

TeamGym

ABC for Floor

May 2020



European
Gymnastics

A coach's guide

ABC for Floor will guide you as a coach to get the basic knowledge about TeamGym floor, how a routine is built up and provide tips and ideas on how to choreograph your TeamGym floor program.

This presentation will help you to interpret the TeamGym Code of Points (CoP) and clarify different concepts. The content refers to the TeamGym Code of Points 2017-2021, including Revision B, June 2019.

The Technical Committee for TeamGym would like to thank Anders Frisk (SWE) for the preparation of text, pictures and videos for the ABC for Floor.

Any questions or feedback can be submitted through the Contact Us page on European Gymnastics website <https://www.europeangymnastics.com/discipline/teamgym/contact>

A coach's guide

The floor routine showcases the heart of TeamGym, with the team interaction and bond between gymnasts being vital to a strong performance.

In floor the whole team is performing together at the same time which really makes it the team apparatus of the sport.

Floor could also be considered the most complex apparatus since you (apart from all technical aspects) also have the music to correspond to, a lot of composition requirements and the need for gymnasts to perform the same elements at the same time with the same dynamic execution and expression.

What is a TeamGym floor program?

In short, one could explain the floor program as a “dancelike” routine where gymnastic and acrobatic elements are combined to instrumental music where the whole body is engaged in every movement. First off we would like to point out what the main requirements of a floor program are:

- Instrumental music
- Time limit of 2:15 to 2:45 minutes
- Choreography based on gymnastic elements where the whole body is engaged
- All movements and elements shall favour a dynamic execution where the movement phrases show continuity with a logical and natural fluency without unmotivated stops
- Difficulty elements that are distributed over the whole program
- A variation of formations
- Moving rhythmic sequence
- Flexibility element
- Group element
- Different formations (shapes)
- Movements in different planes and towards different directions
- Movements that are corresponding to the music

What is a TeamGym floor program?

The requirements will be further clarified in the following three sections: Composition, Difficulty and a section for Music.

In addition, we will look at the requirements for Execution both in general and specifically for the difficulty elements as well as the choreographic requirements.

The score

The team's floor score is divided into three parts, Composition, Difficulty and Execution. The final score is the sum of the Composition, Difficulty and Execution scores.

C-score (Composition)

The Composition score is calculated from four components:

* Flexibility element * Group element * Rhythmic sequence * Difficulty Distribution.

The maximum C-score is 4.0.

D-score (Difficulty)

D-score stands for difficulty and this is an “open code” meaning there is no maximum on how much you can earn in difficulty. However, you can only choose **9** different elements from the table of difficulty. See the chapter about difficulty below to learn more about the different categories.

E-score (Execution)

The Execution score is divided in two parts; the gymnasts *performance* and specific *choreographic requirements*. The E-score starts from **10.0** and deductions are made during the performance. See the chapter about Execution below for more insights in what is being deducted and what the choreographic requirements are.



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Composition

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Composition

As mentioned above the composition is composed of four components valued 1.0 each. If all gymnasts perform correctly, and the routine is choreographed meeting the requirements, the C-score will be 4.0

The advice is; **make it easy for the judges to identify the different requirements!**

The following section includes clarifications of all the composition requirements in CoP (Art 22.2).

Please note that these clarifications are not replacing the CoP so we strongly advice you to study the code thoroughly.

Composition – Flexibility element (F)

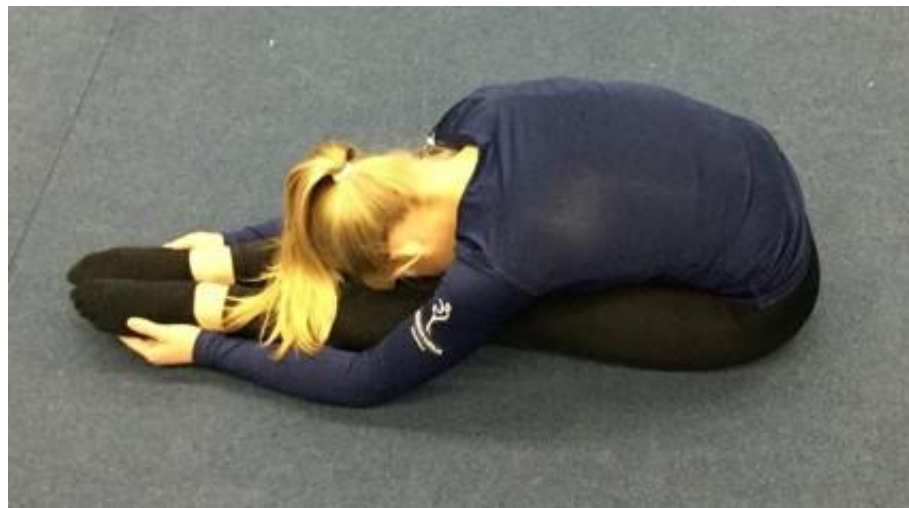
The gymnasts should show flexibility and this is done by choosing elements from four different groups:

- Split (right or left)
- Side split
- Straddle pike fold - leg separation min 90°, the upper body folded all the way down to the floor
- Pike sitting fold - chest on knees

The whole team has to show the flexibility element at the **same time**, but the choice of element is **individual** and can be different for different gymnasts.

If all gymnasts manage to fulfil the requirements the team will be awarded the full 1.0, but if one or two gymnasts fail according to the definition, the team will get half the value. If three or more gymnasts fail, the value will be zero.

Flexibility elements



Composition – Rhythmic Sequence (RS)

The Rhythmic Sequence defines a movement phase where travelling movements are connected so that the team crosses the floor; either from side to side, back to front (or reversed) or diagonal. Travelling means that gymnasts are moving all the time without any pauses in the sequence. There must be continuous movement of the centre of gravity.

The team performs the same sequence (mirroring is allowed) at the same time in either one or two groups.

The sequence should also show a change of tempo in the movements.

The sequence **must not** include any difficulty elements.

Composition – Rhythmic Sequence (RS)

The key word here is that the sequence should **travel** across the floor area so active footwork should be shown, e.g. the sequence should never stop but constantly be moving.

- 1) Movements can come from different categories of elements/movements (see examples in movie clip).
- 2) Movements must show a variety of rhythms, rather than just the basic pulse of the music in order to show a change of tempo.
- 3) The starting and ending position should not be further than 3 metres from the floor edges and 5 metres from the corners.

Tips from the coach

See to that the gymnasts really starts and ends the RS within the limits in order to make it clear for the judges to identify the sequence.

Composition – Rhythmic Sequence (RS)



**TRAVELLING
MOVEMENTS**

Composition – Rhythmic Sequence (RS)



EXAMPLES OF
RHYTHMIC SEQUENCE

Composition – Group Element (G)

Group element

The definition of the group element says: In the group element all gymnasts must take part and play an active role in either a visible lift off the floor or a throw (i.e. lift, being lifted, throw and/or catch or being thrown). The element has to be performed at the **same time** in groups or with the whole team. Passive support is not sufficient.

The definition of a group is at least **three** gymnasts.

This means that the interaction can happen between at least three, four or even more gymnasts as long as **everyone is included and play an active role** in the visible lift or throw. The lifted gymnast(s) has to stay longer in the air than they could stay by performing the element alone.

Also, different kinds of group elements can be used within the team.

Composition – Group Element (G)

Tips from the coach

If you were to remove one gymnast from the interaction, the group element shouldn't be able to be performed.

Make it clear for the judges that everyone is active in the lift or throw.

Composition – Group Element (G)



Composition – Difficulty Distribution (DD)

The Difficulty Distribution requirement is about spreading the difficulty throughout the whole program. This means that at least three (3) difficulty elements must be performed **after 1 minute and 30 seconds**.

For you as a coach this means that you have to be aware of how the difficulty elements are placed when you are preparing the choreography. In order to get the requirement fulfilled the element should start after the time limit of 1:30. So for example, a balance to be held for a least two seconds has to be in balance after 1:30.

Tips from the coach

Ensure you are well inside the margin of the time limit so that there is no question about the three elements being performed after 1:30.



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Difficulty

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Difficulty

What defines the difficulty value of a floor routine?

To get the difficulty value you refer to the table of difficulty and choose suitable elements. There are three categories of difficulty elements. Also two of the selected elements should be in combination. To get the value you calculate the value of in total nine elements from the following groups

- 4 different **balances**
- 3 different **jumps/leaps/hops**
- 2 different **acrobatic elements**
- 1 **combination** of two elements

The chosen difficulties must have **different code numbers** from the table of difficulty elements.

All gymnasts must perform the same difficulty at the same time and there should not be more than **three** steps to prepare for the difficulty (a chassé is not considered a step).

Difficulty - Balances

The category of balances are divided into three different subgroups:

- **Dynamic balances** – pirouettes and power elements. E.g. balances in motion
- **Standing balances** – standing on one leg with the free leg in a given form/position. Need to remain still for at least two seconds.
- **Hand supportive balances** – where the weight is placed on your hands and in some cases (the bridge) also on one foot. Need to remain still for at least two seconds.

The four (4) balances has to be chosen as such:

- One **handstand**
- One **dynamic balance**
- One **standing balance**
- One **optional**

Difficulty – Dynamic balances: Pirouettes

To get the difficulty value the rotation, measured by the hip, has to be fulfilled and there should be no jumping.

