

Back Handsprings

(aka "Flip Flops" or "Flic Flacs")

Important Prerequisites for Learning Back Handsprings

1. Handstand – the student must be able to support their body weight in a handstand position that achieves vertical with extended shoulders
2. Bridge position – the student must be able to perform a bridge position with the feet elevated at 8"; the student must be able to perform the bridge with straight arms, hands shoulder width apart, and shoulders pressed above or past the hand placement
3. Shoulder flexibility – the student must be able to open the shoulder angle to 180° or more (the student should be able to comfortably hold the arms behind the ears)
4. Jumping ability – the student must have enough strength in the lower body to quickly jump and accelerate her body weight up and over the hands
5. Kinesthetic awareness – the student must be aware of the body's position, even in inverted or backwards positions; the student must be able to recognize the motions of each part of the body during the execution of a skill
6. Comfort in moving backwards – the student must be comfortable moving backwards during backward rolls, bridge downs, and back walkovers, with or without a spot

Q: What can I do at home to help my tumbling progression?

While we do not encourage students to perform skills outside of the gymnasium and without direct instructor supervision, students can work on flexibility and strength exercises at home to help meet the above objectives.

1. Push-ups/Pull-ups – help with strength in the chest, shoulders, and arms (necessary for proper handstands)
2. Bridge positions – can be worked at home (increasing shoulder and upper back flexibility)
3. Lunges – help with lower body strength (for jumping ability)