



***Special
Olympics***
British Columbia

Rhythmic Gymnastics Skill Book
Updated August 2012

Coaching Principles

STEPS IN TEACHING A DRILL

1. Introduce
2. Demonstrate
3. Explain
4. Organize
5. Execute
6. Correct
7. Practice

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Drills should relate specifically to what you are teaching.
- Athletes should be made aware of how drills relate to the sport.
- Drills should only be a part of your practice.
- Drills should be introduced at a slow pace and then gradually increased
- Drills should be accommodated for fitness, age and abilities.
- Drills should move from simple to complex. First perform drills that will help keep the interest of athletes.
- Drills should relate to the system of play that the athletes will use.
- Perform a variety of drills to prevent monotony.
- As fatigue sets in, technique deteriorates so provide frequent rest periods.

EXECUTION PRINCIPLES

- Review the drill procedure before practice so you know how it works.
- When introducing a new drill, walk a group of athletes through it so others can see how it is performed.
- Avoid talking too much, get the athletes performing, they will learn by doing.
- When errors occur, the drill should be stopped momentarily to correct errors.
- Praise those athletes doing the drill well and encourage those having difficulty.

If equipment is necessary, ensure it is set up before so that progression.

Basic Motor Skills

These exercises help to improve both balance and coordination and reinforce many of the movements used throughout rhythmic gymnastics routines.

Passe Balance:

Stand on straight leg, other leg bends at knee so pointed toe is at knee level of straight leg. Bent knee to point forward or side. Arms extended to both sides. Practice both legs, hold each for 3-5 secs. Once this is adequate, try having athlete stand/balance on toe.



Arabesque Balance:

Stand on straight leg, other leg is stretched/extend straight backwards. Extended leg should be as high as possible. Keep torso/body in an upright position. Point/aim belly button in direction of travel. Arms out to sides for balance.

Chaine Turn:

A series of $\frac{1}{2}$ (180) turns. Step right swinging left leg clockwise around so body is facing back. Step left swinging right leg clockwise around so body is facing front. Step right leg and close left. These steps should be small, keeping feet close together (the closer the feet, the faster the turn).

Tip-toe Turn:

Walk in a small tight circle on toes. Circle turns on itself.

Pencil Jump:

Straight jump. Legs together, straight. Arms swing and reach up into the air.

Split Leap:

Front leg (right) kicks up straight, back leg (left) kicks up/back straight, land on front leg (right). Usually prep this by 2 runs. Ideally have legs in the air in the same time, as straight as possible. Try to avoid a “see-saw” look. Keep body/torso up.

Basic Motor Skills

Tuck Jump:

Both knees bend at the same time and are brought up close to the chest.

Ball throws/Tosses:

- Two hand throw, two hand catch
- One hand throw, one hand catch
- One hand throw, alternating hand catch

Hoop:

Rolls on Floor with hoop:

- smooth, no wobbles

Flip/Toss Hoop

- hold it horizontal, toss hoop backwards onto itself

Rope:

Rotations with Rope:

- straight elbows, motion comes from wrists
- have rope travel in the proper plane (front, side, overhead)

Skips with Rope:

- forward skipping with straight jumps

A. Ball



Grip:

- have ball REST in hand, there should be NO gripping of ball
- practice swinging ball forward and back
- pass ball from hand to hand, should be smooth transition
- ball should be easy to knock out of hand.

Bounces:

- proper technique – not *slapping*, but *pushing* ball down and waiting for ball to come back up.
- to have ball come to proper height (to waist level)
- two hand bounces, one hand and alternating between the two
- rhythm – different speeds, and levels to make different combinations

Tosses/Throws:

