



GUIDE TO GYMNASTICS FOR ALL

PAGU-UPAG Gymnastics for All Committee

President: Claudia A. Barros (Argentina)

Members

Michele V. Carbinatto (Brazil)

Ximena Rodríguez (Chile)

Sarah Lambert (Trinidad Tobago)

Lori Lasnowsky (USA)

Rebeca Rojas (Venezuela)



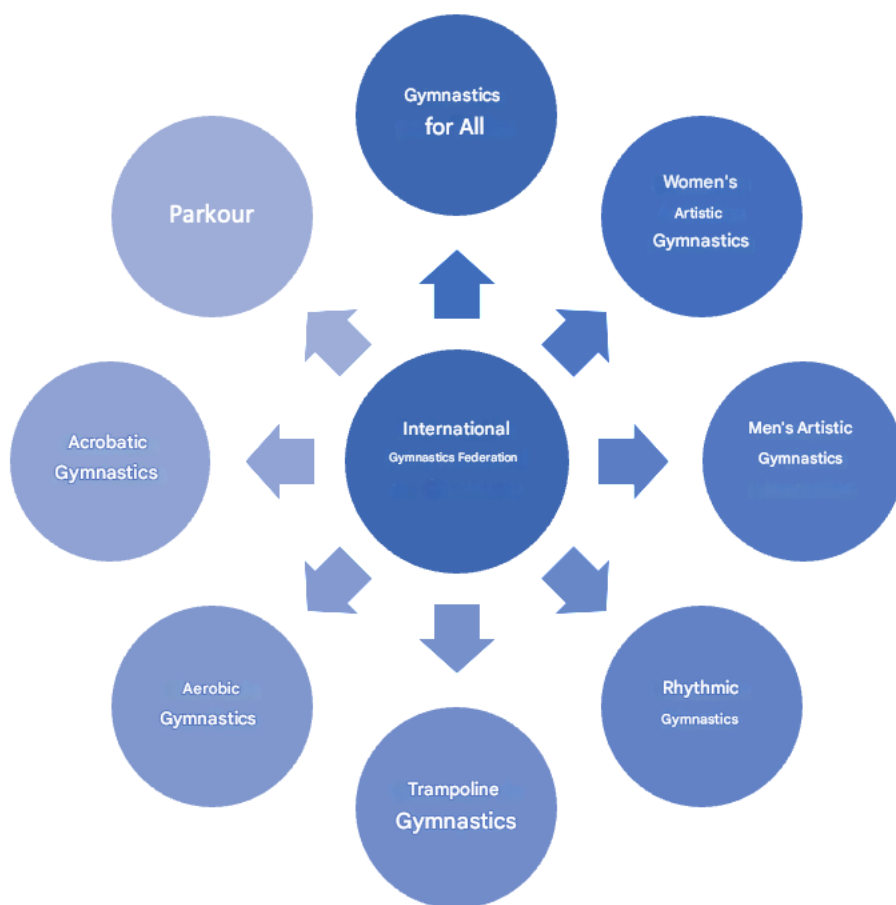
Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>Gymnastics for All.....</i>	3
<i>The Philosophy of Gymnastics for All.....</i>	5
<i>Planning a Gymnastics for All Session</i>	12
<i>Presentations/Displays</i>	22
<i>Organising a Group.....</i>	24
<i>Games/Play in Gymnastics.....</i>	25
<i>Final Considerations.....</i>	26
<i>References</i>	27



Introduction

Gymnastics for All (GfA) is one of the disciplines of the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG). Unlike the other FIG disciplines, artistic, rhythmic, acrobatic, aerobic, trampoline, and parkour, Gymnastics for All is characterized by its inclusive, recreational, and educational approach, promoting the participation of people of all ages, genders, and abilities. This discipline celebrates the diversity of bodies and movements, fostering values such as cooperation, creativity, and cultural expression through gymnastics. The FIG is committed to increasing active participation in, and the development of, Gymnastics through the Gymnastics for All discipline.





Gymnastics for All

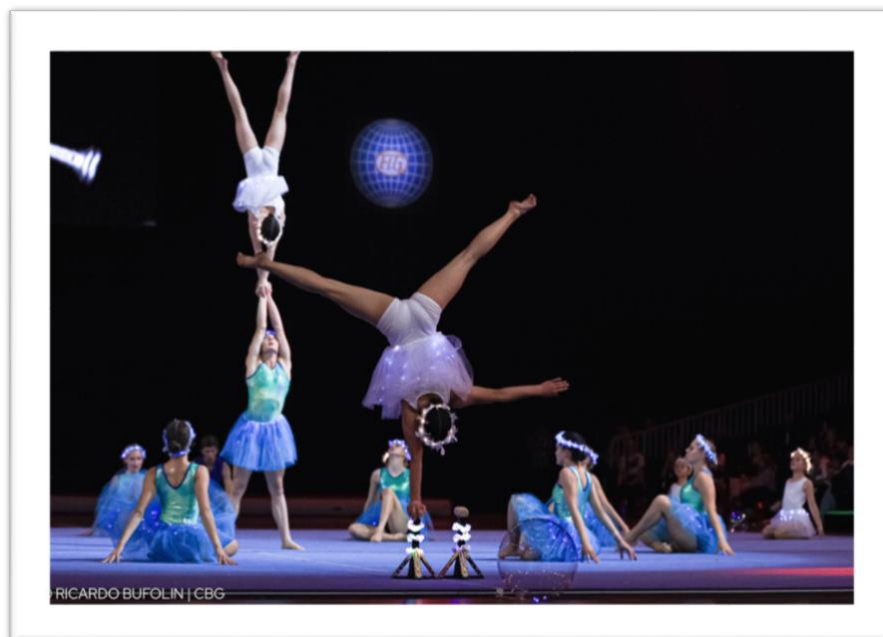
Gymnastics for All offers a variety of activities and games for all age groups, abilities, and cultural backgrounds. These activities contribute to personal health, fitness and well-being (physical, social, intellectual, and psychological).

