the cheerleading guide to

stances & motions for cheerleading



includes step-by-step visuals!

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Being a cheerleader is more than just looking pretty and being loud. Part of a cheerleader's skill set includes being able to hit very precise motions and stances, and knowing when to use each one.

Each member of a cheerleading team must perfect their basic motions and stances so that their team operates as a unit and receives the maximum number of cheers from the audience and points from the judges.



cheer moves 101

Most moves in cheerleading are an extension of a basic move, so it is always good to learn through progression, starting with the basics. Mastering basic cheer motions will help you hit more advanced stunts like a pro, which will be important during routines and at cheerleading competitions. If you perform a move, but don't hit your motions right, the judges will likely take points away from your team.

This is a general overview of some basic cheer motions, with the focus on the position of the arms, and basic cheer stances, with the focus on the position of the feet and legs. You may perform them, or see them performed, slightly different. Basic motions can be used while a cheerleader is on the ground or when she is up in a stunt, so the position of the feet will vary from being shoulder width apart to being together, depending on when and how it is being used.

Many of the basic motion positions can be used with other motions and stances to create combination moves, and these are covered in the guide as well.

good to know



You may know some of these moves by different names, since cheerleading teams might refer to a move by a unique, regional name.











pro tip:

THUMBS UP. Never tuck your thumbs inside your fist. Instead, lay them across your fingers on the outside of the fist.



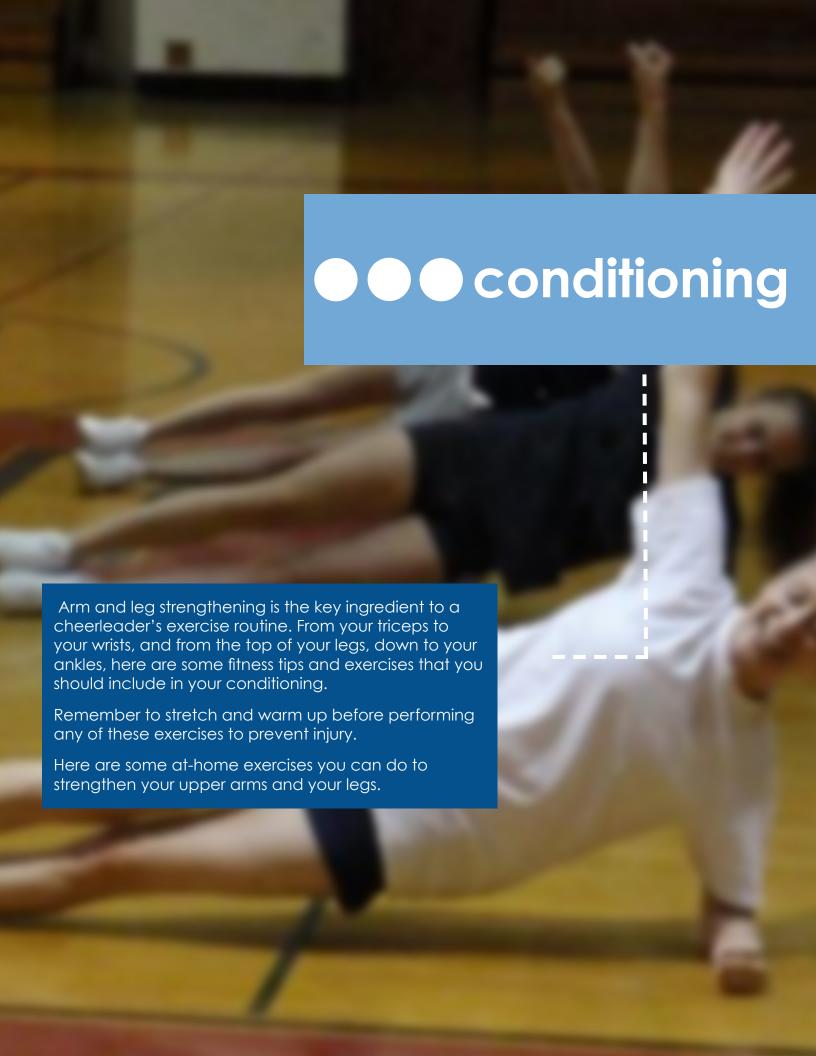














arms

push ups

Lie down on your stomach with your toes to the mat and your legs straight, together and parallel to each other. Your hands should be positioned at shoulder level, but slightly further out than shoulder width, palms flat and fingers spread apart to help with balance. Look straight ahead to help keep your entire body in a straight line. Slowly straighten your arms and push your body off of the floor. Bend your elbows and slowly lower your body down until your chest is touching the floor. If you want more of a challenge, place your hands together in a diamond shape using your thumbs and index fingers.

