



Be Tricky on Your Trampoline

By Richard Miller

Here are some basic tricks you and your family can start with on your new trampoline. Dexterity in these basic tricks is essential before moving on to more advanced trampoline tricks. As is true for any other sport, safety measures need to be implemented and strictly followed to prevent accidents.

BOUNCING

The most important thing about bouncing is that it should be done in the center of the bed. The basic bounce should always begin low and be under control. The check bounce skill should be learned right away and should be employed whenever you land away from the center area or when first learning new stunts so that off balance landings can be controlled. Walk to the center of the bed and stand with your feet about shoulder width apart. Every time the feet hit the bed they should land in this position. Standing in the center of the bed with your feet shoulder width apart, you should attempt about three easy bounces. Kill the bounce by bending your knees upon landing (check bounce). To keep your balance adjusted to the center of the mat, focus your eyes on side of the trampoline while bouncing.

ARM ACTION

The arm is very important for proper control and lift. Kneel on the bed with the shoulders, hips, and knees in a straight line. Lift forcibly up with the arms as described above and begin to bounce on the knees much the same as on your feet. Body alignment is very important. When bouncing, normally the head, shoulder, hip, knee and ankle points should be in a straight line. The eyes should be focused near the end of the frame and should momentarily drop down on the bed to pick-up the relationship of the feet to the center of mat.

BOUNCE VARIATIONS

Seat Drop

You should be sitting in the center with your legs straight out in front of you and with your toes pointed. Take three little bounces, pick up your feet at the top of the third bounce, and sit down. You should land with your seat where your feet were. Push with your hands and drop the legs as you rebound up to your feet. Common mistakes here are failing to push down as you bounce up, or picking up your feet too soon and traveling ahead on the landing.

Knee Drop

When landing for the knee drop the back must be straight with good alignment of the shoulder, hip, and knee. Before attempting this skill on the bed, kneel on the trampoline with the back straight, the toes pointed, and the arms up, but do not sit on the heels. Then, stand up, take three little "bobs" (bounces where the feet do not leave the bed). On the upbeat of the third "bob," lift up, flex the leg at the knee, and with pointed toes land in the proper knee drop position.

Hands And Knees Drop

To do the drop properly, there must be just as much weight on the hands as on the knees; the back should be about parallel to the bed and the hip, leg, knee, and lower leg should be at right angles.

You should pick up your hips and legs behind and drop covering a spot where your feet were. The knees and hands should land simultaneous. To get the feel of this position, get down on your hands and knees on the bed. Make sure you have weight on both your hands and your knees. Don't sit on your heels.

Now, remain in this position and try to bounce. Don't rock back and forth between the hands and knees, but develop an even landing on all four points. Stand up, take three low bounces, lift back with the hips, reach forward with the hands, and land on all fours. Look slightly ahead on landing, not down between your knees. Rebound to your feet. This hands and knees landing position is used primarily as a step in learning other stunts.

Front Drop

The front drop is one of the basic landing positions which cause some concern, for unless the body is in proper position when landing on the bed, a discomforting strain in the back area may result. One approach to learning the front drop starts from the hands and knees drop. First, do a good hands and knees drop making sure that the back is parallel to the bed. As you rebound from the hands and knees, stretch so that you land on your stomach. You can rebound to your hands and knees or go directly to your feet. Carrying on this progression, you would take three bounces, assume the hands and knees position in the air, and before you hit the bed, stretch to a direct Front landing.

In addition to the hands and knees approach, there is another method of learning the front drop. Stand at the center of the bed with the knees bent and lean forward so that the back is about parallel to the bed. Now, from this low, touched position, lift up and back with the hips and legs and drop, placing your belt buckle where your feet were. The hands land out in a natural position slightly to the front and to the side. The landing is taken simultaneously on the forearms, lower chest, stomach, and thighs. The head is held high and the upper chest area is held off the bed.

After you are landing in a good level position and your belt buckle is hitting where your feet were, then crouch slightly, take three low bounces, pick up the hips and land in a good front drop position.