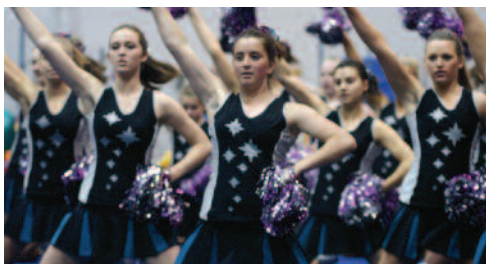


Participant

- Be aware that many gymnastics activities may be fun but are best done with a coach in the gym and not at home. Some examples include:
 - Somersaults
 - Bridging
 - Deep knee bend activities
 - Headstands
 - Acrobatic and tumbling skills
 - Pyramid and stunts
- Be appropriately attired; this includes fitted clothing. Jewellery is not to be worn in the gym. Hair should be neat and tidy and tied back if necessary. Finger nails, must be kept at an appropriate length to minimise the risk to others. Soft-soled shoes with a solid base are used for Cheerleading and Aerobics. Shoe laces must be tied. Acrobats use bare feet or gymnastic shoes.
- Dress for the conditions; be aware of the gym's temperature and dress accordingly.
- Keep the club aware and up-to-date on current and relevant medical history.
- Take regular drink breaks to replenish the body's fuels before, during and after training.
- Be aware of changes in the environment e.g. mats shifting, moving props and other members of the team.

Respect your coaches

- Always listen carefully and obey your coach's instructions.
- Use equipment only when and how instructed by your coach.



In the case of an injury

- Stop immediately if you experience an injury or illness.
- Injured gymnasts should seek prompt attention from qualified first aid personnel or a sports medicine professional.
- Injuries should be fully rehabilitated through a specific and supervised program before returning to activity.
- Injured gymnasts may still be able to undertake modified training which avoids using the injured area. Maintaining contact with coaches, friends and the gymnastic environment enhances the rehabilitation process and will help gymnasts remain motivated and in good spirits.

For further information

Gymnastics Victoria

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Prahran VIC 3181
Phone: 03 9214 6020
Fax: 03 9214 6024
Email: info@gymnasticsvictoria.org.au
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Smartplay – Sports Medicine Australia (Victorian Branch)

Sports House, 375 Albert Road,
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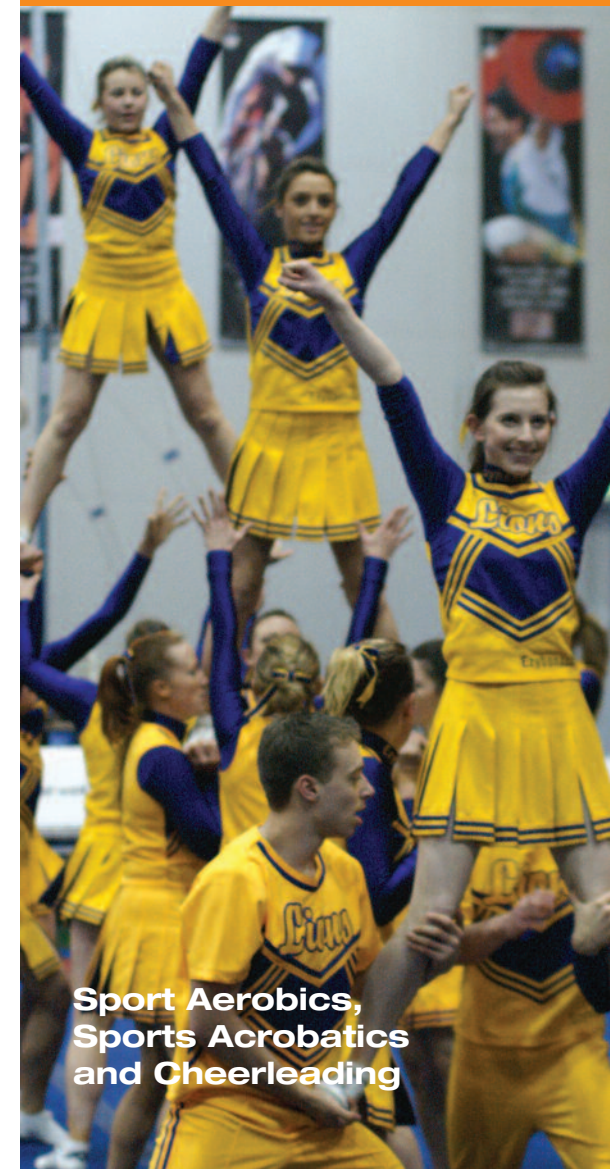
Prepared by Gymnastics Victoria with help from gymnastic coaches/administrators and support staff.

