

DISCOVER GYMNASTICS

# ADULT GYMNASTICS

A GUIDE TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT GYMNASTICS

British Gymnastics
More than a sport

WELCOME

# I'M THE ONE WHO LIKES NEW CHALLENGES

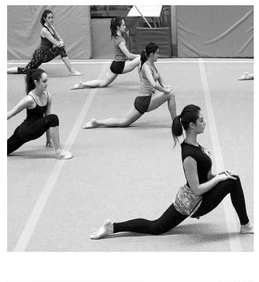
This support guide intends to provide ideas and tips on how to engage new and existing adult participants within your gymnastics environment. Much of the content has been generated from talking to British Gymnastics clubs as well as our own research we'd like to share with you.

We have new insight which shows there is significant interest from adults looking at and wanting to participate in gymnastics. We believe this surge in demand is in part due to the BBC Tumble series which featured celebrity adults trying gymnastics for the first time. Our new website, Discover Gymnastics (british-gymnastics.org/discover) shows the number of searches attributed to adults is almost as high as the 5-12 age group. Thousands of adults are looking at the site, for their local club and for adult gymnastics classes. To help you take advantage of this new interest, we have produced this support guide to ensure you're confident to open your doors for adult gymnastics (if this is something you're keen to offer).

We recommend that an adult gymnastics session should be available to anyone aged 18 or over regardless of ability or experience. Many clubs include a variety of disciplines in their sessions (depending on coaching qualifications) and coaching styles tend to be adapted to meet the unique needs of this audience.







## WHAT DO ADULTS WANT FROM A GYMNASTICS SESSION?

Our research and club consultation shows that:

- As people get older, the social side of sport becomes more and more important
- Adults are interested in meeting new people and having fun
- Fitness is important
- In terms of the environment required by adults, they may be put off by training alongside young children i.e. they want sessions with others in their own age group






## THE BENEFITS OF DELIVERING ADULT GYMNASTICS

Introducing Adult Gymnastics to your programme can bring many benefits:

- Increased participation/membership
- New income streams
- Retention of gymnasts aged 18+
- Increased usage of your facility by running adult sessions during downtime, perhaps later in the evening when you may usually be closed
- Allows you to provide a varied offer to attract more people and a broader range of customers, as well as respond to the demand
- An opportunity to identify future coaches, judges and volunteers to develop your workforce
- Offers the opportunity for coaches to use a different skill set as coaching adults is different to coaching children

# WHERE TO START

Here are some recommended steps to take when establishing new adult gymnastics sessions.
Please note: The order is a recommendation only and steps can be completed in a different order.

## APPROPRIATE SET-UP

### STEP 1

**PARTICIPANT AVAILABILITY**

Adults are available to access sessions at times when children cannot – such as late evenings or lunch times. Consider availability as part of your set-up.

### STEP 2

**COACH AVAILABILITY**

Providing a coach who can engage well with adults is essential. The coach must seek to understand their motivations, be able to show empathy and understanding as well as good technical skills in order to keep sessions fun and engaging.

### STEP 3

**COST**

When considering your session costs it is worth spending some time reviewing other providers in the local area to ensure your prices are competitive.

### STEP 4

**TIMETABLING**

Adults prefer participating with those of a similar age; therefore, it is recommended that adults have their own dedicated session. If this is not possible, could you run the sessions alongside existing sessions such as pre-school where adults are not intimidated by the skill level of younger participants? Or use a curtain to separate them?

### STEP 5

**EQUIPMENT**

Having the appropriate equipment to support and develop adults is important to ensure their safety and enjoyment. It is worth completing an equipment audit to identify what equipment is and isn't suitable i.e. Pre-school equipment would not appeal, or be appropriate for adults.





## FUNDING

You may be able to source funding to support the set-up of your Adult Gymnastics sessions:

### STEP 6

**SPORTIVATE**

A nationwide campaign following the London 2012 Olympic Games, providing opportunities for teenagers and young adults (aged 11-25) to receive 6-8 weeks of coaching in a sport of their choice and guiding them into regular participation within their community. Please follow this link for more details: www.sportengland.org/our-work/children-and-young-people/sportivate/

### STEP 7

**LOCAL FUNDING**

Contact your local British Gymnastics Club Development Coordinator or County Sports Partnership to find out if there are any local funding pots available to support the set-up and delivery of adult sessions. Please follow this link to find your local Club Development Coordinator: www.british-gymnastics.org/contact-us

# STEP 8
# SESSION CONTENT

Choose what disciplines or activities you'd like to offer



## ADULT GYMNASTICS

There are many gymnastics activities that appeal to adults. The simplest approach may be for you to modify the disciplines that you already offer to make them more suitable for adults such as reducing the number of apparatus used in Women's or Men's Artistic to make it more accessible.

