

ACTIVE BALANCE GYM

A GYMNASTICS-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, MOVEMENT AND WELL-BEING IN ADULTS

University textbook with a review

ACTIVE BALANCE GYM: A Gymnastics-Based Approach to Health, Movement and Well-being in Adults
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ACTIVE BALANCE GYM

PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

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INTRODUCTION: ACTIVE BALANCE GYM

Contemporary adulthood is characterised by a growing discrepancy between the human need for movement and the environments in which many people live and work. Professional responsibilities, prolonged sitting, commuting, family commitments, mental workload, and limited discretionary time can substantially reduce opportunities for regular movement. For employed adults in particular, physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour may gradually become embedded in everyday routines rather than representing a deliberate lifestyle choice.

The Active Balance Gym: Gymnastics for Health and Well-being project was developed in response to this challenge. Its central premise is that physical activity for adults does not need to be based exclusively on conventional fitness or competitive sport. Gymnastics, when appropriately adapted, can provide a broad and engaging movement environment in which adults develop balance, posture, strength, coordination, agility, mobility, body control, and confidence in movement.

The project therefore introduces **AGLE – Adaptive Gymnastic Learning Environment**, a gymnastics-based approach specifically adapted to the needs and abilities of adults. Rather than pursuing competitive performance or technically complex gymnastics as an end in itself, the programme uses selected gymnastics movements, apparatus and teaching principles to support health, functional capacity, movement competence, and long-term participation in physical activity.

This chapter introduces the Active Balance Gym project, its objectives and target population, and the contemporary lifestyle challenges to which the programme responds. It also establishes the transition from prolonged workplace inactivity towards a broader concept of active living.

[1.1] ABOUT THE PROJECT

Active Balance Gym: Gymnastics for Health and Well-being is an Erasmus+ Sport project designed to promote physical and mental well-being among employed adults aged 30–50. Particular attention is directed towards adults whose occupational responsibilities involve prolonged sitting, long working hours, high levels of mental demand, and workplace stress.

The project responds to the recognition that contemporary working environments can restrict opportunities for movement and contribute to decreasing levels of physical activity. Sedentary behaviour has been associated with a range of adverse health outcomes, while workplace stress can additionally affect well-being, work performance and participation in healthy lifestyle behaviours. The project therefore seeks to provide an alternative and practically applicable way of integrating structured physical activity into adult life.

At the centre of Active Balance Gym is the development of the **Adaptive Gymnastic Learning Environment (AGLE)**. AGLE reinterprets gymnastics for an adult recreational population. The emphasis is shifted away from competition, technical perfection and high-level performance towards **safe, adaptable and progressively challenging movement experiences**.

Gymnastics apparatus is used as a learning and training environment rather than solely as equipment for performing traditional gymnastics skills. Mats, balance beams, springboards, trampolines, bars, rings and other apparatus can provide different forms of support, instability, suspension, elevation and movement variability. When appropriately selected and adapted, these environments create opportunities to develop balance, posture, coordination, strength, mobility, agility, spatial orientation and general body control.

The project combines several interconnected activities. First, a tailored AGLE curriculum and handbook are developed for use with adults aged 30–50. Second, coaches from the participating countries are trained to apply the methodology. Third, the programme is implemented through national pilot interventions. Finally, participant outcomes, experiences and programme implementation are evaluated in order to refine the approach and support its future transfer to sport organisations, workplaces and community settings.

The handbook is therefore not intended only as a collection of gymnastics exercises. It provides a framework connecting the rationale for using gymnastics with adults, the AGLE methodology, participant assessment, safety principles, adapted exercise progressions and practical examples of programme implementation.



[1.2] PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of Active Balance Gym is to develop and test an accessible gymnastics-based model that supports physical activity, functional movement and well-being among employed adults aged 30–50.

The project translates this overall purpose into several practical objectives.

[1.3] DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGLE CURRICULUM

A primary objective is to develop a **tailored gymnastics curriculum for adults** based on the Adaptive Gymnastic Learning Environment. The programme focuses particularly on functional movement capacities such as **balance, posture, agility and body control**, while also incorporating strength, coordination and mobility.

Exercises are adapted to adult participants and organised progressively so that individuals with different levels of previous experience and physical preparation can participate. Safety, pedagogical quality and progression from simpler towards more demanding movement tasks are central requirements of the methodology.

[1.4] EDUCATION OF COACHES

The project aims to prepare professionals who can safely and effectively implement AGLE in practice. Three coaches from each participating country, **nine coaches in total**, take part in the learning and training process.

Coach education goes beyond learning individual exercises. Coaches need to understand how to assess participant readiness, adapt tasks, provide assistance, organise progressive learning environments, manage heterogeneous groups, and use gymnastics equipment safely. Practical experience and feedback from coaches are also used to refine the final AGLE methodology and handbook.

[1.5] PILOT IMPLEMENTATION WITH ADULTS

The methodology is tested through national pilot programmes involving at least **15 adults aged 30–50 in each participating country**.

The recommended programme consists of:

- six weeks of organised activity;
- two sessions per week;
- 60 minutes per session;
- twelve structured training sessions;
- a total of 12 hours of guided activity.

The intervention is designed to improve physical fitness and functional movement, promote healthier movement habits and contribute to reducing the negative effects associated with sedentary working routines.

[1.6] ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The programme includes initial and final assessment. Evaluation combines information about participation and programme completion with indicators related to physical abilities, perceived health, well-being and participant satisfaction.

The purpose of assessment is not to rank participants according to sporting performance. Instead, it provides information about individual starting points, supports appropriate exercise adaptation and allows changes occurring during the programme to be observed.

[1.7] INCLUSION, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY

Active Balance Gym is intended to provide more than a short-term intervention. The methodology should be accessible to adults with different levels of physical fitness and previous movement experience, including people who may have fewer opportunities to participate in organised sport. A further objective is therefore to create a model that can be transferred beyond the original pilot programmes. AGLE is designed for potential continued implementation in **sport organisations, gymnastics clubs, workplaces and community-based physical activity programmes**.

In this way, the project follows a sequence that can be summarised as:



The long-term value of the project will depend not only on what happens during the six-week pilot, but also on whether the developed methodology can encourage continued participation and provide coaches and organisations with a practical model for adult recreational gymnastics.

[1.8] TARGET GROUP: EMPLOYED ADULTS AGED 30–50

The primary target group of Active Balance Gym consists of **employed adults aged 30–50**, with particular relevance for individuals whose professional roles involve prolonged sitting, long working hours, high cognitive demands and workplace stress.

This stage of adulthood presents a distinctive context for physical activity. Work and family responsibilities often coexist with commuting, reduced discretionary time and competing daily obligations. Participation in organised sport may consequently decline even among adults who were physically active earlier in life.

The target population should not be viewed as a homogeneous group. Adults aged 30–50 may differ considerably in:

- previous sporting and gymnastics experience;
- habitual physical activity;
- strength and mobility;
- balance and coordination;
- body composition and general fitness;
- confidence in performing unfamiliar movements;
- previous injuries or musculoskeletal limitations;
- motivation and expectations regarding exercise.

Some participants may enter the programme with regular exercise experience but little familiarity with gymnastics. Others may be returning to organised physical activity after several years of low participation. For some, movements involving hanging, supporting body weight, balancing on elevated surfaces, rolling or becoming inverted may represent entirely new experiences.

This heterogeneity is one of the reasons why a conventional one-size-fits-all programme is inappropriate for the target group. The exercise environment must allow participants to enter a task at a level corresponding to their current abilities and to progress according to individual readiness.

The choice of adults aged 30–50 is also strategically important from a health-promotion perspective. It represents a period in which many lifestyle patterns associated with work and family life are already well established, but in which there remains substantial potential to maintain and develop physical capacity and establish sustainable movement habits for later adulthood.

Active Balance Gym therefore does not approach participants as former athletes who should regain their previous performance, nor as patients who need rehabilitation. They are **adult learners and recreational participants** whose movement experiences, physical capabilities and everyday contexts differ. The role of AGLE is to create an environment in which these differences can be accommodated rather than treated as obstacles to participation.

[1.9] SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Modern working environments have substantially changed the way physical activity is distributed throughout the day. For many employed adults, occupational movement has been replaced by prolonged periods of sitting at computers, during meetings, in vehicles and increasingly within remote or hybrid working arrangements. Time spent sitting at work can then continue during commuting and leisure time.

It is useful to distinguish between **physical inactivity** and **sedentary behaviour**. Physical inactivity refers to insufficient participation in physical activity relative to recommended levels, whereas sedentary behaviour describes waking activities performed while sitting, reclining or lying with very low energy expenditure. An individual may therefore participate in organised exercise and still accumulate substantial periods of sedentary time during the remainder of the day.