Photos courtesy of Troy Anderson and Gymnastics Victoria.

The information contained in this fact sheet is general in nature and does not constitute medical advice from your doctor or health professional. While all reasonable attempts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this fact sheet, Smartplay and associated parties, cannot accept responsibility for loss, injury, claim or damage resulting from the use or application of information within this fact sheet.



Safety in Numbers



**Sport Aerobics,
Sports Acrobatics
and Cheerleading**



Introduction to aerobic and acrobatic gymnastics, and cheerleading

Sport Aerobics, Sports Acrobatics and Cheerleading are three new exciting, primarily team based, gymnastics sports.

Sport Aerobics is fast paced with vibrant music usually performed in pairs or groups but can be individual.

Sports Acrobatics involves both balance and tempo routines with participants performing balances, tumbling and dance.

Cheerleading is poms, chants and stunts set to music.

Gymnastics is a sports industry leader in club development through the Club 10 Quality Assurance Program. This Program enables affiliated clubs to meet specific standards of club operation, including



risk management, equipment maintenance, coach accreditation and member protection. Participating clubs can be readily recognised by the Club 10 logo.

Important information

Due to the exciting, energetic and challenging nature of gymnastics, injuries may occur, as is the case with any physical activity. Acrobatics and Cheerleading have the extra responsibility for safety of participants performing at a height.

Some common injuries which may occur in gymnastics include landing and repetition injuries, and collisions between athletes and/or props.

Correct management of these injuries and returning to activity only once an injury is fully healed will help prevent re-injury.

The following information helps to highlight the common responsibilities of key personnel within acrobatic activities to minimise the risk of injury to participants.

Coach responsibilities

Legal responsibilities

- Provide a safe environment.
- Adequately plan activities.
- Evaluate athletes for injury and incapacity.
- Provide safe and proper equipment.
- Warn gymnasts of the inherent risks of the sport.
- Closely supervise activities.
- Know first aid.
- Ensure clear, written rules for training and general conduct are followed.
- Keep adequate records.

Extract from "Update Logbook" Coach Accreditation-Australian Sports Commission.

Other responsibilities

- Be appropriately qualified for the gymsport and level being coached, be registered with Gymnastics Australia and keep all qualifications up-to-date.
- Annual updating is a required part of professional development.
- Complete the Managing the Risks of Coaching (MRC) compulsory online study unit. MRC focuses on safe, controlled learning environments and reducing and managing risk.
- Ensure each gymnast participates at the appropriate level for their ability, commitment and number of training hours. For skills including pyramids, aerial work and stunts, ensure the selection of placement is based on physical capabilities and weight/strength ratios.



- Plan lessons beginning with a warm up to ensure the gymnast's body is ready for the class. Strength, conditioning and flexibility should be a focus to prepare for skill development. A cool down to minimise muscle tightness should end the session.
- Teach appropriate progressions for each skill and ensure that the participant has the necessary strength, conditioning and flexibility before embarking on harder skills.
- Be proficient in 'spotting'. Spotting is used to assist gymnasts as required and provide a 'safety net' for pyramids and stunts; it is not to carry the participant through the skill. In Cheerleading performances, a spotter is required to help control the building of, or dismounting from a stunt.
- Safely handle props used for Cheerleading.
- Ensure extra matting (scatter or crash mats) is used when teaching new skills or stunts.
- Use correct hand grips and lifting techniques.

Club responsibilities

When a club affiliates with Gymnastics Victoria, a number of standards must be met which help ensure a safer environment is provided for gymnasts and officials.

- Programs are planned catering for individual needs and allow participants to progress at their own pace.
- Participants' medical histories are kept on file and known to relevant club personnel.
- A current First-Aider is on site and accessible at all times.
- A list of local emergency contacts is available.
- Ice is readily available.
- Club safety rules are displayed and enforced.
- Floor areas should be level, firm and free from obstruction. A sprung floor may be required for competitive levels.
- Matting in landing areas is non-slip, even and without gaps.
- Consideration is given to ceiling height, floor surface, lighting and heating/ventilation.