We've seen Floor and Vault sessions working well for adults and clubs successfully implement this type of session. At the end of this resource, you'll find a case study on 1066 Gymnastics who have successfully implemented gymnastics sessions for adults.

## GYMNASTICS FOR ALL PROGRAMMES

Why not introduce Gymnastics for All to your programme which has plenty of activities to offer adults? When considering what disciplines or activities you'd like to offer, it is worth thinking about the characteristics required to deliver a successful adult session:

- A relaxed and social atmosphere
- Positive coach-participant relationships
- Participant focussed
- Multi-disciplinary – allowing participants to specialise or have a go at everything
- Recognising achievement rather than perfection



GYMFIT

## GYMFIT

GymFit is an awesome way to work out with a huge variety of exercises focusing on cardio, core, upper and lower body. Adults will come away from every session feeling fitter, healthier and one step closer to that gymnast's physique. While the focus is primarily on developing fitness, adults will also pick up some of the basics of gymnastics. So if they ever want to get more into the sport, they'll find they've already got the perfect foundation.

GymFit is easy to implement and accessible to all which makes the activity perfect for adults. It particularly appeals to adults with a fitness motivation and there are already resources available on GymNET to give you plenty of ideas and guidance on how to deliver the activity to adults.

GymFit exercises could be integrated into a general adult gymnastics session to ensure adults are physically prepared for the skills that they want to learn, or you might find that stand-alone GymFit sessions are more popular. The choice is yours! Why not use GymFit as an entry route into adult gymnastics to minimise the feeling of intimidation, as participants will turn up to their first general adult gymnastics session with the basic strength and fitness required to learn skills?



## TEAMGYM

If your participants enjoy training and having fun as part of a group, they'll get a kick out of TeamGym as it offers a fantastic social opportunity for those adults looking to meet new people. TeamGym participants train and perform alongside each other on three pieces of apparatus; floor, trampette and tumble. Teams can be made up of 6-12 adults; all male, all female or mixed.

Adults of any ability can give TeamGym a go, but it is recommended that teams consist of similar abilities so that the floor routine can be performed effectively. TeamGym floor routines are performed as a group which may appeal to adults with little gymnastics experience, giving them more confidence with people by their side. However, ex-artistic gymnasts also enjoy taking part in TeamGym due to the team spirit and social element so you may choose to market this activity to your experienced adults instead, or as well.





Free g

## FREE G

FreeG is about total freedom. Combining elements from martial arts and stunt performance as well as gymnastics, there are no technical rules or competitions. Participants learn the tricks they want to learn and express themselves how they want. FreeG enables adults to be expressive and build confidence due to the unstructured nature of the activity. It lends itself to adults with some experience of gymnastics however beginners can take part too as they also thoroughly enjoy the freedom it brings, so why not introduce FreeG to your adult sessions once everyone has learnt the basics?



GYM CHALLENGE

## GYMCHALLENGE

GymChallenge is a team competition with a twist, so why not run it as your first taster of gymnastics for parents and older siblings of your participants. Unlike other team competitions where gymnasts are marked on technical excellence, GymChallenge is run by your club, focussing on fun and fitness.

The idea behind GymChallenge is to motivate everyone to achieve personal goals and have fun, by giving them the support of a team around them and the challenge of an opponent to beat. It can be run as a big one off event, or a regular competition staged at intervals throughout the year to assess skill level and give adults something to work towards.

GymChallenge is a great way to get adults of all ages and abilities involved as they can choose the level to have a go at and challenge others to achieve the highest score! Why not organise a 'Parents vs. Children' GymChallenge or use it as a fun, social competitive opportunity for adults to beat their own score each week?

We want GymChallenge to be an easy-going way of keeping adults engaged and energised so we've made it as simple as possible to get started. There are resources available to clubs on GymNET to give you guidance on how to deliver the activity.