This distinction is particularly relevant for workplace health. A one-hour training session represents only a small proportion of the waking day. Regular exercise is valuable, but the wider movement pattern of daily life also matters. Active Balance Gym consequently views structured training as one component of a broader movement-oriented lifestyle.

The project needs analysis identifies prolonged physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour as important challenges for employed adults aged 30–50, particularly those in managerial roles. The project documentation links these behaviours with declining physical fitness and increased risks of obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular and musculoskeletal disorders, as well as poorer mental health. Workplace stress represents an additional challenge and may contribute to fatigue, burnout and reduced opportunities or motivation for physical activity.

From a movement perspective, prolonged periods of limited movement also reduce the variety of physical demands placed on the body. Everyday life may involve few situations requiring substantial ranges of

motion, dynamic balance, body-weight support, hanging, rotation, controlled landing or multidirectional movement. A person may therefore remain capable of performing routine daily activities while gradually losing confidence and competence in less frequently used movement patterns.

This is especially relevant to the Active Balance Gym concept. The objective is not merely to increase energy expenditure. The programme seeks to reintroduce **movement diversity**: supporting body weight, balancing, jumping, landing, rolling, rotating, hanging, moving through different planes and interacting with different types of apparatus.

These experiences will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters. At this point, the essential message is that the contemporary sedentary environment presents both a **quantitative problem**—too little movement—and a **qualitative problem**—too little variety in the ways the body is required to move.

[1.10] BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ADULTHOOD

Low participation in physical activity among working adults cannot be explained solely by a lack of knowledge about its benefits. Most adults are aware that exercise is beneficial. The more relevant question is why this knowledge is often difficult to translate into regular practice.

The barriers affecting adults aged 30–50 are frequently interconnected.

Time-related barriers are among the most evident. Professional obligations, commuting, childcare, household responsibilities and other commitments compete for a limited amount of discretionary time. Exercise may therefore be perceived as an additional obligation rather than a natural part of daily life.

Mental fatigue and occupational stress can further reduce willingness to participate. After a cognitively demanding working day, the prospect of beginning a highly intensive or performance-oriented training session may be unattractive even when sufficient time is technically available.

Motivation and previous experience also influence participation. Adults who do not identify themselves as physically active or athletic may feel uncomfortable entering conventional sport or fitness environments. Previous negative experiences, low perceived competence or uncertainty about how to exercise safely may further reduce participation.

In gymnastics, an additional barrier can be the **perception of the activity itself**. Gymnastics is frequently associated either with childhood or with technically demanding competitive performance. Adults may consequently assume that gymnastics is inappropriate for their age, physical condition or level of experience. Movements involving balance, suspension, support, elevation or inversion may additionally generate apprehension.

Access and programme design also matter. A programme may be theoretically effective but practically inaccessible if it requires specialised skills from the beginning, demands a high initial fitness level or does not allow tasks to be adapted.

These barriers have important implications for the design of Active Balance Gym. A programme for working adults must provide attainable entry points, visible progression, appropriately challenging tasks and opportunities for successful movement experiences. It must recognise differences between

participants and enable coaches to adjust the exercise rather than expecting every participant to adapt to one predetermined form of the exercise.

For this reason, accessibility and adaptability are not additional features of AGLE. They are necessary conditions for its practical application.

[1.11] FROM WORKPLACE INACTIVITY TO ACTIVE LIVING

The response to sedentary living cannot be reduced to asking adults to exercise harder for a short period of time. A more sustainable objective is to create circumstances in which **movement becomes a regular and meaningful component of everyday life**.

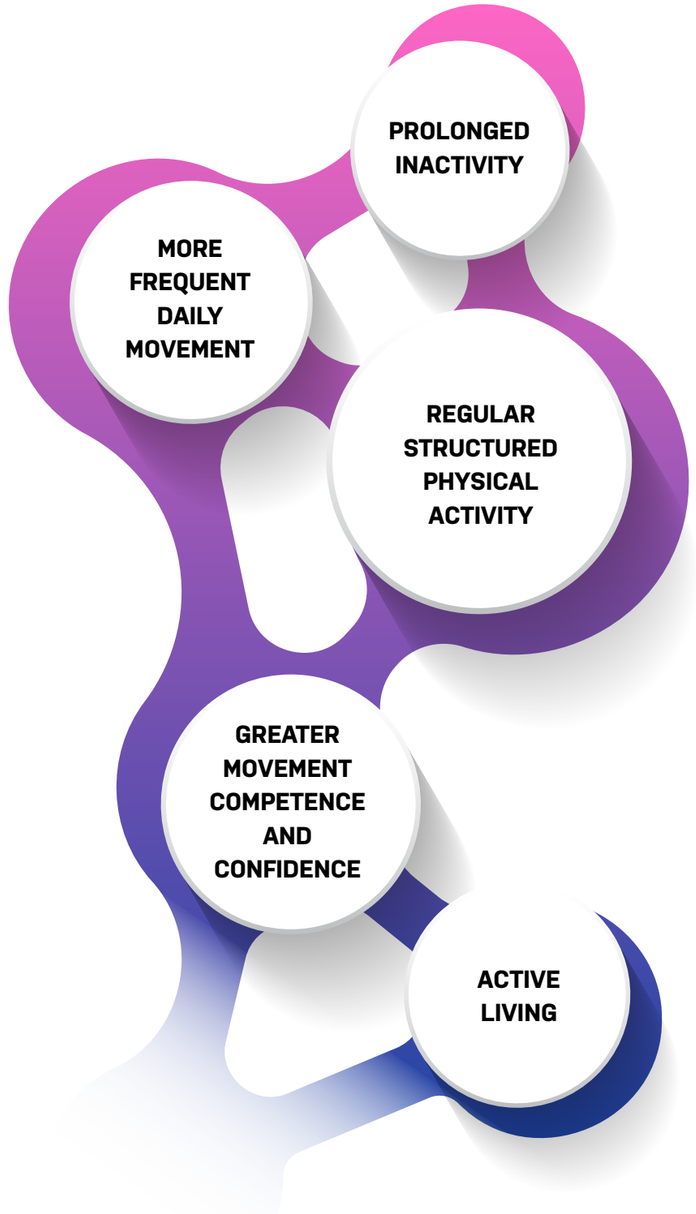
Active Balance Gym therefore does not aim to transform every participant into a gymnast. Nor is the six-week programme intended as an isolated intervention after which participants return to their previous movement patterns. The programme is conceived as an opportunity to rediscover movement, develop physical confidence and experience forms of physical activity that may be continued or transferred into everyday life.

Structured training provides an important stimulus. During AGLE sessions, participants encounter movement tasks that may have disappeared from their daily routines: balancing, supporting their body weight, hanging, jumping, landing, rotating, coordinating different body segments and adapting to changing movement conditions.

At the same time, the broader principle is that **regular movement should extend beyond the organised training session**. Breaking up prolonged sitting, changing position, walking when possible, using stairs, performing short mobility routines and incorporating simple movement opportunities into the working day can complement structured exercise.



The desired transition can therefore be understood as a continuum:



Within this perspective, success is not defined exclusively by test scores or the ability to perform a particular gymnastics element. A participant who becomes more confident in movement, develops greater functional capacity, participates regularly in physical activity and begins to perceive movement as an enjoyable and sustainable part of everyday life has achieved an equally important outcome.

The role of the six-week Active Balance Gym programme is therefore to provide a structured starting point. The role of AGLE is to make that starting point adaptable, progressive and engaging.

This raises the central question for the next chapter:
Why can gymnastics provide a particularly valuable movement environment for adults?

WHY GYMNASTICS?

Gymnastics is often associated with two apparently distinct contexts: childhood, where it supports play and the development of fundamental movement skills, and competitive sport, where it is characterised by technically demanding skills and high levels of physical performance. Between these two contexts lies a much broader potential that is particularly relevant to Active Balance Gym: **gymnastics as an adaptable system of human movement**.

For adults, the purpose of gymnastics does not need to be the mastery of competitive skills. Its value can instead be found in the variety of movement experiences it provides. Balancing, supporting body weight, hanging, rolling, rotating, jumping, landing and moving through different body positions require the coordinated interaction of strength, mobility, balance, spatial orientation and neuromuscular control. Gymnastics therefore provides opportunities to develop several dimensions of movement simultaneously rather than treating them as entirely separate capacities.

This perspective is central to the Active Balance Gym project. The project does not seek to reproduce competitive gymnastics for an adult recreational population. Instead, it selects and adapts gymnastics movements, apparatus and teaching principles to create movement experiences appropriate for employed adults aged 30–50.

