

STARS & STRIPES TEAM NEWS

JULY 2023



Summer Practice Schedule: ALL LEVELS

HOT SHOTS: Monday/Wednesday 4:25–5:25

HOT SHOTS 1: Tuesday/Thursday 4:25–5:25

HOT SHOTS 2: Monday/Wednesday 4:25–6:25

LEVEL 3: Monday/Wednesday/Thursday 12:30–3:15

LEVEL 4: Monday 2–5:30, Tuesday/Thursday 11:30–3:30, Friday 9–1

LEVEL 5–10: Monday 11–3, Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 8:45–12:45, Friday 9–1

XCEL BRONZE: Tuesday/Thursday 4:15–6:15

XCEL SILVER/GOLD/PLATINUM:

Monday/Wednesday 5:00–7:45

XCEL EXTRA PRACTICE SILVER AND UP (OPTIONAL): Thursday 5:30–7:15

Team Calendar & Parent Information

Parent information is emailed and also posted on the competitive team page of the Stars & Stripes website. Additionally, on the team page there is a button for the team calendar. The school-year schedule is posted on the calendar but it does not yet reflect holidays, gym closings, 1/2 days of school, etc. The calendar will be completely updated by the end of August.

WORD OF THE MONTH:

INDOMITABLE SPIRIT

Persisting in the face of challenge & surging forward after failure.

PRACTICE CHANGES:

JULY

- NO PRACTICE JULY 1st–8th for ALL LEVELS

AUGUST

- Summer schedule ends Aug. 25th for ALL LEVELS
- School year schedule starts Aug. 28th for ALL LEVELS
- NO PRACTICE for ALL LEVELS Friday Sep. 1st– 4th: Labor day
- Aug. 28th 1/2 Day practice 12–4pm for level 5–10

STARS & STRIPES TEAM NEWS



BETSY BOOTCAMP: Monthly Nutrition

Each month the team newsletter contains nutritional tips, recipes and valuable information from sports nutritionist Betsy McNally Laouar – the best part, all of the information is specific to gymnasts!

Check out the recipe of the month!

2023–2024 Competition Schedule & USA Gymnastics Membership

XCEL SILVER & UP and LEVEL 4–10

The competition schedule will be finalized and distributed in mid to late September. Please make sure your athlete's membership is registered or renewed with USA Gymnastics. We cannot reserve our spot at competitions until everyone has an updated membership.

New Routines

XCEL SILVER & UP AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

New Level 4 gymnasts will learn their new routines starting end of July. The process of learning the routines will take approximately 4–6 weeks. It is expected that it will take another 6–10 weeks to really fine-tune and perfect the routines (for competition).

New level 5 gymnasts will begin learning their routines early fall, there are not many changes from level 4 to level 5 so we don't need as much time to make these adjustments.

Optional level athletes (level 7 and above) and Xcel Silver/Gold/Platinum receive a new floor routines every 2 years. Floor routine choreography usually takes place between late August and late October.

MINDSET MATTERS



Each month the team newsletter contains mindset tips to help the athletes in the gym.





POWERFUL WORDS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

PARENTS PERCH

Young students: "I have a no-quit, go-for-it attitude!"

Older students/teens/adults: "Persisting in the face of challenge & surging forward after failure."

Week 1 Indomitable spirit defined: Who has an indomitable spirit, what are their habits & how do they persist?

Week 2 Overcoming hurdles: What gets in the way? How do we cope with challenges?

Week 3 Dealing with failure: How can we see failure as a learning opportunity & how do we pick up and try again?

Week 4 Talking to ourselves: How we can urge ourselves forward. Is there a time to quit and move on?

Dear Family,

This month we are going to be discussing the powerful concept "indomitable spirit."

People who are described as having an indomitable spirit persist in the face of challenge. They don't allow mistakes to stop them from going after their dreams. They pick themselves up after each failure, learn from experience and surge forward with new knowledge. They might try something new, practice harder or get some help. People with an indomitable spirit get a fire in their bellies, buckle down and don't give up when they've made the choice to persevere until the end. They are unstoppable.

It has been said that people who have an indomitable spirit, have set habits that allow them to persist. They have:

- a strong vision that drives them,
- a passion to keep fighting,
- a belief in their capabilities,
- a routine work ethic,
- the ability to pivot and adapt,

- commitment to learning, and
- role models to emulate (Harvey Deutschendorf, Fast Company).

When we surround ourselves with persistent people, we tend to try harder as well. Studies show that even babies learn persistence by watching adult models. Being around people with an indomitable spirit allows us to become inspired such that we become "birds of a feather." In addition, while persisting against all odds, it can be a huge benefit to have strong connections to others who serve as a support system, cheerleaders and sounding boards along the way.