A pirouette starts when the free leg and the heel are lifted from the ground and is finished when:

- The rotation is over **or**
- The heel of the supporting leg is touching the floor **or**
- The free leg is touching the floor

All gymnasts must start performing the turn facing the same direction

A forward pirouette is when you turn in the same direction (towards) as the supporting leg . A backwards pirouette is when you turn in the opposite direction (away from) as the supporting leg.

Difficulty – Dynamic balances: Pirouettes



EXAMPLES OF FORWARD PIROUETTES

Difficulty – Dynamic balances: Pirouettes



PIROUETTES
BACKWARDS

Difficulty – Dynamic balances: Power elements

Definition of power element:

There must be a controlled movement with dynamic strength. The starting and ending positions must be clearly visible. Movement must be controlled and performed without a pause.

Handstand as a starting or ending position in power elements must have straight legs together and arms and hip straight.

Difficulty – Standing balances

Definition of balance elements: There must be a recognised shape where the whole body is held in a static position for at least **two** (2) seconds without any additional movement.

Difficulty – Hand supportive balances

Definition of balance elements: There must be a recognised shape where the whole body is held in a static position for at least **two** (2) seconds without any additional movement.

In the **handstand** HB1001, which is **mandatory** the gymnast are allowed to have the legs in different positions.

The alignment of the body must though be straight and no additional movement either in legs, trunk or walking.

The placement of legs in HB1001 is optional for each gymnast but must be equal to or above hip level.

In the straddle pike and pike sitting balances, there must be no leaning on the arms.

Difficulty – Hand supportive balances



EXAMPLES OF **BALANCES**

FOR CODES AND VALUES SEE APPENDIX A1 IN THE COP

Difficulty - Jumps

The definition of this group of elements are: A recognised shape (position) must be formed in the air during a jump or a leap or a hop. The shape during the flight, twists and the landing position define the level of difficulty.

Jumps are divided into three categories:

- Jumps – take-off from two feet and land on one or two feet or in front laying support
- Hop – take-off from one foot and land on the same foot
- Leaps – take-off from one foot and land on the other foot or both feet or in front laying support

In the floor program there must be **three** different jumps where at least one should be in combination (see combination).

Difficulty - Jumps



EXAMPLES OF JUMPS/LEAPS/HOPS

FOR CODES AND VALUES SEE APPENDIX A1 IN COP

Difficulty – Acrobatic elements

Acrobatic elements

All acrobatic elements must comply with norms of TeamGym. The table of difficulty states what elements to choose from.

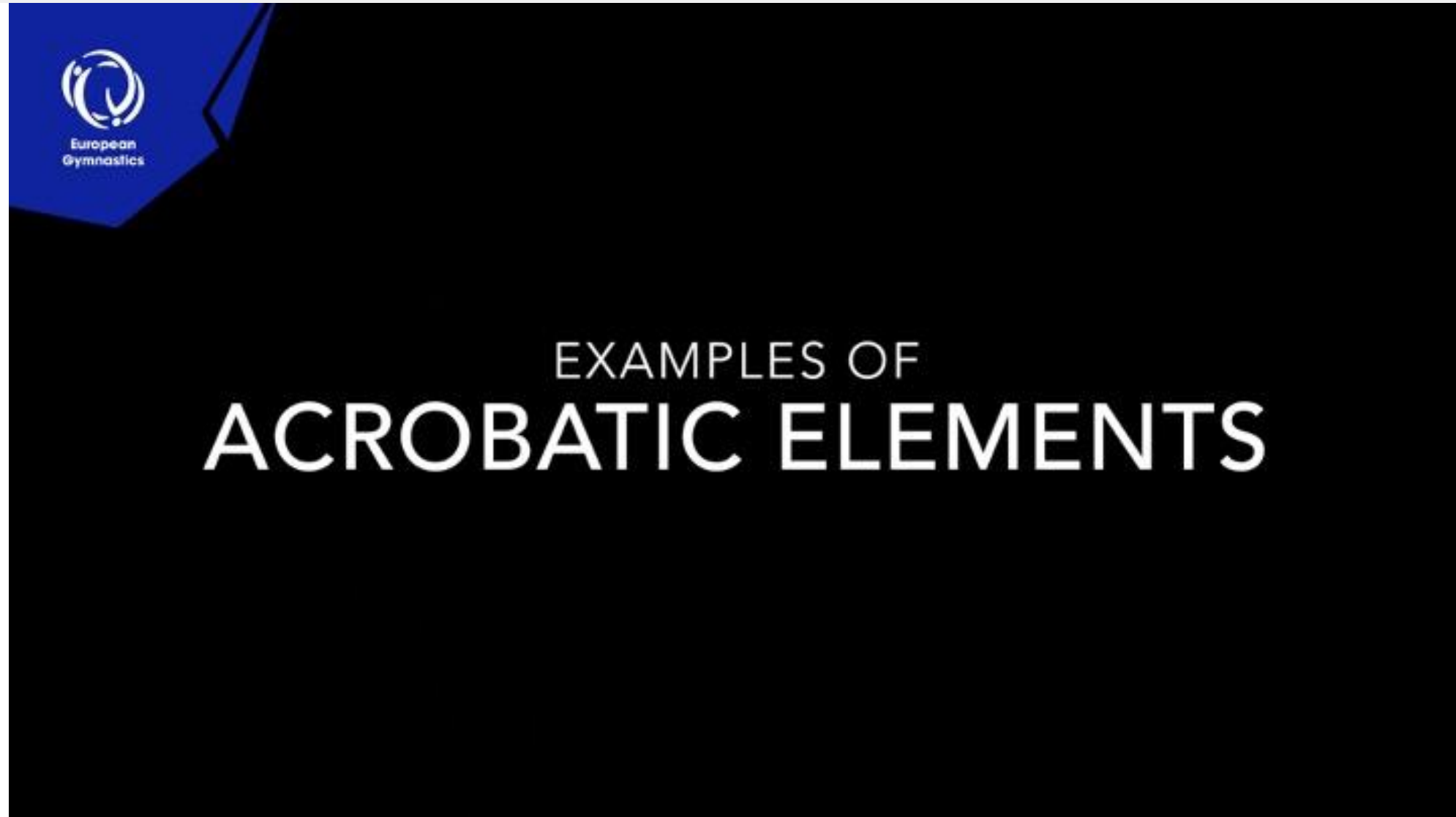
Acrobatic elements (e.g. saltos) are often performed combined with for example a cartwheel or a round off.

Tips from the coach

When adding the difficulties to the tariff form, remember that only nine elements will be counted so if you have for example two saltos with a roundoff as take off **do not** add the roundoff as one of the difficulty elements.

The first two acrobatic elements written on the tariff sheet will count, so only write the saltos.

Difficulty – Acrobatic elements



Difficulty – Combination of elements

The definition is: A Combination of Elements can only be awarded for **direct** connections between two different elements. E.g. the elements should be performed without stops and without making an additional preparation.

There are three options when choosing a combination:

- Jump/hop/leap + jump/hop/leap
- Jump/hop/leap + pirouette or standing balance
- Jump/hop/leap + acrobatic element

Or in reverse order



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Execution

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Execution

The execution score is divided into **two** parts: the **performance** of the gymnasts and **choreographic** requirements. There is also a **bonus** included in execution where the team can be rewarded an extra 0.1 if the performance is made in an excellent way.

In the sections below we will go through the different demands both for the performance and for the choreography.

Execution – Choreographic requirements

Even though part of the execution score, the choreographic requirements are in fact a major part of the choreography of the program including how the gymnasts are placed. In short you could say that the choreographic requirements are a "tick in the box" if the gymnasts perform according to the demands, so you should know beforehand that you have met all the requirements.

Tips from the coach

As with composition; make it clear for the judges to identify the different choreographic requirements.

Execution - Music

Time limit

- Timekeeping starts with the music and stops when the last movement has been fully performed
- The limit is between 2:15 and 2:45 minutes
- Based on experience, the recommendation is to have a ± 5 second limit since different sound systems might play the music in different tempo.

Instrumental

The choice of music is optional but has to be instrumental. You are allowed to use music where a human voice is heard as long as there is no words spoken or sung. This means that humming, whistling and other ways to use your voice without forming any words are allowed.

Other aspects of music such as; what kind of music to use and basic music theory will be handled later in this document.

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations

Formations

A formation is the *pattern* that the team is forming on the floor. There are three basic requirements: ***number of formations, shape of formations and size of formations.***

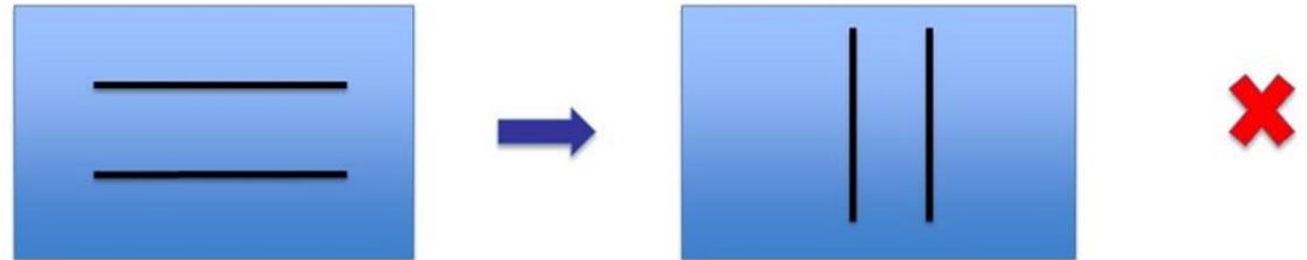
1st Number of formations

There must be at least **6** different formations during the program. What is then defined as a different formation?

