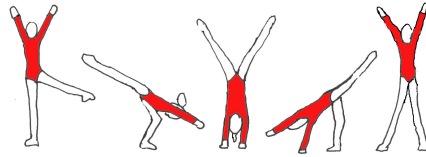


SIDE-TO-SIDE CARTWHEEL

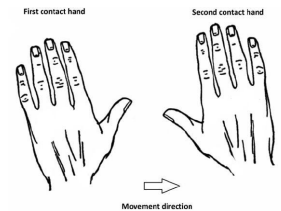


Arguably one of the hardest basic gymnastic moves to teach, some children just 'get it' straight away, while others labour for years without any real progress. It is the Coach's job to use whatever resources and ideas are at hand to aid the process.

Flexibility plays an important part in the Cartwheel so gymnasts with a narrow Side Splits and tight shoulders may struggle.

What you are looking for (side cartwheel):

- ✓ Starting from a standing stretch, sideways to the line the body will follow.
- ✓ Both arms up by the ears, and one leg lifted in the direction of travel.
- ✓ A deep side-lunge in and down, turning the hands 90 degrees, so fingers point in the opposite direction to the front of the body i.e sideways to the line of travel.
- ✓ Legs are split wide, and follow an arc through vertical.
- ✓ Bottom is tucked in and back is straight.
- ✓ Foot comes down close to the hand, and the body is straightened up, keeping the arms up to finish.

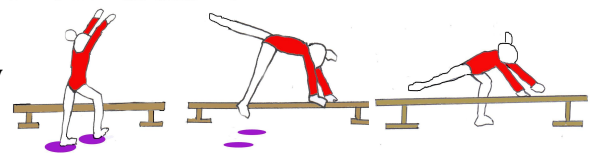


Set-ups & Progressions:

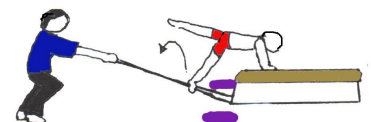
- Start with explaining the hand and foot sequence correct: *foot, hand, hand, foot, foot*.
- Set up a pattern on the floor of 2 spots for the feet, a hoop for the hands, and 2 more spots at the other side. The hoop is good because it gives the beginner a big area to put the hands in, and also means that they have to jump their feet over to get them onto the other spots. Early attempts may just be bunny-hopping around from 2 feet to 2 feet. The main concern here is to take the weight on the hands, and to turn the fingers to face away from the direction of the front of the body.



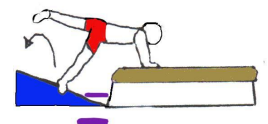
- Hopping over a bench from one leg to the other is a good introduction to the sideways movement. Again use spots to show where the feet should be. Encourage straight legs and make sure the child starts and ends facing in the same sideways direction.



- Use the end of a box top to repeat the same process, Place two skipping ropes under the box and hold them straight and low for the child to 'hop' over with the correct foot and hand placement. Slowly lift the ropes with each attempt, so that the child has to lift the legs a little higher each time to get over them.



- Placing a soft play wedge can also be useful for independent activity.



- Use the end of a padded bench (with a mat over) or a Box top. Get the child to place their hands on the end of the bench, and bunny-hop the feet round to the floor. Hold at the hips and 'steer' the child, encouraging them to lift the legs a little higher each time.

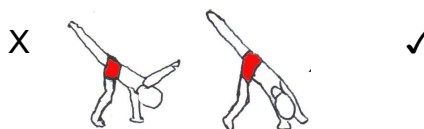


- To 'straighten out' a cartwheel, and get the gymnast to bring the legs up over the top, have them do cartwheels against a padded wall (using a sturdy crash mat or similar). They must cartwheel with their back to the mat, and attempt to do the whole move with back and legs skimming it. Not easy!
- The same exercise can also be done facing the wall, especially if the gymnast is swinging their legs round the side. This exercise will highlight the problem. Care must be taken to ensure they do not topple backwards, so the Coach should spot from behind.

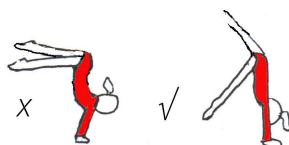
Common Faults:

Getting a child to understand the concept of rotating sideways is often tricky, so correcting while supporting is useful.