We certainly have many examples of people who have demonstrated indomitable spirit in their lifetimes. Helen Keller's determination, along with the unwavering support of her teacher, helped her to learn both Braille and sign language despite being both deaf and blind. J.K. Rowling was rejected by 12 major publishers before getting an acceptance letter with one

caveat; "don't quit your day job." Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years before being released and becoming president of South Africa, Steve Jobs got fired from Apple before returning and Michael Jordan didn't make the cut when he tried out for the high school basketball team! Indomitable spirit has the power to, over time, change the outcome from failure to success.

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best personal development centers in the world.

Here's to your success!

Best Regards,
—Your Motivated and Dedicated Instructors

UPCOMING POWERFUL WORDS

AUGUST SPORTSMANSHIP
SEPTEMBER LEADERSHIP
OCTOBER TRUSTWORTHINESS

JULY: Betsy Bootcamp Nutrition Presents: The Female Athlete Edition



Welcome to July Betsy Bootcampers! This month's newsletter will focus specifically on the challenges that face female gymnasts. As usual, the newsletter will cover other issues applicable to any gender, but I thought it would be a good time to really focus on the special needs that young women face in our sport - specifically how puberty affects hormones, energy, bone density, PMS and even body image.

I will discuss how we need to be eating enough of the right foods and calories to stay strong both physically and mentally in this very challenging sport. This is the first time I am dedicating a newsletter to this specific topic, so I hope you will enjoy and learn a lot!

GYMNASTICS CAN BE HARD ENOUGH!

We love our sport of gymnastics! It can be rewarding, exciting and challenging! But sometimes, it can be overwhelmingly challenging..... One of the hardest things for me personally as a young gymnast was going through puberty, which is when your body changes from a young girl to a woman. This happened to me when I turned 14. I was dealing with major body changes and my confidence was shaken,,, my energy dipped and I was feeling "different". My leotard was getting smaller and skills were getting harder. What was happening to me was all completely normal, and I wish someone would have told me that! You too will go through this (or may have already) so please know its totally ok, and I'm here to tell you its' totally natural and normal! It can just be a challenge sometimes to deal with something we call PMS.

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a common condition that affects many women in the days leading up to their menstrual cycle or their monthly "period" You may experience cramps in your belly or water retention and bloating. It can be very uncomfortable and you may even get irritable and moody (yes everyone will get on your nerves! Lol) It's not super fun when you are about to do three or four hours of gymnastics practice. SO, how can we make PMS more tolerable so your practices run more smoothly during your period? While there are many factors that contribute to PMS, including hormonal changes, stress, and diet, there are actually some foods that can help alleviate symptoms. Here are some examples of foods that can help you through:



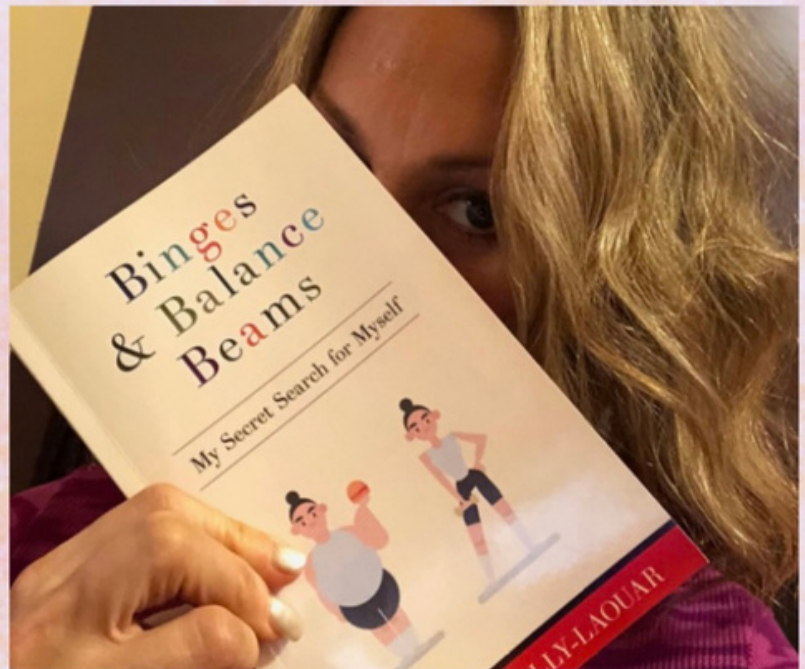
- **Complex carbohydrates:** Foods like whole grains, beans, oatmeal, sweet potatoes and lentils are rich in complex carbohydrates, which can help regulate blood sugar levels and reduce mood swings.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins and minerals that can help reduce inflammation and improve mood. Try incorporating leafy greens, berries, and citrus fruits into your diet.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** Foods like fatty fish (salmon, tuna, and sardines), flaxseed, and walnuts are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can help reduce inflammation and alleviate cramps.
- **Calcium-rich foods:** Calcium can help reduce mood swings, cramps, and bloating associated with PMS. Foods like low-fat dairy products (I love Greek yogurt) leafy greens, and fortified cereals are good sources of calcium.
- **Magnesium-rich foods:** Magnesium can help reduce PMS symptoms like headaches, bloating, and mood swings. Foods like spinach, almonds, and avocados are good sources of magnesium. If it's GREEN it's GOOD!
- **Water-rich foods:** Drinking plenty of water can help reduce bloating and promote hydration. Foods like watermelon, cucumbers, and celery are also high in water content and can help promote hydration.
- **Herbal teas:** Certain herbal teas, such as chamomile and ginger, can help reduce menstrual cramps, bloating, and mood swings.
- It's important to note that every female's experience with PMS is different, and what works for one person may not work for another. Additionally, if PMS symptoms are severe or interfere with your daily activities, it's important to talk to your healthcare provider/physician about treatment options. Just know that as a gymnast/ athlete you can still do gymnastics when you are on your period or suffering with PMS! Taking proper steps nutritionally while experiencing PMS each month will help you greatly!