Gymnastics for All is conceptualized by Rojas and Rojas (2007) as:

The body in motion, in rhythm, harmony, music, joy, body expression and communication between its practitioners. As a modality of Gymnastics, it constitutes the fundamental basis of all movement performed by man, and is a component that is directed to the social, psychological and physical well-being of a population. This modality can constitute the regular and systematic practice of physical activities by all population strata, regardless of social or physical condition, age, disability, sex, race, practiced in small and large groups, and the same, given the variety of its activities, is aimed at being developed BY AND FOR ALL (p.2)

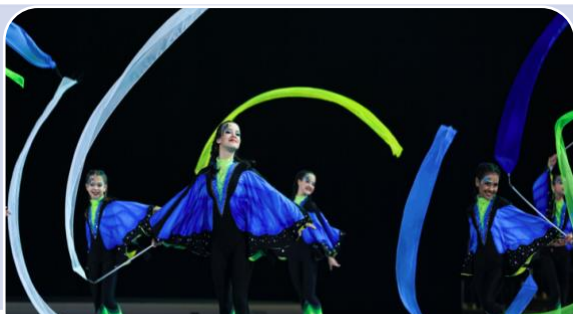
Gymnastics with or without equipment, gymnastics and dance for all ages, all genders, and even people with disabilities can participate in Gymnastics for All.

Gymnastics for All programs focus on: Fun, Fitness, Fundamentals and Friendship - Forever. It is important to understand that Gymnastics for All is the base of movement all forms of gymnastics as well as all sports.





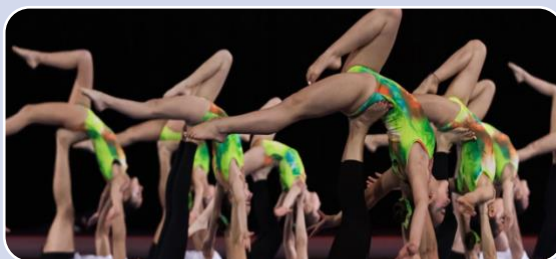
Gymnastics for All offers:



Aesthetic movement experiences for participants and spectators.



The opportunity to focus on topics of particular interest and on national and international contexts.



Experience and learn the movements of various forms of gymnastics



The Philosophy of Gymnastics for All

In the FIG Foundations of Gymnastics Manual (2010), it is established that the philosophy of Gymnastics for All is based on five main pillars which are called the five "F's", for the first letter of name of each pillar in English.



The FIG expects member Continental, Regional and National Federations to introduce the Gymnastics for All philosophy and training as the starting point for the development of gymnastics in their countries. Every GfA model or version must be based on these five principles.



Fun

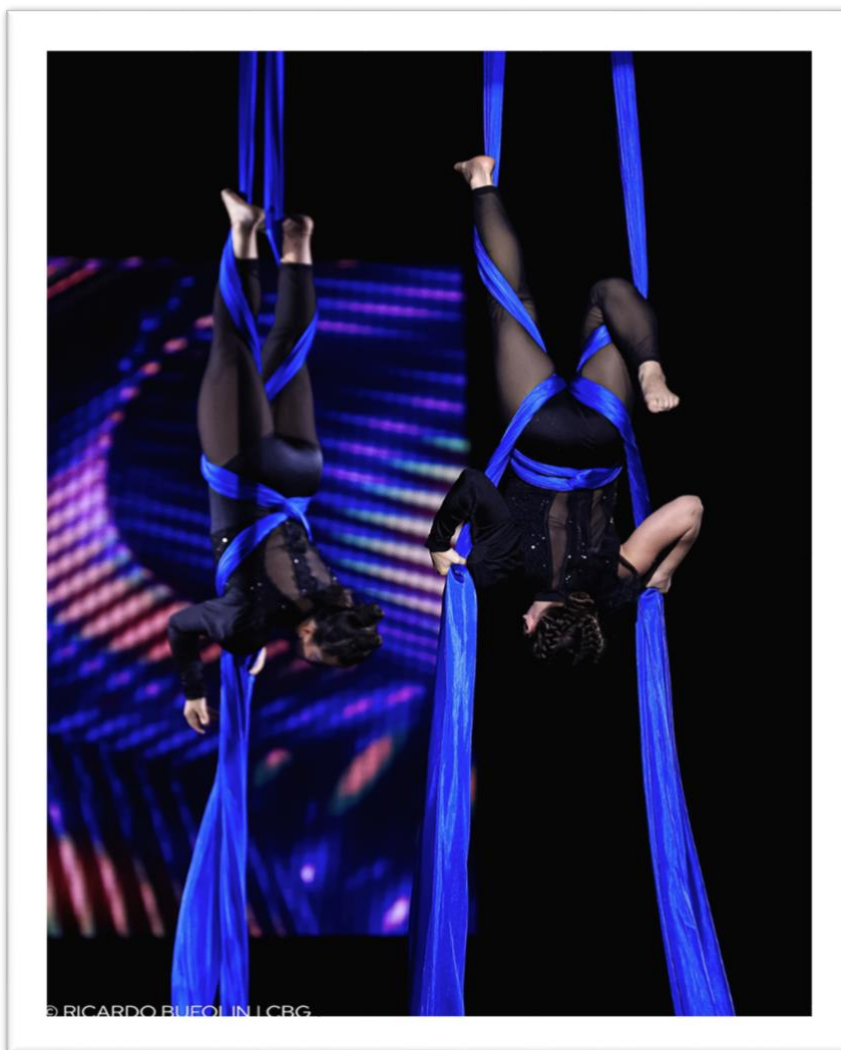
Being active most of the time, being successful frequently, and receiving positive feedback are profoundly interrelated aspects that contribute to personal growth and overall well-being. Staying active, both physically and mentally, fosters discipline, resilience, and adaptability, fundamental qualities for achieving sustainable goals. Consistent success, on the other hand, reflects not only talent but also effort, strategy, and perseverance. Furthermore, positive feedback reinforces motivation and self-confidence, generating a positive cycle that drives continuous improvement. Together, these elements form a solid foundation for personal and professional success.





Fitness

Achieving good physical condition during training sessions ensures better learning of basic movements and prevents injuries. Activities that facilitate the development of the components of physical fitness, cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular endurance, strength, power and flexibility should be included in each training session.

