

Glossary of Gymnastics Terms

Aerial

A stunt in which the gymnast turns completely over in the air without touching the apparatus with his or her hands.

All-Around

A category of gymnastics that includes all of the events. The all-around champion of an event earns the highest total score from all events combined.

Amplitude

The height or degree of execution of a movement. In general, the higher the salto or the more breathtaking the movement, the better the amplitude and the score. The height or distance an element is performed away from the apparatus. Internal amplitude refers to proper alignment or body positioning during the performance of an element.

Apparatus

One of the various pieces of equipment used in gymnastics competitions.

Arch Position

The body is curved backwards. The upper and lower parts of the body are stretched backward forming a curve.

Artistry

The ease of movement, quality of expression and aesthetic performance of skills, links and choreography exhibited throughout a routine.

Assemblé

Pushing off one foot while swinging the other foot forward and up, bringing the feet together upon landing.

Back-in, Full-out

A double salto with a full twist (the complete twist performed during the second salto).

Cat Leap (pad de chat)

Jump forward off of one leg while swinging the other leg forward and up, switch legs in midair and land on take-off foot. Legs are bent at 90-degree angle during flight.

"Code of Points"

The official FIG rulebook for judging gymnastics skills.

Composition

The structure of a gymnastics routine. Each individual movement or skill is a building block; the arrangement of the moves in the exercise is called the composition of the routine.

Compulsories

Pre-designed routines that contain specific skills and movements required of all gymnasts.

Coupé

Stand on one leg, the free leg should be bent, toe pointed, and toe at the ankle of the support leg. Knee of bent leg can face forward or sideward.

Deduction

Points taken off a gymnast's score for errors. Most deductions are pre-determined, such as a 0.8 deduction for a fall from an apparatus or a 0.1 deduction for stepping out of bounds on the floor exercise.

Dismount

To leave an apparatus at the end of a routine; usually done with a difficult twist or salto. A skill performed from the apparatus to a controlled landing on a mat.

Element

A single move or skill that has an expected standard of execution and has been given a technical value.

Execution

(1) The performance of a routine. (2) Form, style, and technique used to complete the skills included in a routine constitute the level of execution of an exercise. Bent knees, poor toe point and an arched or loosely-held body position are all examples of poor execution.

FIG

The International Gymnastics Federation is recognized by the International Olympic Committee and is responsible for the governance of the sport of gymnastics on the international level.

Flexibility

The range of motion through which a body part can move without feeling pain.

Flic-Flac

Also known as a flip-flop or back handspring. Take off on one or two feet, jump backwards onto hands and land on feet. This element is used in a majority of tumbling passes on the floor exercise. It's also used a great deal on the balance beam.

Fouetté

Push off one leg while kicking the other leg forward and up, execute a 180 degree turn, then land on the first leg. The other leg remains extended back.

Front Attitude

Stand on one leg with free leg lifted so thigh is horizontal, turn the leg outward and bend knee slightly.

Front Support

Arms are straight and extended in front of the body. Also, known as plank or push-up position.

Full-in, Back-out

A double salto with a full twist (the complete twist performed during the first salto).

Gaylord

On high bar, a front giant into a one-and-one-half front salto over the bar to regrasp. First done by U.S. gymnast Mitch Gaylord.

Giant

A swing in which the body is fully extended and moving through a 360-degree rotation around the bar.

Gymnastics Point (Tendu)

Beginning with stretched body position, place one foot forward, leg straight, toe pointed, and toe lightly touching floor. Often used as starting position for gymnastics skills.

Half-in, Half-out

A double salto with a half twist on the first salto and a half twist on the second salto.

Handspring

Springing off the hands by putting the weight on the arms and using a strong push from the shoulders; can be done either forward or backward; usually a linking movement.

Hitchkick

Push off one leg while swinging the other leg forward and up, switch leg positions in midair and land on the other foot. Legs are extended.

Hollow

Begin with a stretched body position, then contract the chest and abdomen inward with a pelvic tilt, and bring the shoulders forward. Gymnast should have a rounded upper back.

