



June 11, 2012

Dear Parents and Gymnasts,

Everyone knows that gymnasts must be flexible to be successful. Developing flexibility is essential to the sport. Good flexibility is beneficial to injury prevention not only in gymnastics but throughout life. Flexible bodies are typically made, not born. Most people have to work hard to develop proper flexibility throughout their lives. Research shows that a minimum of 45 seconds (and up to 2 minutes) of each stretch, once or twice daily, gives the maximum benefits.

Flexibility must be worked daily. Since many of our gymnasts are only with us one day a week, working flexibility only in class has few benefits. As our athletes increase in skills, they need to have increased flexibility to prevent injury and perform the skills properly. To gain flexibility, we recommend our athletes work on their flex daily at home as well as in the gym.

The stretches each gymnast will be asked to work are easy and safe. It is very important, however, that before any stretching session the muscles are warm from activity. Stretches can be done anywhere, at any time, so long as the muscles are warm. Research shows that stretching with cold muscles can lead to injury. Ten minutes of aerobic activity is usually sufficient to warm up muscles. Aerobic activity can be running, jumping jacks, skipping, or anything that makes the heart have to work and causes the body to warm up.

All stretches should be done without the aid of weights or anyone "pushing" on the athlete. Gravity, at the lower gymnastics' levels, is the best "weight" for our young athletes. As they advance, coaches may assign some more rigorous stretches, and these will be communicated to the parent as well as the athlete.

Each gymnast will be given a small chart each week. If they bring in the completed chart showing that they did their daily stretches, they will receive a small token prize. This chart must be completed for all seven days to receive the prize. This is an honor system. We expect that our young athletes will be honest and show good character when completing the chart.

Completed charts can be brought up to The Vault during any normal Vault operation hours to be redeemed for a small prize. If a gymnast forgets to bring in a chart one week, he or she can bring it in the following week (along with the completed chart for the current week) and redeem both for the prizes.

It is our goal that our athletes will become more flexible. They will also have personal responsibility for their gymnastics through this program. We want to have the best athletes in the area. We love each of our gymnasts and want them to have the skills, including flexibility and responsibility, to succeed!



Standing parallel pike: Feet should be facing forward.  
Standing turned out pike: Feet should be in a V shape with heels together



Butterfly: Feet should be together. Try to sit up tall.



Froggy: Lay on tummy with hips pressed into the ground, bottoms of feet should be together



Right/Left leg split: Sitting tall, back leg knee should be facing the ground, front leg knee should be facing up and slightly turned out. Try to make little toes on each foot touch the floor.



Middle Splits: Support yourself on your elbows, legs in a straddle and trying to push hips into the ground, knees facing up and toes pointed



Downward Dog: Stand on feet, lean forward and place hands on the ground. Allow to work through the arm and legs.

# Flexibility Homework

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Week beginning \_\_\_\_\_

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Standing Parallel Pike							
Standing Turned Out Pike							
Butterfly							
Froggy							
V-sit Front Stretch (Pancake)							
Splits Right							
Splits Left							
Splits Middle							
Down Dog							

**Color in each box when you have completed the stretch for 45 seconds-90 seconds.**

- Remember:
- Hold each stretch. Try not to bounce
  - Stretch only when your muscles are warm.
  - Keep holding the stretch until the timer is done.
  - Use the best form you can
  - Stretching can be uncomfortable, but shouldn't be painful. If it hurts too bad, don't try to go down as far.
  - Do your stretches every day.
  - Do any additional stretches your coach may ask you to do also
  - Be responsible. It is your responsibility to remember to stretch, not your parent's.

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