

Topic: Warmup, Stretches and Technique—What do you do and how often? How to give your students a sound technique foundation.

*We spend different amounts of time on warmups, stretches, and technique. Early in the season, before we start learning the show, we may have rehearsals that are all technique. As we get into camps and show learning, we will continue to have the technique block, but it may vary in the amount of time we spend on it—from a minimum of an hour to 50% of the rehearsal. As the season is well on its way and the show is learned, the technique block may become isolated parts of the show, tosses pulled from the show, or across the floors that are traveling moments in the show.

*For Warmups and stretches, don't forget cardio! Many times a judge will comment that the students look tired towards the end of the show. To build up endurance our group ran at the beginning of each practice. We would start with setting a timer for four minutes and thirty seconds and gradually increase that time as the season progressed. Some groups do Zumba or other cardio exercises together.

*Letting your students know the importance of technique block is a key. They should not view it as a punishment, but as an opportunity to improve themselves and their team. Talking with them about why basics are important, explaining the physics of how the body works with or without equipment, watching videos to see the application of technique in a show, and giving constructive feedback to students on what they are doing well or what they can improve on is important. Some directors use the slow motion video on their phone to allow students to watch themselves and see what they can do better.

Biggest Takeaway: Technique block is a must! Even when you are at that point in the season where you are pressed for time because you must finish the show, still find time for technique block. It is during this time that students are getting better with movement and equipment through feedback provided to them, can focus and prepare themselves for the rehearsal ahead, learn the logistics of how and why things work a certain way, work on matching their teammates around them, and become stronger/more confident performers.