upside down push up

Get into position by doing a handstand against the wall (you'll be using the wall to help you keep your balance). To make sure you are not too far away from the wall, place your finger tips as close to it as possible. Keep your body straight against the wall and lower yourself by bending your elbows. Then, straighten your elbows to push back up.

good to know



The weakest part of your arm is your wrist, so it's important to take precautions and prevent injury by building your muscle strength in your wrists.











chair dip

Get into a sitting position, with back straight and feet flat on the floor, in front of a chair. You'll grasp the side edges of the chair and dip your body down by bending your elbows and keeping your back straight. Dip until your elbows are at a 90 degree angle and then straighten your elbows to return to the starting position.

wrist lifts

Start with a light weight, like a can of soup. Hold the can in your hand and face your palm upward. Slowly lift the can up and down with your wrist. It's very important that you do this motion slowly to target your muscles in your wrist. Start with two sets of twenty-five for each hand and slowly add more repetitions as your wrists become stronger.

hand squeeze

Grab a tennis ball or a stress ball and slowly squeeze and release in each hand. Do two sets of twenty five in each hand and slowly add more repetitions as your wrists, hands and forearms become stronger.

the cheerleading guide to stances & motions for cheerleading













legs

lunge

Stand in an upright position with feet hip distance apart with your toes, knees and hips in a straight line. Pull your belly button towards your spine and contract your abdominal muscles. Place your right leg a step ahead and bend your right knee. Remember to keep your back straight while you lower your body until your left knee touches the ground. Finally bring your legs together and repeat the exercise by alternating legs.

squats

Stand in an upright position with feet hip distance apart with your toes, knees and hips in a straight line. Pull your belly button towards your spine and contract your abdominal muscles. Slowly lower your body until your butt is in line with your knees (knees at 90 degree angles). If you can't go down that low, go as low as you can. You might also find it helpful to extend your arms straight out in front of your for balance. As you are lowing, make sure your knees are behind your toes. Keep your weight on your heels and slowly push your body back to starting position. Make sure that you don't lock your knees when you return to the starting position.

good to know



When you are ready for more of a challenge, add dumbbells to your workout. Choose a comfortable weight that you can sustain through the entire routine.











walking lunge

Stand up straight with your shoulders back and your feet together. Pull your belly button towards your spine and contract your abdominal muscles. You have the option of keeping your arms flat at your side or holding your hips. Take a step forward with your right foot and bend both knees. Your front knee needs to be aligned over your ankle and the back knee should come close to the floor with back heel lifted off the floor. Before your back left knee touches the floor, push up with your left leg. Force your body weight through your right heel while bringing your left foot together with your right foot. Alternate legs without stopping by lunging forward with your left foot.

calf raises

Stand in an upright position and keeping your body straight, rise up on your toes. Then lower yourself back down until your feet are flat. The key to success in this exercise is to execute it slowly.









pro tip:

STRAIGHT LINES. All of your lines should be straight, and this includes making sure your wrists don't bend. Keep your wrists tight, and make sure they are aligned with your arms.













A cheerleader's stances are her support system. Any motion that she tries to hit will miss the mark completely without the body being in a tight, formatted stance.

classic • • •



Beginning Stance

Stand up straight with your shoulders back, keep your head up and face forward. Your legs should be together with your feet facing forward. Your arms can either be straight and against your sides (with your palms in) or you can make a fist with your hands and place them on your hips.



Arms Against Sides

Stand up straight with your shoulders back, keep your head up and face forward. Your legs should be just further than shoulder width apart with your feet facing forward. Position your arms tightly against your sides, keeping them straight and extending your fingers with your palms facing in.



Hands on Hips

Stand up straight with your shoulders back, keep your head up and face forward. Your legs should be just further than shoulder width apart with your feet facing forward. Make fists of both hands, and bring them up to rest on your hips or upper thighs. Your thumbs should be facing back and pointing down. Both elbows should be pointing outward.