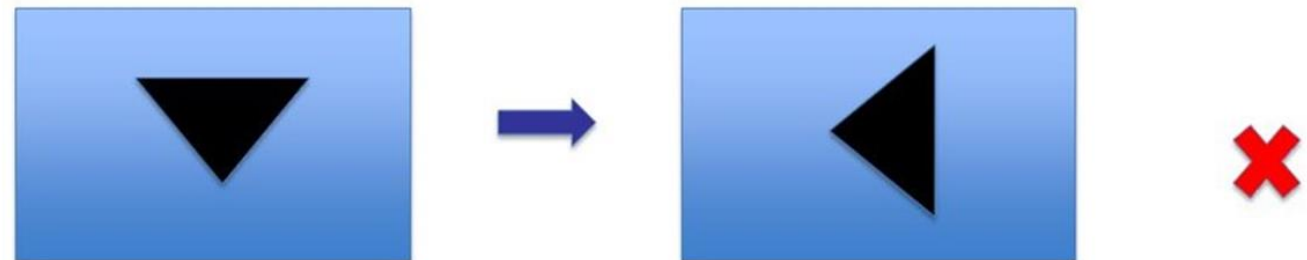
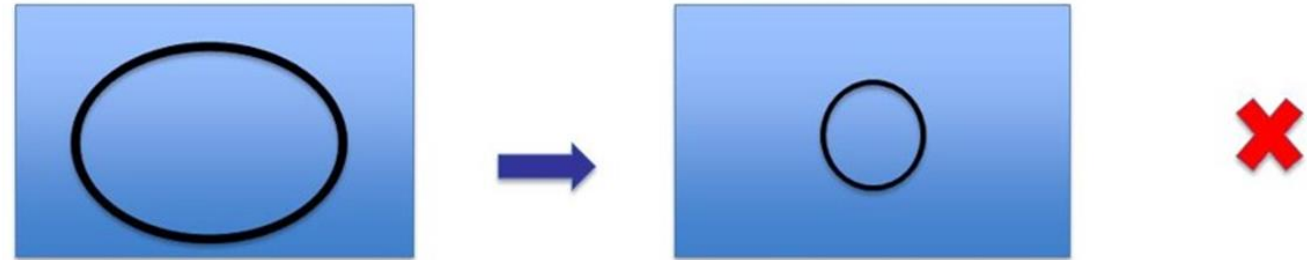
As stated above, the team has to show different patterns on the floor area. For example a small circle and a large circle are the same pattern and will not be considered as different. The same will count if the gymnasts are standing in two straight lines and the lines just change positions on the floor area. It is still just two lines.

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations

Examples of formations that are considered the **same** shape/form

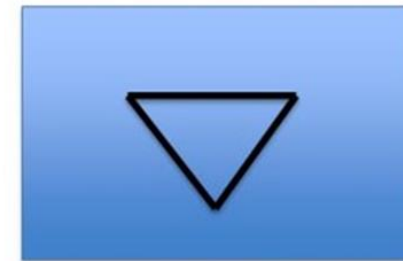
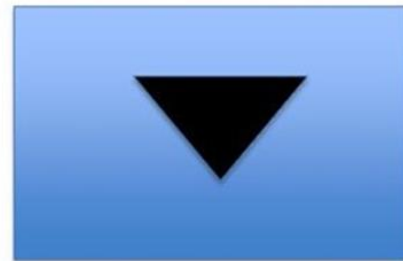
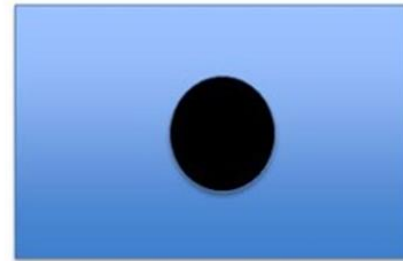
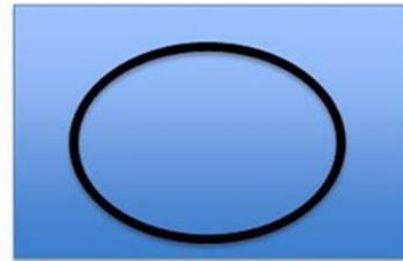
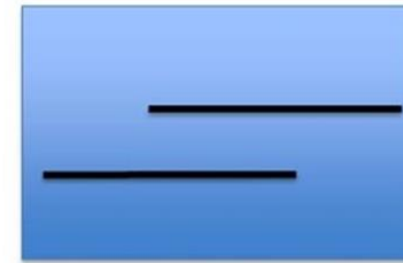
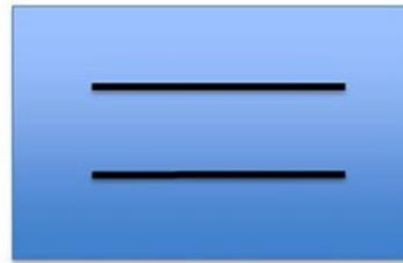


You may of course use these combinations of formations, but they are not counted as **different** formations.



Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations

Examples of formations that are **not** considered the **same** shape/form



Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations

2nd Shape of formations (e.g. moving curved formation)

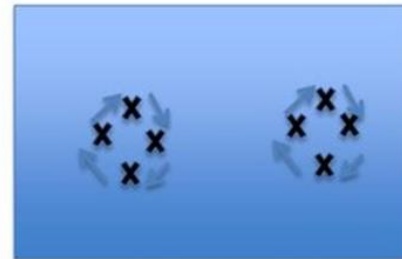
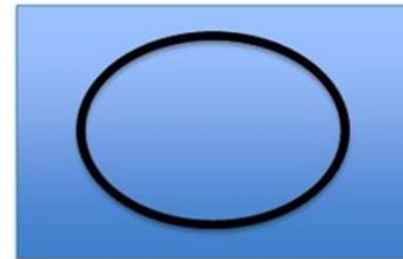
In the program there must be one formation that shows a **moving curved** pattern on the floor. In order to get a moving curved formation there has to be at least four (4) gymnasts positioned in that formation following each other along the curved pattern.

A formation is counted as a moving curved formation if the path is clearly curved and contains at least **three** (3) elements.

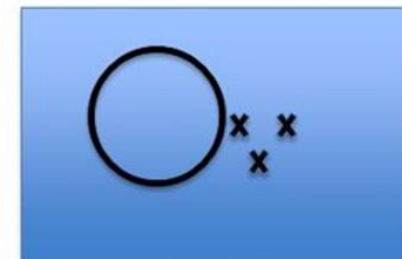
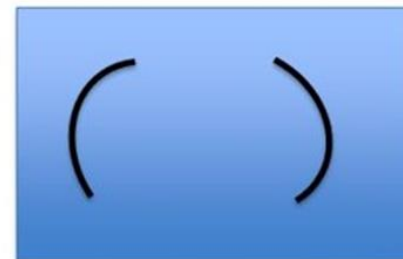
All gymnasts have to be engaged in a curved shape at the same time . The curved formation might appear when moving even if the pattern on the tariff-form shows a more squared formation (see the animation).

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations

Examples of **curved** formations



Can be moving in a circle?!



All gymnasts needs to be Included in the curve.

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations



EXAMPLES OF
**MOVING CURVED
FORMATIONS**

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations

Tips from the coach

A good advice is to use different phrases of travelling movements in order to make the moving curve visible and clear.

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations

3rd Size of formations

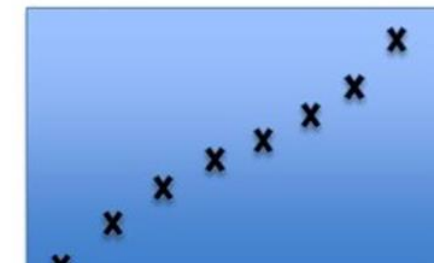
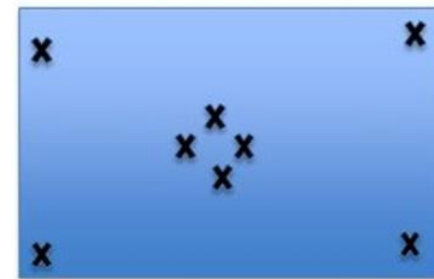
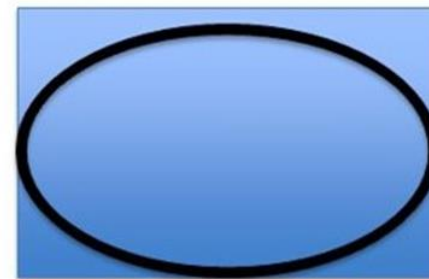
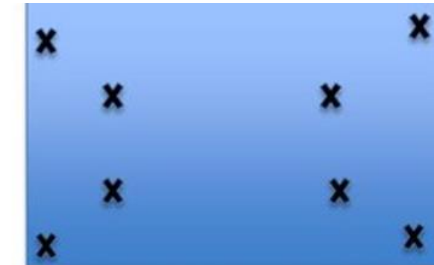
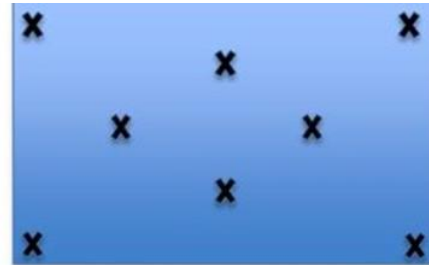
The size of the formations must vary, where one has to be small and one large.