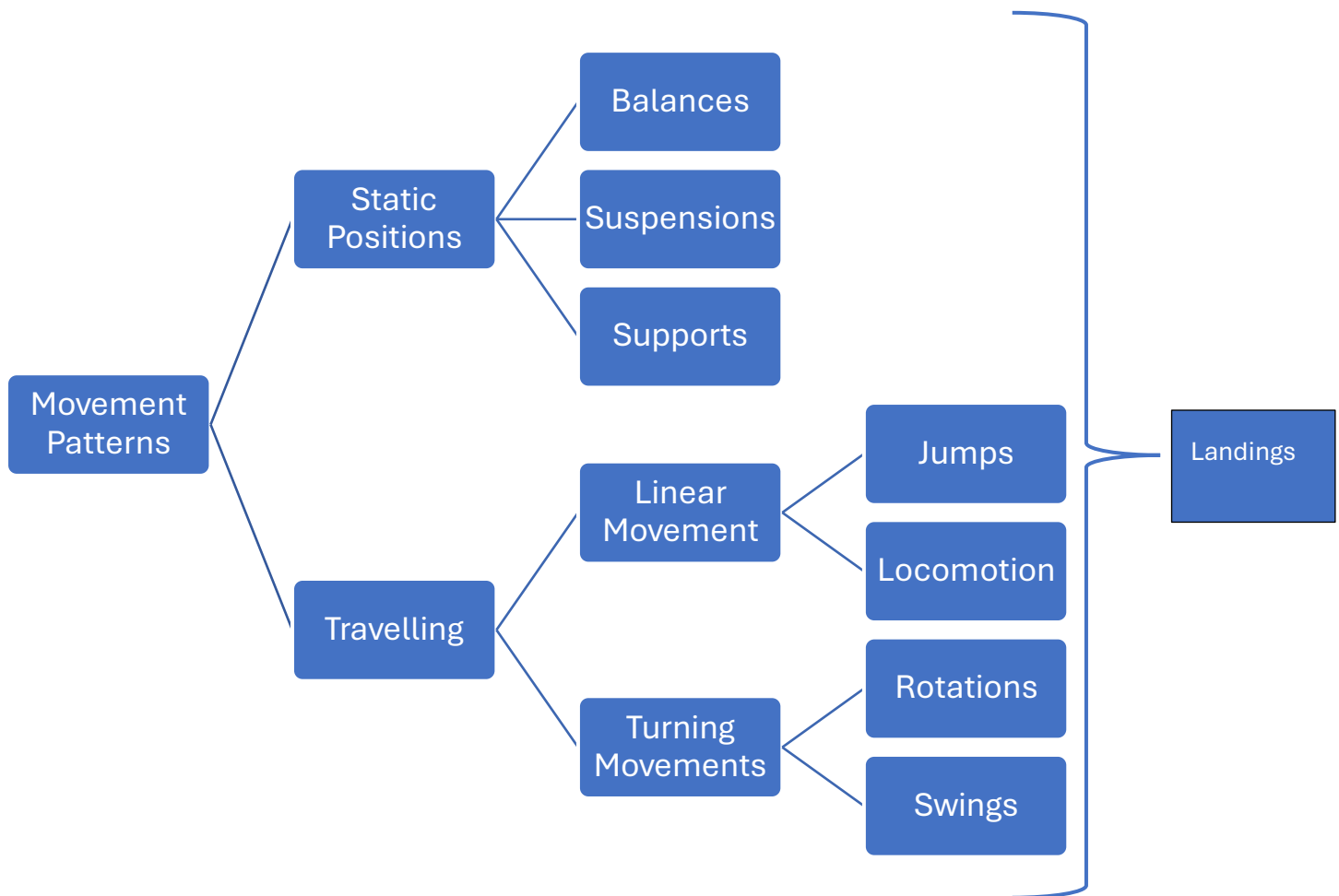


© RICARDO BUELO IN LCBG



Fundamentals

Fundamentals are the basis of all gymnastics and human movements and are classified within the taxonomy known as *Gymnastic Movement Patterns*, developed by Dr. Keith Russell, a member of the FIG Academy.





Explanations:

Static Positions

- No movement outside of the base of support

Linear Movement

- Linear movements forward, backward, upward, and sideways. These include jumping or take-off movements and locomotion actions such as running, trotting, galloping, and crawling.

Turning or Rotating Movements

- Body movements rotating around the internal axes, namely longitudinal, transverse and antero-posterior.

Swings

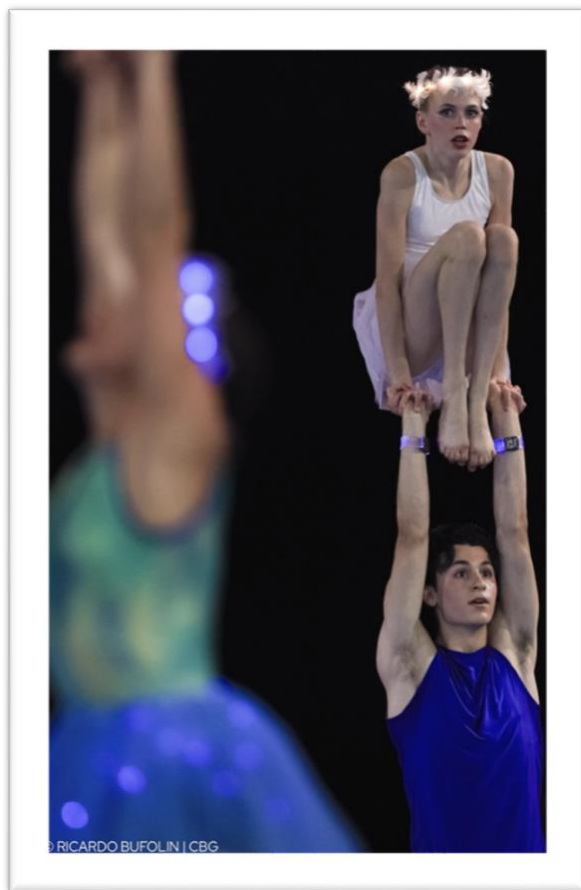
- movements that are performed around an external axis, for example around the fixed bar, on the parallel bars

Landings

- movements that are performed around an external axis, for example around the high bar or on the parallel bars.

Hand Apparatus

- all the movements performed by gymnastic equipment such as hoops, ribbons, balls, clubs, and ropes, or fans, scarves or umbrellas, when manipulated by the gymnast. For example: the rotary movements of hoops when thrown.



© RICARDO BUFOLINI / CBG



Friendship

Sessions should be held in an environment that promotes the formation and strengthening of healthy and lasting friendships. Creating work situations of camaraderie, collaboration, and competition on equal terms is essential to promoting these values.