The question is therefore not whether adults can perform gymnastics in its traditional competitive form. The more relevant question is:
How can the principles and movement possibilities of gymnastics be adapted to help adults move better, more confidently and with greater functional capacity?

[2.1] GYMNASTICS BEYOND CHILDHOOD AND COMPETITIVE SPORT

Gymnastics has traditionally played an important role in physical education and sport because of the breadth of movement experiences it provides. However, its public image is often dominated by competitive artistic gymnastics and the exceptional strength, flexibility and technical ability demonstrated by elite gymnasts.

This image can create an unnecessary barrier for adults. A person with no previous gymnastics experience may associate the activity with handstands, somersaults, complex bar skills or other movements that appear inaccessible. If gymnastics is understood only through these advanced skills, it is reasonable for many adults to conclude that it is not an activity for them.

Active Balance Gym adopts a different perspective.
A forward roll does not need to be understood primarily as a competitive gymnastics element. It can represent an opportunity to experience rotation and spatial orientation. A balance beam does not exist only for performing technically prescribed skills; it can provide a progressively challenging environment for postural control and dynamic balance. Rings can be used for supported movement, suspension and the development of upper-body control without requiring advanced strength elements. A trampoline can introduce rhythm, dynamic balance, take-off and landing in a controlled environment. In this interpretation, **the apparatus is not the objective; it is part of the learning environment**.

The same principle applies to gymnastics skills. Their value within AGLE depends not on their competitive difficulty but on the movement problem they present and the physical or perceptual capacities they can help develop. This makes it possible to reinterpret gymnastics across the lifespan. Exercises can be simplified, supported or modified by changing body position, range of motion, height, speed, stability, assistance or equipment. The essential movement experience can therefore remain while its difficulty is adapted to the individual. Gymnastics for adults should consequently not be understood as a simplified imitation of competitive gymnastics. Within Active Balance Gym, it represents a **purposeful selection and adaptation of gymnastics-based movement experiences for health, physical competence and well-being**.

[2.2] GYMNASTICS AS A SYSTEM OF HUMAN MOVEMENT

One of the distinguishing characteristics of gymnastics is the diversity of ways in which the body interacts with gravity, support surfaces, equipment and space.
The body may be:

- stable or moving;
- supported by the feet, hands or multiple body parts;
- suspended from equipment;
- moving horizontally, vertically or rotationally;
- accelerating or decelerating;
- maintaining equilibrium or intentionally moving beyond it;
- taking off from and returning to a support surface.

These conditions create a rich movement environment.

In many gymnastics tasks, the body itself represents the primary load. Changing the position of the body changes the mechanical demands of the task. Moving the centre of mass, altering the base of support, changing lever length, reducing points of contact or increasing the range of movement can transform a relatively simple exercise into a substantially more demanding one.

This characteristic has particular relevance for an adaptive programme. Difficulty does not always have to be increased by adding external resistance. It can be manipulated through the **movement task itself**. A support exercise, for example, can progress from a stable elevated surface towards a lower or less stable support. A balance task can progress from two-leg to single-leg support, from a wide to a narrow surface, or from a static position to movement. Hanging can range from partially supported positions to full suspension. Jumping can progress through changes in height, direction, rhythm and landing requirements. Gymnastics therefore provides a system in which **strength, mobility, balance, coordination and movement control interact continuously**.

For Active Balance Gym, this integrated nature is particularly valuable. The objective is not to train a collection of gymnastics elements independently, but to use them to expand the participant's movement repertoire and capacity to respond to different physical tasks.

[2.3] GYMNASTICS AND CONVENTIONAL FITNESS TRAINING

Gymnastics-based exercise and conventional fitness training should not be viewed as competing approaches. Both can contribute substantially to health and physical capacity, and both can include strength, endurance, mobility and coordination when appropriately designed.

Their emphasis, however, may differ. Many conventional fitness programmes organise training around measurable physical capacities such as muscular strength, cardiovascular endurance or body composition. Progression may involve increasing resistance, volume, duration or intensity.

A gymnastics-based approach provides additional possibilities for progression through changes in the movement itself. The position of the body, length of a lever, size of the base of support, number of contact points, movement direction, stability of the environment, range of motion and spatial demands can all be manipulated. Consequently, the same general movement can exist in numerous forms ranging from highly accessible to highly challenging.

Another characteristic of gymnastics is the frequent requirement to **solve movement problems**. The participant must not only produce force but also organise the body relative to gravity, apparatus and space. A balance task requires continuous postural adjustments. A controlled landing requires force absorption together with alignment and stability. A roll requires orientation while the relationship between the body and the environment changes. Hanging and supporting require the coordinated control of multiple body segments. This does not make gymnastics inherently superior to other forms of exercise. Rather, it explains its **specific contribution within Active Balance Gym**. AGLE uses gymnastics because it provides a particularly rich environment for combining physical conditioning with movement learning.

[2.4] MOVEMENT QUALITY AND FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY

Physical capacity is not determined solely by how much force a person can produce or how long they can sustain activity. It also depends on how effectively that capacity can be expressed in movement. Within Active Balance Gym, **movement quality** refers broadly to the ability to organise movement with appropriate control, stability, mobility, coordination and efficiency according to the demands of a task. Functional capacity is closely related to this concept. Everyday movement requires physical abilities to operate together. Rising, reaching, carrying, stepping over an obstacle, maintaining balance, reacting to an unexpected perturbation or safely absorbing force all involve combinations of strength, mobility, coordination and postural control.

Gymnastics provides an environment in which these capacities are repeatedly integrated. Importantly, movement quality should not be confused with a single ideal technique applicable to every participant. Adult bodies differ in anthropometry, mobility, previous experience, physical capacity and movement history. Within AGLE, quality therefore means **effective and controlled movement appropriate to the individual and the task**, rather than reproducing an aesthetic competitive gymnastics standard. The practical consequence is important: technique is taught, but technique serves **safe and effective movement**, not technical perfection for its own sake.

[2.5] BALANCE, POSTURE AND BODY CONTROL

Balance and posture are among the capacities explicitly prioritised by the Active Balance Gym project.

Balance requires continuous integration of sensory information and motor responses to maintain or regain control of the body. Gymnastics provides numerous opportunities to manipulate the conditions under which this control is required. The base of support can become narrower. The body can move higher from the ground. Movement can occur on compliant or unstable surfaces. The position of the head and trunk can change. Participants can move from static to dynamic tasks or combine balance with reaching, turning and locomotion. A balance beam provides an obvious example, but balance demands occur throughout gymnastics: during landing, supporting on the hands, moving on bars, bouncing on a trampoline or transitioning between positions.

Posture within this context should not be understood as maintaining one supposedly perfect static alignment. More importantly, it concerns the capacity to **organise and control body segments according to changing movement demands**. Body control therefore connects balance and posture with the wider AGLE approach. Participants learn not only to maintain a position but also to enter it, leave it, adjust it and recover from disturbances.

[2.6] STRENGTH, MOBILITY, COORDINATION AND AGILITY

The Active Balance Gym project specifically emphasises functional movement capacities rather than isolated performance outcomes. Gymnastics offers a useful environment because several capacities can be developed within the same movement task.



Strength is required whenever participants support, suspend, stabilise, propel or decelerate their body. Body-weight tasks can be modified substantially through leverage, support and assistance, allowing the load to be adapted without eliminating the fundamental movement.



Mobility allows the body to access positions required for effective movement. Gymnastics exposes participants to varied joint positions and ranges of motion, while the use of apparatus can provide support that makes these positions more accessible.



Coordination is required to organise multiple body segments in appropriate spatial and temporal relationships. Even relatively simple gymnastics tasks can require the arms, trunk and legs to perform different but complementary actions.



Agility extends this capacity towards effective changes in body position and movement in response to task demands. Although adult recreational gymnastics does not require the sport-specific agility of competitive athletes, transitions, changes of direction, variable support conditions and combinations of movements provide meaningful opportunities to practise adaptable movement.

These capacities should not be considered independently. A participant performing a controlled step and turn on a beam, for example, requires lower-limb strength, ankle and hip mobility, postural control, coordination and balance simultaneously.

This integration is one of the principal reasons gymnastics is well suited to the objectives of AGLE.

[2.7] SPATIAL ORIENTATION AND BODY AWARENESS

Every movement requires information about where the body is and how it is moving. In everyday life, however, adults repeatedly perform a relatively limited range of familiar movements, predominantly in upright positions. Gymnastics expands these spatial experiences. Rolling changes the orientation of the head and body relative to gravity. Supporting on the hands changes the usual relationship between upper and lower limbs. Hanging introduces a different relationship with gravity and support. Trampoline activities require participants to control their position during brief periods without contact with the ground. Turns and rotational tasks require continuous updating of body orientation. These experiences contribute to **body awareness and spatial orientation**.

