug Hissy snake Inside-out Modified push-up Plank hold Plank hold marching hands Plank jump Plank walk up and down a mat Prone hip lift Push-up Push-up against wall Push-up clap Push-up to head Seal walk Shoulder shrug push-up Spider handstand (or backup handstand) Straddle walk (or pike walk) Supported log roll Tabletop Three-leg hop Three-quarter handstand hop</p>

Area worked	Flexibility exercises	Muscular strength exercises
<p>Lower legs</p> <p>The lower legs are often stretched during the warm-up phase. Stretch the ankles, calves, and shins before running and jumping. At the end of class, you may want to stretch these areas again. Leg strength is important in all the tumbling skills. Leg strength is used in most sports, so students are most likely to have developed some leg strength in other activities. When students jump and land, ensure they use proper technique. The muscles affected are gastrocnemius, soleus, peroneus longus, flexor digitorum longus, tibialis anterior, peroneus brevis, and extensor digitorum longus.</p>	<p>Achilles stretch I Achilles stretch II Achilles stretch III Achilles stretch IV Ankle circles I Ankle circles II Ankle walk Elevator walk Feet positions Walk on heels Pronounced walk</p>	<p>Bunny hop Candlestick jump Donkey kick Frog jump Jump in all body positions Jump over folded mats Jump up and down to and from folded mats Kneeling lunge jump Mountain climber Scissor hop Short-person walk Single-leg squat Sit and stand Squat thrust Step-up Walking leg kick Wall sit Wall squat</p>
<p>Upper legs</p> <p>Upper-leg flexibility is important for every skill in tumbling. Each circuit has stations that develop this flexibility. Leg strength is important in all the tumbling skills and in most sports, so your students are most likely to have developed some leg strength in other activities. When students jump and land, ensure they use proper technique. The areas worked are vastus lateralis, gracilis, adductor magnus, biceps femoris, semitendinosus, semimembranosus, tensor fasciae latae, iliopsoas, pectineus, sartorius, adductor longus, rectus femoris, vastus intermedius, and vastus medialis. These encompass hamstrings, quadriceps, groin, and hip flexors.</p>	<p>Ankle walk Bounce, bounce, straighten Butterfly stretch Crossed pike stretch Inchworm Kneeling flexor stretch Kneeling hamstring stretch Leg swing Modified hurdle stretch Needle kick walk Pike stretch Reverse butterfly Side lunge Standing pike stretch Standing quadriceps stretch Standing straddle stretch Standing step pike stretch Straddle stretch Walking leg kick</p>	<p>Bunny hop Candlestick jump Donkey kick Free straddle hold sit Frog jump Jump in all body positions Jump over folded mats Jump up and down to and from folded mats Kneeling lunge jump Lean-back Lower-leg lift Mountain climber Scissor hop Short-person walk Single-leg hold Single-leg squat Single straight-leg lift Sit and stand Squat thrust Step-up Straddle sit reach Walking leg kick Wall sit Wall squat</p>

(continued)

(continued)

Area worked	Flexibility exercises	Muscular strength exercises
<p>Neck The neck muscles that need stretching are omohyoid, sternohyoid, sternal head of sternocleidomastoid, semispinalis capitis, splenius capitis, and sternocleidomastoid. Stretching the neck is especially important when doing forward and backward rolls.</p>	<p>Neck forward and back Neck look Neck hold Neck side to side Retracted joggle</p>	<p>In this book there are no specific exercises for the strengthening of the neck, because most of the skills are performed with little involvement from the neck. Here are some skills that work the neck muscles: Headstand against wall Tripod Headstand</p>
<p>Lower back When stretching the lower back, other areas are often affected. Many of these exercises also stretch the abdominals, quadriceps, hamstrings, and flexors. Strengthening the lower back will help in stabilizing the core during the beginning-level skills. When students are ready to learn limbers and handsprings, they will need strong backs to accomplish skills. They will develop internal and external obliques, gluteus medius, gluteus minimus, and gluteus maximus.</p>	<p>Ankle walk Big rock Bridge Bridge with hopping legs Cat and cow stretch Flexor back stretch Inside-out Kneeling backbend Lower-back roll Rocking bridge Wall backbend</p>	<p>Alternating Superman Log roll V-up Superman Superman rock Superman walk</p>
<p>Abdominals The torso is the axis of movement for many tumbling skills. It is important to ensure this area is stretched and strengthened. All abdominal exercises should be performed with a flat lower back that is in contact with the mat. The head should be in a neutral position and not strain to lift the upper body. There should be no neck pain or throwing of the head. If students have weak abdominal muscles, it may be necessary for them to support their upper bodies on their forearms and work only their lower abdominals until they are stronger. Many of these exercises also stretch the back. The main muscles developed are serratus anterior, rectus abdominis, and external obliques.</p>	<p>Big rock Bridge Bridge with hopping legs Cat and cow stretch Cross and stretch Elephant swing Inside-out Kneeling backbend Mexican hat dance bridge Rocking bridge Side bend Trunk rotation Wall backbend</p>	<p>Crunch Curl-up bicycle Curl-up climb Curl-up double-leg extension Curl-up leg circle Curl-up, single-leg press-out Curl-up straddle cross Hollow hold Hollow hold side reach Leg lift Log roll V-up Overhead leg lift Popcorn Prone hip lift Side crunch Sit-up Sitting bicycle Sitting reach Supported log roll Tuck and open V-sit V-up</p>

Preparing to Teach Tumbling



Who are you? You may be a physical education teacher, a student majoring in physical education, an acrobatics teacher, a coach teaching tumbling for cheerleading, or a teacher in a recreation program. In any case, teaching and learning any new activity in the beginning may seem like a huge undertaking, but with some basic understanding of the environment you create for your students and the use of this curriculum, you will find yourself providing a worthwhile exploration of physical movement in an exciting learning format. Whether you have limited knowledge or want new ideas for teaching tumbling skills, using circuits is an effective way for students to learn progressions and develop strength and flexibility.

As an educator, you must be concerned with the physical surroundings, equipment, organization, and behaviors of students in your facility. Understanding why the circuits are designed the way they are and how to manipulate them to fit

your individual lesson plans and goals will make your instruction more effective. The rubrics in the appendix provide you with a tool for gauging the development of your students. Are you ready for a fun, exciting class where students acquire new tumbling skills? Let's get started.

SAFETY

Safety is an extremely important aspect of any tumbling program. Therefore, it must be your primary concern when setting up your equipment. USA Gymnastics has a safety handbook (*Gymnastics Risk Management, 2009 Edition*) that covers many aspects of safety, some of which are included in this section. Remember to be careful of traffic patterns. I typically have my students rotate in a clockwise manner. They realize this quickly and then automatically know how to rotate. Students rotate on a signal to keep

from developing bottlenecks, so they are not tempted to cause disturbances. Also, make sure to maintain clearance from walls and doorways, unless a wall is being used as a support for a specific skill or exercise. Do not alter mats in any way, and always use them for their intended purposes.

You should keep records of any unusual occurrences or injuries. If an injured student is old enough, I let the student read the incident report and sign it or add anything I may have omitted. Keep these records for a very long time. If a student has sustained an injury inside or outside of your class, make sure the student gives you a doctor's note stating that he or she is allowed to participate fully in your class.

For some reason kids love to dive onto their heads. Remind your students that they must always practice safe landing procedures, which includes landing on their feet, to help prevent injuries. Do not assume they know how to land. Check to see that your students understand to land first on the balls of the feet and then the heels, not flat footed or on the toes. They need to bend their knees a minimum of 45 degrees on landings (many students will land with their knees locked, which can result in serious injury). They also need to maintain a hollow position in the trunk (abdomen drawn in with the backs slightly rounded). The trunk should be stable on landings. (See figure 1.1.)

Encourage your students to keep their eyes open when performing skills. Many students will close their eyes when they go upside down, which can result in a lack of kinesthetic awareness. Ask your students if they saw a body part, the mat, or something else in the gym, if you think their eyes were closed. This will help them to focus on maintaining visual awareness. Each chapter contains references to some visual cues. Also stress the importance of keeping the tongue inside the mouth during all skills. It's common to stick the tongue out while concentrating on a new skill, which can result in biting it.

When teaching new tumbling skills, always remember to teach the basics first. Do not push the students to learn new skills too quickly. Take your time and teach the skills in stages. Extra matting is never a replacement for students' readiness (USA Gymnastics 2009). Try to teach skills on each side (left and right) so that students develop equal strength and flexibility on both sides of the body.



Figure 1.1 Proper landing position.

Starting Your Class

Students entering the gym should not be allowed on the equipment until you have prepared them for the day's activity. Once everyone is assembled and ready, every class should begin with a warm-up. This should consist of 5 to 10 minutes of aerobic-type movement, such as running, hopping, skipping, jumping, dancing, jumping jacks, or any other high-energy movement that involves the large muscle groups. Students need to raise their core body temperatures so that their muscles are prepared to respond efficiently. Students should follow the aerobic warm-up with stretching of all the major muscle areas to prepare the body for movement. Each circuit contains a suggestion for warming up your students.

In some of the warm-ups, you may want to play a game or an activity. Vary the activities and be creative to add excitement and enjoyment. There are several activities, but here are a few:

- Stop and go. Use a locomotor skill like running, walking, skipping, hopping, crab

walking, bear crawling, or jumping that you designate and demonstrate. Teach respect for personal space and spatial awareness by having them move without touching each other. When you say stop, they must stop; this reinforces listening skills.

- Freeze dance. Play music; students may dance or perform designated movements. When the music stops, students freeze. This provides many of same benefits as stop and go.
- Warm-up for young children:
 - Students jump with bunny ears and stomp like kangaroos, which teaches them the difference between landing on the balls of the feet and landing flat footed as well as landing light and landing heavy. Repeat several times, getting progressively faster.
 - Drop to prone position (face-down on belly). They can hiss like snakes, working the arms. You can use feelings here: Push up and say, “I’m mad. Do you know why I’m mad? I’m mad because it’s raining outside.” Go back to prone, push back up. “I’m happy. Do you know why I’m happy? Because I got a new umbrella.” Down, up. “I’m sad. Do you know why I’m sad? I’m sad because I skinned my knee and it hurts.” Down, up. “I’m all better now because I have a cool neon bandage that glows in the dark.”
 - Straddle stretch. Ask students to give you colors to paint each leg of their straddle and to touch their noses to the floor mat in the middle, then go side to side with arms high to paint rainbows.
 - Pike stretch. Ask students what they would like on a sandwich. Place each sandwich item all the way down the piece of bread (legs), then put the other piece of bread (upper body) on top. This is a pike position. They can then eat their sandwiches.
 - Tabletop. Ask students to put a pretend bunny on their belly. They lift the bunny up by pushing to a tabletop. Wave to the bunny by lifting one hand, then the other. Now wave with each foot. Oh, bunny’s getting tired! Now rock over feet and shoulders and rock the bunny to sleep.

- Kneeling hamstring and flexor stretch. Students stand on one knee and place the other leg straight out in front. As they lean forward by bending the front leg in a kneeling lunge to stretch the flexors, they say, “Hello.” As they bend over the straightened front leg to stretch the hamstrings, they say, “Goodbye.”

- Late for school:

1. Students are in a prone position (face-down). The alarm goes off late and they have to get up quickly to dress, eat, and brush their teeth. Then they jog in place to school.
2. They get ready to cross the street. They say, “Oh, my gosh, there’s a big truck!” Run fast! Made it.
3. Still jogging, they say, “Oh, no, there’s a banana peel!” They pretend to slip and fall, get back up, and dust themselves off.
4. Keep jogging. They hear a warning bell at school. “Hurry, run!” Get in a seat just before the late bell.
5. Continue with a stretch.

I’ve seen many other games; if you can relate the games to what the students are studying in another class, it could serve as a reinforcement to their other studies.

After warm-up, take time at the beginning of class to practice landing drills, such as jumping forward, backward, and diagonally and jumping with turns of 90 to 360 degrees with safe body control and awareness. Discuss and practice falling forward to a modified push-up position, backward stressing either a cradle position or reaching back with the hands turned inward (not outward), and falling sideways to a side roll. These are fun ways to learn how to fall safely.

Spotting

Sometimes it may be necessary to physically assist a student to safely and more accurately perform a skill. This is known as spotting the skill. Always be prepared for unusual occurrences and protect the student’s head, neck, and back first and then other body parts. Remember to stand where the student is most likely to need assistance, usually while inverted, or during rolls when the student has pressure on the neck.

Understanding the mechanics and body positions of the skill being taught will enable you to prepare for performance difficulties.

When spotting, set the area you are teaching in so that your back is never facing the class. Generally, your legs should be a little wider than shoulder-width apart for a good base of support. To protect your back, bend your knees when lifting the student, and try to spot the student near the body's **center of gravity**, a point in the body where the weight is evenly dispersed.

Spotting is a skill. If you are unsure about spotting, go to a local gymnastics club. Most coaches will work with you on your technique. Sometimes while spotting, you might accidentally touch a student inappropriately (that is, on the chest, buttocks, or crotch). Apologize quietly to reduce any embarrassment and make sure to make any necessary adjustments so that it does not happen again. Conversely, you may be struck by a student in an uncomfortable spot; do not make an issue of the incident.

MATS AND EQUIPMENT USED IN CIRCUITS

While developing these circuits, I considered the budgetary constraints that all teachers must be mindful of. Therefore, the circuits use basic mats and equipment. A matted surface will be needed under the circuits to provide a safe area. They may be unfolded mats, wrestling mats, cheer mats, tumbling strips, or a floor exercise area. To develop a more visually exciting environment, you may want to use a contrasting color or a variety of colors. Also, be vigilant about checking all your mats for tears (students could catch their feet or hands in them), condensation of the foam (whereby it loses its intended function or shape), and breakage in the foam (which could cause opportunities for an injury). Here are the additional equipment requirements for performing all of the circuits in this book:



- Folding mats (figure 1.2a). These are used as basic floor mats or folded for drills. They are also referred to as panel mats. They are firm and resilient and come in many colors and sizes. The size used in the circuits is 6 feet wide, 12 feet long, and 1.25 to 2 inches thick (~2 m by 3 m by 3 to 5 cm). They are easy to store because they are stackable.
- Incline (cheese) mats (figure 1.2b). These mats are shaped like cheese wedges (high at one end and descending to about 1 inch off the floor at the other end). They come in many sizes and colors. This mat is used for teaching many new skills because the student is able to develop momentum and has a different spatial landing, depending on whether the student is ascending or descending the mat. I prefer the larger size for bigger students and one that folds for easy storage.
- Octagonal (also called barrel) mat (figure 1.2c). This mat is shaped like an octagon and comes in many sizes and colors. Determine the size you need by the size of your students. It's used for rolling, back support, and flexibility skills.

Figure 1.2 Equipment used in the circuits for this book include (a) folding mats, (b) incline or cheese mats, (c) octagon or barrel mats (continued)



Figure 1.2 (continued) (d) 8-inch skill cushion mats, (e) T-mat with incline, (f) dowel rolls equipment, and (g) spring board.

- Eight-inch skill cushion (figure 1.2d). This soft mat is used for shock absorption on landings of new skills. Typical size is 5 feet wide by 10 feet long by 8 inches thick (1.5 feet by 2.4 feet by 20 cm).
- T-mat with incline mat (figure 1.2e). This is a configuration of mats used in the front handspring circuit. One or two folded mats are placed vertically to form a single line; another folded mat is placed perpendicularly, forming the letter T; the incline mat is then placed against the top of the T with the higher end toward the T. This enables the gymnast to run into a skill and perform it going downward.
- Equipment for dowel rolls (figure 1.2f). Dowel rolls, the exercise, may also be referred to as wrist rollers. You will need to construct the equipment for dowel rolls using about a 12- to 18-inch length of a 1- to 1.5-inch (2.5-3.8 cm) dowel, 36 to 48 inches (91-122 cm) of heavy-grade string, and 1.5 ounces (43 g) of weight. Tie the weight to one end of the string; tie the other end to the middle of the dowel. You may need to add a staple on top of the string if the string won't remain stable. A student will be able to hold the dowel with the string and weight between the hands.
- Springboard (figure 1.2g). A board used for jumping. It has a nonslip surface with springs underneath for additional bounce. It is used for gaining height or momentum and comes in various sizes.

SETTING UP THE CIRCUITS

Your equipment and space may be a determining factor in the way you are able to set up your stations in your circuit. I have the circuits organized so that they form a 36- by 24-foot (11 by 7 m) rectangle. I use 6- by 12-foot (2 by 3 m) folding mats as my floor mat because this is probably more common in most teaching environments. Some of you may have the luxury of more space, but

if you have less space, then set up fewer circuits by doing the strength and flexibility exercises as a group and having the circuit consist of the drills and skills stations. Unfortunately, this will result in more students per station. The shape of your space may also change the way the circuit is formatted. Instead of a rectangle, you may find it easier to set up four strips of mats parallel to one another and assign the students to each strip and rotate once they all have finished the circuits on a strip of matting. All of the additional mats are placed on the floor mats. I have tried to be consistent within a skill by having the mats in the same places from circuit to circuit. In many of the circuits I have a strip of matting set up against the wall to accommodate the exercise being performed. In the figures for the circuits, a mat is depicted when it is essential to the safety of the students. Typically, I make station cards indicating the activities at that location. If I rely on the students to remember, it usually results in chaos.

USING THE CIRCUITS

Because class length differs among school systems, it will be up to you to determine how many times you are able to repeat a circuit. The general idea is that you will spend about 10 minutes warming up your students. After this, you may spend a few minutes on proper landing techniques followed by the circuit of the day. Each circuit takes about 13 to 15 minutes; you can shorten this by changing the number of repetitions or sets that you have your students perform. Students will start at each of the stations in the circuit so that there are two or three students per activity. Each student performs the repetitions and numbers of sets each time through the circuit. The more times they can go through the circuit, the better, because practice makes perfect. Remember to allow a few minutes at the end of class for a cool-down.

USING RUBRICS

As a teacher, you need to have some way of measuring your students' success. Using rubrics allows you to evaluate not only how your students are performing but also whether there is a flaw in how the skill is being introduced. Obviously, if all your students are deficient in an area of skill performance, then as a teacher you need to emphasize it more. By using this assessment tool, you will better understand which students are ready to proceed to more difficult elements and which students need more practice on the current skills and where their deficiencies lie. This will allow you to develop your program to meet the needs of the students and provide a challenging environment to all of them. You will evaluate your students in three areas: the performance of a required element, the quality of the performance, and class behavior. You will judge them based on a four-point merit system. All the skill rubrics are provided in appendix A.

SUMMARY

By using the ideas presented in this book, you should feel more confident in introducing beginning tumbling skills to your students while developing their strength, coordination, balance, flexibility, power, and agility through an exciting and stimulating workout. Our goal is to help your students develop a lifestyle filled with enjoyment and health.

1, 2, 3

Look at me
I'm as healthy
As can be

Forward Rolls



The forward roll is one of the first tumbling skills you will teach your students. It is also one of the most important skills for them to learn for their safety when doing any physical activities. If they are falling, knowing how to roll could prevent an injury from occurring. Forward rolls also develop students' ability to know where they are when they are upside down. When first performing this skill, students will sometimes become dizzy. This will pass as they become more proficient in their performance.

In a tumbling program, you want to incorporate many strategies for developing healthy bodies by challenging the students to actively participate in exercises, drills, and tumbling skills. The forward roll reinforces concepts of forward movement, rounding the body, and tucking the head. While also developing balance and agility, students will strengthen their bodies and develop many areas of flexibility.

Flexibility

- Neck flexibility is important for preventing injuries and developing the concept of tucking the head toward the chest.
- You should address wrist flexibility and strength because students place some weight on their hands as they support themselves going into rolls.
- Flexibility in the lower back and hamstrings is a must because students will pass through compressed, piked positions as they roll.

Strength

- Leg strength is important for pushing off the floor when initiating the roll and especially for standing without hands at the completion of the forward roll.

- Arm strength is important when lowering the head toward the mat during the onset of the roll.
- Abdominal strength is crucial when rolling up from the back to a sit before standing.

BASIC TECHNIQUE

Students start in a squat stand and place the hands on the mat about 12 inches (30 cm) from their feet. Students lift the hips upward and tuck the head between the feet and hands. As the arms bend, a push from the feet is necessary as they straighten their legs. Students then bend the legs to a tuck as they roll from the back to a sit-up and arrive in a squat stand. Using the hands to aid in standing up is discouraged. They should use hands on the mat to lower the head but not to push from the mat to stand. (See figure 2.1.)

There are many ways to enter and exit a forward roll to add creativity and excitement to your classes once students master the basic roll. Here are some examples:

Entries

- Tuck
- Straddle
- Pike
- Lunge
- Scale (leads to a handstand forward roll)
- Front support
- Jump

Exits

- Tuck
- Straddle

- Single-leg step-out
- Knee-out pose
- Pike sit (also turning to a flank hold)
- Jump

CUEING

While students are performing forward rolls, you can use some visual cues. You can tell students to look at the belly. If a student is having problems with tucking the head, you can tell her you put a piece of candy in her belly button; if she doesn't watch it, then you're going to eat it. If the student is older, put money in her belly button and take it if she doesn't watch it.

It is important for students to keep their eyes open during the roll and start developing the ability to spot their surroundings during their skills. Once the roll is progressing, they should see their legs pass over their faces. As they stand, the focus should be forward.

Here are some verbal cues you might need to use:

- Tuck head.
- Lift hips.
- Push from feet.
- Stay round.
- Sit up using abdominal muscles.
- Bend legs and reach forward to stand.

SAFETY AND SPOTTING

The greatest concern when performing a forward roll is an injury to the neck caused by improper



Figure 2.1 (a) The beginning of the forward roll, demonstrating hip lift and tucking of the head; (b) the push from the feet and body position midway through the roll; (c) sitting up and tucking the legs for the conclusion of the forward roll.

technique. This is why the first circuit does not involve rolling forward onto the mat with force from the legs. The goal is to teach the concept of rolling from a less dynamic takeoff and to work on the flexibility and strength required for protecting the neck.

Some children may need assistance when executing a forward roll. Since the roll travels forward, it is better if you stand to one side and slightly ahead of the student. Check to make sure the head is tucking as the student lifts the hips to initiate the roll. You may want to give the student a tactile reinforcement by touching the back of the head and tilting it forward. Once the head is tucked, reach for the hips and gently pull the student forward onto the back. Finally, cradle the neck to enable the student to sit up, followed by an assist in standing up. I find that more students today may need assistance. Spotting, breaking the skill down into drills, and developing the strength and flexibility will all contribute to safely acquiring the skill. (See figure 2.2.)

Here are some common errors to watch for in forward rolls:

- Not tucking the head, resulting in possibly injuring the neck or not rolling in a rounded position
- Legs not staying in prescribed position, making it difficult to stand at the completion of the roll
- Not having enough leg and abdominal strength to perform the forward roll correctly
- Rolling over a shoulder, causing a deviation from a straight line

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Once your students have a good sense of forward rolls, you can choose some group activities for them to perform. These skills reinforce concepts you have been teaching your students and enhance listening skills, ability to follow directions, and sequencing skills:

- Forward rolls in a row down the mat, either like a ball (they'll get dizzy) or standing up in between rolls, will develop leg strength.
- Forward roll to side roll to forward roll will reinforce coordination.
- Forward roll straight jump, forward roll tuck jump, forward roll straddle jump, forward roll jump full turn will reinforce sequencing, coordination, and memory skills.
- Forward roll to straddle stand to forward roll tuck stand to forward roll to straddle stand will reinforce sequencing, coordination, and memory skills.
- Combine Red Light, Green Light and Simon Says. Students start on a line. Call out a type of roll, such as lunge forward roll to step-out. Those who perform it have progressed; those who did not go back to the start line. You may increase the difficulty by saying, "Simon says," and then they would also return to start if they rolled without Simon saying to do so. The goal is to progress to a predetermined line on the mat.
- Create your own roll with various entries and exits. Ask students how many they were able to create.



Figure 2.2 (a) Tactile reinforcement of tucking head; (b) pulling hips into the roll; (c) helping student to stand.

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

As a teacher, you want to encourage students to challenge their knowledge and physical capabilities concerning forward rolls, which will add to their enjoyment of learning and pride in accomplishment. Students develop self-esteem through mastering and learning skills they hadn't known before. When students are more advanced, you need to make the skill more challenging:

- Add a handstand before the roll (handstand forward roll).
- Jump to a handstand forward roll.
- Add pirouettes in the handstand phase before rolling.
- Introduce the dive forward roll (students need strength, great kinesthetic awareness, and understanding of rolling and jumping the legs and hips upward). If you are unfamiliar with this skill, do not have your students try this.

You also do not want to overwhelm students who need more opportunities to develop their skills. Always revert to previous lessons to find a simpler form of the skill progression. Students

who have more difficulty with skill acquisition should be able to see demonstrations well and be encouraged to ask questions if they don't understand the exercise being taught. Students will be able to participate in many of the group activities by using an incline mat. They may have to break down the combinations in order to fit the roll on the mat unless you have more than one incline mat. Here are some other adaptations:

- Do log rolls instead of forward rolls.
- Do log rolls in a tucked position.
- Keep legs in frog position when rolling over.
- Use hands to assist in getting off the back to a stand.
- Place hands and head in a forward roll position. Don't roll over, but push with hands to return to a straight stand (working on tucking head and arm strength). Also perform this activity from the alternative starting positions and practice the ending positions.
- Remember that upper-body support on the forearms is allowable for all lower-abdominal exercises if a student is unable to keep the back flat to the floor.

CIRCUIT

1

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

🕒 *Warm-Up*

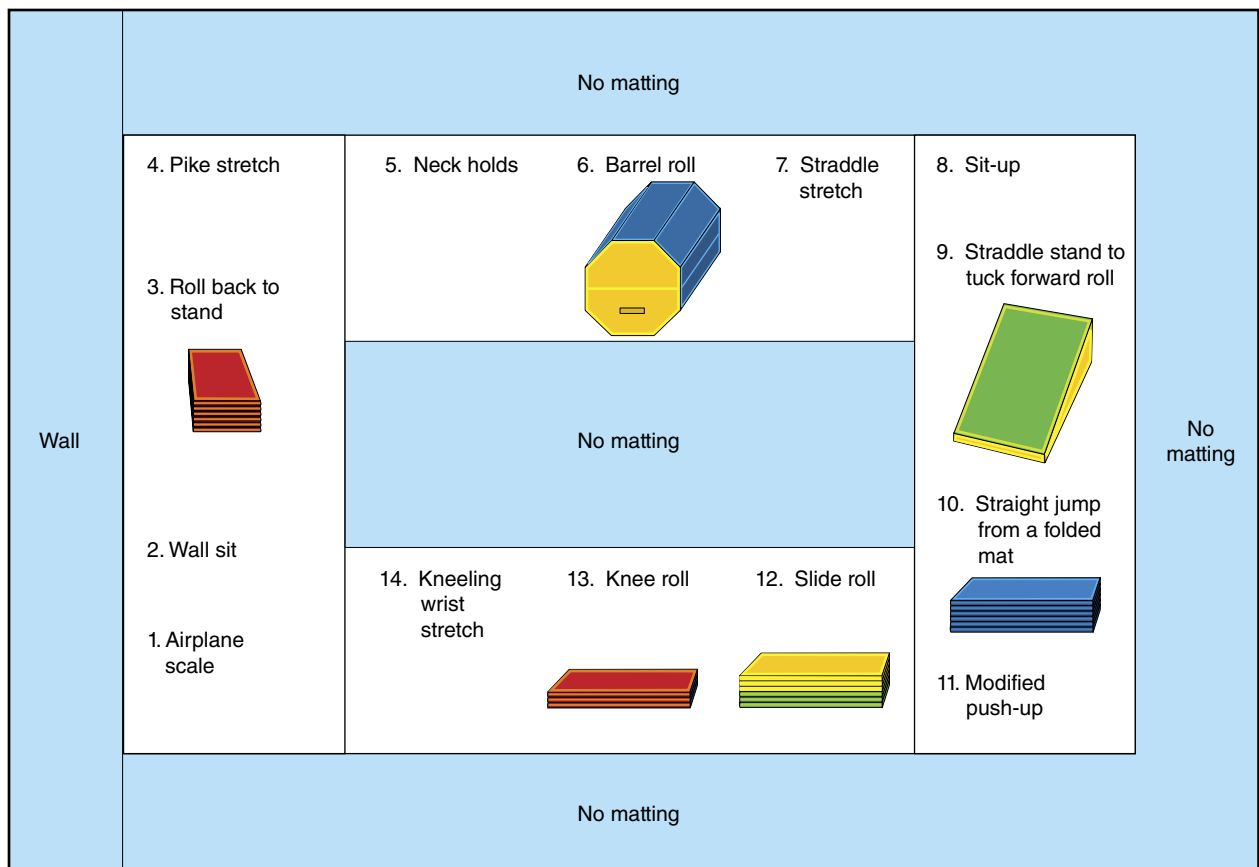
A warm-up is always necessary before you introduce the circuit. Since this may be the first day of introducing your students to a tumbling warm-up, keep it basic. Here are some suggestions:

- Walk on the heels to stretch the Achilles tendons.
- Walk on the toes with arms high, working the ankles.
- Jog lightly for 2 to 5 minutes to raise the heart rate.
- If they did a 2-minute jog, finish with 30 jumping jacks.

- Perform neck holds.
- Perform straddle stretch; this exercise is reinforced in the circuit.
- Perform pike stretch; this exercise is reinforced in the circuit.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch; this exercise is reinforced in the circuit.
- Perform tabletop (a held crab position; they may also rock over the shoulders and feet).

6 Stations

1. Airplane scale. Hold for 10 seconds on each leg; do 3 times for each leg.
2. Wall sit. Perform while saying the alphabet backward.
3. Roll back to stand with or without folded mat. Do 10 times.
4. Pike stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
5. Neck holds. Roll neck to one side, to the front, and to the other side, holding each stretch for 1 second; do 10 times in each direction.
6. Barrel roll. Do 3 times.
7. Straddle stretch. Hold 10 seconds for each leg; do 3 times for each leg.
8. Sit-up. Do 3 sets of 10.
9. Straddle stand to tuck forward roll, down an incline mat. Do 3 times.
10. Straight jump from a folded mat to a safe landing position. Do 10 times.
11. Modified push-up. Do 3 sets of 10.
12. Slide roll from two folded mats. Do 3 times.
13. Knee roll from folded mat. Do 3 times.
14. Kneeling wrist stretch. Hold palms flat and flipped, 10 seconds each way; do 3 times.



Cool-Down

About 3 to 5 minutes before class ends, perform a cool-down with your students. It will decrease soreness and lower heart rates. It will also calm down students before returning to their academic classrooms or their parents.

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform neck forward and back stretch.
- Perform triceps stretch I.

C I R C U I T

2

Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your individual situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

Warm-Up

Since most students are relatively new to tumbling skills, the warm-up will remain simple and reinforce the skills introduced in the circuits.

- Perform pronounced walk.
- Perform short-person walk.
- Jog.
- Skip, reinforcing step, hop, step, hop.
- Perform neck forward and back.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform tabletop, rocking over shoulders and feet.

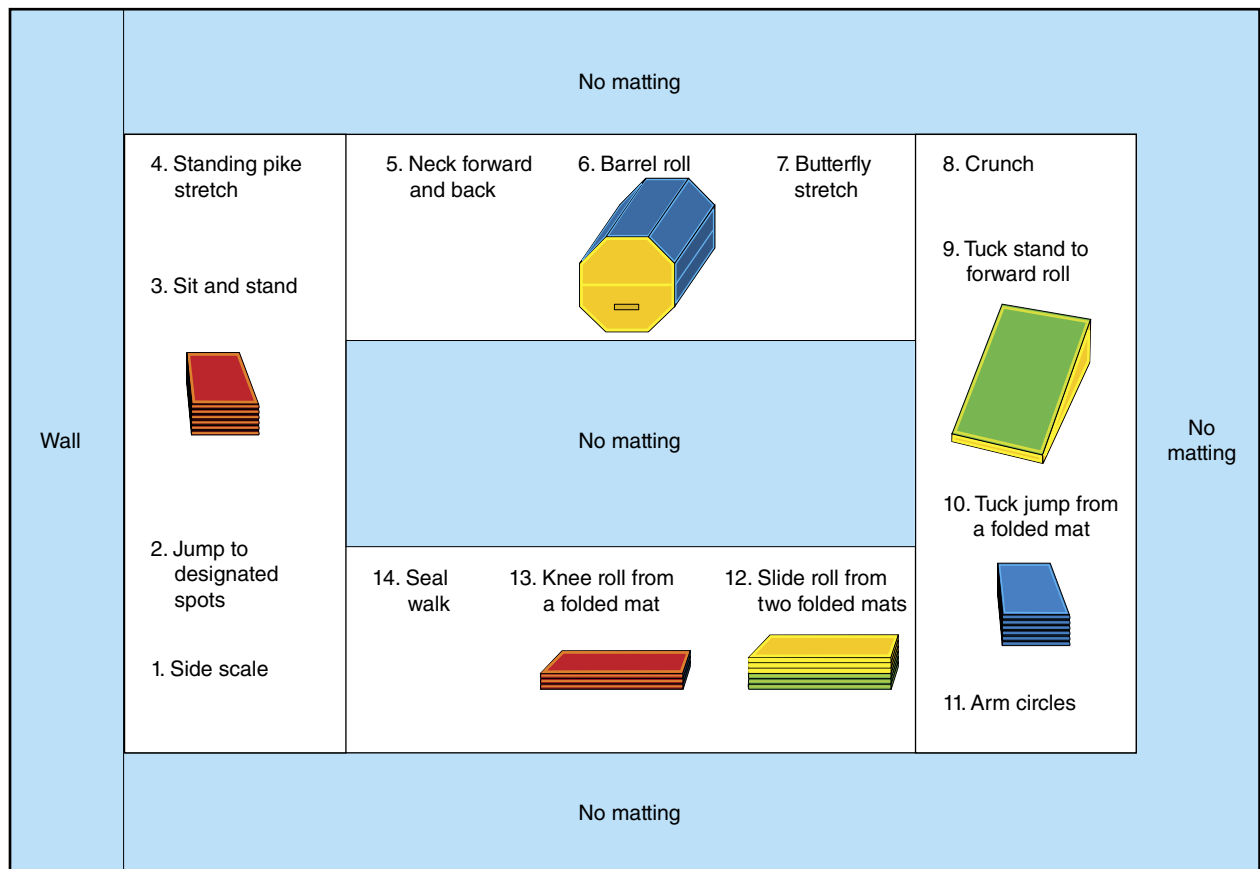
Stations

1. Side scale. Hold for 10 seconds on each leg; do 3 times for each leg.
2. Jump to designated spots. Continue until “rotate” is called.
3. Sit and stand. Do 10 times.
4. Standing pike stretch. Stretch forward and touch the toes and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
5. Neck forward and back. Roll neck forward and hold for 10 seconds, roll neck backward and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
6. Barrel roll. Do 3 times.
7. Butterfly stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
8. Crunch. Do 3 sets of 10.
9. Tuck stand to forward roll down incline mat. Do 3 times.
10. Tuck jump from a folded mat to a safe landing. Do 10 times.

11. Arm circles. Rotate arms forward and backward.
12. Slide roll from two folded mats. Do 3 times.
13. Knee roll from a folded mat. Do 3 times.
14. Seal walk. Do 3 sets of 10 steps.

🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform standing step pike stretch.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform triceps stretch II.



CIRCUIT

3

🕒 *Equipment*

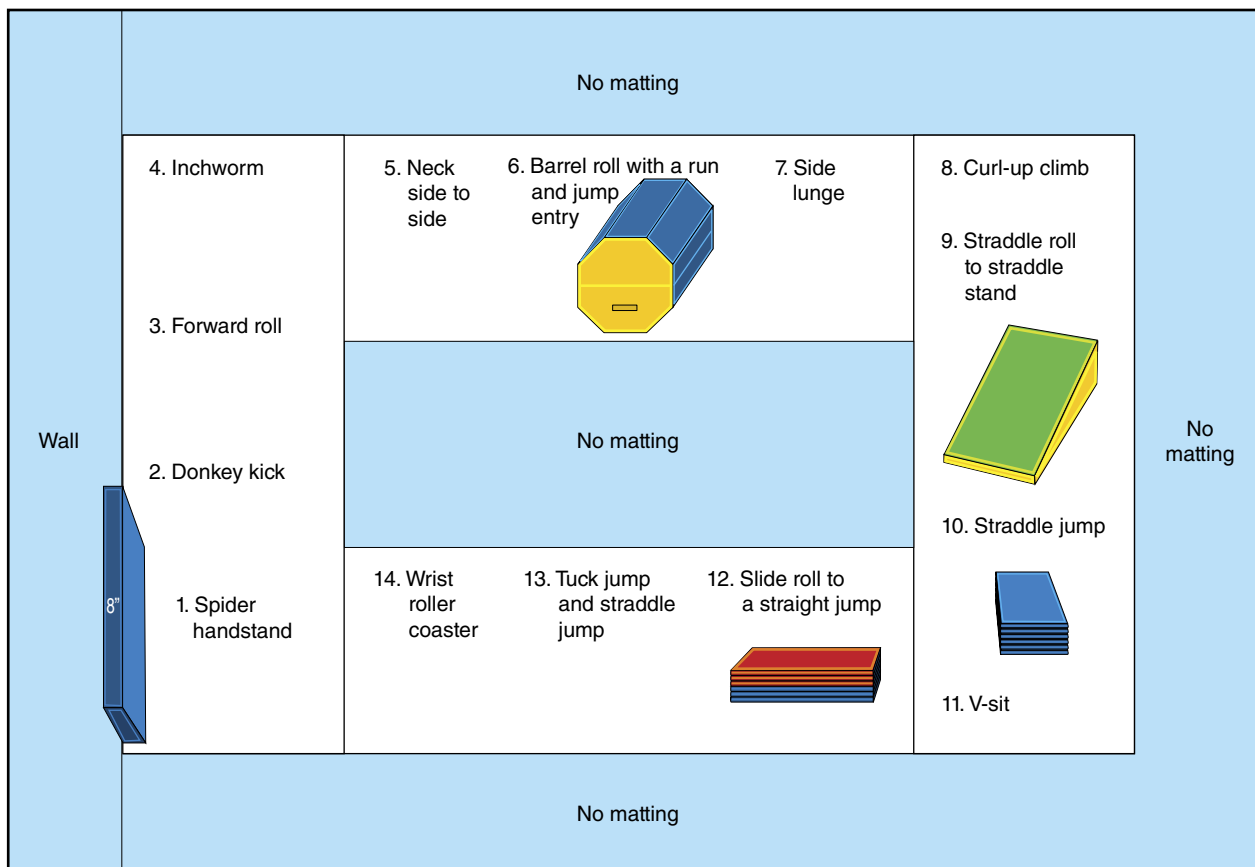
- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat
- 1 8" mat skill cushion, if wall is not matted

Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Perform elevator walk.
- Jog.
- Perform galloping with each leg leading the movement.
- Perform neck side to side.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform wrist roller coaster.

