
Cheerleading Terminology

Aerial

Used to describe a cartwheel without hands touching the ground or floor, sometimes used to refer to a walkover or roundoff without hands.

All Stars

A Cheerleading squad that is not associated or affiliated with a school

Arabesque

One leg is down straight and the other is behind you almost at a ninety degree angle to your back.

Arch

A position in which the back is curved.

Attack the Crowd

A technique used to get the audience involved in a cheer, dance or song

Awesome

Similar to an elevator except the bases bring their hands to the middle and the climber's feet are positioned very close together. This is also known as a Cupie.

Back Handspring

Backwards jump onto your hands, then a quick push from your hands to your feet. Also known as flip-flop or flick-flack.

Balance Stunt

Hitch, Heel Stretch, Liberty, "L"™ etc

Banana

This is when you arch your back and reach upwards. You usually only do a banana when you are doing a combination

jump or riding up a basket toss.

Base

This is the person/persons who remain in contact with the floor lifting the flyer into a stunt. Person/persons on the bottom of a stunt or pyramid.

Basket Toss

A stunt usually using 3 or more bases which toss the flyer into the air. Two of the bases have interlocked their hands. In the air the flyer may do any jump before returning to the cradle.

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Bracer

A person who stabilises or touches a stunt by direct contact with another person. Although in direct contact, the bracer does not carry any weight. The stunt would remain stable without the bracer.

Briefs

Matching undies that are part of your Cheerleading uniform, worn under your skirt. Sometimes called bloomers, spankies, tights, or lolipops.

Buckets

Buckets are when you hold your arms straight out in front of you, with your fists facing down as if you were holding the handle of a bucket in each hand.

Candle Sticks

This is a cheer motion where you extend your arms out in front of you with your fists facing each other as if you were holding a lit candle in each hand.

Captain

The leader of a squad or team.Â (see squadÂ leader)

Chant

A short cheer, with simple arm movements. A short repeated yell. Usually done on the sidelines.

Cheer

A longer yell, that involves motions, pom poms, stunts, jumps, or tumbling.

Choreography

The set arrangement of dance steps and movements.

Coach

A person that instructs or teaches a performer, player, or team.

Competitions

An event where squads come to test their skills against others and compete for 1st, 2nd or 3rd place finishes.

Cradle Catch

An end movement where the catcher(s) catch a flyer/flier by holding her under the thighs and around her back after tossing her in the air.

Crew

A competition category similar to Seniors, at least one member of the team must be 16yrs and over on the day of competition.

Cupie

One base holds up a flyer/flier with one hand. The bases arm is fully extended and both of the flyer's feet are in the base's one hand. Also known as a kewpie or awesome.

Deadman

When the flyer falls backwards or forwards out of a stunt. 3 or 4 people catch the flyer and could possibly push the flyer back up to the bases hands.

Dismount

A way to return the flyer to the floor after a stunt. Returning to the floor position after a routine or mount.

Double Hook

A jump where one leg is bent in front of you and the other leg is bent behind you, your arms are in a high V. Also known as a Pretzel, Abstract, or Table Top. Elevator Two bases each hold a different foot of one flyer. The feet are both held at shoulder level.

Double Trick

Example: Scissor Kick & Twist Down in Basket Toss

Execution

To perform a stunt or routine; the way in which a stunt or routine is performed. The form, style, and technique of a stunt or routine make up its execution.

Extension

A stunt in which the arms of each base are fully extended above the head, supporting the mounter/flyer standing in the palms of the base(s).

Extended Stunt

One in which the supporting arms(s) of the base(s) is fully extended above the head. Stunts such as chairs, Russian lifts and T-lifts are extended stunts.

Extension

One of the basic stunts. Two bases each hold one of the flyer's feet at their chest level and a spotter stands in back. From this position, you can move into a full extension. The full extension is where the bases' arms are straight, holding the flyer above their heads.

Facials

Cheerleaders can't compete with frowns on their faces! Facials help get the crowd excited and impress the judge's big time! The goal is: make it look like your having the time of your life...even if you are so nervous or scared you want to leave...facial tricks that score big with judges are: winks, cheesy smiles, occasional sticking out the tongue, and bobbin your head up and down...hey it sounds stupid, but it helps so much in a competition or game!