Forever

The many forms and possibilities of Gymnastics for All offer a valuable lifelong fitness option. By integrating strength, flexibility, coordination, and body awareness, it adapts to different ages, backgrounds, and ability levels, promoting physical, mental, and social well-being.

Gymnastics, when viewed not just as a competitive sport but also as an enjoyable and accessible physical activity, offers a sustainable path to better health and well-being. Making it a regular part of your life means recognizing movement as a form of self-care and communication.





Planning a Gymnastics for All Session

This section presents some guidelines and suggestions for planning Gymnastics for All sessions, considering their inclusive, creative, and participatory nature. Through accessible and adaptable proposals for different contexts and audiences, the goal is to foster a meaningful physical experience in which everyone can explore, experience, and enjoy gymnastic movements. The recommendations presented here are intended to support educators, instructors, and professionals interested in developing activities that promote play, cooperation, expression, and respect for the diversity of bodies and ways of moving.

The Warm up

WHY?

The body needs to warm up to prepare for subsequent physical activity.

Muscles and joints function best when warm and flexible.

Participants are less prone to injury.

BENEFITS

Prepare your heart, muscles, and joints

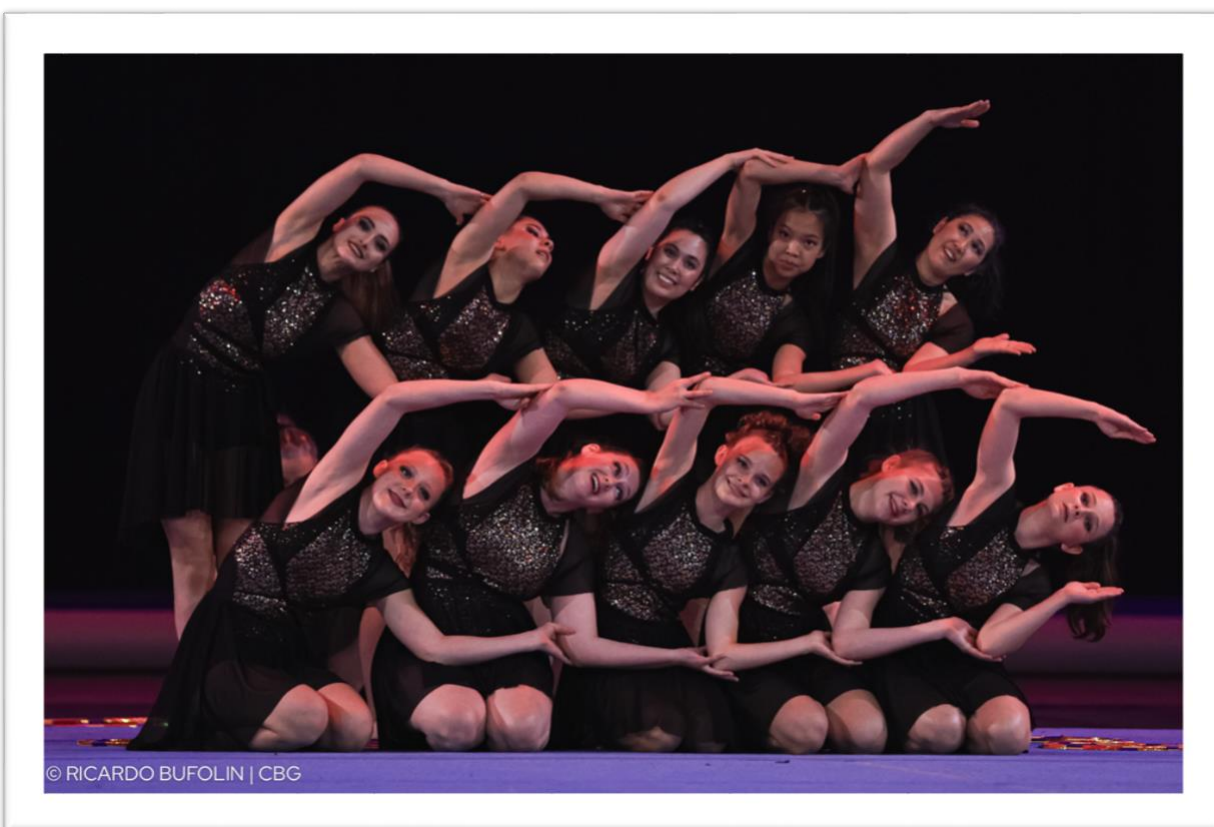
Prepare your mind

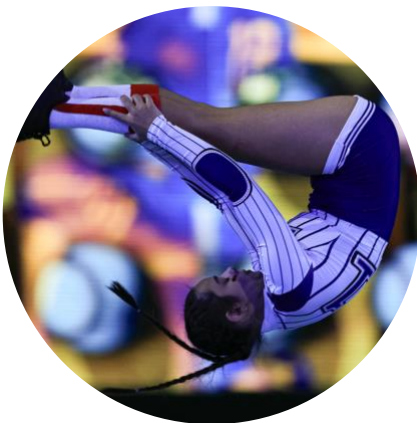
Improve your physical fitness

Build a good relationship



ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	DURATION (MINUTES)
1. Physical actions	Gradually increase body temperature	5 minutes
2. Mobility and stretching	Increase range of motion	5 minutes
3. End of the warm up	Developing skills, review OR introduction to gymnastics fundamentals	5 minutes