Stations

1. Spider handstand against a wall. Hold each handstand for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Donkey kick. Perform donkey kicks until it is time to rotate.
3. Forward roll. Do 5 times.
4. Inchworm. Do 5 times.
5. Neck side to side. Stretch your ear toward your shoulder for 10 seconds on each side; do 3 times for each side.
6. Barrel roll with a run and jump entry. Do 3 times.
7. Side lunge. Hold a side lunge for 10 seconds; do 3 times on each leg.
8. Curl-up climb. Climb an imaginary rope with your hands; do 3 sets of 10.
9. Straddle roll to straddle stand.
10. Straddle jump from folded mat to a safe landing. Do 10 times.



11. V-sit. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
12. Slide roll from 2 folded mats to a straight jump. Do 3 times.
13. Tuck jump and straddle jump. Perform each jump 3 times.
14. Wrist roller coaster. Perform 10 each way.

Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform neck forward and back while seated.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.

C I R C U I T



4

Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch IV.
- Perform jumping in place 10 times, forward then backward 10 times, side to side 10 times, jump and twist 10 times.
- Perform hopping on each foot 10 times.
- Perform neck holds.
- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing step pike stretch.
- Perform washing machine and dryer.
- Perform tabletop first; then hold one leg up straight and place it down. Repeat on other leg.

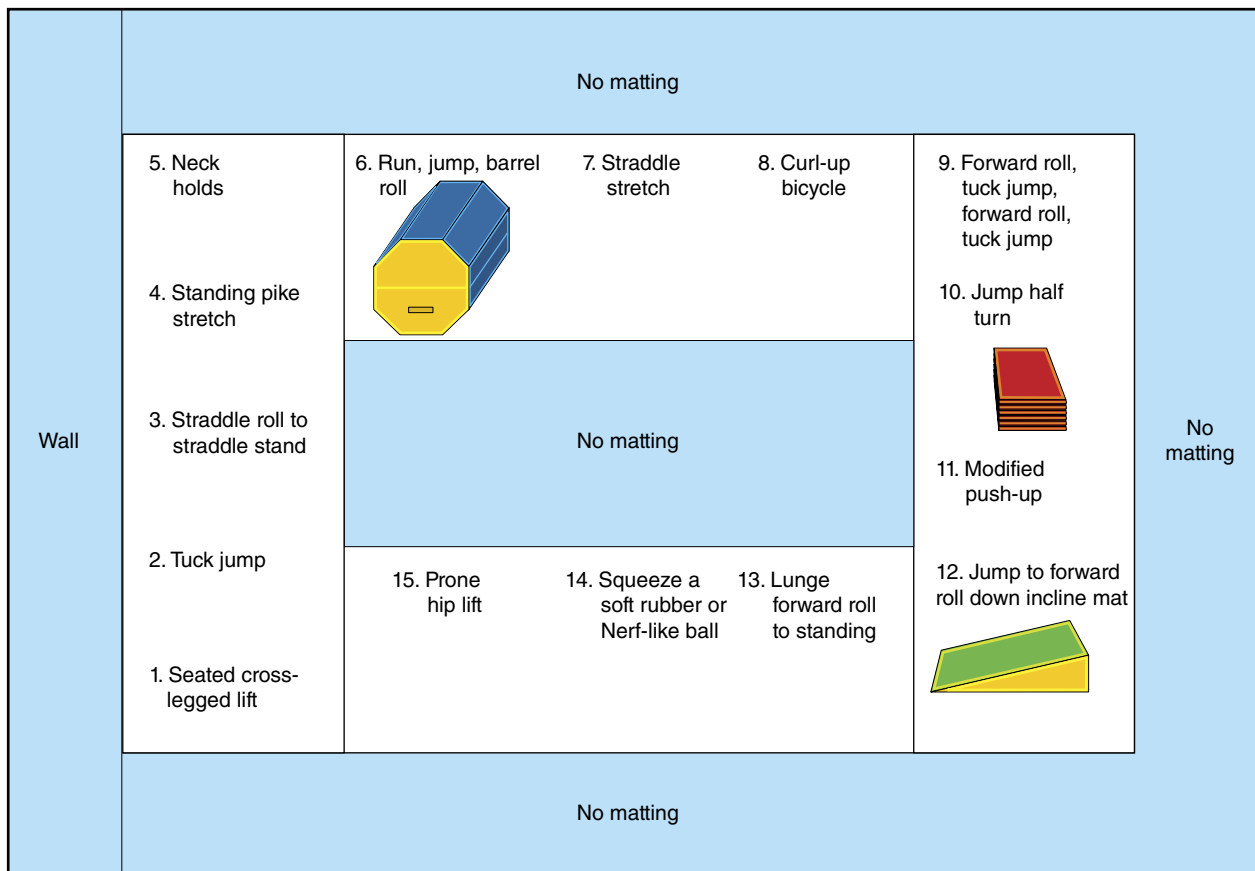
Stations

1. Seated cross-legged lift. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Tuck jump. Perform 3 sets of 10 jumps.
3. Straddle roll to straddle stand. Do 5 times.
4. Standing pike stretch. Walk your hands up and down your legs 10 times.
5. Neck holds. Roll neck to one side, to the front, and to the other side, holding each stretch for 1 second; do 10 times in each direction.
6. Run, jump, barrel roll. Do 5 times.
7. Straddle stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
8. Curl-up bicycle. Do 3 sets of 10 bicycle legs for each leg.
9. Forward roll, tuck jump, forward roll, tuck jump. Do 3 times.
10. Jump half turn from folded mat to safe landing. Do 10 times.

11. Modified push-up. Do 3 sets of 10.
12. Jump from floor mat to forward roll down incline mat. Do 5 times.
13. Lunge forward roll to standing. Do 5 times.
14. Squeeze a soft rubber or Nerf-like ball. Squeeze ball 10 times in each hand; do 3 sets.
15. Prone hip lift. From a prone position with your hands by your chest (similar to a plank), slide the tops of your toes toward your head and lift your hips; do 10 times.

Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform neck looks. Look hard to the right and then to the left.
- Perform wrist roller coaster.



CIRCUIT

5

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

🕒 *Warm-Up*

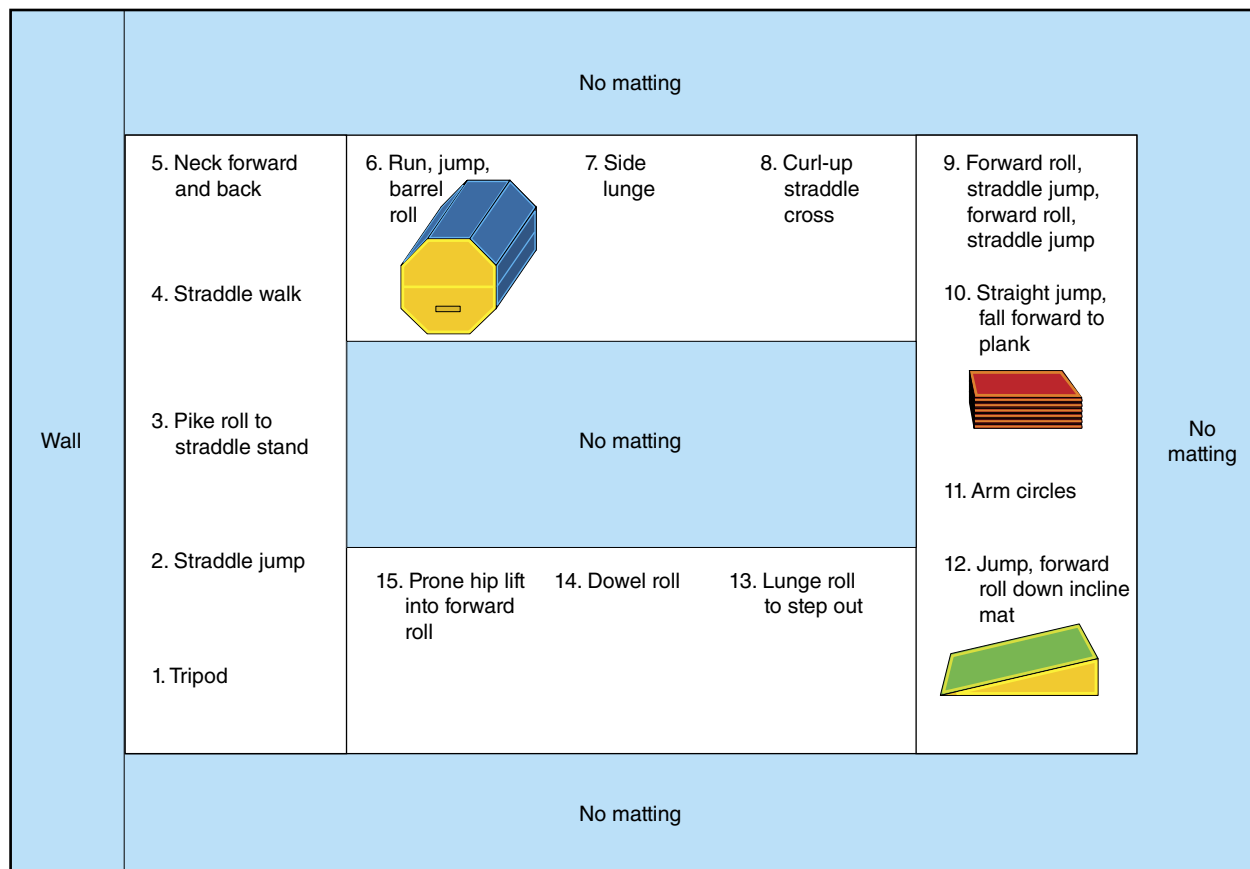
- Perform ankle circles II. Do 10 times each way.
- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Crawl forward.
- Perform bear crawl forward.
- Perform jumping jacks in a circle. Do 5 times each direction.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing step pike stretch.
- Perform standing wrist stretch.
- Perform tabletop, then hold one leg straight up.

🕒 *Stations*

1. Tripod. Do 3 for 10 seconds each.
2. Straddle jump. Do 3 sets of 10.
3. Pike roll to straddle stand. Do 5 times.
4. Straddle walk. Do 3 sets of 10.
5. Neck forward and back. Roll neck forward and hold for 10 seconds, roll neck backward and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
6. Run, jump, barrel roll. Do 5 times.
7. Side lunge. Perform a side lunge and hold for 10 seconds on each leg; do 3 times for each leg.
8. Curl-up straddle cross. Do 3 sets of 10 on each side.
9. Forward roll, straddle jump, forward roll, straddle jump. Do 3 times.
10. Straight jump. Jump from folded mat, land on feet, fall forward to plank; do 10 times.
11. Arm circles. Do 30 forward and 30 backward.
12. Jump from mat, forward roll down incline mat. Do 5 times.
13. Lunge roll to step out. Do 5 times.
14. Dowel roll. Roll a dowel in your hands 10 times in each direction; do 3 sets.
15. Prone hip lift into forward roll. From a prone position, slide the tops of your feet toward your head, lifting the hips upward; tuck head and roll to stand. Do 5 times.

6 Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten 3 times.
- Perform neck forward and back.
- Perform wrist circles each direction.



CIRCUIT

6

6 Equipment

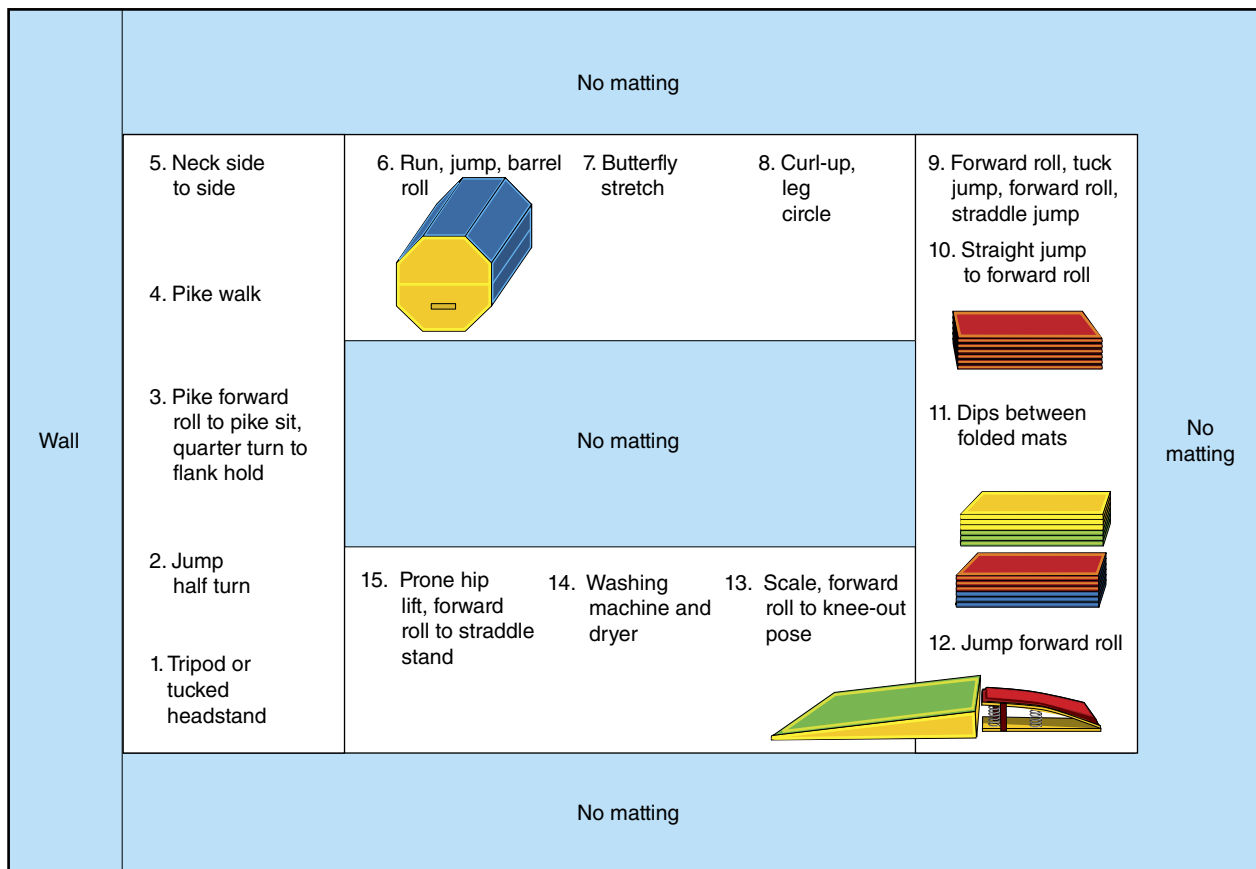
- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat
- 1 springboard if available

Warm-Up

- Perform ankle circle I.
- Perform Achilles stretch I.
- Perform stop and go.
- Perform neck forward and back.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.
- Perform tabletop, hopping from one foot to the other.

Stations

1. Tripod or tucked headstand. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Jump half turn each direction. Do 10 times.
3. Pike forward roll to pike sit, quarter turn to flank hold. Do 5 times.
4. Pike walk. Do 3 sets of 10.
5. Neck side to side. Stretch your ear toward your shoulder for 10 seconds on each side; do 3 times for each side.
6. Run, jump, barrel roll. Do 5 times.
7. Butterfly stretch. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
8. Curl-up, leg circle. Do 3 sets of 10 each way.
9. Forward roll, tuck jump, forward roll, straddle jump. Do 3 times.



10. Straight jump to forward roll. Jump from folded mat, land on feet, and do forward roll; do 10 times.
11. Dips between folded mats. Do 3 sets of 10.
12. Jump forward roll from springboard down incline mat. Do 5 times.
13. Scale, forward roll to knee-out position, pose. Do 5 times.
14. Wrists. Do washing machine and dryer 10 times each.
15. Prone hip lift, forward roll to straddle stand. From a prone position, slide the tops of your toes toward your head, lifting your hips, and perform a forward roll to a straddle stand; do 5 times.

Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge to each side.
- Perform cross pike stretch.
- Perform retracted joggles.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.

Backward Rolls



The backward roll is more difficult for students to learn than the forward roll, even though technique-wise the body passes through the same positions. You may decide to teach a cartwheel first, depending on your students' strengths. When you teach the backward roll, your first concern must be the safety of the neck. The students need to have enough arm strength to take the pressure off of their necks. The backward roll develops strength in the entire body as well as kinesthetic awareness. Following are areas of flexibility and strength your students will acquire while learning backward rolls:

Flexibility

- Neck flexibility is necessary for avoiding injury to the neck.
- Flexibility in the hamstrings and lower back is important while passing through compressed positions.

- Wrist work is necessary for placing hands back in the proper position and then pushing with them.

Strength

- Leg strength is necessary for standing up at the end of the roll.
- Arm strength is crucial for pushing the head off the floor.
- Abdominal strength is necessary for pulling the legs up and over the head.

BASIC TECHNIQUE

Students begin in a squat stand. They may use their hands in front of them for balance until they are ready to perform the backward roll. Once they are ready to begin, they will keep the head tucked to the chest, maintain a rounded back, and

bring the hands above the shoulders, as if they are carrying a pizza (“pizza hands” with bent arms). They roll backward by dropping the buttocks to the floor and bringing the legs up over the head. Pushing must begin with the hands and arms just before the feet contact the floor. They should finish in a squat stand. (See figure 3.1.)

As with the forward roll, you may use multiple entries and exits once your class has mastered a basic backward roll. Here are examples:

Entries

- Tuck
- Straddle
- Single-leg sit
- Pike

Exits

- Tuck
- Straddle
- Knee scale
- Pike
- Scale
- Plank

CUEING

When performing the backward roll, students should look at the belly as they roll backward. This will aid in keeping the head tucked in and the back rounded to help diffuse the possibility of head or back injuries. While they are rolling over, tell your students to see their legs passing over their faces. This will help them roll in a straighter line. Upon landing, they should see their hands

first and then look in the direction in which they initiated the roll.

Here are some verbal cues you might need to use while students are performing backward rolls:

- Roll legs up and over the head.
- Keep your back loose and flexible to round your roll.
- Push with arms to get your head off the floor and reduce pressure on the neck.
- Use a little momentum to help with rolling over.
- Use pizza hands and place them on the floor by the ears.

SAFETY AND SPOTTING

The backward roll is a difficult skill because of the neck, especially in young children. In proportion to the rest of the body, a child’s head is larger than that of an adult; therefore, a greater push off the floor is required in order for the child to clear the head and not injure the neck.

As a teacher, you must ensure that students have enough abdominal strength to lift the hips overhead and enough arm strength to push the head off the mat. This will relieve the pressure from the neck. One of the skills in the circuit, introduced by Rick Feeney (1990), involves placing the mats in a V-formation for the backward roll. It serves several purposes: It protects the neck from injury, teaches the student how to roll in a straight line, and teaches how to push with the hands and arms. Do not rush to have students perform the backward roll independently on flat mats until you have ascertained their readiness.



Figure 3.1 (a) The beginning of a backward roll, with head tucked and hands in pizza hands position; (b) during the roll, placing hands on the mat and starting to lift the hips over the head; (c) finish, pushing body to an upright position.

When they perform this skill on a flat surface, be prepared to spot by lifting the hips up and over, consciously keeping pressure off the neck. The backward roll is a great skill for your students to learn because it helps them fall safely and helps them develop strength and agility.

Spotting a backward roll takes a little more practice than spotting a forward roll. Have a student start in a squat stand. Next, make sure the chin is tucked forward and the hands are by the shoulders with palms facing the ceiling. You should stand slightly behind and to the side of the student. As the student rolls backward, be prepared to reach in and grab the hips to lift their body up and over to the feet, keeping the pressure off the head and neck. Follow through to the completion of the element. Spot the student until she has a good understanding of hand placement and how to push with the hands to avoid a neck injury. (See figure 3.2.)

Here are some common errors you will need to watch for while students perform backward rolls:

- Rolling over one shoulder, possibly injuring the neck
- Lack of push or uneven push with hands
- Failure to stay round
- Lack of control with legs
- Landing errors

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Once your students have a good sense of backward rolls, here are some group activities you may choose to have your students perform:

- Backward rolls in a row down the mat, either like a ball (they'll get dizzy) or standing up in between rolls.
- Forward roll to straight jump with half turn, backward roll to straight jump with half turn. Any variety of jumping positions may be used.
- Combination of red light, green light and Simon says. Students start on a line. You call out a type of roll, such as tuck backward roll to step-out. Those who perform it have progressed; those who did not go back to the start line. You may increase the difficulty by saying, "Simon says." They return to the start if they rolled without Simon saying to do so. The goal is to progress to a predetermined line on the mat.
- Create your own roll with various entries and exits. Ask students how many they were able to create.

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

Challenging more advanced students during backward rolls is an excellent time to start working on their strength development for more difficult skills that you want them to learn later in the curriculum. One of the best skills for training their strength is the back extension roll. Students begin by executing backward rolls to a three-quarter handstand. After they are able to master this skill with control, introduce a backward roll to handstand (back extension roll). When this



Figure 3.2 (a) Ensuring the student starts in correct position; (b) lifting hips to ease pressure on the neck and helping to complete roll.

becomes easy, the next step is to perform it with straight arms. The student rolls backward with arms in a high position and palms facing the ceiling with fingers pointing toward one another. The hip opening to handstand is very early and quick, and straight body positioning is a must. Once a student masters either technique for the back extension roll, you can add a challenge by introducing the handstand pirouette. Here are some other modifications:

- Backward roll to three-quarter handstand
- Back extension roll
- Back extension roll with straight arms
- Back extension roll with pirouette

As with the forward roll, students needing more time and repetitions for mastering the backward roll can enjoy practicing the various

entries and exits by using an incline mat. If they are unable to perform the roll itself, then have them perform the entry into the roll and the finish. If a student lacks the strength to push from the floor into the end position, add a folded mat and let the student try to push off the folded mat. The folded mat will raise the body upward, aid in arriving to the desired finish position, and help develop strength and balance. The student is able to have fun in creating a favorite entry and exit while developing skills in a less repetitive fashion. Here are some adaptations:

- Practice only entries into the backward roll.
- Practice only exits from the backward roll.
- Use the V-mats or incline mats to aid in the performance of the actual roll while working on the alternative entries and exits.

C I R C U I T

1

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Walk backward on heels, stretching the Achilles.
- Walk on toes with arms high.
- Jog forward, backward, and sideways.
- Perform neck look. Look to the side and hold for 10 seconds.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.
- Perform tabletop. Lift one straight leg up and the opposite hand up, balance for 5 seconds, and repeat with other leg and hand.

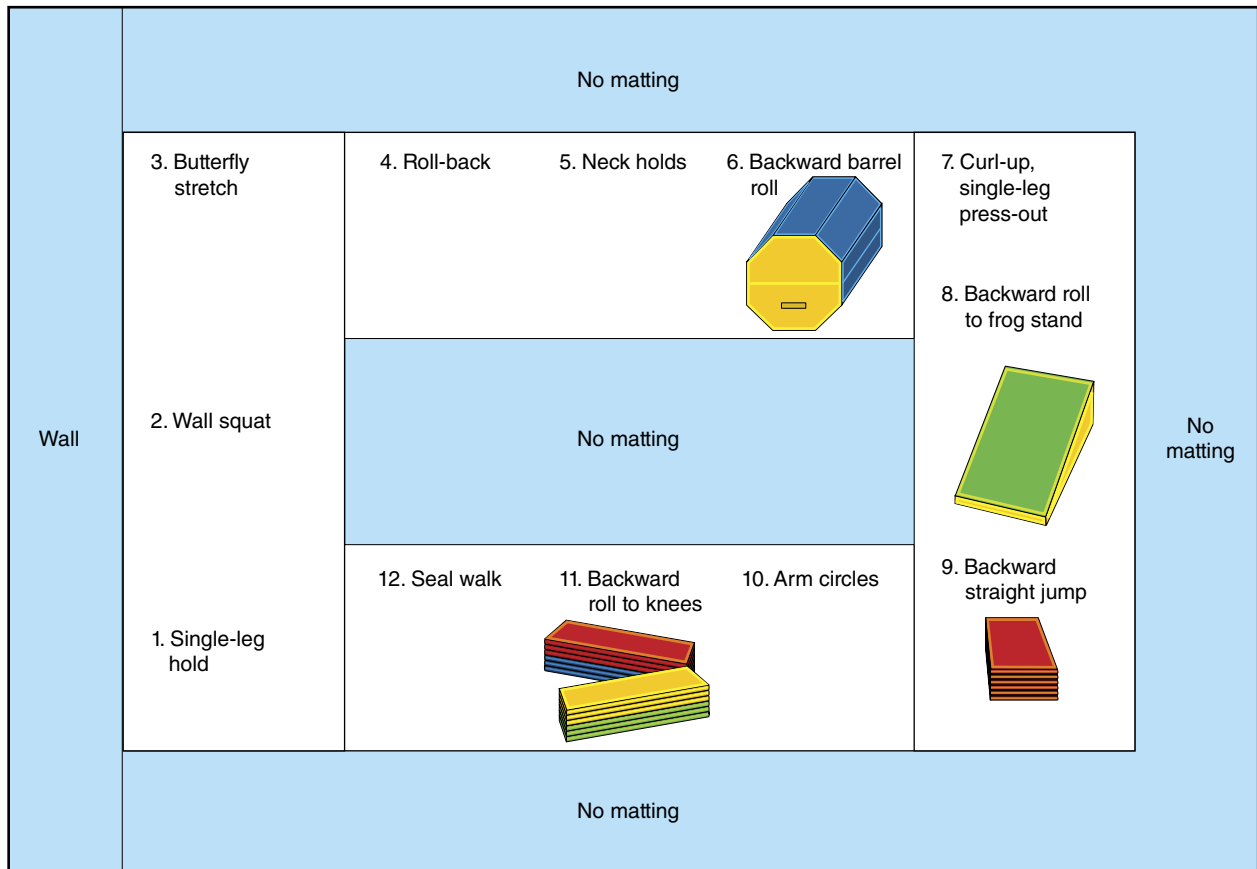
🕒 *Stations*

1. Single-leg hold. Hold one leg horizontal in front of body for 10 seconds; do 3 times for each leg.
2. Wall squat. Slide from a standing position to a squat and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
3. Butterfly stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.

4. Roll-back. Starting in a tuck sit position, roll backward and place hands in the backward roll position; do 10 times.
5. Neck holds. Roll neck to the side, forward, and other side, holding each stretch for 1 second; do 10 times each way.
6. Backward barrel roll. Arch back as you roll over the barrel and work on straight-arm support and using abdominal strength to pull legs over; do 5 times.
7. Curl-up, single-leg press-out. Do 3 sets of 10 for each leg.
8. Backward roll to frog stand. Begin by sitting on an incline mat; do 5 times.
9. Backward straight jump. Jump from a folded mat backward to a safe landing position; do 10 times.
10. Arm circles. Do 30 forward and backward.
11. Backward roll to knees. Start by sitting on the closed end of a V-mat with hands on the mat and head in the middle of the mats; do 5 times.
12. Seal walk. Do 3 reps of 10 steps.

Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform neck forward and back.
- Perform triceps stretch I.



C I R C U I T

2

ⓐ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

ⓐ Warm-Up

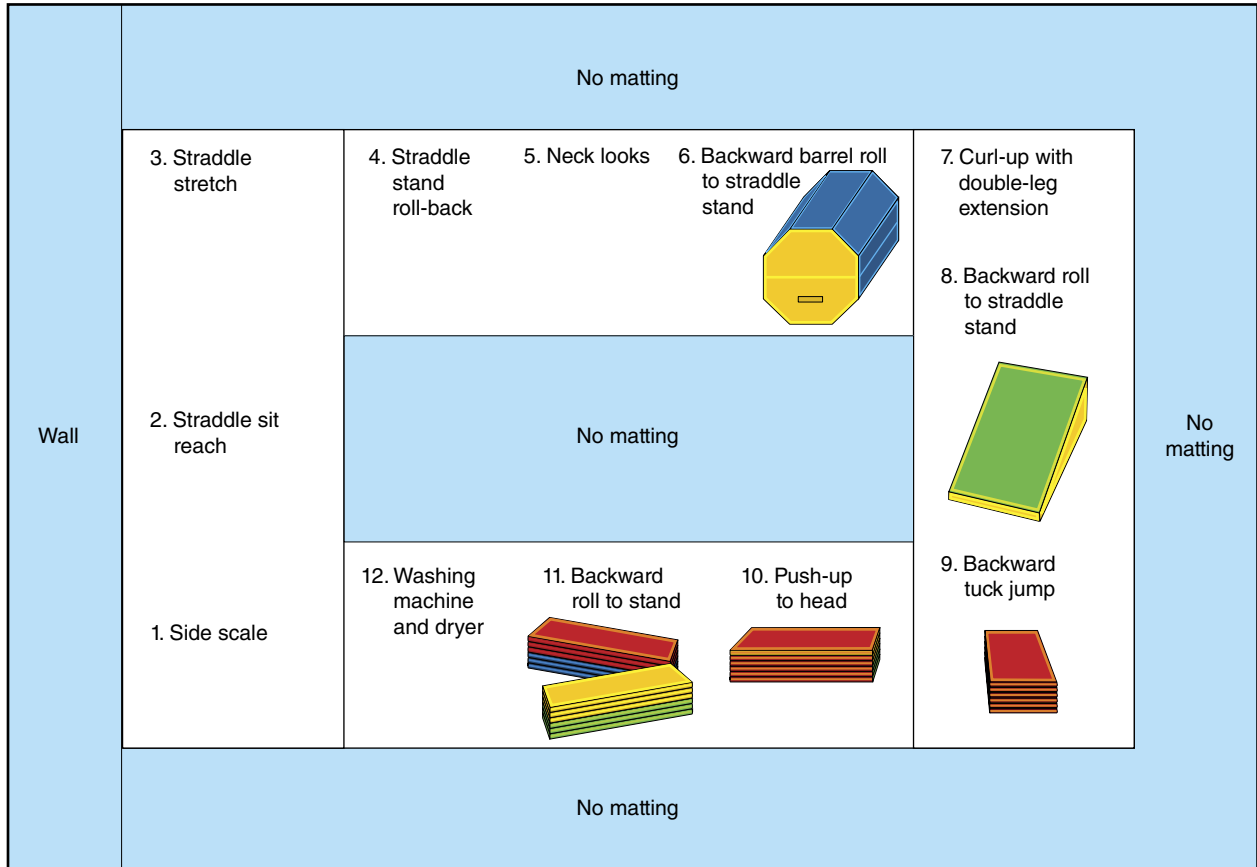
- Perform pronounced walk.
- Perform short-person walk backward.
- Jog and skip backward, then finish jogging and skipping forward.
- Perform neck forward and back.
- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform tabletop, rocking over shoulders and feet.

ⓐ Stations

1. Side scale. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times on each leg.
2. Straddle sit reach. Reach forward past knees, lift each leg one at a time, and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
3. Straddle stretch. Stretch to the side, middle, and other side, holding each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times for each position.
4. Straddle stand roll-back. Stand in a straddle and reach through legs to sit and roll back to backward roll hand placement; do 10 times.
5. Neck looks. Do 3 times on each side.
6. Backward barrel roll to straddle stand. Arch back over the octagonal mat, place hands on the floor with straight arms, and pull legs over to finish in straddle stand; do 3 times.
7. Curl-up with double-leg extension. Support yourself on elbows and extend legs from tucked to straight and hold for 3 seconds; do 10 times.
8. Backward roll to straddle stand. Begin by sitting on an incline mat; repeat 5 times.
9. Backward tuck jump. Jump backward from a folded mat to a safe landing position; do 10 times.
10. Push-up to head. Place legs up on two folded mats, bend upper body forward to place hands on floor mat, raise and lower the head to the floor mat by performing a push-up action with the arms; do 10 times.
11. Backward roll to stand. Use a V-mat; do 5 times.
12. Washing machine and dryer. Do 10 for each wrist; repeat 3 times.

ⓐ Cool-Down

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform triceps II stretch.



CIRCUIT

3

🕒 **Equipment**

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

🕒 **Warm-Up**

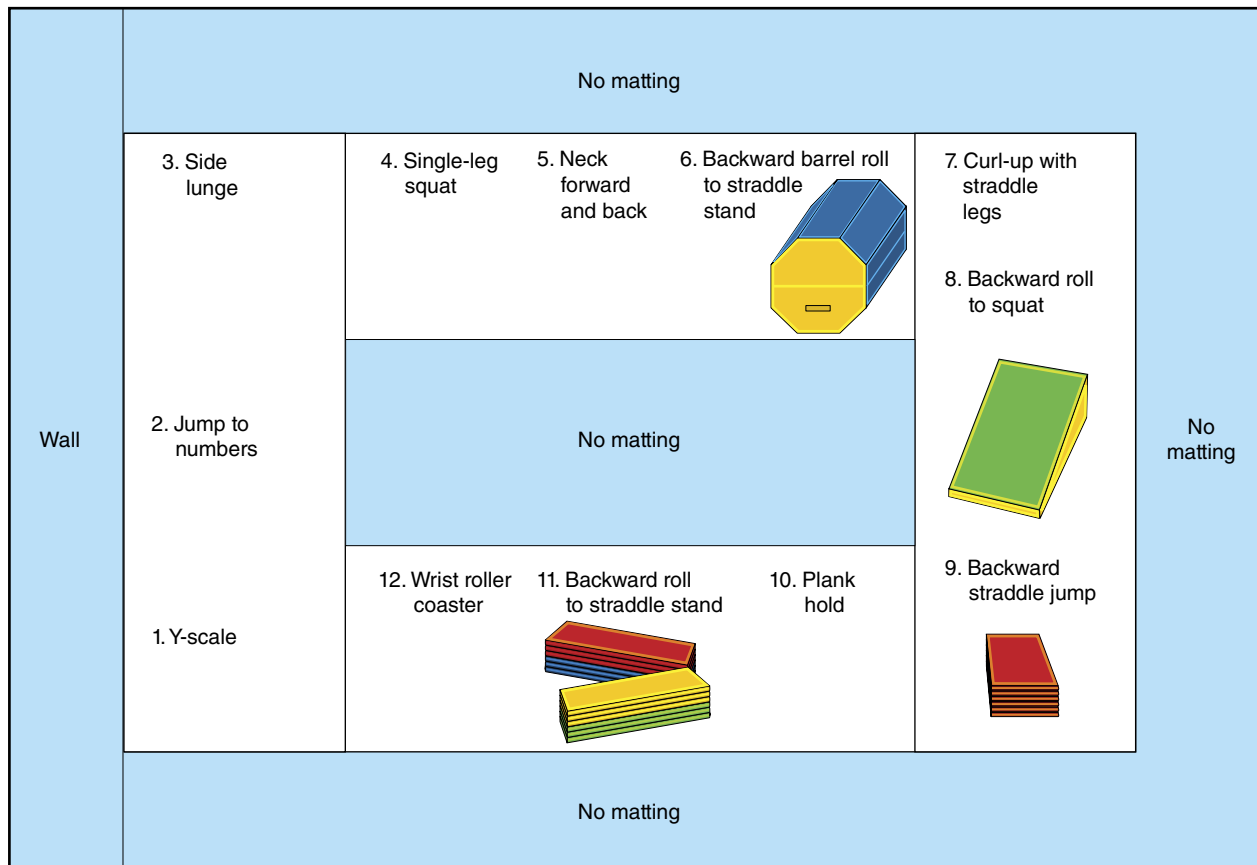
- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Perform elevator walk backward.
- Jog.
- Gallop backward with each leg leading the movement.
- Perform neck side to side.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform washing machine and dryer.

🕒 Stations

1. Y-scale. Hold for 10 seconds on each leg; do 3 times.
2. Jump to numbers. Jump to numbers written in chalk, counting by 1s, 2s, 3s, and so on until it's time to rotate.
3. Side lunge. Hold for 10 seconds on each leg; do 3 times.
4. Single-leg squat. Holding the free leg horizontally in front of you, sit and roll back, working on proper hand placement; do 10 times each leg.
5. Neck forward and back. Stretch the neck forward and back, holding for 10 seconds in each direction; do 3 times.
6. Backward barrel roll to straddle stand. Do 5 times.
7. Curl-up with straddle legs. Supporting yourself on your forearms, put your legs into a straddle position, and then cross them 10 times; do 3 reps.
8. Backward roll to squat. Begin sitting on incline mat and finish in a squat position; do 5 times.
9. Backward straddle jump. Jump backward from folded mat to a safe landing position; do 10 times.
10. Plank hold. Hold for 30 seconds.
11. Backward roll to straddle stand. Use a V-mat; do 5 times.
12. Wrist roller coaster. Do 3 sets of 10 each way.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.



CIRCUIT

4

🕒 Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your individual situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

🕒 Warm-Up

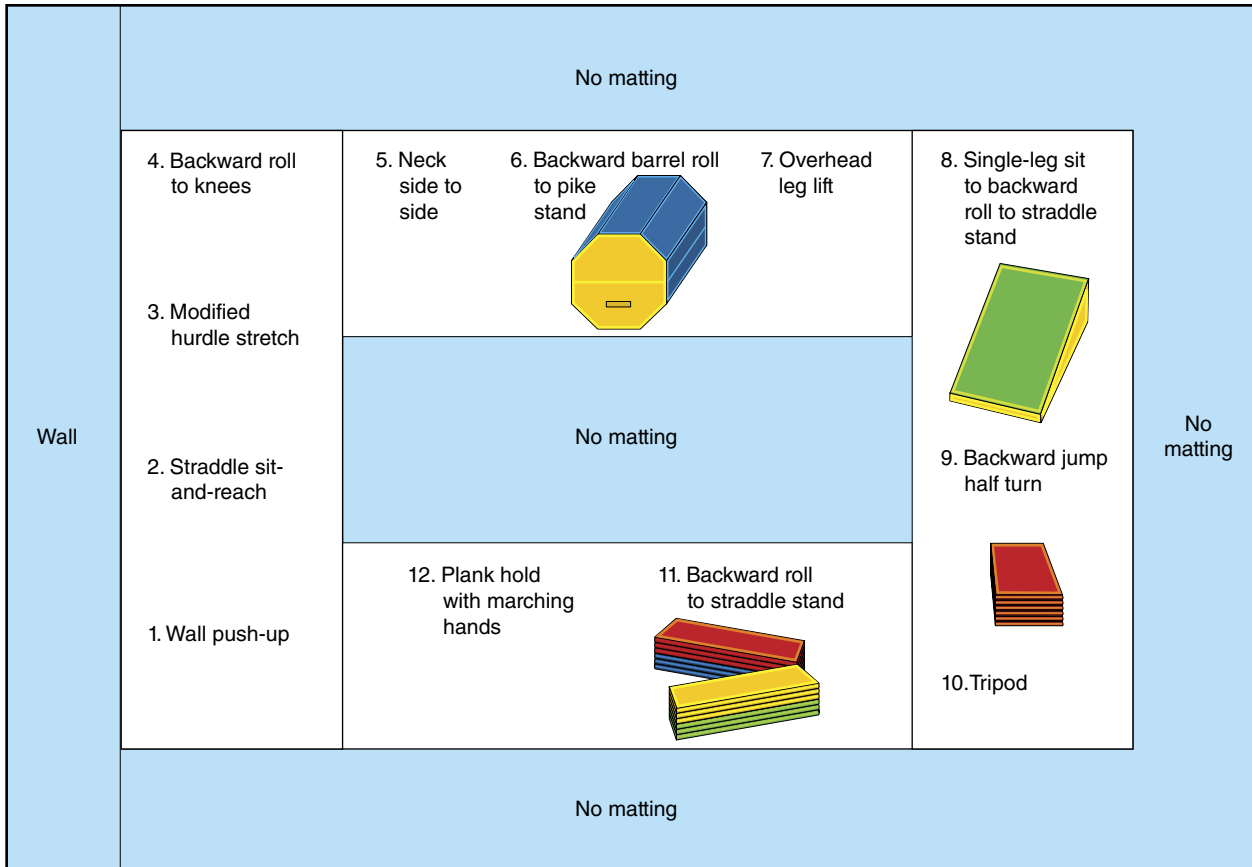
- Perform Achilles stretch IV.
- Perform feet positions.
- Jump in place 10 times, jump forward and backward 10 times, jump side to side 10 times, and jump and twist 10 times.
- Hop on each foot 10 times.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform standing wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge.

