

# Gymnastics

by Lindsay A Hill BSc(Hons) MSc, Axis Podiatry

## How does gymnastics impact on the foot?

Because gymnastics is unique, being performed with minimal, if any, foot support, the feet are more at risk of injury than most other sports. Nearly every activity in gymnastics is considered high impact.

Gymnastics requires tremendous strength and flexibility. Gymnasts are prone to a wide range of injuries due to their superior flexibility, which allows them to move beyond the normal range of motion. It also requires a lot of balancing on the feet and hard landings.

Gymnasts have among the highest injury rates of all athletes.

## What are common problems that affect gymnasts?

- **Callus** – thickened areas of skin which typically form on the bottom or sides of the feet. Caused by excessive, prolonged pressure and friction.
- **Blisters** – caused by friction and the repeated rubbing of the skin against the inside of the gymnast's shoe or the equipment. Effects of blisters are made worse by damp, sweaty conditions of the shoe.
- **Verrucae** – a viral infection of the skin which is spread from one person to another either directly or indirectly. As gymnasts are barefoot a lot of the time, it makes them more prone to this complaint.

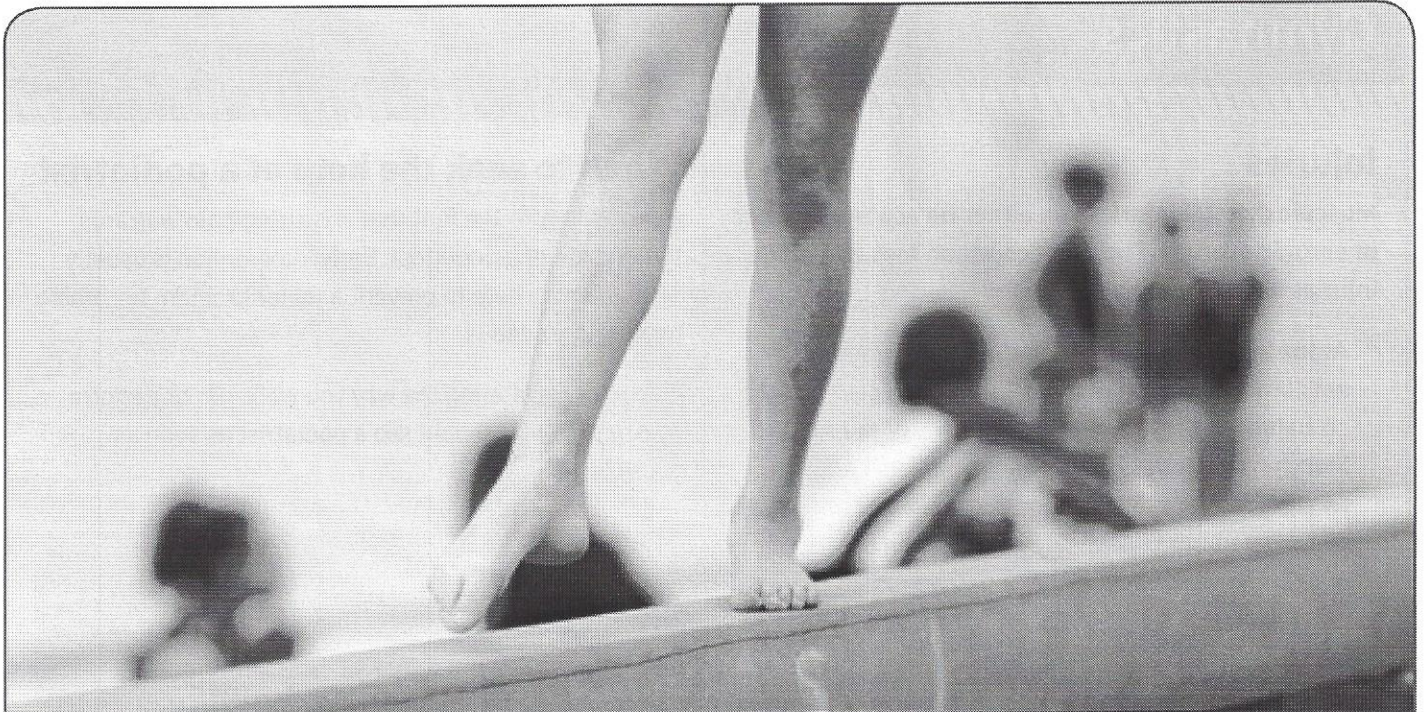
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