Inverted

Any position in which the lower body is moved into a position above the upper body.

Kip

Movement from a position below the equipment to a position above, usually on the uneven bars, parallel bars or high bar.

Layout position

A straight or stretched body position. Usually performed as a body shape in a salto.

Mount

A skill performed from the floor to get onto a piece of equipment.

Olympic order

The international competition order that is decided by the FIG. Olympic order for women is vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise.

Men compete in the following order: floor exercise, pommel horse, still rings, vault, parallel bars and horizontal bar.

Olympic order for rhythmic gymnasts is rope, hoop, ball, clubs and ribbon.

Optional

The design of the routine and skill selection is determined by the coach and gymnast(s). Gymnasts portray their best skills while meeting the requirements of the level of competition. Routines can be constructed to reflect the gymnasts' strongest abilities.

Passé

Stand on one leg, the free leg should be bent, toe pointed, and toe at the knee of the support leg. Knee of bent leg can face forward or sideward. Thigh of free leg should be horizontal.

Pike Position

Body flexed forward more than 90 degrees at the hips while the legs are kept straight.

Pirouettes

Changing direction or moving in a circular motion by twisting in the handstand position.

Plié

Bending the knees with feet flat on the floor and body straight and upright. Demi-pliés (slight bend of the knees) are important for safe landings and take-offs. Depending on the skill, leg/knees/feet may be turned out or facing forward.

Prone

Lying face down on the floor.

Rear Support

Arms are straight and extended behind the body.

Release

Leaving the bar to perform a move before re-grasping it.

Relevé

Standing in a straight position on the balls of the feet (on toes).

Round-off

A dynamic turning movement, with a push-off on one leg, while swinging the legs upward in a fast cartwheel motion into a 90 degree turn. The lead-off to a number of skills.

Routine

A combination of stunts displaying a full range of skills on one apparatus. Multiple skills or series linked together form a routine. Another term for routine is “exercise.”

Salto

Flip or somersault, with the feet coming up over the head and the body rotating around the axis of the waist.

Scissors

A combination requirement in a competitive routine on the pommel horse, which combines cuts and undercuts. It begins in a stride support and ends in an opposite stride support.

Sequence (or Series)

Two or more positions or skills which are performed together creating a different skill or activity.

Sissone

Jump from two feet (one foot in front of the other), separate legs into a split position in the air, then land on the forward foot. The other leg remains extended back.

Squat

Support on the balls of the feet with the knees and hips flexed so that the seat is near, but not touching the heels, and the torso erect.

"Stick" (landing)

Slang term used for when a gymnast executes a landing with correct technique and no movement of the feet.

Straddle

Legs are straight and extended sideward.

Straight Stand

Standing with feet together, parallel or at a 45-degree angle, legs straight, abdomen tight, rib cage lifted, head neutral and with arms at sides.

Stretched Stand

Standing with feet together, parallel or at a 45-degree angle, legs straight, abdomen tight, rib cage lifted, head neutral and with arms extended upwards by the ears. Body should form a straight line.

Stride Leap

Pushing up and forward off of one foot, traveling forward and landing on one foot, showing flight with legs in straight (or stride) split position.

Supine

Lying flat on back.

Tuck

A position in which the knees and hips are bent and drawn into the chest; the body is folded at the waist. The body is “curled up in a ball.”

Twist

Not to be confused with a salto, a twist occurs when the gymnast rotates around the body’s longitudinal axis, defined by the spine.

Virtuosity

The artistry, or the degree of rhythm and harmony, displayed while a movement is executed. In general, the more flowing and seamless a series of skills appears to be, the greater the virtuosity and the higher the score.

Wolf Jump

Similar shape to pike jump with one leg bent at 90 degree or greater angle, and other leg straight.

Yurchenko Vault

Round-off entry onto the board, flic-flac onto the vaulting table and salto off of the vaulting table. The gymnast may twist on the way off.