



Start Here, Go Anywhere!

Gymnastics NSW

Performance Gymnastics Guide

Disclaimer

The GFA Intermediate Coaches Accreditation Course provides coaches with all the tools to assist with creating a Performance routine, it is highly recommended that you have a GFA Intermediate Coaching Accreditation to complete the Performance Competencies which can be transferable across all Gymsports.

Table of Contents

Introduction of Gymnastics for All 3

What is Performance..... 4

Performance Guidelines..... 5

 1. Performance environment..... 5

 2. Performance Requirements..... 6

 3. Age and Ability..... 6

 4. Team Numbers..... 6

 5. Theme..... 7

 6. Music..... 7

 7. Costuming..... 8

 8. Apparatus..... 9

 9. Choreography Elements..... 10

Putting it together 12

Event Pathways..... 13

Acknowledgements..... 16



2019 World Gymnaestrada GNSW Combined Clubs Performance



Gymnastics for All (GFA)

Gymnastics for All is a sport for everybody and a sport for life, regardless of age, gender or ability. It is the perfect activity to prepare for **long term** participation in sport and develops vital life skills.

Gymnastics for All (GfA), is the fourth recognised discipline of the International Gymnastics Federation and plays a vital role in the development of the sport of gymnastics as a whole. It provides a foundation for all seven competitive disciplines in addition to being a discipline in its own right.

Gymnastics for All:

- Is lots of fun.
- Develops balance, co-ordination and confident body movement.
- Builds self-esteem, strength and flexibility, preparing the body & mind for life's challenges.
- Provides heaps of variety....so there is something for everyone
- Is a sport for life
- Is conducted within a safe environment which caters for personal growth and development.
- Develops healthy minds and bodies for now and later life.

Gymnastics For all is the basis of all Gymsports and a Gymsport in its own right. Clubs can utilise Gymnastics for all as a starting point for teaching the fundamentals, before gymnasts specialise in any of the other 6 Gymsports. Alternatively, clubs may focus on developing Gymnasts with diverse skills, adaptable to a variety of movement experiences.

Gymnastics for All has been categorised by the International Federation of Gymnastics (FIG) into the following areas:

- Gymnastics on and with traditional, innovative or creative apparatus
- Playful apparatus gymnastics
- Floor exercise and gymnastics
- Gymnastics with and without hand apparatus
- Rhythmic gymnastics Jazz gymnastics and jazz dance
- Modern dance and Aerobic Gymnastics Activities which contribute to the health and wellbeing of participants.
- KinderGym also falls into the above categories and therefore comes under the Gymnastics for All Banner.



Performance Gymnastics

“The showing and sharing of gymnastics through movement”.

Performance Gymnastics is part of Gymnastics for All and provides clubs and athletes the opportunity to showcase their gymnastics skills using any style and combination of gymnastics and dance. Skills are artfully arranged with or without music and using any large or handheld apparatus or no equipment at all. It is a fantastic way to bring your club together and work as a team to express and show your love of gymnastics and in a fun and creative way.

Performance Gymnastics develops leadership and teamwork skills to benefit the individual's health and a potential in life and is a way of engaging men and women to continue with their sport at any age. A performance team can consist of as few as four gymnasts and up to as many as you want. The possibilities in Performance Gymnastics are infinite.

Performance offers a diverse range of activities that can be used throughout a routine and include:

Gymnastics without Apparatus

- Floor (i.e. tumbling, acrobatics)
- Aerobics
- Dance (i.e. Jazz, Folklore, Modern)

Gymnastics with large Apparatus

- Vaulting, and other Artistic Apparatus (combined or individually)
- New/Original/Modified Apparatus

Gymnastics with Hand Apparatus

- Known Rhythmic Apparatus (i.e. ball, hoop, ribbon)
- New/Original/Modified Apparatus

Gymnastics through Play

- Movement Activities
- Modified Skills/Equipment
- Exploration

Display and Performance Gymnastics are both ways to exhibit Gymnastic routines however they have a distinct difference. Performance Gymnastics is demonstrated by costuming accompanying a theme whereas Display Gymnastics is demonstrating Gymnastic skills.

Performances can be done anywhere. They are used by clubs to promote themselves and gymnastics at shows and in different arenas from your local town festival to the Easter Show or Australia's got Talent. NSW and GA have annual performance events and there are numerous international Gymnaestrada where thousands of gymnasts meet and show their talents and skills.



Performance Guidelines

Performances are like jigsaw puzzles, there are many pieces that fit together, and the picture is not complete if any pieces are missing. To create a routine all you require is imagination, simple ideas and the ability to combine movements that are both suitable to the participants involved and the environment in which they will perform.