🕒 Stations

1. Wall push-up. Do 3 sets of 10.
2. Straddle sit-and-reach. Reach forward past knees and lift both legs as long as possible; do 10 times.
3. Modified hurdle stretch. With one leg bent as in the butterfly stretch and the other leg straight, stretch forward and hold 10 seconds; do 3 times on each side.
4. Backward roll to knees. Perform with assistance; do 5 times.
5. Neck side to side. Bring your ear to your shoulder and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times on each side.
6. Backward barrel roll to pike stand. Keep legs straight throughout; do 5 times.
7. Overhead leg lift. Lie on back. Keeping legs straight, lift them over head and then lower them until they are 6 inches (15 cm) from the mat; do 3 sets of 10.
8. Single-leg sit to backward roll to straddle stand. Using an incline mat, hold one leg forward horizontally and do a single-leg sit into a backward roll, landing in straddle stand; do 5 times.
9. Backward jump half turn. Jump backward from folded mat to safe landing position; do 10 times.
10. Tripod. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
11. Backward roll to straddle stand. Finish in straddle stand on V-mat; do 5 times.
12. Plank hold with marching hands. Do 3 sets of 10 with each hand.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform neck look.
- Perform wrist roller coaster.



C I R C U I T

5

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your individual situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

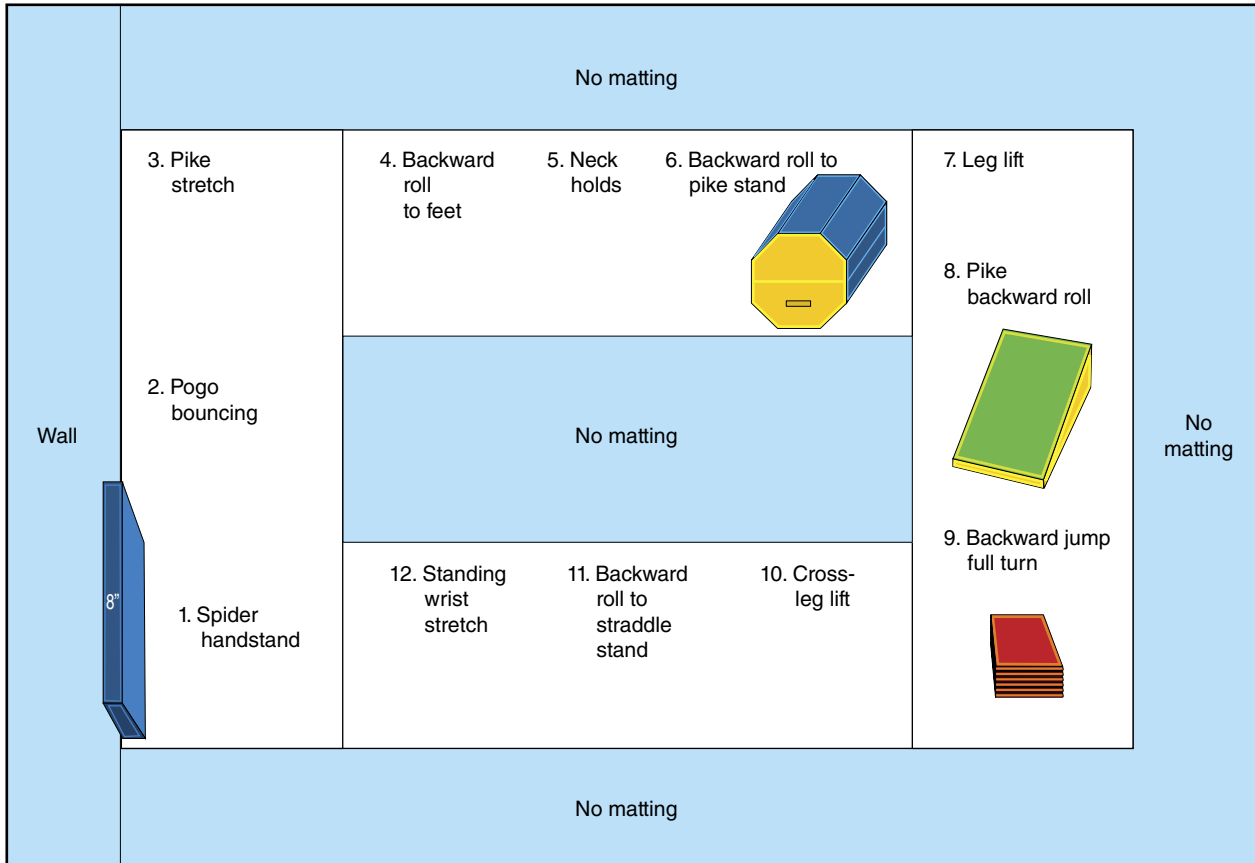
🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform ankle circles II 10 times each way.
- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Crawl backward.
- Perform bear crawl backward.
- Perform crab walk forward and backward.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.

- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge.

Stations

1. Spider handstand. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Pogo bouncing. Perform small jumps on the balls of the feet; do 10 forward and backward, 10 side to side, and 10 twisting in each direction.
3. Pike stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
4. Backward roll to feet. Do 5 times.
5. Neck holds. Roll neck to the side, front, and other side, holding each stretch for 1 second; do 10 times.
6. Backward roll to pike stand. Use a barrel mat and push through shoulders off hands; do 5 times.
7. Leg lift. Lying on back, reach hands to ceiling and bring straight legs to fingers; do 3 sets of 10.
8. Pike backward roll. Use incline mat and start and finish in pike position, keeping legs straight throughout; do 5 times.
9. Backward jump full turn. Backward jump full turn from backward stand on folded mat and land in safe landing position; do 10 times.
10. Cross-leg lift. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
11. Backward roll to straddle stand. Do 5 times.
12. Standing wrist stretch. Keeping arms straight, pull fingers of opposite hand toward body, up and down. Hold each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.



🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform retracted joggles.
- Perform wrist circles in each direction.

C I R C U I T



6

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your individual situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 2 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform ankle circles I.
- Perform Achilles stretch I.
- Perform a game like stop and go, freeze dance, or late for school.
- Perform neck forward and back.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.
- Perform bridge with feet together.

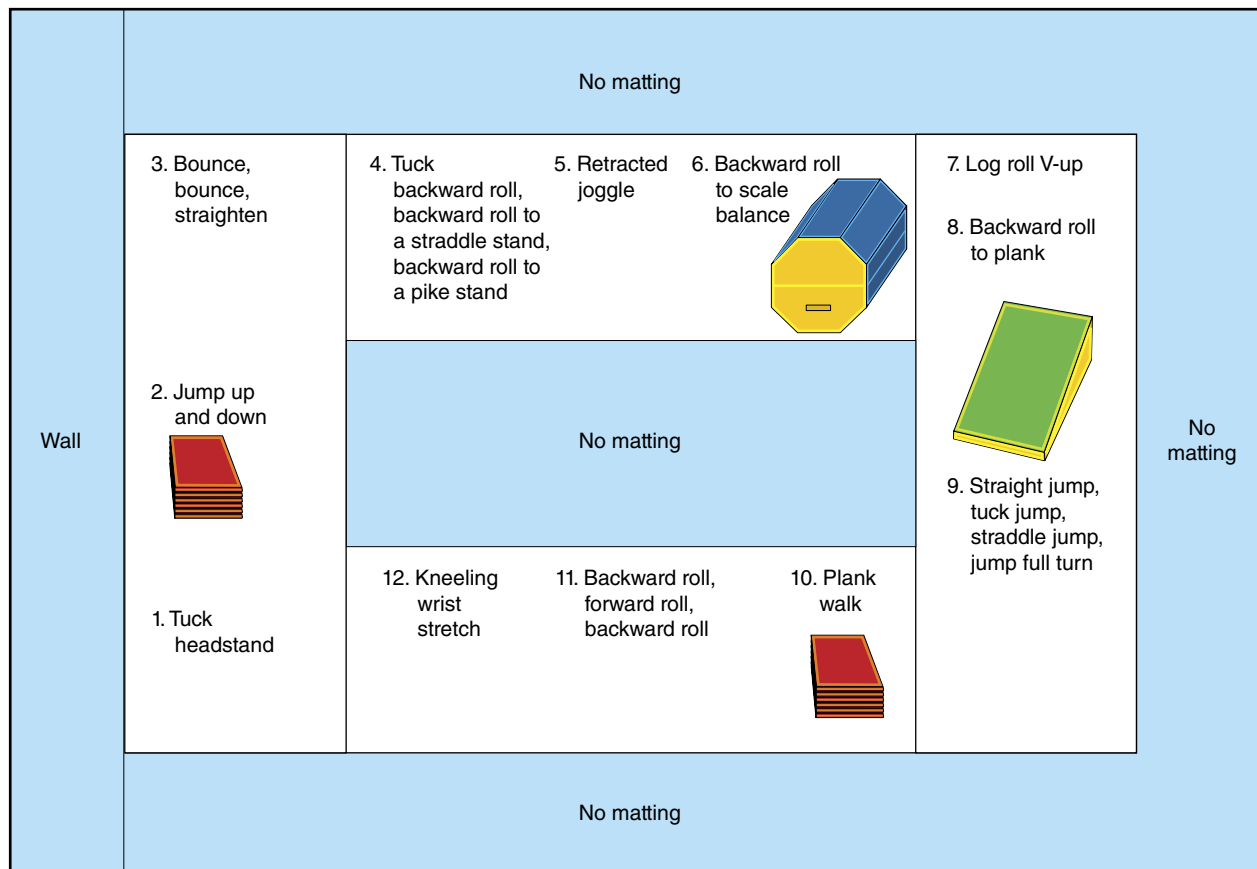
🕒 *Stations*

1. Tuck headstand. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Jump up and down. Jump up onto a 6-inch mat and then back down again; do 3 sets of 10.
3. Bounce, bounce, straighten. Bounce in squat 2 times, then straighten legs with hands on floor; do 10 reps.
4. Tuck backward roll, backward roll to a straddle stand, backward roll to a pike stand. Do 3 times.
5. Retracted joggle. Retract head and, using fingers on neck for support as necessary, joggle it; do 10 times.
6. Backward roll to scale balance. Using barrel mat, roll back and land on one foot. Push off hands and try to balance in a scale; do 5 times.
7. Log roll V-up. Feet should never touch the floor; do 5 times in each direction.
8. Backward roll to plank. Use incline mat; do 5 times.
9. Straight jump, tuck jump, straddle jump, jump full turn. Perform the jumps in a row; do 10 times.
10. Plank walk. In a plank, travel up and down folded mat; do 10 times.

11. Backward roll, forward roll, backward roll. Perform a backward roll, jump half turn, do a forward roll, jump half turn, and do another backward roll; do 5 times.
12. Kneeling wrist stretch. Place fingers on floor facing the body, alternating palms and backs of hands. Hold each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times in each direction.

Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge to each side.
- Perform cross pike stretch.
- Perform retracted joggles.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.



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Cartwheels



The cartwheel is a fun skill for students to learn, but they must have sufficient arm strength to support themselves when moving through the inverted position. Difficulty may arise as students try to understand proper hand placement and leg kick. This is the first skill in which students need to determine which leg is dominant. You can use several methods to determine leg dominance:

- Ask the student to perform a jump full turn and see which shoulder leads the turn.
- Stand behind the student and gently push; the student will usually step with the dominant leg.

- If a student can do a three-leg hop, the leg that is closer to the hand hopping is most likely the dominant leg.

Sometimes you will need to have students try the cartwheel on both sides to determine which side appears stronger.

Because cartwheels require a supported inverted body position, students will need to develop a lot of strength in order to perform this skill well. Using body weight as resistance is a great way to develop strength (see the strength exercises listed in the stations). Muscular strength as well as endurance will develop from repetitions of cartwheels. Flexibility and agility will

contribute greatly toward mastering this skill. Following are some of the areas that will become more flexible and stronger:

Flexibility

- Wrist flexibility is important because of the weight the skill places on the hands and wrists.
- Groin flexibility should be developed because of the straddling of the legs.
- Side bends and trunk rotations contribute to core flexibility.
- Shoulders need to be flexible enough to hold the arms straight above the head.

Strength

- Strong quadriceps, hamstring, and gluteus maximus muscles are required for the push-off, kickover, and landing.
- Arm and wrist strength is important for supporting the body and for pushing off the mat.

- Core strength, including the side obliques, must be developed for stabilization of the body while inverted and for lifting the body at the conclusion of the skill.

BASIC TECHNIQUE

A cartwheel has a 1-2-3-4 rhythm: hand, hand, foot, foot. A student may start the cartwheel facing sideways, from a lunge, with a straight forward kick, or pointing the forward foot on the mat. The finish is a sideward straddle stand or a lunge facing the direction the student started. The body should look like a windmill or spokes on a tire during the cartwheel. The legs are straddled and the arms, body, and legs should be in a straight vertical line. (See figure 4.1.)

Once students have mastered the basic cartwheel, you can teach many other skills in the cartwheel family (listed in order from least difficult to most difficult):

- **Cartwheel step-in.** Perform the cartwheel as if to land in a lunge, but instead place the second foot beside the first foot. Land facing the direction you began the skill.
- **Round-off.** Same as the cartwheel step-in, but bring feet together before landing.
- **Running cartwheel and round-off:** Use a single-leg hurdle to initiate the skill. The running round-off is used as a forward entry to backward skills, usually requiring momentum.
- **One-arm cartwheel.** Use either near arm (first hand) or far arm (second hand) for support.



Figure 4.1 (a) Entry into the cartwheel; (b) cartwheel during its inversion; (c) stretching up out of the cartwheel during landing (notice student is on opposite leg from her entry).

- Dive cartwheel. This is more advanced. Show flight before hand contact against the floor.
- Push-off cartwheel. Show flight after hand contact before landing.
- Aerial cartwheel. This is a no-hand cartwheel.

CUEING

When performing cartwheels from a forward stance, students should have the arms high above the head, and the focus should be forward. They should be able to see the mat in front of them. When they are performing cartwheels from a sideward position, the arms will also be high with the focus forward. They will not look in the direction of their movement. As they rotate to an inverted position, the focus with their eyes should be on their hands. The head is neutral. Because the arms will be by the ears at the completion of the cartwheel, the eyes should remain focused on the hands while arriving to an upright position. Once a student has come to a stand, the head should be in a neutral position with the focus in a straight line, either in a sideward landing or facing the direction the cartwheel was initiated.

Here are some verbal cues you may need to use with students while they are performing cartwheels:

- Hands point in the same direction as the foot that is forward in the stance.
- The first hand is the same as the front foot.
- Paint a rainbow with your toes.
- Push off the hands to stand.
- Sometimes rocking from foot to foot helps you perform the cartwheel.

SAFETY AND SPOTTING

A cartwheel is a fun skill for students to learn, but it can also be confusing for beginners. You must ensure that your students are able to hold themselves inverted against the wall with straight arms (a handstand). This may be performed as a spider handstand (stand with back against the wall, place hands forward on the floor and walk feet up the wall) or a kick-up handstand. Also, make sure students understand the sideward entry by having them jump and kick over folded mats. I would suggest spotting the first few attempts to

ensure students understand the mechanics of a cartwheel and the concept of pushing from the floor with the hands to arrive in a stand. Some students will be more successful with cartwheels than with backward rolls. Your main concern is their ability to arrive in an upright position at the completion of the skill.

When spotting a cartwheel, stand to the side of the student and slightly ahead so you are positioned to catch and hold the student during the inversion. The side you stand on is determined by the front foot of the student. If the right foot is forward, you stand to the student's right. You want the student's back toward you so you are less likely to get kicked. At the onset of the cartwheel, you should reach the hand nearest to the student's opposite hip (for example, standing on the right side of the student, I would place my left hand on the student's right hip) and follow with the second hand on the other hip. Now, you are able to support the student easily during the inverted phase of the cartwheel. Follow through until the student is standing (arms finished crossed). The follow-through is important because sometimes they are not strong enough to push off the mat to arrive standing. If they don't push, they will usually fall. (See figure 4.2.)

Here are some common errors you will need to watch for when students are performing cartwheels:

- Hand and foot placement is incorrect. An example is right foot forward, left hand down; the correct sequence is right foot forward, right hand down, left hand down, left foot down, and finally right foot down.
- Legs bend.
- Arms bend.
- Shoulder angle is incorrect because arms do not stay by ears. Usually the cartwheel will be flat (not vertical).
- Head sticks out instead of remaining neutral.
- Student is unable to push off floor with hands to stand at finish.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

The development of the cartwheel will have many stages. When students are performing group activities, make sure you create ample spacing in travel lanes. Some students will have difficulty



Figure 4.2 (a) Inverted spot with a hand on each hip; (b) ending spot with arms crossed.

maintaining straight lines. Students will possibly become dizzy between skills, which could also cause them to stray. Allow the students to perform at least two skills before allowing another group to start.

- Cartwheels in a row.
- Alternate between a forward roll step-out and a cartwheel.
- Alternate between dominant-side and nondominant-side cartwheels.

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

The more advanced students may want to try some of the following modifications to keep them engaged and motivated to achieve to their maximum capabilities. Here are some more challenging opportunities for your students:

- Alternate near-arm and far-arm one-hand cartwheels.
- Perform a round-off, jump half turn and step-out to another round-off.

- Perform a round-off with a jump, such as tuck, straddle, pike, or jump half turn or jump full turn.
- Perform dive cartwheels alternating with push-off cartwheels.
- Perform aerial cartwheels in a row without a hurdle.

Students needing more time to develop the basic skills for acquiring the cartwheel may participate in the group activities. You can do this by placing some folded mats in a row moving down a tumbling lane. They will be able to progress down the floor mat, like their counterparts. Here are some adaptations:

- Monkey jump over each folded mat
- Barrel roll over each folded mat
- Alternating barrel roll and monkey jump over each folded mat
- Opposite-side barrel roll and monkey jump over each folded mat
- Barrel roll over a folded mat to forward roll (incline mat if necessary)

C I R C U I T

1

Ⓢ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 6 hula hoops
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted

Ⓢ Warm-Up

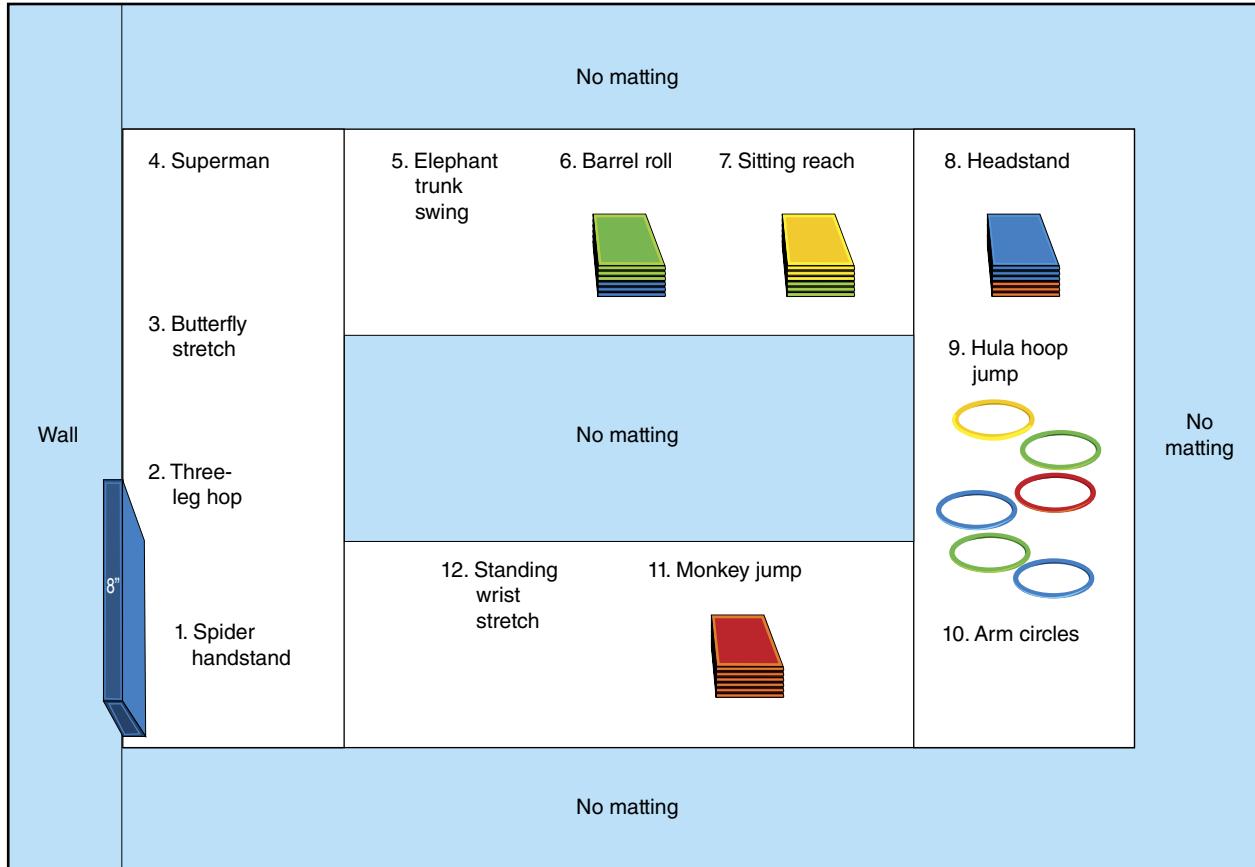
- Perform Achilles stretch I.
- Perform ankle walk.
- Jog.
- Perform a grapevine.
- Perform neck look.
- Perform side bend.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge with feet together.

Ⓢ Stations

1. Spider handstand. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Three-leg hop. Hop on each leg 3 times.
3. Butterfly stretch. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
4. Superman. Hold for 3 seconds; do 10 times. Then do 10 quickly 3 times.
5. Elephant trunk swing. Do 10 times on each side.
6. Barrel roll. Perform over a folded mat, placing hands on the mat; do 10 times each direction.
7. Sitting reach. Sit on the edge of a folded mat with legs tucked. Reach to each side with hands together 10 times; do 3 sets.
8. Headstand. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times. You may use 2 stacked folded mats to aid in balance.
9. Hula hoop jump. Jump in the hula hoops until it is time to rotate stations.
10. Arm circles. Do 30 forward and 30 backward.
11. Monkey jump. Perform over folded mat with hands on the folded mat; do 10 in each direction.
12. Standing wrist stretch. With the arms straight, pull the fingers of the opposite hand toward the body and up and down; hold each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.

Ⓢ Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform trunk rotation.
- Perform triceps stretch I.



CIRCUIT

2

🕒 *Equipment*

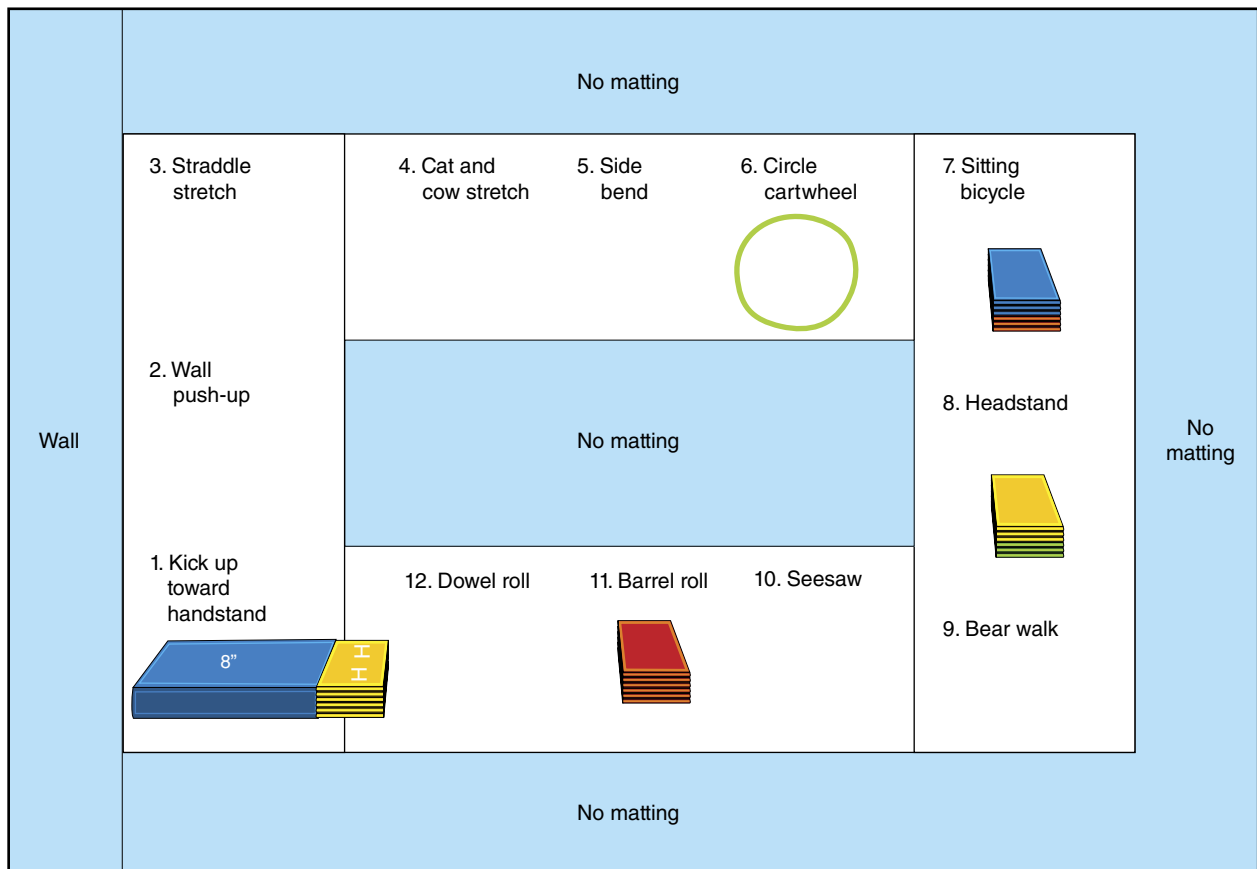
- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion
- 1 drawn circle (with chalk or tape)

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform Achilles stretch II.
- Perform walking leg kick, walking forward with forward kicks.
- Perform skipping forward and backward.
- Perform trunk rotation.
- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform bridge, rocking over shoulders and feet.

Stations

1. Kick up toward handstand. Keeping hands on the folded mat and feet starting on the floor mat, kick up toward a handstand; do 10 times.
2. Wall push-up. Do 3 sets of 10 leaning against the wall.
3. Straddle stretch. In a straddle position, stretch to one side, the middle, and the other side; hold each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
4. Cat and cow stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
5. Side bend. Reach 5 times and then hold for 5 seconds; do 3 sets on each side.
6. Circle cartwheel. Stand on the predrawn circle with the torso facing the center of the circle. Bend to one side, placing hands on circle. Hop off the feet in a sequential motion, landing on the circle past the hands. Torso remains facing the center of the circle the entire time; do 10 in each direction.
7. Sitting bicycle. Sitting on the edge of a folded mat, do bicycle legs by bringing opposite elbow to opposite knee; do 3 sets of 10 on each side.
8. Headstand. With or without folded mats, hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
9. Bear walk. Do 3 sets of 10 forward and 10 backward.
10. Seesaw. Do 10 times.
11. Barrel roll. Perform over folded mat so that as one leg goes forward, the same hand is the first on the mat. The other leg then kicks over mat and corresponding hand goes down. This roll uses a 1-2-3-4 rhythm. Do 10 in each direction.
12. Dowel roll. Roll the dowel in your hands, turning one hand at a time. Do 3 sets of 10 with each hand.



🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform triceps II stretch

C I R C U I T

3

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 2 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Perform ankle circles I.
- Perform walking leg kick, sideward kick.
- Jog, skip, gallop, and grapevine.
- Perform side stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform bridge, rocking over shoulders and feet.

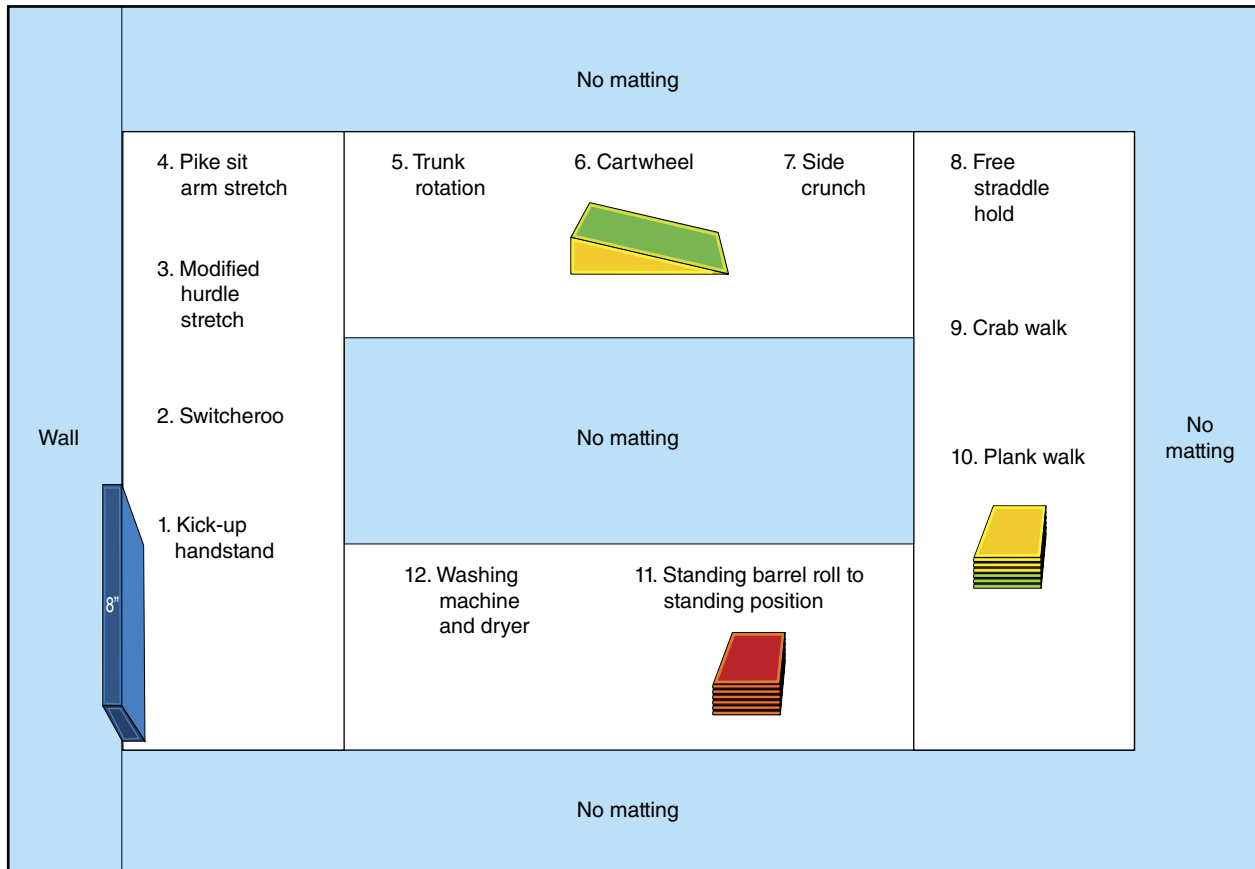
🕒 *Stations*

1. Kick-up handstand. Kick up into a handstand against a matted wall and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Switcheroo. Do 10 on each side.
3. Modified hurdle stretch. With one leg bent as in the butterfly stretch and the other leg straight, stretch forward and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times on each side.
4. Pike sit arm stretch. Do a V-sit with the buttocks as far from the hands as possible. Hold for 10 seconds and then rock side to side. Do 10 times.
5. Trunk rotation. Do 3 sets of 5 in each direction.
6. Cartwheel. Perform down incline mat 5 times on each side.
7. Side crunch. Lie on your side and lift your upper body 10 times on each side; do 3 sets.
8. Free straddle hold. Sit in straddle position with hands on mat between your legs. Push hands against the floor to lift legs and body off floor. Hold for 10 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10-second holds or do 10 sets of 3-second holds.
9. Crab walk. Do 3 sets of 10 forward and 10 backward.
10. Plank walk. In plank position, march up and down a folded mat 10 times.

11. Standing barrel roll to standing position. Do barrel roll over folded mat and finish in standing position with arms above head; do 10 on each side.
12. Washing machine and dryer. Do 3 sets of 10 on each wrist.

Cool-Down

- Perform reverse butterfly.
- Perform crossed pike stretch.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.



C I R C U I T

4

Equipment

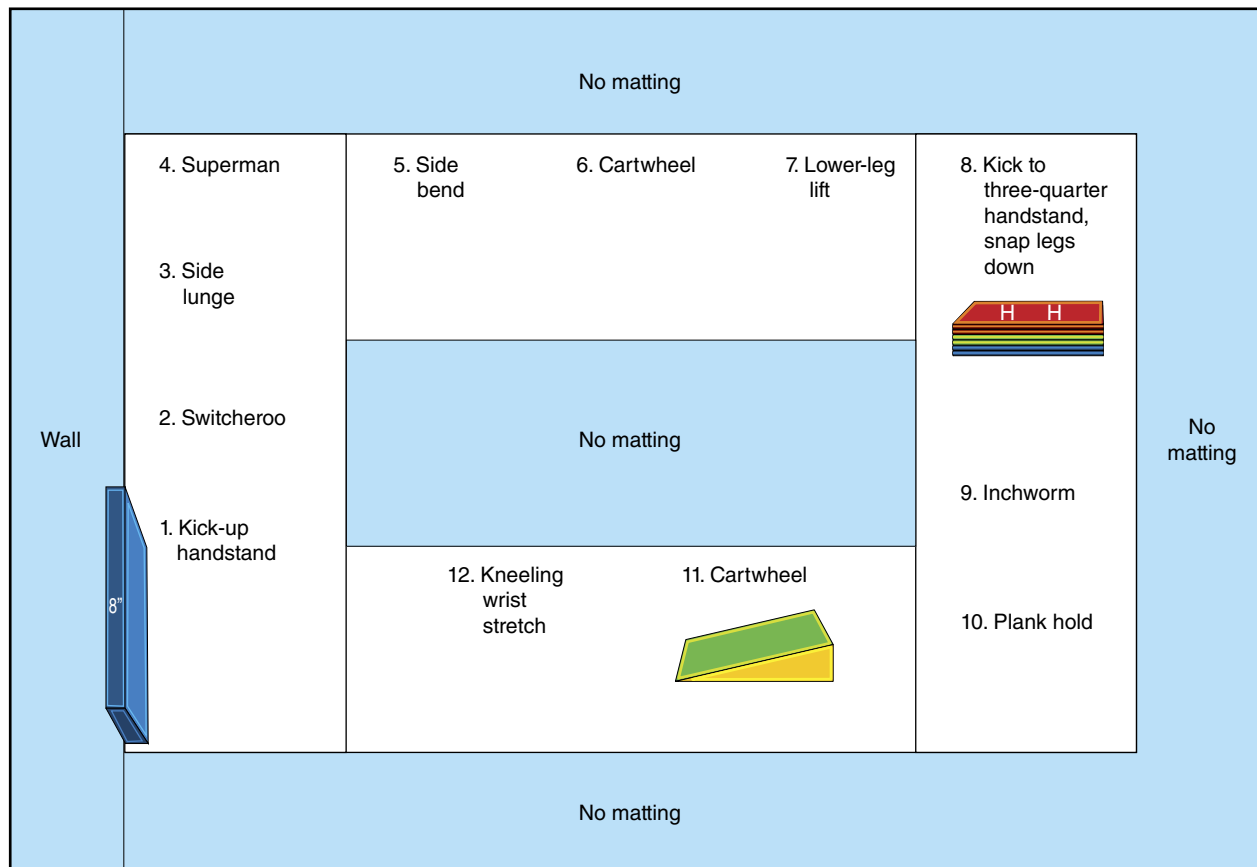
- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat

🕒 Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch IV.
- Perform feet positions.
- Perform walking leg kick, kicking backward.
- Perform jumping jacks: 25 regular, 10 forward, 10 backward, 5 to right, 5 to left, 10 circling right, 10 circling left.
- Perform elephant swing.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform standing wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge, attempting to keep feet together and legs straight to push weight over shoulders.

🕒 Stations

1. Kick-up handstand. Kick into handstand against a matted wall and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Switcheroo. Do 10 on each side.
3. Side lunge. Hold stretch for 10 seconds on each side; do 3 sets.
4. Superman. Lift opposite leg and arm 10 times on each side; do 3 sets.
5. Side bend. In a small straddle stand, bend sideways right and then left, holding for 10 seconds on each side; do 3 sets.
6. Cartwheel. Do 5 on each side.



7. Lower-leg lift. Lying on your side, cross your upper leg in front of lower leg and lift lower leg toward ceiling. Do 3 sets of 10 on each side.
8. Three-quarter handstand, snap legs down. Kick to a three-quarter handstand and then snap your legs down together while pushing off the mat through your shoulders; do 10 times.
9. Inchworm. Reach your hands to the mat and walk out 5 steps, then walk in 5 steps; do 10 sets.
10. Plank hold. Hold the position for 30 seconds.
11. Cartwheel down incline mat 5 times on each side.
12. Kneeling wrist stretch. Kneeling on the mat, point your fingers toward your body and hold your palms on the mat for 10 seconds; then flip the hands so the backs of the hands are on the mat and hold for 10 seconds. Do 3 times.

Cool-Down

- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform shoulder press.
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.

C I R C U I T



5

Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 2 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted

Warm-Up

- Perform elevator walk.
- Perform pronounced walk.
- Perform crawl, bear crawl, frog jump, and backward jog.
- Perform side bend.
- Perform reverse butterfly
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform washing machine, dryer, and wrist roller coaster.
- Perform bridge with feet together and legs straight, pushing weight over shoulders.

