



SKILLS AND DRILLS

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# THE COED TOSS DRILL

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[Caution: Cheerleading gymnastics, including stunts, pyramids and tumbling, should only be performed under the supervision of a qualified adult.]

Mastering the technique of the toss in the very beginning of your cheerleading career will make progressing to more advanced stunts a breeze. If you are already advanced, and you're having trouble perfecting toss stunts, the problem may lie in your toss. Use this demo to test your technique or get you started with coed stunting!

## IN A NUTSHELL...

The base places his hands on the waist of the top. On a designated count (like 1-2), they dip together with their legs.



The base drives through his legs and explodes with his arms, tossing the top as high as he can. In order to do this, he "follows through" the toss by extending his arms as high as he can and "flicks" his wrists upward at the top.

The top takes an explosive jump off of the ground, pulling up with her shoulders the whole time. At the top of the base's toss, she "flicks" downwards with her wrists.

On the way down, the base reaches for the top's waist and slows her down to the ground, absorbing with his legs. The top re-grabs and distributes some of her weight to the base's wrists, catching herself on the way down.

Ah, yes...It sounds so simple. Here are some tips to make the learning process a little easier...

## FOR THE BASE...

Don't grip the waist of the top girl and don't start doing work to lift her until you are both on your way up from that dip! Follow the top girl down and then after she jumps, explode from the bottom with your legs to create momentum to assist with the toss. As you stand up, fully extend your arms using the momentum generated by your legs, and then "flick" your wrists straight up at the top. To make sure you are flicking straight up, be sure that your thumbs are facing upwards at the end of the flick.

Make sure that the timing between your arms and legs is together. Your arms should reach their highest extension at the same time as your legs do. Even better, try to explode off of the ground with enough power to leave the ground, like you would do when you throw a basket toss.



To make sure you are tossing straight up, instead of holding the waist of the flyer, imagine you are holding two glasses of water. When you dip, go straight down with those glasses. When you explode up, go straight up with those glasses. If you go any other way, someone is going to get wet. When you get to the flick at the top, act as if you are flicking the glasses of water off to the sides, so your thumbs are ultimately facing up where they should be at the end of the flick.

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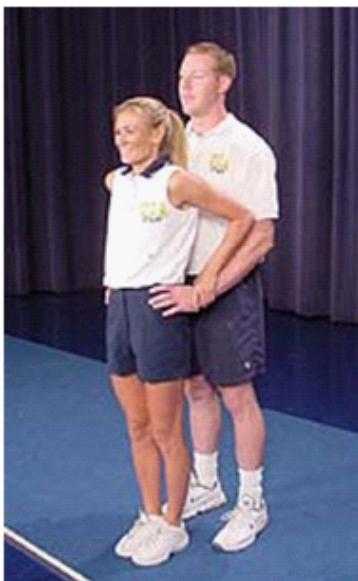
To re-catch the top on the way down, make sure to keep your hands up and catch the top at the waist as soon as you can reach her. Start to slow the top down as soon as you make contact with the top's waist. Slowly lower her onto the ground, removing your hands from her waist only once the top is safely on the ground.

### **LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE TOP...**

When you are set to dip, make sure that your elbows are pointing backwards and not out to the side. The powerful jump off of the ground should be directed slightly backward into the base with your hips positioned slightly in front of your shoulders. Keep your feet together until you reach the top. Think of the concept of a parachute. A parachute that is closed does nothing in terms of slowing you down. Likewise, if your feet are together, you will not create as much resistance on the way up and may actually be able to get a couple of more inches on the toss.

Your "flick" adds to the height of the base's work. At the very top of the toss (and at the same time as your base's flick), push off your base's wrists and pull up with your shoulders at the same time.

On the way down, keep your hands by your sides and re-grab the base's wrists as soon as you make contact with them. Put your weight in your arms and keep your chest up to provide resistance against the base so he can slow you safely to the ground.



### **TIMING IS KEY!**

Make sure that both the base and the top are flicking at the same time, and that they are both waiting until the absolute

top of the toss to flick. A lot of height can be gained or lost solely based on the timing of the flick!

*Contributors for this article include Varsity.com message board members Scooter, Tossedacupie M.D., and Spacemonkey. Special thanks to UCA instructors Mike Morphy and Krista Parker from the University of Memphis for showing off their toss!*