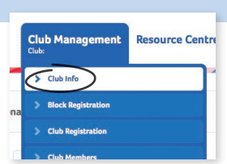
There are a variety of other disciplines or activities that may appeal to adults. Please contact your local Club Development Coordinator for more ideas or support to implement Gymnastics for All activities. Find their details at british-gymnastics.org/contact-us

## HOW TO REGISTER

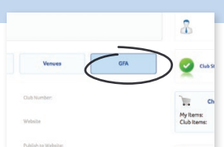
To register for any of the Gymnastics for All activities such as those listed above, please follow these simple steps where you will find all of the information and marketing materials you will need to get started:



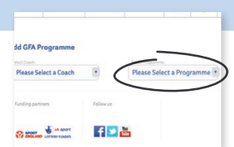

1 Visit british-gymnastics.org and click on 'Login' (top left). Once you are logged in, please select 'GymNET'.




2 Select 'Club Info', under the 'Club Management' tab.




3 Select the 'GFA' button.

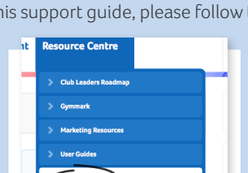



4 Select a coach, then from the 'Please Select a Programme' menu, select the activity that you're interested in.

To access an electronic version of this support guide, please follow these simple steps:




1 Visit british-gymnastics.org and click on 'Login' (top left). Once you are logged in, please select 'GymNET'.




2 Select 'GfA Resources', under the 'Resource Centre'.

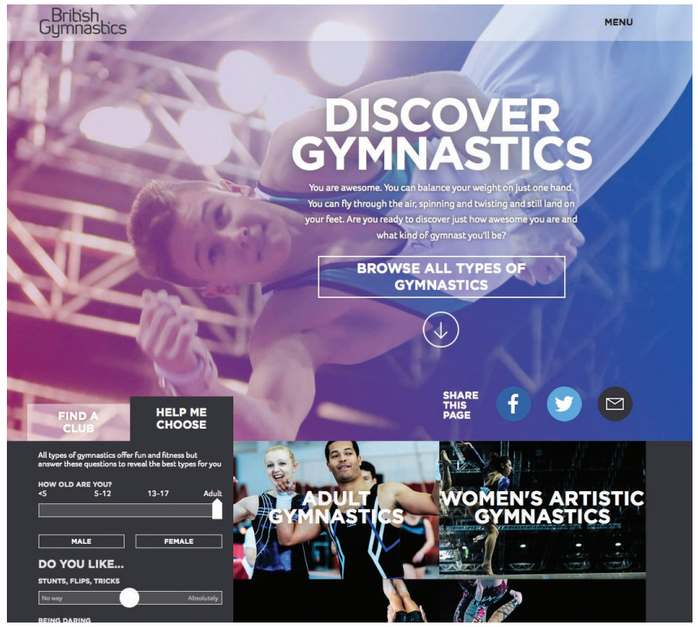



3 Scroll down to find this Adult Gymnastics Support Guide, along with any other GfA resources that you have registered for.

# STEP 9
# MARKETING & PROMOTION

Once you've made the decision to include sessions for adults, you'll need to think about promotion and raising awareness.






## HERE ARE SOME TIPS

You are welcome to use any of the text on the Discover Gymnastics site (british-gymnastics.org/discover) on your own website. The Discover Gymnastics text introduces every gymnastics discipline/activity without using technical language in order to attract a wider audience, which you may find useful. Here is an example of some of the text used, from the Adult Gymnastics page:

"You can get involved in adult gymnastics at any age from eighteen up - even if you've never done anything like this before. Adult gymnastics provides a new opportunity to try out an amazing sport. You can test yourself in a range of activities and on apparatus offered at your local gymnastics club. By building your strength, flexibility and control, you'll see your performance improve in other sports too. Whether you're looking to take your first steps in gymnastics or get back into the sport, adult gymnastics makes it easy. There's a big social element, which makes the sessions a lot of fun."

Visit **ADULT GYMNASTICS** british-gymnastics.org/discover/

Ensure your club is listed on our website british-gymnastics.org/discover as delivering adult gymnastics. Many adults are looking at this site and linking to club websites/contact details. If it's not listed, please visit GymNET and update your 'Activity' tab. This can be found under the 'Club Info' option in the 'Club Management' menu (as illustrated on page 7). If you have any problems please contact Customer Service on 0345 129 7129 ext. 2395 for assistance.

Make sure your adult gymnastics session is clearly listed on your website if you have one. This could be included in the general information about your club, as well as listed on a timetable. Be sure to include whether you can participate if you are a beginner or whether you need experience. Clearly stating which sessions are open to adults and whether they are exclusive to adults or not is important, so be sure to clarify this on all promotional material including your timetable eg. FreeG adult session, or FreeG session for 11+ (adults welcome). It's also useful to state whether it's a drop in class or whether the session runs as a term/course. It is worth including information on clothing and footwear requirements so that adults don't assume they have to wear a leotard.

