Injury Prevention in the Competitive Gymnast

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Injury Prevention - Begins and Ends with the Coach

- The coach has the largest influence over injury prevention.
  - Proper spotting
  - Proper use of mats and training aids to assist the gymnast
  - Proper supervision in practice
Injury Prevention
What Can You Control?

- Proper set-up and maintenance of equipment
  - Replace old equipment/mats - “holes in the floor”
  - Mats too short or too narrow create ledges for gymnasts to land on
  - Separation of mats creating a gap they can step into
  - Type of spring board – too firm or too soft/unstable

- Skill selection and skill progression for the gymnast’s ability
  - Use the code to assist the gymnast – less is sometimes more

- Training and conditioning plan for the gymnast per season and per career
  - Skill development: part routines: routines
  - Strength development: power/plyo’s
  - Hard landings, soft landings
  - Routine ready?

- Training and conditioning plan per practice
  - Number of hours per practice
  - Hard floor and hard vault on same day?
  - Conditioning legs to fatigue then having the gymnast vault?
  - Flexibility- static and dynamic, effect on power
Injury Prevention
What Can You Control?

- Knowing the gymnast’s physical capabilities
  - Is she a strong, powerful gymnast or a flexible, graceful gymnast?
  - Better at salto’s versus twists, better at dance versus tumble.
  - Strength to weight ratio
  - Too flexible and too tight can both lead to injury
    - Shoulders (replace Healy with a Khorkina)
    - Hips/back

- Knowing the gymnast’s mental ability
  - What can she comprehend
  - How much can she comprehend at one time
  - Mental fatigue/breakdown leads to mistakes in timing and positioning that leads to injury
  - What is her body language telling you?

- Nutritional status
  - Proper food and fluid intake inside and outside of practice
Injury Prevention
The Gymnast Needs to Pay Attention To their Coach

Injury Prevention: The Basics

- Theraband exercises for the shoulder, ankles, and wrists
- Birdseed Bucket
- Static and dynamic balance training
Injury Prevention: The Basics

- Tri-plane stretches
- Core stabilization
- Pilates

- Body Blade
- Swiss ball spinal
- Wobble Board
- Mini-tramp
- Jump Rope
Do you have any questions?

• Use of tape?
• Use of wrist/ankle brace?
• Use of ice?
• Use of pads?
• Etc.