In the small sized formation: the gymnasts must be positioned within an area of four by four metres (4 m x 4 m).

Large sized formation: the requirement says that the team has to cover the floor area from *back to front and from side to side*. A limit of **one (1) metre** from each edge is allowed so that the gymnast does not have to be fully out on the carpet. The formation should be seen as **one** formation and not several different small ones spread out over the floor area. This means that there should be a connection between the gymnasts so no big gaps between them.

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Formations

Examples of **large** formations



Execution – Choreographic requirement: Planes

Requirement of sequences of travelling movements where the whole team at the same time moves in two different planes:

- At least three (3) different movements where the **side** of the body is leading (frontal plane – door plane)
- At least three (3) different movements where the **back** of the body is leading (sagittal plane – wheel plane)
- *Sequences forward in the wheel plane **are not** included in the requirements of the execution but could be added as an additional travelling sequence. Also this creates increased spatial awareness within the gymnasts.*

Turning (>45°) is not allowed during planes.

The keyword here is that the gymnasts must be moving within the same plane throughout the whole sequence. It is thus about what plane the gymnasts are moving in and not about what direction/front they are facing.

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Planes



SEQUENCES IN PLANES

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Planes

Frontal plane – Door plane

This plane is about width and height, and you can imagine that you are moving as a sliding door.

The gymnast should feel that the side of the body is leading.



Width

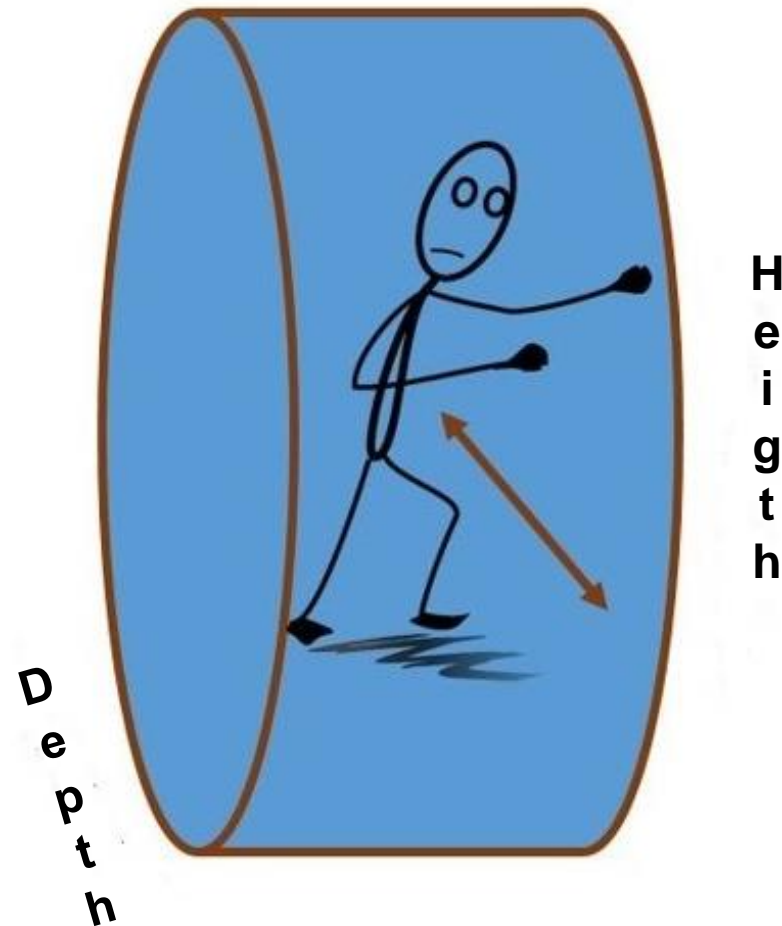
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Execution – Choreographic requirement: Planes

Sagittal plane – Wheel plane

This plane is about height and depth, and you can imagine that you are moving in the direction of a wheel. The CoP only requires a sequence where the back is leading.

In order to enhance the gymnasts' awareness about the wheel plane it could be a good idea also to work in phrases where the front is leading. This way they will feel the contrast between backwards and forward.



Execution – Choreographic requirement: Planes

The sequences can not be performed with intermediate steps.

The sequences do not have to be performed in a straight line but can be made for example in a curved pattern.

Important though that the gymnast keep the movements within the plane. The movement sequences in the different planes can also be included in the *Rhythmic Sequence*.

Acrobatic elements can **not** be used as parts of the sequences in planes.

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Directions

This requirement is about the team presenting to different fronts, e.g. where the “nose is pointing”.

There are three different directions that the whole team must be facing.

- Forward (e.g. toward the judges)
- Backward (e.g. back to the judges)
- Right or Left (e.g. profile to the judges)

There must be at least **three different movements** performed towards each direction in a sequence (all gymnasts at the same time)

Tips from the coach

Make it easy for the judges to identify the work towards the different directions. E.g. choreograph so that there are more than three elements being performed and that the movements are different.

Execution – Choreographic requirement: Music

Movements corresponding to the music

This requirement is about using the full picture of the music and not only as a metronome. We use the expression “see what you hear and hear what you see”, meaning that the movements should enhance the dynamics of the music. For more guidance in how to use the music see the separate section about music.

Tips from the coach

Make sure the music you choose suits your gymnasts both concerning style and maturity. Style, meaning that they are taught within the specific movements that are corresponding with the style. Maturity, e.g. that they are able to fill the music with the movements.

Execution – Performance

If the choreographic requirements are decided beforehand, the performance part of the execution is all about what the gymnasts are doing in real time. We will start this section dealing with what good technique is.

What is good technique in a TeamGym floor program?

Good technique is when the gymnast uses just the right amount of energy/force and speed in performing the different movement/elements/difficulties.

Though in the floor program this is quite a complex question and has to be divided into different parts; the *difficulty elements, working as a team* and all the *other (the dance) elements/movements*.

Execution – Performance: Technique

Technique in difficulty elements

Overall the technique in the difficulty elements should comply with the norms of gymnastics e.g. good posture, clear positions, height (in jumps and acrobatic elements), flexibility and strength.

For some difficulty elements there are specific requirements, these are specified in the table of difficulty in Appendix A1 and in Appendixes A4.

There can also be differences in the demands between execution and difficulty for example, in a straddle jump the legs must be in horizontal, but to achieve the difficulty value the leg-separation of 135° and the 90° angle in the hip must be fulfilled.

Execution – Performance: Working as a team

TeamGym is about working as a team and the floor program is really the *centrepiece* in this aim. There are several execution requirements that handle this.

Precision in formations

There are requirements about different kinds of formations throughout the program. In order for the judges to see the different shapes of the formations it is important that the gymnasts are correctly placed. The hardest part when it comes to formations is changing from one formation to another.

Tips from the coach

Here the *secret* is that if the gymnasts are aware of the path they are travelling along from one formation to the next then it is going to be much easier for them.

Execution – Performance: Working as a team

Synchronisation

One of the biggest charms with a TeamGym floor program is to experience the team as one. One way of accomplishing this is to work in unison and to be fully synchronised. You are absolutely allowed to work in canon, in different groups and even to do completely different movements but the unspoken rule is that synchronised teamwork is preferred. However, doing different movements and working in different time can be effective to highlight the program.

Tips from the coach

Remember that the gymnasts experience music and timing differently. Some need counting, some needs sound-effects and some just listen to the music. See to that you provide all ways in order for the gymnasts to be synchronised.

Execution – Performance: Working as a team

Uniformity in execution

All movements (if the choreography doesn't say anything else) should be performed in the same way. That means that arms and legs should be in the same position and following the same movement patterns, curves in the torso should be performed in an identical way, that difficulty elements are performed with the same technique. The overall effect should make the team appear as one.

Tips from the coach

When you have a floor program in a specific style, use that dance genre in the everyday training in order for the gymnasts to get the *same* movement patterns.

Execution – Performance: Working as a team



EXAMPLE OF WHEN DEDUCTION CAN BE
MADE FOR
UNIFORMITY

Execution – Performance: Transitions

Transitions

Changing gymnasts' positions from one formation to another is called a transition. Also preparing to perform the group element can be counted as a transition.

All transitions must be fluent, made as a part of the program by doing gymnastics, e.g. that the gymnasts are not simply walking or running to find the new formation and that the execution of the movements are not being compromised just because the gymnast has to find the new formation.

There are two categories of deductions that are being made:

- Quality of transitions
- Easy access

Execution – Performance: Transitions



Execution – Performance: Transitions

1st Quality of transitions

In short one could say that the transitions should be “invisible”. The change between formations must form a natural part of the program. As stated above there must be gymnastic and/or rhythmic qualities and that means that the whole body, not only arms, is engaged in every movement.