Raising awareness through your current participants can be effective and low cost. Let your gymnasts know you are offering sessions for parents and older siblings and send a note home. Many adults, in particular parents who are familiar with the gymnastics environment, enjoy attending adult gymnastics sessions to improve their fitness rather than having to join a gym.

If you have a Facebook and/or Twitter account, announce the launch of your session here and continue to promote and talk about it. You can share the progress of your session in social media, which will encourage others.

You may find it helpful to share the 'Adult Gymnastics' page of the Discover Gymnastics website into your social media accounts by clicking the Facebook and Twitter icons on the page. You'll have a chance to adapt the post before you publish it.

When promoting your sessions to the adult community why not consider targeting the following groups in order to attract participants:

- Higher Education (university) institutions
- Further Education (college) mature students
- Community groups such as weight loss classes, church groups or complimentary sports clubs (eg. Martial arts)
- Workplaces
- Parents of existing customers

Before contacting Higher or Further Education institutions, it is worth speaking to your local Club Development Coordinator to find out if the institution has registered onto our new Student Enrichment Programme. Find their details here: british-gymnastics.org/contact-us

# OPPORTUNITIES TO PERFORM AND COMPETE

For those adults showing continued interest or those wanting to showcase their skills, the below exit routes are fun and social ways of getting more involved:

## FESTIVALS

The opportunity to participate in festivals such as GymFusion or even international festivals.  GymFusion provides the opportunity for gymnasts of all ages and abilities to showcase their gymnastics skills in front of a captive audience in theatre-like venues.

## BRITISH VETS

A competition open to anyone aged 18 and over, regardless of experience or ability, with the opportunity to socialise and compete. The event creates a fun and relaxed atmosphere where competitors can meet like-minded people whilst showcasing their gymnastics skills to one another. It is a multi-discipline event where competitors can enter Acrobatic, Men's Artistic, Trampoline, Tumbling or Women's Artistic competitions. Adults may even choose to enter several disciplines. To get involved, why not join our 'British Vets' Facebook group and become part of this fantastic community!

## REGIONAL ADULT COMPETITIONS

Many clubs with well-established adult sessions run successful adult competitions. This is a great starting point for those adults who have never competed before and helps create a network of participants. As with British Vets, all competitions are relaxed and highly sociable with a number of disciplines on offer.

Please follow the link below to find your local Club Development Coordinator and request more information:

british-gymnastics.org/contact-us



"It's fun. I can do stunt training and the coaches are willing to help everyone, regardless of ability or discipline."









"It's a great way to meet people. I recently moved from Australia and the people I work with attend so they encouraged me to come along. I like that there is freedom to use all of the apparatus and do whichever type of gymnastics you like."

# COMMON CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

Here is an overview of the things to consider and some other helpful tips for introducing adult gymnastics:

| | |
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| Isn't gymnastics for young children? | • Our new GfA programmes are all designed for 11+. Our research shows that fitness is particularly important among adults, which makes GymFit a perfect programme to incorporate into adult sessions.<br>• Adapt your marketing to include the social aspect and wider benefits of adult sessions such as weight loss, improved self-confidence, new friends, stress relief and increased fitness (refer to steps 8 and 9 earlier in the guide).<br>• Ensure you use appropriate imagery and language to overcome this perception. |
| How can we create a friendly, relaxed environment? | • The social aspect of adult gymnastics should be promoted both in sessions and marketing.<br>• Be clear who your session is aimed at so that you can manage participant expectations.<br>• Organise social events for participants to get involved in such as activities and nights out or introduce a 'bring a friend for free' offer.<br>• Offer structure as well as freedom within sessions – this way everyone's needs are catered for.<br>• Work to build a rapport with participants and differentiate your coaching style to work with the needs of the individual. |
| How can we fit adult sessions into my programme/timetable? | • Adult sessions can be scheduled during the day (lunch times) or late evening after work, at times when children's sessions are not run and sessions are more accessible to adults.<br>• Adult sessions could be run alongside Pre-school sessions, getting the parents to become the participants whilst providing a childcare option. |
| How can we cater for the range of abilities and disciplines that adult gymnastics brings, whilst ensuring we have appropriately qualified coaches? | • Though there may be the demand for a wide range of disciplines or activities, a level 2 BG coach can deliver introductory skills to almost any discipline provided these are low level, enabling one coach to deliver a range of activities.<br>• Please note: Some activities such as FreeG require an Add-on Module qualification in order to deliver the activity. |



"I enjoyed gymnastics so much as a child, so I wanted to come back and get fit. The club is local and has a good reputation for adults."