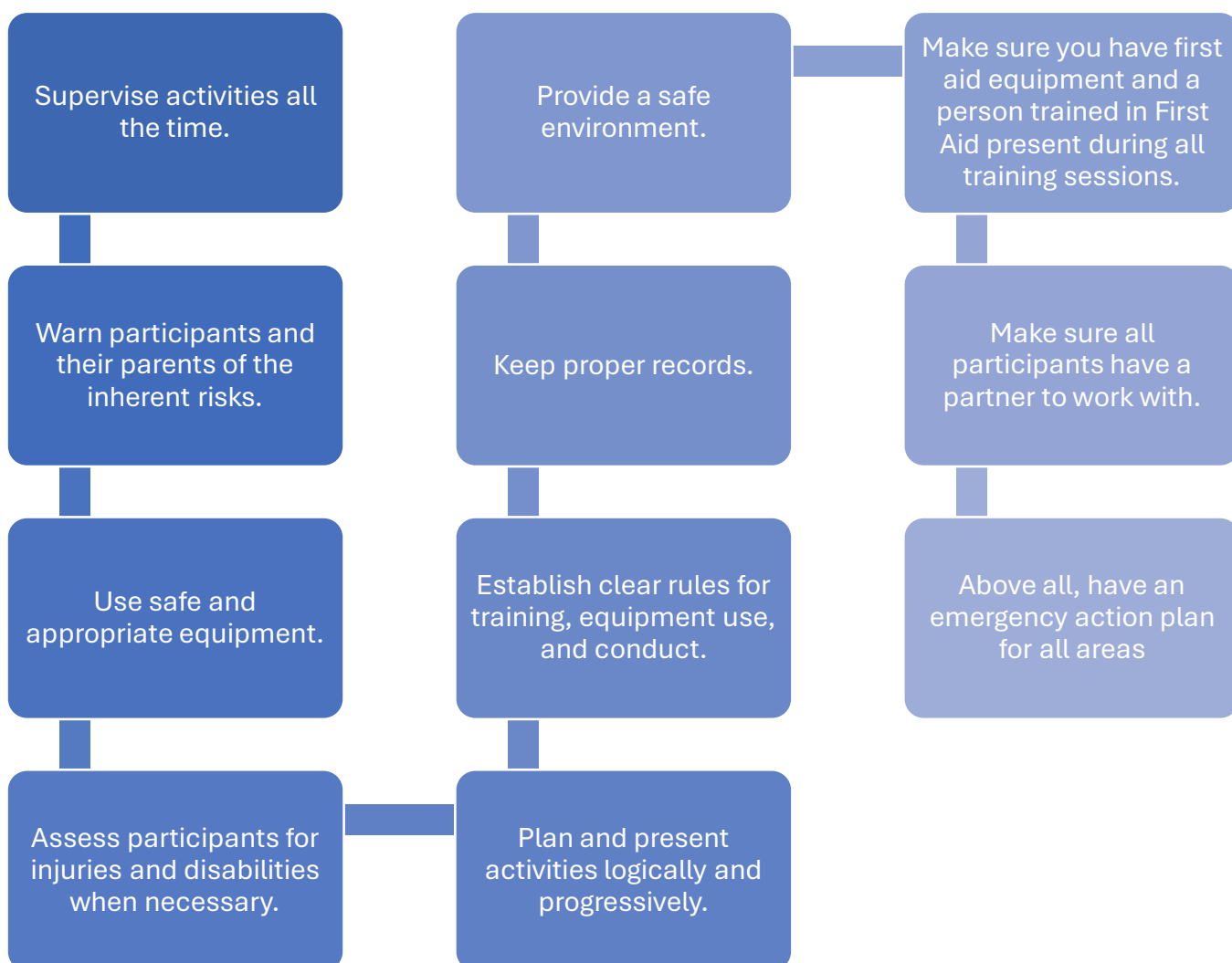




Safety

Safety can be divided into 4 areas:

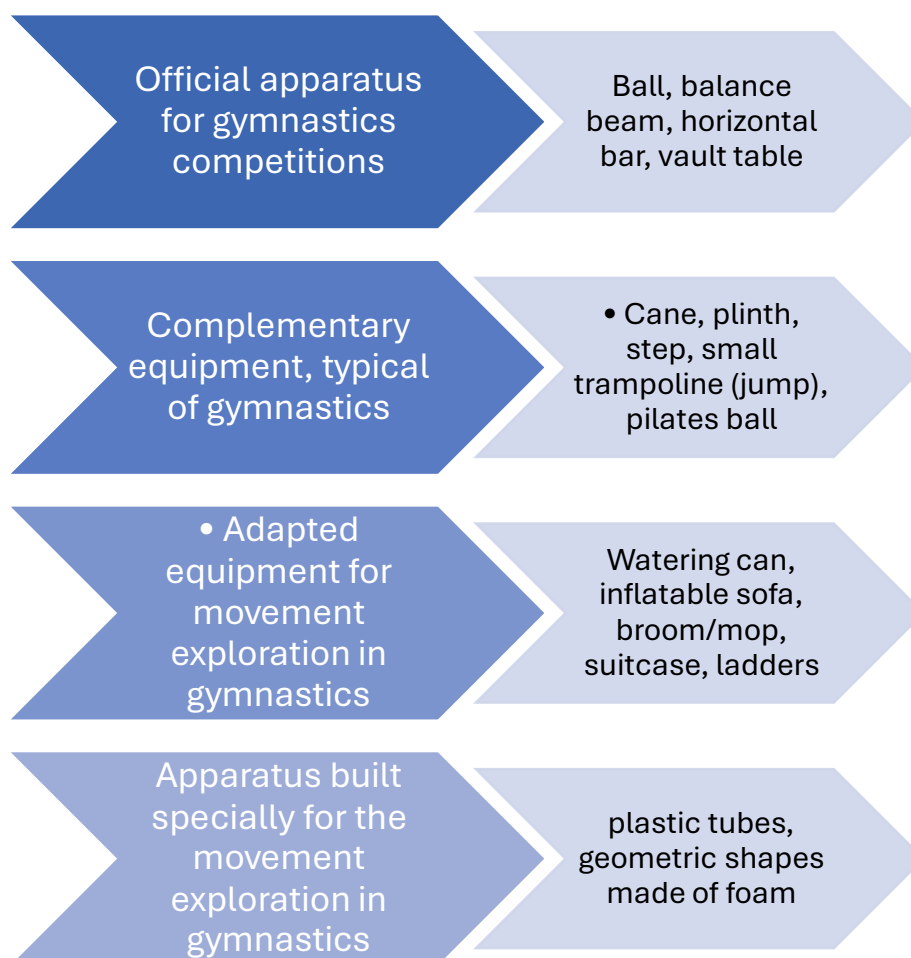
1. Environment
2. Program Content
3. Coaches
4. Participants





Apparatus

In Gymnastics for All (GfA), the concepts and principles do not require the use of apparatus or objects in classes or choreographic composition. However, their incorporation has proven to be a highly effective teaching and motivational tool within the world of gymnastics. The history of this physical practice shows a long connection to apparatus, starting from its very beginnings. A significant figure is Henrich Medau, who recognized that incorporating objects, such as balls, made the movements smoother, more natural, and more harmonious. Based on studies by Bratfische and Carbinatto (2016), we propose:





A key feature of Gymnastics for All is using unusual or alternative apparatus. This allows for new expressive and movement possibilities for both performers and the audience. This amplification of body gestures allows for the fashioning of new experiences, redefining the relationship with one's own body and with gymnastics.