- ball is *cradled* in hands, extend hands upward stretching through knees and toes, elbows must stay straight, NEVER jump while throwing.
- wait with arms extended in the air for ball, lower arms and bend knees to *cushion* ball as it is caught, there should be no sound when catching ball
- catch the ball like you are catching an egg.
- two hand throw and catch, one hand throw with two hand catch [alternating hands], one hand throw and catch.
- throw ball 2 hands and catch in crook of bent elbows
- toss ball from 2 hands to catch on back of hands and reverse
- toss ball from behind back to front (small toss over the shoulder!)
- toss ball over shoulder to catch behind back
- when throwing, do not let arms/hands get behind the head
- release the ball with fingers pointing in the direction you want the ball to travel

Skill Development - Equipment

Rolls:

Body

- on two arms, elbows stay together [use this as a way to show the different elevations in arm height can control the speed of the roll]
- one arm from hand to shoulder, make sure shoulder does not roll/curve forward. Roll down other arm from shoulder to hand
- sit ball on shoulder and roll down back, make sure body rounds forward to give a place for ball to roll
- sit in pike: roll ball up/down legs moving body with ball, stretch body as flat onto legs as possible, exaggerate the positions [flat on legs, sitting up tall]
- roll ball on legs and roll back with legs/feet, raise legs to roll ball back to lap
- roll ball on legs and toss back with feet; lift feet quickly (AT SAME TIME) as soon as ball reaches feet, bend knees a bit

Rolls

Floor

- ball should roll smoothly across floor without bounces or hops,
- place ball on ground do not drop, when placing ball on ground bend body at knees [don't stick butt into air]
- arm should extend out in direction of roll, elbows should not bend. (point in the direction you wish the ball to roll.)
- point fingers in the direction you want the ball to travel.

Skill Development - Equipment

B. Ribbon

Grip:

- index finger should always be extended down the length of the stick

Patterns:

As a general note, whatever pattern movement the end of the ribbon stick creates/draws is what will be transmitted to the ribbon.

- movement comes from wrist, elbow should be straight
- all pattern work should be off the ground
- ribbon should always be in constant motion, **NEVER LYING ON THE GROUND**
- the tighter, smaller patterns the better, try to achieve 4 to 6 patterns for length of ribbon.

-spirals

at side of body
across body/under arm
in front of body
horizontal while turning in a circle



-snakes

at side of body
across body/under arm
in front traveling down
in front travelling up
behind back on floor
in front on floor
over head

Swings/Circles:

- should not hear ribbon snap when swung
- movements should come from the shoulders
- should travel on one of the planes [front, side, overhead)

Figure Eight's

- movement comes from shoulders
- range of sizes

Skill Development - Equipment

Throws:

- small backwards toss
- sideways throw

C. Hoop

Grip

- hold hoop loosely in hand
- point index finger along the hoop
- two types overhand – with palm facing down and underhand – with the palm facing up

Swings:

- front swings require an under hand grip
- side swings require an over hand grip
- arms/elbows should be straight
- hoop should not hit/touch floor during swing, this will disrupt flight path of hoop

Passes/Exchanges:

- pass hoop around body in a fluid motion, do not switch planes.(try to keep hoop flat and horizontal to the ground)
- exchange hoop behind back, make sure vertical plane of hoop does not waiver
- keep finger along hoop to control plane

Rolls:

- roll smoothly without wobbles
- control direction of roll with finger along hoop
- extend arm/finger in the direction of roll/ have a follow through with arm and body
- make sure hoop is in vertical position when sitting/resting on floor
- Types of rolls:
 - sideways, backward and front rolls
 - place hoop with the top angled inward, roll hoop in a circle



Skill Development - Equipment

- boomerang – place hoop in front and *pull heel of hand towards ground*, this will create a back spin on the hoop.