When planning for an end of year club display or for an international GymFest you need to consider the following components and influences:

1. Performance environment
2. Performance Requirements
3. Age and Ability
4. Team Numbers
5. Theme
6. Music
7. Costuming
8. Apparatus
9. Choreography Elements

1. Performance Environment

Before you start to plan for your routine you will need consider the environment and venue in which it will be performing in/on starting with the venue.

- a. Indoor
 - Club Gym
 - Council, community or school Hall
 - Theatre
 - Sports stadium i.e. Basketball Stadium
- b. Outdoor
 - Marquee
 - Grassed area with or without cover
 - Ashfelt or similar with or without cover
 - Elevated outdoor stage
 - Elements – Wind, rain, sun

Each environment will have their own challenges that will need to be considered. This will assist with planning a routine to suit:

- What is the performance size?
- What is the roof height?
 - are there obstacles in the roof i.e. low bearing beams
 - looking into the sky/sun.
- Are there any obstacles on the outside of the floor area?
 - poles holding up the sunshade
 - walls,



- exit doors.
- What is the flooring?
 - hard wood / Plywood (slippery)
 - sports plastic floor
 - roll out mats
 - sprung floor
- Will the spectators be standing or sitting?
- How many sides will the spectators be seated/ standing on?
- Is the venue air conditioned or not?
- Will there be lighting or rigging available?
- What is the sound system set up?
 - One speaker in the hall
 - Surround sound in the stadium
 - Theatre sound system
 - Outdoor speaker at the school fete
- From where are the athletes entering and exiting the floor area?
- Elements
 - Will participants need to wear shoes as the surface may be hot or concrete.

2. Performance Requirements

Next you will need to determine if the Performance is for a specific event with rules and regulations or not.

- I. End of Year club performance – no event requirements
- II. School Fete – no event requirements, may have time constraints.
- III. GymFest
 - Team Numbers required to be eligible to enter
 - Number of routines required
 - Length of routine required e.g. 5 minutes including entry and exit.
 - Venues at which Performances will be conducted
 - Equipment – events may have categories including no equipment, handheld and large equipment. Also check what equipment will be available at the event and transportation for equipment you want to incorporate.

3. Age and Ability

In order to have an effective and entertaining performance your gymnasts should be performing at their level and ability. Use the performance to celebrate the skills your gymnasts can do well and also use it as an opportunity to let everyone shine regardless of their ability. If you have a gymnast who can only do a forward roll don't just hide them behind more talented gymnasts. Utilise your routine so they have their moment doing their forward roll front and centre.

4. Team Numbers

Once you have determined when and where your performance will be held you will need to consider how many participants will be involved in the performance. A routine for 10 participants on a small stage would be totally different to that choreographed for 200 participants on a large oval.



5. Theme

Themes can be used as a helpful tool for planning any routine. Themes can provide a common thread throughout the performance and assist with the selection of movement forms, music, costumes and props. Themes can also assist to tie multiple performances together at a GymFest or a Club end of year display to convey a story to the spectators and share the journey with the athletes.

Event organizers may provide you with a list of topics that will work with the selected theme or you may have the opportunity to choose your own. Here are a few examples provided as a starting point.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| • Transportation | • Seasons/Weather | • Around the world | • Sports |
| • Colours / Light | • Circus | • Jungle | • Show Tunes |
| • Outer Space | • Industrial World | • Under the Sea | • Popular Culture |
| • Outback to Ocean | • Disney | • Holidays | • Time travel |
| • Country and Western | • Elements of Life | • Animals | • Australiana |

6. Music

Music Mapping is a module within the GfA Intermediate Coaches Accreditation and provides practical activities on how to map music successfully.

The choice of music to support your performance will be one of the most important decisions you will make. Music is used as part of the performance to enhance skills, set the mode or tone and prepare the audience for a show. It can be a single track or a compilation the choice is yours. When choosing music be aware of the lyrics and themes represented, especially when using songs in a foreign language. Using mixed language songs can really enhance an international theme, however you must be sure to check the lyrics.

The music must be appropriate to the age of the participants while also be suitable for the audience you will perform to and the movements that you will perform. Be mindful that using a Can Can or tango style of music is not appropriate for 8-12-year old's and Frozen may not really be appropriate for 18+. This is where a theme will help you choose your music so that your story flows, makes sense to the audience and is not disconnected.