Side Hip

Stand facing to the side, then turn your upper body to face forward. Your inside arm (facing the back) will cross over your abdomen, and your hand will rest on the opposite hip. Your outside arm (facing the crowd) will rest over the other hand in a relaxed hand on hip position, with the elbow pointing out. Pull your outside leg up so that your knee is slightly bent and you are up on your toes.







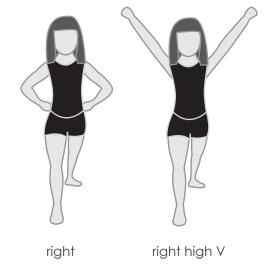
lunges







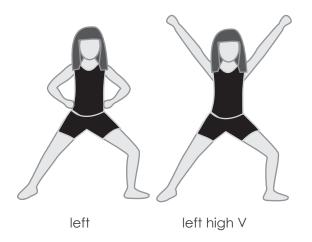




Front Lunge

Step forward with one foot and place that foot flat on the ground. Bend your forward leg slightly at the knee, while keeping your back leg straight. You can angle the back foot slightly away from your body to help keep your balance. Your body will respond to its position by dipping down slightly. Make sure that you move with that dip, but continue to stand straight with your shoulders back, your head up and your face forward.

Your arms can hit many motions while in the lunge stance, including hands on hips, a High V and a T motion. The front lunge can be done with either leg forward.



Side Lunge

Your legs should be just further than shoulder width apart with your feet facing forward. Bend one leg at the knee, while at the same time turning that foot out and away from your body. You can angle the straight foot slightly away from your body on your other side to help keep your balance. Your body will respond to its position by dipping down slightly. Make sure that you move with that dip, but continue to stand straight with your shoulders back, your head up and your face forward.

Your arms can hit many motions while in the lunge stance, including hands on hips or a high V (both shown here). The side lunge can be done either to the left or right side.







1s









High #1

Stand up straight with your shoulders back, keep your head up and face forward. Turn one foot out and away from your body, bend that knee and come up on those toes while at the same time putting that hand on your hip. Your other arm (opposite arm of the bent leg) should go straight up into the air, in the touchdown motion, with all but the pointer finger in a fist. You can do a right or left High #1, just always make sure that the leg and arm that go up are opposites.



Low #1

Stand up straight with your feet together and shoulders back. Keep your head up and face forward. Pull one foot up onto your toes by bending your knee while at the same time putting that hand on your hip. Keep the other foot flat on the ground and bring that arm into a dagger with all but the pointer finger in a fist. You can do a right or left Low #1, just always make sure that the leg and arm that go up are opposites.





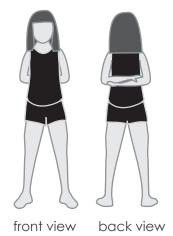


resting positions





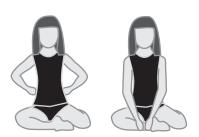




Standing Rest Position

The standing rest is often used at football games. Your legs will be shoulder width apart, or together. Be sure to keep a slight bend in your knees. Locking your knees and standing for an extended period of time can result in dizziness and fainting.

Your arms should be folded behind your back, one resting on top of the other. The top arm's palm will be facing down, positioned so that the fingers are at the elbow fold. The bottom arm's palm will be facing up, positioned so that the fingers reach the elbow. Stand with your shoulders back, your head up and your face forward.



Sitting Rest Position

The sitting rest is often used at basketball games. While sitting, tuck one leg behind you and pull it slightly to the side. You want the leg resting next to your body; do not sit on it. The other leg should cross in front of your body with the bottom of your foot resting against your other leg's thigh. Your front knee will be facing sideways, away from your body. Your hands can be on your hips or on the ankle of your front leg. Sit with your shoulders back, your head up and your face forward.









pro tip:

SHARP MOVES. Your muscles should be tight and your arms should be stiff when you are hitting your motions. A loose arm will make the motion sloppy. Don't just put your arms into position, snap them into position!











A cheerleader's motions are the backbone of her ability. It's great, and super fun, to be able to do amazing cheerleading jumps, twist and flip your way through tumbling passes and fly high during stunt tricks, but you have to have the basic techniques down too!

claps & clasps









Clap

Bring your arms in tight to your body. Your elbows should be pulled in and pointed down, and your hands should be just below your chin. Bring your palms together, with your fingers facing up toward your chin. Your thumbs should be positioned on the side of your hands that is closest to your body.