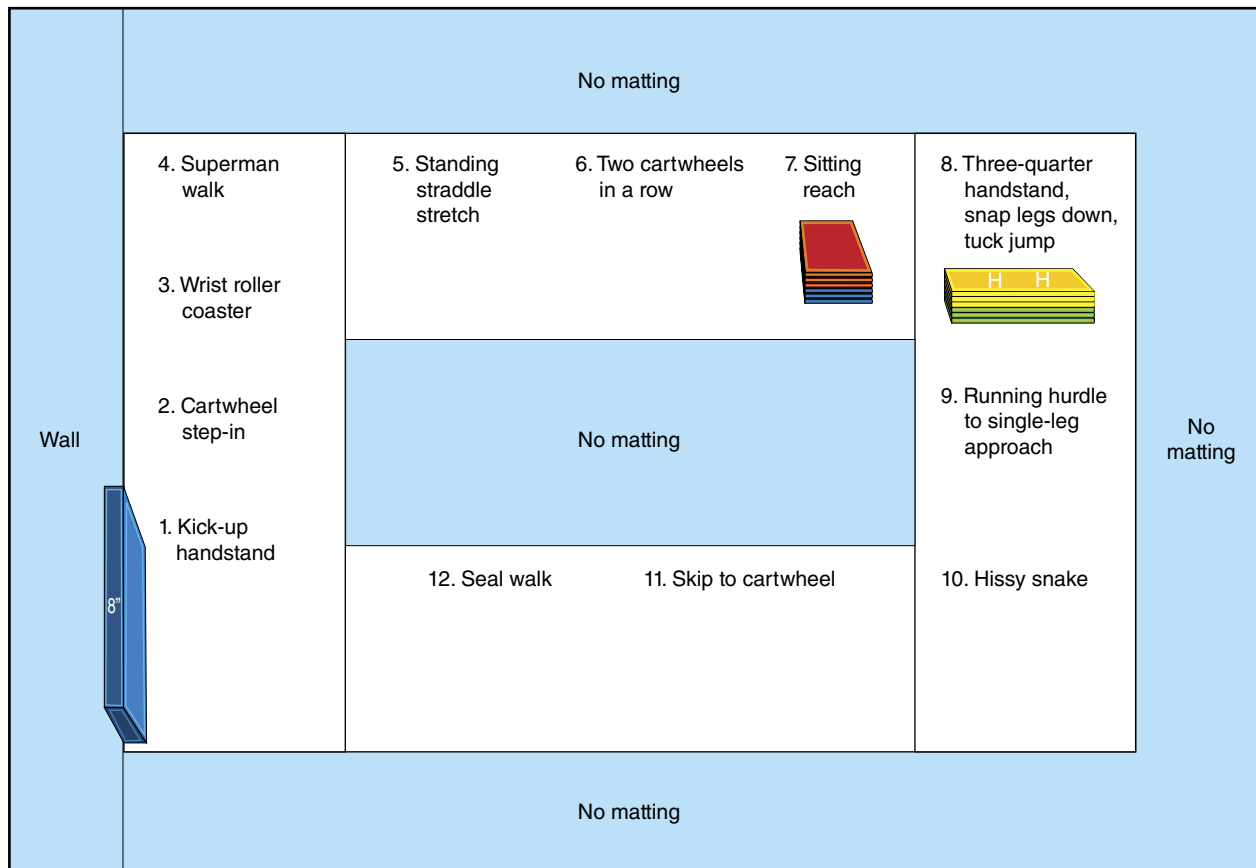
Stations

1. Kick-up handstand. From a lunge with your arms above your head, kick up to a handstand against a matted wall and return to the start position; do 10 times.
2. Cartwheel step-in. Do a cartwheel and then bring your second foot beside your first foot (step in); do 5 times.
3. Wrist roller coaster. Do 3 sets of 10 each way.
4. Superman walk. Lift opposite arm and opposite leg at the same time, pausing on each lift; do 10 times on each side.

5. Standing straddle stretch. In a straddle stand, stretch over right leg, to the middle, and then over left leg; hold each stretch for 10 seconds. Do 3 times.
6. Two cartwheels in a row. Do 5 times on each side.
7. Sitting reach. Sitting on the edge of a folded mat, tuck your legs and reach to each side with hands together 10 times; do 3 sets.
8. Three-quarter handstand, snap legs down, tuck jump. Kick up to three-quarter handstand and then snap legs down together and push off the mat through your shoulders into a tuck jump; do 10 times.
9. Running hurdle to single-leg approach. Take 3 steps to the hurdle; do 10 times.
10. Hissy snake. Lie flat on your belly with your hands by your chest. Push to lift your chest; do 30 times.
11. Skip to cartwheel. Do 5 times.
12. Seal walk. Do 3 sets of 10 forward and 10 backward.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform trunk rotation.
- Perform wrist circles in each direction.



C I R C U I T**6****ⓐ Equipment**

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 1 8-inch skill cushion mat, if wall is not matted

ⓐ Warm-Up

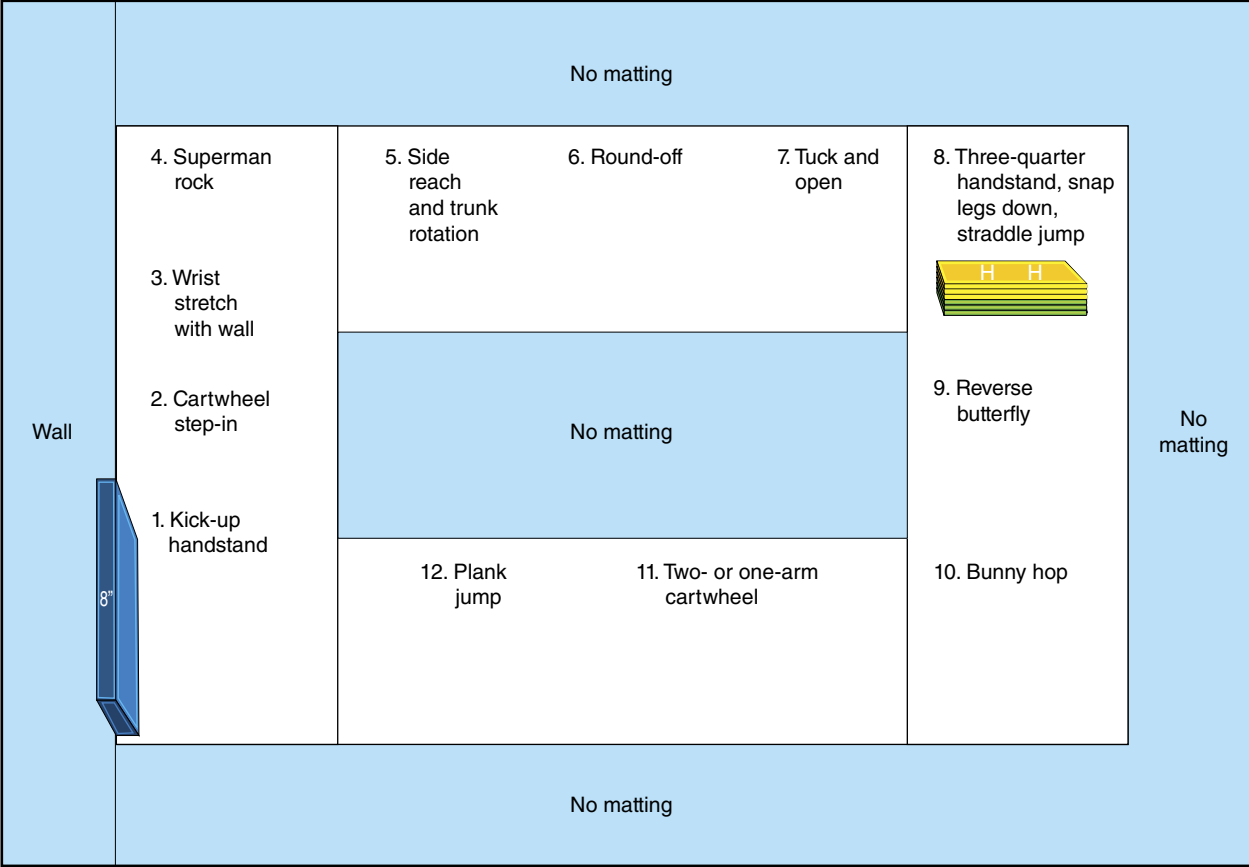
- Walk on heels.
- Walk on toes.
- Perform a game like stop and go, freeze dance, or late for school.
- Perform cross and stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.
- Perform bridge single-leg hold with each leg.

ⓐ Stations

1. Kick-up handstand. Kick into handstand using the wall as little as possible; hold for 10 seconds and repeat 3 times.
2. Cartwheel step-in. Do 5 times.
3. Wrist stretch with wall. Lean toward a wall and place hands out to support you; rotate hands by walking them on the wall until it is time to rotate.
4. Superman rock. Hold lifted Superman position and rock back and forth 10 times each direction; do 3 sets.
5. Side reach and trunk rotation. In a slight straddle stand, reach to each side 5 times and hold for 5 seconds. Then do 5 trunk rotations in each direction. Do 3 sets.
6. Round-off. Do 5 times.
7. Tuck and open. Lie on your side with forearm supporting your upper body and bottom leg bent; tuck your body toward top leg as it bends and then extend. Do 10 times on each side.
8. Three-quarter handstand, snap legs down to a straddle jump. Use a folded mat; do 10 times.
9. Reverse butterfly. Hold position on your belly for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
10. Bunny hop. Jump with hands and feet at the same time; do 10 forward and 10 backward.
11. Two- or one-arm cartwheel. If your two-arm cartwheel is good, do 5 one-arm cartwheels; otherwise do 5 two-arm cartwheels on each side.
12. Plank jump. In a plank position, push off with your hands; do 3 sets of 10.

ⓐ Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge to each side.
- Perform cross pike stretch.
- Perform bent-body arm stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.



Combinations of Rolls and Cartwheels



Students now have learned some basic skills in tumbling. It's time to see if they can remember all the body positions and skills they have developed. This review will also help students who needed more time on the fundamental skills so they can more readily develop the next skills. Putting these skills into combinations will improve their skill; develop their sequential memory; and further develop their coordination, strength, flexibility, agility, and muscular endurance. Following are the areas of strength and flexibility that will be enhanced:

Flexibility

- Neck flexibility is highlighted during the rolls.
- Wrist flexibility is necessary for all hand-supported tumbling skills.

- Lower-back and hamstring flexibility will be developed, which is important in rolling and helps prevent back pain.
- Groin flexibility will improve because of the leg separation during cartwheels and straddle rolls.
- Core flexibility will be developed through trunk rotations and bending associated with the cartwheel.
- Shoulder flexibility for a straight body line during the cartwheel will be developed.

Strength

- Leg strength is developed in all basic skills, push-offs, and landings as well as in the leg swing for the cartwheel.
- Arm strength is emphasized in these skills and is essential in the upcoming skills.

- Development of abdominal muscles is reinforced throughout this chapter through the forward roll, which works on upper abdominals; the backward roll, which works on lower abdominals; and the cartwheel, which works on side obliques and core stability.

These circuits introduce a review of the skills in the previous chapters by starting with the introductions of the skills and quickly escalating to the full development of the skills. Many combinations encompass changes in body position that will challenge the students' coordination, balance, and memory. Students will have an exciting and rewarding time as they work to understand the skills and how they work together to form short combinations.

Remember that this is a review for your students, but you also might need to review the content in the previous chapters. Safety and spotting for all skills, especially tucking the head during rolls, are important. Also, don't forget the cues! Teaching requires understanding the components of good skill acquisition, recognizing students' errors in achieving the desired movement, and finding positive solutions to aid in the development and performance. Success is based on a thorough understanding of the skills and breaking them into simpler parts. Developmental exercises will assist your students further in their skill acquisition. Because these are skills that were previously introduced, the adaptations remain the same as listed previously. Remember that students feed off your enthusiasm, so have fun with these circuits.

CIRCUIT

1

ⓐ *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 6 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat

ⓐ *Warm-Up*

- Perform Achilles stretch I.
- Perform ankle walk.
- Jog, skip, and gallop.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform side bend.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge with feet together, rocking over shoulders and feet.

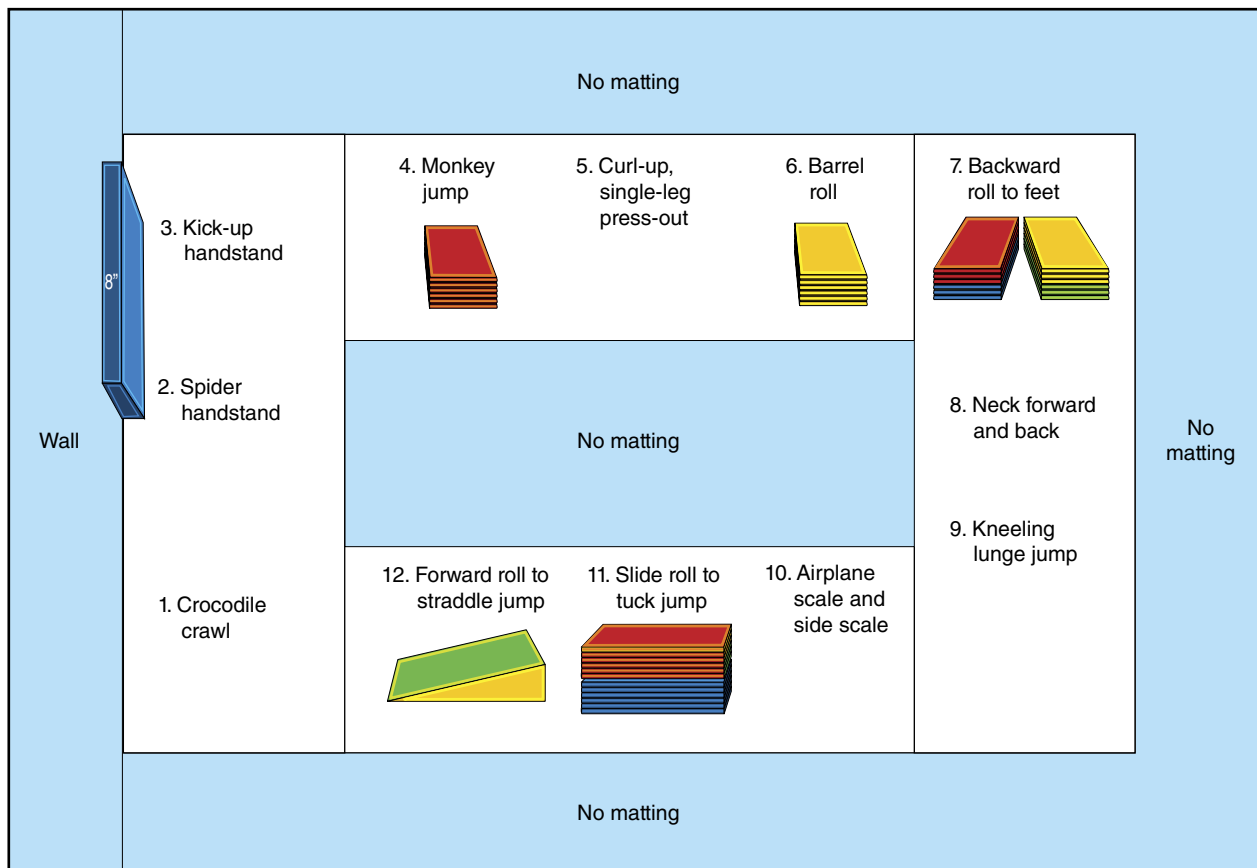
ⓐ *Stations*

1. Crocodile crawl. Crawl 10 steps; do 3 sets.
2. Spider handstand. Hold for 30 seconds.
3. Kick-up handstand. Hold for 30 seconds.
4. Monkey jump. Over a folded mat, do 10 in each direction.

5. Curl-up, single-leg press-out. Support weight on forearms and do single-leg press-outs (bicycle legs); do 30 on each leg.
6. Barrel roll. Do 10 on each side of a folded mat.
7. Backward roll to feet. Use a V-mat and do 10 times.
8. Neck forward and back. Lean head forward and hold stretch for 10 seconds, then lean head backward and hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 sets.
9. Kneeling lunge jump. Jump from a kneeling lunge to the other kneeling lunge; do 10 times on each leg.
10. Airplane scale and side scale. Hold each scale for 5 seconds; do 3 times on each leg.
11. Slide roll to tuck jump. Use two folded mats and do 10 times.
12. Forward roll to straddle jump. Use incline mat; do 10 times.

Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform retracted joggle.
- Perform triceps stretch I.



C I R C U I T

2

ⓐ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat

ⓐ Warm-Up

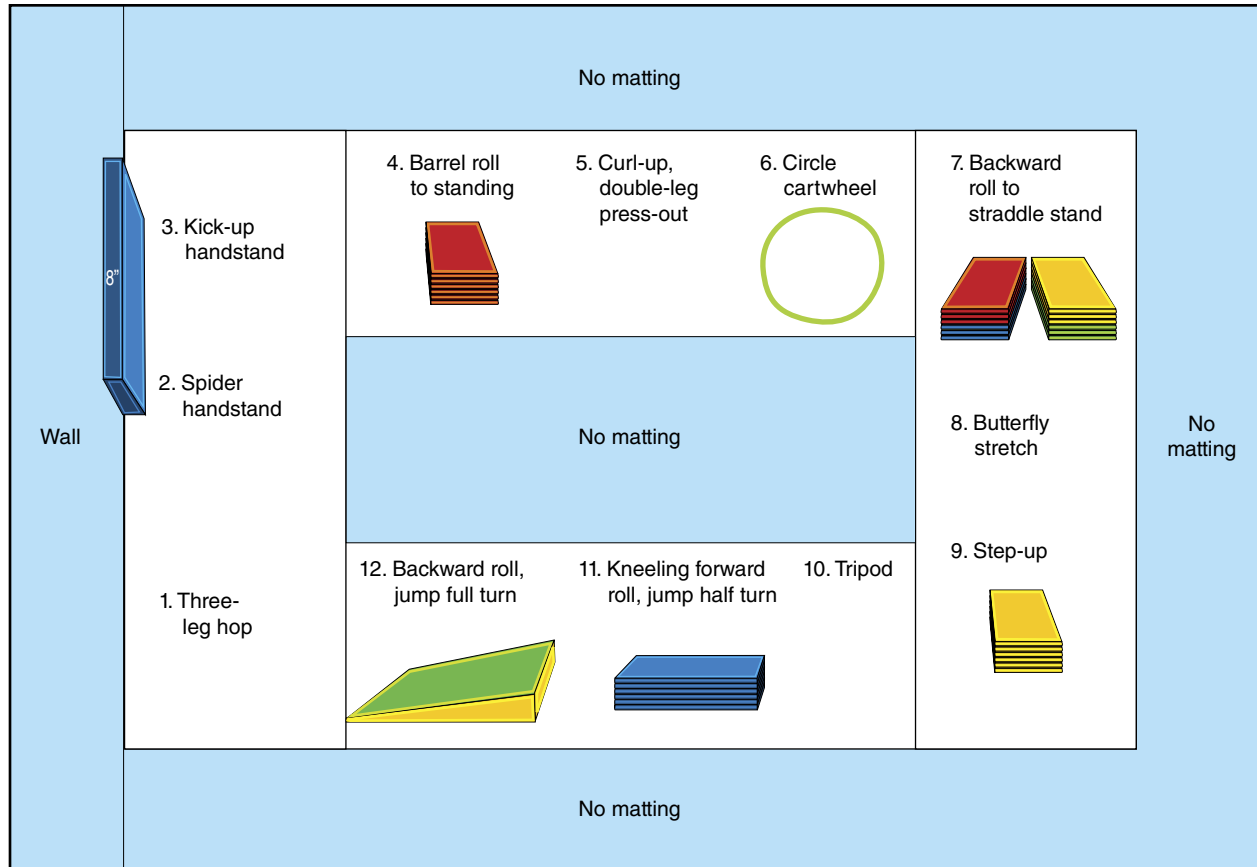
- Perform Achilles stretch II.
- Perform walking leg kick forward.
- Jog, skip, and gallop backward.
- Perform elephant swing.
- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform bridge with feet together, rocking over shoulders and feet.

ⓐ Stations

1. Three-leg hop. Do 3 sets of 10 on each leg.
2. Spider handstand. Hold for 30 seconds.
3. Kick-up handstand. Hold for 30 seconds.
4. Barrel roll to standing. Begin and end in standing position; do 10 times on each side.
5. Curl-up, double-leg press-out. Support weight on elbows; do 30 times.
6. Circle cartwheel. Do 10 in each direction.
7. Backward roll to straddle stand. Use a V-mat and finish standing on the mats; do 10 times.
8. Butterfly stretch. Hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
9. Step-up. Using a folded mat, step up, up, down, down; do 10 times leading with each leg.
10. Tripod. Hold once for 30 seconds.
11. Kneeling forward roll, jump half turn. Use folded mat; do 10 times.
12. Backward roll, jump full turn. Use incline mat; do 10 times.

ⓐ Cool-Down

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform triceps II stretch.



CIRCUIT

3

Ⓢ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted

Ⓢ Warm-Up

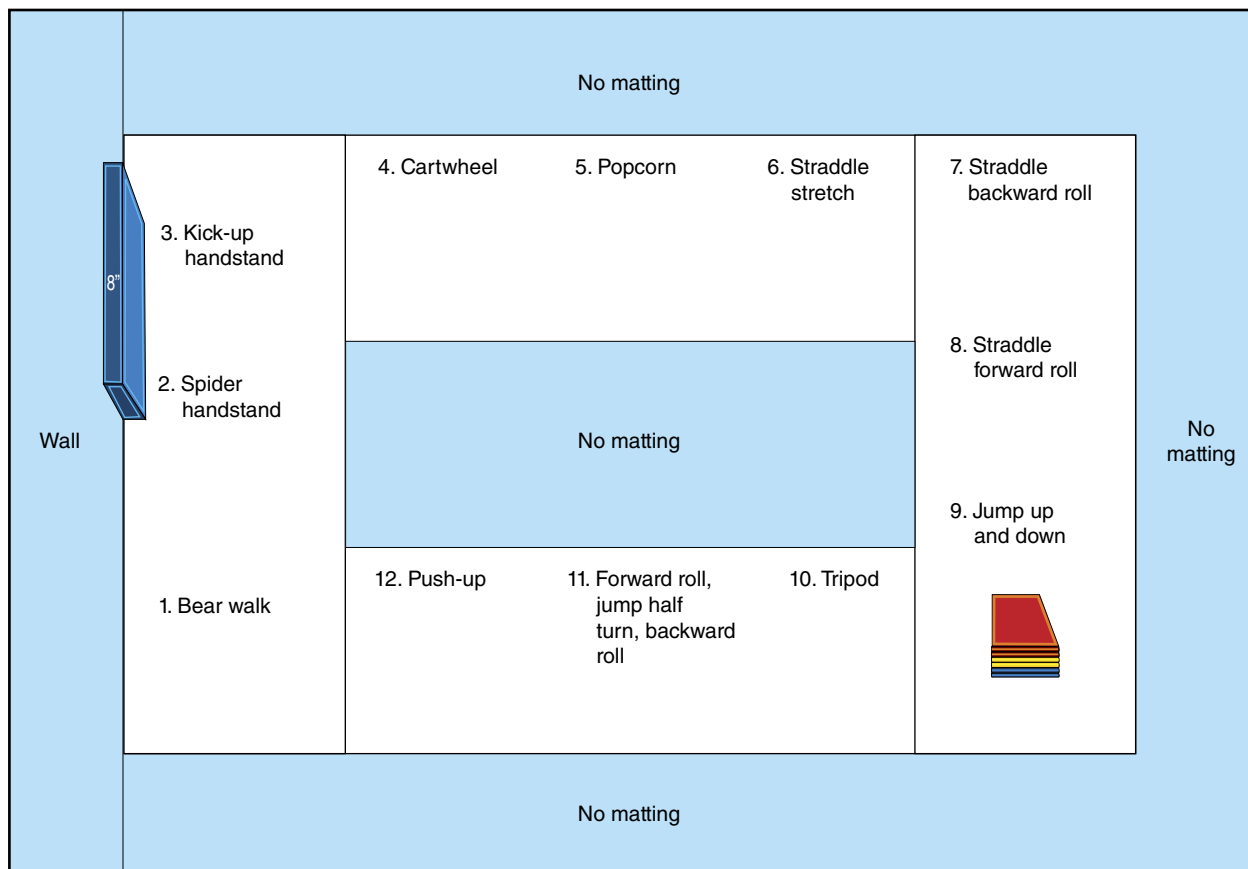
- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Perform ankle circles I.
- Perform walking leg kick, sideward kick.
- Jog, skip, gallop, and grapevine.
- Perform side stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform standing wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge push-up.

🕒 Stations

1. Bear walk. Do 3 sets of 10 forward and 10 backward.
2. Spider handstand. Hold once for 30 seconds.
3. Kick-up handstand. Hold once for 30 seconds.
4. Cartwheel. Do 5 on each side.
5. Popcorn. Beginning in a tuck sit and with arms in side middle, straighten legs out in front and then return to tuck sit; feet should never touch mat. Do 3 sets of 10 reps.
6. Straddle stretch. Stretch to the side, middle, and other side, holding each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 sets.
7. Straddle backward roll. Do 10 times.
8. Straddle forward roll. Do 10 times.
9. Jump up and down. Use a folded mat; do 30 times.
10. Tripod. Hold once for 30 seconds.
11. Forward roll, jump half turn, backward roll. Do 5 times.
12. Push-up. Do 3 sets of 10. May be modified if necessary.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.



CIRCUIT

4

Ⓢ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat

Ⓢ Warm-Up

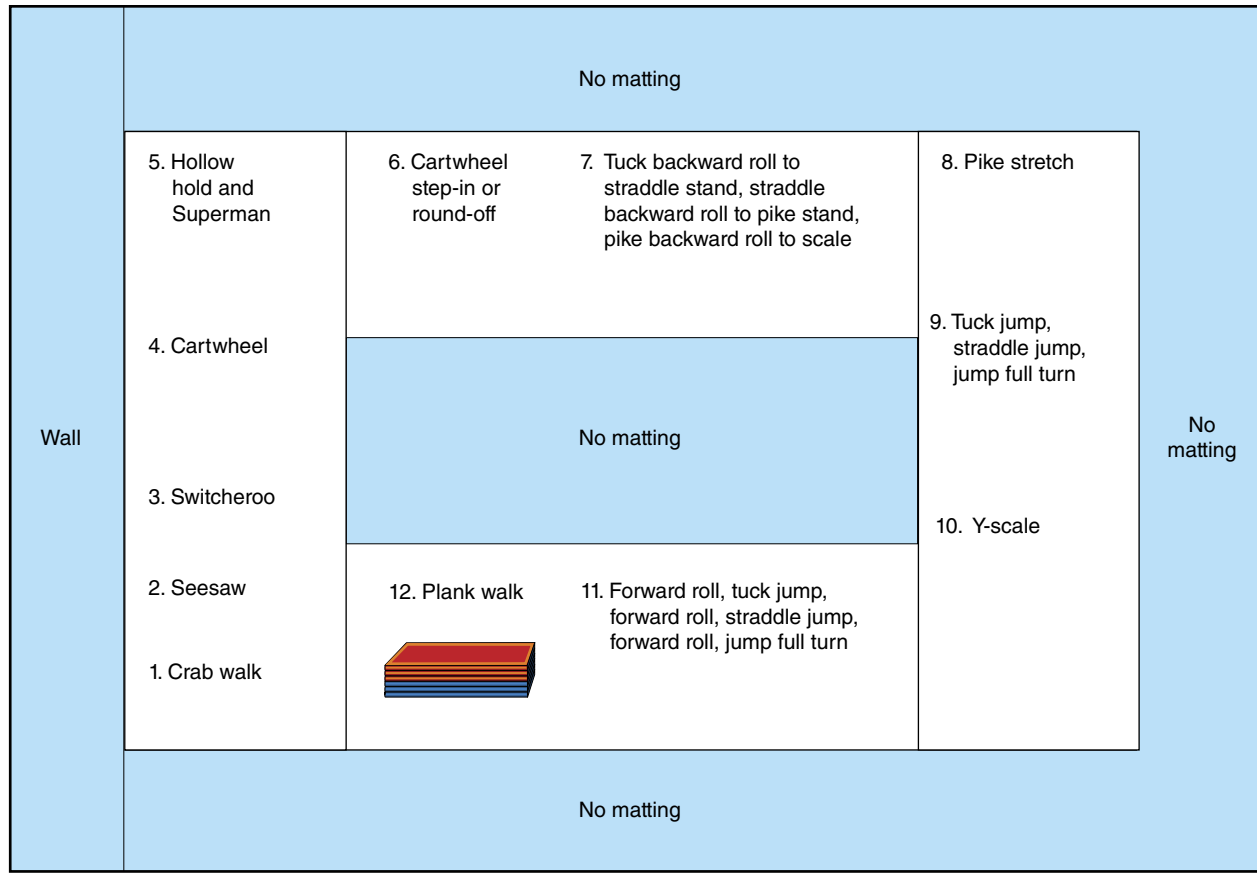
- Perform Achilles stretch IV.
- Perform feet positions.
- Perform walking leg kick, kicking backward.
- Perform jumping jacks: 25 regular, 10 forward, 10 backward, 5 to the right, 5 to the left, 10 circling right, 10 circling left.
- Perform trunk rotation.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform washing machine and dryer.
- Perform kneeling backbend.

Ⓢ Stations

1. Crab walk. Do 3 sets of 10 forward and 10 backward.
2. Seesaw. Do 10 on each side.
3. Switcheroo. Do 10 on each side.
4. Cartwheel. Do 5 on each side.
5. Hollow hold and Superman. Hold each position for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
6. Cartwheel step-in or round-off. Do 10 times.
7. Tuck backward roll to straddle stand, straddle backward roll to pike stand, pike backward roll to scale. Do 3 times.
8. Pike stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
9. Tuck jump, straddle jump, jump full turn. Do each jump 10 times.
10. Y-scale. Hold for 10 seconds on each leg; do 3 times.
11. Forward roll, tuck jump, forward roll, straddle jump, forward roll, jump full turn. Do 3 times.
12. Plank walk. In push-up position, march hands up and down folded mat to a 1-2-3-4 rhythm; do 10 times.

Ⓢ Cool-Down

- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform shoulder press.
- Perform wrist roller coaster.



CIRCUIT

5

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform elevator walk.
- Perform pronounced walk.
- Perform crawling, bear crawl, frog jump, and jogging.
- Perform side bend.
- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform wrist circles in each direction.
- Perform bridge with hopping legs.

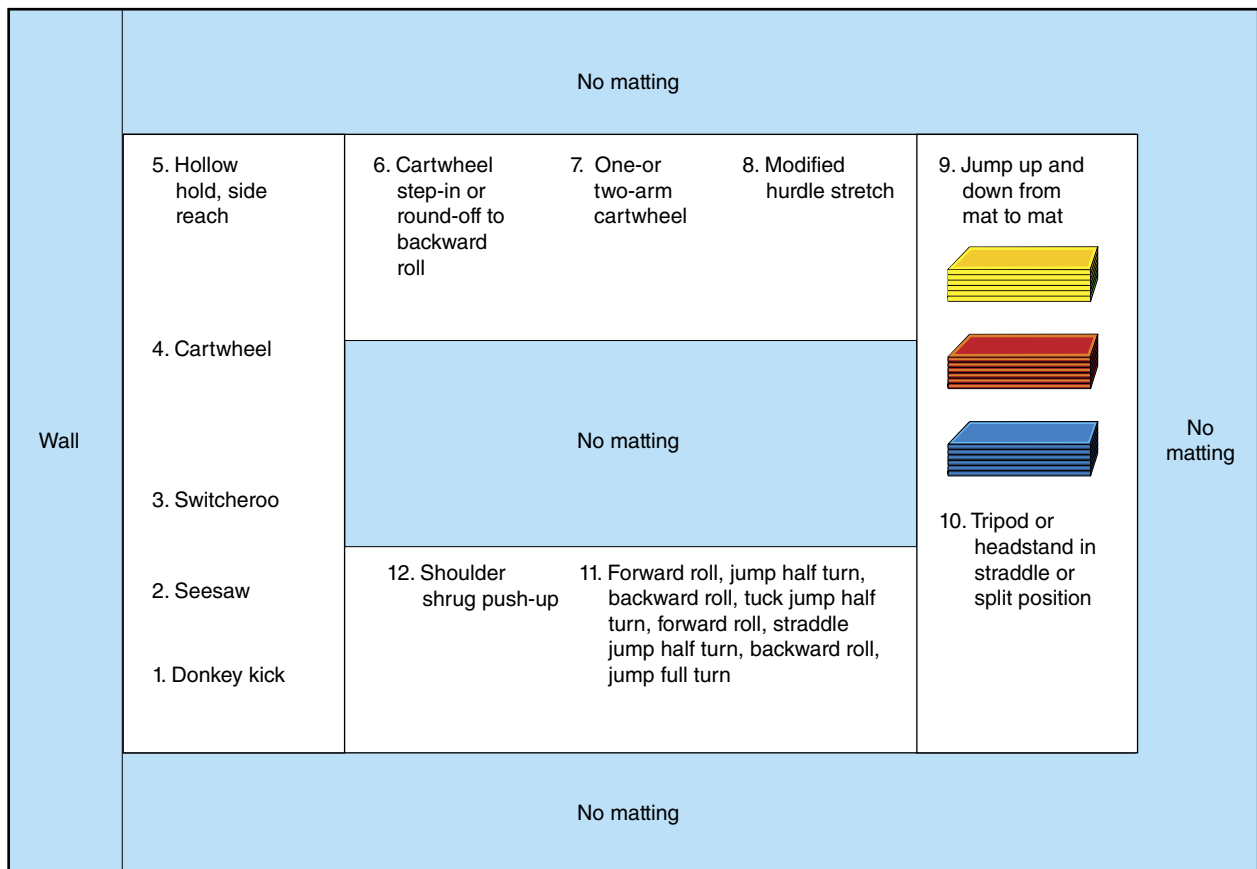
🕒 *Stations*

1. Donkey kick. Do 30 times.
2. Seesaw. Do 10 times on each side.

3. Switcheroo. Do 10 times on each side.
4. Cartwheel. Do 3 in a row 5 times.
5. Hollow hold, side reach. In a hollow hold position, slide your hand sideways to each knee; do 3 sets of 10 reaches to each side. You may bend your knees as a modification if necessary.
6. Cartwheel step-in or round-off to backward roll. Do 10 times.
7. One- or two-arm cartwheel. Do 10 times.
8. Modified hurdle stretch. With one leg bent as in the butterfly stretch and the other leg straight, stretch forward and hold for 10 seconds. Stretch 3 times on each side.
9. Jump up and down from mat to mat. Do 10 times.
10. Tripod or headstand in straddle or split position. Hold for 30 seconds.
11. Forward roll, jump half turn, backward roll, tuck jump half turn, forward roll, straddle jump half turn, backward roll, jump full turn. Do 3 times.
12. Shoulder shrug push-up. Do 3 sets of 10.

Cool-Down

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform kneeling hamstring stretch.
- Perform kneeling flexor stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.



CIRCUIT

6

🕒 Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats

🕒 Warm-Up

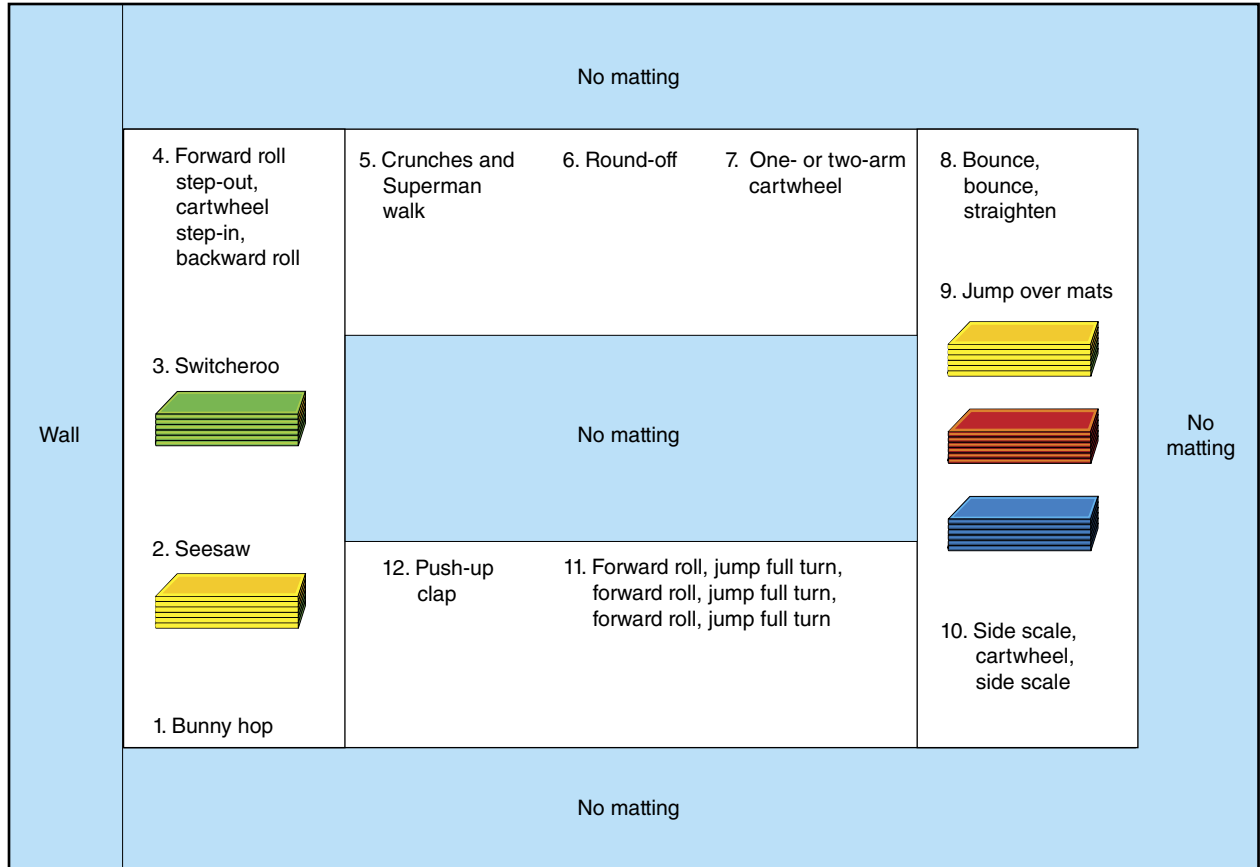
- Walk on heels.
- Walk on toes.
- Perform a game like stop and go, freeze dance, or late for school.
- Perform cross and stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.
- Perform bridge single-leg hold with each leg.

🕒 Stations

1. Bunny hop. Do 3 sets of 10.
2. Seesaw. Use a folded mat and do 10 on each side.
3. Switcheroo. Use a folded mat and do 10 on each side.
4. Forward roll step-out, cartwheel step-in, backward roll. Do 5 times.
5. Crunches and Superman walk. Do 20 crunches and 10 Superman walks on each side.
6. Round-off. Do 10 times.
7. One- or two-arm cartwheel. Do 10 times.
8. Bounce, bounce, straighten. Keep hands on the floor; do 10 times.
9. Jump over mats. Use folded mats; do 10 times.
10. Side scale, cartwheel, side scale. Do 10 times.
11. Forward roll, jump full turn, forward roll, jump full turn, forward roll, jump full turn. Do 5 times.
12. Push-up clap. Do 3 sets of 10.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge to each side.
- Perform cross pike stretch.
- Perform bent-body arm stretch.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.