Tips from the coach

Use travelling elements of the choreography in order to change formation as well as the techniques of mirroring, doing different movements and move in different directions.

Execution – Performance: Transitions

2nd Easy access

The gymnasts should not be forced to lengthen or shorten their movements just in order to get to the new formation. Never let the execution be compromised just because of transition between two formations!

Tips from the coach

If for example the gymnasts are doing a combination of leaps and you have two gymnasts with different heights standing beside each other you can't ask of them to perform the same length. Better then to let the new formation be formed by where they end up after the combination.

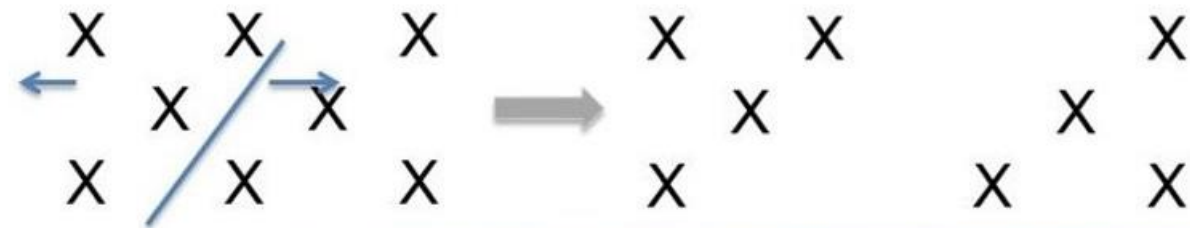
Execution – Performance: Transitions

Examples of different ways
of changing formations

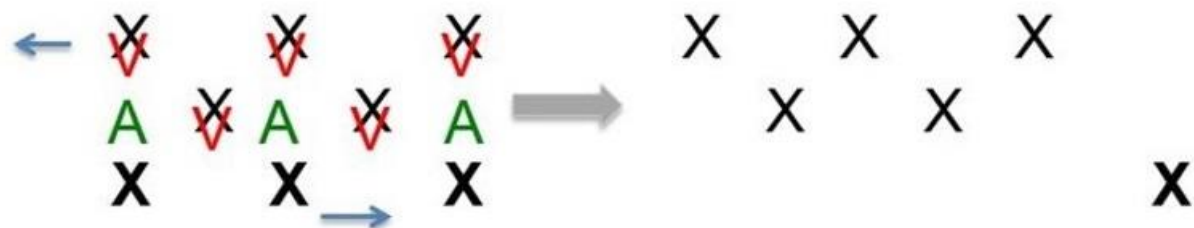
Movements in different directions



Going the “other way”



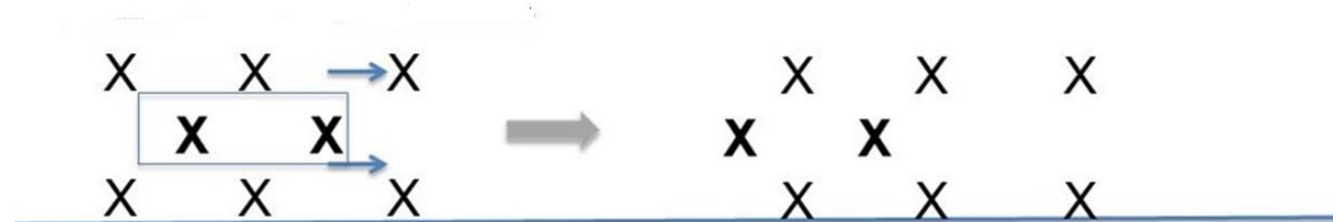
Mirroring



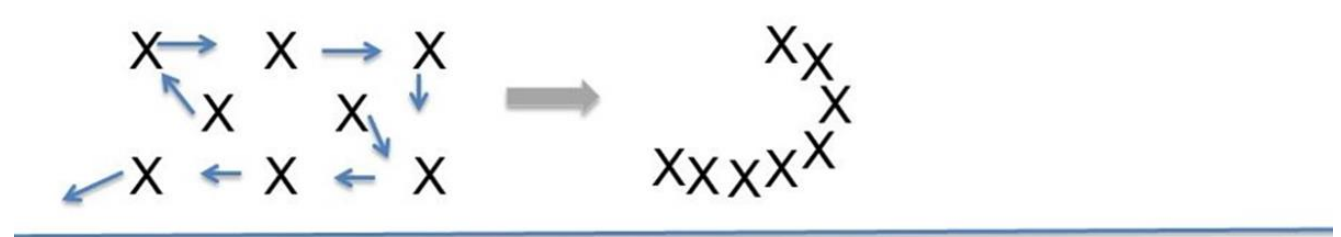
Execution – Performance: Transitions

Examples of different ways
of changing formations

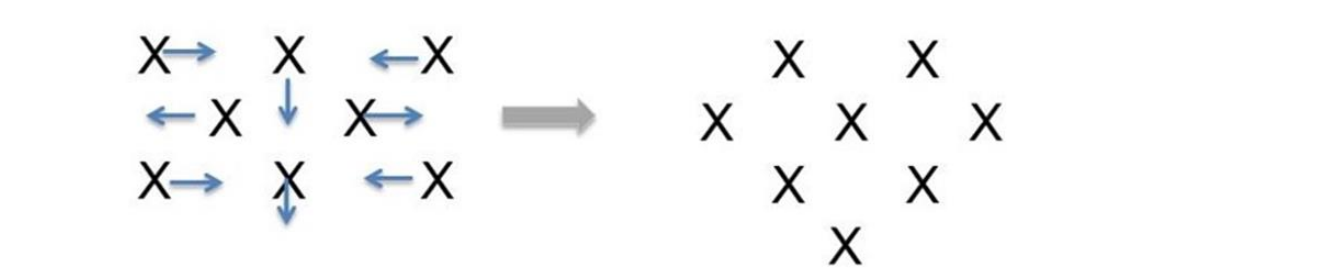
Performing different movements



Movements in a curve



Different directions

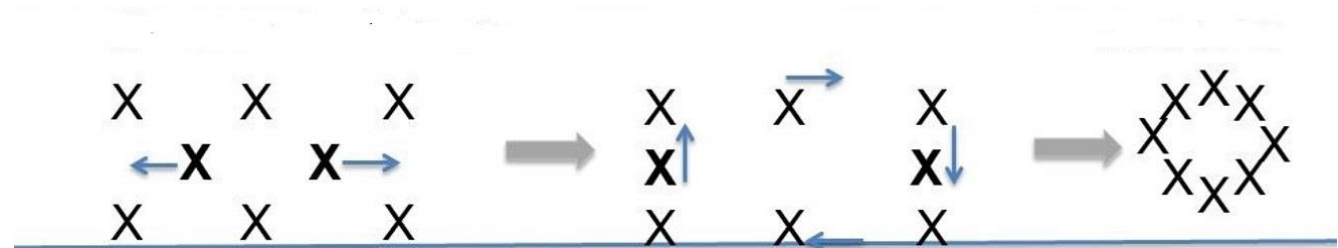


Execution – Performance: Transitions

Examples of different ways
of changing formations

Different length of the movements

... to a curve



Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements

Requirements of all the elements/movements

The following requirements will of course affect the teamwork as well and one should strive for the same execution within the team.

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements

Dynamic execution

This requirement is one of the most significant for a floor program in TeamGym. That is the demand of the whole body being active in **every** movement, meaning the movement of the torso (e.g. the spine), so called total body-movements .

In this category of movements we find: curves (bendings), spirals (turns of the spine), contractions, body-waves, swing-movements (pendulums) and all combination of those.

If the spine is active in every movement then isolated arm and leg movement will be reduced, it will be easier to connect all the movements together in order to get the fluency in the movement phrases and with that no purposeless stops in between the phrases.

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements

Dynamic execution

For this the gymnasts must be aware of gravity, how it is influencing the body, and rhythm in order to get changes in the dynamics of the movements .

Dynamic execution also requires the gymnasts to connect movements and movement phrases together.

Therefore, as one movement ends, the next one should follow creating a fluency of movement / movement phrases.

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements



EXAMPLES OF
TOTAL
BODYMOVEMENTS

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements



DYNAMIC EXECUTION

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements

Amplitude and extension

All movement/movement-phrases should be performed with its' full *range of movement*. For example if the feet are supposed to be pointed then they should be fully stretched. It may be easier to spot in the big movements if the amplitude is insufficient but equally important that the small movements are performed with the same awareness and *range of motion*.

Tips from the coach

Active foot-work is essential in training the gymnasts. Also the awareness of the *personal space* and the *zones* that we will discuss further in the material.

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements



AMPLITUDE

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements

Balance and controlled execution

As in all types of gymnastics we want the gymnasts to express safety and confidence while moving. This concerns of course all execution requirements but maybe in particular this demand. In balances we want the gymnasts to be still. In pirouettes, on balance and with a controlled finish. And of course we don't want them to fall.

Tips from the coach

One thing that might help the gymnasts is if they are *grounded* in the floor. If they really feel that they are using the floor and creating force from there, it's easier for them to be controlled in their execution.

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements

Execution bonus – Perfectly performed

The goal is to create the awareness of the gymnasts so that they *feel* what they are doing, that they are communicating the program. When you reach this point the next step could be to aim for the execution bonus, that is when the program is performed with excellence. This can be rewarded for parts of the program or the whole program.