In Gymnastics for All, apparatus helps teaching methods, make movement easier, and encourage creative and fun ways to express oneself. At Gymnastics for All events, people are often amazed and fascinated by the new ideas, feeling like they're rediscovering their own understanding of the body and movement. Just as with music, it is not about following fixed formulas or predetermined activities, but about making, together with the group, singular and collective paths that celebrate exploration, innovation, and individual expression within each gymnastic experience.



Ways of manipulating materials and their combinations	
Action	Static or dynamic; with body parts (Arm, hand, leg, foot); Body actions (jumps, turns, balances)
Space	Pathways of the materials or the body: vertical, horizontal, circular with variations.
Tempo	Phases of moving the body or the material separately or together: in unison, in canon or mirroring.
Interactions	Individual, duet, trio or in small or large groups.

Fonte: Toledo, Tsukamoto e Carbinatto (2025).





Movement

Gymnastics is movement with a specific purpose. There are three key aspects to making movements effective and expressive: *posture, body awareness and the movements themselves*.

Posture is the base of all movement, making it possible to stand, sit, and move in a natural, controlled manner while maintaining proper body alignment. *Body awareness*, the ability to know where the different parts of the body are and what they are doing at any given moment, allows for accurate execution of movements such as twists, rotations, contractions, extensions, balances and complete body sequences. These elements not only enrich the gymnastics experience but also strengthen the connection between body and mind.

We present some age-appropriate training ideas.

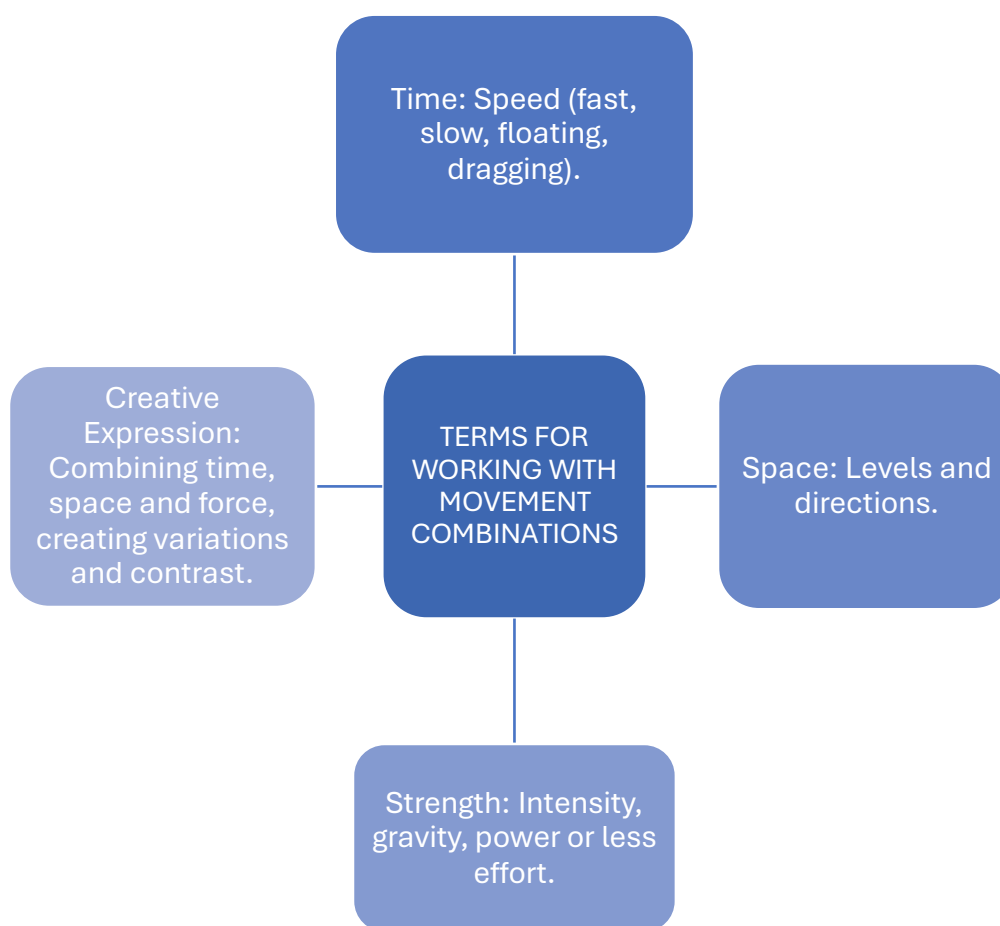
BOYS, GIRLS & ADOLESCENTS	YOUTH	ADULTS & SENIORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Static positions: supports and balances • Jumps and landings: hops and steps • Locomotion: walking, jumping, climbing, running, crawling • Rotations: rolls, somersaults, and cartwheels • Swings: Hanging or supported • Handstands: Throwing and catching <p>NOTE: Use age-appropriate music that can be recognized and sing along to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full body movements • Use of different levels (high, medium, and low) • Use of different directions • Coordination • NOTE: Use age- and time-appropriate music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility and flexibility. • Strength training • Coordination and balance. • Increased focus on dance movements. • Low-impact exercises. • NOTE: Use age-appropriate music that they can recognize and sing along to.

People with **special educational needs** can participate in gymnastics activities but **with the necessary adaptations** to promote their full and safe participation. Of greatest importance, is to **guarantee real and meaningful inclusion**, offering accessible programs that respect physical, cognitive, and emotional diversity. Gymnastics for All, due to its flexible and playful nature, allows for the creation of spaces where everyone can be expressive and move with enjoyment, without barriers or exclusions, reaffirming everyone's right to participate in enriching physical experiences.



Music

Music is a powerful tool in Gymnastics for All sessions, as it can inspire natural and spontaneous movement among participants. To fulfill this role, it is important that the music be enjoyable, appropriate for the age and abilities of the group, and establish a motivating atmosphere. When participants recognize the music—and can even sing along—an emotional connection is created that enhances bodily expression, joy, and participation. Choosing the right music contributes significantly to a more inclusive, creative, and meaningful experience.