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Front Limbers and Backbend Kickovers



Front limbers and backbend kickovers are more difficult than the previously covered skills and require more flexibility. They are gateways to learning front and back walkovers. Both the front limber and backbend kickover use a two-foot base that places stress on the back. A walkover uses a single-leg approach and requires more strength and balance than a kickover or limber. Many students do not have the strength or flexibility to perform the skill by themselves, but they can participate easily in all the lead-ups, assuming they have acquired the cartwheel and handstand-type skills.

When students perform either of these skills and their lead-ups, the focus is on all major muscle groups. Control in the handstand is useful for the front limber; therefore, all students should be developing strong arms and core muscles to enable them to balance in a straight position. Throughout either skill, students will maximize their flexibility, which is a focus during this chapter. Flexibility, strength, and agility will enhance the ability to acquire the front limber and backbend kickover. Following are areas that will be developed:

Flexibility

- Back and shoulder flexibility is essential to the acquisition of a limber and kickover because of the arrival in a bridge or backbend position.
- Hamstring and groin flexibility is also important because of the leg split position.
- Flexor flexibility is needed because of the open hip angle in the backbend position.

Strength

- Leg strength is important for both skills. In both skills, a strong kick is required. Coming out of the front limber takes a tremendous amount of strength in the quadriceps, hamstrings, and gluteus maximus.
- Arm strength is necessary because students will support body weight on their hands with straight arms. The wrists should also be flexible and strong.

- Core strength is also important because students will change body positions.

BASIC TECHNIQUE

For the front limber (see figure 6.1), students first kick to a handstand position. The body should be vertical and straight. The eyes should be able to see the hands. As they start to move from the handstand, the shoulders shift forward as the back arches, then the feet reach the landing surface. Now they are in a bridge position. It is important for the shoulders to be over the hands so that the upper back and arms support the majority of weight. Then it is necessary to shift the weight over the feet and push off the hands. They arrive in a tight arch stand by lifting with the hips, squeezing the buttocks, and straightening the legs. Arms remain high by the ears with eyes focused on the hands.



Figure 6.1 (a) Entry into a front limber; (b) shoulder shift; (c) contacting floor mat with feet; (d) arrival at finish position.

For the backbend kickover (see figure 6.2), students will stand with feet shoulder-width apart and arms above the head. They reach backward, leading with the shoulders and arms to catch themselves on the mat with their hands. They support body weight on the hands and feet with eyes focused on the hands. They then push their weight over the hands and kick the dominant leg (which should be the foot they put forward going into the cartwheel) while jumping off the other foot. This should allow students to pass through a handstand split position before stepping on the mat. Then they push off the mat with the hands, arriving in a lunge position with arms high.

Many times during the circuits, the students are asked to perform back limbers over a barrel. This will increase their arm and core strength while limiting the amount of changes in body position. A back limber without support is sig-

nificantly more difficult than a backbend kickover and should never be taught first. A back limber is performed with legs remaining together throughout the skill, without a push through the legs, resulting in the need for more flexibility and upper-body strength than a backbend kickover requires. When executing a backbend kickover, students perform a backbend and then kick one leg and push off the floor with the other leg to create the energy necessary for rotating and completing the skill.

CUEING

For either skill, students begin with the head in a neutral position and eyes focusing forward. As they reach the bridge position, they should see their hands on the mat. The focus should remain on the hands through the conclusion of the front limber. During the backbend kickover, the focus is on the hands until the arms are lifting from the floor to an upward high position at the conclusion of the skill, where the head will return facing forward in a neutral position.

Here are some verbal cues you might need to use while students do front limbers and backbend kickovers:

Verbal Cues for Front Limber

- Arms should be by ears (bunny ears).
- Focus on hands.
- Attain a handstand position.
- Shift shoulders to increase shoulder flexibility.



Figure 6.2 (a) Starting position reaching to go into backbend; (b) push from floor mat with other leg kicking; (c) arrival toward end of skill.

- When landing, feet may be apart, preferably no more than shoulder width.
- A rocking motion shifts weight over the feet.
- Eyes still focus on hands.
- Arms stay by ears.
- Straighten legs and tighten buttocks as you lift to stand.

Verbal Cues for Backbend Kickover

- Feet are shoulder-width apart.
- Arms are by ears (bunny ears).



Figure 6.3 (a) Spotting the handstand and shoulder shift position; (b) assisting into the bridge; and (c) helping to shift student over feet and to a stand.

- Focus on hands.
- Be prepared to catch body weight.
- Push off nonkicking leg, up and over towards the arms, to pass through a handstand split position and kick dominant leg hard, like your foot is drawing a rainbow.
- Step down and push off hands to finish in a lunge with arms by ears.

SAFETY AND SPOTTING

The front limber and backbend kickover are skills that require a tremendous amount of flexibility. They also put a lot of stress on the lower back, especially if they are not performed correctly. It is absolutely necessary to spot this skill during a student's development toward acquisition. A student who is not very flexible will have great difficulty learning these skills. I would recommend not teaching these skills until a child is at least eight years old because of the amount of stress on the back and the skeletal maturation of young children. If any students say these skills hurt their backs, have them stop performing any more limbers and have them do some lower-back stretches. When introducing these skills, always use incline mats when they are available because these pieces will aid in performance.

A front limber requires a kick to a handstand. For spotting (see figure 6.3), it is easiest to stand slightly ahead and to the side of the leg that is

kicking upward first. In this way, you are able to assist if they need help getting to the vertical position. Once a student is in a handstand with legs together, you will help the student to a bridge by supporting the back. I'm small, so I usually catch by circling my arms around the lower back and waist. The next phase is the most difficult for the student. The body weight needs to transfer from the hands and feet to just the feet. This requires timing, flexibility, and strength on the student's part. You, as the spotter, have two choices to help the student arrive in a stand. You may lift by the lower back, giving strong support, or you may aid in the rocking motion. To do this, push by supporting the student's upper back and shoulders with one arm and still support the lower back with the other arm.

When spotting the backbend kickover (see figure 6.4), stand on the side of the student's

kicking leg. The assistance you provide will first be given to the lower back as the student goes from a standing position backward to a backbend. Once the student is in the backbend, you will have one arm supporting the lower back and one arm on the kicking leg. With this skill, the student will shift weight from the feet and hands to only the hands. You will aid the student by lifting and pushing the student over the hands and assisting the kicking leg. It may be necessary as the student steps down to lift the body up by the waist if the student is not strong enough to push from the mat.

Here are some common errors you should watch for when students perform front limbers and backbend kickovers:

Common Errors in Front Limber

- Not kicking to a handstand (lack of control)
- Focus not on hands (ducking head forward toward chest)
- Allowing shoulders to move forward, causing weight to not remain over hands
- Unable to catch and then shift weight onto feet
- Squatting (bent hips) instead of standing erect

Common Errors in Backbend Kickover

- Fear of going backward, causing turning or falling
- Ducking head forward, resulting in a fall onto back



Figure 6.4 (a) Aiding student to backbend; (b) supporting lower back, assisting with weight transfer and leg kick; (c) helping student during completion of skill.

- Arms bending when hands are contacting the mat
- Not keeping weight over feet
- Lack of kick
- Lack of push or jump from nonkicking leg
- Not able to push from arms off the mat to stand up

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

There are many modifications for students who show proficiency in front limbers and backbend kickovers. These modifications allow students to develop more strength, balance, coordination, and flexibility; they will also challenge students to attempt new skills. Following are some of the skills, listed in order from least to most difficult:

Challenges in Front Limber

- Front walkover
- Weak-side front walkover (using opposite leg)
- Switch-leg front walkover
- Handstand pirouette front walkover
- Tic-toc starting forward
- One-arm front walkover
- Aerial front walkover

Challenges in Backbend Kickover

- Back walkover
- Weak-side back walkover (using opposite leg)

- Switch-leg back walkover
- Back walkover to handstand pirouette, step down
- Tic-toc starting backward
- One-arm back walkover
- Valdez

As the skills increase in difficulty, you may find that some of your students lack the flexibility or strength they need to be able to perform some of the tasks. It is always prudent to err on the side of caution. Go to previous skills if you think more practice is necessary. Here are some adaptations:

Front Limber

- Practice handstand roll.
- Practice handstand roll, then push into a bridge and rock over shoulders and feet.
- For wall backbends, have a folded mat or two so the students can finish their backbends on them and be able to come up from the skill.
- Practice only the handstand to bridge.

Backbend Kickover

- Perform a bridge and hold one leg up.
- Perform a bridge, hold one leg up, and hop.
- Perform a handstand split, practicing stepping down to lunge.
- When using the folded mat against the wall, push to bridge with feet on one or two mats and practice the kickover with elevated feet.

C I R C U I T**1****🕒 Equipment**

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall has no matting

🕒 Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch I.
- Perform ankle walk.
- Jog, skip, and gallop.
- Perform neck hold.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge with hopping legs.

🕒 Stations

1. Frog jump. With hands between feet, do 3 sets of 10.
2. Wall backbend. Walk hands down a wall toward a bridge position; do 5 times.
3. Kick-up handstand. Do handstand against a padded wall and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
4. Standing quadriceps stretch. Stand on one leg and bend other leg. Reach back to grasp foot and pull it toward buttocks. Place knee behind standing knee and hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times on each leg.
5. Rocking bridge, tuck and roll. Over feet and over hands, do 5 sets of 3 rocks. Do tuck and roll between each set of rocking bridge.
6. Needle kick walk. Do 10 times with each leg.
7. Front limber over barrel. Do 10 times.
8. Arm circles. Do 50 forward and 50 backward.
9. Handstand forward roll. Perform a handstand in front of a folded mat into a forward roll on the folded mat (see figure 6.5); do 5 times.
10. Standing wrist stretch. With arms straight in front of you, pull fingers toward yourself and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times with each hand.
11. Bridge single-leg hold. Do a bridge. Lift one leg up and hold for 5 seconds; do 3 times with each leg.
12. Straddle stretch. Stretch to the side, middle, and other side and hold each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 sets.

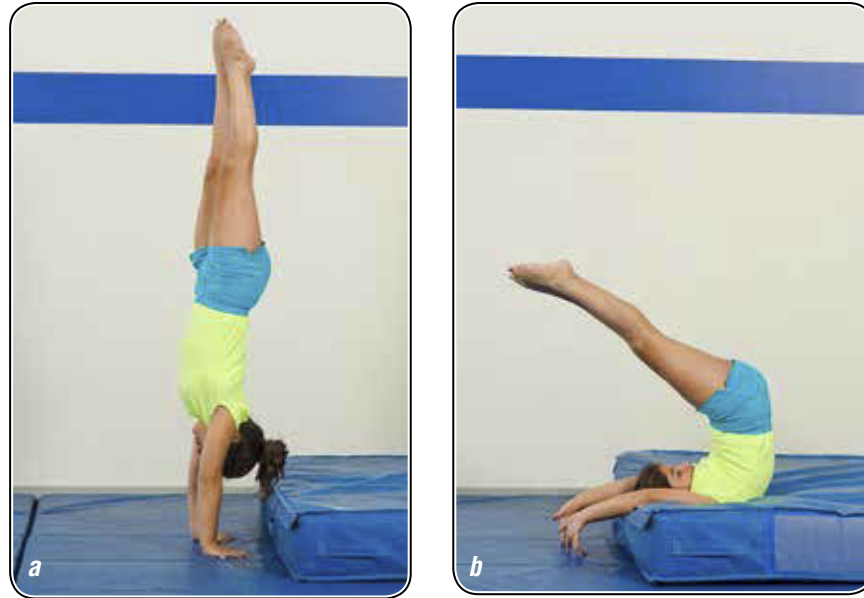
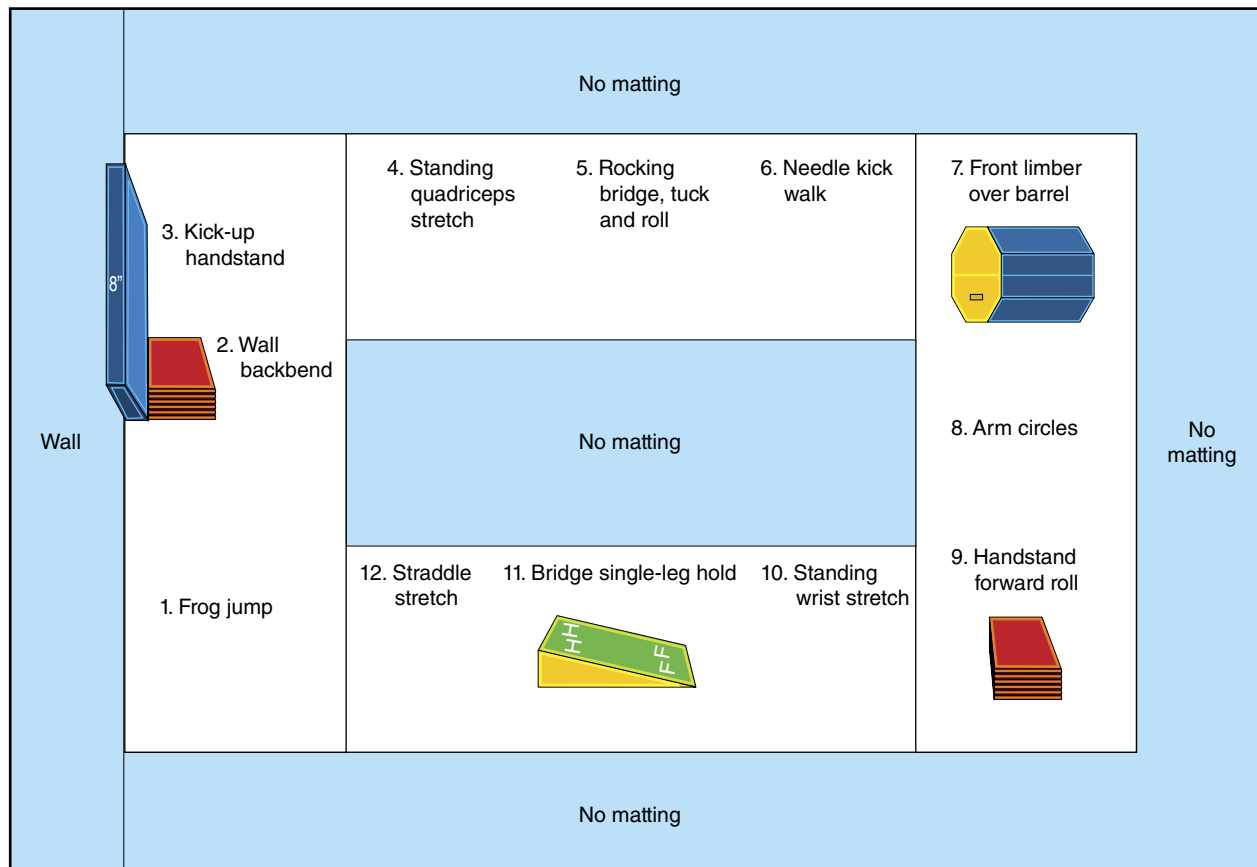


Figure 6.5 (a) Handstand in front of 8-inch mat; (b) forward roll on 8-inch mat (may also be performed onto a folded mat).

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform tuck and roll.
- Perform triceps stretch I.



C I R C U I T

2

⌚ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, all depending on whether you have a matted wall or another mat to pad the wall
- 1 folded mat

⌚ Warm-Up

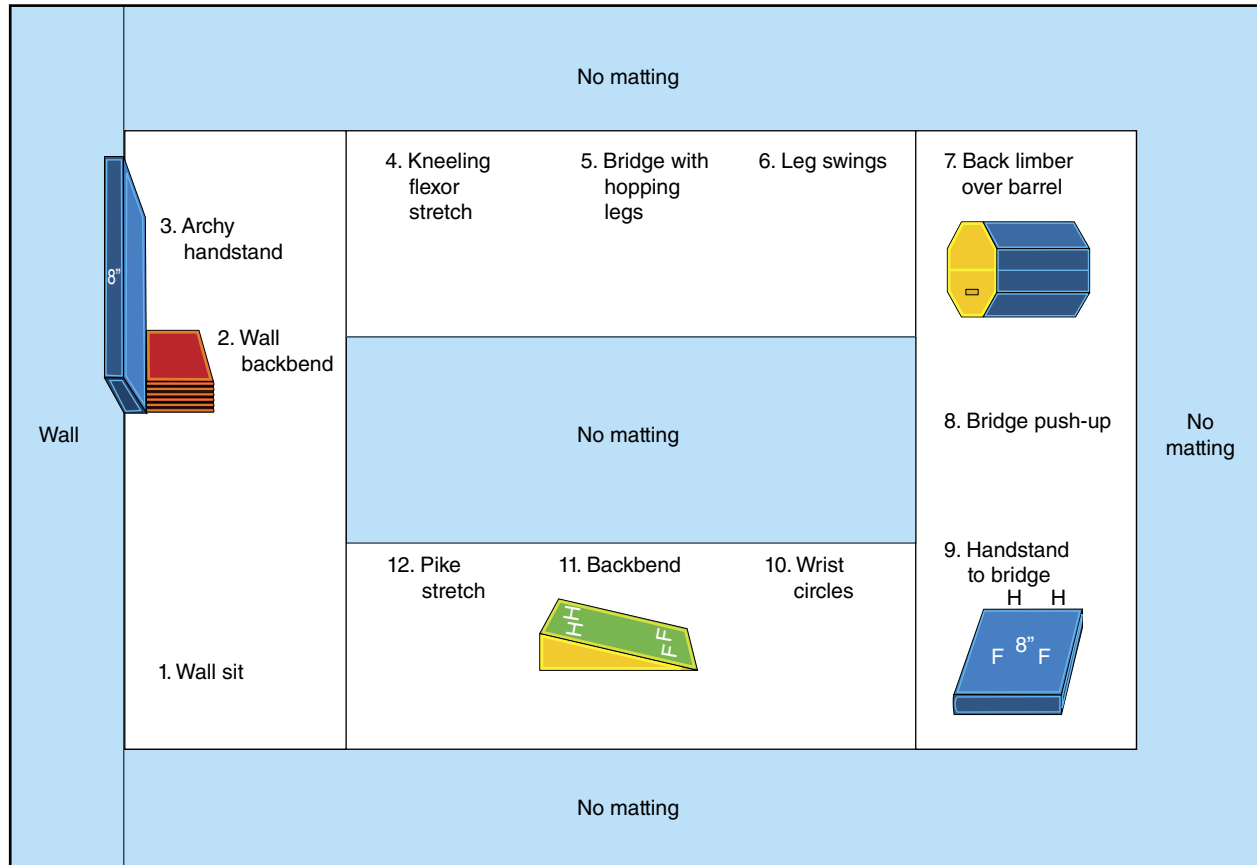
- Perform Achilles stretch II.
- Perform walking leg kick, kicking forward 1, 2, then sideways 1, 2, then backward 1, 2; repeat.
- Skip and gallop forward and backward.
- Perform trunk rotation.
- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform bridge push-up.

⌚ Stations

1. Wall sit. Slide down a wall until your knees are bent 90 degrees; hold the wall sit while you say the alphabet backward.
2. Wall backbend. Walk hands up and down to a mat; do 5 times.
3. Archy handstand. Kick up to archy handstand against wall and hold for 10 seconds, working on shoulder flexibility; do 3 times.
4. Kneeling flexor stretch. Bring back foot to buttocks and hold for 10 seconds with each leg; do 3 times.
5. Bridge with hopping legs. Do a bridge and then hop from one foot to the other 10 times; do 3 sets.
6. Leg swings. Swing leg forward and backward 10 times and then hold the leg in forward middle position for 10 seconds; do 3 sets with each leg.
7. Back limber over barrel. Arch backward over a barrel mat and then pull legs over through handstand position, piking down on landing; do 10 times.
8. Bridge push-up. In bridge position, raise and lower your head to the mat; do 3 sets of 10.
9. Handstand to bridge. In front of a soft mat, perform a handstand and then arch to bridge. Do 10 times.
10. Wrist circles. Do 30 each way.
11. Backbend. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart at the bottom of incline mat and then arch backward into backbend going up the mat; do 10 times.
12. Pike stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 5 times.

🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform cat and cow stretch.
- Perform triceps stretch II.



C I R C U I T

3

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 2 folded mats
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, depending on whether your wall is matted

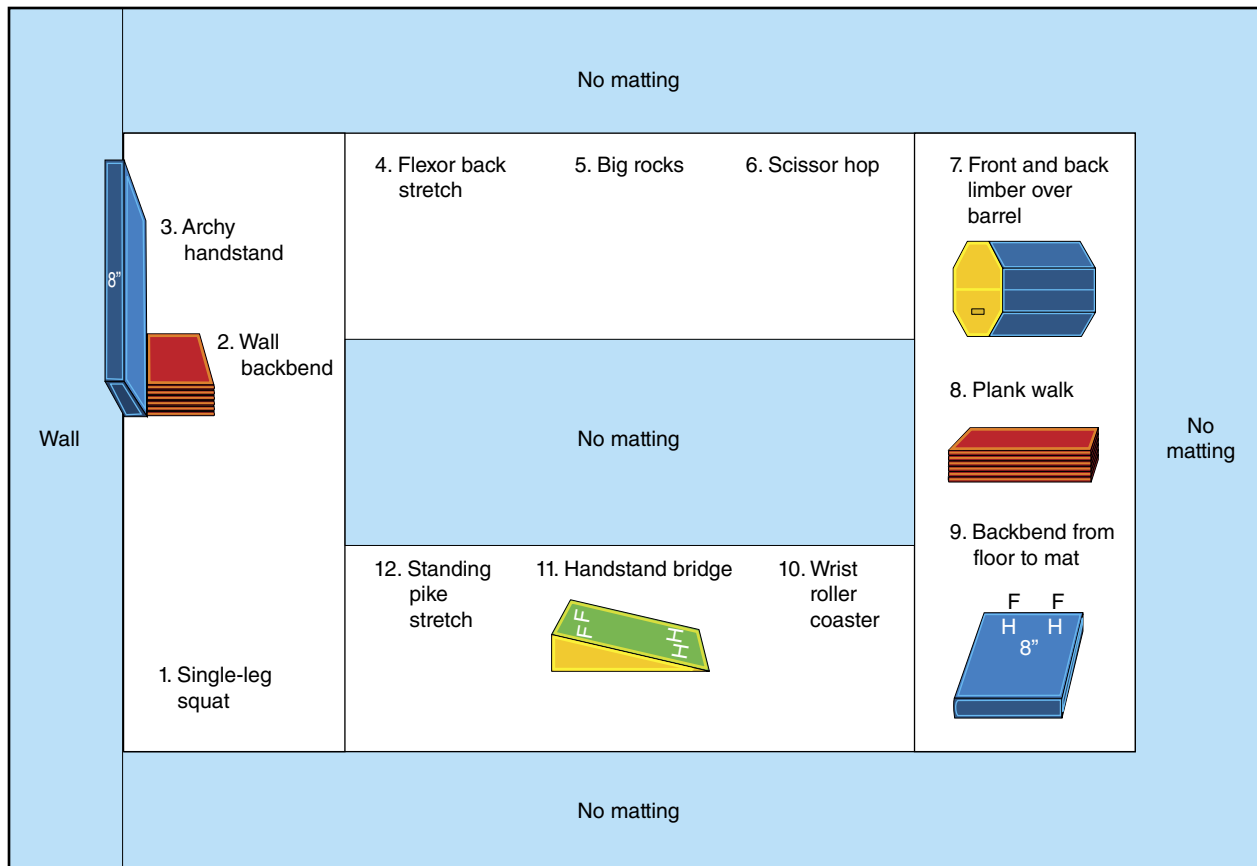
🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Perform ankle circles I.

- Perform walking leg kick, kicking forward 1, 2, then sideways 1, 2, then backward 1, 2; repeat.
- Jog, skip, gallop, and grapevine.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform standing wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge single-leg hold.

Stations

1. Single-leg squat. Stand on one leg and hold the free leg horizontal. Bend standing leg to 90-degree angle and then straighten; do 10 times on each leg.
2. Wall backbend. Walk hands up and down wall to folded mat; do 5 times.
3. Archy handstand. Kick up to archy handstand against a wall. Slowly lower legs down to pike stand and then stand up straight with arms high. Do 10 times.
4. Flexor back stretch. Lying on your belly, reach bent leg behind to opposite side and hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times on each side.
5. Big rocks. Jump from feet to hands in bridge position; do 3 sets of 5. Do tuck and roll between each set.
6. Scissor hop. Hop from each foot, keeping other leg straight. Do 25 forward and 25 backward.
7. Front and back limber over barrel. Do 5 front and 5 back.
8. Plank walk. In push-up position, walk hands up and down folded mat 25 times.



9. Backbend from floor to mat. Do 10 times.
10. Wrist roller coaster. Do 25 times in each direction.
11. Handstand bridge. Do a handstand and arch over, going up incline mat into bridge 10 times.
12. Standing pike stretch. Walk hands down legs for 8 counts, hold the stretch for 8 counts, and then walk hands back up legs for 8 counts; do 3 sets.

Cool-Down

- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.

C I R C U I T

4

Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, depending on whether wall is matted

Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch IV.
- Perform feet positions.
- Perform scissor hop forward and backward.
- Perform jumping jacks: 25 regular, 10 forward, 10 backward, 5 to right, 5 to left, 10 circling right, 10 circling left.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform washing machine and dryer.
- Perform kneeling backbend.

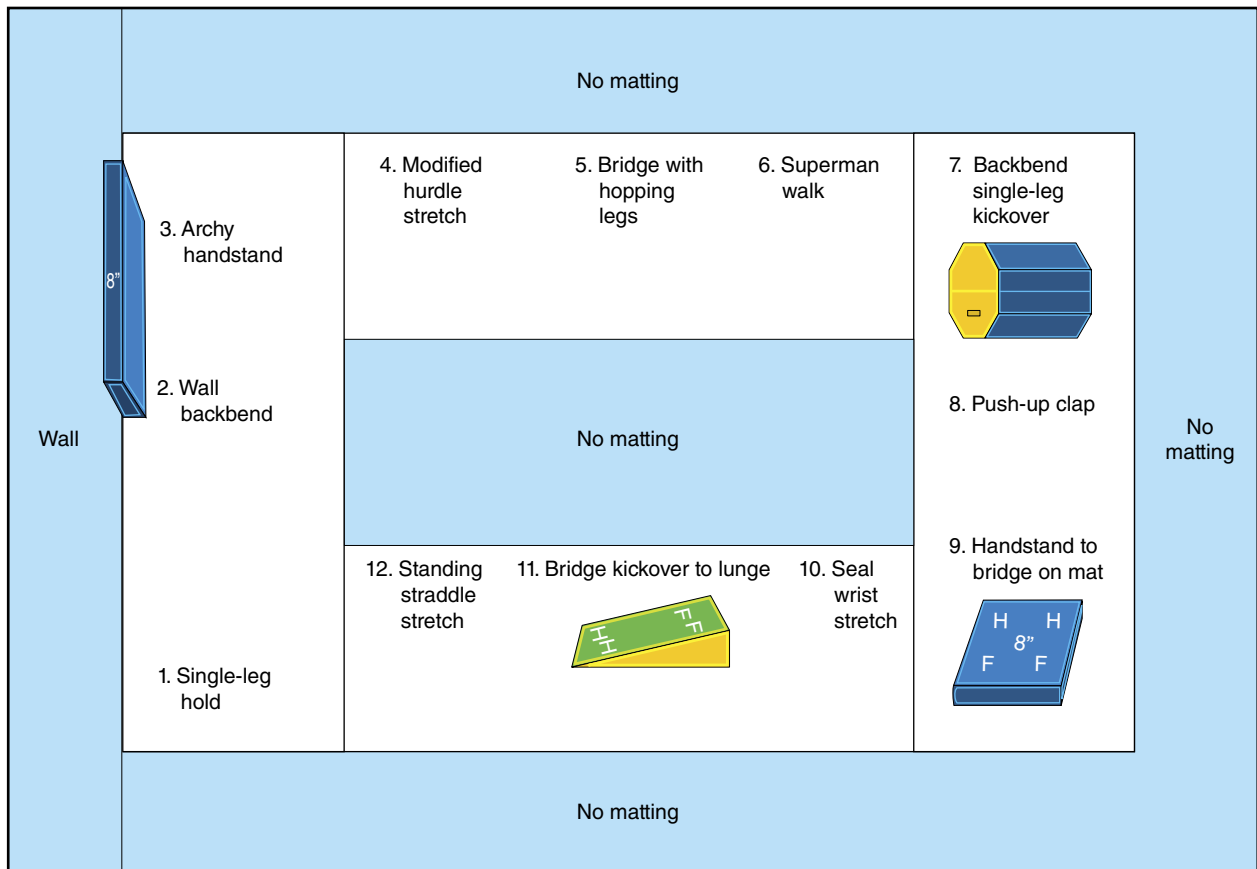
Stations

1. Single-leg hold. Hold leg to the front, side, and back, holding each position for 10 counts.
2. Wall backbend. Walk hands up and down wall into backbend 5 times.
3. Archy handstand. Do an archy handstand against wall and then step down one leg at a time; do 10 times.
4. Modified hurdle stretch. With one leg bent as in the butterfly stretch and the other leg straight, stretch forward and hold for 10 seconds; do 5 times on each side.
5. Bridge with hopping legs. In a bridge, hold one leg up and then hop off the other leg 10 times; do 3 sets.
6. Superman walk. Hold for 3 seconds; do 10 times for each leg.

7. Backbend single-leg kickover. Use barrel mat; do 10 times.
8. Push-up clap. Do 25 times.
9. Handstand to bridge on mat. Do 10 times.
10. Seal wrist stretch. Walk hands in various directions until it's time to rotate to next station.
11. Bridge kickover to lunge. Using an incline mat, push up to a bridge. Going downhill, kick over to land in lunge. Do 10 times.
12. Standing straddle stretch. Reach to the side, middle, and other side and hold each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 sets.

Cool-Down

- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform shoulder press.
- Perform wrist roller coaster.



CIRCUIT

5

🕒 Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, depending on whether your wall is matted

🕒 Warm-Up

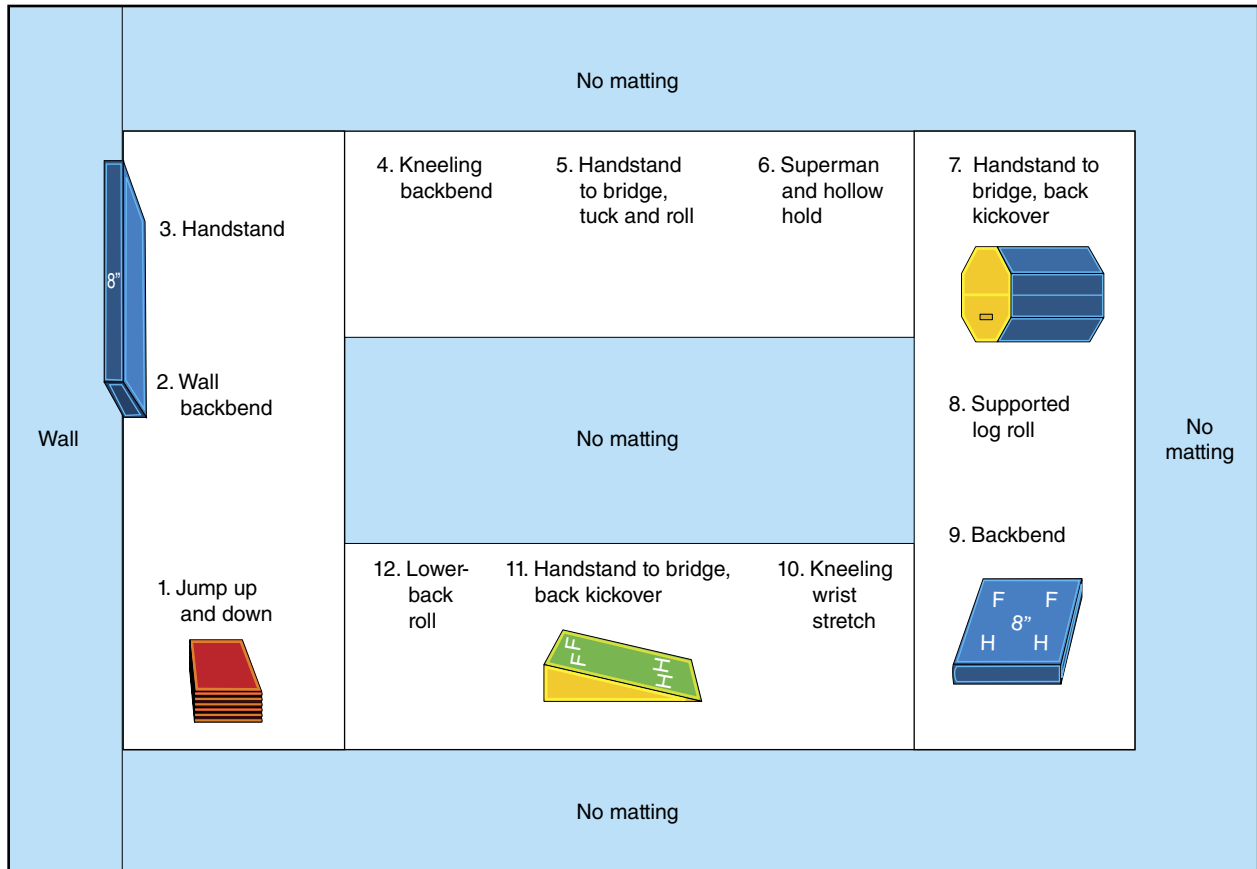
- Perform elevator walk.
- Perform pronounced walk.
- Perform crawl, bear crawl, frog jump, and jogging.
- Perform kneeling flexor stretch.
- Perform kneeling hamstring stretch.
- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform wrist circles.
- Perform bridge with hopping legs.

🕒 Stations

1. Jump up and down on folded mat 25 times.
2. Wall backbend. Walk hands up and down wall into backbend; do 5 times.
3. Handstand. Do a handstand against wall and hold for 25 seconds; do 2 times.
4. Kneeling backbend. While kneeling, arch backward with your head toward feet and return to upright position; do 5 times.
5. Handstand to bridge, tuck and roll. Do a handstand to bridge and then tuck and roll; do 5 times.
6. Superman and hollow hold. Hold each for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
7. Handstand to bridge, back kickover. Using a barrel mat, do a handstand to bridge into a back kickover; do 10 times.
8. Supported log roll. Rotate from front support (plank) to rear support; do 10 times each way.
9. Backbend. Using a soft mat, do 10 times.
10. Kneeling wrist stretch. While kneeling with your palms up and down, pull fingers back toward yourself and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
11. Handstand to bridge, back kickover. Using an incline mat, do a handstand going up the incline mat into a bridge, then into a back kickover; do 10 times.
12. Lower-back roll. Roll your legs back over your head and bend your knees by your shoulder. Hold this position for 10 seconds, then straighten your legs and hold for 10 seconds. Do 3 times.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform cat and cow.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.



CIRCUIT

6

⌚ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, depending on whether wall is matted

⌚ Warm-Up

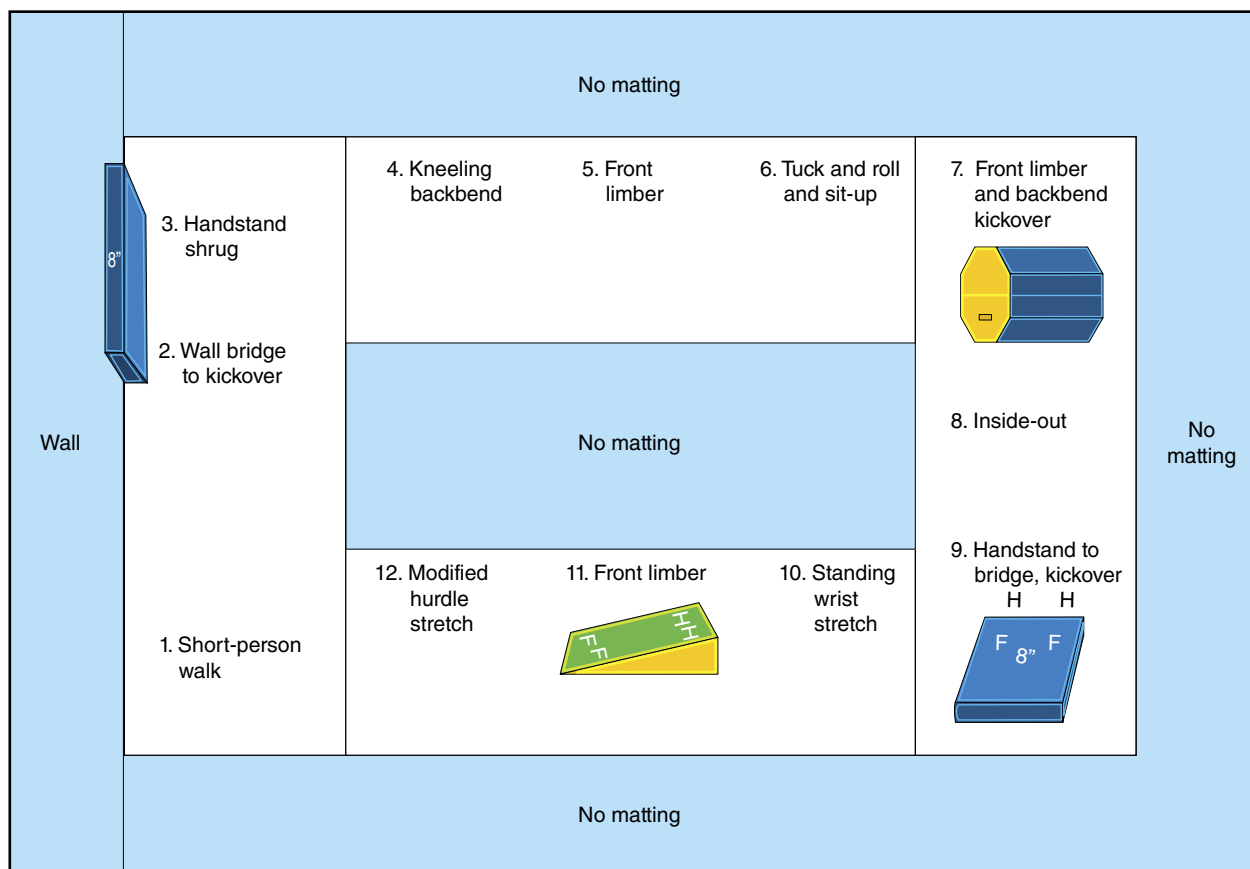
- Walk on heels.
- Walk on toes.
- Perform scissor hop forward and backward, grapevine, and skip forward and backward.
- Perform cross and stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.
- Perform bridge single-leg hold.