Within AGLE, this does not mean that every participant needs to perform complex inversions or rotations. Spatial demands can be introduced progressively. A participant may begin with simple changes of body position close to the floor before progressing towards movements involving greater rotation, elevation or reduced support. This gradual exposure is particularly important for adults who may initially experience uncertainty when moving outside familiar upright positions. The objective is not complexity itself. The objective is to broaden the range of situations in which participants can maintain awareness and control of their bodies.

[2.8] PSYCHOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT AND MOVEMENT CONFIDENCE

Movement is not exclusively a physical process. Adults entering a gymnastics environment may encounter tasks that challenge established perceptions of what they can or cannot do. Standing on a narrow beam, leaving the ground during a jump, supporting body weight through the arms, hanging from rings or changing body orientation can produce hesitation even when the physical requirements of the task are relatively modest. This makes **movement confidence** an important component of the learning process.

Appropriately adapted tasks allow participants to experience success while gradually extending their perceived capabilities. A task that initially appears unfamiliar or difficult can become manageable through assistance, equipment modification and progressive practice. Such experiences may have value beyond the successful execution of an individual exercise. They can strengthen perceived competence, willingness to explore unfamiliar movements and confidence in one's capacity to learn.

Gymnastics also requires attention. Balance, timing, transitions and changes in spatial orientation demand active engagement with the movement task. The participant receives continuous sensory information and must adjust movement accordingly. The existing Active Balance Gym material therefore identifies cognitive engagement and the interaction between body and mind as distinctive characteristics of the gymnastics-based approach. Within AGLE, however, psychological challenge must always remain proportional to the participant's readiness. **Fear is not a training objective.** The coach's task is to create conditions in which challenge is perceived as manageable and progress is associated with competence rather than pressure.

[2.9] GYMNASTICS FOR LIFELONG PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WELL-BEING

The value of Active Balance Gym ultimately depends on whether the experience supports continued engagement in movement beyond the programme itself. For this reason, gymnastics within AGLE is not defined by the number of elements a participant learns. The broader objective is to develop physical capacities and movement experiences that contribute to an active life.

A participant may improve balance without ever performing an advanced beam skill. Upper-body strength can be developed through adapted supports and hanging without progressing to competitive ring elements. Spatial orientation can be challenged through simple rolls and turns without performing somersaults. Coordination can develop through accessible sequences rather than technically prescribed routines. This distinction is essential.

The gymnastics skill is a means; movement capacity is the outcome.

The wide range of gymnastics activities also provides possibilities for continued progression. Exercises can evolve as participants become stronger, more mobile, more coordinated and more confident. The same apparatus can provide accessible introductory tasks as well as increasingly complex challenges. This scalability supports the broader project ambition to create an approach that is not limited to a single six-week intervention but can contribute to sustainable physical activity in sport organisations, workplaces and community settings. The project explicitly identifies accessibility, inclusion and long-term transferability as intended characteristics of the AGLE model.

For employed adults aged 30–50, this perspective may be particularly relevant. The objective is not to recreate the movement capacity of childhood or to pursue the performance standards of competitive gymnastics. It is to preserve and expand the capacity to move throughout adulthood.

In Active Balance Gym, gymnastics is therefore understood not primarily as a destination, but as a **movement environment**—one that can be adapted to the individual, progressively explored and used to develop the physical competence and confidence required for an active life.



THE ADULT BODY AND MOVEMENT

Adulthood is not a period of inevitable physical decline. The human body retains a substantial capacity to adapt to physical activity and motor learning throughout adult life. Nevertheless, physical capacities are not static. Strength, mobility, balance, coordination, recovery and tolerance to physical loading are influenced by biological ageing, previous activity levels, occupational demands, lifestyle and individual health.

For employed adults aged 30–50, these influences often interact. Long periods of sitting may coexist with limited movement variability, occupational stress, family responsibilities, insufficient recovery and irregular participation in structured physical activity. As a result, two people of the same chronological age may enter an exercise programme with very different levels of physical capacity and movement experience.

This variability is particularly important for Active Balance Gym. Chronological age alone provides relatively little information about how an individual should exercise. A physically active 45-year-old with previous sport experience may tolerate considerably more demanding movement tasks than an inactive 35-year-old who has spent many years in predominantly sedentary work. Conversely, an adult returning to physical activity after a long period of inactivity may still demonstrate considerable movement potential when exercises are introduced progressively.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore not to describe ageing as a process of unavoidable loss. Instead, it identifies several dimensions of physical capacity that are particularly relevant when designing gymnastics-based exercise for adults: **neuromuscular control, strength, mobility, balance and recovery**. Understanding these dimensions provides the physiological and functional basis for adapting exercise to the individual rather than adapting the individual to a predetermined exercise.

[3.1] PHYSICAL CAPACITY DURING ADULTHOOD

Physical capacity is multidimensional. It includes the ability to generate and control force, move through appropriate ranges of motion, maintain balance, coordinate body segments, tolerate physical loading and recover between bouts of activity.

These capacities change across the lifespan, but their trajectories differ substantially between individuals. Biological ageing contributes to gradual changes in neuromuscular and musculoskeletal function, yet lifestyle and physical activity strongly influence how and when these changes become functionally relevant. For adults aged 30–50, the consequences of **underuse** may be at least as important for exercise planning as chronological age itself. An individual whose daily routine consists predominantly of sitting may rarely encounter tasks requiring deep joint ranges, rapid force production, single-leg balance, upper-body support, hanging, rotation or controlled landing. The ability to perform these movements may consequently become less familiar even before major age-related physiological changes occur.

This distinction between **capacity** and **exposure** is important.

A participant may initially struggle with a movement not because the body is incapable of performing it, but because that movement has not been practised for many years. Motor confidence, coordination and tolerance to loading may therefore improve relatively rapidly once appropriately scaled movement is reintroduced. At the same time, coaches should not assume that all adults can immediately tolerate movement demands simply because they are apparently healthy. Previous injuries, long-term inactivity, limited mobility, low strength or unfamiliarity with gymnastics may affect performance and confidence. For this reason, AGLE begins with the participant's **current functional capacity**, not with assumptions based solely on age. The objective is to provide sufficient challenge to stimulate adaptation while maintaining conditions in which movement remains controlled, safe and achievable.

[3.2] NEUROMUSCULAR CONTROL AND COORDINATION

Human movement depends on the interaction between the nervous and musculoskeletal systems. The nervous system receives sensory information about the body and environment, selects an appropriate response and coordinates muscular activity to produce movement. This interaction is particularly visible in gymnastics. Balancing on a narrow surface, controlling a landing, supporting body weight through the arms or changing orientation during a roll requires more than muscular force. The participant must continuously organise the timing and magnitude of muscle activity according to information received from visual, vestibular and somatosensory systems.

Neuromuscular control therefore refers broadly to the ability to coordinate muscular activity in order to maintain or regain appropriate control of the body during movement. Coordination represents a closely related capacity. Effective movement requires body segments to cooperate in appropriate spatial and temporal relationships. The arms may stabilise while the legs move; the trunk may transfer force between the upper and lower body; or several segments may need to act sequentially during jumping, rolling or transitioning between positions.

For adults who have experienced limited movement variability for many years, unfamiliar tasks may initially require considerable conscious attention. This is not necessarily evidence of poor physical capacity. It may reflect limited recent experience with the movement. Repeated practice allows movement solutions to become more stable and efficient.

This is one reason why AGLE should not be reduced to physical conditioning. The participant is not only **exercising the body but learning movement**. The practical implication is that exercise progression should consider more than repetitions or resistance. A movement can become more demanding by changing:

- the base of support;
- movement direction;
- speed or rhythm;
- body orientation;
- number of support points;
- stability of the environment;
- sequence of movements;
- amount of external assistance;
- predictability of the task.

Gymnastics equipment provides numerous possibilities for manipulating these conditions. This makes neuromuscular control and coordination integral to the AGLE approach rather than separate components added to a conventional exercise programme.

[3.3] MUSCLE STRENGTH AND FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY

Muscular strength is fundamental to movement throughout adulthood. It enables individuals to generate, absorb and control forces during everyday activities as well as during structured exercise.

In gymnastics-based activity, strength is required in several different forms. Participants may need to:

- support part or all of their body weight;
- maintain a stable body position;
- pull or push against an apparatus;
- control the body during lowering;
- generate force during take-off;
- absorb force during landing;
- stabilise joints while other body segments move.

Strength therefore contributes directly to **functional capacity**. During adulthood, maintaining adequate muscular strength becomes increasingly important. The existing Active Balance Gym material correctly recognises strength as a central component of long-term physical autonomy and proposes body-weight and apparatus-based exercise as scalable ways of developing it.

