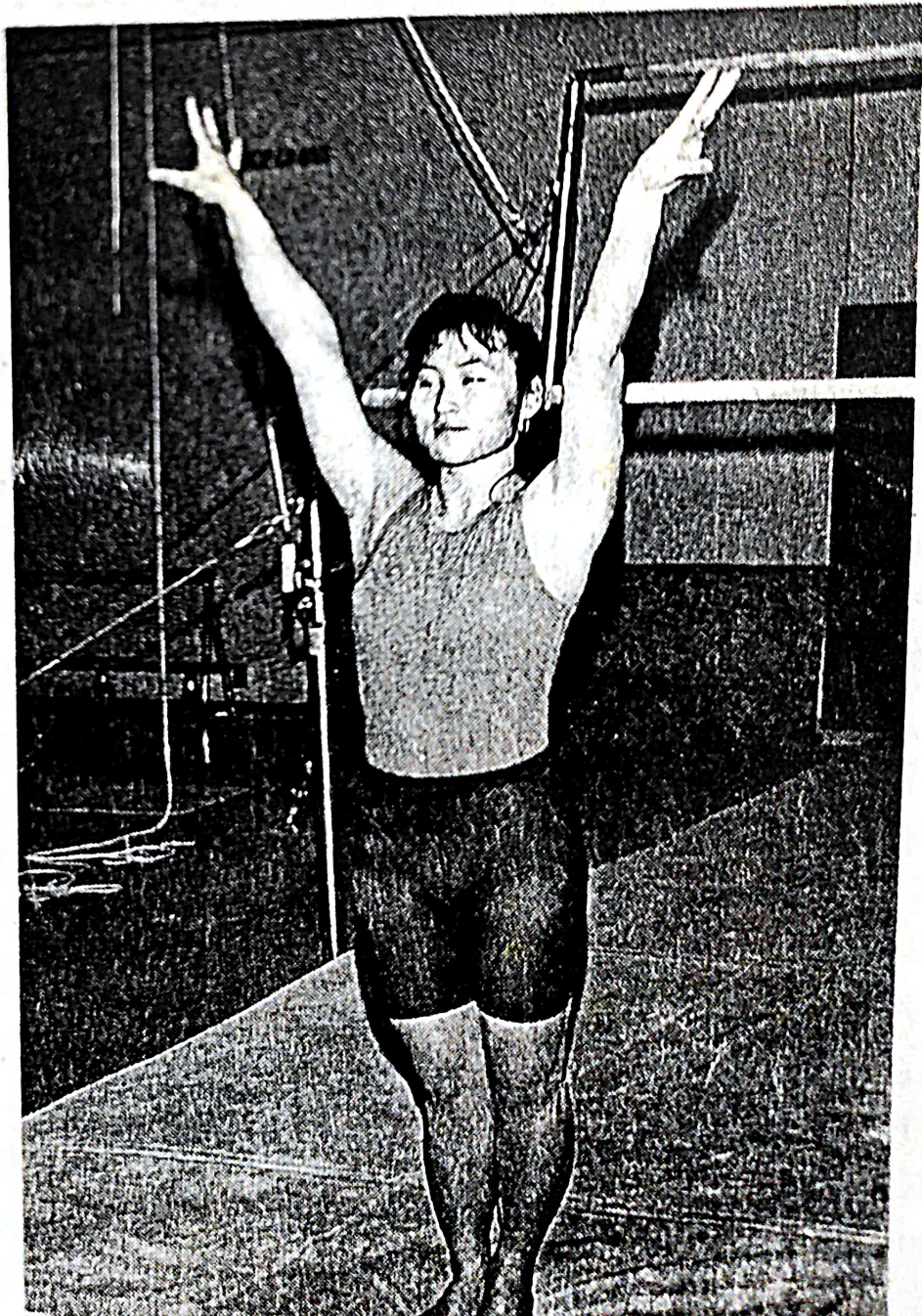
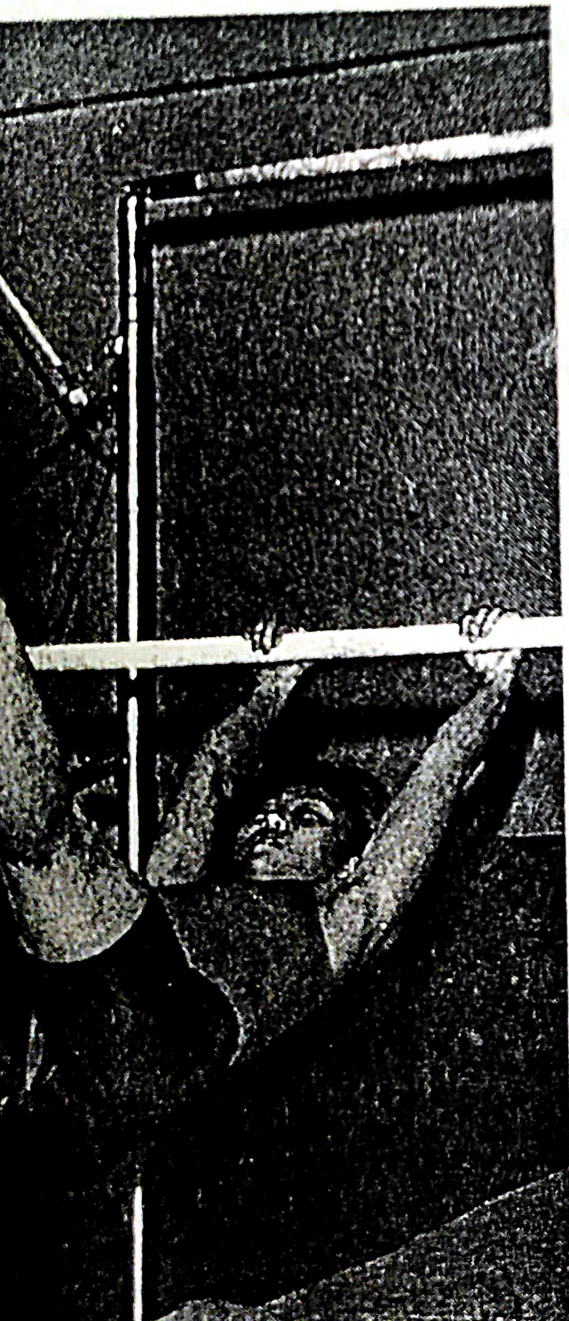