🕒 Stations

1. Short-person walk. Take 50 steps with knees bent at 90 degrees.
2. Wall bridge to kickover. Do a bridge with your feet touching a matted wall. Walk up the wall and kick over. Do 5 times.
3. Handstand shrug. Push up and down in shoulders; do 3 sets of 10.
4. Kneeling backbend. While kneeling, arch your back down and up; do 5 times.
5. Front limber. Do a handstand to a backbend and then stand up; do 5 times.
6. Tuck and roll and sit-up. Do 10 tuck and rolls and then 30 sit-ups.
7. Front limber and backbend kickover. Using a barrel mat, do 5 front limbers and 5 backbend kickovers.
8. Inside-out. From a bridge position, do a log roll to a bear crawl and then back into a bridge; do 5 times each way.
9. Handstand to bridge, kickover. Use a soft mat and do 5 times.
10. Standing wrist stretch. With your arms out straight in front middle position, pull fingers toward yourself up and down with opposite hand and hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times with each hand.
11. Front limber. Perform down an incline mat 10 times.
12. Modified hurdle stretch. With one leg bent as in the butterfly stretch and the other leg straight, stretch forward and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times on each side.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge to each side.
- Perform cross pike stretch.
- Perform bent-body arm stretch.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.



Front Handsprings



A front handspring is a fast-moving skill requiring more strength than flexibility. It requires a hurdle entry, strong leg swing, and powerful push through the shoulder girdle. A front handspring passes through the handstand position and then propels forward and upward to land on the feet. A front handspring has a blind landing (that is, the performer does not see the mat before contacting it).

Because of the strength required to execute the front handspring, a lot of attention is placed on muscular strength. Additionally, flexibility still needs to be enhanced for an optimal front handspring. Muscular endurance is encouraged through circuit exercises and, for the more advanced students, through combinations of skills. Here are some of the areas of strength and flexibility that will be developed:

Flexibility

- The wrists will feel more impact; therefore, attention should be paid to stretching them out before performing this skill.

- The shoulders and upper back are areas of concern because the more open the shoulder angle, the easier it will be to push properly from the mat.
- The hip flexors, hamstrings, and quads need to be stretched because they are integral to the successful completion of the front handspring.

Strength

- The front handspring requires a lot of strength in the entire body.
- Strength is needed in the hamstrings and gluteus maximus for performing the strong kick to propel the body through the skill.
- Quadriceps need to be developed in order to explode with power off the floor at the beginning of the skill. Strength in both quadriceps and gluteus maximus is necessary for achieving a tight finish to stand.
- Core strength is required for performing the skill safely with control.

- This is one of the first tumbling skills that requires a lot of shoulder strength using a popping action. I describe it like a pogo stick. Students place straight arms overhead like bunny ears and then push in and out of the shoulders without bending the arms.
- The wrists will feel stress and should be strengthened as well.

BASIC TECHNIQUE

The front handspring (see figure 7.1) begins with a run and a single-leg hurdle. This is the same concept used when teaching a running cartwheel or a round-off. A run of several steps culminates in a skip lifting the dominant leg and then step-

ping forward with the dominant leg. The move produces horizontal velocity resulting in power for the skill.

After performing the hurdle with arms by the ears, the student swings the non-dominant leg backward and upward and places the hands on the floor in a handstand position. The dominant leg pushes off the floor to join the other leg just after vertical.

Just before reaching vertical, a strong push through the shoulders occurs, resulting in flight to the feet. This is the difference between a front handspring and a front limber: the speed and flight to the feet.

Momentum is developed through the run, hurdle, kick, and push from the dominant leg. If the student is not confident in the approach phase or lacks strength, the result is a front handspring that runs out of energy and probably resembles a front limber. The student must squeeze the gluteus maximus and push up out of the legs to keep from landing in a squat.

The front handspring may also be performed as a step-out, which means landing on one leg at a time. This is usually taught after a two-foot landing because it takes more strength to perform this skill onto one leg. The advantage of learning a step-out is that it offers the ability to connect to other one-foot takeoff skills, such as another front handspring, cartwheel, or round-off.

If the takeoff for the front handspring initiates from two feet, it is called a flyspring. A flyspring is never taught first because it is considered more difficult and requires more strength.



Figure 7.1 (a) Kicking into the front handspring; (b) flight from hands to feet; (c) landing the front handspring.

CUEING

In the front handspring, it is important to look forward down the mat during the run and hurdle phase. The head is in neutral position. During the hurdle, the arms lift over the head and cover the ears. Once the hands are on the mat, the focus is on the hands and remains on the hands at the completion of the skill.

Here are some verbal cues you may need to use with students when they perform front handsprings:

- Transfer as much momentum as possible from the run and hurdle into the skill.
- Keep arms by ears during the hurdle and throughout the skill.
- Focus on hands as you contact the mat until the finish.
- Finish like the front limber, with legs straightening, buttocks squeezing tightly, and eyes focused on hands.
- There should be flight from the hands to the feet.

SAFETY AND SPOTTING

A front handspring has more momentum and requires more strength than the previously taught skills. Therefore, injuries, especially to the lower extremities, may occur. Students need special preparation for executing this skill. Proper basic tumbling should proceed learning this skill. Attention to each student's strength development is a must, and they need to practice kinesthetic drills for body awareness as well as landing drills. You should use many practice stations before allowing students to attempt a front handspring on the floor mat. Make sure you clearly communicate where the hurdle and hand placement will occur, and have students practice just that portion of the skill before you spot them on the entire skill. This is a much more difficult skill to spot because of the running entry and the quick nature of the skill. You and the students must be aware of the physical location of the skill (that is, the exact spot on the mat where they put the hands down after the hurdle).

The spot on the front handspring is fairly easy, but you should not attempt it until a student has exhibited a good understanding of the skill, a well-developed hurdle entry, and strength specific to

this skill. As the spotter, you will designate where the student should try to place the hands. Bear in mind that students will be running and may miss the designated target, requiring you to move forward or backward to be in the proper position to catch their weight and help them. You should be slightly ahead of the student so that when you catch and support her, it is from the inverted position to the finish of the skill.

Execute the spot with the near hand on the triceps and shoulder area and the far arm on the lower back. The upper-arm spot helps them up and also keeps them from falling forward. The lower-back spot helps them up and ensures that they do not fall on their back. (See figure 7.2.)

Here are some common errors you will need to watch for when students perform front handsprings:

- Arms don't remain by ears throughout the skill.
- Eyes don't focus on hands.
- Momentum is inadequate.
- Strength is lacking in kicking and pushing phases.
- Landing is in squat position.
- Axis of rotation shortens by dropping arms to a side middle position after pushing from the mat. This quickens the rotation but usually results in an incorrect body position.



Figure 7.2 Spotting on shoulder and back for front handspring.

- Head goes forward and downward, resulting in tucking the body rather than landing in a tight arch. The tucked position will cause a landing in a deep squat (possibly causing injury to the knees) or a fall forward.

Remember, a forward landing is a blind landing because the student will not see the mat before contacting it. Thus, falling forward or backward could cause an injury because of a lack of spatial awareness.

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

If students master a front handspring, you want to keep them motivated during their practice. This is an opportunity to learn a front handspring step-out, a flyspring, or a combination of skills in a sequence. Here are some suggestions for modifications:

- Series of front handspring step-outs
- Front handspring step-out to front handspring

- Front handspring step-out to round-off
- Front handspring, dive forward roll
- Flyspring
- Series of flysprings
- Front handspring, flyspring

Because the front handspring is more difficult than the previous skills you have introduced, you may have many students who are not as proficient in this skill. Therefore, you want to maintain their enthusiasm for learning without causing them to feel overwhelmed. Many drills introduced in the circuits are developmental and fun. Here are some other adaptations you may want to have your students try.

- Kneeling round-off or a cartwheel starting in a knee-out pose ending, which aids in developing a stronger leg swing
- Archy handstand against the wall, working on strong kick and focusing eyes on hands
- Walk up wall from bridge (finishing in tight arch position) to straight jump
- Needle kick walk, snap legs together, straight jump looking at hands

C I R C U I T

1

🕒 *Equipment*

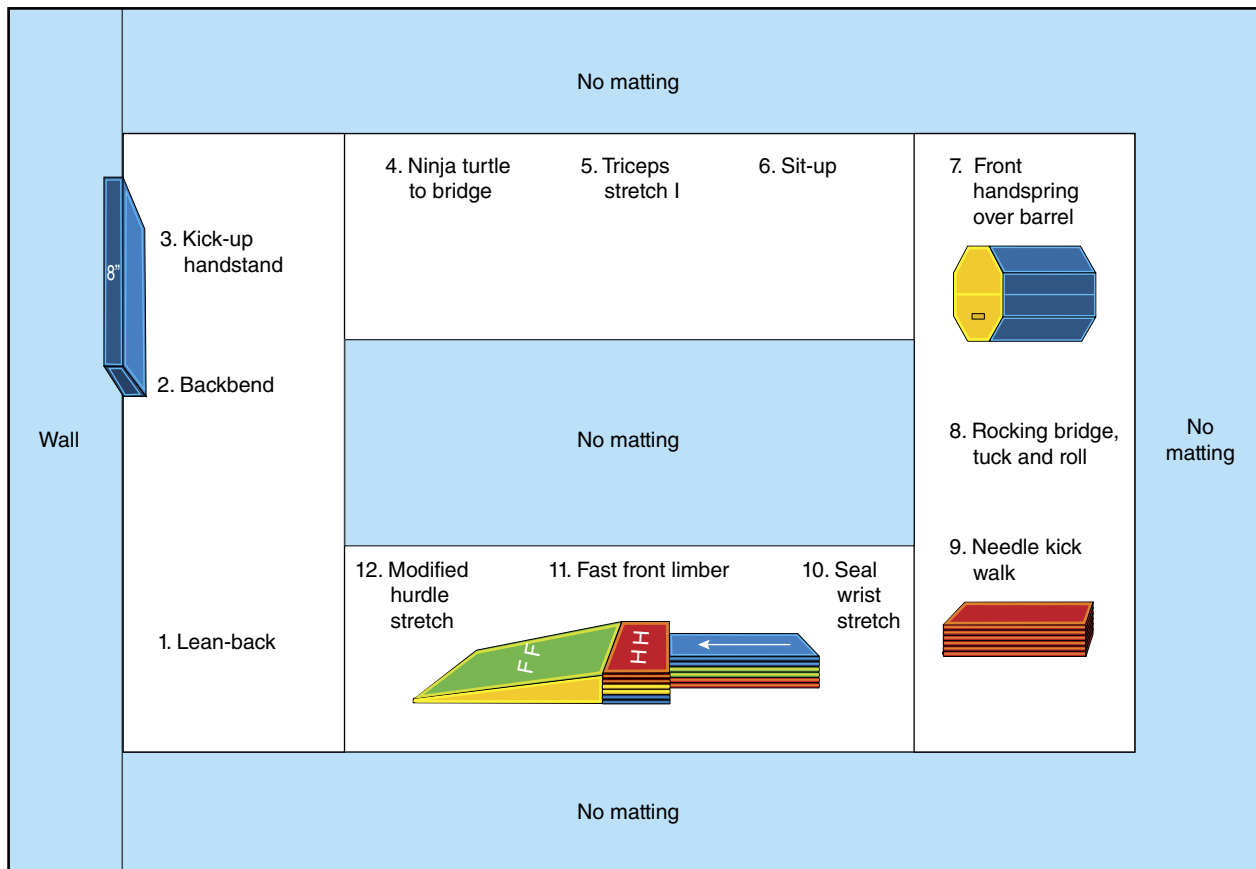
- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform Achilles stretch I.
- Perform ankle walk.
- Jog, skip, and gallop.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge with hopping legs.

Stations

1. Lean-back. Kneeling, lean back as far as possible with straight body, and return; do 10 times.
2. Backbend. Walk hands up and down wall into backbend; do 10 times.
3. Kick-up handstand. Kick up into handstand against wall; hold for 30 seconds.
4. Ninja turtle to bridge. Lie on back with legs overhead. Place hands in bridge position and whip legs up through shoulder stand position. Arch your back and push with hands to finish in bridge. Do 10 times.
5. Triceps stretch I. Pull one arm across chest, using other arm to help. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
6. Sit-up. Do 30.
7. Front handspring over barrel. Using a barrel mat, do 10 front handsprings from one foot using a hurdle.
8. Rocking bridge, tuck and roll. Hands to feet, rock back and forth 10 times; do 3 sets with tuck and roll between sets.
9. Needle kick walk. With hands on folded mat, the kicks are as rearward and as high as possible; do 3 sets of 10 for each leg.
10. Seal wrist stretch. Walk hands inward and outward 30 times.
11. Fast front limber. With T-mats in front of an incline mat, hurdle, then place hands on folded mat and do a fast front limber down the incline mat; do 10 times.
12. Modified hurdle stretch. With one leg bent as in the butterfly stretch and the other leg straight, stretch forward and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times on each side.



🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform tuck and roll.
- Perform triceps stretch I.

C I R C U I T

2

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform Achilles stretch II.
- Perform walking leg kick forward and backward.
- Jog kicking toward buttocks, then lifting knees forward, then leaping from one foot to the other.
- Perform trunk rotation.
- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform bridge push-up.

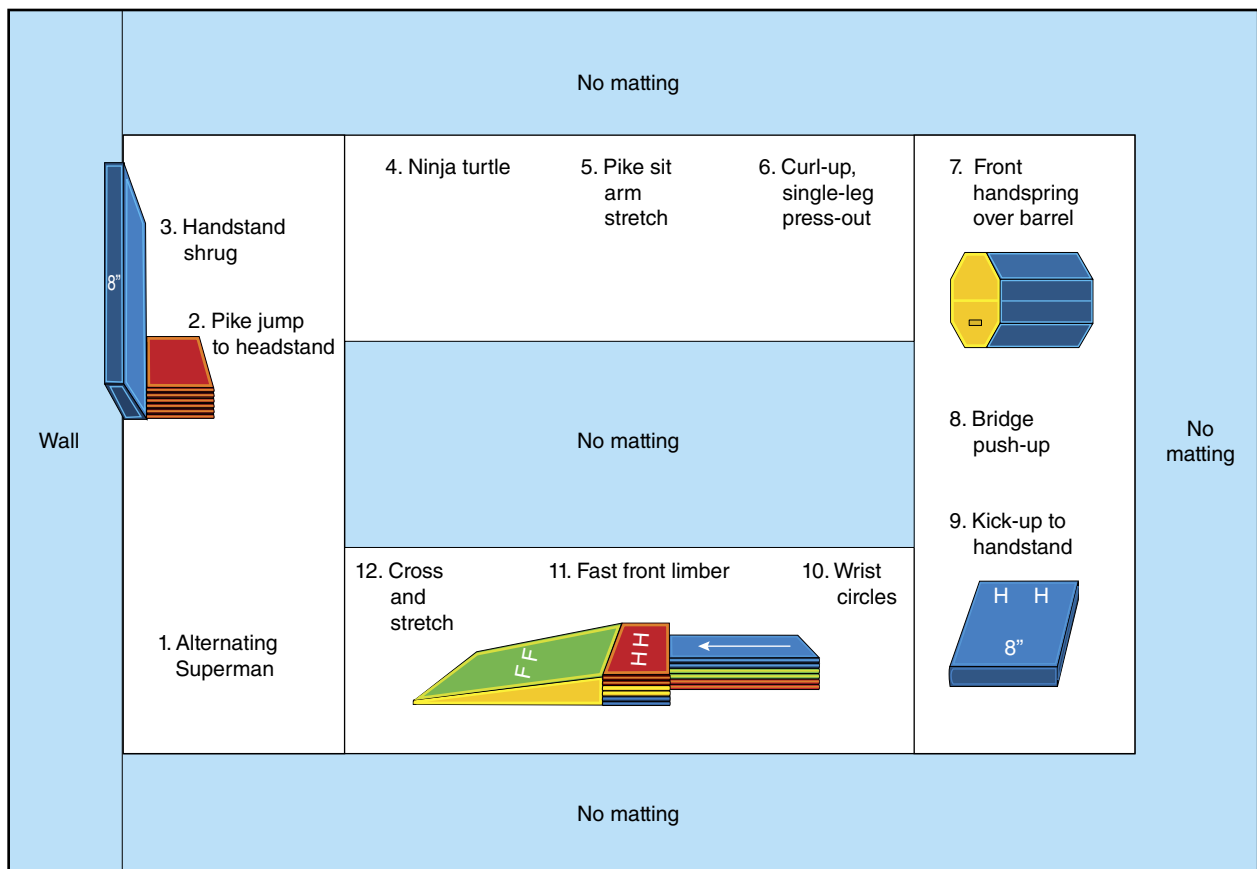
🕒 *Stations*

1. Alternating Superman. Opposite arm and leg rise; do 30 times for each leg.
2. Pike jump to headstand. Place hands and head into a headstand position on folded mat against a wall. Jump from floor mat in a pike position to a headstand against the wall. Do 10 times.
3. Handstand shrug. Do 30 against wall.
4. Ninja turtle. Do 10 times.
5. Pike sit arm stretch. Sit in a pike position with your hands together behind buttocks and fingers pointing away from body. Push hips as far from hands as possible, stretching shoulders. Hold for 10 seconds, rock side to side for 10 seconds, and then hold for another 10 seconds.
6. Curl-up, single-leg press-out. Supporting weight on forearms, do 30 on each leg.
7. Front handspring over barrel. Using a hurdle, do a front handspring over a barrel mat; do 10 times.
8. Bridge push-up. In a bridge position, bend arms until your head touches the mat and then push back to bridge; do 3 sets of 10.
9. Kick-up to handstand. Use an 8-inch mat; do 10 times.

10. Wrist circles. Do 30 in each direction.
11. Fast front limber. Place T-mats in front of an incline mat. Hurdle, then place hands on folded mat and do a fast front limber down the incline mat; do 10 times.
12. Cross and stretch. Sit in a pike position and bend one leg, crossing it over thigh of straight leg. Twist upper body in opposite direction of bent leg and hold stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat with other leg.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform cat and cow stretch.
- Perform triceps stretch II.



CIRCUIT

3

⌚ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

⌚ Warm-Up

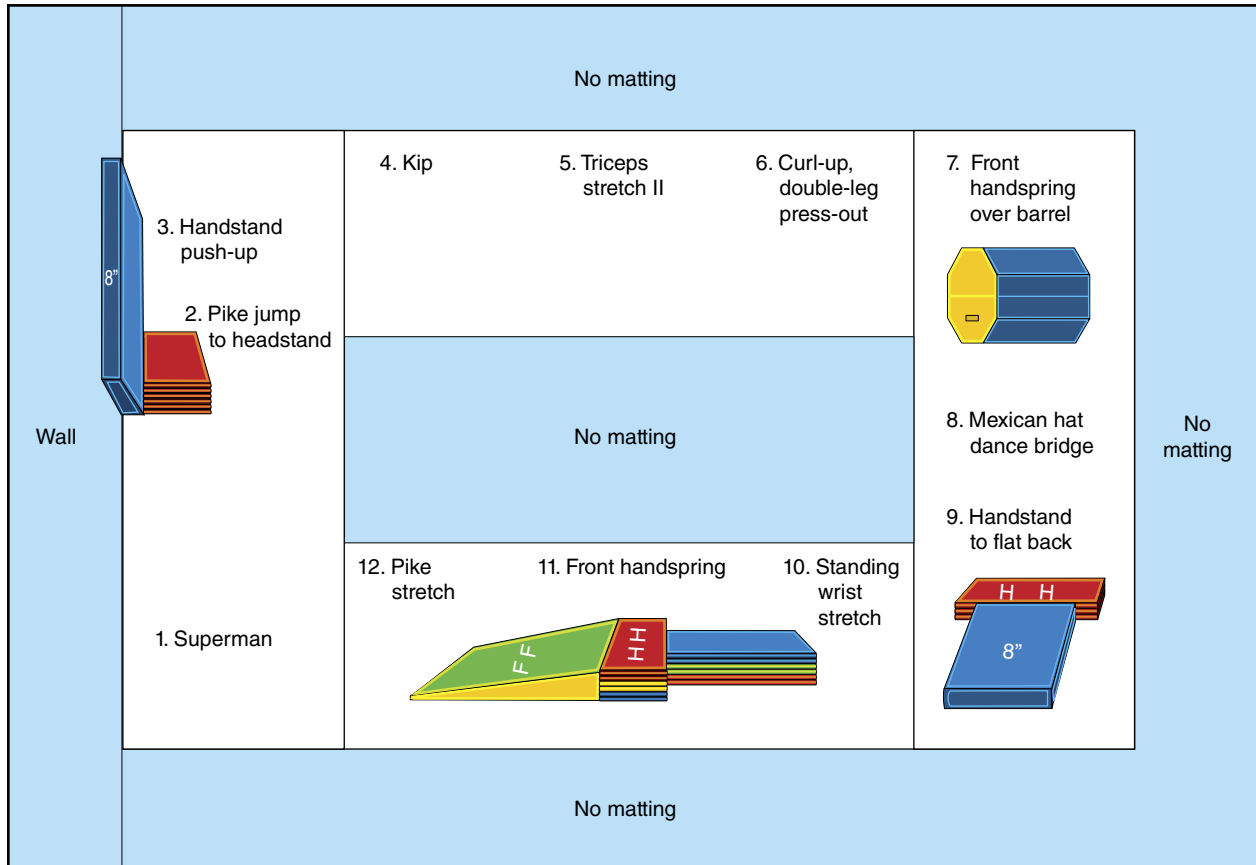
- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Perform ankle circles I.
- Perform kneeling lunge jump 10 times each leg, jogging with knees up in place and jogging by kicking buttocks in place.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform washing machine, dryer, and wrist roller coaster.
- Perform bridge single-leg hold.

⌚ Stations

1. Superman. Arch up and hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
2. Pike jump to headstand. With hands and head in headstand position on a folded mat against wall, jump from floor mat in a pike position to a headstand against the wall; do 10 times.
3. Handstand push-up. Do 3 sets of 10 against a wall.
4. Kip (ninja turtle to upright standing position). Do 10 times.
5. Triceps stretch II. Lift elbow up and behind head using the opposite hand to stretch the triceps by placing it near the elbow. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds on each arm; do 3 times.
6. Curl-up, double-leg press-out. With weight supported on forearms, do 30 times.
7. Front handspring over barrel. Use three steps and a hurdle; do 10 times.
8. Mexican hat dance bridge. In a bridge position, hop from one foot to the other; do 30 times each foot.
9. Handstand to flat back. Kick to a handstand on a folded mat. Keeping your body straight, push from the shoulders and land flat on your back on the 8" skill cushion mat. Do 10 times.
10. Standing wrist stretch. Stand with arms straight out in front of you and pull fingers up and down toward body with the opposite hand. Hold each stretch for 10 seconds and repeat with the other hand.
11. Front handspring. Use T-mats in front of an incline mat. Do 10 with a hurdle.
12. Pike stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform lower-back roll.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.
- Perform kneeling flexor stretch.



CIRCUIT

4

🕒 Equipment

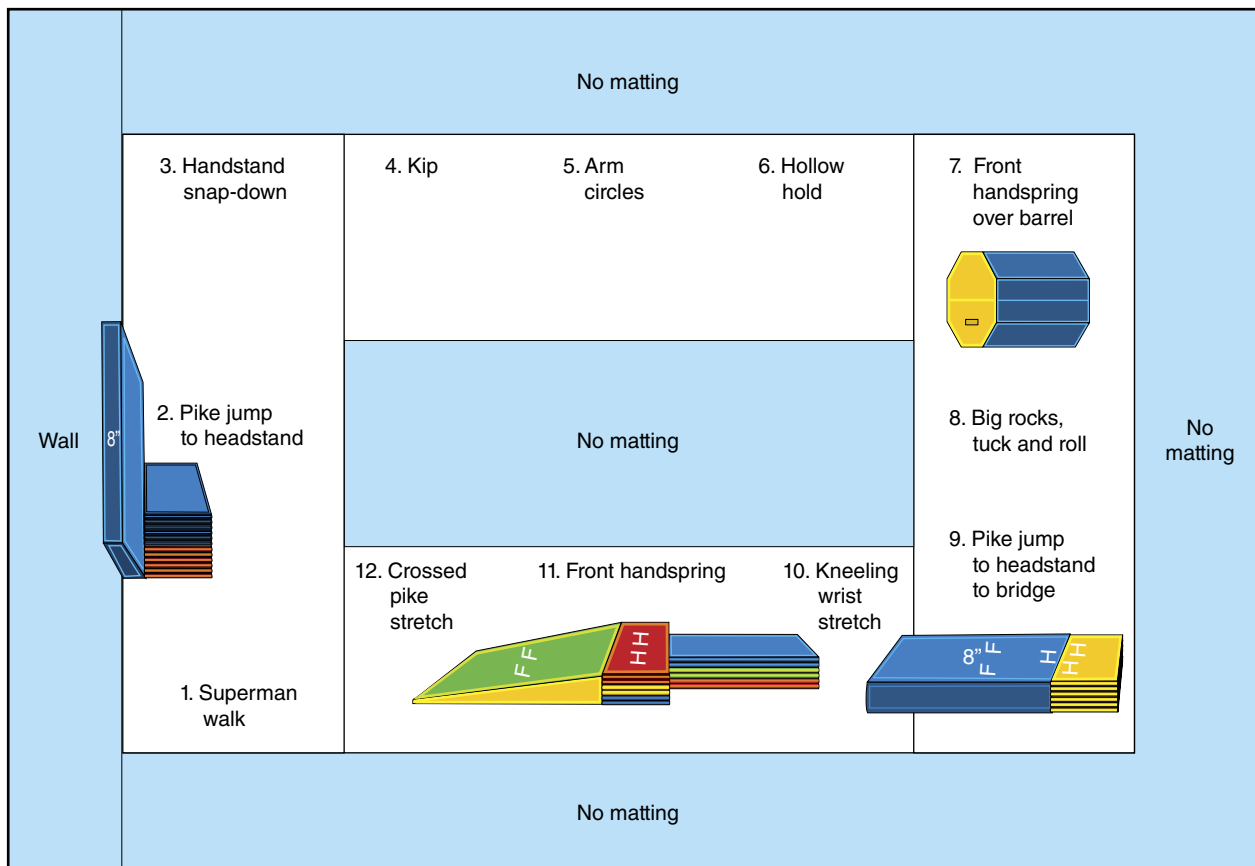
- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch IV.
- Perform feet positions.
- Perform 10 squat thrusts, 10 candlestick jumps, and 25 jumping jacks.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform wrist circles.
- Perform kneeling backbend.

Stations

1. Superman walk. Perform 30 on each leg.
2. Pike jump to headstand. With hands and head in a headstand position on a folded mat against a wall, jump from floor mat in a pike position to a headstand against wall; do 10 times.
3. Handstand snap-down. Do 30, working on the shoulder push.
4. Kip (ninja turtle to feet). Do 10 times.
5. Arm circles. Do 30 in each direction.
6. Hollow hold. Hold each one for 30 seconds; do 3 times.
7. Front handspring over barrel. Use 3 steps and a hurdle; do 10 times.
8. Big rocks, tuck and roll. While in a bridge position, jump from hands to feet to hands; do 3 sets of 10. Do tuck and roll between sets.
9. Jump to pike, then headstand, arch over to bridge. Jump to pike position, then into headstand on a folded mat. Arch over to bridge, landing on 8-inch mat. Do 10 times.



10. Kneeling wrist stretch. Sitting on knees, place hands on the mat with fingers pointing toward body. Alternate palms and backs of hands, holding each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
11. Front handspring. Using T-mats in front of an incline mat, do the skill with a hurdle; do 10 times.
12. Crossed pike stretch. Stand with legs crossed and reach toward toes, holding stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times with each leg in front.

Cool-Down

- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform shoulder press.
- Perform wrist roller coaster.

C I R C U I T

5

Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

Warm-Up

- Perform elevator walk.
- Perform pronounced walk.
- Perform bear crawl, frog jump, and donkey kick. Finish with scissor hop forward and backward.
- Perform kneeling flexor stretch.
- Perform crossed pike stretch.
- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform standing wrist stretch.
- Perform big rock.

Stations

1. Standing alternating Superman. Hold each for 5 seconds; do 5 times for each leg.
2. Wall backbend. Walk hands up and down the wall to a backbend position; do 10 times.
3. Donkey kick. Do 3 sets of 10.
4. Handstand to bridge. Do 10 times.
5. Arm circles. With palms facing up, do 50 small arm circles in each direction.
6. Curl-up leg circle. From a hollow hold position, do 3 sets of 10 small leg circles in each direction.
7. Front handspring over barrel. Starting with three steps and a hurdle, do 10 times over barrel mat.

8. Bridge push-up. Do 3 sets of 10.
9. Front headspring. Run and hurdle to both feet, jump placing hands and head on two folded mats, pike legs upward to a stretched vertical position, then arch over and land on feet on an 8-inch mat by snapping to a tight arch and pushing off with hands. Do 10 times. (See figure 7.3.)
10. Seal wrist stretch. From a seal hold position, walk hands inward and outward 30 times.
11. Front handspring. Using T-mats in front of an incline mat, do a front handspring with a hurdle 10 times.
12. Kneeling hamstring stretch. Kneel on one knee with other leg straight out in front of you. Stretch over the straight leg and hold it for 10 seconds. Do 3 times with each leg.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform cat and cow.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.

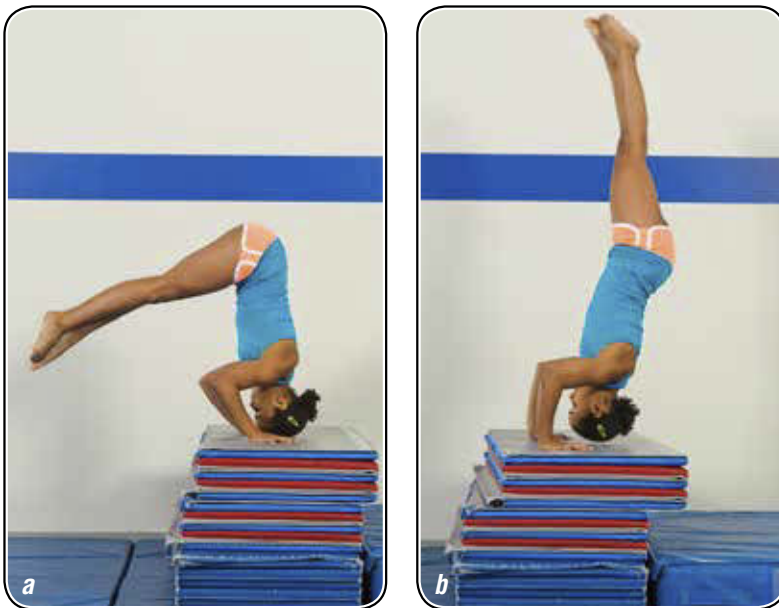
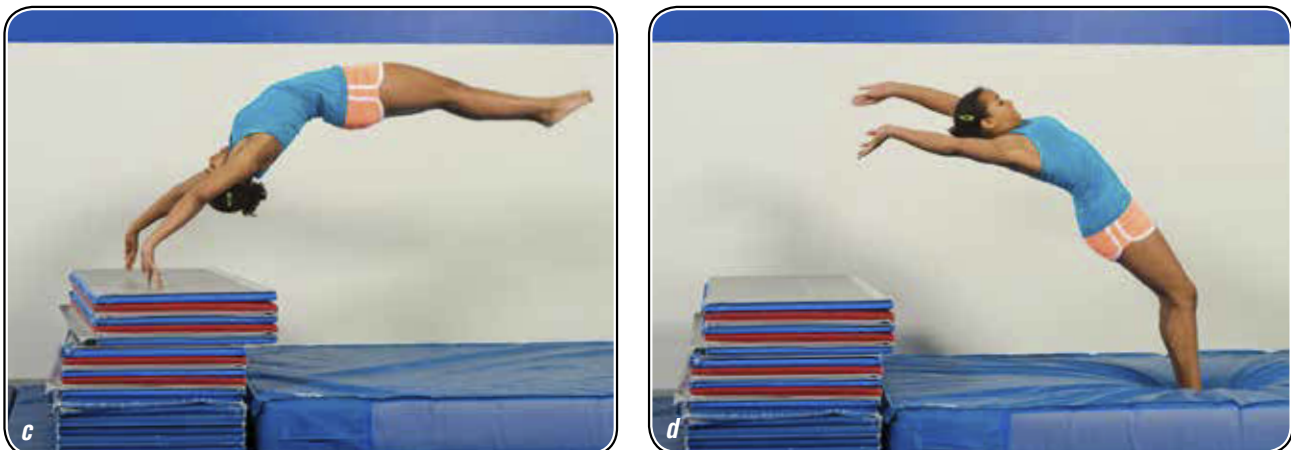
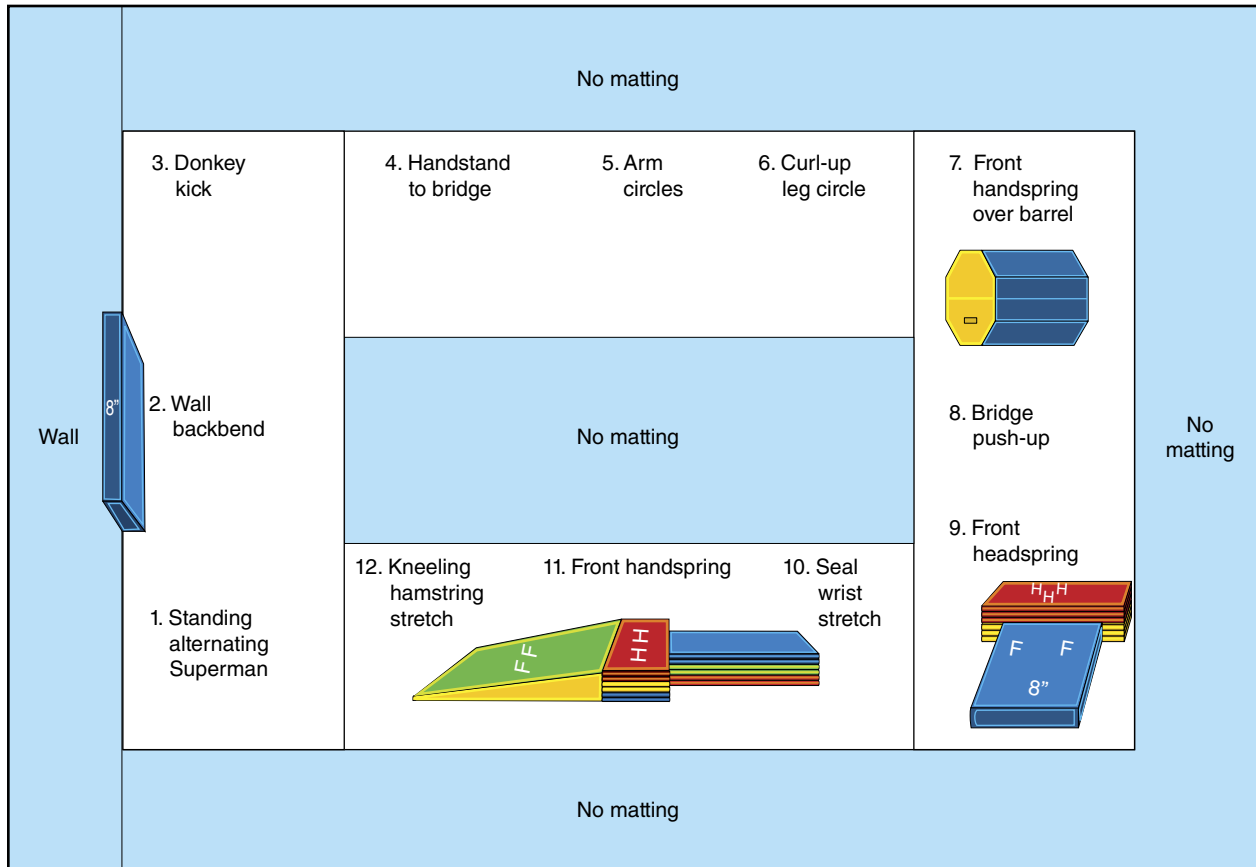


Figure 7.3 Front headspring over two folded mats or a block, landing on an 8-inch mat. (a) The beginning of the front headspring, similar to a piked headstand; (b) opening the hip angle when near vertical; (c) explosive push from the arms with the body in a tight arch position; (d) landing the front headspring.





CIRCUIT

6

Ⓢ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 or 2 8-inch skill cushions, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

Ⓢ Warm-Up

- Walk on heels.
- Walk on toes.
- Perform scissor hop forward and backward, grapevine, and skip forward and backward.
- Perform cross and stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.

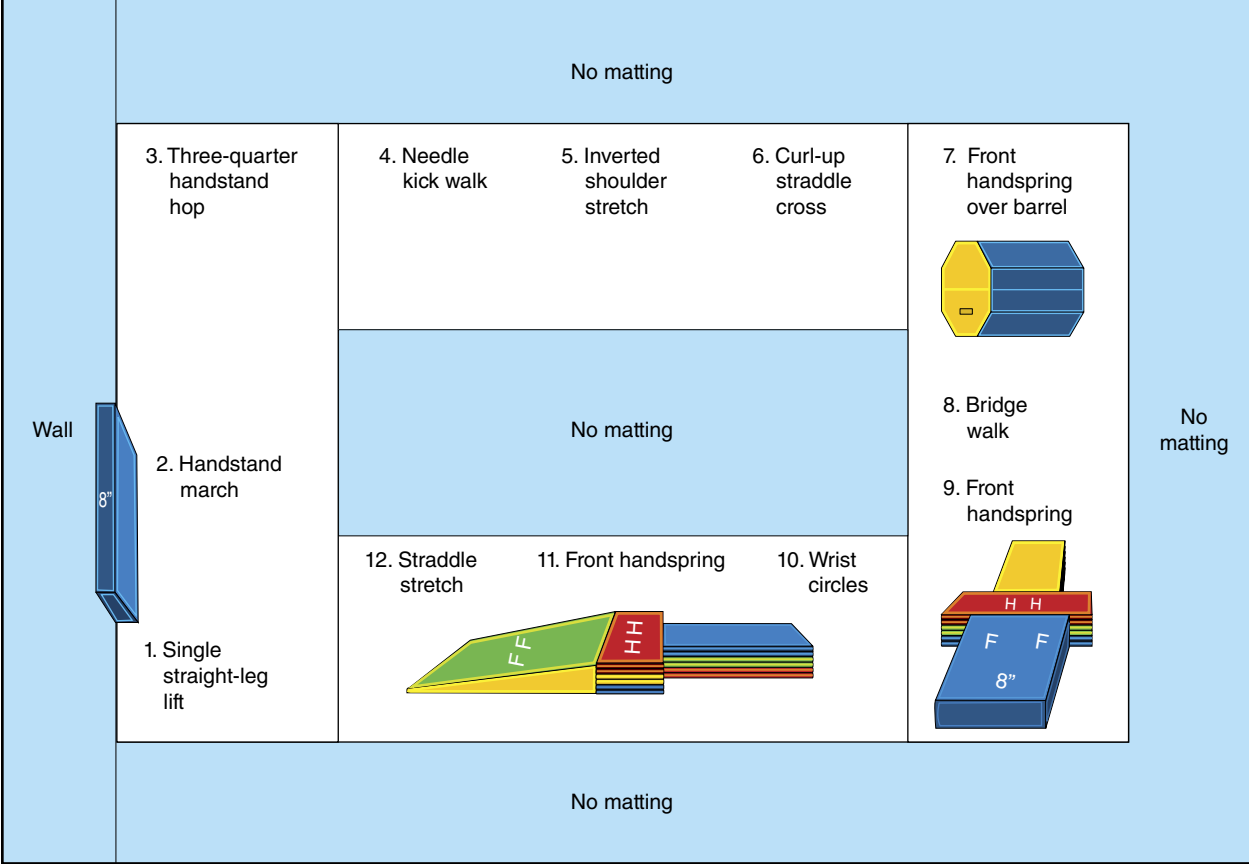
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.
- Perform bridge walk forward and backward.