Within AGLE, however, strength should not be interpreted primarily through maximal performance. The more relevant question is:
Does the participant have sufficient strength to control the movement task safely and effectively?

For example, an individual does not need to perform a full unsupported hang in order to train pulling and grip-related capacities. The feet can remain partially supported. Similarly, upper-body support can begin on an elevated surface before progressing towards positions in which a greater proportion of body mass is supported by the arms. This demonstrates an important characteristic of gymnastics-based strength training: **the body itself can become an adjustable resistance**. Changes in leverage, body angle, support points and assistance allow substantial modification of exercise difficulty. The current AGLE material already identifies this as one of the central advantages of the approach. Strength development within AGLE should therefore follow the same principle as motor learning: sufficient challenge, appropriate control and progressive adaptation.

[3.4] MOBILITY, FLEXIBILITY AND JOINT FUNCTION

The terms mobility and flexibility are related but not identical. **Flexibility** generally refers to the ability of muscles and associated tissues to permit movement through a range of motion. **Mobility** is a broader functional concept involving the ability to actively access and control movement through an appropriate range.

For gymnastics, this distinction is important. Possessing a large passive range of motion does not necessarily mean that an individual can control that range during movement. Conversely, effective movement does not require maximal flexibility at every joint. It requires sufficient mobility for the task being performed. Adults with predominantly sedentary routines may spend long periods within

relatively limited joint positions. Daily life may therefore provide little exposure to larger ranges of shoulder elevation, hip extension, trunk rotation, ankle dorsiflexion or other movements encountered in gymnastics-based exercise. AGLE can reintroduce these ranges progressively. Gymnastics apparatus can also support mobility development. Bars and rings allow the upper body to move through different positions while support can be modified. Floor exercises can combine active mobility with body control. Supported positions can allow participants to explore ranges that would initially be difficult to access independently.

However, more range is not automatically better. The objective is **usable movement range**: mobility that can be accessed and controlled according to the requirements of the task. This principle is especially important for adult recreational participants. Forcing range of motion or pursuing flexibility targets derived from competitive gymnastics would be inconsistent with the objectives of Active Balance Gym. Mobility work should therefore be progressive, individualised and linked to the movement demands of the programme. Because mobility and stretching form a substantial practical component of AGLE, specific methods—including dynamic mobility, static stretching and PNF approaches—are discussed separately.

[3.5] BALANCE AND POSTURAL CONTROL

Balance is one of the central physical capacities identified in the Active Balance Gym project. The project specifically requires AGLE to focus on improving **balance, posture and functional movement** in adults aged 30–50. Balance is not a single ability. It involves maintaining, achieving or restoring control of the body's centre of mass relative to the available base of support. This may occur under static conditions, such as standing on one leg, or dynamically while walking, turning, landing or transitioning between positions. Effective balance depends on the integration of several sources of sensory information together with an appropriate motor response. Vision provides information about the environment, the vestibular system contributes information about head position and movement, and somatosensory information provides feedback about body position and contact with support surfaces.

Gymnastics offers unusually diverse opportunities to manipulate these conditions.
The participant can move:

- from a wide to a narrow base of support;
- from bilateral to unilateral support;
- from stable to more compliant surfaces;
- from the floor to an elevated surface;
- from static to dynamic balance;
- from predictable movement to transitions and turns;
- from foot support to hand support or suspension.

The objective is not simply to remain still. It is to develop the capacity to **control the body while movement conditions change**. Postural control is closely connected to balance. Within AGLE, posture should not be understood as maintaining one idealised static body position. Human posture is dynamic and task-dependent. Effective postural control means organising body segments in a way that allows the participant to maintain stability while responding to the demands of movement. This perspective is particularly relevant for adults working in sedentary environments. Rather than attempting to correct every participant towards a single "perfect posture", AGLE promotes the ability to **move between positions, tolerate different movement demands and control the body across varied tasks**. Balance and postural control therefore become active movement capacities rather than static ideals.

[3.6] RECOVERY, FATIGUE AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Exercise produces adaptation when an appropriate training stimulus is followed by sufficient recovery. This principle applies at every age, but it has particular practical relevance for employed adults because exercise load represents only one component of the individual's overall daily demands. A participant may arrive at the same training session after very different days.

One may be well rested and physically prepared. Another may have slept poorly, spent ten hours at work, experienced considerable psychological stress or remained seated for most of the day. Their capacity to tolerate and respond to the same exercise may consequently differ. The Active Balance Gym project explicitly identifies **workplace stress** as one of the challenges affecting its target population.

The existing AGLE material also recognises professional responsibilities, family demands and reduced recovery opportunities as factors that interact with training load. This has an important implication: **training readiness is not fixed.**

An exercise that was appropriate for a participant during one session may require adaptation during another. Fatigue can affect coordination, force production, attention and movement control. These effects become particularly important in gymnastics tasks involving balance, elevation, rotation, landing or body-weight support, where deterioration in control may also increase risk.

Coaches should therefore observe not only whether a participant can technically complete an exercise, but also **how the exercise is being completed**. Signs such as substantial loss of movement control, repeated technical errors, unusual hesitation or inability to maintain previously demonstrated performance may indicate that the task should be simplified, assistance increased or recovery provided. Within AGLE, adapting exercise to daily readiness is not a failure to follow the programme. It is part of the methodology. Recovery should therefore be considered alongside progression. The objective of each session is to provide an effective movement stimulus—not to maximise fatigue.

[3.7] IMPLICATIONS FOR EXERCISE

The characteristics described throughout this chapter lead to several practical principles for gymnastics-based exercise with adults.

Start from functional capacity, not chronological age
Adults aged 30–50 represent a highly heterogeneous population. Exercise selection should therefore be based on current capacity, previous experience, movement confidence and individual limitations rather than age alone.

Reintroduce movement progressively
Movements that have not been performed for many years should not automatically be treated as impossible, but neither should they be introduced at full difficulty. Support, assistance, reduced range of motion and simplified environmental conditions can provide appropriate entry points.

Train movement, not isolated capacities alone
Strength, mobility, coordination and balance interact during functional movement. AGLE should therefore provide tasks in which these capacities are integrated while still allowing individual components to be emphasised when necessary.

Prioritise control before complexity
More difficult movement is not necessarily better movement.
Progression should occur when the participant demonstrates sufficient control, confidence and physical readiness—not simply after completing a predetermined number of repetitions.

Use equipment to adapt the task
Gymnastics apparatus should not automatically make exercise more difficult. It can also make movement **more accessible** by providing support, assistance, clear spatial references and controlled learning environments.This concept is already embedded in the developing AGLE material, where apparatus is described as both a means of progression and a tool for adapting movement to participant capacity.

Consider the whole person
Exercise occurs within the wider context of work, stress, sleep, recovery and everyday physical activity. The same programme should therefore allow some day-to-day flexibility.

Preserve the capacity to learn
Perhaps most importantly, adulthood should not be treated as a stage in which the objective is merely to slow physical decline. Adults retain the capacity to learn new movement skills, improve strength, develop balance and expand their movement repertoire. A gymnastics-based environment can provide opportunities to rediscover capacities that have not been used for years and to develop entirely new ones.

This perspective changes the question from:

> **What movements should adults avoid because of their age?**

to:

> **How can the movement environment be adapted so that adults can learn safely and progressively?**

That question leads directly to the central methodology of Active Balance Gym: **Adaptive Gymnastic Learning Environment (AGLE).**

ADAPTIVE GYMNASTIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (AGLE)

The **Adaptive Gymnastic Learning Environment (AGLE)** represents the methodological core of the Active Balance Gym programme. It was developed to translate the movement possibilities of gymnastics into a safe, adaptable and meaningful form of physical activity for employed adults aged 30–50. AGLE does not represent a new gymnastics discipline, nor does it attempt to reproduce competitive artistic gymnastics at a lower level of difficulty. It is an **adaptive learning environment** in which selected gymnastics movements, apparatus and teaching strategies are used to develop functional movement capacity, movement confidence and long-term engagement in physical activity.

The central idea is simple: **The exercise should be adapted to the participant—not the participant to the exercise.** Adults enter the programme with different physical capacities, movement histories, previous sport experiences, levels of confidence and everyday demands. The same predetermined exercise can therefore be appropriate for one participant, insufficiently challenging for another and unnecessarily difficult for a third. AGLE addresses this variability by allowing the coach to modify the **task, equipment, environment, assistance and level of complexity** while preserving the intended movement objective. A balance task, for example, may be performed on the floor, along a marked line, on a low beam or on a standard beam. A hanging task may begin with partial body-weight support and progress towards full suspension. A rolling task may be facilitated by an inclined surface before being performed independently on a horizontal mat. The movement objective remains related, but the learning environment changes. This capacity to modify the environment is the defining characteristic of AGLE.