Tips from the coach

By using metaphors and imagery you can enhance the awareness of the gymnasts and with that start closing in towards perfection.

Execution – Performance: Requirements of all elements

There are a few more execution requirements; *not stepping out of the floor-area* and having the *right number of gymnasts* but these will not be discussed here.



European
Gymnastics

Music

TeamGym – ABC for Floor

Music

The music is one of the most important components in floor and in this chapter we will discuss some important aspects.

Music – Basic musical theory

The meaning is not that we as coaches should be musicians but when using music as a tool we need to know some of the basic structures of music (Glemne et al. 2011). This in order to help us create the programme, as well as getting the gymnasts together as a team.

If we have the basic knowledge of the structure of the music it will be easier *choreographing the routine*.

Music – Basic musical theory

Tempo

The tempo is the overall *speed* of a piece of music. Measured in *Beats per Minute* (BPM). The beat also called the *pulse* is a regular rhythmic pattern of the music.

Tips from the coach

It is important to identify the tempo in order to know what pulse you should make your changes of tempo (in the movements) towards (demand in the Rhythmic sequence).

Music – Basic musical theory

Measurement

Measurement is the period of a musical piece that covers a complete cycle of the time signature. Goes from one emphasized element to the next equally emphasized element. The number of beats of the pulse within that range will give the signature of the music and is called *a bar*. The most common measurement is 4/4-measure which means that there are four beats of the pulse from one emphasized element to the next, in 3/4 there are three beats and so on.

Music – Basic musical theory

Tips from the coach

In identifying the measurement of the music you have the basic tools in how to count in order to get the gymnasts synchronized. Also important that the movements follow the measurement of the music especially if you are using for example a 3-measurement ($3/4$, $6/8$) so you are not counting to four when the music is based on three or six.

Music – Basic musical theory

Rhythm

The rhythm is the way to organize the different sounds in time, the length of the different notes and the changes between accented and unaccented elements.

Tips from the coach

If one identifies all the different *layers* of different rhythms in the music, there is a lot to hold on to concerning *choreographing the music* instead of just follow the basic pulse and measurement.

Music – Basic musical theory

Accents

To emphasize certain parts of the music.

Regular

Regular recurring patterns/structures of the music. Can be the beat of the drums, the baseline or other rhythmical structures.

Temporary

Non-regular patterns in the music. When a temporary structure of the music occurs to enhance or emphasize a certain part of the music. Could be a *crash*, a *boom* etc.

Music – Basic musical theory

Tips from the coach

Together with finding the layers of the rhythms of the music the accents are one of the more helpful tools in choreographing the music. The music is rarely *un-dynamic* and by finding all the accents (especially the regular ones) the choreography will not be either. Consider leaving the temporary accents until the very end of the choreographic as a tool to enhance and create variations of the choreography.

Music – Basic musical theory

Phrases

Phrases are a natural division of the flow of the music, independent of the measurement (bars). Can be how the melody *travels* over the beat and measure. Compare to sentences in the spoken language.

Tips from the coach

Instead of counting to the pulse let the gymnasts find the connection between the movement-phrases and the phrases (e.g. the melody) in the music.

Music – Adapting the music

To the gymnasts

It really doesn't matter how well you choreograph a floor program if the music doesn't correspond to the level of maturity and awareness of the gymnasts. A big symphonic/epic soundtrack might not be the best choice for a team of youth gymnasts if they are suppose to express the music through movements.

Tips from the coach

Be aware of that younger (or less experienced) gymnasts have a smaller range of movement so just because they aren't so coordinated they don't need slower music. In slower music they will finish the movement earlier and will be waiting in to start the next movement phrase (e.g. unmotivated pauses). The younger ones also have shorter arms and shorter legs so they perform the movements faster e.g. choose a bit more up-tempo music.

Music – Adapting the music

To the style/genre of choreography

The headline might be a bit misleading since it's hard to decide what influences what: the music influencing the style of dance or vice versa. This is mentioned because you could have a hard time if you have trained the gymnasts to express movement through music for a specific style of dance (e.g. modern - contemporary) and then choose a different genre for the floor program.

Tips from the coach

When working on a floor program, hold dance classes in the same style as the actual program.

Music – Choice of music

Choice of music

The only requirement is that it should be instrumental (or at least without any sung or spoken language) and be between 2:15 and 2:45 minutes long. Otherwise it's optional what kind of music to use. As mentioned above the most important thing with the choice of music is that it is adapted for the gymnast's level of maturity and skills.

Sure there have been (and probably always will be) different trends, but the CoP gives us quite a lot of freedom.

We recommend you find music that is suitable for the genre of movement as well as for the gymnasts that you as the coach want to create.

Music – Choice of music

Searching for music

There are a lot of platforms/media players for searching for music; YouTube, Spotify, iTunes etc. and one of the best things is that you, when searching, will get tips on other songs/composers/artists to continue the search.

It is quite time-consuming to search for music but the more music you browse through the more material you will have to choose from.

Music – Choice of music

When searching for the “right” music for your team you can use the following checklist:

- Do you like the music? – Trivial question perhaps but consider hearing the song a couple of hundred times
- Will it suite the gymnasts?
 - According to their maturity in movement/coordination
 - According to their ability to express the music in movement
 - Will they like it? – It is important for you as a coach to be the one to decide even if the gymnasts can be involved in the process, especially when they are getting a bit older
- Is the pulse, measurement, rhythm and accents easy identified?
- Is it corresponding with the style of dance that you are training?

Music – Choice of music

Suggestions of genres/words for music search: Instrumental, Soundtrack, TV-themes, Karaoke, World music, Jazz, Technolounge, Specific instruments (for ex. Drums) etc.

Movie-music is a great treasure when searching for music to floor program. Be a bit attentive though that this kind of music can be a bit illusive when it comes to measurement (can even change during the piece). Also it has a tendency to become big and symphonic which means that there is a lot of dynamic to live up to.

Karaoke versions have a tendency of being quite limited in the sound-picture and can sound a bit flat.

Music – Choice of music

Tips from the coach

Take a day off (preferable when the weather is bad) and browse through a lot of music. Create a playlist of *potential songs for the program* and gather a lot of different pieces of music. This can be a first step and then listen through the playlist and categorize in sub-lists and so on. When it's time for you to create a new program then you sit down and go through the different playlists analysing the music a bit deeper (see checklist below).

Music – Choice of music

To analyse the music:

- When listening, what images, feelings and types of movement do you see/get?
 - To get an overall feeling of the music especially to decide if the music suits the gymnasts.
- Is the basic pulse easy to identify?
 - For the gymnasts to feel it
 - The first tool for changes of tempo
- Can you identify the measurement?
 - So you can count in order to get the gymnasts synchronized.
 - So the movements/elements “fit in” the music

Music – Choice of music

- Can you identify the different regular accents?
 - Great tool for choreographing the music
 - Great tool for identifying the dynamics of the music
- Identify the temporary accents
 - This can be done after you've finished choreographing. If you start here the risk is that the periods in between cool effects will be empty.
 - This is a great tool for enhancing the choreography

Music – Choice of music

This might seem to be a lot of work, but it is so important that the music is right for the program. When decided for one (or perhaps several) piece/pieces of music you either go to the store and buy the cd or you buy it online, so you have the original file.

Do not try to use YouTube-clips (or similar) because the quality of the sound-picture will be poor.

Music – Choice of music

Mixing the music?

The question mark in the head indicates that there are several ways of looking at mixing the music. You do not have to mix between different pieces of music; you can use one single piece. It might be that you need to mix within the song to get the right length.

The most common (?!) way though, is to use two or even more pieces of music in a program. When doing so we think it is important that the different music *match* together so that the sound-picture shows wholeness instead of totally different parts. This is kind of subjective and there is no deduction for using sharp contrasts in music but nevertheless worth considering.

Music – Choice of music

Tips from the coach

When mixing within one piece of music it can be done by just *copy-paste* in the same audio track but when adding several different pieces together a recommended method is to crossfade the pieces between two separate audio tracks.

Music – How to choreograph the music

This will be discussed a little bit deeper in the chapter about how to choreograph, but from a musical perspective here are some advice:

- Try not to get *caught* in just counting (e.g. 1-8) since the movement-phrases have a tendency then to be *silent* and *empty* in the end. We want the phrases to connect throughout the whole program.
- Learn the music *by heart*. Then you can let the music lead you in to the movements.
- You don't have to start from the top (if choreographing with the music as a base). Start where you feel inspiration.

Music – How to choreograph the music

- Don't be afraid to leave parts un-choreographed, fill the gaps later.
- Use the regular accents and the different layers of rhythm as guidance when enhancing the music with movements. Then you are using the dynamics within the music and will have many things for free considering the demand of dynamics of execution
- Try to catch the feeling (images) of the music in the movements, find the character and express that through movements

Music – How to choreograph the music

Tips from the coach

If you suddenly realise that the gymnasts have *grown out* of the music or that the movement-material have grown because of the gymnasts enhanced skills, or if it just doesn't feel right, don't be afraid to change the music.

You don't have to waste the whole program and start over, see what happens if you just change the music.



