

**UNITED STATES  
TRAMPOLINE AND TUMBLING  
ASSOCIATION**



**Safety Manual**  
4<sup>th</sup> Edition

# USTA Safety Manual

## **DEFINITION OR SAFETY AWARENESS**

Safety Awareness is an attitude or condition that promotes reasonable and prudent actions and behaviors relative to the safety measures of tumbling / trampoline.

## **PURPOSE OF RISK MANAGEMENT**

Risk management has three purposes:

1. Risk management seeks to eliminate those injuries that are predictable and totally preventable. For example, predictable and preventable injuries include heat stroke, injuries due to horseplay, and injuries due to known facility hazards.
2. Risk management tries to reduce the likelihood of those injuries which can not be predicted nor prevented. Unpredictable injuries sometimes occur when the tumbler/ trampolinist and the coach do everything correctly, but an injury still occurs.
3. Risk management seeks to ensure that the injury is handled appropriately when an injury does occur. Injuries in physical activity are inevitable and therefore must be managed by prior planning and preparation.

## **WHAT IS RISK MANAGEMENT?**

The ultimate purpose of this safety manual is to improve the level of safety. It is also clear that no amount of care or precaution will eliminate injury from any athletic activity. No athlete can enter any sport unaware of the unavoidable risk associated with any athletic activity. No teacher or coach can expect or can be expected to guarantee the safety of his or her athletes. The goal is to achieve a reasonable degree of safety that is consistent with the nature of the activity itself and both the skill level and the performance of the athletes.

Risk is everywhere. You can take a risk getting out of bed, getting into your car, or flying in an airplane. Risk management involves the intelligent selection and reasonable conduct of risky behaviors. Management involves directing, controlling, focusing, leading, governing, conducting, shepherding, and regulating something. Risk for our purposes involves danger, hazard, peril, and chance. Risk is not completely predictable. Rewards almost always require some risk. Reward and progress require effort. We usually assume that there is some kind of a relationship between the type and level of rewards and effort expended and the type and level of reward(s) achieved. Risk management helps the tumbling and trampoline professional successfully walk a tightrope over negligence by maintaining a balance between risk and the pursuit of reward.

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## **DEFINITION OF THE TUMBLING / TRAMPOLINE PROFESSIONAL**

Tumbling / Trampoline Professionals include teachers, coaches, or instructors trained in the scientific, technical, and psychological dimensions of various tumbling / trampoline activities. They are responsible for guiding and supervising participants in learning and performing tumbling and trampoline-type activities in a safe manner.

**PERHAPS THE BEST PROTECTION IS TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM THAT IS PROFESSIONAL AND CONSISTENT WITH THE SPORT STANDARDS AND DOES NOT ALLOW ATHLETES TO FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS.**

## IMPROVING THE ODDS

**AS A PROFESSIONAL, YOUR FIRST OBLIGATION IS TO THE SAFETY OF YOUR ATHLETES.**

You also have every right to protect yourself from a future lawsuit by building a record now that you are safety conscious and safety educated.

1. **EDUCATION.** As a professional, you need to gain the necessary knowledge to coach, instruct or supervise the level in which you intend to practice. Once you attain the level of knowledge, you must maintain it through continuing education to keep pace with new developments in the sport.

2. **SUPERVISION.** Regardless of the skill level, children will act like children. Without the discipline that results from quality adult supervision, children will resort to horseplay, daredevil stunts and sloppy performance. While a jury should find an athlete injured during such behavior to be negligent, the same jury may find the coach more negligent for creating an environment that permitted such behavior. Make sure that your ratio of students to teacher is a safe one for the skill level of the athletes and the skill level of the coaches. Make sure that the responsibilities being delegated to assistants are equal with their training and experience.

Create, announce and repeat all necessary safety rules and then enforce them. Teach your students to take safety seriously.

3. **INSTRUCTION.** Know the latest coaching and training methods. Be organized on your approach to your classes or practice sessions. Provide your athletes with individual instruction so that you can account for their differences. Keep records of your activities and your athletes performances. Require that your athletes follow the appropriate progressions in learning new skills. Do not push performance at the expense of safety or health.

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4. EQUIPMENT. Purchase quality equipment and maintain it properly.

### FAILURE TO WARN

**IN VIRTUALLY EVERY LAWSUIT ARISING OUT OF A TUMBLING OR TRAMPOLINE ACCIDENT, ONE OF THE PLAINTIFF'S CLAIMS WILL BE "FAILURE TO WARN."**

What does this mean? The term stands for the allegation by the plaintiff that the coach or instructor failed to warn the athlete of the risk of injury that existed either in tumbling or trampolining generally or with respect to a particular maneuver or skill. The professional must be able to refute such testimony. One method is to demonstrate to the jury that the athlete did, in fact, know the risk of injury. Another method is to prove that the professional warned the athlete repeatedly of the risk of injury, in language considered to reach this particular athlete, and in a way to affect the athletes' behavior in terms of behavior in terms of safety. For proof of this you need to rely heavily on verifiable documentary facts, such as a waiver, that the professional warned the athlete of the risk of injury.

Many coaches have expressed the need for caution and sensitivity in warning a young tumbler that he or she can suffer serious or even catastrophic injury, and the importance of confidence in executing the skills successfully. The professional has the right to determine when such warnings should be given so that such negative thought processes do not interfere with the atmosphere of confidence necessary for learning and performing skills.