Be mindful of the audience that you will be performing to. Not only will there be children in the audience there will also be people of all races and religions. Please ensure any music chosen will not be offensive. Any music with inappropriate lyrics, themes or swearing will generally be stopped and the performance will not be allowed to continue.

Once your music has been selected the next step is to analyze the music and develop a map/framework to assist with the construction of the routine. Mapping music involves counting the exact number of beats in a piece of music to define the crescendos, peaks, highlights and lows of the piece.

Think through the dynamics of the music and ensure your movements match the changes and modes of music.

- Fast music – use fast movements like tumbling, leaping, changing formations, throwing handheld apparatus etc.



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- Slow music – use slow poses or dance moves, perhaps acro balances, movements on the floor etc.
- Strong beats in music – use staccato poses, jumps, isolated moves on each beat to match and accentuate the music. Balls are great to use in music with heavy beats
- Building to a crescendo – start slow and increase your size and speed of movements with the music and finish on a large movement.
- Decreasing from the crescendo – gradually slow down and decrease the size of movements to the pace of the music.
- Consider how you are going to move around the floor and convey the theme through different types of movements and the music facilitates the changes and progressions around the floor.

Always ensure you have a good quality recording of your music. Some sights that work well are:

- Apple Music
- Spotify
- The original artists website will also have good quality recordings.

To edit the music or create your own mix or mash up you can use:

- Garage Band
- Sound Studio
- Audacity
- Ashampoo

7. Costuming

Costumes can be as simple or as complex as you like and need to compliment your theme. They can enhance the overall impression provided, adding color, atmosphere and feeling to your performance.

Clothing worn by the participants must allow them to perform the skills and movements safely, for example complicated costumes such as a store bought Dorothy, tin man and cowardly lion costume for your wizard of oz routine may seem like it a good idea, but they can potentially be restrictive or tear easily so do your research before committing to a costume. Instead maybe using a white leotard and leggings with a checked apron may be more suitable for your Dorothy. The effect will still blend with the theme of your routine.

Make sure the colours you choose for the costumes are in harmony with the music, theme and are appropriate to the performance area and age group. It is always a good idea to hold a dress rehearsal before a performance so any costume glitches can be fixed.



8. Apparatus

Performances involving the use of apparatus (and/or props) can add great depth and dimensions to your routine. In some circumstances the simplest prop can provide some of the most spectacular and entertaining shows, However, when incorporating the use of equipment, it is vital that careful consideration is given to:

- How the Apparatus/prop will be transported
- The performance and storage space available
- How the equipment will be placed and set up on the performance area
- How it can be removed quickly for the following performances.
- Careful consideration also needs to be given the safely to ensure appropriate matting can also be fixed and used through the performance if needed.
- Time requirements for placement and removal as well as staff/volunteers to assist
- Large equipment can also be difficult to move around during the performance. Do you really need a 12m air floor for your routine or can you use a 6m air floor?

Some ideas for props and their uses are:

- Large sheets of fabric can be moved in front of gymnasts to ‘hide’ them
- Simple handheld apparatus can create effective transitions like throwing beach balls or having some scarfs or large pieces of fabric to create different layers of colours and depth through the routine.
- An air floor can be fantastic to allow some great tumbling runs and passes
- A large box can also be effective for adding some dynamic moves and something as simple as a straight jump can look amazing. Then you can use your cannon movement as a building tool in the music and have a series of jumps of the box starting with a straight jump and culminating with a salto skill, You can make a picture to go in front of the box to support your theme, at the beach you could put some sand dunes or a beach buggy picture in front of the box
- Mini Tramps can also be a great addition for those who have great vaulters and trampolining gymnasts. They are also a great way to use your space as you can have gymnasts jumping off the mini tramp into the air while a gymnast does a corresponding movement on the floor. For example, a tuck salto on the mini tramp with a forward roll on the ground.
- Have a large banner/screen at the back of the floor for a quick costume change mid performance.

Be prepared to experiment! Try mixes of equipment arrangements as these can all add to the overall look and entertainment value that your performance provides for spectators.



9. Choreography Elements

Performance Elements is a module within the GfA Intermediate Coaches Accreditation and provides practical activities on how to choreograph successfully.