Clasp

Bring your arms in tight to your body. Your elbows should be pulled in and pointed down; your hands should be below your chin. Wrap your hands around each other so that your right knuckles are vertical, facing up toward your chin, and your left knuckles are horizontal, pointing out and away from your body. Your left thumb should be on top of your right thumb, and they should both be on the side of your hand that is closest to your body.



High Clasp

Extend both arms straight up, and bring them in line with your body so that your arms touch your ears. Keep your hands wrapped around each other, in the clasp position. Your thumbs should be facing behind you.







claps & clasps









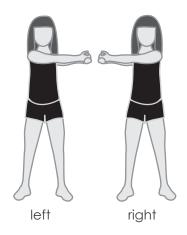
Middle Clasp

From the clasp position, extend your arms straight out, away from your body. Keep your shoulders back and your head up. Your thumbs will be facing up toward the ceiling, and your fingers will be facing out in front of you.



Low Clasp

From the clasp position, extend your arms straight down (similar to a low touchdown) and bring them in tight with your body. Arms should be in line with, but pulled slightly in front of the legs. Your thumbs will be facing out in front of you, and your fingers will be facing in toward your body.



Side Clasp

Bring your arms and hands into a middle clasp position, and then pull one arm to the side so that it crosses your chest. Keep your arms at chest level; don't drop them down. This can be done to the left or right.



















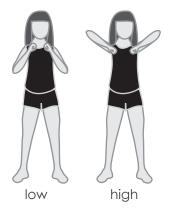
High V

Extend your arms upwards and at a 45-degree angle from your head with your hands in fists. Keep your thumbs facing out and your pinkies facing back.



Low V

Extend your arms downwards and at a 45-degree angle from your body with your hands in fists. Keep your thumbs facing out and your pinkies facing back.



Broken V

For a Low Broken V, start in the Low V position. Then bend your elbows up and in, bringing your fists below your chin. Your pinkies should be facing out. Your elbows should point down and away from your body.

For a High Broken V, start in the High V position. Then bend your elbows down and in, bringing your fists to rest just below your shoulders. Your pinkies should be facing out, and your elbows should continue to point out and away from your body.

















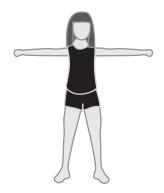
Touchdown

Extend both arms straight up, and bring them in line with your body so that your arms touch your ears. Keep your hands in fists, with your fingers facing in and your knuckles facing out.



Low Touchdown

Extend both arms straight down, and bring them in tight with your body. Arms should be in line with, but pulled slightly in front of the legs. Keep your hands in fists, with your thumbs facing the crowd and your pinkies facing your body, with your fingers facing each other.



Т

Extend your arms from your shoulders so that they are parallel with the ground. Keep your hands in fists with your thumbs facing out and your pinkies facing back.



















Half T

Extend your arms from your shoulders so that they are parallel with the ground, like for a T, but bend both arms at the elbows and bring them in toward your shoulders so that your forearms are facing up. Keep your hands in fists, pulled tight into your shoulders and don't bring your arms forward. Your pinkies will be facing out and your thumbs will be facing your shoulders.



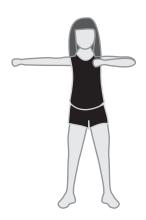
Tabletop or Daggers

Bend your elbows and bring your arms in tight to your body. Your elbows should be pulled in and pointed down, and your hands should be just below your chin. Keep your hands in fists, with your fingers facing in and your knuckles facing out. Your thumbs will be toward your body, and your pinkies will be away from your body.



Punch

Extend one arm straight up (into the Touchdown position). The other arm is resting on the hip, with the hand in a fist. That elbow should be pointing to your side. The punch can be done as a right punch or left punch. The arm in the Touchdown position determines which move it is (if the right arm is in a Touchdown, it is a right punch).



Bow & Arrow

One arm is extended in a T position, and one arm is in a Half T position. This motion can be done as a right or left motion. The arm that is in the T position determines which motion it is (when the right arm is in a T, it is a Right Bow and Arrow).



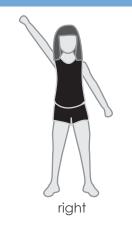






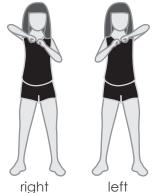






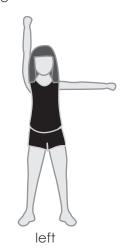
Diagonal

One arm is extended in a High V motion, and one arm is in a Low V motion. This motion can be done as a right or left motion. The arm that is in the High V position determines which motion it is (when the right arm is in a High V, it is a Right Diagonal).