[4.1] WHAT IS AGLE?

AGLE stands for **Adaptive Gymnastic Learning Environment**. The term combines three essential ideas.

- **Adaptive** means that movement tasks are modified according to the participant's current abilities, previous experience, confidence and readiness. Adaptation may involve changing body position, support, range of motion, speed, equipment, assistance or movement complexity.
- **Gymnastic** refers to the movement content and environments derived from gymnastics. These include balancing, supporting, hanging, rolling, rotating, jumping, landing and moving through different body positions, as well as the purposeful use of mats, beams, bars, rings, springboards, trampolines and other apparatus.
- **Learning Environment** emphasises that the objective is not simply to complete exercises. Participants are given opportunities to learn, explore and progressively control movement. The coach, equipment, task and physical environment together create conditions in which this learning takes place.

AGLE can therefore be defined as: **A participant-centred gymnastics-based learning environment in which movement tasks, equipment, assistance and progression are systematically adapted to individual abilities in order to develop safe, functional and sustainable movement.** This definition distinguishes AGLE from a fixed exercise programme. The methodology provides a framework within which exercises can be modified while maintaining their intended movement purpose.

[4.2] WHY AN ADAPTIVE GYMNASTICS ENVIRONMENT?

Adaptability is particularly important when working with adults. As discussed in previous chapters, adults aged 30–50 represent a heterogeneous population. Two participants of the same age may differ considerably in strength, mobility, coordination, balance, previous injuries, gymnastics experience and movement confidence. A fixed progression based solely on age or number of completed sessions would therefore be inappropriate. Traditional gymnastics teaching frequently works towards a defined technical element. The learning process is organised around progressively mastering the technique required to perform that element.

AGLE changes the emphasis. The final gymnastics element is not necessarily the objective. Instead, the coach identifies the **movement capacity** that the exercise is intended to develop and selects an appropriate version of the task. For example:

Movement objective: dynamic balance
Floor line

- low beam
- standard beam
- beam with locomotion
- beam with direction changes or additional movement tasks.

or:

Movement objective: upper-body support
Elevated stable support

- lower support
- increased body-weight contribution
- parallel-bar support
- support combined with controlled movement.

This creates multiple valid entry points. The participant does not "fail" because the most demanding version cannot yet be performed. Instead, the coach identifies the version that provides an appropriate level of challenge. In this way, adaptation serves both **accessibility and progression**.

[4.3] PRINCIPLES OF THE AGLE APPROACH

The existing Active Balance Gym methodology identifies three closely connected characteristics of AGLE: **safe movement, adapted movement and sustainable movement.** These principles define how gymnastics-based activity should be delivered to adults.

Safe movement
Safety is the foundation of AGLE. Safety does not mean eliminating challenge. An environment in which participants are never challenged would provide little opportunity for learning or adaptation. Instead, safe movement means **managing challenge while avoiding unnecessary risk**.
This includes:

- selecting exercises appropriate to participant readiness;
- introducing movement progressively;
- providing suitable assistance and spotting;
- using equipment correctly;
- maintaining controlled execution;
- recognising fatigue or loss of movement control;
- avoiding progression before prerequisite abilities are established.

Gymnastics contains movements involving body-weight support, suspension, elevation, rotation and landing. These provide valuable movement experiences, but they also require appropriate teaching and supervision. Safety must therefore be embedded in the learning process rather than added after an exercise has been selected.

Adapted movement
No single version of an exercise is appropriate for every participant.
Adapted movement recognises differences in physical capacity, mobility, strength, previous experience and confidence.

Within AGLE, adaptation can involve manipulating:

BODY POSITION	changing leverage or alignment;
BASE OF SUPPORT	wider, narrower, bilateral or unilateral;
RANGE OF MOTION	partial to greater movement range;
EQUIPMENT	changing height, stability or type of apparatus;
ASSISTANCE	coach, partner or equipment support;
SPEED AND RHYTHM	slower controlled execution towards more dynamic movement;
COMPLEXITY	isolated movement towards combinations;
ENVIRONMENT	predictable conditions towards greater variability.

Adaptation therefore does not mean simply making an exercise easier. It means creating the version that best matches the participant and the intended learning objective.

Sustainable movement
The third principle concerns continuity. Active Balance Gym is not intended as a short period of intensive exercise followed by a return to inactivity. The programme seeks to establish movement experiences that participants can continue to develop over time. Sustainable movement therefore prioritises **consistency, progression, positive experience and long-term participation**. Exercise should be sufficiently challenging to stimulate adaptation but not so demanding that repeated failure, excessive fatigue or unnecessary risk reduce motivation. Variety also contributes to sustainability. Gymnastics provides many different movement environments, enabling participants to experience balance, support,

suspension, jumping, rotation, locomotion and mobility within the same overall programme. AGLE therefore views long-term engagement as an important outcome in itself.

[4.4] PARTICIPANT-CENTRED AND INDIVIDUALISED APPROACH

AGLE places the participant at the centre of the learning process. This means that exercise selection begins with the question:

> **What does this participant need in order to successfully engage with this movement task?**

rather than:

> **How can we make every participant perform the same exercise?**

Participant-centred coaching considers physical readiness, previous movement experience, confidence, individual goals and responses during the session. Two participants may therefore work towards the same movement objective using different exercise variations. For example, during a balance station:

- one participant may walk along a line on the floor;
- another may walk on a low beam;
- a third may perform a turn or controlled single-leg position on the beam.

All three participants are working on balance, but the challenge is individualised. This approach is particularly relevant in heterogeneous adult groups. It enables participants with different abilities to train together without requiring identical performance. Individualisation should nevertheless remain structured. AGLE is not an unplanned collection of individually selected exercises. The coach maintains a clear movement objective and adjusts the route through which each participant works towards it.

[4.5] SAFE, ADAPTED AND SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT IN PRACTICE

The three AGLE principles are closely connected. An exercise that is not adapted to the participant may become unsafe. An exercise that repeatedly creates fear or failure may not support long-term participation. A programme that never progresses may be safe but eventually cease to provide an adequate stimulus. AGLE therefore seeks a balance between:

SAFETY	⟨⟩	CHALLENGE
STRUCTURE	⟨⟩	ADAPTATION
SUCCESS	⟨⟩	PROGRESSION
CONSISTENCY	⟨⟩	VARIABILITY

The appropriate point within these relationships may change over time and even from one session to another. A participant may normally perform an intermediate version of an exercise but use an easier version when fatigued. Another may progress more rapidly in strength-based tasks than in tasks involving rotation or balance. Progression in AGLE is consequently **non-linear and task-specific**. This flexibility is not a weakness of the programme. It is one of its central methodological characteristics.

[4.6] PROGRESSIVE MOTOR LEARNING

Learning a movement requires repeated opportunities to perceive, attempt, adjust and stabilise an effective movement solution. For adults with limited recent gymnastics experience, unfamiliar movements should therefore be introduced progressively. An appropriate learning sequence generally moves from:

FAMILIAR	❯	UNFAMILIAR
SIMPLE	❯	COMPLEX
SUPPORTED	❯	INDEPENDENT
STABLE	❯	VARIABLE
SLOW AND CONTROLLED	❯	MORE DYNAMIC
PARTIAL	❯	COMPLETE MOVEMENT

This principle is already reflected in the developing AGLE material, where exercises progress through beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. However, progression should not be understood as a requirement to reach the most difficult exercise. For some participants, an accessible version may remain the most appropriate form of a task. For others, progression may occur relatively quickly. The purpose of progression is therefore not to move everyone through identical levels at identical speed. Its purpose is to ensure that the task continues to provide an **appropriate learning challenge**.

[4.7] MOVEMENT VARIABILITY

Movement variability is an important feature of the AGLE learning environment. Once a participant can perform a basic task with sufficient control, small changes can be introduced to broaden the movement experience.

A balance exercise, for example, can vary through:

- direction of movement;
- width or height of the support surface;
- arm position;
- speed;
- visual conditions;
- addition of a turn;
- combination with another task.