Throws:

- finger should be extended along the hoop
- swing hoop prior to throw, extend arm in follow through motion, stretching body up onto toes
- release of hoop with fingers, arms pointing and extending in the direction you want it to travel

Rotations:

- to start rotations swing hoop from side to side.
- elbow straight, hand is vertical with thumb pointing to ceiling
- small rotations/circles with wrist cause hoop to circle- do not rotate in arms
- hoop should circle outwards (clockwise for right hand and counter clockwise for the left hand).
- rotation should occur on hand, across palm/back of hand, beneath thumb, NOT ON WRIST

D. Rope

Grip:

- always hold knotted ends
- grip should be loose, held between the thumb and index finger, make a cup to hold rope

Swings:

- rope must always keep it's shape, 'U'
- do not let end of rope flick up to disrupt it's shape.
- do not let rope touch floor, this will disturb it's flight path

Rotations/Circles:

- elbow must be straight
- motion comes from wrist circling
- rope must travel on proper plane (front, side, or overhead)

Skill Development - Equipment

Skipping:

- elbows must be straight
- motion comes from wrist
- rope does not touch/hit ground
- legs should be straight beneath body not piking forward
- toes should be pointed.
- forward, backward, cross, double, cat leaps

Throws:

- from front rotation; elbow bends into body and pushes straight up to sky
- from side rotation; elbow bends and arm pushes upward

Skill Development - Body

These exercises help athletes to learn new body skills and improve existing ones. These can be done either one person at a time across the floor, or as a group across the floor.

1. Pike Stretch

Objective: Lay body as flat on legs as possible

- legs straight in front of body (knees up and straight)
- reach arms/body flat out across legs



2. Straddle Stretch

Objective: Stretch body along both legs and out flat in the middle
Open legs as wide as possible

- keep legs/knees straight, and facing the ceiling
- reach to both sides, place bottom shoulder in front of knee
- reach flat to both sides, stretching body as long as possible
- reach flat in middle, try to have stomach touch ground (flat back)

3. Butterfly Stretch

Objective: Have knees touch floor, and body flat out to front

- reach body forward/flat as feet are brought together
- stretch and hold, then bring feet closer towards body and repeat
- bend knees and bring sides of feet together

Skill Development - Body

4. Inner Thigh Lifts

Objective: Keep body flat and straight, bottom knee to stay straight

- lay body on side
- bottom leg has flexed foot with inner thigh facing ceiling
- bend top leg up and over body,
- keep body straight and low to the ground as possible.
- raise bottom leg up and down

5. Bum Raises

Objective: Keep a steady pace between lifts and lowers

- standing, open legs shoulder width apart, bend knees and lean body forward,
- place hands flat on ground,
- keeping heels on ground and toes pointed forwards,
- raise butt until legs are almost straight and lower. Repeat.

6. Lunges

Objective: Keep thigh flat and facing the ground

- start by kneeling on ground
- keeping front leg bent at right angle with foot directly under knee, toe pointed forward
- back leg to be straight on ground
- lean body forward, place elbows on floor to the inside of the leg
- reach to outside of legs, place hand on ground and reach other up, opening body and stretching.
- alternate legs

Skill Development - Body

7. Splits

Objective: Keep hips square to front and body weight centered

- hips to be even so back leg knee and thigh are flat facing floor
- front knee is to face the ceiling
- point toe and turn foot out(don't sickle foot)
- walk hands back towards butt to center weight
- keeping body/head up hold for a count of 15
- eventually to lift and hold without hands (with assistance!)
- *to be done after lunge
- *make sure both legs are stretched

8. Relevés

Objective: Knees straight, rise high onto toe and lower to flat

- jazz first – toes and heels together
- ballet first – toes open, heels together
- on one foot – standing on one leg, the other is bent at knee with toe pointed (repeat for other leg)
- ballet third – one foot in front of the other at the instep
- ensure the body is going directly up and down and not rocking
- ensure weight is evenly distributed over the entire floor

9. Sit-ups

Objective: Lift body, keeping chest as open as possible

- arms across chest, just lift to middle back
- lift legs in air and bend knees so feet are off floor
- reach arms to sky and lift upward
- lift legs straight in air, arms straight reach to either side of feet
- bend knees to side, keeping shoulder blades on mat, reach up
- cross ankle onto bent knee, put hands behind head, touch elbow to knee
- hands on shoulders, knees bent, reach hands to touch top of knees and back to shoulders. up, up, down, down.

Skill Development - Body

10. Leg Kicks

Objective: Keep back and hips flat on the ground, legs straight.