**REGARDLESS OF WHAT METHODS YOU USE, THE MESSAGE MUST BE CLEAR AND FIRM. YOU MUST TELL YOUR ATHLETES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**

**BY THE VERY NATURE OF THE ACTIVITY, TUMBLING AND TRAMPOLINING CARRIES A RISK OF PHYSICAL INJURY. NO MATTER HOW CAREFUL THE ATHLETE AND COACH ARE, NO MATTER HOW MANY SPOTTERS ARE USED, NO MATTER WHAT HEIGHT IS USED OR WHAT LANDING SURFACE EXISTS, THE RISK CANNOT BE ELIMINATED. REDUCED, BUT NEVER ELIMINATED. THE RISK OF INJURY INCLUDES MINOR INJURIES SUCH AS BRUISES AND MORE SERIOUS INJURIES SUCH AS BROKEN BONES, DISLOCATIONS, AND MUSCLE PULLS. THE RISK ALSO INCLUDES CATASTROPHIC INJURIES SUCH AS PERMANENT PARALYSIS OR EVEN DEATH FROM LANDINGS OR FALLS ON THE BACK, NECK OR HEAD.**

How do you prove that you have warned? You obtain a signed receipt. Require your athletes and their parents to sign an acknowledgment of the warning they have received. Periodically obtain new acknowledgments, but keep all of them.... for a very long time.

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## MEDICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Although it is impossible to guarantee participation in tumbling and trampolining without injury, it is the responsibility of the coach or teacher to minimize the risk of injury. The risk of injury appears to increase with an increasing skill level. This may be due to the increase in practice time.

The primary responsibility of the coach is prevention of injury. Prevention requires preparation on the part of the athlete as in physical and mental readiness, and preparation on the part of the program, as in equipment, safety practices, progressions, and the knowledge and level of the coach.

Identification of injuries often falls, first, to the coach. The coach should become familiar with common injuries and be prepared to refer the athlete to the appropriate medical professional. The use of a standard injury report form is recommended. All coaches should be instructed in basic first aid techniques and should be certified in CPR.

The decision of when an injured athlete can return to participation is very important for the safety of the athlete, and should be made only by the physician. Rehabilitation following injury will help the athlete to heal quickly and properly as well as guard against further injury. Rehabilitation is necessary to regain flexibility and strength to the injured part as well as a general conditioning program for total body fitness.

**NO TUMBLING OR TRAMPOLINING SHOULD EVER TAKE PLACE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS, OR ANY MEDICATION THAT MAY DULL OR INHIBIT SENSES OR HINDER A PERSON'S COORDINATION OR PERCEPTIVE ABILITIES.**

**NO ONE SHOULD EVER TUMBLE OR USE A TRAMPOLINE WHEN THAT PERSON IS TIRED, FATIGUED, OR IN A STATE OF VERTIGO.**

Despite the best planning and prevention measures, injuries will sometimes occur. When they happen, there is no time to set up a plan of action. The program must be ready to be carried out by people knowledgeable in first aid.

## SUGGESTED MEDICAL INFORMATION

Information should be compiled on every athlete in the gym, and kept in a convenient location accessible at all practices and competitions.

THE NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OF THE ATHLETE, HIS/HER NEXT OF KIN (SPOUSE, PARENT, OR GUARDIAN), AND PERSONAL PHYSICIAN.

THE ATHLETE'S MEDICAL HISTORY, INCLUDING ANY ILLNESSES, MEDICATIONS, AND ALLERGIES.

THE TYPE OF HEALTH COVERAGE OR INSURANCE PLAN THAT COVERS THE

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ATHLETE.

A MEDICAL CONSENT FORM SIGNED BY THE ATHLETE OR BY A MINOR'S PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS SO THE COACH CAN SIGN FOR TREATMENT IF THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN IS UNAVAILABLE.

There should be a standard system for managing any injuries.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

REFERRAL TO THE APPROPRIATE SPECIALIST

REHABILITATION

RECORD KEEPING.

## **PARENT AND PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Parents, guardians, spouses, and other indirect participants should understand the purpose and goals of the tumbling/ trampoline program, the purpose for safety rules and regulations, and basic information about identifying, preventing, and caring for injuries that occur. Indirect participants (e.g., parents, guardians, and spouses) should be informed of special nutritional needs, fluid replacement, home activities that may be helpful or harmful, expectations of the program, and the athlete's safety. Parent, spouses, and significant others should be treated as partners with the coaches and administrators in the process of tumbling/ trampoline safety education.

In the event of an injury or emergency, a designated staff member must assume leadership. Appropriate first aid or CPR measures should be taken and arrangements made for transportation of the injured, and notification of the parents or legal guardians. Emergency plans should include:

1. Athlete injury
2. Fire
3. Natural disaster (tornado, earthquake, etc.)

**All staff members should be trained in basic first aid and certified in CPR.**

## **AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

Every gym should have an emergency plan to help prepare for a variety of potential emergencies. All staff should be well versed in the plan, and the children should be familiar with the actions that may be required of them.

**THE FOLLOWING ARE DIAGRAMS THAT AID IN THE EMERGENCY TREATMENT OF THE INJURED ATHLETE.**

**ABC's**

**AIRWAY**

The first priority is to make sure that the patient has an open airway. Airway obstruction is usually due to either a foreign body (such as a food particle) or the tongue (in an unconscious patient).

**BREATHING**

Check if the athlete is breathing.

If not, an accredited sports trainer or a trained first aider should begin rescue breathing.