| | |
|---|---|
| How can we ensure we'll have enough coaches when offering drop-in sessions? | • Often, some coaches may want to attend adult sessions as a participant so they could be granted free access to the sessions and should they be required to coach, they will already be on-site.<br>• Adults could be asked to 'sign-up' for the next session to give you a rough idea of numbers for the following session. |
| How can we offer sessions exclusively to adults when my timetable is full? | • Consider establishing a satellite club, it is a great way to provide an exclusive session to adults, whilst keeping costs down.<br>• Classes can be run alongside existing sessions such as Pre-school where adults are not going to feel intimidated.<br>• Using a curtain to segregate the adult session is also an option for those struggling to provide an exclusive session. |
| How can we afford to offer sessions exclusively to adults? | • Sportivate funding is available from your County Sports Partnership (CSP) to support coaching and venue costs. Local funding pots may also be available (refer to steps 6 and 7 earlier in the guide).<br>• You could provide the option for participants to pay monthly, this way income is guaranteed even if participation is not.<br>• Review your local competition to ensure your prices are competitive in order to attract more customers. |
| Who do we market to apart from parents? | • Making links with the local community is essential to attract new members.<br>• Your CSP can help you make links with workplaces (potentially as part of workplace schemes where businesses are invited to participate at your venue), community groups and FE/HE institutions. This will help you create a broader base of participants to generate sustainable income (refer to step 8 earlier in the guide). |



# SO WOULD YOU LIKE TO OFFER ADULT GYMNASTICS?

If you've been inspired by what you've read and would like to develop Adult Gymnastics at your venue, please contact your local Club Development Coordinator:

british-gymnastics.org/contact-us

Your Club Development Coordinator will be able to offer you support to get started and assist with the development of your sessions, as well as linking you with other clubs to create networks and share success stories.







CASE STUDY

# ADULT GYMNASTICS AT 1066 GYMNASTICS ACADEMY

**We caught up with Matte Hart, Manager & Head Coach of The 1066 Gymnastics Academy to tell us why adult gymnastics and the British Vets competition means so much to him and how increasing opportunities for adult participation has helped the club.**

**WHO DOES IT ATTRACT?**

We have a real mix! There's regular competitor and father of two, Patrick O'Farrell, who is in his mid-forties and an inspiration to us all. We have men and women in their twenties and thirties who never tried gymnastics as a child and now it is their turn. They enjoy the social side of the class and keeping fit in a different way. They're starting from scratch but making good progress and having fun along the way. We've been pleasantly surprised by a crossover from FreeG sessions. Sometimes we get someone in their twenties who trains in our FreeG gym ask about making the move into our main gym to try their hand at some men's apparatus and we always encourage them to enjoy a mixture of sessions and get the best of both. We're also proud to train a lovely couple named Jane and Malcolm; they won't mind us saying they are in their fifties and sixties. They enjoy a lot of yoga and walked in with good flexibility and really impressed us! They have a great time working on floor skills and they tell me they are getting a few surprised looks from young people at the fitness gym they go to when they give them a run for their money. They've been coming regularly for around a year. They enjoy the challenges gymnastics offers and the increase in fitness it brings.

**WHY DOES YOUR CLUB LOOK TO PROMOTE ADULT GYMNASTICS SO KEENLY?**

For me, Adult gymnastics is a fun class to teach. I enjoy all of my coaching, but in a week of coaching squad gymnasts and taking care of the admin duties involved in running the club, Adult Gym is the













class each week where you know you are going to have a great time and it's always a fun and relaxed atmosphere. I've always made sure we have Adult Gym active in our club programme and we offer competitive opportunities to those who want to take it that bit further. Any coach involved in our Adult gymnastics  class has fun teaching it. It's great helping someone revisit a sport they loved as a child, helping them regain skills or even try new ones. For those who didn't get their chance as a child, we can show them that it's never too late.

In 2014 we ran our first invitational competition and welcomed friends from other clubs running adult sessions. It was a great afternoon and wonderful to allow everyone to catch up and support each other. The whole adult gymnastics scene is a very friendly one and I'd love to see clubs cross over and visit each other more.

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHER CLUBS INTERESTED IN INCREASING ADULT GYMNASTICS?**

Find out what everyone's goals are. Some may come for general fitness and the social side. Others will have specific skills or apparatus they want to work on. Some people may be interested but not very confident in giving it a go so try taster sessions or a "bring a friend" night and show them that everyone can start at their own level and build from there. Embrace the social side and arrange friendly competitions or evenings together for everyone. A successful adult gymnastics programme can create a new community of participants within a club.



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