A jumping exercise can vary through:

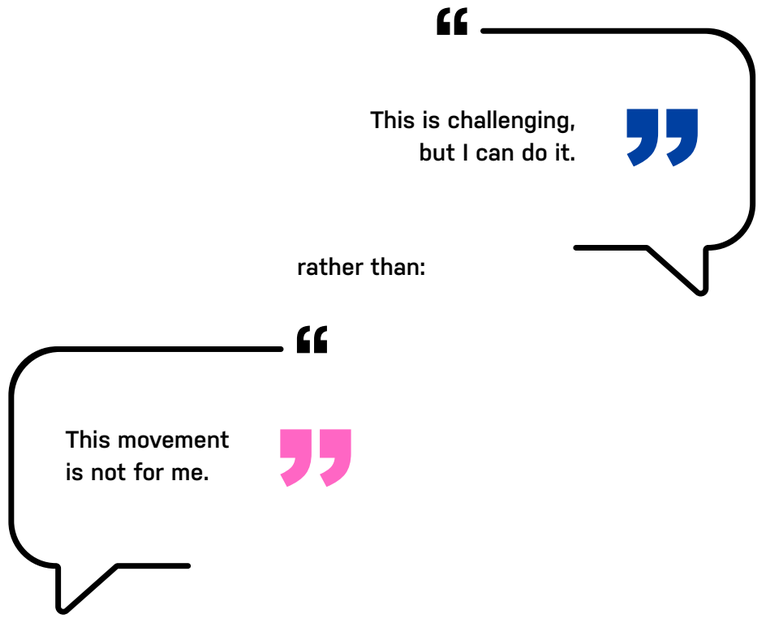
- take-off position;
- landing position;
- direction;
- rhythm;
- height;
- movement before or after the jump.

Variability should not be introduced randomly. The objective is to encourage participants to adapt movement to changing task demands while maintaining appropriate control. This principle is consistent with the progression logic already used in the PETIT methodology, where motor learning progresses from relatively simple and predictable movement towards increasingly complex and variable conditions. In AGLE, however, variability is adapted specifically to an adult recreational population and is always subordinate to safety and participant readiness.



[4.1] MOVEMENT CONFIDENCE, MOTIVATION AND ENJOYMENT

Physical capacity alone does not determine whether a participant will engage with a movement task. Perceived difficulty, previous experience and fear can substantially influence participation. This is particularly relevant in gymnastics. Adults may be uncertain about leaving the ground, balancing on elevated surfaces, hanging from equipment, supporting their body weight or changing orientation. AGLE therefore treats **movement confidence** as part of the learning process. Confidence develops through successful experiences. Appropriate assistance, gradual progression and well-selected exercise variations allow participants to experience challenge without being overwhelmed by it.
The coach should therefore seek a level of difficulty at which the participant can think:



Enjoyment is closely related to this process. Gymnastics equipment can create novelty and variety that differ substantially from repetitive exercise routines. Moving between apparatus, solving different movement tasks and experiencing visible progress can contribute to engagement. Enjoyment should not be interpreted as entertainment added to training. Within AGLE, it supports willingness to participate, practise and continue. For an intervention seeking long-term behaviour change, this matters.

[4.8] THE ROLE OF GYMNASTICS EQUIPMENT

Gymnastics equipment is a defining feature of AGLE, but its role differs from competitive gymnastics. In competitive gymnastics, apparatus defines the event and the technical skills that must be performed. Within AGLE, apparatus is primarily a **tool for modifying the movement environment**. Equipment can:

- provide support;
- reduce or increase instability;
- modify body position;
- change the relationship with gravity;
- facilitate movement;
- increase movement complexity;

- provide clear spatial information;
- enable assistance;
- introduce variety and novelty.

A beam can progressively reduce the base of support. Rings can allow assisted pulling, suspension and upper-body support while permitting natural adjustment of hand position. Bars can provide support for mobility, hanging and body-weight tasks. Soft mats can reduce the consequences of loss of balance and facilitate rolling or landing. Springboards and trampolines can modify take-off conditions and provide experiences of rhythm, flight and controlled landing.

Equipment therefore has a dual role: **It can make movement more challenging, but it can also make movement more accessible.**

This distinction is central to AGLE. The coach should not ask simply, ***Which apparatus should we use?*** The more useful question is: **How can this apparatus modify the environment to support the intended movement objective?**

[4.9] THE AGLE COACHING PROCESS

The existing Active Balance Gym methodology identifies four interconnected processes for implementing AGLE:



These processes should not be understood as four completely separate phases. They continuously interact during coaching.

Assessment approach
Assessment identifies the participant's current physical capacity and provides information for exercise selection and adaptation. Within AGLE, assessment is not used primarily to compare participants or establish performance rankings. Its purpose is to identify appropriate starting points, monitor individual progress and support safe progression. Formal assessment is already described , but informal assessment also occurs continuously during training as the coach observes movement quality, confidence and response to exercise.

Teaching approach
The teaching approach focuses on gradual motor learning. The coach introduces exercises in a form that allows the participant to understand the movement objective and experience successful execution. Instruction may include demonstration, verbal explanation, external cues, task modification and progressive practice. The objective is not immediate technical perfection.
It is the development of increasingly controlled, confident and functional movement.

Execution approach
Execution refers to the way the participant performs the exercise. Gymnastics movements are adapted according to current mobility, strength, coordination and experience. Emphasis is placed on controlled execution, appropriate body position and movement quality rather than on reproducing advanced competitive technique. The appropriate version of an exercise is therefore the version the participant can perform with sufficient control while still being appropriately challenged.

Assistance approach
Assistance allows the participant to experience movements that may not yet be possible independently. It can include:

- physical support from the coach;
- spotting;
- partner assistance;
- modified equipment;
- reduced body-weight loading;
- environmental support;
- verbal and visual guidance.

Assistance should increase safety and confidence without unnecessarily replacing the participant's own movement control. As competence increases, assistance can gradually be reduced. The ultimate objective is **increasing independence**.

[4.10] DEMONSTRATION, INSTRUCTION AND FEEDBACK

Gymnastics movements are often easier to understand when they are seen as well as verbally explained. Demonstration therefore plays an important role in AGLE. A useful demonstration should emphasise the essential characteristics of the movement rather than overwhelming the participant with technical detail. Verbal instruction should likewise be concise and relevant.

For many introductory tasks, one or two clear cues are more useful than a long technical explanation. Feedback should help the participant understand what was successful and what should be adjusted during the next attempt. The sequence can be simple:



Not every technical deviation requires immediate correction. The coach should prioritise aspects related to:

1. safety;
2. successful completion of the movement objective;
3. movement control;
4. efficiency.

Feedback can gradually become more detailed as the participant develops experience. Participants should also be encouraged to recognise their own movement sensations and outcomes. Learning is strengthened when they become active participants in the correction process rather than passive recipients of instructions.

[4.11] ADAPTATION, REGRESSION AND PROGRESSION

Every AGLE exercise should allow movement in more than one direction of difficulty. **Regression** reduces the demands of the task while preserving its essential movement objective.
Progression increases the demands when the participant demonstrates sufficient readiness.
Adaptation is the broader process through which the coach modifies the task in either direction.



For example:



BALANCE

Floor
← low beam → standard beam → movement combination



HANGING

Standing support + hands on bar
← partial suspension → full suspension → controlled movement in suspension



ROLLING

Rocking movement
← inclined assisted roll → independent roll → roll combined with another movement
This bidirectional structure is important.

Participants should always have a route towards greater challenge and a route back towards greater control.

[4.12] THE THREE AGLE LEVELS

The existing AGLE programme organises exercises across three progressive levels:

LEVEL 1 – BEGINNER

The beginner level establishes the foundation.
Exercises emphasise:

- basic body positions;
- safe movement patterns;
- mobility;
- basic support and hanging;
- simple balance;
- jumping and landing;
- introductory rolling and rotation;
- confidence with apparatus.

The objective is familiarity, control and successful movement.

LEVEL 2 – INTERMEDIATE

The intermediate level introduces greater movement demands.
Progression may involve:

- reduced support;
- greater range of motion;
- increased body-weight loading;
- more dynamic movement;
- greater balance demands;
- movement combinations;
- changes in rhythm;
- increased coordination requirements.

The objective is to expand the participant's movement repertoire while maintaining control.

LEVEL 3 – ADVANCED

The advanced level introduces more demanding gymnastics-based tasks requiring higher levels of strength, balance, coordination, timing, spatial orientation and body control. This three-level structure is already explicitly established in the developing project material.

Advanced within AGLE must not be confused with **advanced competitive gymnastics**. It means advanced **relative to the recreational AGLE progression**.

This distinction is important. The purpose of Level 3 is not to transform participants into competitive gymnasts, but to provide continued challenge for adults who have developed sufficient physical and movement competence.

[4.13] CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION

Progression should be based on **readiness rather than time**. Completing a certain number of sessions does not automatically mean that a participant should progress. Before increasing difficulty, the coach should consider whether the participant demonstrates:

- adequate movement control;
- sufficient strength or mobility for the next variation;
- stable execution across repeated attempts;
- appropriate understanding of the task;
- confidence without excessive hesitation;
- ability to maintain control under current conditions;
- absence of pain during execution.