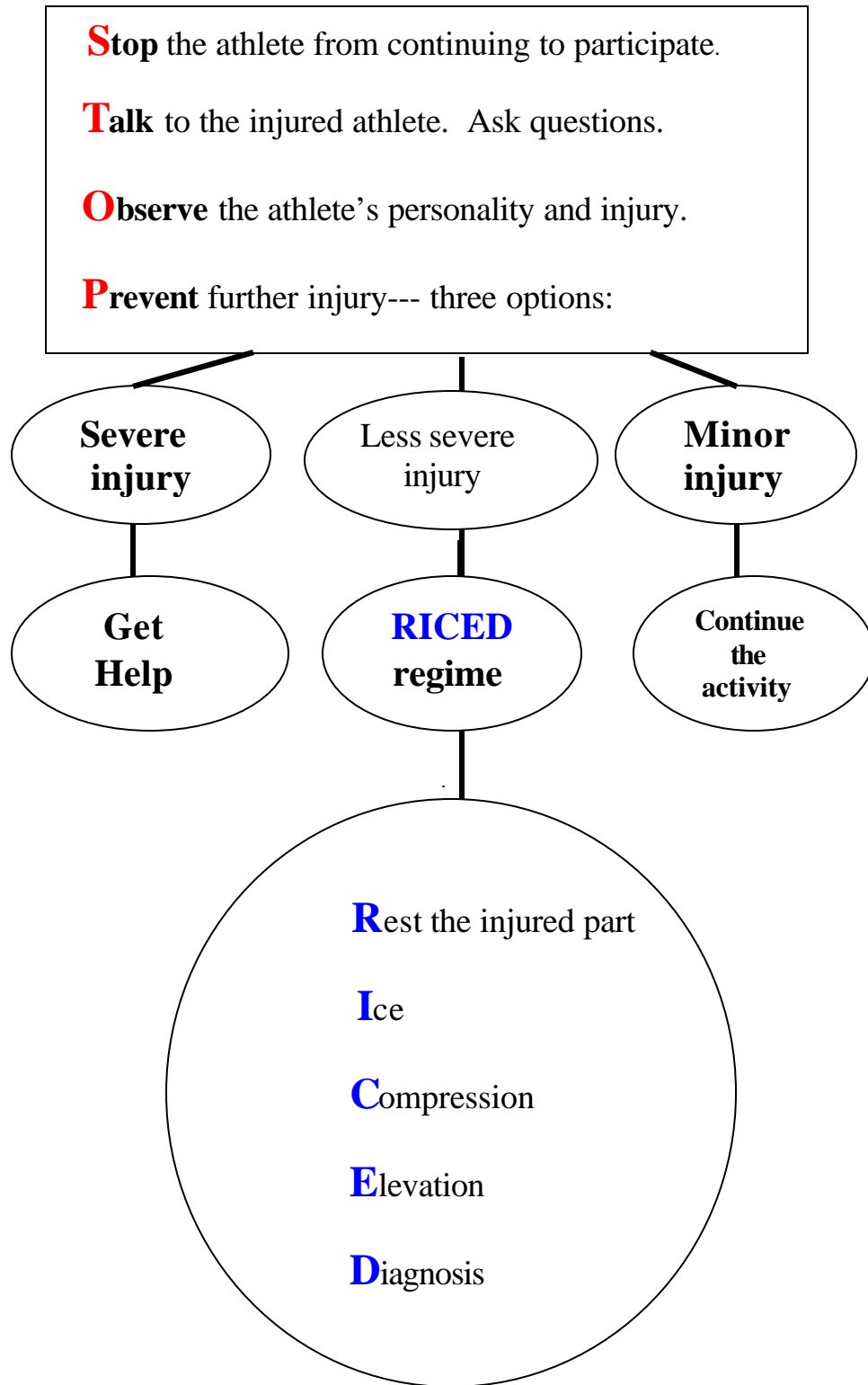
**CIRCULATION**

Pulse can easily be taken at the wrist, or at the artery in the neck.

Stop all bleeding with firm pressure over the injured site.

CPR should be maintained until respiration is normal, or until professional help arrives.

## The **STOP** Procedure



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## FIRST-AID KIT

Competent management of minor injuries requires basic first-aid equipment. Every tumbling/trampoline program should have a first-aid kit. First-aid kits should be maintained and inspected regularly. If athletes have access to the first-aid kit, then no medications should be placed in the kit. Medications should not be given to minors without parental or medical directions. Below is a list of suggested items for a tumbling. Trampoline first-aid kit.

- Adhesive Bandages (assorted sizes)
- Alcohol and/or alcohol preparation pads
- Wound antiseptic
- Bandage scissors
- Cotton swabs
- CPR mouth piece/ shields
- Two inch elastic tape roles
- 1.5 inch or ¾ inch standard tape
- Eye wash
- Foam padding
- Hard candy (with sugar) for diabetics
- Instant-type ice pack
- Latex/ sterile gloves
- Mirror for contact lens wearers
- Plastic bags for ice
- Nail clippers
- Non-stick wound dressing
- Taping pre-wrap
- Gauze roll and gauze pads
- Safety pins
- Plastic bottle for water
- Coins for emergency telephone call
- Splints
- Tape adherent
- Tape remover
- Oral thermometer
- Tweezers
- Vaseline or skin lubricant

The primary preparation for non-catastrophic injuries is provided by basic first-aid training. While most seemingly minor injuries can be handled by basic first-aid and wound management, the tumbling. Trampoline professional should follow-up on all injuries to ensure that they are healing in a timely fashion.

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## PHYSICAL READINESS

The primary evaluation of physical preparation is mostly medical. The athlete should be in good health, free from disease, and free of any previous injury. In addition to a standard medical check-up, the athlete should be examined orthopedically to determine that there are no defects in the skeletal and muscular systems that may interfere with safe learning training and performing. Medical evaluations should be required not only of new students, but also of students returning to activity following a significant illness or injury.

Following a medical evaluation, the athlete is presumed "ready". It is now the responsibility of the coach to determine readiness for each and every activity and skill. There are different demands and different level of demands for each skill and for each individual performing the skill. It is the responsibility of the coach to recognize these demands and determine "readiness".