Balance Beam

The balance beam is $3\frac{7}{8}$ " wide, 16'4" long, and 3'11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " above the ground. The gymnast is required to work from end to end on the beam, using tumbling, dance, and poses. The event is timed and the routine must be completed in 1 minute and 30 seconds to avoid penalty. A deduction is also made for each fall,



and the gymnast is allowed only 10 seconds to re-mount the beam after a fall.

▶ Learning Hints

The beam should be lowered when teaching beginning students, or lines on the floor can often be utilized.

✓ **Squat Mount.** Place the spring board at a right angle to the beam. Stand on the board with the hands shoulder-width apart on the beam. Jump from the board, pressing down on the beam. At the same time, raise the hips and tuck the knees to the chest, placing the feet on the beam. The spotter stands on the opposite side of the beam and grasps the performer's upper arms to prevent her from falling forward.

✓ **Back Shoulder Roll** (Figure 14-15). Lie back on the beam and drop the head to one side. Bring the legs back over the head to the beam, bending one knee to place on the beam. The hands move to the top of the beam and both hands push up. End in a knee scale. The spotter is on the opposite side of the performer's head. Facing the direction of the roll, the spotter grasps the performer's hips and guides them until the knee scale is attained.

✓ **Forward Roll.** Standing on the beam, bend at the waist and extend the arms to grasp the beam. Lower the upper body to the beam by bending the arms. Tuck the head by pressing the chin to the chest. Raise the hips, roll to the back of the neck, and continue forward. Allow one leg to bend, and place the foot on the beam as the other leg extends forward. Complete the roll by coming to a stand. The spotter stands to one side of beam and guides the performer's hips. Follow the performer until she is balanced.

✓ **Leap.** The leap is the transfer of weight from one foot to the other with neither foot touching the beam during the transfer. A leap is actually an isolated running step. The beginner may be hesitant to leave the beam for much height. Arms are out to the side at shoulder level for balance. Try to spot the end of the beam with the eyes and not look directly down. Spotters are on either side of the beam with the near arm extended toward the performer. The performer can then use the spotter's arms for balance when needed.

✓ **Chassé** (Figure 14-16). The right leg is in front of the left and remains in front throughout. Step forward with the right leg and bring the left leg from behind to take its place. The weight shifts from the right to the left as the right leg is replaced with the left. Continue again, stepping forward with the right, and repeat. Spotter again walks along the side of the beam as the performer travels down the beam.