- lay flat on back, arms extended out to the sides
- bend one knee, so foot is flat on the ground
- kick the other leg straight into the air keeping knee straight

11. Wind Sprints

Objective: Quick changes in direction, builds stamina

- lay out a course to touch a line/section 1/3 of the way to end of gym, run back to start and touch line, run and touch line 2/3 to -the end of gym, run back to start and touch line, run to end of gym, touch and run back to start.

12. Body Wave

Objective: Show movement through torso/back

- start in crouch/bent over position
- push knees forward, then hips/bum, stomach, and shoulders
- arms are to circle down and back while body waves.

13. Cat Leaps

Objective: Bring knees close to chest, jump high with quiet landing

- to start, hold hands palms down
- jump so that knees touch the bottom of palms
- knees alternate lifting, although for a second both are to be in the -air at the same time, arms are to circle down and up.

Skill Development - Body

14.Split Leap

- Objective:** Not to travel far but to travel up, obtain height in jump
- legs are to be straight, body erect,
 - take off and land on same leg
 - bent knees on landing

15.Tour Jette

- Objective:** Quick flip in air, to HIT arabesque position upon landing

- kick leg up to horizontal front, switch body direction 180° to face opposite direction, land on first leg which was elevated
- change in body direction should be sharp/quick
- higher leg kicks the better
- knees/legs should be straight

16.Chasses

- Objective:** Jump to vertical, bringing feet/legs together to a height able to point toes
- legs should cross, hit in air
 - legs should NOT seesaw/swing/gallop out in front of body, but should be positioned directly beneath torso.

Rhythmic Gymnastics Fitness

As an integral part of training, maintaining adequate fitness and incorporating fitness training into each session is highly important. Depending on the time of year, you may want to bring this element into the practice in different areas.

At the beginning of the year, it is probably easiest to include the fitness component into the warm up.

The warm up and stretching can extend into doing some leg kicks, abdominal work outs, wind sprints etc...

Doing a combination of these exercises at a good pace will elevate heart rate and challenge the cardiovascular system.



Mid season, running lines is a way to keep athlete's interest and motivation up. Have athletes line up at one end of the gymnasium and lead across the floor one at a time doing jumps, leaps and turns. Once they have completed the drill, they return to line up again. If you continue a progression that has many moves, athletes will be working on their fitness level.

Once competition season starts, the fitness component will really come from working through their routines consistently and with repetition. At this point, they should be in peak physical condition, so it is just about maintaining it.

Once the weather gets nice, have athletes bring running shoes to practice and lead the group through some jogging outside.

Practice Plan

Unstructured Free Play (10 min)

Prior to the practice athletes who have arrived early should be encouraged to participate in free play activities.

Warm Up (10-12 min)

Warm up should start with a light jog to get the athletes' heart pumping. Athletes should then gather to stretch, starting slowly and gradually involving all the muscles and body parts to be utilized in the exercise related instruction phase of the practice.

Basic Motor Skills (15-20 min)

Basic Motor Skills are defined as the very simplest movement skills (i.e. running, kicking, jumping, throwing, catching, etc). This phase starts with known content and progresses to the application of skill(s) resembling the game/competition, allowing athletes to fine-tune these basic skills to enhance the acquisition of sport skills. It should focus on one specific skill at a time. The combination of 2 or more skills will be encompassed in the next section.

Sport Specific Skills (15-20 min)

During this phase the athletes will combine several basic motor skills and practice the skills as demonstrated during the instruction. Emphasis should be placed on creating competition-like conditions (through game-like drills) during this phase.

Fitness (12-20 min)

This phase involved physical conditioning activities that are specific to the fitness needs of your sport. This is done by setting continual work/pause ratios (through circuits) for your athletes that stress the correct energy system(s). Fitness encompasses cardio, muscular strength, muscular endurance and flexibility.

Simulated Game (10-15 min; for team sports only)

During this phase athletes will compete in a competition-like setting to incorporate all the skills they have learned as well as the rules of the sport. Infractions should be called so that the athletes learn all aspects of the sport.