Gymnastics Burns A Lot Of Calories!

Gymnastics at a high level can take its toll on the female body. First, it is a muscular endurance sport which means it takes a lot of healthy calories to help the gymnast with energy, mental focus, recovery and rebuilding. Sometimes when a gymnast doesn't eat enough calories, she can be at risk for developing something called the Female Athlete Triad. Please note that the following descriptions are for educational purposes only and not to diagnose anyone who may be reading this. It is to provide education for the female athlete and to build awareness that this condition exists.

The Female Athlete Triad is a medical condition that involves three interrelated components: low energy availability, menstrual dysfunction, and low bone density. It commonly occurs in female athletes who participate in sports like gymnastics, figure skating, and distance running. Low energy availability occurs when a person's energy intake (i.e., the calories they consume) is inadequate to meet their energy needs for training and normal body functions. This can lead to a range of physical and psychological consequences, including a decrease in muscle mass and a decline in overall health.

Menstrual dysfunction refers to any changes in a female athlete's menstrual cycle, including a delay or absence of menstruation. This can result from low energy availability, stress, and other factors. Low bone density refers to a reduction in bone mass, which can increase the risk of stress fractures and osteoporosis. All three components of the Female Athlete Triad can occur separately or together. If left untreated, the condition can lead to serious health consequences, including increased risk of stress fractures, osteoporosis, and other long-term health problems. Therefore, it's important for female athletes to receive appropriate care and support from healthcare professionals and coaches to prevent and manage the Female Athlete Triad.



There are several steps that female athletes can take to prevent the Female Athlete Triad:

- Consume adequate energy: Female athletes should ensure they are consuming enough energy to meet the demands of their training and normal body functions. This can be achieved by working with a registered dietitian to develop a meal plan that supports their energy needs. Include a variety of nutrient-dense foods: A diet rich in whole, nutrient-dense foods can help support optimal health and prevent nutrient deficiencies that may contribute to the Female Athlete Triad.
- Prioritize recovery and rest: Adequate rest and recovery are essential for preventing the Female Athlete Triad. Female athletes should ensure they are getting enough sleep and taking rest days as needed.
- Seek support from a healthcare professional: Female athletes should work with a healthcare professional who is knowledgeable about the Female Athlete Triad to monitor their health and identify any potential warning signs.
- Engage in strength training: Resistance training and weight-bearing exercises can help improve bone density and prevent osteoporosis. Luckily you are already doing gymnastics so this "box" is checked!
- Manage stress: Stress can contribute to menstrual dysfunction, so female athletes should take steps to manage their stress levels through relaxation techniques, meditation, or other stress-reduction strategies.
- As always, consult your physician if you have questions regarding your health. By implementing these strategies, female athletes can help prevent the Female Athlete Triad and maintain optimal health and performance.

EATING ENOUGH FOOD To be an amazing Gymnast!

One thing I wish my coaches would have told me as a young gymnast, was how important nutrition was to my performance, my mental game and how it made me feel during the time that my body was growing. The truth is food plays a HUGE role in athletic performance and recovery, especially to a growing female. If we aren't eating enough of the right foods, doing gymnastics can be challenging and there is a significant amount of research on athletes and food that supports this.

Below are some tips on how to adequately fuel your growing body for this sport. Keep in mind that gymnasts have unique nutritional needs, as they require more energy and nutrients than sedentary individuals to support their physical activity and training.