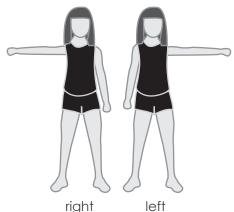


Broken Diagonal

From the Half T position, angle one elbow up and out while simultaneously angling the other elbow down and in. Your fists should stay at chest level. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that goes up will determine which direction the move is.



Extend one arm into a Touchdown motion, and the other into a T motion. This motion can be done as a right or left motion. The arm that is in the T position determines which motion it is (when the right arm is in a T, it is a Right L).



Low L

Extend one arm into a Low Touchdown motion, and the other arm into a T motion. The arm that is in a T, determines which move it is.







pro tip:

SPOT ON. Through practice, you will gain muscle memory and know exactly where you need to hit a motion. While you are learning, remember that your arms should never be behind you. Always keep them slightly in front of you when performing a motion.













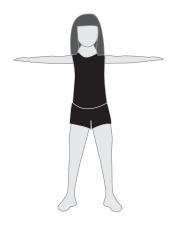






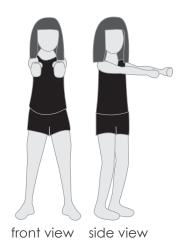
K

Extend one arm into a High V motion, while the other arm holds a Low V position but is crossed over your body. This motion can be done as a right or left motion. The arm that is in the High V position determines which motion it is (when the right arm is in a High V, it is a Right K).



Blades

This motion is similar to the T motion, but instead of putting your hands into fists, they should be in blades. In the blade position, your hands are open and your fingers are straight and together, with your palms facing down and your pinkies facing back.



Candlesticks

Extend both of your arms straight out in front of you and hold them chest level and parallel to the ground. Your hands should be in fists, with the insides facing each other so that your thumbs are on top and your pinkies are on bottom. Your thumbs should wrap around your fingers, not rest on top of them. As always, keep your head up, facing forward and your shoulders back.



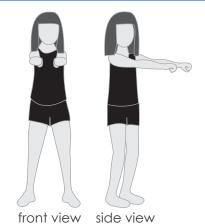






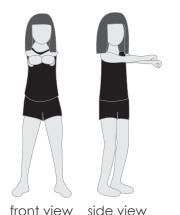






Buckets

Buckets are essentially the same as Candlesticks, except that the fingers of your fists should face down toward the floor.



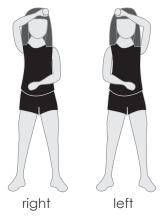
Cross Buckets

From the basic Buckets position, cross one arm over your other at the wrist. You don't want to push the 'cross' up the arm at all. Keep it tight by making sure that your wrists continue to rest on top of each other.



Muscles

From the T motion, rotate your arms so that the fingers of your fist face upwards. Then, bend both arms so that your forearms are vertical, facing up. The fingers of your fists should be facing in toward your head. Do not pull your arms in toward your chest. Keep your head up and your shoulders back.



S

For a Right S, pull your right arm into a Touchdown motion, then bend your elbow so your forearm moves in toward your head and rests diagonally in front of your forehead. Your hand will be in a fist, and your fingers will be facing out and away from your face. Drop your left arm into a Low Touchdown then bend your elbow so your forearm moves in toward your body and rests diagonally in front of your stomach. Your hand will be in a fist with your fingers facing in toward your body. For a Left S, your left arm goes up, your right goes down.



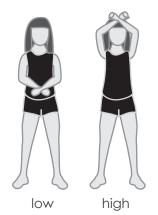








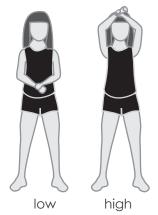






For a High O, pull both arms straight up into a Touchdown, then bend your elbows so that both forearms angle in toward your body, above your head. Cross your left arm in front of your right arm at the wrists, then open your right fist and wrap your fingers around the back of your left wrist. Keep your left hand in a fist, with your fingers facing out. Make sure to hold your motion at your wrists to keep it tight.

For a Low O, you'll pull your arms down and your right fingers will wrap around the front of your left wrist. Your left hand will be in a fist with your fingers facing in toward your body.