Cool Down (5-8 min)

Don't forget this portion. Cool downs are a vital part of a practice as they allow the heart rate to return to normal. Stretching should also be included at this time to prevent sore muscles the next day.

Evaluation/Tips (5-10 min)

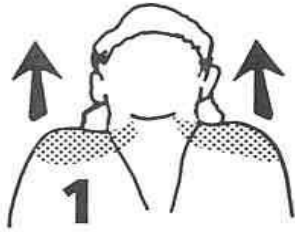
Evaluation is used to assess the effectiveness of specific activities or the total practice. It is helpful to spend a few minutes with your athletes at the end of a practice to get some feedback on the practice session. It can take the form of a 5 minute wrap session about things that went well and things that the athletes and/or coaches need to work on. The topics discussed can be built into the next week's practice. All around training should also encompass nutrition and/or mental training so it is important to discuss these items with your athletes as well.

NOTE: for additional resources, go to www.specialolympics.bc.ca and click on Resources

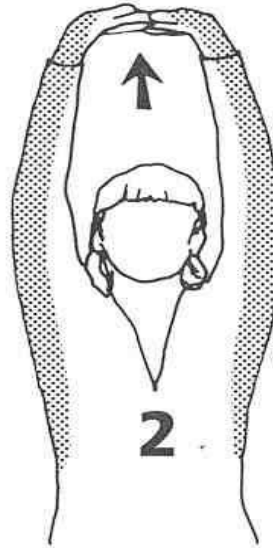
Before and After Gymnastics

Approximately 8 Minutes

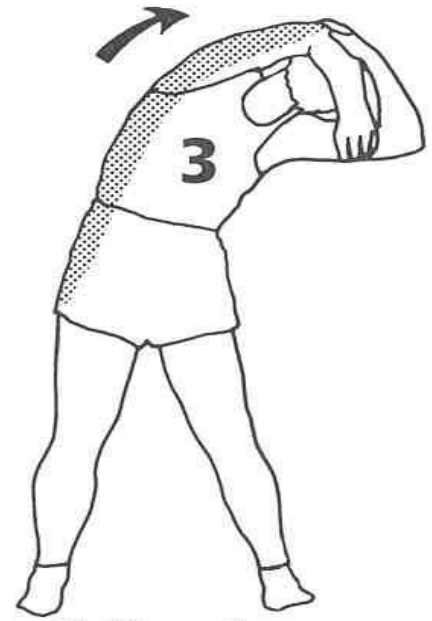
Warm up for 4–5 minutes by walking or jogging before stretching.



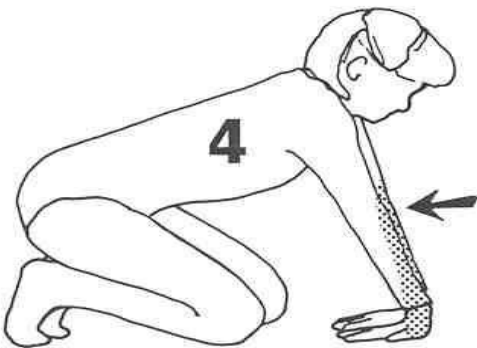
5 seconds
3 times
(page 46)



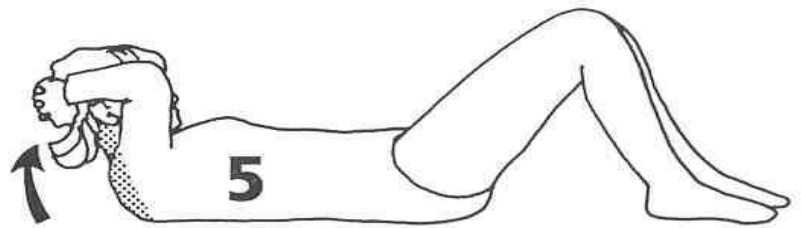
15 seconds
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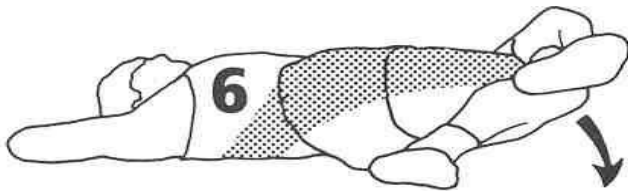
10–12 seconds
each side
(page 44)