- **Carbohydrate intake:** Studies have shown that carbohydrate intake is critical for athletes, as it provides the energy needed for physical activity and can improve endurance and performance. Carbs include: whole grains, legumes, beans, pastas, fruits and vegetables, potatoes and cereals and bread.
- **Protein intake:** Adequate protein intake is also important for athletes, as it supports muscle growth and repair. Research has shown that consuming protein after exercise can help promote muscle recovery and reduce muscle soreness. Protein sources can be found through eggs, dairy, cheese, lean meats, fish and even green vegetables and legumes.
- **Hydration:** Proper hydration is essential for athletes, as even mild dehydration can impair performance. Research has shown that drinking fluids before, during, and after exercise can help maintain hydration status and improve performance. Betsy Bootcamp recommends drinking at least half of your bodyweight in water in ounces everyday at a minimum.
- **Timing of meals:** The timing of meals and snacks is also important for athletes, as it can affect energy levels and performance. Research has shown that consuming a carbohydrate-rich meal or snack before exercise can improve endurance and performance. A great snack pre-workout would be a whole grain rice cake topped with almond butter, banana slices and honey!
- **Nutrient timing:** Research has also investigated the timing of nutrient intake, such as consuming carbohydrates and protein immediately after exercise. Studies have shown that consuming carbohydrates and protein within 30 minutes of exercise can help promote muscle recovery and reduce muscle soreness. A great post workout snack would be a Greek yogurt filled with berries and dry oatmeal.
- The research on athletes and food has highlighted the importance of proper nutrition for athletic performance and recovery especially with growing bodies that are at risk for nutrient deficiencies.



Recipes of the Month: Great Snacks for the Hormonal Gymnast:



Time to balance your hormones! In general if you can incorporate healthy fats, complex carbs, whole grains and lots of water, you can battle hormones all month long! Here are my favorite snacks to beat the hormonal surge!

- Fresh edamame with a dash of sea salt, paired with red grapes and an ounce of cheese
- A whole grain rice cake topped with cottage cheese and blueberries
- A sweet potato topped with coconut oil and cinnamon
- A large apple with peanut butter and a some whole grain crackers Greek yogurt with strawberries, chia seeds and a drizzle of honey
- A half cup of cucumbers with hummus, guacamole and salsa, place on a rice cake
- 1/4 cup of walnuts or almonds, 1/4 cup dried bananas or plantains and an organic string cheese
- A whole grain pita stuffed with tuna, a cup of spinach or celery and a tablespoon of light mayo
- A green smoothie made with almond milk, Greek yogurt, berries and seeds of choice, Add maple syrup for a sweet kick!
- A cup of sugar snap peas and broccoli crowns dipped into 1/2 cup of hummus, guacamole or salsa and Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup of dark chocolate chips, 1/2 cup of tart cherries and 1/4 cup walnuts, YUM!



BETSY BOOTCAMP SAYS LOVE YOURSELF!



Here are some examples:

Practice self-care: Taking care of your body through healthy habits like regular exercise, healthy eating, and getting enough sleep can help you feel more positive about your body. This is why Betsy Bootcamp puts so much emphasis on eating functionally. When you fuel yourself with good food, you feel GOOD!

Surround yourself with positive influences: Spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself and avoid people who are negative or critical about your appearance.

Limit exposure to social media: Social media can be a source of unrealistic beauty standards and can contribute to negative body image. Try limiting your time on social media or unfollowing accounts that make you feel bad about yourself.

Challenge negative self-talk: When negative thoughts about your body come up, challenge them by replacing them with positive affirmations or reframing your thoughts in a more positive way. By the way, very few people can do gymnastics like you! So embrace all of your gifts both in and out of the gym, you are doing amazing things with your body!

Practice gratitude: Focus on the things your body can do rather than what it looks like. Practice gratitude for your body and all the amazing things it allows you to do.

Seek professional help: If body image issues are interfering with your daily life or causing significant distress, consider talking to a mental health professional who can help you work through these issues.

It's important to remember that developing a positive body image takes time and effort, but it's worth it for your mental and physical health. BETSY BOOTCAMP supports you on your journey! Be good to yourself.

One of the coolest things I get to do with my bootcamp is travel all over the world and meet new gymnasts. It is so cool to see all of the different gymnasts from different backgrounds. We are all different sizes, shapes, ages, we all have different hair color, eye color, we are all different heights. We are even different skin colors, racial and ethnic backgrounds. We like different kinds of music, clothing styles and have different tastes in foods and sense of humor.

One thing however I have noticed through my travels is the impact that social media has had on many of our beautiful young gymnasts. This includes how young girls look at themselves and how they feel about their bodies. Some may even develop body image issues where they question themselves. These are what we call body image issues.

Body image issues can be especially difficult for young girls and pubescent teenagers, as they are going through a period of rapid physical growth and development. If you are going through this yourself now, I want to encourage you that there are several steps you can take to improve your body image and develop a positive relationship with how you feel about you (by the way YOU are awesome!)