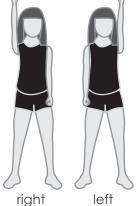
For a High X, pull both arms straight up into a Touchdown, then bend your elbows so that both forearms angle in toward your body, above your head. Cross your right arm in front of your left arm at the wrists. Keep your hands in fists, with your fingers facing out. Make sure to hold your motion at your wrists to keep it tight.

For a Low X, you'll pull your arms down and cross your right wrist in front of your left wrist. Your hands will be in fists with your fingers facing in toward your body.



Low X Extension

From the basic Low Touchdown position, cross one arm in front of the other. Keep the cross tight by making sure that your front arm is resting on your back arm at the wrist. Either arm can cross in front, a team just needs to communicate which arm they expect everyone to use in front.



Scissors

One arm should go into a Touchdown motion, while the other arm goes into a Low Touchdown motion. Your hands will be in fists with the thumb of your raised hand facing behind you and the thumb of your lowered hand facing outward and away from your body. Scissors can be done as a right or left motion. The arm in the High Touchdown motion determines which move it is.



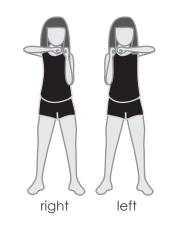






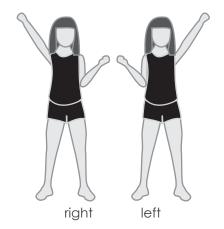






Corners

One arm should go into a Half T motion, but you should pull your arm in so that your fist is under your chin. Your pinkies will be facing out and your thumbs will be facing your shoulders. Your other arm should go into a Dagger motion, but you should rotate your fist so that your pinkies are facing out. Corners can be done as a right or left motion. The arm in the Half T motion determines which move it is.



Check

Extend one arm into a High V motion, keeping your thumbs facing out and your pinkies facing back. The other arm should go into a position similar to the Low Touchdown motion, but instead of pointing your fist down, you should bend your elbow so that your forearm is pointing away from your body at a 45 degree angle. Your fist should have fingers up, with your thumb facing back. Check can be done as a right or left move. The arm in the High V motion determines which move it is.



Genie

From the basic Blade motion, bend on arm in toward the middle of you chest so that your thumb is closest to your body. Next, do the same with the other arm, but rest the second arm lightly on top of the first one. The tips of your fingers should line up with the elbow of the opposite arm. Either arm can rest on top, so a team needs to be sure to communicate which arm should be on top.



Dagger X

From the basic Daggers position, cross one arm in front of the other. Your fists should stay just below chin level. Keep the cross tight by making sure that your front arm is resting on your back arm. Either arm can cross in front, a team just needs to make sure that they are clear about which they will be using.











pro tip:

NO SHRUGS. Your shoulders should be low and relaxed and your neck should be extended.

Do not shrug your shoulders up.





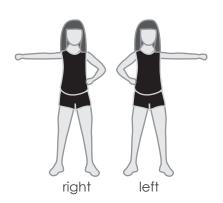






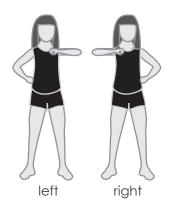






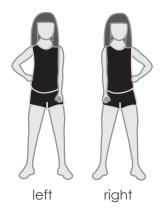
T, Hand on Hip

From the basic T motion, bend one arm and bring your fist to rest on your hip. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the T position will determine which direction the move is.



Half T, Hand on Hip

From the basic Half T position, bring one arm in and rest your fist on your hip. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the Half T position will determine which direction the move is.



Low Touchdown Hip

From the basic Low Touchdown motion, bend one arm up and in, and bring your fist to rest on your hip. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the Low Touchdown position will determine which direction the move is.



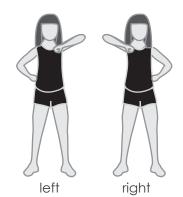






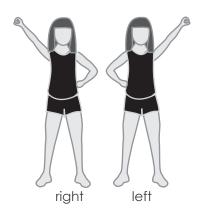






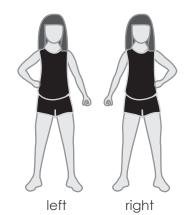
Broken V, Hand on Hip

For this combination, bring one arm into a High Broken V and the other into other Hands on Hips. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the High Broken V position will determine which direction the move is.