Some of the factors to be considered are:

1. Strength
2. Power
3. Flexibility
4. Muscular endurance
5. Cardio-respiratory endurance
6. Body composition
7. Skill level

## MENTAL READINESS

Psychological readiness is one aspect often overlooked by coaches and teachers. It is necessary for athletes to possess the psychological skills as well as maintain complete control of these skills. These skills include, but are not limited to:

1. Learning to manage stresses and control anxiety.
2. Improving concentration skills
3. Improving relaxing skills
4. The use of Imagery skills
5. Improvement of self-discipline and self-control.
6. Identification of and control of fear.

## SUPERVISION

The education and supervision of the athlete is the responsibility of the coach. In addition to teaching progressions, the coach must inform the student that any attempt to execute a skill that has not been thoroughly taught is dangerous and should be avoided. A trust must be developed between the coach and the student so that the student, having properly learned through progression, will be ready and able to perform the skill.

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The coach should organize and discipline the class with safety in mind. A few factors to keep in mind are:

1. In tumbling classes, students should not stand at the end of or on the mat while others are tumbling.
2. Lines should be formed off to the side and out of the way of the tumbler.
3. Traffic patterns should be established to keep the tumbling area clear.
4. Once a pass is completed, students should clear the area, whether it be the tumbling mat, trampoline, or double-mini landing area) immediately.
5. Never run across a mat when students are tumbling, or across the approach area for double-mini tramp.
6. No athlete should ever dismount from the trampoline by either jumping or executing a skill.
7. When mounting and dismounting the trampoline, a athlete should be taught to first sit on the frame.
8. Never sit on, stand on, or lean on the sides or ends of a trampoline when a person is jumping. Never sit on the trampoline with feet and legs through the springs.
9. Never place objects on the sides or ends of the trampoline when a person is jumping.
10. Only one person should be allowed on the trampoline at a time.
11. The double-mini tramp should never be used as a trampoline. Only one mount or spotter skill should ever be allowed at one time. No back, seat, or front landings are allowed. Only two feet take-offs and two foot landings are permitted.
12. No obstruction should be placed within 10 feet of the landing mat area.
13. The area around the trampoline should be matted with standard 1 ¼ inch mat.
14. At no time should unsupervised free play, horseplay, or fooling around be allowed or permitted.

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Tumbling and trampolining must never take place without the direct supervision of a qualified coach. In home situations, where backyard trampolines are in use, a parent or responsible adult, having knowledge about trampolines should directly supervise the activity. The use of a trampoline requires a minimum of four qualified spotters properly placed around the trampoline. These spotters must be ready and able to assist the performer at all times.

### DEFINITION OF SPOTTING

Spotting- the strategic manipulation and observation of a tumbling/trampoline participant through a skill (or series of skills) to completion in order to minimize the risk of injury and / or to facilitate learning.

Hands-on spotting requires a complete knowledge of the skill, experience, and high levels of hand-eye coordination. This requires the spotter to stand adjacent to the performer on the trampoline bed, double-mini trampoline bed, or following them parallel to the tumbling surface, during the skill execution. In this way the instructor is literally capable of manipulating the performers through the skill, or series of skills.

- Spotting is an important skill, but spotting is not a failsafe.
- The goals of spotting are, 1) keep the athlete from landing on his/ her head, 2) prevent other serious falls, and 3) manipulate the athletes' body position and position in space to enhance skill learning.
- Spotting can be overused. Over reliance on spotting can work against independent performance.
- Tumbler/ Trampolinist often falls too rapidly for a human spotter to react and prevent the fall.
- There are a variety of spotting methods and devices.
- Spotting is a skill that must be learned and practiced before competent performances is achieved.

### ENVIRONMENT AND EQUIPMENT

Tumbling and trampolining should take place only in situations where safety has been carefully considered and accommodated for. The following are some of the many factors to be considered:

1. Walls should be a contrasting color from the mats of other landing surfaces.
2. Partitions, walls, columns or obstructions must be far enough away from the area to avoid accidental contact. These obstructions should be safely padded.
3. The location of doors, windows, mirrors, etc., should be carefully considered in relation to runways and dismount areas.
4. Traffic patterns and walkways should be planned and away from runways and dismount areas.

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5. Lighting should be adequate.
6. A ceiling height of at least 16 feet, 21 feet for upper level athletes, above the trampoline is required.
7. Trampolines and double-mini tramps should be set on a firm, level, non-slip surface at least 8 feet from walls or obstructions.
8. The ground surface surrounding the trampoline must be protected with mats and free from any equipment or obstacles.
9. A landing mat of a minimum of 12" thick by 6' by 12' must be used with the double-mini trampoline.
10. Safety harnesses, ropes, and spotting rigs must be properly and securely attached to supporting beams which are designed to withstand the forces inherent in spotting. They should also be inspected regularly around the metal rings that attach to the belt for fraying.
11. Only trampolines and double-mini tramps that meet the standard of the U.S.T.A. should be used.
12. Qualified, knowledgeable people must set up trampolines and double-mini tramps. Standard safety frame pads, end spotter tables, and a properly installed trampoline bed are required.
13. When constructing a trampoline pit, remember after all the construction is complete the pit should be as deep as the trampoline is or 4 ½ feet deep.
14. Tumbling mats should be sufficiently shock absorbent to minimize injuries upon landings. Mats must be a minimum of 1" thick and at least 5' wide. The length should be sufficient for the type of tumbling. The use of a "spring" type surface is recommended for tumbling that involves handsprings and above.
15. Small-segmented mats should be joined together to form one continuous and secure length.
16. Proper attire is required when tumbling or trampolining. Street clothes are not permitted. Gym outfits, leotards, or training clothes and tumbling shoes should always be worn. No jewelry rings, watches, hair ornaments, or other hard-formed plastic, or metal objects should be worn.
17. It is important that the athletes' hair be kept out of the face so as not to impair vision or cause injury. Fingernails and toenails should be trimmed regularly by both coaches and athletes to prevent injuries. Eyeglasses should be securely fastened about the head. If

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contact lenses are worn, sufficient cleaning solution, saline solutions, eye wash and so forth should be readily available.