ESSENTIAL MUSIC TERMS FOR WORKING WITH MOVEMENTS

1. The pulse: the periodic and repetitive pulse of music, such as the beating of the heart.
2. The time: is determined with the pulse of the music, the speed of the pulse (fast or slow).
3. The beat: comes from the pulse, the music is pulsed in certain periods or bars, it is where the first beat is accentuated. (2/4 - 3/4 - 4/4).
4. The rhythm: guides the choice of movements, it is the type of music (salsa, waltz, cha-cha-cha, ballad, pop, others)
5. Character: can be: light, heavy, aggressive. The movements must be in accordance with the character of the music (slow, fast, heavy, soft)
6. The theme: the specific structure of music. All the parts need to be identified, such as verses and choruses, to create a wonderful choreography

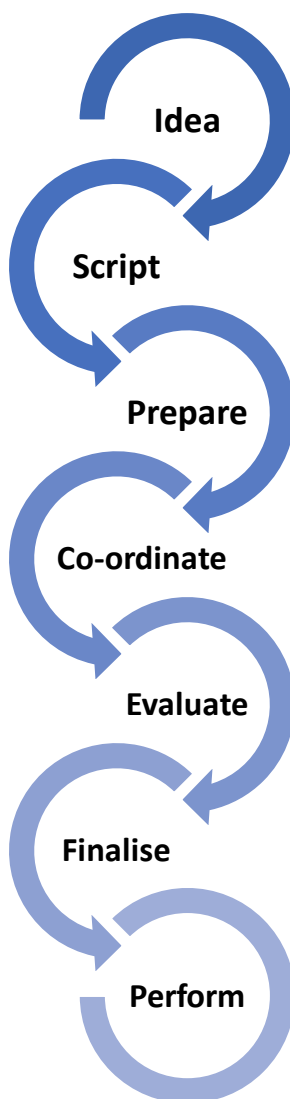
NOTE: The choice of music is significant when it comes to giving character to movements. It is important to choose the music that suits the objective of the movement and choreography.





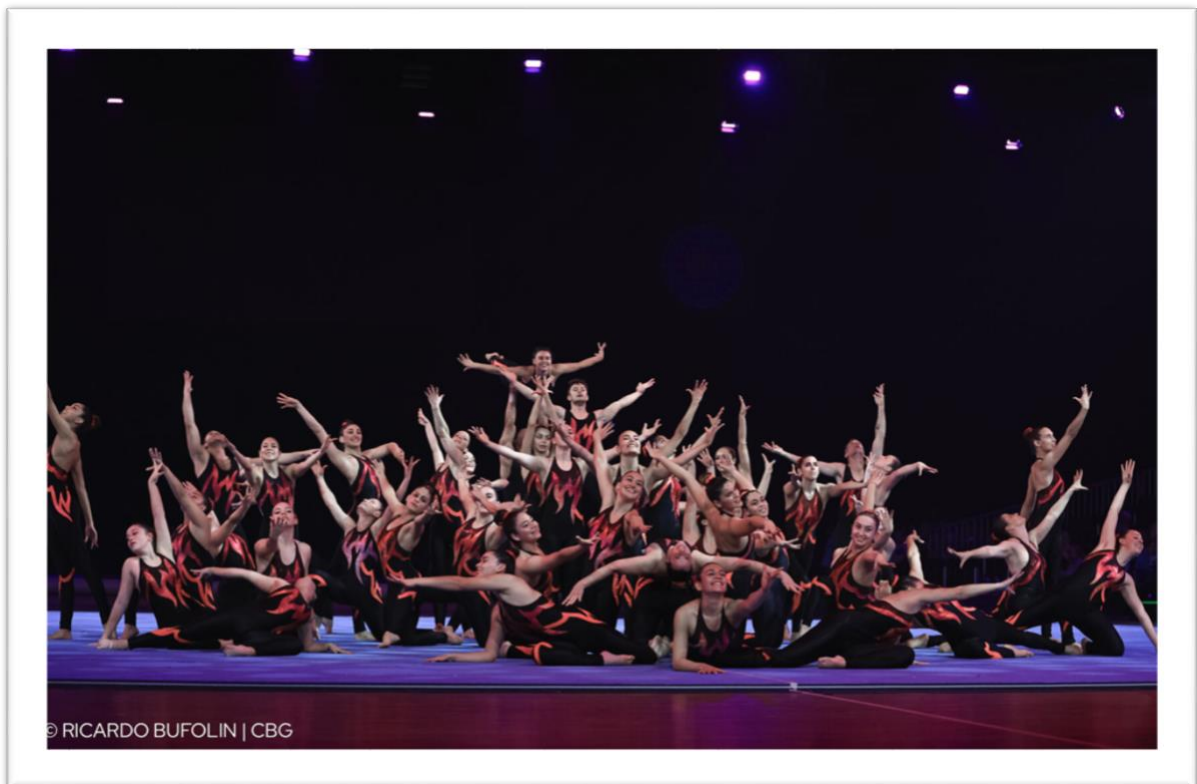
Presentations/Displays

A group routine is a sequence of movements performed in front of an audience. These performances can be given at local, national, and international events. Their purpose may be to educate, entertain, tell a story, achieve a goal, offer an aesthetic experience, or serve as an introduction to the sport. Everyone can participate, regardless of level, gender, age, or culture. For it to be successful, a group routine must be carefully planned. The steps to creating a performance may include:





- ✓ Make sure the lyrics of the song reflect the theme
- ✓ Make sure the music and lyrics match the age of the students
- ✓ Connect the rhythm of music with the rhythm of movement
- ✓ Use a quality music recording
- ✓ Make sure the presentation flows a good introduction, a good development and a good conclusion
- ✓ Look for the unexpected and the unusual
- ✓ Carefully integrate apparatus (entrances and exits)





Organizing a Group

WHY?	More effective and efficient way to achieve goals in the shortest amount of time. It guarantees quality time with gymnasts and meets their expectations.
WHEN?	1- Time Cycle 2- Time Period 3- Unit of time, class time
HOW?	Three Keys to Increasing Class Session Efficiency : 1- Good time management 2- Maximum safety 3- Correct coaching
WHO?	The coach Explore and experiment with choreography Learn quickly and efficiently Consolidate and improve learning
GENERAL GUIDELINES:	Reduce wait times Focus your attention on gymnasts Progression from easy to complex Safe Gym Practices Simple and precise instructions Station management Use activity cards



Games/Play in Gymnastics

Games are a fundamental part of learning in gymnastics. From the free to the most organized forms, the playful nature of games allows all participants to approach gymnastics practice with pleasure, imagination and freedom of expression. Games in gymnastics foster an environment of discovery, where movement experimentation and skill development are spontaneous, fostering a positive, lasting relationship with physical exercise.

