

SPOTTING IN GYMNASTICS

Spotting is an essential part of coaching gymnastics. It is physical contact between a coach and an athlete that is reasonably intended to respond to the needs of the athlete. Spotting for guidance is used when needed to orientate or position the athlete so they can replicate movements. Spotting for safety is used when needed to reduce the risk of injury or an error in performance, with the goal of designing and using safe progressions as often as you can.

When spotting for safety, if the athlete is in danger of injury, always protect their head and neck by catching them, or by rotating them to a safer landing position. If you must catch an athlete, place your arms on either side of their centre of mass. (Often you are reducing the landing impact rather than catching the athlete. Your contact with them should occur very early in the skill and you should remain in contact until their landing is secure).

Spotting Guidelines:

- Grasp athletes on the side of their hips and trunk whenever possible.
- Wear light footwear and minimal jewellery.
- Long hair should be tied back.
- Keep both your hands free.
- Get close the athlete, bend your legs, keep your back as vertical as possible.
- Communicate with the athlete.
- Respect the personal physical boundaries of the athlete.
- To move with the athlete, ensure that you slip-step sideways (rather than crossing one leg over the other).

If accidental, unintended touch occurs resulting in a violation of the athlete's personal physical boundaries, acknowledge the boundary violation and apologize to the athlete immediately. If this occurs more than two times, stop and reflect. Ask yourself what changes you can make to keep the athlete safe while also respecting their boundaries.