✓ **Arabesque** (Figure 14-17). This is generally considered a momentary balance or pose. Step forward on one leg and lift the other leg to the rear as high as possible. Chest and head are raised by arch-

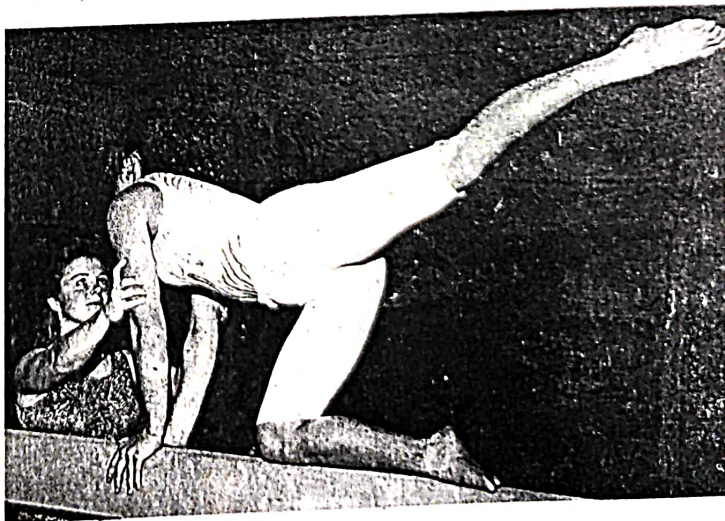
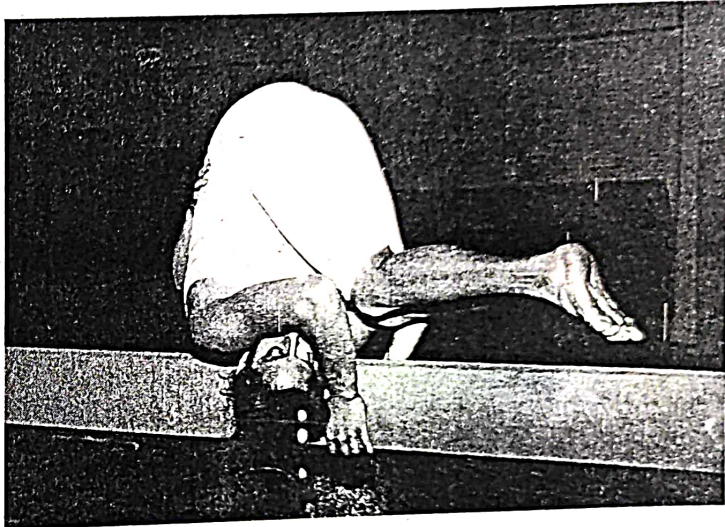
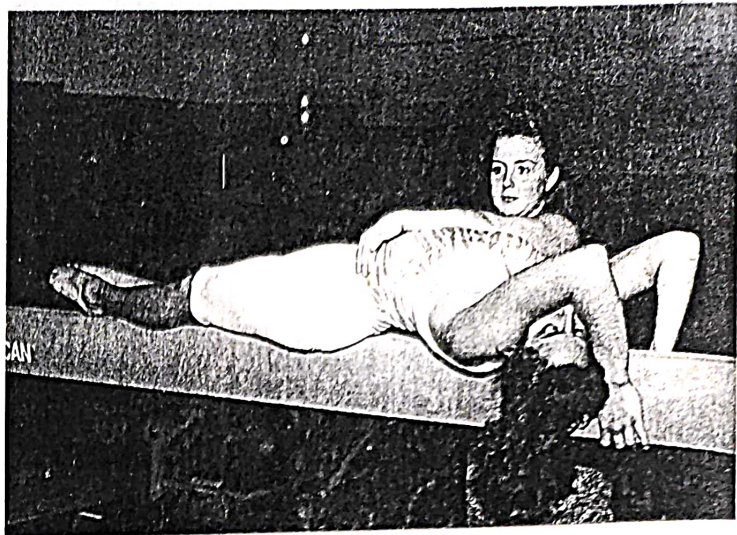


FIGURE 14-15 Back shoulder roll.

ing the back. Extend the arms to the side. The arms may be changed to different positions. Be creative. Use spotters on either side of the beam if needed.

