



where children discover the power and grace within themselves

Home Strength Exercises That will Help You Progress in Gymnastics Faster



Gymnastics puts such an incredible demand on the body, it's important to plan your workouts in accordance with your gymnastic goals. Strength training is very important if you want to progress in your gymnastics. Cardio is important to keep your body fat down, but gymnastics is more of a strength than endurance event, and too much cardio can start to break down muscle tissue. The good news is that using weights can give gymnasts muscular proportions that can hinder their abilities, so the only equipment you need to work out is the weight of your body.

- If you start slowly (1 set with 6-10 repetitions) and try to add to the number of exercises you do in each set and then add sets up to 3 set maximum, you will be able to increase your strength and improve your gymnastics progress.
- For the best results do these exercises every other day 3-4 times a week

Here is an 11 step exercise program you can do at home or in the park that will really help you get stronger and improve your gymnastics more quickly.

Step 1

Do as many pushups as you can, then rest and repeat. Experiment with hand placement -- try placing them far apart or side by side to work different muscles. To make them harder, put your feet on a chair or the couch and finally your bed.

Step 2

Stand in a face-down pike position, as tight as you can. Bracing your hands on the floor, bend your elbows to lower the top of your head to the floor, then push back up. Do as many as you can, then repeat. To make it harder, stand on your tip toes.

Arrange yourself into table position, with your hands and feet on the ground and your pelvis toward the ceiling. Squeeze your butt to get your pelvis as high as you can, then bend your elbows until they are bent at a 90-degree angle and push back up. Do two sets of as many as you can always trying to increase that number each week.

Step 3

Arrange yourself into table position, with your hands and feet on the ground and your pelvis toward the ceiling. Squeeze your butt to get your pelvis as high as you can, then bend your elbows until they are bent at a 90-degree angle and push back up. Do as many as you can for two sets. Do two sets of as many as you can always trying to increase that number each week.

Step 4

Lie on your back with your arms straight over your head. Straighten your legs together and raise them about 4 inches from the floor. Quickly pike until you are touching your toes while balanced on your tailbone, then lower back down. Keep your body hollow. Do two sets of as many as you can always trying to increase that number each week.

Step 5

Get into plank position -- the top of a pushup -- and hold for 15 seconds. Then build up to 30 seconds. Tilt your body to the right, maintaining your straight body, until you are balanced on one hand with your feet stacked. Hold the position for 15-30 seconds, then return to plank for 15-30 seconds. Repeat to the other side, then return to plank for another 15-30 seconds.

Step 6

Lie on your back with your hands behind your head and your legs straight and together, pointing at the ceiling. Lower your legs toward the floor until your lower back begins to lift off the floor, then raise them back up. Do as many as you can, rest, then repeat.

Step 7

Sit up straight with your legs straight and together in front of you, hands on the ground next to your hips. Hollow your body and push through the ground to lift your body into the air, maintaining straight legs. Hold as long as you can, rest and repeat.

Step 8

Stand with your legs together and take a giant step forward into a lunge. Spring back to the starting position, and repeat to failure. Do the same thing on the other side, rest and repeat the set.

Step 9

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees to lower your butt toward the ground, then rise back up. Repeat 30 times. For the next 10, jump into the air instead of raising slowly. Rest, then repeat the set.

Step 10

Stand in second position with your toes pointed out. Bend your knees to sink into a grand plie (squat), making sure to keep your back straight and your butt tucked in. Slowly rise back up, and repeat 15-30 times. Perform the same move on your tiptoes for another 10- 20 reps, rest, then repeat.

Step 11

Finish every workout with a 12-minute cardio session that you gradually increase to 15 and then 20 minutes. Running or jump rope or jogging in place burns the most calories, but cycling or swimming will give your joints a much-needed rest. Keep a pace that allows you to talk without gasping.

Warnings

- Start slowly and work your way into the recommended exercise. Pushing yourself too hard will only work against you and can result in injury.

Tips

- Add a third set to each exercise where you do as many reps as you can in 30-45 seconds. This improves your speed and reflexes, both important to learning new skills in gymnastics.
- If you can get access to a pull-up bar, doing several sets of pull-ups can improve your bar work. Advanced gymnasts do about 30 per day, but a great goal is to work up to doing two sets of the number of your age. That's the kind of strength you need to progress rapidly in gymnastics.
- For further information of additional exercises consult your gymnastics instructor, or you can contact Fun & Fitness Gymnastics General Manager, Marc Yancey at: director@funfitgym.com.