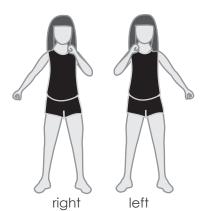
High V, Hand on Hip

For this combination, bring one arm into a High V and the other into Hands on Hips. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the High V position will determine which direction the move is.



Low V, Hand on Hip

For this combination, bring one arm into a Low V and the other into Hands on Hips. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the Low V position will determine which direction the move is.



Low V, Broken V

For this combination, bring one arm into a Low Broken V and the other into other a Low V. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the Low V position will determine which direction the move is.





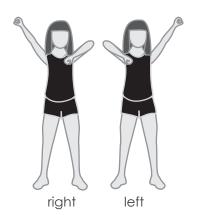






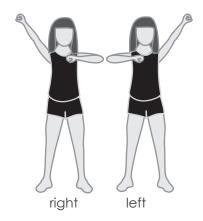






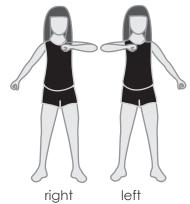
High V, Broken V

For this combination, bring one arm into a High Broken V and the other into a High V. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the High V position will determine which direction the move is.



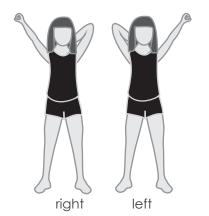
Half T, High V

For this combination, bring one arm into a High V and the other into Half T. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the High V position will determine which direction the move is.



Half T, Low V

For this combination, bring one arm into a Low V and the other into Half T. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the Low V position will determine which direction the move is.



High V, Back Broken V

For this combination, bring one arm into a High V and the other into a modified High Broken V where your hand is placed behind your head instead of in front of your chest. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the High V position will determine the direction of the move.





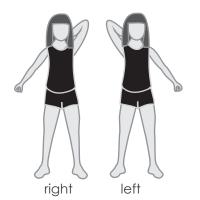






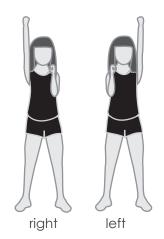






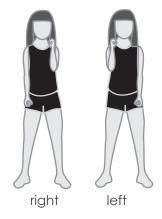
Low V, Back Broken V

For this combination, bring one arm into a Low V and the other into a modified High Broken V where your hand is placed behind your head instead of in front of your chest. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the Low V position will determine the direction of the move.



Touchdown Daggers

For this combination, bring one arm into a Touchdown position and the other into a Dagger position. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the Touchdown position will determine the direction of the move.



Low Touchdown, Daggers

For this combination, bring one arm into a Low Touchdown position and the other into a Dagger position. This move can be done as a left or right motion. The arm that stays in the Low Touchdown position will determine the direction of the move.









pro tip:

THE SHORTEST DISTANCE. Instead of bringing your arms all the way out and around to hit a motion, practice bringing them forward, then up, in one swift, fast move.











about us



The official cheerleading blog sponsored by industry leaders Omni Cheer®, Campus Teamwear®, Chassé®, Fun"d"2Raise®, and Glitterbug Cosmetics[®]. The University launched in 2012 and provides tips and answers for everything cheer including tryouts, uniform ordering, fundraising, living a cheer lifestyle and more!









Omni Cheer®

Omni Cheer[®] has been serving cheerleaders with custom designs and original campwear for over 30 years! Let Omni Cheer® help your squad set the standard as your high-quality, value-priced cheer destination from modern to classic looks, find huge selection of cheerleading apparel and supplies that are in-stock and ready to ship!



Campus Teamwear®

Providing squads with high quality cheerleading uniforms for more than 20 years! Campus Teamwear® understands that style is a huge component of competing effectively. Our selection of contemporary cheerleading uniforms and gear - in the latest trendsgives squads the competitive edge in looking great.



Chassé[®]

Chassé[®] is a leader and innovator in the world of cheerleading apparel and accessories, providing affordable and high-performance cheerleading apparel to cheerleaders of all ages. Cheerleading is not just a sport - it's a lifestyle! Live it with Chassé®!



Get the look of performance! Glitterbug® is a cosmetics company specializing in glitter products for face and body. We also offer pre-glittered stars and adhesive jewel stones allowing cheerleaders and dancers to create one-of-a-kind styles that really sparkle.



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The "FUN" in fundraising! For the last 5 years, we have helped thousands of school, teams, and non-profit organizations raise millions of dollars. Make fundraising fun with our scratch off donation cards - a quick and easy way to raise money for your organization!