



COACHES

**PRACTICE
ADVICE**

PRACTICE ADVICE

Having an effective cheer practice is about more than trying to figure out who to put where in the routine. As a coach, it's imperative that you stay organized throughout the year by planning ahead and mapping out a schedule for your team.

The first thing you must do is have written, well thought-out plans. Coaches should attend all practices and related events, and all practices should begin on time. Remember that the quality of practice time is what's important, not the quantity.

You should recognize your team's abilities and match their difficulty. Give your cheerleaders a routine that will challenge them. Schedule what to improve on for each practice. Also, create a written plan to allow for safe practices.

SCHEDULE FOR PRACTICE

• Warm-up:

- Tell your team members the goals for that day's practice.
- Try to vary who conducts the warm-up.
- Include aerobic conditioning and stretching every time.
- Set routines to avoid wasted time.

• Jumps (10-15 minutes):

- Work all kinds of jumps to better use your time.
- Be sure to work both legs in your jumps.

• Tumbling (15 minutes):

- Have your cheerleaders prepare for what they will be doing at games and competitions.
 - If you're still at the beginning of your season, have them try new skills.
 - If it's later in the year, work on and drill the skills they have for timing and perfection.

• Break (5 minutes):

- Don't forget to set aside time for water breaks.
- Give them bathroom breaks too.

• Partner Stunts and Pyramids:

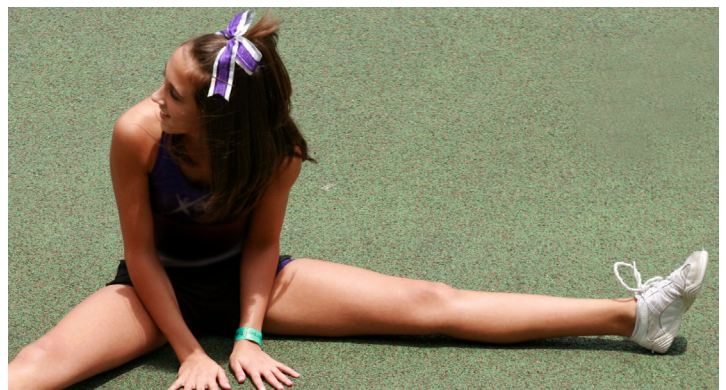
- Teach and review safety and spotting techniques before doing anything else.
 - Work on specific stunt progressions. Visit www.aacca.org for more information.
 - Be sure the material you are teaching your team is appropriate for their ability level.
 - Check off each stunt and/or pyramid when it's mastered.

• Cheer/Chant (30 minutes):

- At the beginning of the year, concentrate on actually learning the material.
- Later in the year, focus on reviewing and updating what you already have.
- Start incorporating tumbling, jumps, and stunts in your cheers.

• Cool Down:

- Stretch.
- Remind your team of upcoming events, including the dates, times, and locations for each. If you have a calendar for your team, have them bring it to each practice and go over all the information with them.



The procedures for an effective cheer practice are pretty basic. However, it's extremely important to follow each and every one of them. First and foremost, provide constant supervision throughout the entire practice. Consistently enforce all rules in order to keep things fair. Never allow your team members to wear jewelry or loose clothing, and make sure their hair is secured. Actively control all situations at practice, and immediately put a stop to unsafe activities. Prohibit talking or horseplay while practicing, as that and several situations listed above could result in injuries.

EXTRA TIPS TO KEEP YOUR CHEERLEADERS SAFE AND ENSURE THEIR SUCCESS:

- Make sure practice and performance areas are safe.
- Follow proper progressions. Be sure to inform your team of the inherent risks and how to avoid them.
- Understand the current emergency plan, and make sure your cheerleaders know and understand it as well.
- Keep a positive and enthusiastic attitude:
 - Give positive critiques.
 - Keep yourself organized for disciplined practices.
- Be creative:
 - Incorporate new cheers, chants, and stunts.
 - Keep material that the crowd enjoys, and be sure to add variety and new ideas on a regular basis.
- Be sure to fit in teambuilding activities throughout the year.
- Review and update pep rally ideas.
- Learn new dances and try to put them to different band chants.
- Plan activities for rainy days.
- The opportunities are endless!