10–15 seconds
2 times
(page 42)



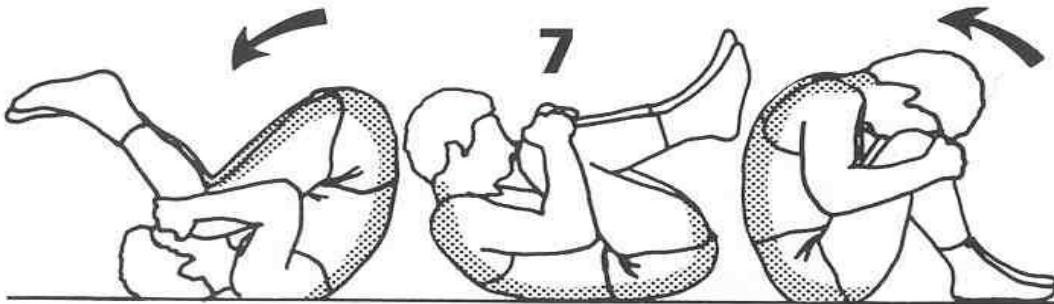
3–5 seconds
2 times
(page 27)



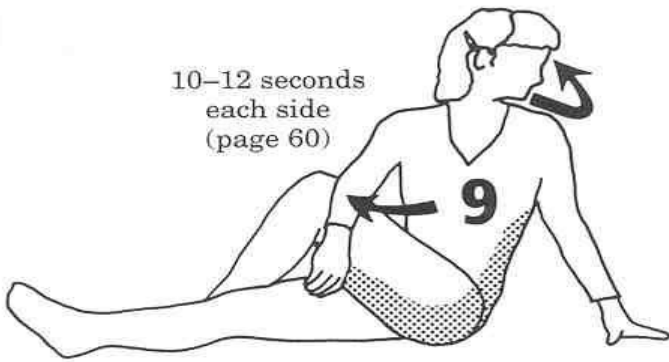
10–20 seconds
each side
(page 27)



30 seconds
(page 65)



Gently roll
6–12 times
(page 63)



10-12 seconds
each side
(page 60)



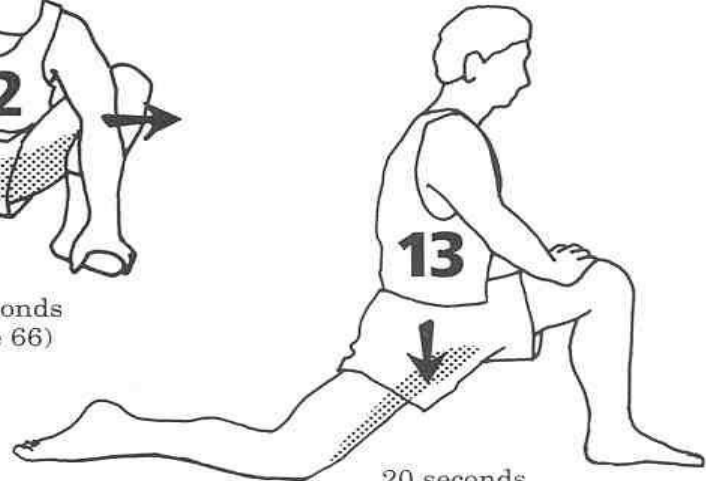
30-40 seconds
each leg
(page 39)



30-40 seconds
(page 97)



20 seconds
(page 66)



20 seconds
each leg
(page 53)



15 seconds
2 times
(page 102)



20-30 seconds
(page 65)



15-30 seconds
(page 99)

Mini-routine:

2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 16
Approx. 4 minutes