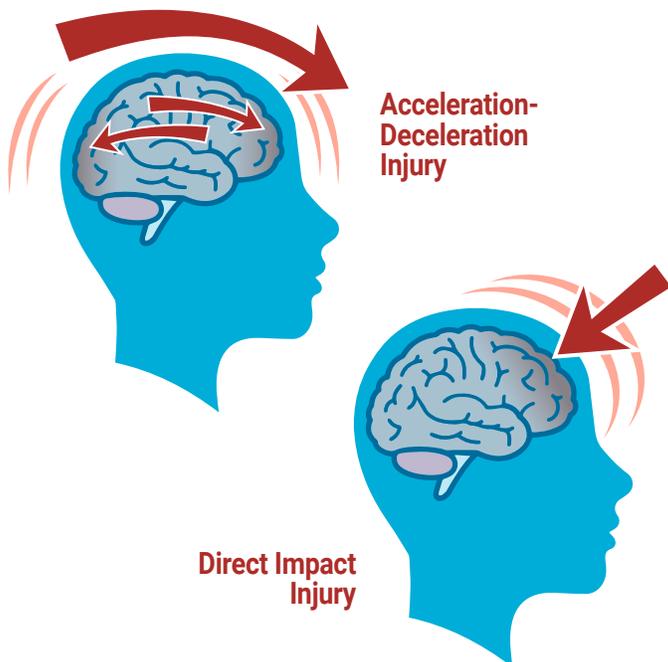
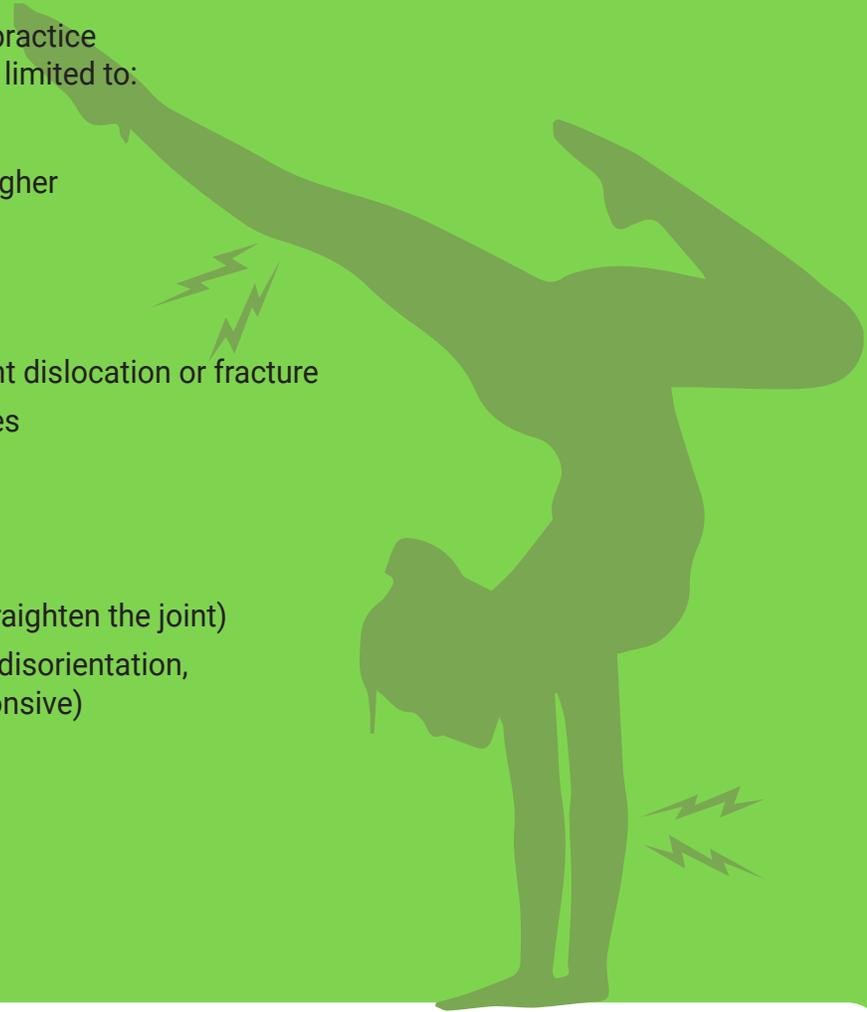


WHEN SHOULD A COACH SUSPEND PRACTICE?

Signs and symptoms that generally indicate that practice should be stopped for the day include, but are not limited to:

- difficulty bearing weight on an arm or leg
- moderate to severe pain (pain rating of 5 or higher on a scale of 1-10 is a good rule of thumb)
- numbness or tingling
- limping
- deformity of a body part indicating a likely joint dislocation or fracture
- bleeding that doesn't stop within a few minutes
- deep or large cut
- swelling
- large area of bruising
- loss of motion in a joint (can't fully bend or straighten the joint)
- change in level of consciousness (confusion, disorientation, irritability, irrational behavior, fainting, unresponsive)
- vomiting
- fever (Temperature above 100.4°)
- dizziness, light-headedness
- chest pain, shortness of breath



CONCUSSIONS

A suspected concussion event would also be a reason to stop a gymnast from practicing. Please refer to [USA Gymnastics educational information](#) for more discussion regarding concussions.

Use your best judgement. Coaches should always err on the side of athlete safety. When in doubt, sit them out. Our goal is to keep athletes safe first and foremost.

Parents should be notified immediately if any of these things occur.

WHEN SHOULD A GYMNAST SEE A PHYSICIAN?

Signs and symptoms that generally indicate that a gymnast needs to see a physician include, but are not limited to:

- Any injury or illness that causes practice to be stopped for the day (see above list)
- Pain for more than 1- 2 weeks that is getting worse, staying the same or only slightly better
- Recurrent pain
- Pain is in or close to a joint, rather than in a muscle/soft tissue
- Loss of full range of motion of a joint
- Feeling that a joint is unstable
- Low energy or fatigue, requesting or needing more frequent breaks
- Notable change in athlete's mood
- Other concerning behaviors

ALWAYS REMEMBER

IDENTIFICATION OF INJURY

- Activities should be stopped immediately or modified if a gymnast has pain
- Sitting out due to injury should never be treated as a punishment or shameful
- Athletes should always be encouraged to listen to their bodies
- Athletes should be supported when they voice concerns, even if coach thinks they are faking or trying to get out of practice
- ALWAYS HONOR AN ATHLETES VOICE
- The goal is to create an environment that makes the gymnast feel comfortable voicing their concerns, pain, or symptoms

ASSESSMENT OF INJURY

- It's not a coach's job to figure out if an athlete is injured or "faking"
- If an athlete feels the need to fake an injury, there is likely something going on that needs to be addressed:
 - Fear of a skill
 - Loss of interest in sport
 - Burnout
 - Negative coaching
- Sometimes it seems that an athlete will avoid some activities but not others that seem similar. Injuries can be complex and should be assessed by a medical professional before a coach assumes that the athlete is making it up
- Kids can often FEEL psychological distress as physical pain

SUPPORT THE INJURED ATHLETE

- When athletes are injured, have other things they can do already planned out to keep them involved with the team
- Often athletes feel isolated and punished when coaches and other teammates ignore them as they are sitting out. This makes it less likely that an athlete will report an injury
- Allow the athlete to rejoin the team in other ways:
 - Help with timing routines
 - Learning to coach or judge
 - Helping the coach or team in other ways