European
Gymnastics

Choreography

TeamGym – ABC for Floor

Choreography

This is a field that is not all easy to explain in writing, how to put different movements together in order to create a choreography. The best way of learning this is to attend different courses and to just *try for yourself*. Some basic components will be discussed here though and to help us we use a modified version of Rudolf Laban's (1879-1958) movement analyses called BESS (Ravn, 2005). BESS stands for *Body, Effort, Shape* and *Space* and these components will be presented below.

Why Laban and the BESS-concept?

For us that have been involved in TeamGym for some time we have discovered that the BESS-concept correlates well with the CoP.

Choreography

With this theoretical framework we get a vocabulary to use in describing what we see in movements, to put words on the feeling of the movement and to help us understand the different components of the CoP and to relate that to the choreography of a floor program.

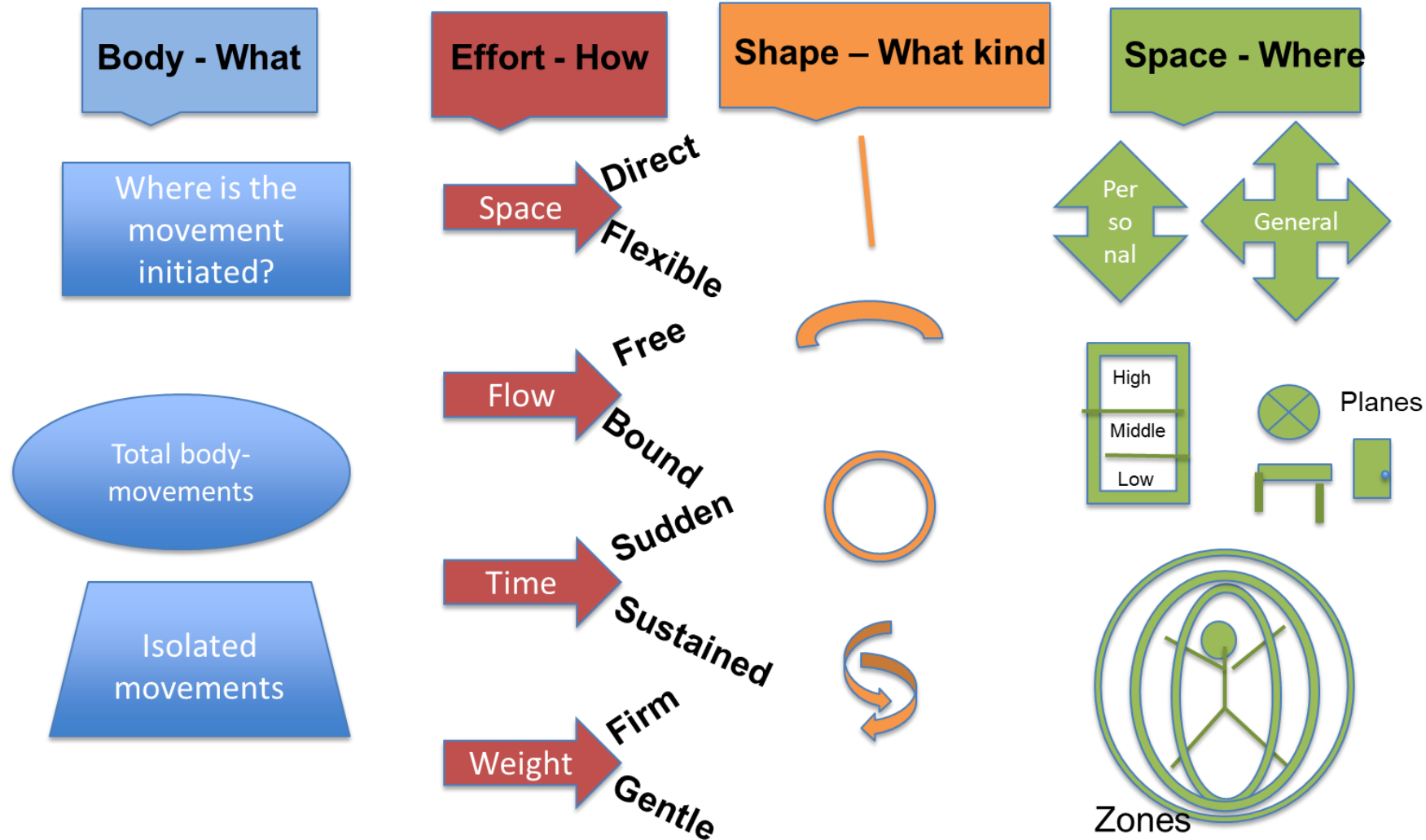
Laban's theories about analysing movement, including Laban-notation and choreutics (see for ex: Laban & Ullman 2011; Newlove & Dalby 2004)) are very complex why we have limited us to the BESS-concept as presented and interpreted in Ravn (2005).

Choreography – BESS-concept

The concept (framework) is based on four aspects:

- 1) *Body*
- 2) *Effort*
- 3) *Shape*
- 4) *Space*

Choreography – BESS-concept



Choreography – BESS-concept

Body

- The body's possibility to move
- Total or isolated movements
- Where is the movement initiated?

This first aspect is about the body's *possibility to move*; what kinds of movement are there in the body? Very simple we could talk about three basic movements of the body: *to bend*, *to stretch* and *to twist* and it is by combining these three basic movements we get the richness of our movement-vocabulary.

Choreography – BESS-concept

This aspect is also about how much of the body that are integrated in the movement; we talk about *total movements* or *isolated movements*. This has been mentioned before in the chapter about dynamics that the CoP states that the whole body should be active in every movement, which means that total movements are to prefer when choreographing a floor program. Isolated arm and leg movement will actually result in a deduction so the torso should be active to combine these movements together.

Within this aspect we also investigate where the movement is *initiated* in the body; if it starts centrally (e.g. in the movement-centre) or if it starts distally (for example in one hand) and where the movement continues from there. Again, if the movement starts within the centre of the body it is going to be easier for the gymnasts to engage the whole body.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Effort

The *dynamic expression* of the movement

Divided into four sub-aspects:

- 1) *Space*
- 2) *Time*
- 3) *Flow*
- 4) *Weight/Force*

The effort-aspect is more or less about how the movement/movements are being executed. This means that it is about the gymnasts awareness about the movement and if you put that in to the team-work that all gymnasts should have the same awareness.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Space

- Direct movements - the movement takes the most economical (straight)way from point A to point B
- Flexible movements – the movement travels in a more curved path which costs more in energy

Choreography – BESS-concept

Time

- Sudden movements – The movement happens suddenly
- Sustained movements – The movement are more ongoing

Tips from the coach

Both the space and time factors are important tools to be aware of when working on the synchronisation of the team.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Flow

- Free flow – The movement has a natural stop (for example a leap)
- Bound flow – The movement can stop at any time

Choreography – BESS-concept

Weight/Force

Firm – The movement is performed with a lot of weight (e.g. towards gravity)

Gentle – The movement is performed with less weight (e.g. resisting gravity)

The aspect of effort is quite complex but if we as coaches are aware of the effect that the execution of every movement has then we can transfer this to our gymnasts.

Tips from the coach

In order to create a uniform execution and an awareness of the dynamics of the movements use metaphors, imagery, sounds and other way to guide your gymnast.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Shape

- The plastic shape of the body
- The traces in space that the movement leaves

Choreography – BESS-concept

Shape of the body

There are four basic shapes of the body: *the stick* (straight), *the wall* (a big), *the ball* (a round and/or small) and *the spiral* (twisted).

If we (and the gymnasts) are aware of what shape the body is in it is going to be easier to get them synchronised and uniform in the execution. Also relates to where in space (see below) the movement is being performed.

Tips from the coach

If the gymnast have an image that they for example are drawing a sun you will have easier to get them to follow the same traces in space.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Traces

Also here there are four basic traces the movement makes: *the line* (straight), *the curve*, *the circle* and *the spiral*. Movement leaves traces in space when being performed both in the personal space (see below) as well as in the general space (see below) and by recognising what kind of trace the movement is suppose to follow or what path the movement (sequence) follows on the floor it too will hold the gymnasts to be uniform and synchronised. Also by identifying what path they are travelling along the floor it will be easier for them to go from one formation to another (see transitions under composition).

Tips from the coach

Especially when it comes to moving in a curve it will be easier for the gymnasts to keep the curve if they know the path in the floor.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Space

- Personal and General space
- Levels
- Fronts
- Zones
- Planes

The aspect of space is about the physical space, the actual space where the movement takes place.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Personal room

Also called the kinesphere (Laban & Ullman 2011, p.10). This is the space you have around yourself, as far as you can reach without changing your supporting area.

Tips from the coach

If the gymnasts know where and how in the personal room, the movement is supposed to be performed then you have the most important tool in getting the team into uniformity.

Choreography – BESS-concept

General room

All of the space outside the kinesphere, the floor area, the relations between the gymnasts, the four walls of the room etc. Important to be aware of ones own personal space in the general space, especially when it comes to working in formations.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Levels

Laban talked about three levels: *high, middle* and *low*.