***REGARDLESS OF THE SIZE, TYPE, AND QUALITY OF THE MATS, THEY ARE NOT FAILSAFE. SERIOUS AND CATASTROPHIC INJURIES OR EVEN DEATH CAN OCCUR WHEN LANDING ON THE HEAD OR NECK. HEAD AND NECK LANDINGS MUST BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS.***

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

Progressions are meant to be just that, progress from the beginning level, upward. Teaching skills slowly and carefully, progressing from the most basic movements to more difficult skills is an important factor in safety. The athlete must have complete mastery of the basic skills before continuing to more difficult skills. This requires the coach to select the appropriate skills and spend a great deal of time teaching, as well as allowing for a great deal of time for practice and repetition.

Progressions refer not only to the broad spectrum of skill levels but also to the breakdown of more complete skills into easily understood parts.

The practice and repetition of basic skills will also assist the athlete in the development in body awareness. Body awareness refers to the ability of the athlete to understand where their body is in space, where their body is in relationship to the ground and where their body is in relationship to their other body parts. The athlete's level of body awareness will greatly effect the potential for safe learning.

Numerous activities can help the athlete develop better body awareness and contribute to the safety of the athlete. Perhaps the best is movement education for young children. The child learns what their body can do, where their body is during movements, and where their body is in relationship to other objects. These fundamentals help in the total movement experience as well as development of body awareness.

Movement awareness should also incorporate the development of safety skills and habits, as well as safety "rules". Young children can understand safety skills and, when presented in the early learning stages, will grow and develop with these safety skills.

A few suggestions to assist in the development of body awareness include:

Body shape and Positions-- tuck, pike, straddle, straight, handstand, hollow, arch and bridge. These positions should be practiced in a variety of settings.

Non-locomotor movements--twisting, turning, flexing, extending, moving toward and away from the center of the body, raising and lowering parts of the body.

Locomotor skills-- the eight locomotor skills are; walking, running, jumping, hopping, leaping, skipping, sliding, and galloping.

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THE PROPER AND CONSISTENT USE OF SKILL PROGRESSIONS AT EVERY LEVEL OF TRAMPOLINE AND TUMBLING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF BODY AWARENESS AND SAFETY.

### DEFINITION OF BODY AWARENESS

It is the ability of the athlete to perceive his/her body parts in relation to one another as well as in relationship to the apparatus and/or ground.

Visualization is another essential factor in the development of body awareness. The athlete should be taught to use their eyes to see focal points before, during, and when landing a skill. During the teaching phase of all skills, the coach must teach and emphasize the importance of developing of these visual skills.

The consideration of safety in tumbling and trampoline should be obvious and our coaching should reflect that act. The athlete can lose awareness more easily as they progress to more advanced level. Consequently, they can suffer more serious injury, especially spinal injury, from improper landings and/or unintentional falls if he or she lands upside down.

Often the athlete we are training is a beginner with no exposure to tumbling. It is important to emphasize that the student be raised into the air only by their own power and not be artificially lifted. Maintaining this rule is a safety plus because the heights capable of a beginner are not great but will increase along with the increase of body awareness. Artificially lifting a beginner tumbler is potentially dangerous and should not be permitted. New and unfamiliar movements should not be attempted until the student has mastered the essential lead-up skills and progressions.

Still, a most important safety technique is the proper teaching of progressions. All skills can be broken down into easier parts. It is suggested to demonstrate the complete skill first, then teach the sub-parts of the skill in reverse order. In other words, teach how to finish the skill, what it should feel like, and how to bailout in the middle if necessary. The following simple progressions for teaching a backward roll can serve as an example:

1. From a squat, rock forward onto hands and back down to a squat, emphasizing the finish.
2. Lie on the back with the knees tucked and the hands over the head. Rock back and forth, trying to place the hands on the mat prior to head contact.
3. From a squat, roll backward stressing the hand placement and the feet reaching over the head toward the floor.
4. At the top of an inclined mat, stand in a squat position with the hands overhead. Roll backward, placing the hands on the mat and reaching the feet over the head. Push on the hands to shift the weight on to the feet.
5. Do the same as step #4 on a level mat. Then progress to other backward roll variations.

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This important point is not that this is the only way for teaching a backward roll, but that the skill has been divided into a set of simple, yet related lead-up movements, which can be presented to a class in a safe and clear manner.

All coaches have their own ideas on the matter--based on their own judgment and the ability of the athlete, however, the coach should adhere to the progression table without short-cuts of lead-up skills. *Teaching progression is to insure safe learning and development.*

The following is a sample progression of some of the many tumbling skills that may be used in classes:

1. Forward roll
  - a. forward straddle roll
  - b. forward pike roll
  - c. forward roll step-out
2. Backward roll
  - a. backward straddle roll
  - b. backward pike roll
  - c. backward roll step-out
3. Handstand (for weight bearing)
4. Cartwheel
  - a. both right and left
  - b. 1 arm cartwheel
  - c. running cartwheel
5. Round-off
  - a. from a stand
  - b. from a hurdle
  - c. from a run
6. Handstand
  - a. handstand forward roll
  - b. backward extension roll
  - c. handstand to limber
7. Backbend
  - a. from a stand
  - b. stand up from bridge
  - c. kick over from bridge
8. Front walkover
  - a. front arabian
9. Back walkover
  - a. back arabian
10. Forward handspring
11. Backward handspring
12. Round-off back handspring

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The following is a sample progression for use on the trampoline:

1. Mounting and dismounting the trampoline
2. Basic jumping and stopping technique
3. Stand-up jumps
  - a. tuck jump
  - b. straddle jump
  - c. pike jump
4. Turns
  - a. 1/2 turn
  - b. full turn
  - c. 1 1/2 turn
5. Seat drop
6. Hand and knee drop
7. Hand and knee drop to front drop
8. Front drop
9. Stationary back drop
10. Back drop
11. Combinations of the above

***THE ATHLETE SHOULD ATTAIN TOTAL MASTERY OF THE ABOVE SKILLS PRIOR TO BEGINNING THE PROGRESSIONS FOR SOMERSAULTING SKILLS.***

The following is a sample progression for use on the double-mini tramp:

1. Approach and hurdle
2. Proper jumping techniques
3. Proper landing techniques
4. Stand-up jumps
  - a. tuck jump
  - b. straddle jump
  - c. pike jump
5. Turns
  - a. 1/2 turn
  - b. full turn
  - c. 1 1/2 turn

The above jumps and turns should be learned and mastered as mounter skills, spotter, skills, and dismounting skills.

***THE ATHLETE SHOULD ATTAIN TOTAL MASTERY OF THE ABOVE SKILLS PRIOR TO BEGINNING THE PROGRESSIONS FOR SOMERSAULTING SKILLS.***

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Somersaulting skills should never be attempted without an overhead spotting belt, or a qualified instructor using a "hand-spot". Aerial skills for tumbling are best learned first on a trampoline. However, skills that are possible and safe on double-mini tramps may not be safe or practical for tumbling. Spotting, either by mechanical rig or hand spot, should be employed when moving from one piece of equipment to another. **Athletes must know their limitations.**

### LANDING TECHNIQUES

Proper landing techniques are very important to the athlete, not only in terms of deductions from their scores, but also to their safety. Landings occur quite often in both practice situations and in competition. Often the landings are not planned and for this reason the proper landing techniques must be practiced until they are done without thought on the part of the athlete.

Landing drills presented here are taken from the U.S.T.A. safety manual, 1st edition. Both groups of drills assume that the athlete has mastered the forward roll, backward roll and the shoulder roll. Also, in both groups, appropriate matting is needed.

#### Group One: Flat Surface Drills

1. The athlete is instructed to jump vertically in place and to land with proper technique. Points to be emphasized include:
  - a. Land first on the balls of the feet and then the heels. Discourage landing completely flat footed or primarily on the toes.
  - b. Stress bending adequately at the ankles, knees, and hips to absorb the landing shock.
  - c. Stress proper use of arms for balance and appearance.
  - d. NEVER LAND WITH LOCKED KNEES.

Note: In order to help minimize potentially serious knee injury problems, caution against locking the knees when landing must be emphasized throughout all training sessions.

2. The athlete is instructed to jump forward, backward and at a slight diagonal and to land with proper technique.
3. The athlete is instructed to jump forward, backward, and on a diagonal landing slightly off balance and recover by doing a forward, backward, or shoulder roll--whichever is appropriate to the situation.

**STRESS PROPER PLACEMENT OF THE HANDS ON THE SIT-BACK PHASE OF THE BACKWARD ROLL. THE HANDS SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE MAT WITH THE FINGERS FACING FORWARD SO THAT THE ELBOW CAN "HINGE".**

4. The athlete is instructed to jump vertically in place with a 1/4, 1/2, 3/4, and full twist with good landing technique. These drills should be practiced in both twist directions. The athlete should be taught to recover, or roll, on the mat if the landing is not on top, or dead center.

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NOTE: IMPROPER LANDING MECHANICS WHILE TWISTING CAN CONTRIBUTE TO EXCESSIVE FORCE ABOUT THE KNEE JOINT. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT THE ATHLETES BE TAUGHT HOW TO ABSORB THE FORCES INHERENT IN LANDINGS CHARACTERIZED BY A TWIST COMPONENT.

5. The athlete is instructed to roll backward into a cradle position, again, emphasize placing the hands on the mat with the fingers forward. The athlete should also be instructed to practice rolling backward in the cradle position with the hands positioned on the floor behind the ears and the head tucked into the chest. This same technique should then be practiced in a shoulder roll.
6. The athlete is instructed to fall forward to a prone position and absorb the shock by bending the arms.
7. The athlete should be instructed in recovering from a fall from a handstand. First the athlete is instructed to kick to a handstand, step into a pirouette by moving one hand forward, (preferable the same hand as the leading leg) and cartwheel out of the position. Next the athlete is instructed to ride through a handstand position and arch over until the feet make contact with the mat. Finally, the athlete is instructed to execute a handstand and then to tuck the head under, bend the arms and go into a forward roll.

NOTE: ALL OF THESE DRILLS REQUIRE COMPETENT SPOTTING DURING THE LEARNING PHASES.

### Group Two: Elevated Drills

In this group, the athlete repeats drills one through five from group one using an elevated take-off surface and landing on ground level. Start with a relatively low take-off surface (about six inches) and gradually increase the increase the elevation to 2-3 feet above the ground as directed by the athletes landing proficiency. Good landing and/or rolling techniques should be stressed always.

**Always be sure that the mats and landing pads are appropriate to the activity.**

NOTE: DO NOT PERMIT VERY YOUNG (UP TO 8 YEARS OF AGE) OR INEXPERIENCED ATHLETES TO JUMP FROM ANY HEIGHT GREATER THAN WHAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF JUMPING ON THEIR OWN.