🕒 Stations

1. Single straight-leg lift. On forearms and knees, lift one leg straight backward 30 times for each leg.
2. Handstand march. Do 30 against wall.
3. Three-quarter handstand hop. Kick up into a three-quarter handstand and push off with hands. Do 30 times.
4. Needle kick walk. Return to a standing position after each kick. Do 10 times for each leg.
5. Inverted shoulder stretch. From a standing position, clasp hands behind body, bend forward, and swing clasped hands upward. Hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
6. Curl-up straddle cross. From a hollow hold position, straddle and cross legs; do 30 times.
7. Front handspring over barrel. Take three steps and a hurdle and do a front handspring over a barrel mat; do 10 times.
8. Bridge walk. Take 10 steps forward and 10 steps backward.
9. Front handspring. Using T-mats in front of an 8-inch mat, do the skill 10 times.
10. Wrist circles. Do 30 in each direction.
11. Front handspring. Using T-mats in front of an incline mat, do the skill with a hurdle 10 times.
12. Straddle stretch. In a straddle position, reach to the side, middle, and other side. Hold each stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 sets.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform bent-body arm stretch.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.



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Back Handsprings



The back handspring is one of the most exciting skills that you may teach. Many students look forward to learning this skill because it is very popular in cheerleading, and sometimes even football players do them. The back handspring is a backward jumping action that springs to the hands and then springs off the hands to the feet. Never should the hands and feet be on the floor at the same time. It is a fast-moving skill often used in developing horizontal velocity, which is converted to vertical height in the execution of more difficult skills.

The back handspring produces much pressure on the hands and arms because of the impact from the jump. You must ensure that students develop proper upper-body strength for this skill. The lower extremities provide the power and exertion necessary for initiating a back handspring. When learning a back handspring it is obvious that a lot of strength is needed, but flexibility also plays an integral part in the skill. Here are some

areas you will want to help students develop in order to have a positive learning experience:

Flexibility

- The back handspring requires good shoulder flexibility in order to reach backward toward the mat.
- Flexibility in the hip flexors is essential in extending out of the jump and backward.
- Some students will have sore wrists, so stretching the wrists before performing back handsprings is recommended.

Strength

- Strong legs are required for initiating a powerful jump.
- A strong core is required for stability during the execution of the skill.
- A very strong upper body is necessary for preventing the head from coming into

contact with the mat and for pushing the body into an upright position.

- The wrists must be strong to handle the pressure when landing on the hands.

BASIC TECHNIQUE

The back handspring requires much strength. Before teaching a back handspring, I require students to be able to perform a back extension roll (a backward roll that pushes to a handstand). This indicates that when they are jumping backward to the hands with extra pressure, they should be strong enough to handle the stress. Handstand push-ups against the wall are an excellent lead-up drill.

I also prefer students to be able to go to a bridge from a stand (a backbend). This shows that they are not afraid of going backward. I have had a few students who lacked the flexibility to do this but had the strength to overcome their deficiency in flexibility.

The back handspring (see figure 8.1) begins in a straight stand with the arms in a high position. The student leans backward with the chest remaining upright and bends the knees, as if sitting back into a chair. This allows a diagonal rearward trajectory. Simultaneously, the arms swing forward and downward, just past the buttocks. Then, the student jumps and swings the arms explosively forward and upward by the ears to land in an inverted position. I often tell students to pretend they are jumping backward to a handstand. The

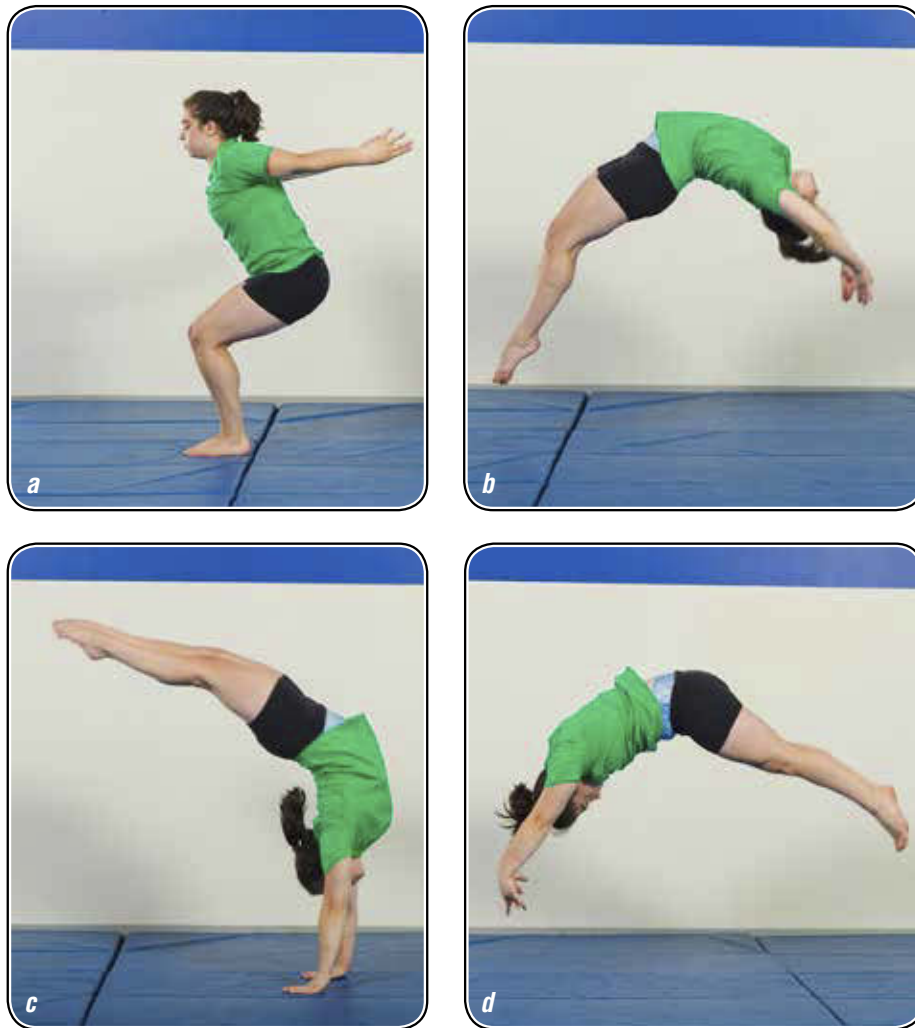


Figure 8.1 (a) Beginning of back handspring demonstrating the backward sit and arm swing; (b) flight to handstand; (c) contact on hands; and (d) flight to feet.

student must push aggressively from the hands and snap the legs downward, landing on the feet. The lower back is rounded, arms are by the ears and the head is in neutral position, facing the same direction as at the onset of the skill.

Back handsprings may be performed consecutively. They may also be performed from a round-off. Once a student finds the courage to perform a back handspring from a round-off, the skill is usually much easier to perform. The student can run into the round-off to produce more power and acceleration.

Some students will perform a back handspring with a step-out. They will often learn this in order to perform it on a balance beam. Other variations include one-arm back handspring and gainer back handspring. Also, a back handspring may eventually develop into a whip-back, which is a back handspring performed with no hands touching the floor.

CUEING

The focus when starting this skill should be forward. The head should be in neutral position during the entire skill. The student will see the mat when the legs are snapping downward but will quickly look forward at the finish.

Here are some verbal cues you might need to use when students do back handsprings:

- Maintain a forward focus while sitting back for the takeoff.
- The arms, not the head, should be the driving force to go backward. The head should remain neutral, not forward or backward.
- Think of jumping backward to a handstand.
- Tell students, “Big jump, big throw.” The arms and legs will work in concert with one another.
- The body should be fully extended after takeoff.
- The feet should snap downward to the mat as the arms lift upward, maintaining position by the ears.
- There should be flight to the hands and flight from the hands to the feet.

SAFETY AND SPOTTING

A back handspring is an exciting skill to learn but can result in many injuries if a student is

not properly trained through strength conditioning and drills. Many students will want to attempt the skill before they are ready. Bearing in mind the additional pressure exerted on the hands and arms, make sure students are strong enough in the legs and arms to safely perform the back handspring. Students should learn this skill slowly, and you should ensure they learn all progressions properly. Spotting is a must during students’ acquisition of this skill because students have a greater chance of falling on their heads.

Spotting the back handspring (see figure 8.2) is easier than spotting the front handspring because the student starts from a set position on the mat. As the spotter, stand to the side of the student and slightly behind to assist with the skill. The arm closest to the direction the student will go is placed on the back (for example, if you are on the right side of the student, your left hand is on the back). The other hand goes on the hamstrings after the student swings the arms upward to throw backward into the skill so that you do not interfere with the arm swing. Support the back and lift the legs up and over the student’s head. Once the student is landing, the farther arm is on the lower back and the other arm ensures that the student’s arms are lifting off the mat.

Here are some common errors you will need to watch for when students perform back handsprings:

- Many students have a tendency to throw the head back in the beginning of the skill.



Figure 8.2 Arms on lower back and hamstrings to spot through the completion of a back handspring.

The head should not lead the movement to the mat. The arms should lead the movement.

- The synchronization of the arms and legs may be off. The student should not whip the arms without a jump. Likewise, the student should not jump without throwing the arms. These two actions should occur together.
- Lack of arm strength may affect the performance in a couple of ways. A student without adequate arm strength who lands on the hands may collapse on the head. The other problem might be lack of strength to push off the mat before the feet land on the mat. This often results in a planche over the arms (the shoulders lean forward over the hands) (see figure 8.3). Again, the arms may bend at this point, resulting in a face plant.

MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

If you have students who perform the back handspring well, then it is time to give them a greater challenge. First they will need to be able to per-



Figure 8.3 Student planching at end of back handspring because of lack of strength.

form the skill on the floor mat with confidence and proficiency. They will really enjoy trying to combine this movement with other skills as well as experimenting with various entries and exits. As they develop a capacity for greater horizontal velocity, they will build up to learning more advanced elements not discussed in this book. Once they have mastered back handsprings, students will have developed a lot of strength and flexibility that will contribute to their overall physical health and coordination and agility for success in many athletic endeavors. Here are some other activities and skills to challenge your students:

- Back handspring step-out
- Round-off, back handspring
- Round-off, multiple back handsprings
- Back handspring step-outs in a row
- Gainer back handspring
- One-arm back handspring

The back handspring is a very challenging skill to many students. I do not have the students perform them on the floor mats in the circuits because of the complexity, strength, and coordination required for successful performance of this skill. All the lead-ups are great for developing strength and flexibility in a fun, safe, and exciting environment. Here are some ideas for students needing adaptations:

- Backward roll instead of a back handspring
- Round-off, backward roll
- Jump to back on folded incline mat or stacked mats, then move to end of mat with hands reaching backward to floor mat and pull legs overhead to floor mat
- Backward roll to three-quarter handstand
- Backbend

CIRCUITS

Many of the circuits use a bifold incline mat. If you do not have one, then use stacked mats. The top surface should be soft because the students jump backward to a supine (faceup) position.

CIRCUIT**1****ⓐ Equipment**

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat bifolded or 2 8-inch skill cushions stacked
- 1 octagonal mat

ⓐ Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch I.
- Perform ankle walk.
- Jog, skip, and gallop.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge with hopping legs.

ⓐ Stations

1. Wall sit. Slide down wall until knees are at a 90-degree bend; hold this position while saying the alphabet backward.
2. Sit-back (first half of sit-back). Stand 24 to 30 inches (60-76 cm) away from the wall with arms held high. Lean back, bending your legs as though sitting in a chair, and swing arms down; do 30 times.
3. Three-quarter handstand snap-down. Kick up to three-quarter handstand on a folded mat and then push off the mat to a standing position with arms by ears (see figure 8.4).
4. Shoulder press. Place hands close together horizontally on a wall and step back with head between arms, pressing shoulders open; hold for 10 seconds. Do 3 times.
5. Push-up clap. Do 3 sets of 10.
6. Curl-up bicycle. In a hollow hold position, do bicycle legs, reaching opposite elbow to opposite knee; do 30 times to each side.
7. Back limber over barrel, back extension roll. Do 5 times.
8. Straight jump, tuck jump. Do 3 sets of 10.
9. Jump up and down from mat to mat 10 times.
10. Squeeze a soft rubber or Nerf-like ball 50 times with each hand.
11. Jump backward to stretched position on soft waist-high mat 10 times (see figure 8.5).
12. Standing quadriceps stretch. Stand on one leg and bend the other, bringing heel toward buttocks. Hold the foot to keep knee in place behind support leg. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times for each leg.



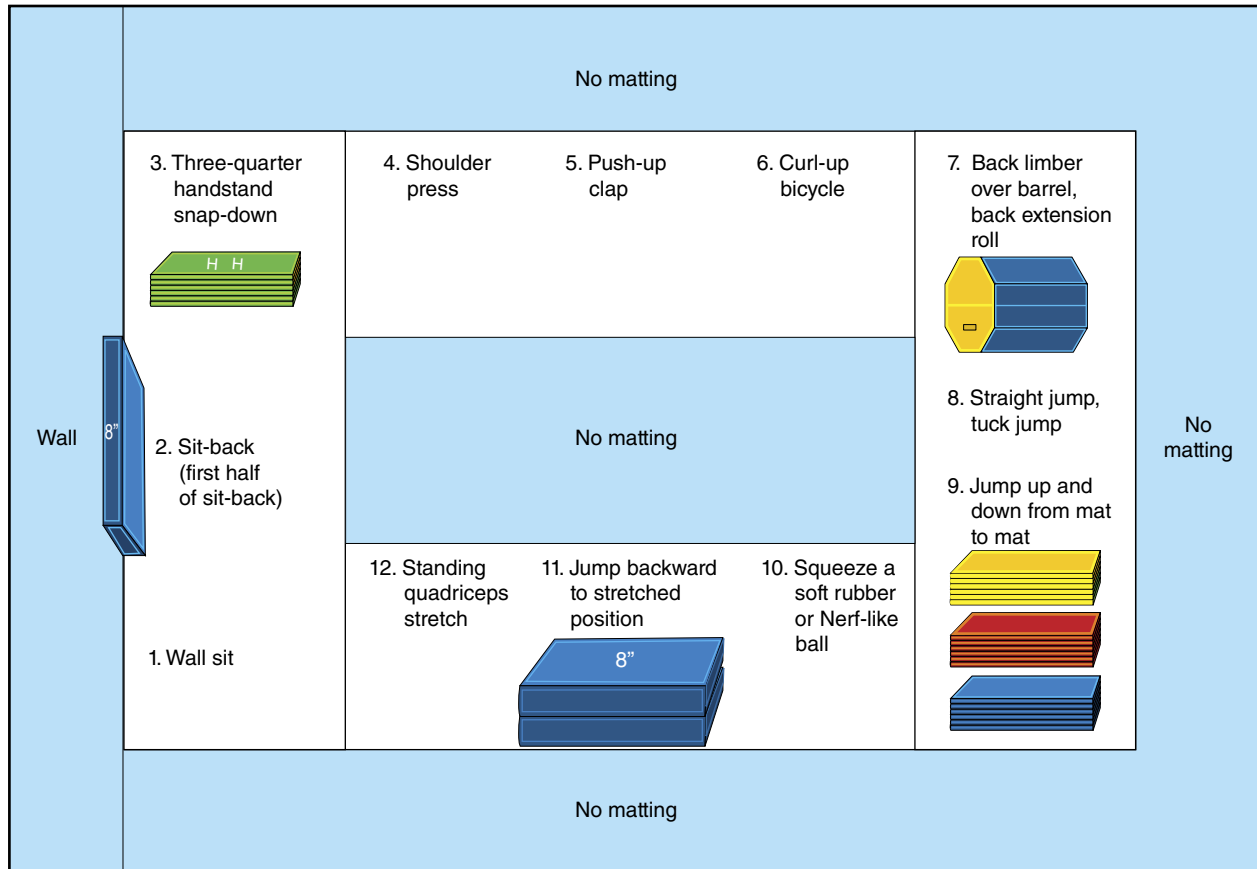
Figure 8.4 A snap-down, which is used at the end of a back handspring, should show flight from hands to feet.



Figure 8.5 Jump backward to stretched position on waist-high mat.

🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform tuck and roll.
- Perform triceps stretch I.



CIRCUIT

2

Ⓢ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat bifolded or 2 8-inch skill cushions stacked
- 1 octagonal mat

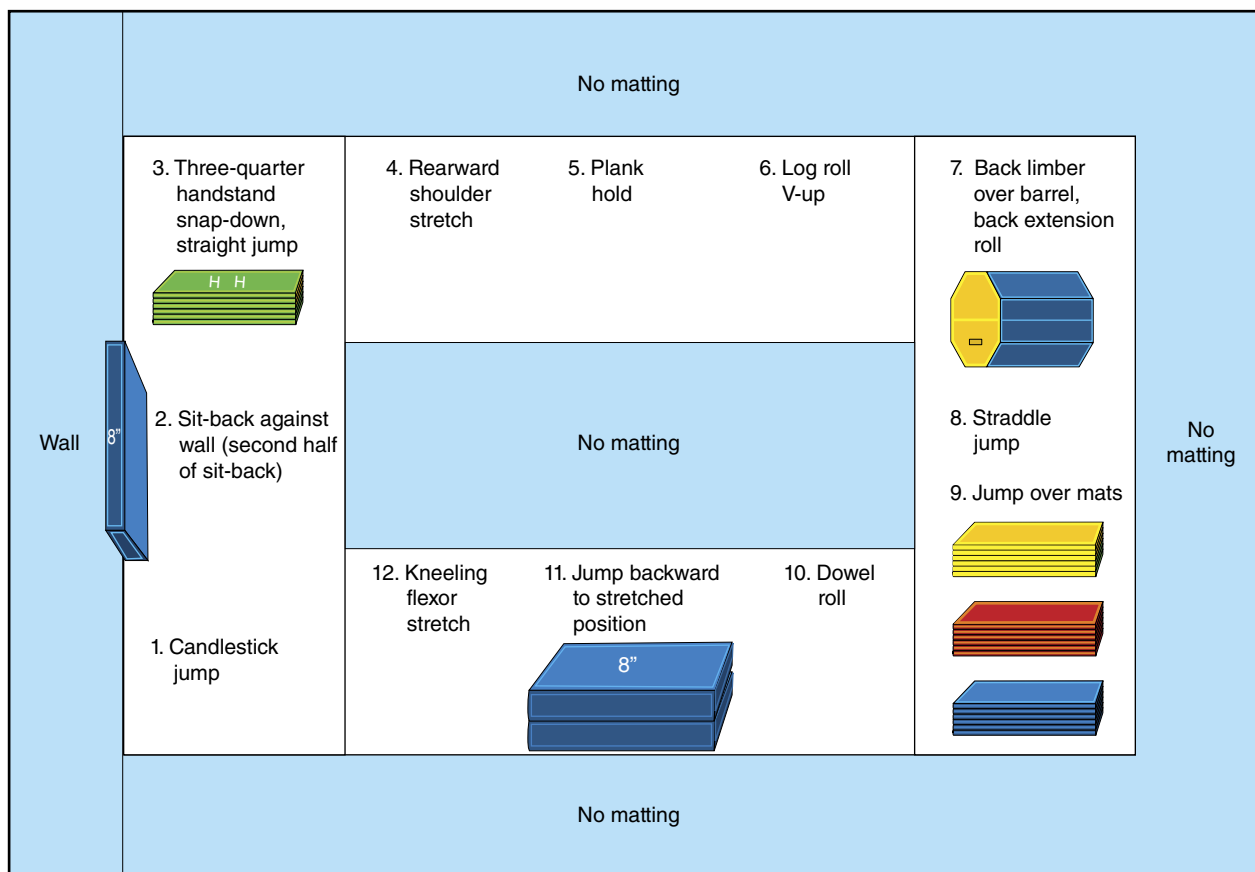
Ⓢ Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch II.
- Perform walking leg kick forward and backward.
- Jog kicking toward the buttocks, then lifting knees forward, then leaping from one foot to the other.
- Perform trunk rotation.
- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike stretch.

- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform bridge push-up.

🕒 Stations

1. Candlestick jump. Do 3 sets of 10.
2. Sit-back against wall (second half of sit-back). Sit against a wall with your arms down. Then swing your arms up overhead while straightening your legs and opening the hip angle. Do 30 times.
3. Three-quarter handstand snap-down, straight jump. Kick up to a three-quarter handstand on a folded mat and then snap legs down and do a straight jump with arms high; do 30 times.
4. Rearward shoulder stretch. Stand with your back to a wall an arm's length away. Reach arms behind toward the wall, placing them on the wall and bending knees with hips open. Hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
5. Plank hold. Hold the position until it is time to rotate to the next station.
6. Log roll V-up. Do a log roll, ending in a V-up (lift upper and lower body into a V shape). Feet and shoulders should never touch the mat. Do 10 times in each direction.
7. Back limber over barrel, back extension roll. Do 5 times.
8. Straddle jump. Do 3 sets of 10.
9. Jump over mats. Do 10 times.
10. Dowel roll. Do 30 in each direction.



11. Jump backward to stretched position. Using a soft waist-high mat, jump backward to a stretched position; do 10 times.
12. Kneeling flexor stretch. From single-leg kneeling lunge, lean forward, pulling kneeling foot toward buttocks. Hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times for each leg.

🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform cat and cow stretch.
- Perform a triceps stretch II.

C I R C U I T



3

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Perform ankle circles I.
- Perform kneeling lunge jump 10 times each leg, jogging knees up in place, and jogging kicking buttocks in place.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform washing machine, dryer, and wrist roller coaster.
- Perform bridge single-leg hold.

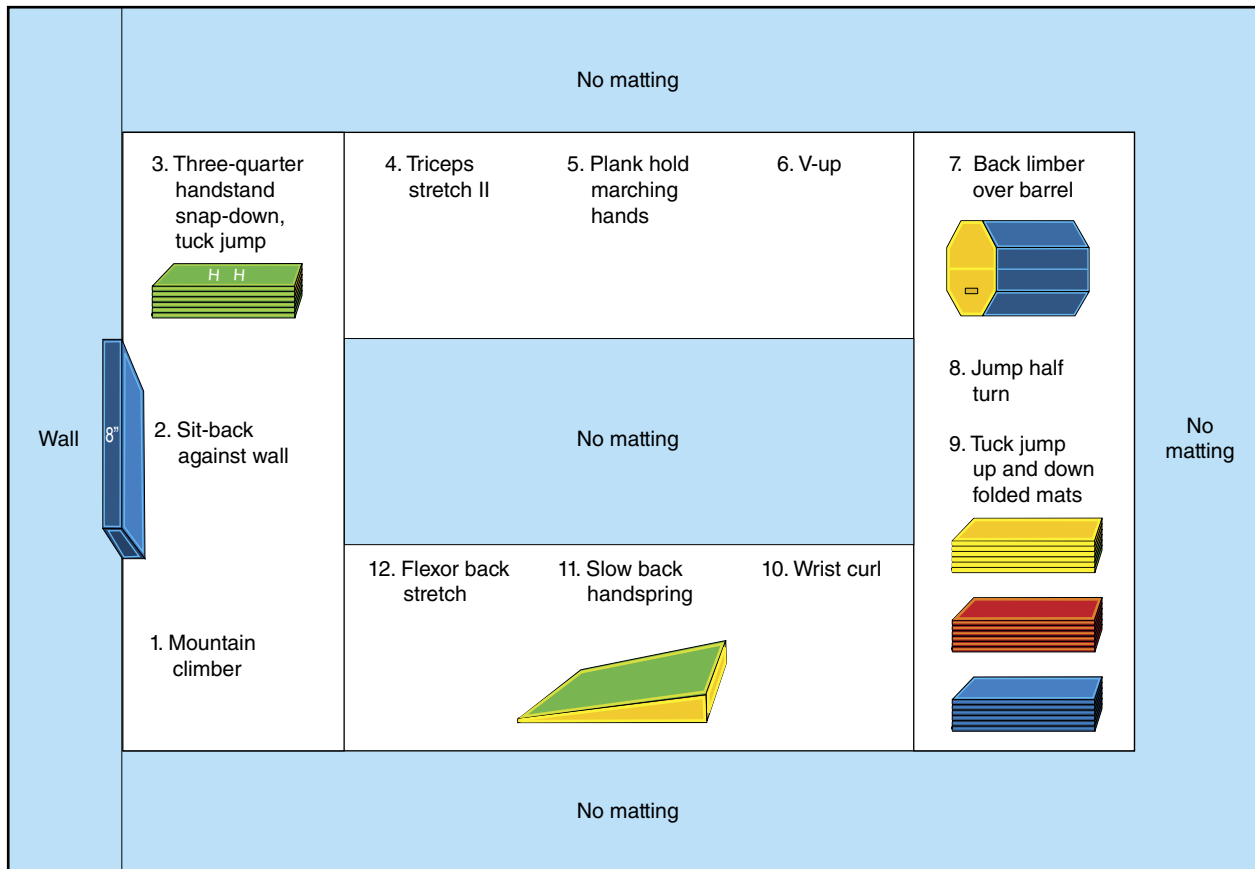
🕒 *Stations*

1. Mountain climber. In lunge position with hands on mat, jump opposite leg forward in lunge position; do 30 times for each leg.
2. Sit-backs against wall. Stand 12 to 18 inches (30-45 cm) away from matted wall with back to wall. Sit back, swing arms down and back, and then straighten legs and open hips while swinging arms up. Do 30 times.
3. Three-quarter handstand snap-down, tuck jump. Kick up to three-quarter handstand on a folded mat and then snap legs down and do tuck jump with arms high; do 30 times.
4. Triceps stretch II. Lift elbow up and behind head, using opposite hand to stretch arm by placing it near elbow. Hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times for each arm.

5. Plank hold marching hands. In plank position, march hands; do 30 times for each hand.
6. V-up. Lift both upper and lower body into V-position, lower to a hollow hold, then lift both upper and lower body into V-position with legs in straddle. Do 10 times.
7. Back limber over barrel. Do with small jump entry; do 10 times.
8. Jump half turn. Do 10 in each direction.
9. Tuck jump up and down folded mats. Do 10 times.
10. Wrist curl. Support the back of forearm with free hand. Holding a light weight, curl hand up and down 10 times for each wrist; do 3 sets.
11. Slow back handspring. On incline mat with a spot, jump backward to handstand, then snap legs down to standing position; do 10 times.
12. Flexor back stretch. Lying on belly, bend one leg and reach behind to the opposite side. Hold stretch for 10 seconds on each side; do 3 times.

Cool-Down

- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform lower-back roll.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.
- Perform kneeling flexor stretch.



CIRCUIT

4

⌚ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

⌚ Warm-Up

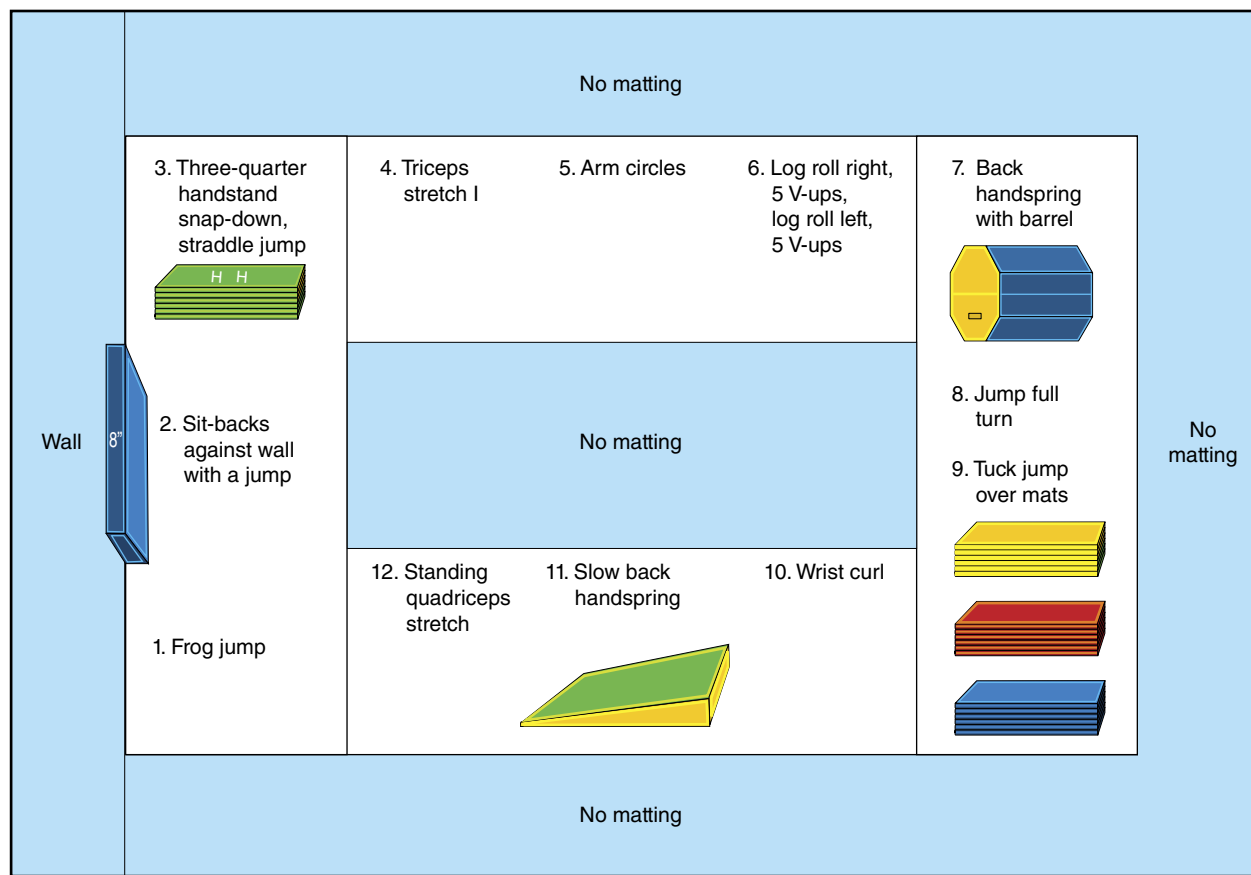
- Perform Achilles stretch IV.
- Perform feet positions.
- Perform 10 squat thrusts, 10 candlestick jumps, and 25 jumping jacks.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform wrist circles.
- Perform kneeling backbend.

⌚ Stations

1. Frog jump. With hands on mat between legs; do 30 times.
2. Sit-backs against wall with a jump. Stand 12 to 18 inches away from a matted wall. Sit back, open hips using arm swing, and jump. Do 30 times.
3. Three-quarter handstand snap-down, straddle jump. Kick up to three-quarter handstand on folded mat and then snap legs down and do straddle jump with arms high; do 30 times.
4. Triceps stretch I. Cross one arm over chest and use other arm to stretch, holding the position for 10 seconds for each arm; do 3 times.
5. Arm circles. Do 50 small arm circles in each direction.
6. Log roll right, 5 V-ups, log roll left, 5 V-ups. Do 5 times in each direction.
7. Back handspring with barrel. Jump backward onto a barrel mat and do a back handspring; do 10 times.
8. Jump full turn. Do 10 times in each direction.
9. Tuck jump over mats. Do 10 times.
10. Wrist curl. Support front of forearm with free hand. Holding a light weight, curl wrist up and down 10 times. Do 3 times for each wrist.
11. Slow back handspring. On an incline mat with a spot, jump backward to a handstand, then snap legs down to standing position; do 10 times.
12. Standing quadriceps stretch. Stand on one leg and bend free leg toward buttocks with your hand holding the foot to keep knee behind support leg. Hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.

⌚ Cool-Down

- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform shoulder press.
- Perform wrist roller coaster.



CIRCUIT

5

ⓐ *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

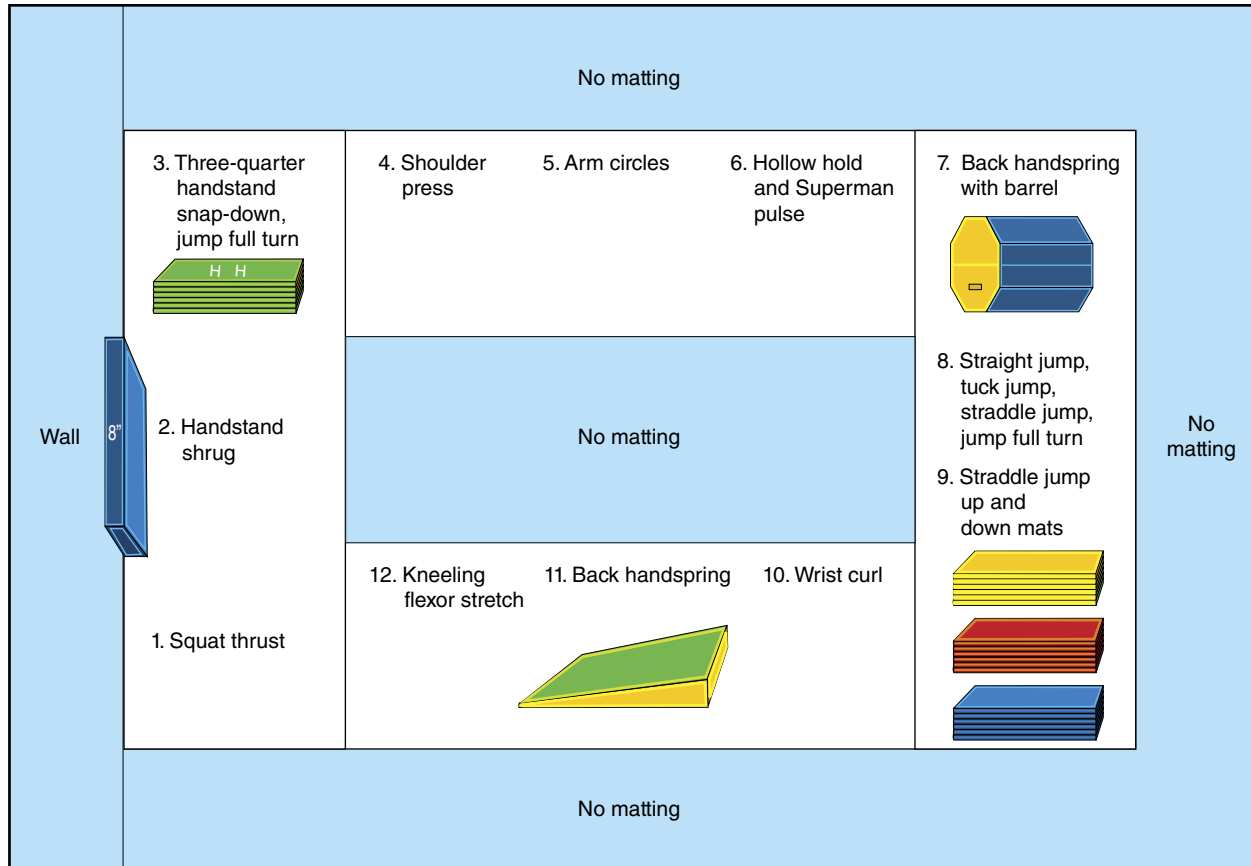
ⓐ *Warm-Up*

- Perform elevator walk.
- Perform pronounced walk.
- Perform bear walk, frog jump, and donkey kick; finish with scissor hop forward and backward.
- Perform kneeling flexor stretch.
- Perform crossed pike stretch.
- Perform standing straddle stretch.

- Perform standing wrist stretch.
- Perform big rock.

Stations

1. Squat thrust. Squat down, jump legs back to plank position, jump forward to squat position, then do straight jump. Do 3 sets of 10.
2. Handstand shrug. Kick up to handstand and push out of shoulders; do 30 times.
3. Three-quarter handstand snap-down, jump full turn. Kick up to three-quarter handstand on folded mat and then snap legs down and do a jump full turn; do 30 times.
4. Shoulder press. Place hands close together, horizontal to mat against the wall. Step back with head between arms and press open the shoulder angle. Hold stretch for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
5. Arm circles. Do 50 small arm circles in each direction; keep palms facing up.
6. Hollow hold and Superman pulse. Do 3 sets of 10 of each skill.
7. Back handspring with barrel. Jump backward onto barrel mat and do back handspring; do 10 times.
8. Straight jump, tuck jump, straddle jump, jump full turn. Do 10 times.
9. Straddle jump up and down mats. Do 10 times.
10. Wrist curl. Support forearm with free hand. Using a light weight, do 3 sets of 5 each way for each wrist.
11. Back handspring. Do 10 down an incline mat with a spot if necessary.
12. Kneeling flexor stretch. From a single-leg kneeling lunge, press forward, pulling kneeling foot toward buttocks. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times for each leg.



🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform cat and cow.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.

C I R C U I T

6

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 3 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 springboard if available

🕒 *Warm-Up*

- Walk on heels.
- Walk on toes.
- Perform scissor hop forward and backward, grapevine, and skip forward and backward.
- Perform cross and stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.
- Perform bridge walk forward and backward.