Different levels; *lying, sitting, standing* and *jumping*, are used to give the program a larger range for the use of space and providing variations.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Fronts

Laban used the bearing of the compass in describing to what front movements are being performed. In the CoP, this aspect is called directions and are mentioned as *forward*, *backwards*, *right* and *left*, where forward is the direction/front towards the judges.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Zones

The kinesphere is divided into three zones: *near*, *mid*, and *far* zone. In the near zone the movement could be imagined as a thin fabric touching the skin e.g. movements very close to the body. The expression (feeling) of moving in the *near* zone is usually a bit introvert and shy. The *mid* zone is situated in the middle of the personal room and the expression here may become a bit “sloppy” since the arms for example are not fully stretched.

The *far* reach is then the zone where one tries to reach as far as possible in your personal room without shifting weight. Movements in the *far* zone are often seen as strong and extrovert. Awareness of the zones can be a tool in interpreting the music so that the movements correspond with expression of the music since the expression shifts as mentioned in the explanation above.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Tips from the coach

Awareness of in what zone the movement takes place is also a tool in working with the *amplitude* of the movement. Here can also imagery and metaphors be of help, for example if the gymnasts pictures themselves being Spiderman shooting cobweb from his wrists the movement will surely end up in the *far* zone and be of its' full amplitude.

Choreography – BESS-concept

Planes

- Frontal/vertical plane – Door plane
- Horizontal plane – Table plane
- Sagittal plane – Wheel plane

The three-dimensional space is called planes and Laban used the more figurative expressions door, table and wheel when describing these. They have (or at least two of them) been discussed above in the chapter about composition. In the *door plane* the movements are performed with *height and width*; imagine moving along a sliding door. Movements in *table plane* are *wide and deep* as if you are “trapped” in the middle of a table.

Choreography – BESS-concept

When moving in the *wheel plane* the front or back of the body is leading and one can imagine running in a “hamster-wheel”. The movements are thus high and deep in space.

In short one can say that Body, Shape and Space are *more* choreographic aspects since they are about *what* the body is doing in *what kind* of shape and *where* in space the body is moving. Whereas Effort is about *how* the body is moving.

Choreography – Putting movements together

“You learn by choreographing, by experimenting, by creating little bits and pieces and fragments of dances and dance phrases, by playing with the materials of the craft over and over again...”

(Bloom & Chaplin 1989, p. 3)

Choreography – Putting movements together

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the craft of choreographing is nothing you learn by reading about it you have to try as suggested in the quotation above. In this part I will try to give some guidelines in the process of choreographing.

You can use them to *explore* your movement-vocabulary, to explore the craft of putting movements together and with that giving you the *experience* to choreograph a whole floor program. Remember that it is gymnastics and not dance we are creating for and you have the CoP as a guide.

Since you are creating for a group, “simplicity is a must” (Humphrey 1987, p. 94) and in TeamGym it becomes even more relevant since you have the demand of uniformity and synchronisation.

Choreography – Putting movements together

Building phrases

A movement phrase is the smallest and simplest unit of form. Even the shortest phrase has a beginning, middle and an end (Bloom & Chaplin 1982). Two movement connected together can be seen as a phrase.

A movement phrase is to a choreography what a sentence is to the spoken or written language. What then makes a phrase to become choreography is that you connect several phrases together building sequences then connecting sequences together to longer sections. And bit-by-bit you create wholeness.

Choreography – Putting movements together

How to build phrases then?

There are several ways of going towards this process. For example, Doris Humphrey, one of the pioneers in choreographic theory, says that building a phrase is like designing shapes of the body in time (1987). So in giving the body different shapes one can piece by piece build a phrase.

Since one of the requirements of the floor program is to have fluency in the movements it is important though to find natural connections between the movements/shapes and here the knowledge of the aspects of *Body* and *Shape* (as in traces) become so important. If you know where a movement starts you also know where it stops and there you have the connecting point to the next movement/shape.

Choreography – Putting movements together

How do I get the movements or shapes that are suppose to be linked together?

- Use movements you already know in your body
- Use movements that your gymnasts have in their bodies
- Try new movements through exploratory work (improvise around the aspects of the BESS-concept)
- Try to explore “everyday-movements” or maybe the movement-pattern of another sport
- What kind of inspiration do you get from the music? If you have music with firm and heavy dynamics what do your body want to do? Let the music guide you

Choreography – Putting movements together

How do I get the movements or shapes that are supposed to be linked together?

- Try working with pictures and images
- Explore movements from a specific theme, for example anger, water or animals
- Use inspiration from dances you know or have seen
- Build a statue of a body (use a colleague or a gymnast), build another one and connect the two and so on

Choreography – Putting movements together

- The sequences in planes give you a good start to build a phrase. Connect three movements travelling sideways and you have both a phrase to build from and the demand for travelling in the door plane.
- Connect travelling movements (for examples the ones in the film-clip) and then you have the first demand for the Moving Rhythmic Sequence.
- Connect two difficulty elements and you will both have started a phrase as well as fulfilled the demand for combinations.
- Connect with the phrase above and you have a longer phrase.
- Use the CoP

Choreography – Putting movements together

As discussed above, two movement/shapes connected together is a phrase. By connecting these two movements to a couple of more you have a longer phrase and by connecting that phrase to another phrase the row of movements/shapes will turn into sequences of movements and so on.

If you are not working with the music try not to count when performing the phrases/sequences, this could otherwise hinder you when building the phrases into the music.

Choreography – Putting movements together

Tips from the coach

In the beginning of the choreographic process, do not value the movements. E.g. do not say to yourself: “this is an ugly movement” or “this is not a regular gymnastic movement” or “my gymnasts will not be able to do this”. If you do that you will restrict yourself in your creativity. Concerning the gymnasts performing the movements (and maybe especially the younger ones), they will (usually) transform the movements into their own bodies and make it work.

Choreography – Putting movements together

What to do next?

So, now you have a lot of movement phrases/sequences. When you proceed there are some “check-points” you need to attend to:

- If you haven't already, its time to build the movement phrases into the music. Let the music give you the timing of the movement (see the remark above concerning counting)
- Use the tools mentioned in the music-chapter when choreographing the music
- Are all the requirements of the composition fulfilled? That is the requirements that are linked to the movement phrases (planes, RS and movements corresponding to the music) If not, what is missing? Use the CoP and/or BESS for guidance

Choreography – Putting movements together

- Are the difficulty elements built-in the movement material? If not? Try to find natural transitions where you can add a difficulty element:
 - In a sequence where you are on the floor maybe a supporting balance can be included.
 - In a sequence with a lot of flow can a leap be added?
 - Can you get some inspiration from the music? E.g. if the music is going “forward” maybe an acrobatic element or a combination of leaps would be suitable?

Choreography – Putting movements together

- Placing the gymnasts in formations and towards different directions
 - Where to start?
 - Where will the next movement sequence travel in space? Can a change in formation take place?
 - What movement sequences are suitable for transitions between formations?
 - Where should the RS start? Do I need to travel to this starting position?
 - Where can a moving curved formation be suitable to add?
 - Where are the gymnasts placed so I can add the *Group element*?
 - Can I just change the direction of this sequence and perform it with the back to the judges?

Choreography – Putting movements together

- Are the movements total body movements or are they isolated arm and/or leg movements?
 - Even though this is an execution requirement, analyse the movements so that you see the possibility of the entire body being engaged in the movement.
 - If you discover a lot of isolated arm and/or leg movements try to add total body movements (see the film under dynamic execution) or
 - Try to get the movement to be initiated in the centre of the body or
 - Engage the awareness of the torso.

Choreography – Putting movements together

Tips from the coach

Do not wait to teach your gymnasts until you have all the movement material. They will learn more easily if they get small pieces at a time.

Choreography – Putting movements together

In the chapter of choreography the starting point has been putting movements together and with that building movement phrases which have become longer sequences. Of course you can start with the music or even with the formations, but the main issue in this chapter has been about getting tools in creating the building stones (the phrases) of the choreography. There are no wrong ways to approach creating a floor program, you just have to find *your* way in doing so. If you are interested in reading more about choreography, I can recommend Bloom & Chaplin (1989) and Humphrey (1987). Both books also include exercises both in choreography as well as improvisation.

Maybe starting with the music is to prefer when you start exploring the craft of choreographing a floor program but can also be an obstacle since it is easy to get “stuck” in the form of the music.

Summing up

Hopefully, when you have reached this far of the material you feel encouraged to start to explore *your* way in becoming (or evolving as) a floor coach in TeamGym. Sure it is a complex event within an already complex sport but I assure you, it is worth it. It is the optimal way of both being a gymnastic coach and also getting the opportunity to enhance and nurture your creative side.

Summing up

The training in floor consists of different parts:

- Building up for the difficulty elements in a methodical way
 - Strength training
 - Flexibility training
 - Coordination
- Building a movement vocabulary
 - The gymnasts own vocabulary
 - The coaches vocabulary
 - This can be done in a playful manner and using a lot of exploratory work
 - Will also give the gymnasts an advantage in learning movement material

Summing up

- Creating the floor program
- Training the floor program
 - For the gymnasts to learn the movements
 - Learning to perform the movements in formations
 - Getting the gymnasts synchronized and in uniformity
 - Enhancing the movement so that the movements are made with dynamics, amplitude and balanced execution.
 - Getting the team ready for competition

Summing up

The wholeness really shows the complexity of the apparatus, so it is not just to practise the actual program. The material may seem complex, so I recommend you attend a coaching course in TeamGym Floor.

The material will come to life and become much clearer when moving around a floor area.

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Thank you