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## TRAINING PITS

### INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING TRAINING PITS:

1. Always provide for direct supervision whenever the pit is in use.
2. Make sure the athletes are physically and mentally ready to participate.
3. Make sure the tumblers have adequately mastered the appropriate progressions.
4. Do not allow anyone to work on skills above his/ her ability level.
5. Teach every student how to enter the pit safely. For loose foam pits, it is suggested that students know how to land in an open-tucked position on the middle back.
6. Regarding loose foam pits, make sure that there is no one in the pit area before a student enters the pit, and make sure that the pit is adequately “fluffed” and / or properly positioned before using.
7. No horseplay. Do not allow horseplay of any kind in or around the pit.
8. Always emphasize that the use of the training pit is not a fail-safe protection against serious, catastrophic injury, and act accordingly.
9. Pit edges and sides should be padded.
10. Jewelry, gum, hair items, and other objects that may come off in the pit should not be worn.
11. Extricate an injured athlete from a foam pit is difficult, particularly from a loose foam pit. Extrication procedures should be practiced and local emergency medical units should be informed of the challenges. Whenever possible, local emergency medical staffs should be included in practicing extrication of an injured athlete.

### ADVANTAGES AND DIADVANTAGES OF THE LOOSE FOAM TRAINING PIT

- + It is level with the take-off or regular landing surface.
- + It is softer than traditional mats and skill cushions, thus improving the margin for error in learning complex skill.
- + The athlete is able to train or work for longer periods of time due to less stress on the body in landings.
- + It permits placement of additional skill cushions on top of the loose foam to provide a transition to firmer landing surfaces.
- The foam must be adequately “fluffed” and / or properly positioned before using or the performance qualities of the pit are decreased.
- It is somewhat difficult and time consuming for the user to “crawl out” of the pit.
- It does not develop personal performer responsibility for the landing.

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT STUDENTS ARE MADE AWARE AND APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT A FOAM TRAINING PIT, REGARDLESS OF SIZE, TYPE, AND QUALITY, IS NOT A FAIL-SAFE PROTECTION FROM SERIOUS CATASTROPHIC INJURY OR EVEN DEATH.**

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### **SAFETY CONCERNS OF COACHING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Children with disabilities benefit through tumbling / trampoline training. They grow both physically and mentally from the sport. The instructor should be aware of some additional conditions that may hinder safe participation in tumbling / trampoline.

#### **SEIZURE PRONE CHILDREN**

Children who are seizure prone should be watched carefully when involved with heights. The need to know if they have had any recent seizures or if medication has kept them seizure-free for a long period of time.

#### **ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER**

The need to know if a child is ADD before placing him / her in a class is important. Parents often look to tumbling / trampoline and other sports as an outlet for the child's overwhelming need to move. The class ratio may need to be smaller, so your instructor can help this child focus and to develop such skills as staying in line, etc. Some children on strong medication for ADD may appear listless.

#### **OTHER CONCERNS**

If a child in your gym has an obvious physical handicap, it is helpful to know if he / she is in physical therapy. You may need to talk to the physical therapist about how you can structure a program for that child, as well as any movements that may be prohibited.

**THE PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL BENEFITS FROM THIS SPORT FOR THESE CHILDREN CAN BE TREMENDOUS. PARENTS NEED TO INFORM YOU OF EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO MAKE THIS SPORT SAFE.**

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

“Sexual harassment” means any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

It is a civil rights violation for any employer or employee, to engage in sexual harassment; provided that an employer shall be responsible for sexual harassment of the employer's employees by nonemployees or nonmanagerial and nonsupervisory employees only if the employer becomes aware of the conduct and fails to take reasonable corrective measures.

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It shall be a violation of this policy for anyone who is authorized to recommend or take personnel actions affecting an employee, or who is otherwise authorized to transact business or perform other acts or services.

1. To make sexual advances or request sexual favors when submission to or rejection of such conduct is the basis for either implicitly or explicitly recommending, imposing, granting, withholding or refusing terms and conditions that either favor or adversely affect an employee's condition of employment.
2. To recommend, impose, grant, withhold or refuse to take any personnel action consistent with his or her duties and responsibilities because of sexual favors, or as a reprisal against an employee who has rejected or reported sexual advances.
3. To disregard and fail to investigate allegations of sexual harassment whether reported by the individual who is the subject of the alleged harassment, or a witness, and to fail to take immediate corrective action in the event misconduct has occurred.

Employees, students or other individuals who feel aggrieved because of sexual harassment have several means available to make their concerns known:

Aggrieved persons who feel comfortable doing so should directly inform the person engaging in sexual harassing conduct or communications that such conduct or communications is offensive and must stop.

An aggrieved individual who does not wish to communicate directly with the person whose conduct or communications is offensive or if the direct communication with the offending party has been unavailing, should contact the administrative staff for counseling and assistance.

Aggrieved persons alleging either sexual harassment by anyone with supervisory authority, or failure by administrative staff to take immediate action on the individual's complaint, may also file a formal grievance.

Regardless of the means selected for resolving the problem, the initiation of a complaint of sexual harassment will not adversely affect the complainant's employment, compensation or work assignments.

It should be reported and noted:

The date of receipt of the complaint

Identification of the complaint.

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Identification of the party or parties and the actions complained of, including all relevant background facts and circumstances.

A statement detailing the scope of the investigation that had been undertaken and the results.

A statement of corrective measure pursued. The date such measures were undertaken, and the results achieved.

Where possible, a written statement signed by the complainant detailing the conduct complained of.

### LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The ultimate purpose of this safety manual is to improve the level of safety. It is also clear that no amount of care or precaution will eliminate injury from any athletic activity. No athlete can enter any sport unaware of the unavoidable risk associated with any athletic activity. No teacher or coach can expect or can be expected to guarantee the safety of his or her athletes. The goal is to achieve a reasonable degree of safety that is consistent with the nature of the activity itself and both the skill level and the performance of the athletes.

When an accident occurs, the immediate effects are injury and the human and economic costs in pain, disability, and medical care. In today's society, another increasing consequence is litigation. Americans turn to the courts more often than ever before, and seek compensation for injuries that used to be accepted as an unfortunate, even tragic event in life's experiences. Sports-injury litigation is increasing as fast, if not faster, than any other area of personal-injury law.