There are many elements that can help you to enhance your routine to make it more interesting and appealing. This can be achieved through the use of:

- Cannons
- Ripples
- Levels
- Variety
- Formations
- Transitions

Cannons

This effect is created when one skill or movement is repeated, in quick succession, down the line or through a formation and can be enhanced by:

- Hand apparatus e.g. throwing balls
- Words e.g. on words that are repeated in succession.
- Music e.g. exploding sounds in the music

Ripples

A ripple is a visual effect created when one person begins performing a skill or movement, then another person is added one at a time, performing the same skill or movement and so on until all the members are executing the same skill or movement in unison. Ripples can be used in:

- Group dance or gymnastic movements
- Leaps / jumps / turns
- Tumbling

Use of Levels

A visual effect of levels is created with the placements in a formation are varied i.e. sit, kneel, lunge, stand. Levels can be used to Emphasis skills or cater for different abilities. Levels can be enhanced by incorporating cannons, handheld apparatus, words or music. You can use skills that have multiple levels within the skill itself e.g. split leap to dive roll, straddle jump to the floor, cartwheels/walkovers to the knees and on the elbows etc.

Variety

A visual effect is created when a combination of movements or skills are executed in a routine. Variety can be demonstrated by using a basic skill and showing the increased difficulty of that skill in stages. For example, having a cannon of leaps starting with a straight jump and building to a turning split ring, or a series of tumbling starting with a forward roll and ending with a tuck salto.



Formations

A formation is created by the gymnast's positions on the floor. A typical formation is a straight line across the mat. Throughout you want your gymnasts to move and create different shapes like diamonds, circles and V shapes.

Formations are one of the most important elements that you will have in your routine. Once you know the number of members in your team you can then plan and identify the formations (patterns) you can create.

When linking formations, it is important to remember the height of the participants for visual appeal, formations can either be:

- Spread out in order to execute skills e.g. Acro group balances
- Or tight to accentuate synchronization

Transitions

Transitions refer to the way the performance is linked together i.e. getting from A to B. creative transitions should be used to vary the way you link elements and blend from one formation to the other. Transition examples are:

- Locomotion – walk, run, skip
- Rotations – lateral, longitude or Axis turns
- Choreographed movement
- Use of levels i.e. peeling a banana

The use of different Gymsports in your performance can add different dimensions in your performance choreography:

- Artistic – Tumbling, handstands, walkovers etc.
- Acro – static and dynamic balances
- Trampoline – incorporate a mini tramp into your performance, incorporate an air floor if one is available
- Rhythmic – handheld apparatus can be an effective way of showing a progression through your theme and to use on slower music
- Free G – Include some freestyle improv in the middle to some hip-hop music or some breakdancing
- Kindy Gym – Mums and Bubs performances are great and can include wedges, boxes, umbrellas, buckets and spades



Putting it all together

Once you have taken into consideration the event requirements and chosen your theme and music it is time to start your choreography.

Your routine should tell a story with a beginning, middle and end. Plan what you want your routine to portray to the audience. A good example is a day at the beach. Your story will entail going to or arriving at the beach then showing fun at the beach with maybe a little comedic accident then packing up and leaving.

Pre-plan your routine according to your music choice. Take time to sit down and listen to your music and map it out.

Pinpoint the crescendos (high/loud) parts of the music and plan what movements and skills you want to do to show your story. We are at the beach and our props are li-lows or something similar maybe a surfboard and some beach towels. You could plan to lift a gymnast on a li-low or surfboard OR if you have beach towels you can roll them into long ropes and do some exciting skipping over and under and some dive rolls, or saltos over the swinging towels. These will be the 'highlights' of your routine.

You need to plan for your movement around the floor (Transitions). Once you have your highlights set you need to consider how you are getting into and out of your highlights. Plan out where your gymnasts need to be and work backwards to ensure they are in the correct place.

Your start and finish pose are the next thing you need to consider. This is the first and last thing your audience will see. They need to be a part of the routine.

Your start pose should flow into the routine from the beginning. Don't try anything too complicated or difficult to hold. You don't know how long they will be waiting for the music to start. For our beach party you could start with all your gymnasts off the performance area and have them come out into the space greeting each other and setting up for a day at the beach OR you could have a couple start laying on beach towels and the others come through and disturb them OR you could have everyone on the floor in strategic positions so when the music starts they move into beach movements like swimming or playing volleyball with some beach balls.

Your finish pose is the culmination of your routine. It should finish your story. Again, you don't want anything too complicated, if something goes wrong your performance will feel incomplete when the gymnasts don't finish with the music in the intended way. For our beach theme they could all run off waving as they are going home from our day at the beach, or they could have some cardboard cars, and everyone could jump in a car.

Once you have your start and finish poses or exits, highlights and movements set you need to then choreograph the rest of the story, if you can, use your athletes to assist with the choreography by giving them parts for in the routine that they have to create, this will give them a sense of ownership of the routine and they will be more than happy to show off their content.