- The child can usually enter the cartwheel reasonably well. The first issue is often that they leave too long between placing the first hand and the second. This is usually because they are counting! Make sure they keep both arms by the ears, rather than trailing the second hand behind, so that they have no choice but to place the second hand down immediately after the first.

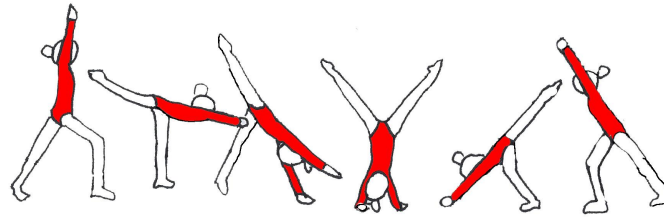


- The second issue, like the handstand, can be the collapsing of the shoulder angle, and arching the back to compensate. While supporting, stop the child upside down, and show them where their shoulders are, and where they should be, by pushing them back in line with the torso. Correcting the shoulder angle should also help correct the legs which will be coming round the side.



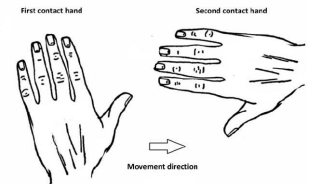
- The final and biggest challenge is the exit. You may find 2 common mistakes happening:
 1. The first landing foot is brought down too far away from the hand so there is no chance of the gymnast being able to stand up. Supporting the child, stop them upside down. Get them to split their legs wide and straight, and then help them lower the leg down to place the foot close to the hand. Repeat the process several times. Stop and correct the shaping and placement until they want to try it on their own.
 2. The child goes over the top and places the first foot down correctly. But then the second foot is placed behind the first, causing the body to rotate outwards, so the child ends up facing forward instead of sideways. To correct this, first take them through the foot positioning, placing the second one slightly in front of the first landing foot. Asking them to look back the way they came can also help. Another way to show what is happening is to take it up onto a bench. Support the Cartwheel, and suddenly the child realises they cannot put their second foot behind them because there is nothing there! Several supported attempts should help to straighten the foot position out.

FRONT-TO-BACK CARTWHEEL



- After the sideways Cartwheel has been mastered, it will be time to move on to the Front-to-Back Cartwheel, or Cartwheel $\frac{1}{4}$ Turn In as it is also known. This skill is the prerequisite to the beginnings of a Round-off, and therefore is the preferred style of Cartwheel. Usually the gymnast can pick up the technique quite easily if their sideways Cartwheel is sound.

- The main difference is the hand position, which is shown below. The first hand is placed exactly the same as with the sideways cartwheel, but the second hand is turned inwards so that the fingers point backwards (the opposite way to the direction of travel).



You are looking for:

- ✓ Starting from a standing stretch, facing along the line the body will follow.
- ✓ Both arms up by the ears, and one leg lifted in front in the direction of travel.
- ✓ A deep lunge in and down, placing the first hand at 90° , and turning the second hand 180 degrees so that the fingers point backwards.
- ✓ The body twists slightly during the travelling phase, initiated by the turning of the second hand.
- ✓ Legs are split wide, and follow an arc through vertical.
- ✓ Bottom is tucked in and back is straight.
- ✓ Foot comes down close to the hand, and the body is straightened up, now facing back towards the starting point, usually in lunge.

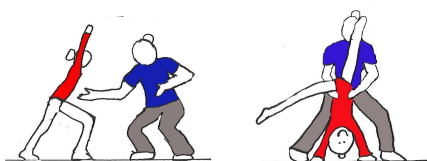
Supporting the Cartwheel

Don't over-support, but use it to help take some of the gymnast's own body weight while learning the technique. Often stopping the Cartwheel in the middle of the upside-down phase is useful to point out incorrect body shape, or to help them understand foot placement on exit.

This is a simple process, easy to pick up:

1. Position yourself slightly in front of the gymnast. You can stand or kneel.
2. Ask which leg they are leading with and stand to the same side, so that you will be to the back of the gymnast as they rotate over, thus avoiding flying legs!
3. Reach out your near hand, as if you are offering a helping hand, with palm facing up.
4. As they step into the move, place that near hand on the hip of the gymnast, palm still up.
5. As they start to rotate over, have your other hand ready to reach over and place it on the other hip.
6. You can keep hold like this right to the end or let go once one or both feet are down.

Standing Support for taller gymnasts



Kneeling Support for shorter gymnasts