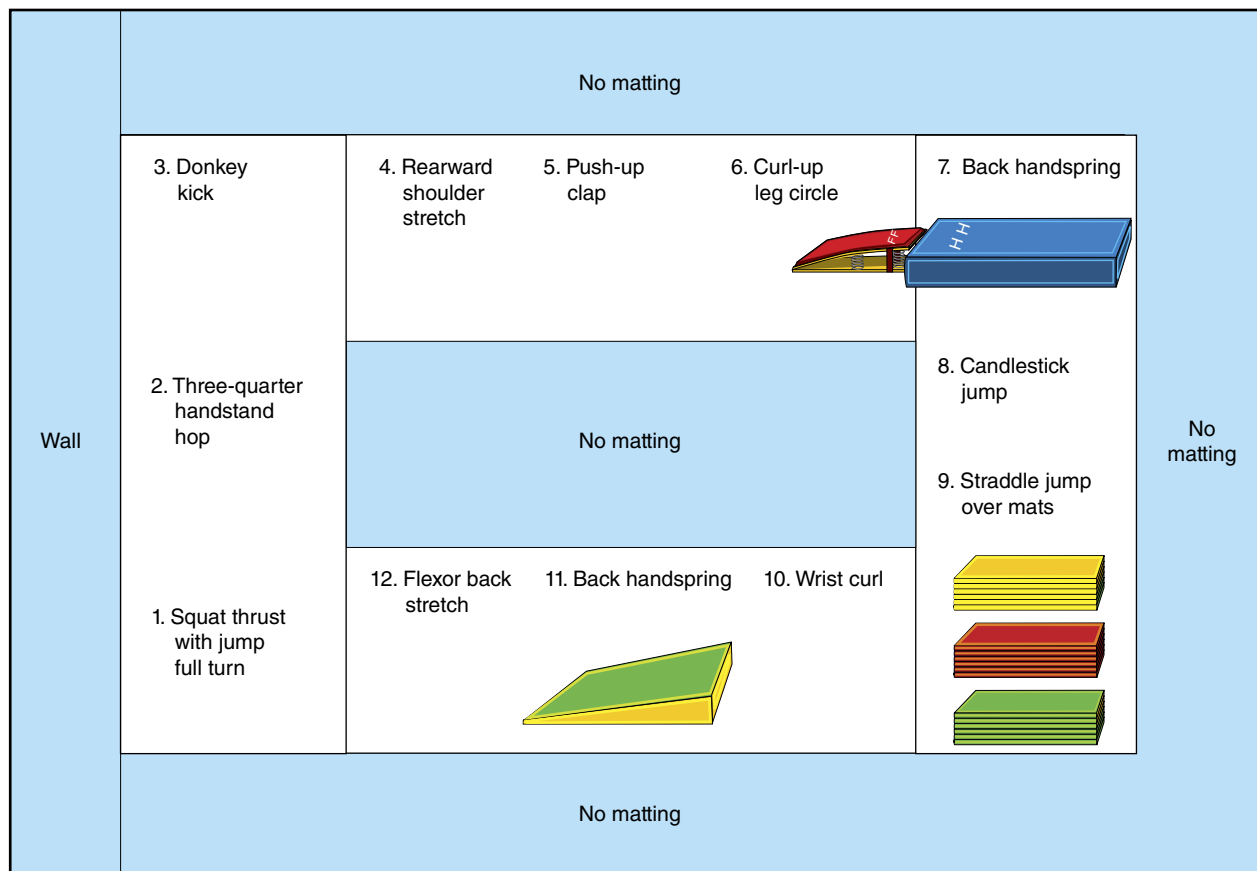
🕒 *Stations*

1. Squat thrust with jump full turn. Do 30 times.
2. Three-quarter handstand hop. Do 30 by pushing through shoulders.
3. Donkey kick. Do 3 sets of 10.
4. Rearward shoulder stretch. Stand with back to wall an arm's length away. Reach behind yourself and place hands on wall. Bend knees with hips open, stretching the arms. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
5. Push-up clap. Do 3 sets of 10.
6. Curl-up leg circle. From hollow hold position, do 3 sets of 10 small leg circles to the right and 10 to the left.
7. Back handspring. Use a springboard for the entry and land on an 8-inch mat; do 10 times.
8. Candlestick jump. Do shoulder stand, roll up to a stand and do straight jump, then roll back to a shoulder stand; do 30 times.
9. Straddle jump over mats. Do 10 times.

10. Wrist curl. Support forearm with free hand. Using a light weight, do 3 sets of 5 each way for each wrist.
11. Back handspring. Use incline mat; provide barrel mat for support if necessary. Do 10 times.
12. Flexor back stretch. Lying on your belly, bend one leg and reach behind to opposite side. Hold stretch for 10 seconds on each side; do 3 times.

Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform bent-body arm stretch.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.



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Combinations of All Skills



Up to this point, students have learned some fundamental skills in tumbling. They have become more proficient at basic motor skills and developed agility and coordination. Their muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility are enhanced. Keeping your program exciting and dynamic with the many activities in the circuits allows students to enjoy physical activity and healthier, stronger bodies through a program that is organized, structured, and safe.

Your students will now have the opportunity to demonstrate all of their acquired skills in these combination circuits. The first three circuits deal with the elements students learned in chapters 6 through 8. These circuits give students time to practice or fine-tune their recently acquired skills. The last three circuits combine all of the skills from the entire book so that students can demonstrate their creativity and proficiency in tumbling.

While performing these circuits, students will develop even more flexibility and strength in the following areas:

Flexibility

- Neck flexibility is highlighted during rolling.
- Wrist flexibility is increased through hyperflexion in all weight-bearing skills.
- Upper-back, lower-back, and flexor flexibility is enhanced in the rolling and arching skills.
- Groin flexibility is developed during splitting and straddling skills.
- Shoulder flexibility is acquired in all inverted skills.

Strength

- Leg strength is developed in all skills through push-offs, landings, and leg swings.

- Arm strength supports the body during inverted skills.
- Core strength allows students to maintain body positions during the skills.

These circuits aid in the review of the content from previous chapters. Remember that this is a review for your students, but you may also need to review content from the previous chapters. Safety and spotting for all of the skills are paramount. Also, don't forget the cues! Because these are skills that were previously introduced, the adaptations remain the same as mentioned previously.

Once these circuits are complete, your students should be able to combine many skills that may be developed into miniroutines in which they perform tumbling passes down the mat. Give them lists of skills to put together, or let them be creative. A skill that lands on one foot is best connected to a skill taking off one foot. Likewise, a skill that lands on two feet is better with a two-foot takeoff skill. They may also want to include jumps and balances between their tumbling skills. Have fun!

C I R C U I T

1

Combination of Front Limbers, Backbend Kickovers, and Front and Back Handsprings

Ⓢ *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

Ⓢ *Warm-Up*

- Perform Achilles stretch I.
- Perform ankle walk.
- Jog, skip, and gallop forward and backward.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform pike stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform kneeling wrist stretch.
- Perform bridge with hopping legs.

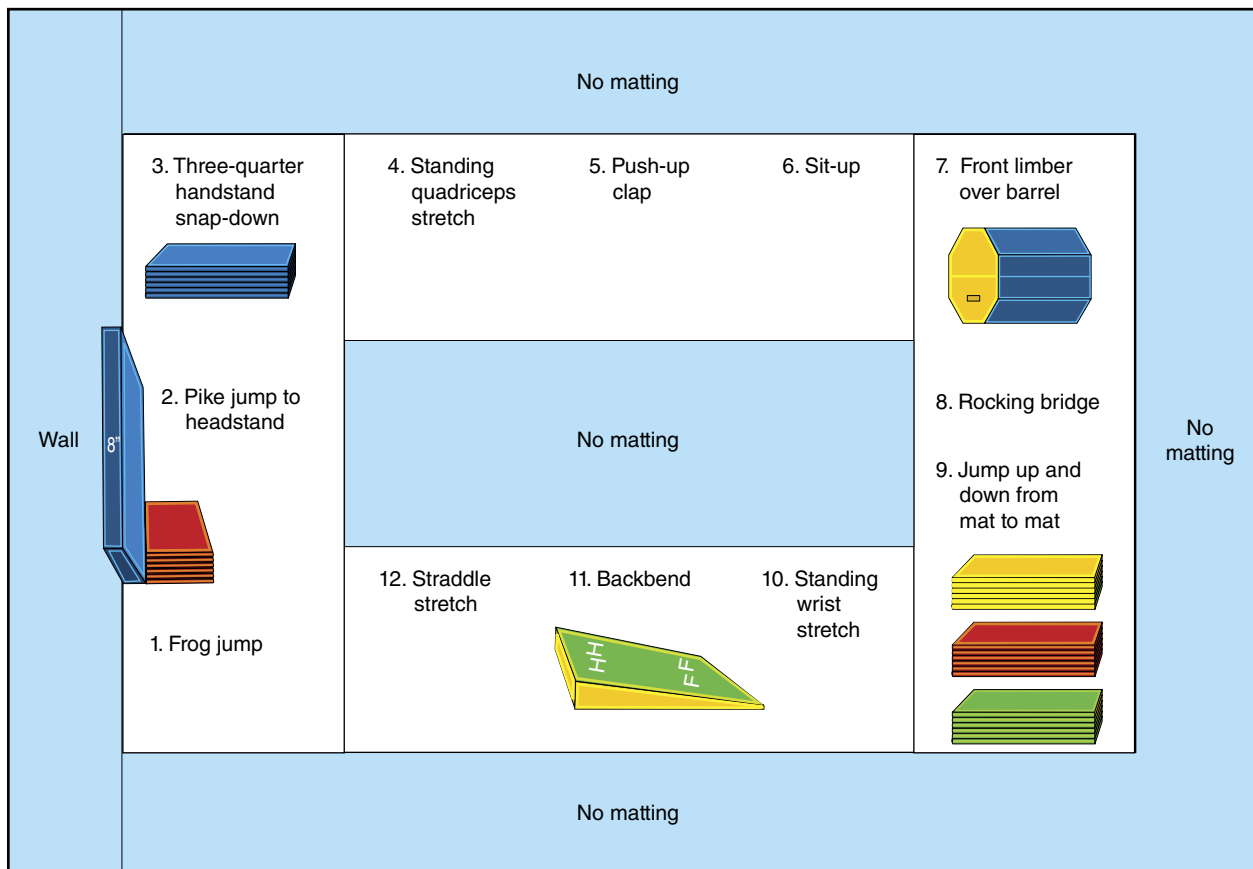
Ⓢ *Stations*

1. Frog jump. Do 3 sets of 10.
2. Pike jump to headstand. With your hands and head in a headstand position on a mat, jump in pike position from the floor mat to a headstand against the wall; do 5 times.
3. Three-quarter handstand snap-down. Kick up to a three-quarter handstand and then snap down to standing position; do 10 times.

4. Standing quadriceps stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
5. Push-up clap. Do 3 sets of 10.
6. Sit-up. Do 30.
7. Front limber over barrel. Do 10 times.
8. Rocking bridge. Do 3 sets of 10. Do tuck and roll 3 times between sets.
9. Jump up and down from mat to mat. Do 10 times.
10. Standing wrist stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.
11. Backbend. Perform up incline mat; do 10 times.
12. Straddle stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.

🕒 Cool-Down

- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform bounce, bounce, straighten.
- Perform tuck and roll.
- Perform triceps stretch I.



C I R C U I T

2

Combination of Front Limbers, Backbend Kickovers, and Front and Back Handsprings

⌚ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

⌚ Warm-Up

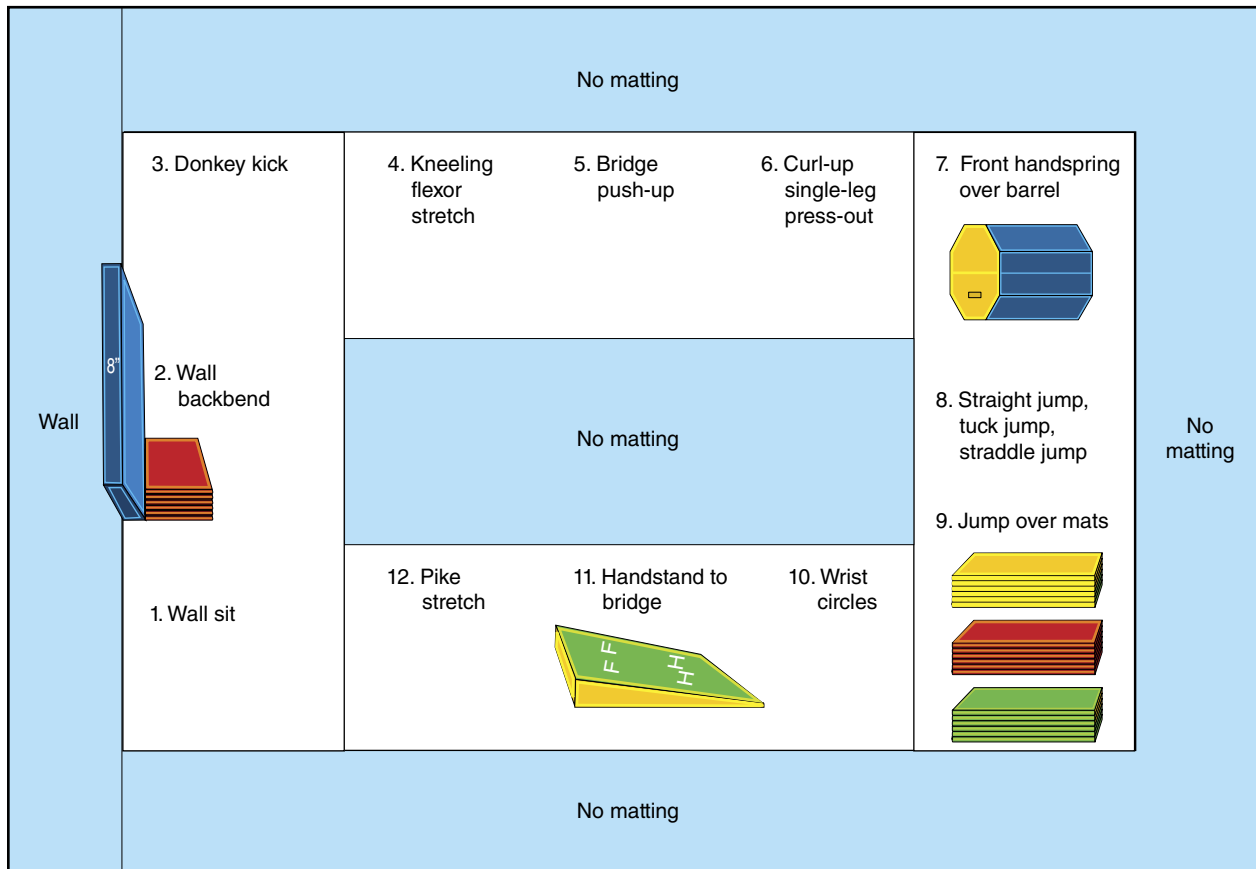
- Perform Achilles stretch II.
- Perform walking leg kick forward and backward.
- Jog kicking toward buttocks, then lifting knees forward, then leaping from one foot to the other.
- Perform trunk rotation.
- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform seal walk in place.
- Perform bridge single-leg hold.

⌚ Stations

1. Wall sit. Hold the position while you count to 99 by 3s.
2. Wall backbend. Walk hands up and down wall to folded mat; do 5 times.
3. Donkey kick. Do 10 forward and 10 backward.
4. Kneeling flexor stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times for each leg.
5. Bridge push-up. Do 3 sets of 10.
6. Curl-up single-leg press-out. Do 25 press-outs for each leg.
7. Front handspring over barrel. Use a hurdle and do 10 times.
8. Straight jump, tuck jump, straddle jump. Do 10 times.
9. Jump over mats. Do 10 times.
10. Wrist circles. Do 30 in each direction.
11. Handstand to bridge. Do a handstand to a bridge going up incline mat 10 times.
12. Pike stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 5 times.

⌚ Cool-Down

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform cat and cow stretch.
- Perform triceps stretch II.



CIRCUIT

3

Combination of Front Limbers, Backbend Kickovers, and Front and Back Handsprings

⌚ Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 4 folded mats
- 1 8-inch skill cushion, if wall is not matted
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

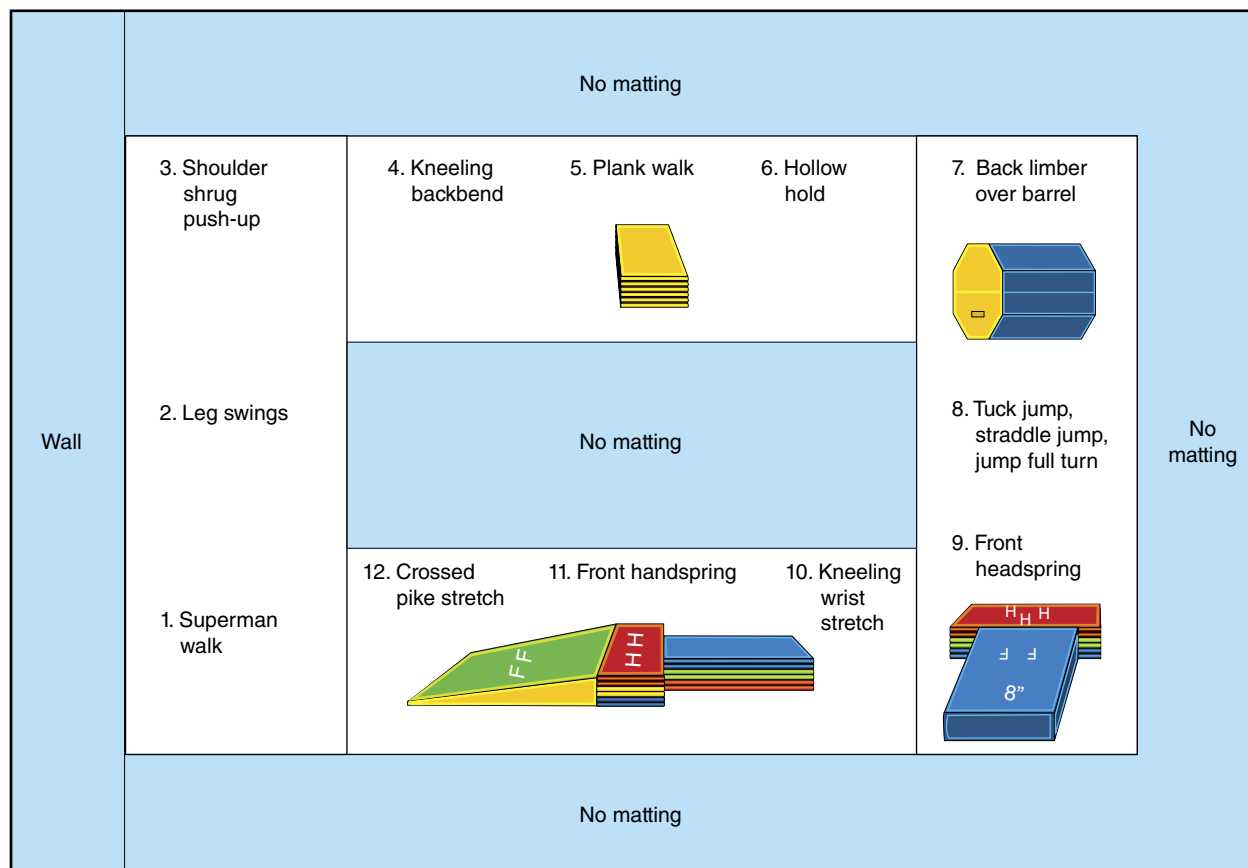
⌚ Warm-Up

- Perform Achilles stretch III.
- Perform ankle circles I.

- Perform kneeling lunge jump 10 times each leg, jogging knees in place, jogging kicking buttocks in place.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform washing machine, dryer, and wrist roller coaster.
- Perform bridge walk in a circle in both directions.

🔗 Stations

1. Superman walk. Do 30 with each leg.
2. Leg swings. Swing leg forward 10 times and then hold for 10 seconds; swing leg backward 10 times and then hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with opposite leg.
3. Shoulder shrug push-up. Do 30.
4. Kneeling backbend. Do 10.
5. Plank walk. In plank position, walk hands up and down mat 25 times.
6. Hollow hold. Hold for 30 seconds; do 3 times.
7. Back limber over barrel. Do 10 times.
8. Tuck jump, straddle jump, jump full turn. Do 5 times.
9. Front headspring. Do off a folded mat 10 times.
10. Kneeling wrist stretch. Hold 10 seconds; do 3 times.
11. Front handspring. Starting with a hurdle, perform the skill down an incline mat 10 times.
12. Crossed pike stretch. Hold for 10 seconds; do 3 times.



🕒 *Cool-Down*

- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform lower-back roll.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.
- Perform kneeling flexor stretch.

C I R C U I T



4

Combination of All Skills

🕒 *Equipment*

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 1 folded mat
- 2 8-inch skill cushions, if wall is not matted
- 1 octagonal mat
- 1 incline mat bifolded or 2 8-inch skill cushions stacked

🕒 *Warm-Up*

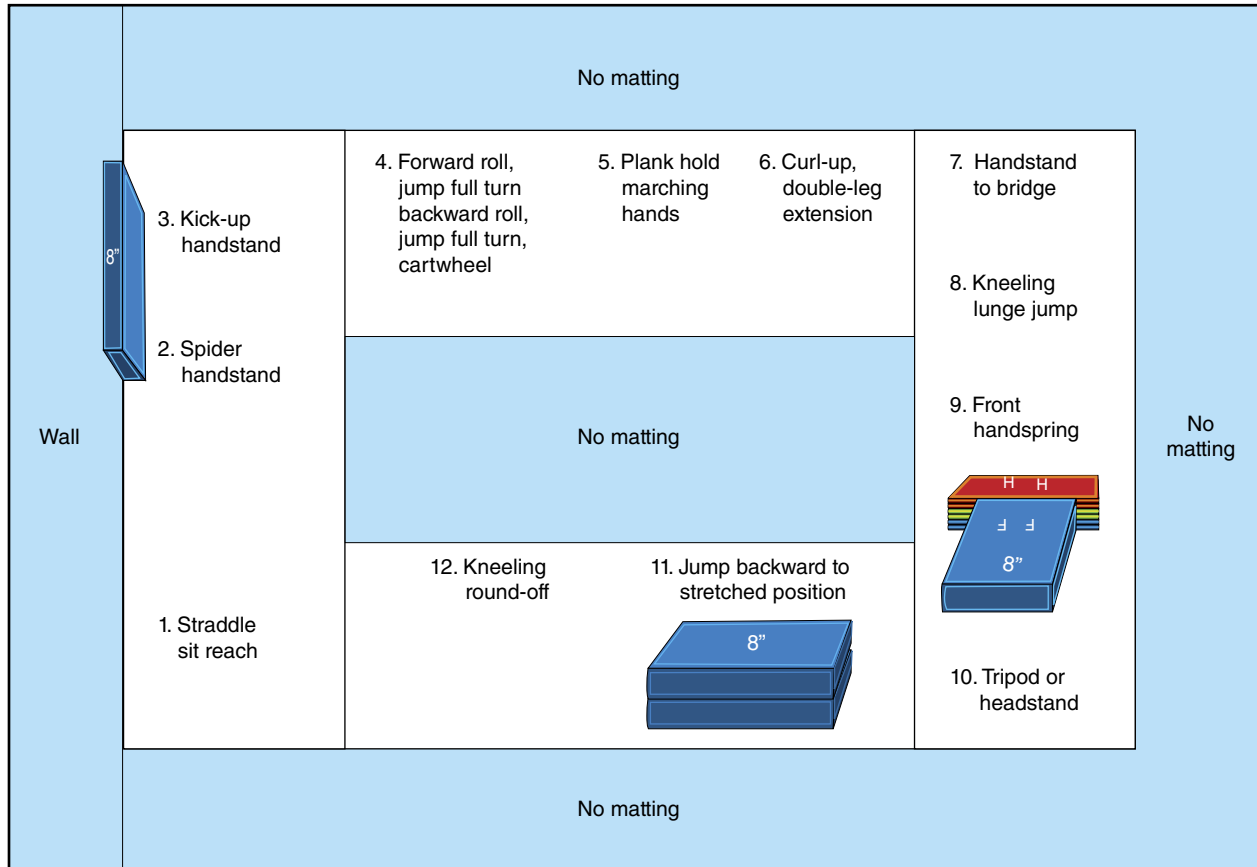
- Perform Achilles stretch IV.
- Perform feet positions.
- Perform 10 squat thrusts, 10 candlestick jumps, and 25 jumping jacks.
- Perform straddle stretch.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform wrist circles.
- Perform kneeling backbend.

🕒 *Stations*

1. Straddle sit reach. Lift one leg and pulse; do 25 times for each leg.
2. Spider handstand. Hold for 10 seconds; do 5 times.
3. Kick-up handstand. Hold for 10 seconds; do 5 times.
4. Forward roll, jump full turn, backward roll, jump full turn, cartwheel. Do 5 times.
5. Plank hold marching hands. In plank position, march 25 times with each hand.
6. Curl-up, double-leg extension. Do 25 times.
7. Handstand to bridge. Adaptation: use octagonal mat. Do 10 times.
8. Kneeling lunge jump. Do 20 for each leg.
9. Front handspring. Do 10 off a folded mat.
10. Tripod or headstand. Do 5 times.
11. Jump backward to stretched position. Jump backward and land in a stretched position on folded cheese mat or two 8-inch stacked mats; do 10 times.
12. Kneeling round-off. Do 10 times.

Cool-Down

- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform flexor back stretch.
- Perform shoulder press.
- Perform wrist roller coaster.



CIRCUIT

5

Combination of All Skills

Equipment

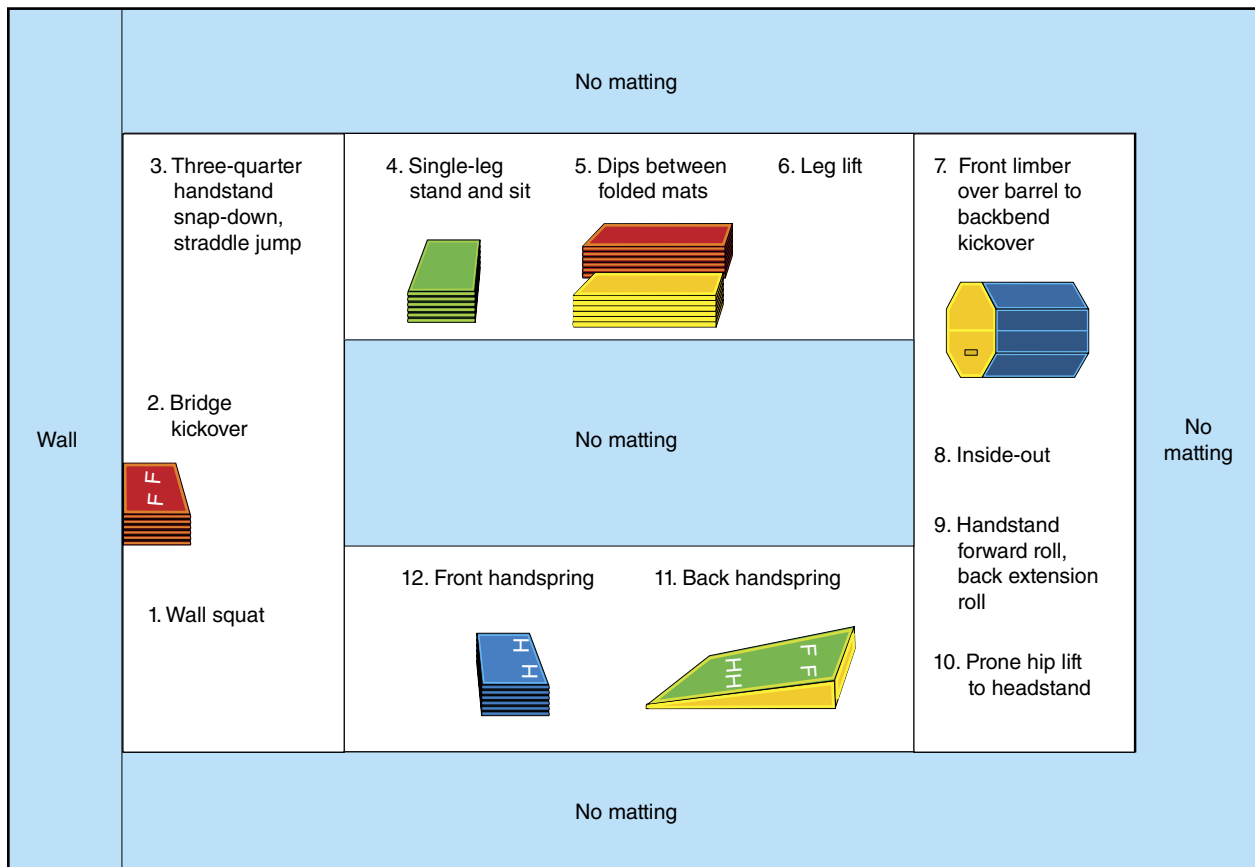
- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 5 folded mats
- 1 incline mat
- 1 octagonal mat

🕒 **Warm-Up**

- Perform elevator walk.
- Perform pronounced walk.
- Perform bear walk, frog jump, and donkey kick; finish with scissor hop forward and backward.
- Perform kneeling flexor stretch.
- Perform kneeling hamstring stretch.
- Perform standing straddle stretch.
- Perform standing wrist stretch.
- Perform big rock.

🕒 **Stations**

1. Wall squat. Do 20 times.
2. Bridge kickover. Do 5 times with folded mat.
3. Three-quarter handstand snap-down, straddle jump. After each three-quarter handstand, snap down and do a straddle jump; do 10 times.
4. Single-leg stand and sit. Do 10 times for each leg; you may do a two-leg stand and sit if needed.
5. Dips between folded mats. Do 20 times.
6. Leg lift. Do 30 times.
7. Front limber over barrel to backbend kickover. Do 10 times.



8. Inside-out. Do 5 times in each direction.
9. Handstand forward roll, back extension roll. Do 5 times.
10. Prone hip lift to headstand. Do 5 times.
11. Back handspring. Do 10 down an incline mat.
12. Front handspring. Do with or without folded mat; do 10 times.

Cool-Down

- Perform butterfly.
- Perform standing pike stretch.
- Perform cat and cow.
- Perform pike sit arm stretch.

C I R C U I T



6

Combination of All Skills

Equipment

- Floor mats (determined by your situation, as discussed in chapter 1)
- 2 8-inch skill cushions, if wall is not matted
- 1 octagonal mats
- 1 springboard

Warm-Up

- Walk on heels.
- Walk on toes.
- Perform scissor hop forward and backward, grapevine, skip forward and backward, donkey kick forward.
- Perform cross and stretch.
- Perform modified hurdle stretch.
- Perform inchworm.
- Perform wrist stretch with wall.
- Perform bridge single-leg hold.

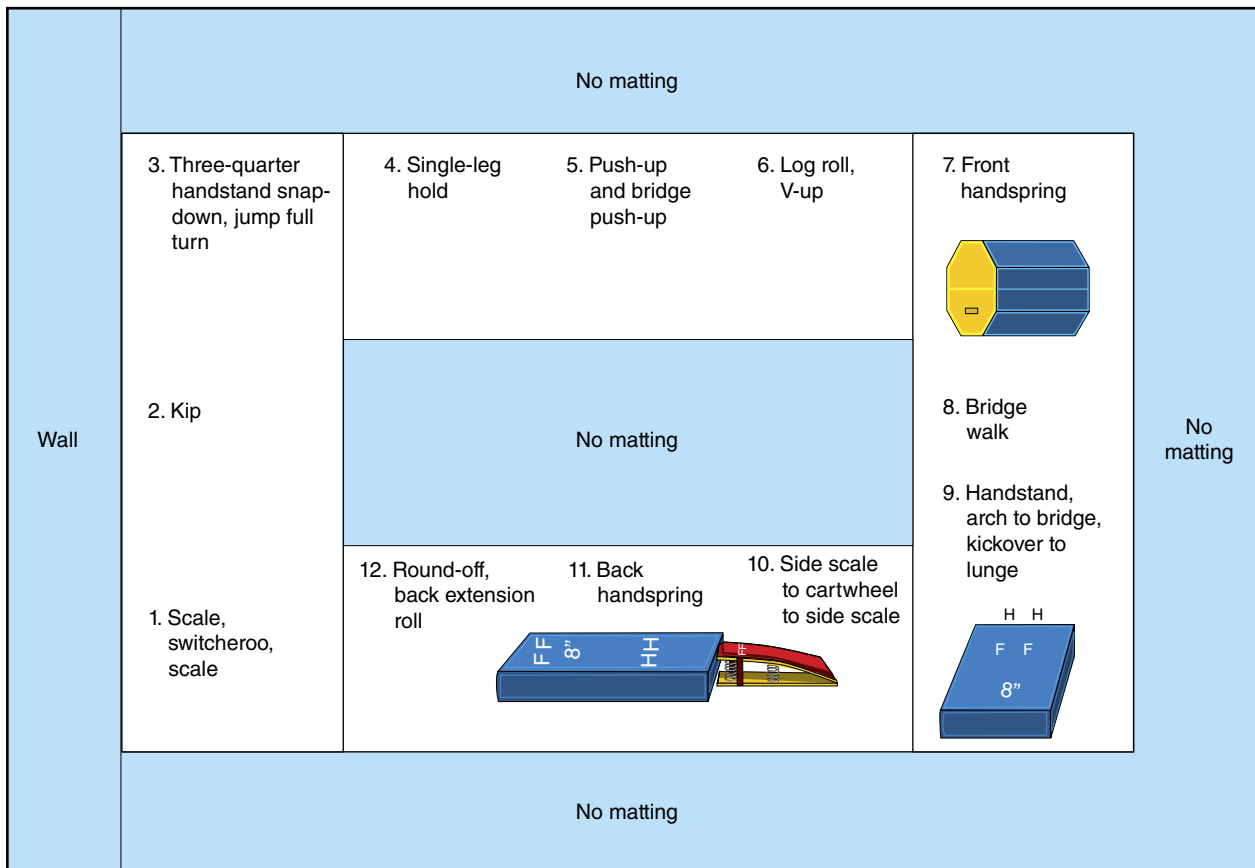
Stations

1. Scale, switcheroo, scale. Do 10 times.
2. Kip (ninja turtle to upright standing position). Do 10 times.
3. Three-quarter handstand snap-down, jump full turn. Kick up to three-quarter handstand and then snap legs down and do jump full turn; do 10 times.
4. Single-leg hold to front, side, and rear for 5 seconds in each direction; do 3 times each leg.
5. Push-up and bridge push-up. Do 20 push-ups and 10 bridge push-ups.
6. Log roll, V-up. Do 10 in each direction.

7. Front handspring. Do with or without a barrel 10 times.
8. Bridge walk. Take 10 steps forward and 10 steps backward.
9. Handstand, arch to bridge, kickover to lunge. Do 10 times.
10. Side scale to cartwheel to side scale. Do 10 times.
11. Back handspring. Perform from a springboard. Do 10 times.
12. Round-off, back extension roll. Do 10 times; replace the back extension roll with backward roll if needed.

Cool-Down

- Perform side lunge.
- Perform standing pike step stretch.
- Perform bent-body arm stretch.
- Perform standing quadriceps stretch.



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Appendix

Rubrics

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Rubric for Forward Rolls

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Tucks head	4	3	2	1
Lifts hips and rolls	4	3	2	1
Sits up	4	3	2	1
Stands up at finish	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skill with ease, makes it look effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skill with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skill disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Points toes	4	3	2	1
Straightens legs in middle of skill	4	3	2	1
Rolls smoothly from start to finish	4	3	2	1
Keeps legs together entire time	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Rubric for Backward Rolls

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Places hands properly	4	3	2	1
Rolls hips over head	4	3	2	1
Pushes with hands	4	3	2	1
Stands up at finish	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skill with ease, makes it look effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skill with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skill disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Points toes	4	3	2	1
Straightens legs in middle of roll	4	3	2	1
Rolls smoothly from start to finish	4	3	2	1
Keeps legs together entire time	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Rubric for Cartwheels

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Places hands correctly	4	3	2	1
Kicks legs up	4	3	2	1
Understands 1-2-3-4 rhythm (hand-hand-foot-foot)	4	3	2	1
Stands up at completion	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skill with ease, makes it look effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skill with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skill disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Keeps legs straight	4	3	2	1
Points toes	4	3	2	1
Body and legs pass through vertical	4	3	2	1
Finishes fully erect and in control	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Rubric for Combinations of Rolls and Cartwheels

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Able to sequentially connect skills	4	3	2	1
Understands changes in body positions when performing a variety of skills	4	3	2	1
Understands how entries and exits of skills determine compatibility of combinations	4	3	2	1
Shows a reasonable level of comfort with skills introduced thus far	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skills with ease, looks effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skills with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skills disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Points toes	4	3	2	1
Legs are straight at appropriate times	4	3	2	1
Demonstrates ease and smoothness in all connections	4	3	2	1
Shows clear distinction between skills being performed	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Rubric for Front Limbers

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Kicks to handstand	4	3	2	1
Understands shoulder shift to bridge	4	3	2	1
Rocks from hands to feet	4	3	2	1
Stands up tall at finish	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skill with ease, looks effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skill with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skill disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Demonstrates control in handstand phase	4	3	2	1
Shows straight legs and pointed toes	4	3	2	1
Is rhythmically smooth from start to finish	4	3	2	1
Is able to stick landing (not move feet) with control	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Rubric for Backbend Kickovers

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Reaches backward to bridge	4	3	2	1
Balances on arms and one leg	4	3	2	1
Kicks free leg and pushes off support leg	4	3	2	1
Stands up with arms by ears at finish	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skill with ease, looks effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skill with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skill disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Shows straight legs and pointed toes	4	3	2	1
Shows smooth transfer of weight from backbend to kick	4	3	2	1
Passes through a T position (like Superman scale) coming up from the kickover	4	3	2	1
Shows good control and balance at completion of skill	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Rubric for Front Handsprings

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Hurdles and kicks to handstand	4	3	2	1
Pushes off hands	4	3	2	1
Focuses eyes on hands and keeps arms by ears	4	3	2	1
Lands on feet	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skill with ease, looks effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skill with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skill disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Demonstrates straight legs and pointed toes	4	3	2	1
Demonstrates speed and power	4	3	2	1
Stands up with tight body on landing	4	3	2	1
Shows controlled rebound (jump)	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Rubric for Back Handsprings

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Sits back and jumps	4	3	2	1
Keeps arms straight	4	3	2	1
Pushes from arms and snaps legs down	4	3	2	1
Lands on feet	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skill with ease, looks effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skill with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skill disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Demonstrates straight legs and pointed toes	4	3	2	1
Demonstrates speed and power	4	3	2	1
Skill travels long and low, not up and down	4	3	2	1
Rebounds (jumps) with tight body and controlled landing	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Rubric for Combinations of All Skills

Name of student: _____

Performance of Required Element

- 4 = All requirements fulfilled
- 3 = 3 requirements fulfilled
- 2 = 2 requirements fulfilled
- 1 = Unable to perform skill

Is able to sequentially connect skills	4	3	2	1
Understands changes in body positions when performing a variety of skills	4	3	2	1
Understands differences in execution of slow- and fast-moving skills	4	3	2	1
Shows reasonable level of comfort with all skills introduced	4	3	2	1

Quality of Performance

- 4 = Performs skills with ease, looks effortless, pays attention to detail (e.g., points toes)
- 3 = Performs skills with ease but lacks refinement
- 2 = Performs skills disjointedly and lacks confidence
- 1 = Does not perform skill with comfort or control

Points toes	4	3	2	1
Legs are straight at appropriate times	4	3	2	1
Demonstrates ease and smoothness in all connections	4	3	2	1
Shows clear distinction between skills being performed	4	3	2	1

Class Behavior

- 4 = Always practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 3 = Often practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 2 = Sometimes practices safely, works diligently, respects others, and maintains self-control
- 1 = Seldom practices safely, works diligently, respects others, or maintains self-control

Practices safely	4	3	2	1
Works diligently	4	3	2	1
Respects others	4	3	2	1
Maintains self-control	4	3	2	1

From K. Ortiz, 2013, *Tumbling basics* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

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About the Author

Kathleen M. Ortiz is an instructor in the physical education department at Boston University. She is also an instructor in the physical education department at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. Ortiz was an adjunct professor for 10 years, teaching tumbling and gymnastics to future physical educators at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey. She has coached athletes in gymnastics and cheerleading up to the Olympic level for more than 40 years and served as a gymnastics official in colleges for more than 30 years. Ortiz has been involved with the Special Olympics for more than 35 years. She has owned a gymnastics club and directed gymnastics programs, and she has been a head coach and written manuals for gymnastics clubs.



Ortiz received her bachelor of science degree in education from Ohio State University. She has been involved in many professional associations, such as USA Gymnastics and National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges. Ortiz served as the state education director in New Jersey for eight years and in Illinois for three years and is safety certified in gymnastics. She also served as the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) gymnastics rules interpreter from 2000 to 2011. Ortiz was president of the State Gymnastics Officials for five years.