✓ **Cartwheel Dismount.** In order to do a cartwheel dismount, the performer should first be able to do a good cartwheel on the floor. Stand approximate-

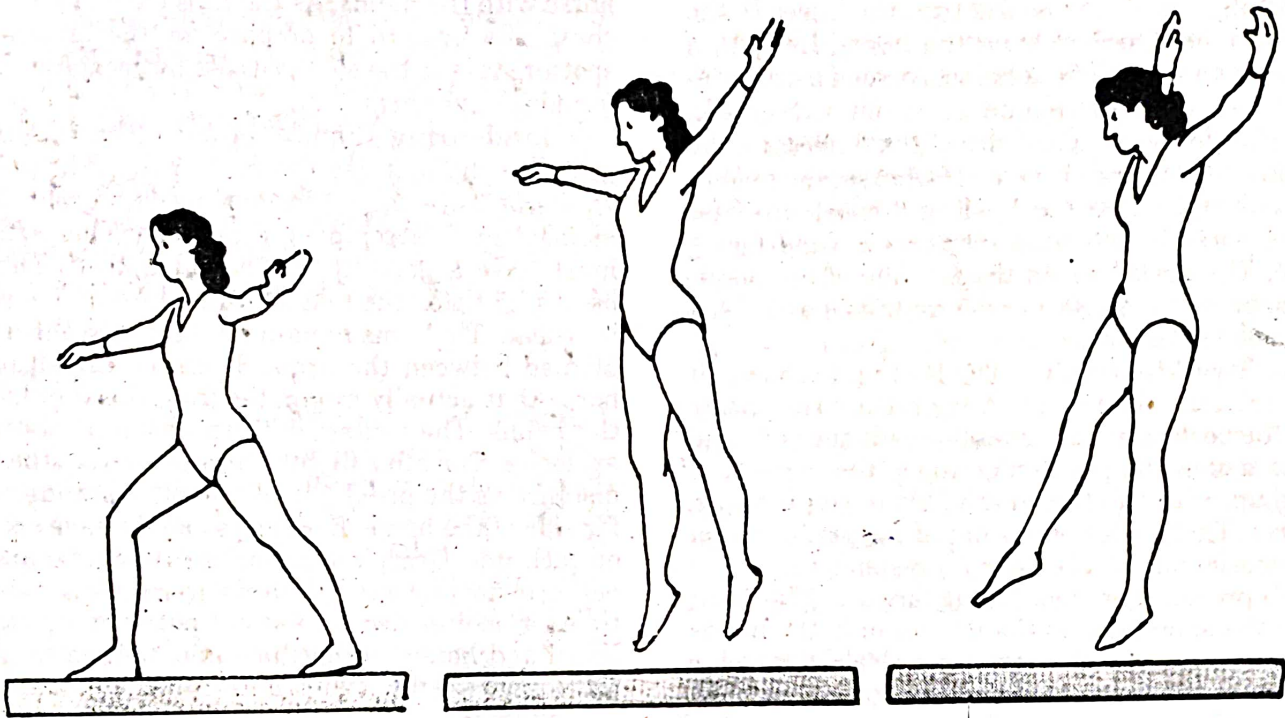


FIGURE 14-16 Chassé.

ly one step back from the end of the beam. Execute a cartwheel, placing the hands at the end of the beam. Legs travel overhead and land together, much like a round-off (see Tumbling: Round-Off). The performer

FIGURE 14-17 Arabesque.



ends facing the beam for better balance. Keep arms straight, and push off to land. The spotter may want to stand on a bench or a stable chair to approximate the performer's height. Stand on the side of the beam at the performer's back when the cartwheel is performed. If the performer is placing her right hand down first, the spotter will cross her arms with the right arm on top and grasp the performer's waist. The spotter moves with the performer, and as the cartwheel is done, the spotter's arms uncross and end with the left over right. Reverse when spotting is on the other side.

► Practice/Organizational Suggestions

Squat mount, leap, forward roll, cartwheel dismount.

Vaulting

When teaching a beginner to vault, you should begin with the run and hurdle step. An instructor may want to first use the takeoff board without the horse. The student can run, use the two-foot takeoff, and land on a layer of mats. The hurdle step precedes the two-foot takeoff. The hurdle is a step onto one foot in front of the board and a two-foot jump onto the board. The takeoff from the board is explosive. With practice, the run and takeoff become second nature, and the gymnast concentrates on the actual vault.

In women's vaulting, the horse is sideways and 47 inches high. Women can perform two separate vaults, but only the better vault is scored.