In the Developmental Model of Sports Participation, the deliberate use of games in all stages of training is significant. Although related to sports, the games in gymnastics are adapted to encourage intrinsic motivation and enjoyment of the activity for the participants. In gymnastics, this approach also leads to routines that emphasize artistic freedom, rhythmic exploration, and physical expression. Important life skills are learned through play/games.

Cooperation	Self Control	Teamwork	Time Management
Listening	Following the Rules	Social Integration	Respect for others

Gymnastics for All Events must preserve the playful spirit of the discipline, even when introducing basic notions of competition. Encouraging spontaneity and celebrating participation—not just performance—are key aspects to maintaining motivation and respecting the principles of the sport.

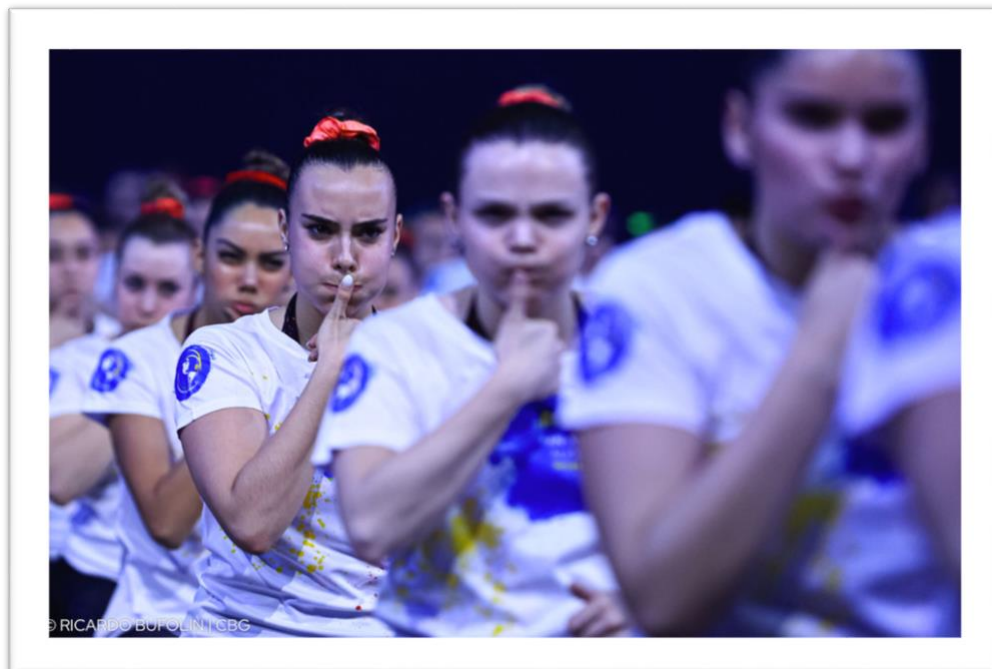
The environment in which the practice or performance takes place also plays an essential role. The presence of the audience, their reactions, and their energy contribute to creating a climate of shared play. Applause, laughter, and expressions of amazement reinforce the participant's sense of validation and belonging, intensifying the emotional value of the gymnastics experience. Elements such as music and choreographic narrative connect the technical with the expressive, allowing gymnasts to experience the beauty of movement in community. Thus, play is not only a means of learning, but a way of experiencing and enjoying gymnastics in all its sensory, social, and symbolic richness. It is a tool used to promote learning, enjoyment, and development.



Final Considerations

Fischer's reflections (Dos Santos, 2009) sensitively highlight the potential of Gymnastics for All as an emancipatory practice, which finds its greatest virtue in the absence of competition. Free from normative pressures and constant comparisons, this form of physical experience values creativity, collective effort, and the physical and psychological benefits offered by an aesthetic activity. Rather than seeking to overcome an opponent, Gymnastics for All is oriented toward creative self-improvement and respectful coexistence with others.

In this way, Gymnastics for All is designed as a space of expressive freedom, where each participant finds their own ways of moving, relating, and creating. Group work, as Fischer emphasizes, strengthens the sense of belonging and the spirit of collaboration and camaraderie, reaffirming that the culture of gymnastics movement can also be a culture of coexistence, joy, and shared creation.





References

Bratfische SA, Carbinatto MV. Inovação e criação de materiais: em busca da originalidade na Ginástica para Todos (Innovation and creation of materials: in search of originality in Gymnastics for All.). In: Miranda RCF, Ehrenberg MC, organizadores (organizers). *Temas emergentes de pesquisa em Ginástica para Todos (Emerging research topics in Gymnastics for All.)*. Várzea Paulista: Fontoura; 2016. p. 77–102.

Dos Santos JC. *Ginástica para Todos: elaboração de coreografias, organização de festivais (Gymnastics for All: elaboration of choreographies, organization of festivals.)*. 2ª ed. Brasil: Fontoura Editorial Ltda.; 2009. ISBN: 978-85-87114-58-7.

International Gymnastics Federation (FIG). *Gymnastics for All Manual*. Lausanne: FIG; 2025.

International Gymnastics Federation (FIG). *Fundamentos de la Gimnasia: manual de curso.(Fundamentals of Gymnastics: Course Manual.)*. 2ª ed. Lausanne, Switzerland: 2021. ISBN: 978-2-940714-02-5

Rojas A, Rojas M. Model of development of Gymnastics for All in the Bolivarian República of Venezuela. In: *Memorias del 13avo Congreso Mundial del Deporte Para Todos (Proceedings of the 13th World Congress on Sport for All)*; 2010. ISBN: 978-951-790-283-0.

Rojas A, Rojas M. Propuesta para el desarrollo de la Gimnasia para Todos en la República Bolivariana de Venezuela (Proposal for the development of Gymnastics for All in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.). *Rev Ciencias de la Educación*. 2012;(40):jul-dic. ISSN: 1316-5917.

Toledo E, Tsukamoto MHC, Carbinatto MV. Fundamentos da Ginástica para Todos (Fundamentals of Gymnastics for All). In: Nunomura M, organizadora (organizer). *Fundamentos das Ginásticas (Fundamentals of Gymnastics)*. 3ª ed. Jundiaí: Fontoura; 2025. p. 12–40.