

## **Gymnastics at Home Worksheets – Working on Levers**

### **Before you start you'll need:**

- **Flat surface – carpet/ rug/ or a mat**
- **A sofa**
- **A wall or closed door**
- **A plastic plate**

Levers are a really difficult skill in gymnastics and some gymnasts find these easier to do than other gymnasts. However everybody can improve their levers if you keep up with practicing the follow exercises below, and don't give up! Use this time to improve your levers.

### **Stretching – stretch out before attempting lever exercises.**

1. Straddle fold/ Japana
2. Pike fold
3. Hands & knees rocking on wrists

### **Warming up leg muscles**

1. Sit on sofa with legs over edge of seat, straighten legs up and down, holding each leg extension for 2 secs before coming back down. Do this 10 times.
2. Lift foot up onto sofa with straight leg, lift leg up and down 10 times each leg and hold the last lift for 10 seconds. Do forwards, backwards and sideways.
3. Lie on back, lift legs up and over head to pike fold, then straddle the legs and bring them back down and around to lie flat. Do 5 times then change and go opposite way round, straddling legs outwards and up to pike over then back down straight to lie.

### **Lever preparations**

1. Sit in straddle, press hands flat on floor with straight arms, lift 1 leg up and down 10 times and then repeat on the other leg.
2. Sit in pike, press hands flat on floor beside knees with straight arms, lift both legs up and down 10 times.
3. Straddle lever press keeping heels on floor but lifting bottom off. Hold for 3 secs each time. Do 5 times.
4. Pike lever press keeping heels on floor but lifting bottom off. Hold for 3 secs each time. Do 5 times.
5. Front support walks dragging feet (can put feet on a plastic/ paper plate) x 1
6. Front support drag feet to pike stand (can put fee on a plastic/ paper plate) x 5
7. Front support drag feet to straddle stand (can out feet on a plastic/ paper plate) x 5

**See next page for more exercises**

## **Levers**

1. Straddle lever hold - feet and bottom off floor. Count how long you hold and record this. Try to beat this next time you do this worksheet (at least once per week!)
2. Pike lever hold – feet and bottom off floor. Same as above.

**Only attempt the below exercises if you can straddle lever and can hold a handstand unaided.**

### **Elephant press to handstand preps**

1. Stand in straddle stand with feet in line with hands. Lift up onto tip toes and back (toe raises). Do 10 times.
2. Elephant hold against wall – back of legs to wall, press on hands and hold with feet off the floor. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 5 times.
3. Straddle lever on floor, lift to straddle stand. Try 5 attempts.
4. Elephant press to straddle handstand with feet starting on a raised surface. Try 5 attempts.
5. Elephant press against wall to handstand, back against wall, hands slightly away from wall.

**I know that not all gymnasts enjoy doing levers as it is hard work! Don't worry if you get muscle cramp during any of these exercises then this is normal, just use your thumbs or a tennis ball to massage where the muscle is cramping, then also stand up and shake your legs out. For demonstrations of all of the above exercises subscribe to the Active Leeds YouTube channel and select the 'Working on Levers' video from the gymnastics playlist.**