

# SPOTTING

Part of your job as a teacher is providing appropriate progressions to be confident about your students' ability to attempt specific moves.

However, spotting is always required whenever a student attempts something new and is often required (at different levels) for a while until the student is completely confident with a position.

We spot people for:

- Safety/Rescue - to bring people to the floor safely
- Guidance - to give pointers to direct people spatially
- Reassurance - to make the person in the air feel safer

When we spot we try to:

- If you are spotting a move where multiple parts of the body are in motion, your priority as a spotter is to protect the head and neck: they are the most fragile parts of the body.
- Slow the flyer's momentum, i.e not to catch the body but to slow it down to give the flyer time to make choices.
- Guide the weight into the floor, redirect the force of the fall into the crash mat.

A spotter must think about how to use one's body when spotting: firstly to make sure they are in a strong and stable place to give support and secondly to try and prevent injuries to themselves.

A few tips for spotters to prevent injury and spot effectively:

- Reduce the height and distance between the person you are spotting and yourself: you need to be somewhere where you can easily assist from. We rarely spot from directly underneath a body but by being closer to your student it reduces the amount of stress that goes through a joint because a smaller "lever arm" exists.  
Simply put, the further away a given weight is away from your body, the heavier it will be when trying to help or control a student if something goes wrong, because you are at a mechanical disadvantage.
- Know the movement your student is about to perform, take time to work out where the best place is for you to spot. With dynamic moves it is worth while practicing with a competent student who is unlikely to fall to work out best distance and hand placement.
- **Spot With The Whole Body, Not Just Back and Arms.**
- Use you legs effectively! Keep the feet a hip width apart, check the alignment for your feet and knees. Don't turn your knees out or let them roll in. Keep the pressure of your body weight in your heels, and drive through the heels when spotting.
- Remember to stick your bottom back as if sitting in a chair, rather than bending the back or letting the knees come over the toes; this helps to engage your legs in spotting.
- Think about trying to direct the students weight towards your body rather than letting them roll away from you.
- Stand to the side. It is rare in aerial to need to spot from underneath but when you do have to, make sure your head and neck are clear of the student
- Try not to always use your 'good side'. We all have one side that is stronger and more stable. It is easy to get used to using that side. If you are teaching even just one class with 8 students imagine how much work that side of your body will get. As an aerialist we are used to training both sides for body balance, as a teacher you should do the same.
- Warm up!
- Make sure you make the student aware of their part in keeping themselves safe. Tell them where you will be spotting and make sure they are clear on what the movement is likely to feel like and where it might go wrong.
- Communicate how much you are spotting to the student. Are you supporting 10% or thier

weight or 50%? It will help them understand how close they are to safely exiting a move independently.

As the level of spotting reduces your role shifts from safety to guidance and reassurance and you can begin to move to visual spotting where you are watching for correct technique, alignment and signals that the student is nervous or unfocused.