



SKILLS AND DRILLS

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# TUMBLING

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Do you still fear that back handspring? Can't do anything on a gym floor? Is it a big problem when the spotter steps away? If so, then it's time to overcome that fear of tumbling!

Gymnastics has become an integral part of cheerleading, and that's why it's crucial to be able to perform your best, in any situation. Although we are all athletes, much of what we do is simply a mental game - learning to train your brain as well as your body.

First, you must not let the skill take control of you. Remember that you decide what happens. Visualize yourself doing the skill perfectly on every type of surface. Think about executing a back handspring with ease on gravel or concrete. Picture yourself mastering a standing back-tuck on asphalt. These mental images help to remind you that you can do this skill regardless of location.

Second, try bringing along a video camera to a game or a gymnastics lesson. Have someone videotape while you perform the skill. If you fall, rewind, and tape over that one. Then, watch the tape every day, reminding yourself that you can do it. Seeing yourself succeed gives you confidence. And don't ever tell yourself that you can't do anything - that would be a lie!

Finally, concentrate on technique. Learning a back handspring with bent arms is hard - I promise! Reviewing how you perform the trick helps your body to remember what to do. Sometimes, even drawing a diagram step-by-step will help you break down the trick (hey, maybe it's elementary, but it works!). Hopefully, it won't seem so scary, too.

The fear of tumbling can be one of the most paralyzing fears of cheerleading. However, once conquered, is the most rewarding. Only you are in control of what you do. By gearing up mentally, the physical performance will be easy. Good luck and happy tumbling!

