



## Ready, Set, Grow! .... safely?

As the Olympic Games draw to a close and our focus returns to our own little worlds, we all hope to welcome new gymnastic enthusiasts into our gyms. Every four years the private gymnastic clubs around the United States experience a nice little spike in enrollment. It's great for your business, better for the sport, and even better for the children that are experiencing gymnastics for the first time.

It's important that with our enthusiasm for new customers we don't overlook the key safety factors of occupancy and traffic flow. Do you know what your occupancy limit is? Not, how many you can squeeze in, but what your municipality, landlord, and fire department allow. Do you have traffic flow rules? And have you stressed this to your staff and students? If you have 100 students in your gym that are all moving to a new station at the same time, there is a safe way to do it. While driving, there is a reason that traffic circles or rotaries make



sense – everyone is moving in the same direction. The two key words are moving and directions. We've all had that chance collision while walking rapidly in the mall or the airport and the unknowing traveler in front of us decides to stop to read a sign. Ouch!



Children can be taught to move safely in your gym with two simple teachings.

Show and tell, but probably in the opposite order. Once they know the directional rules it will be hard to change them. Reinforcing with signs and arrows is always a good idea.



Another Safety consideration when you enrollment grows is to rethink and adjust your stations and staffing. It's great to get new customer in the door, but we don't want to lower the level of attention given to our existing customers. Everyone knows you can't always just add a new student to a group and go from a comfortable 7 / 1 ratio to 8 – 9/ 1 but you can re-sort the groups and have big group stations and small group stations.

Focusing on safe crowd (class) control is as important for your day to day management as is spotting and progression. This is even truer when you are welcoming in new customers or visitors that perhaps aren't as aware of the uniqueness of your facility. Remember, if it's not marked or explained the newbies won't know where their footing will change from a firm mat to a soft mat. What is obvious to you and your regulars may be a surprise to a first time visitor.



Hopefully, as we all welcome the new wave of future gymnasts, we can take a moment to think about traffic safety within our gyms. Plan, discuss, and mark your facility for safe traffic patterns and efficient use of your facility.



*Steve*

Steve Cook – AAI National Sales Director  
[Steve.Cook@fotlinc.com](mailto:Steve.Cook@fotlinc.com)