Flash Cards

Cards that show which words the spectators should shout back.

Flier/Flyer/Floater

The person that is elevated into the air by the bases; the person that is on top of a pyramid/stunt.

Full Extension

Two bases each hold one of the flyer's feet at their chest level and a spotter stands in back. From this position, the bases move into a full extension by raising the flyer with their arms up straight and holding the flyer above their heads. There are double based extensions and single based.

Handspring

Springing from your feet to your hands to your feet again. Used alone or in conjunction with other skills. There are forward and backward handsprings.

Handstand

Springing from your feet to your hands and holding your body in an upright position balancing on you hands alone

Heel Stretch

Similar to Liberty except your bent leg is held straight up with your hand. For more information see Liberty.

Herkie

A cheerleading jump where one leg (usually your weakest) is bent towards the ground and your other leg (usually your strongest) is out to the side as high as it will go in the toe touch position. This jump is very similar to the Side Hurdler except for the position of the bent leg. There are right Herkies and left Herkies. In a right Herkie your right leg is straight with your left leg bent and the opposite is true for a left Herkie. Sometimes called a hurkie. Named after Lawrence "Herkie" Herkimer.

High V

A motion where both arms are locked and hands are in buckets, both arms are up forming a V. Hurdler A jump similar to the Herkie except your bent leg is level with your hip instead of pointing down. There are left Side Hurdlers and right Side Hurdlers. There is also a Front Hurdler which is a completely different jump. In a right Side Hurdler, your right leg is straight and in the Toe Touch position; your left leg is bent, level with your hip and pointing forward.

Jumps

An action where both feet leave the ground; A coordinated placement of the arms and legs while the feet are off the ground. There are three parts to a jump; the prep/approach, the lift, and the landing. Examples of jumps are toe-touches, side hurdlers, front hurdlers, pikes, around-the-worlds, and double nines.

Junior A

Age group for cheerleaders, all competitors must be 12yrs and under on the day of competition Junior B Age group for cheerleaders, all competitors must be 15yrs and under on the day of competition

Hurkie

Same as "Herkie" A jump where your weak leg is bent towards the floor and your strong leg is out to the side as high as it will go. Some call it a herkie. Named after Lawrence "Herkie" Herkimer. Judge The person or persons delegated to score you at tryouts or your squad at competitions.

K motion

A Cheerleading motion. One arm forms a High V and the other arm comes across your body. There are left and right K motions.

Kewpie

One base holds up a flyer/flier with one hand. The bases arm is fully extended and both of the flyer's feet are in the base's one hand. Also known as a cupie or awesome.

Layout

A straight or arched position. Leap A moving spring position in the air from one foot to the other.

L motion

A Cheerleading motion. Both arms form an L shape. The up arm should have your pinky facing the crowd and the side arm should have your thumb facing the crowd. There are left and right L motions.

Liberty

The base holds up a flyer/flier with one of her feet in both of the base's hands. The flier's other leg is bent. There are also one armed Liberties. The arms can be in a high V or one arm in a high V and the other on your hip.

Mascot

An animal, object or person adopted by a group to bring them good luck or be symbolic of their association, organization, group or school.

Masters

70% of the team must be at least 30yrs and over on the day of competition

Megaphone

A funnel shaped device used to amplify and direct your voice. Mini Peeps Similar to Teenies, all competitors must be 9yrs and under - oldest team member can be 9yrs on the day of competition.

Motion

A set position of a Cheerleader's arms. Motions include T motion, L motion, K motion, hands on hips, diagonals, touchdown, daggers, High V, Low V, and variations of them.

Mount

When one or more people are supported in the air. Another word for stunt.

Partner Stunts

Referred to as double stunts; a maneuver in which at least one mounter is supported by one base.

Peel Off/Reload

When a squad is divided into two or more groups to do the same motion, skill or step at different times. Usually used to give a good visual effect.

Peeps

Similar to Junior A, all competitors must be 12yrs and under - oldest team member can be 12yrs on the day of competition.

Pike

A position in which the body is bent at the hips and legs are straight out in ninety degree angle.

Pirouette

A turn in standing position on one leg to a different direction. Pom Pon A hand held ball of plastic strips connected by a handle. Also called Pom Pom.

