

British
Gymnastics



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Pain, Injury and Gymnastics

British Gymnastics Position Statement

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British Gymnastics has developed the following position statement in conjunction with the English Institute of Sport. After reading this document, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact British Gymnastics Integrity team.

Gymnastics is a complex sport, and as with many sports, pain and injury are not uncommon. Pain is highly individual and needs to be managed sensitively and collaboratively between the gymnast, parent, coach and, where appropriate, wider support team. This position statement has been developed to provide current recommendations and guidance for best practice around pain, injury and gymnastics.

British Gymnastics acknowledges we all have a duty of care to safeguard the physical and psychological health of gymnasts.

If a gymnast believes they are unable to train or compete due to pain or injury, this must be respected.

Key Recommendations

1. Any decision around pain and injury in gymnastics must have the gymnast's long-term health as the priority.
2. Regular discussions should take place between gymnasts and coaches around the demands of gymnastics including soreness and pain.
3. If a gymnast is legally considered as a minor, parents/guardians should be:
 - i. Included in regular discussion as described above.
 - ii. Informed of any pain or injury that the gymnast and/or coach believes will impact their training or daily life.
 - iii. Involved in any decision making around training or competing with pain and injury.
4. Seek help from a qualified medical professional such as a Physiotherapist, Sports Doctor, or GP if a gymnast's pain:
 - i. Is moderate or severe in nature (see infographic), **OR**
 - ii. Lasts for 3 or more consecutive days, **OR**
 - iii. Impacts on training for 3 or more consecutive days

5. Close collaboration is advised between gymnast (parent/guardian), coach and medical professional to allow the continuation of safe training and/or competition if appropriate.
6. Clubs and coaches should endeavour to create an environment where gymnasts feel they are able to be open and honest about any pain or injury without fear of reprimand.
7. If there is any doubt as to whether a gymnast is in pain or has an injury, it is recommended that the activity is paused at the earliest opportunity and further discussion takes place.

World Class Performance Programme (WCPP) Practices

The following information highlights the practices of the WCPP regarding pain and injury in gymnasts.

- Gymnasts and coaches are encouraged to report pain and injury as early as possible.
- Physiotherapists are present at junior and senior squad training, and at all competitions. This promotes early diagnosis and appropriate management of any pain or injury.
- There may be circumstances where gymnasts will compete or train in pain, or with an injury. This is after medical review and close collaboration between the medical team, gymnast (parent/guardian), primary coach and Head National Coach/National coach.
- Gymnast's choice, and the long-term physical and/or psychological health of the gymnast are the primary factors in all decision making.