Performance Pathway

The performance pathway is non-competitive and allows athletes the opportunity to represent their club, and/ or Country at any age, any ability across the globe and can be found in 2 types of event formats:

1. Gymnaestrada – non-competitive group performances
2. Gym 4 Life Challenge – Group Rankings and Champion Performance awards.

Local fates and community events provide clubs performances with the opportunity of self-promotion whilst State, Interstate, National and International provide involvement at and FIG level.



Club and Community Events

Club and community events are non-structured in the sense that there are no event criteria considered only the environment in which your team will be performing in. Club and Community events provide the opportunity for the Club to promote itself to the wider community and provide an opportunity for athletes to perform to local peers.

State GymFest

State GymFests are non-competitive events that are structured in their criteria. Attending the event could provide the club the opportunity to be sanctioned to attend further interstate and International event attendance. Participating in a State event also provides the opportunity for you club to travel.

GNSW holds the Annual Festival of Gymnastics in November each year with 2020 marking the 35th consecutive GymFest. The event criteria at the Festival is a mix of Gymnaestrada and Gym for Life Challenge requirements with participation in the event providing sanctioning. For further information please see the GNSW Events Calendar for entry details.

Interstate GymFest

Other state and Territories from around Australia host Performance Events from time to time. These events are usually non-competitive but will have a criterion to be met. For further information see each State/Territories website event calander.



National GymFest

The National Gym 4 Life Challenge is held annually by Gymnastics Australia as part of the National Clubs Carnival. There is specific criteria to be met and is in line with the International Gym for Life criteria, with performances being ranked and awarded by a panel of Performance specialist Adjudicators.

The 3-day event includes:

- 1 x outdoor performance
- 2 x Indoor Performance
- Athletes and Coach Workshops
- Social Event
- Performance Ranking of Bronze, Silver or Gold selected by Adjudicators
- Overall Performance Champion – Peer Judges

The Champion Club is then Eligible to represent Australia at the International Gym 4 Life event.

International Invitationals

These events are usually held by the countries National Governing Body and may be sanctioned by FIG. There are a variety of these events and each will have their own event criteria to be met and are usually held biannually or every 4 years.

Some of the regular International Invitational events are:

[The Festival del Sole in Italy](#)

[Blume Festival in the Canary Islands](#)

FIG World International Events

There are 2 types of FIG World International Events that teams can attend:

1. World Gymnaestrada

The [World Gymnaestrada](#)¹ is the largest general gymnastics exhibition. It is held every four years much like the Olympics. The focus of this event is not on winning medals. The Gymnaestrada is about Group Performances – some with hundreds or even thousands of participants. Adults and children of every age and ability perform. Countries from around the world come together to showcase their talent and the culture of their various countries.

The choreography is designed both to challenge the participants and to delight audiences. Routines are performed at various venues within the host country. Large group routines are known as "mass

¹ Wikipedia



routines" which involve hundreds of gymnasts. The mass routines are often performed in large stadiums where spectators can take in routines performed by gymnasts from all over the world.

The² World Gymnaestrada is a non-competitive display event for teams of 10 or more participants. A range of performance opportunities are provided to teams as well as the chance to mix with gymnastic enthusiasts from around the world.

The event program is held over seven days and includes:

- Opening Ceremony
- Group Performances
- Large Group Performances
- National Evening Presentations
- World Team Performance
- FIG Gala
- Workshops
- City Performances
- Closing Ceremony



Rings – FIG Gala

2. World Gym 4 Life

The [World Gym 4 Life Challenge](#) is an international contest for gymnastics groups that is held every four years. Participation is for everybody, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, culture, ability, or social standing. Performances are a maximum of five minutes, may incorporate any gymnastic element, with or without apparatus, and may be accompanied by music.

The objectives of the World Gym for Life Challenge are to provide a second FIG event for gymnastic groups; and to offer gymnastic groups the opportunity to participate in a contest and have their performance evaluated.

The event program is held over seven days and includes:

- An opening ceremony
- The contest
- The Gym for Life gala
- Workshops
- Show performances
- A closing ceremony

All participating groups are awarded either a gold, silver, or bronze medal. Clubs having earned gold in the qualifying round, participate in an ultimate Gym for Life Gala, where a “World Club Champion” is crowned. The trophy awarded at this event is named after current FIG President Prof. Bruno Grandi.

To represent Australia at this event teams must enter the National Gym for Life Challenge and be awarded Australian Grand Champion Performance. For further details regarding eligibility please see the National GFA Technical Regulations found on the Gymnastics Australia website.

² Gymnastics Australia



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