Pop Off

A dismount method of freeing the top person from a stunt by pushing the top person forcefully off the bases'™ hands

Pyramid

Multiple mounts or a group of stunts next to one another.

Rotation

Somersault - Hip over head rotation

Roundoff

A basic beginner tumbling skill, once perfected it is used as a setup for combination tumbling skills (back handsprings etc.)

Routine

A continuous show of talent in the squad by use of cheers, chants and dance steps. Can last from 2 min. 30 sec. up to 4 min. depending on the time limits of the competition or showcase.

Scorpion

While in a Liberty you grab the toe of your bent leg and bring it up to almost behind your head.

Sell it

A term used when facials or attitude is exaggerated to make the cheer, motion or dance step have more appeal.

Seniors

Age group for cheerleaders, one or more competitors must be at least 16yrs on the day of competition

Single Trick

Example: Toe Touch in Basket Toss

Spankies

Another word for briefs or undies. Also called lolipops, bloomers, and tights.

Split

A movement or sitting position in which the legs are spread apart in alignment or sideways one in front of the other.

Spotter

A person that stays in contact with the performing surface and watches for any hazards in the stunt or mount. The spotter is responsible for watching the flyer and to be prepared to catch her if she falls.

Squad

A small group of people organized for a specific purpose; An athletic team. Stag A leap or pose in which one leg is bent and the other is straight.

Stunt

Any skill or feat involving tumbling, mounting, a pyramid, or toss. Usually does not refer to a jump.

Straddle

A position where the legs are straight out and apart.

Street Cheer

A fusion of different styles of dance predominantly being a mixture of Cheerleading and Street Dance with influences from 1970s styles such as Krump and Hip Hop.

Suck it Up

When a cheerleader says suck it up, it means while a flyer is up in a stunt, to try to hold it and not fall. Also a term used to encourage a person to be brave.

Suspended Roll

A somersault performed in the air by the flyer with constant hand to hand contact with the bases

Teenies

Age group for cheerleaders, all competitors must be 9yrs and under on the day of competition

T motion

A motion where the Cheerleader's arms form a T with the thumb side of her fists facing the crowd. There is a half or broken T where your elbows are bent and the pinky side of your fist is facing the crowd.

Table Top

A jump where it appears the Cheerleader is sitting in the air. This jump is sometimes referred to as an Abstract or Double Hook, depending on where you live. Sometimes the dagger motion is also called a table top.

Tick-Tock

This is when a flier switches feet in a stunt.

Toe Flip

A method used where one or more bases use their hands as a stepping platform to toss the flyer into a hip over head rotation (i.e. Somersault) Prohibited (BANNED under UKCA/British rules)

Toe Pitch

An accepted method used to mount where one or more bases use their hands as a stepping platform to toss the flyer up (Can be used in a partner stunt)

Toe Touch

One of the most widely used jumps in Cheerleading. A jump where your arms are in a "T" motion and your legs split to the sides, toes pointed with your knees up or pointed back. Hands do not touch the toes, as the name implies, but instead your hands try to reach to the insides of your ankles. You should keep your back straight, your head up, and rotate your hips to perfect this jump.

Toss

Top person being free of continuous contact from the base(s) (i.e. Basket Toss)

Touchdown

Cheerleading motion where both arms are held directly overhead, tight against the head/ears. Hands have palms facing each other, pinky side out.

Transitional Stunts

Involves a top person moving from one stunt to another. The transitional stunt may involve changing bases.

Try Out(s)

The way to narrow down potential cheerleaders for a squad. Usually conducted by the coach and/or trained or accredited judges. Special skills are named by the coach to perform and be judged on individual performance.

Tuck Jump

where you bring both knees up to your chest. Can be used as a jump or for flipping.

Tumbling

Any gymnastic skill used in a cheer, dance, or for crowd appeal. Can be done as an individual or as a group in unison.

Twist

Vertical Rotation (No hip over head rotation)

Unit

Similar to Junior B, all competitors must be 15yrs and under - oldest team member can be 15yrs on the day of

competition.

V motion

Cheerleading motion where both arms are up forming a V. Thumb side for fists faces the crowd.

Vault

A stunt in which the hands of the top person are used to assist in clearing a base(s) or prop(s)

Varsity

The main squad that represents a school, college or university. Upperclassmen.