Sports professionals are understandably concerned. No sports professional can afford the price of litigation, either in a potential consequence of paying a court ordered judgment or a settlement, or in the inevitable consequence of defending against a claim or lawsuit for money damages. It is natural that sports professionals want to not only know how to make their sport safer for the participant, but how to protect themselves from the damages of litigation.

### TORT LAW

American law provides a civil-damages remedy for those injured by the fault of another. The remedy is money, as compensation for the injury, the pain and suffering that reasonably accompany the injury, and the expense reasonably incurred as a result of the injury. The money is paid by the person at fault.

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In virtually all states, the court tests of define fault by reference to the legal concept of negligence.

**NEGLIGENCE IS CONDUCT THAT FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD OF CARE THAT SOCIETY EXPECTS OF A REASONABLY CAUTIOUS PERSON ACTING UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.**

If a person refrains from doing something, that we would expect the normal, rational, and careful human being, acting under similar circumstances with appropriate regard for the safety of others, that person has acted in a negligent manner. If we would expect a reasonable person to act positively under certain circumstances, the failure to act in that fashion constitutes negligence.

**ACT AS YOU WOULD WANT OTHERS TO ACT UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES IF YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY WERE AT STAKE.**

If a person is injured and if she believes that the injury was caused by the unreasonable conduct of another, the legal remedy is to file a lawsuit. Once a person files and serves the defendant with the notice of the suit, the defendant must defend. However, it is the plaintiff's obligation to prove his or her allegations.

### A NEGLIGENCE CASE USUALLY REQUIRES PROOF OF FOUR ELEMENTS

1. **DUTY.** The plaintiff must establish that the defendant owed plaintiff a duty of care of a legal obligation to act in accord with a standard of conduct designed to protect persons like the plaintiff from an unreasonable risk of harm. The existence of a duty usually is regarded as a question of law, to be determined by the court instead of a jury. The judge determines whether the defendant owed duty of care to the plaintiff and, if so, defines the standard of conduct imposed by the duty.
2. **BREACH OF DUTY.** The plaintiff next must prove that the defendant breached the duty, or to put in terms of negligence, that the defendant did not act as a reasonable person would act under similar circumstances.
3. **CAUSE.** Plaintiff must prove more than negligence. The error must be, in legal terms, "a proximate cause" of the injury and damages, or the immediate cause. Many courts use the "but for" test. The defendant's unreasonable conduct is a cause if the accident would not have occurred "but for" the negligent conduct of the defendant. Courts also define a casual event as a "substantial factor" in bringing about the accident. A jury enjoys great discretion in deciding which circumstances are causes of an accident, and which are too remote or coincidental.
4. **DAMAGES.** If a plaintiff has established a duty and has proved breach of duty and causation, plaintiff has established a case of negligence and will recover damages, assuming a significant injury has occurred. The jury can award money damages to compensate for the injury itself, the bodily loss due to the degree to which the body has

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been impaired, the pain and suffering in the past and to be incurred in the future and sometimes even the loss of enjoyment of life, past, present, and future. The plaintiff also may seek the present value of future lost earnings and expenses.

### TORT DEFENSES

The principal defense available to one who is sued is to deny the allegations. The plaintiff is the one who has the burden to prove the allegation of negligence. A defendant can defend by insisting that he or she acted reasonable. The defendant can also argue that any alleged negligence was not a cause of the accident.

The law also recognizes several "affirmative defenses" that are available to the defendant.

1. **CONTRIBUTORY NEGLIGENCE.** Common sense tells us that there are usually many causes of an accident. The law recognizes this and permits the defendant to prove that the injured plaintiff caused or at least contributed to his or her own misfortune. As with negligence, the defendant must prove that plaintiff acted contrary to what a reasonable person would do under similar circumstances. The defendant must also prove cause: That the plaintiff's unreasonable behavior was a "imminent cause" of the accident.
2. **COMPARATIVE NEGLIGENCE.** The jury first determines who was negligent and then assesses percentages against each such party so that the numbers add up to 100%. A plaintiff that is 25% negligent will recover only 75% of his or her damages.
3. **ASSUMPTION OF RISK.** A professional coach frequently will defend against a suit by claiming that the athlete "assumed the risk" of the injury that occurred, saying that the accident was just that, an accident, and was the inevitable and unavoidable result of the athletic activity.

While assumption of risk is not an affirmative defense, the professional must expect to persuade the jury of the following facts: (a) The accident was not the result of unreasonable behavior (b) but it was caused by the imperfections of human performance and the traumas imposed by the athletic activity on the body. It is frequently a challenge for the defense lawyer and the coach in a sport-injury litigation to convince the jury that an accident is just that, an accident, and not the result of negligent coaching. A young athlete who has been seriously injured presents a very compelling picture to the jury. It is perfectly natural to be motivated to compensate the injured and juries usually assume that the professional has the means through insurance of otherwise, to pay. Juries are inclined to find negligence and liability on the part of the defendants, especially when the injury is serious or catastrophic.

Think back on any of the accidents and injuries that your athletes have suffered under your supervision. No matter how careful you were at the time, can you say in retrospect that there was nothing you as the professional could have done differently that might have averted the accident? Few of us are perfect for very long, and no one is perfect on a day-to-day basis.

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## **Conclusion**

Risk management seeks to prevent injury and associated litigation. Risk management also helps tumbling/ trampoline professionals be more organized and systematic in the conduct of their programs. It is the purpose of this manual to continue to “raise the bar” of safety and risk management in tumbling/ trampoline. It is necessary that all tumbling/ trampoline professionals continue to increase their knowledge, skills, and professional conduct so that their legacy will allow youngsters for generations come to be well-rounded athletes.