Progression can then occur by manipulating one or more characteristics of the task.
A useful principle is: **Change one major demand at a time whenever possible.**

For example, before simultaneously narrowing the support surface, increasing height and adding a turn, the coach can introduce each challenge progressively. This allows both participant and coach to understand how the movement responds to the new demand.

[4.14] WHEN NOT TO PROGRESS

Progression is not always the appropriate response.
The coach should consider maintaining the current level or selecting an easier variation when:

- movement control deteriorates substantially;
- the participant experiences pain;
- fatigue prevents safe execution;
- fear interferes with movement;
- assistance is still required to maintain basic safety;
- prerequisite strength, mobility or balance is insufficient;
- the participant cannot consistently reproduce the current task.

Regression should not be presented as failure. Within AGLE, moving temporarily towards a simpler version is a normal coaching decision that allows movement quality, confidence or physical readiness to be restored. The same participant may also operate at different levels for different movement families. Someone may demonstrate advanced balance but beginner-level upper-body support, or strong jumping ability but limited confidence with rotation. There is therefore no single overall AGLE level assigned permanently to a participant. The appropriate level belongs primarily to the **participant–task relationship**.

AGLE in one model

The methodology presented in this chapter can be summarised as a continuous process:

ASSESS THE PARTICIPANT

⌄

DEFINE THE MOVEMENT OBJECTIVE

⌄

SELECT THE APPROPRIATE TASK AND EQUIPMENT

⌄

ADAPT THE ENVIRONMENT

⌄

TEACH AND ASSIST

⌄

OBSERVE EXECUTION

⌄

REGRESS – MAINTAIN – PROGRESS

⌄

BUILD CONFIDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

⌄

SUPPORT CONTINUED PARTICIPATION

The process then begins again. AGLE is therefore not defined by any single exercise, apparatus or training session. It is defined by **the way movement is selected, taught, adapted and progressed**. The aim is not to remove challenge from gymnastics. It is to make challenge **appropriate, progressive and meaningful**.



ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

Assessment is an integral component of the AGLE approach. Its primary purpose is not to rank participants, identify the best performers or determine whether an individual is "fit enough" to participate. Instead, assessment provides information that helps the coach understand the participant's current functional capacity, select appropriate exercise variations and monitor individual progress. This distinction is important.

Adults entering the Active Balance Gym programme may differ substantially in previous sport experience, habitual physical activity, strength, flexibility, mobility and confidence in movement. The same exercise may therefore represent a very different challenge for different participants. Within AGLE, assessment supports the central principle introduced in the previous chapter: **The exercise should be adapted to the participant—not the participant to the exercise.** Assessment consequently serves two complementary functions:

ASSESSMENT FOR PROGRAMMING
Where should the participant begin?

and

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS
What has changed during participation?

The Active Balance Gym assessment battery includes four practical functional tests:

- Vertical Jump Test;
- Assisted Pull-to-Hang Test;
- Back Scratch Test;
- Sit-and-Reach Test.

Together, these tests provide information about selected aspects of lower- and upper-body physical capacity and flexibility/mobility. They are intended as a **practical field-based assessment battery,** not as a comprehensive clinical or diagnostic examination. The project also includes participant-reported outcomes related to perceived health, well-being and satisfaction, thereby recognising that programme effectiveness cannot be evaluated exclusively through physical performance.

[5.1] PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment within AGLE has several practical purposes.

Establishing a starting point
Initial assessment provides baseline information about selected physical capacities before structured participation begins. The results can help identify substantial differences between participants and provide additional information for selecting appropriate introductory exercises.

Supporting individualisation
Assessment results should inform exercise selection rather than simply be recorded.

A participant demonstrating limited upper-body strength, for example, may require greater assistance during hanging and supporting exercises. Limited shoulder mobility may influence the selection and range of movements on bars or rings. Assessment therefore connects directly with the AGLE process:



Monitoring individual progress
Repeating the same assessment after the programme allows participants and coaches to compare results with the initial measurement. The relevant comparison is primarily:



rather than:



This individual perspective is consistent with the participant-centred philosophy of AGLE.

Supporting motivation
Visible progress can strengthen motivation.

Changes do not necessarily need to be large to be meaningful to the participant. Performing a movement with greater control, reaching farther, maintaining a position longer or achieving a higher jump may provide tangible evidence that regular participation has produced change.

Evaluating the programme
At group level, assessment contributes to evaluation of the Active Balance Gym intervention.

The project explicitly requires the effectiveness of the pilot programme to be evaluated through participant attendance and satisfaction and through changes in physical fitness, functional movement and overall well-being.

Assessment therefore operates at two levels:

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL	PROGRAMME LEVEL
to guide and monitor the participant;	to evaluate implementation and outcomes.

[5.2] PRE-PARTICIPATION CONSIDERATIONS

Functional testing should occur within a broader consideration of participant readiness. Before testing and participation, the coach should obtain relevant information needed to determine whether the planned activities can be performed safely. This may include information about previous physical activity and gymnastics experience, current limitations, previous injuries and any pain or discomfort relevant to exercise. The assessment battery included in this handbook is **not a medical screening tool** and should not be used to diagnose health conditions.

When information provided by a participant raises uncertainty regarding safe participation, the appropriate course of action is to modify or postpone the relevant activity and, where necessary, advise the participant to obtain appropriate professional guidance before continuing. Participants should also understand the purpose of assessment. They should know:

- what will be assessed;
- how the test will be performed;
- that results are used to guide and monitor participation;
- that testing should not be performed through pain;
- that they can stop a test if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

The same safety philosophy that applies to AGLE exercises therefore also applies to assessment. **Testing should provide information—not create unnecessary risk.**

[5.3] INITIAL AND FINAL ASSESSMENT

The Active Balance Gym programme uses a **pre–post assessment design.** The initial assessment is performed before or at the beginning of the programme. The final assessment is performed after completion of the intervention using the same procedures whenever possible.

Consistency between the two assessments is important. The coach should aim to reproduce:

- the same test procedure;
- the same equipment;
- the same measurement method;
- similar instructions;
- the same scoring criteria;
- comparable testing conditions.

Participants should receive clear instructions and, where necessary, a demonstration before performing a test.



The four-test battery consists of:

DOMAIN	TEST	PRIMARY FOCUS
Lower-body performance	Vertical Jump Test	Explosive lower-body performance
Upper-body performance	Assisted Pull-to-Hang Test	Pulling strength/body-weight control
Upper-body mobility	Back Scratch Test	Shoulder functional range
Lower-body/trunk flexibility	Sit-and-Reach Test	Posterior-chain/trunk forward reach

These tests do not assess every capacity targeted by AGLE. In particular, the current project battery does **not contain a dedicated standardised balance, agility or postural-control test,** although these capacities are central objectives of the programme. This limitation should be acknowledged rather than concealed. The battery represents the assessment protocol currently developed within the project, while other programme outcomes are also considered through observation and participant-reported evaluation.

[5.4] STRENGTH AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Vertical Jump Test

Purpose: The **Vertical Jump Test** is used to assess lower-body explosive performance.
Jumping requires participants to rapidly generate force through the lower limbs while coordinating movement of the body. This makes the test relevant to several movement tasks subsequently encountered within AGLE, particularly jumping, take-off and landing activities.

Equipment

- flat, non-slip surface;
- wall or vertical measuring scale;
- appropriate measuring device.

Starting position: The participant stands upright next to the measuring surface. The maximal standing reach height is first determined. The participant reaches upward with one arm while keeping both feet in contact with the floor.

Execution: The participant then performs a maximal vertical jump from a standing position using both legs. Arm swing and natural coordination are permitted, consistent with the procedure already established in the Active Balance Gym assessment protocol. The participant attempts to reach the highest possible point on the measuring scale. Three attempts are performed.

Result: Jump height is calculated as: **highest jump reach – standing reach = vertical jump height.**
The best of the three attempts is recorded.

Coaching and safety points

- use the same jumping technique at pre- and post-assessment;
- ensure sufficient space around the participant;
- use a stable and non-slip surface;
- allow adequate recovery between maximal attempts;
- observe take-off and landing control;
- stop the test if jumping causes pain or significant discomfort.

The result should be interpreted as an indicator of performance in this specific task rather than as a complete measure of lower-limb function.

Assisted Pull-to-Hang Test

The **Assisted Pull-to-Hang Test** is intended to assess upper-body pulling capacity, shoulder-girdle control and the ability to manage body weight in hanging. This test requires particular attention because participants may differ considerably in upper-body strength. The existing AGLE protocol therefore does not require every participant to perform a complete pull-up. Instead, the assessment recognises different levels of ability.

Purpose: The test provides information about:

- upper-body pulling capacity;
- shoulder-girdle stability;
- body-weight control;
- and, for participants capable of reaching the final position, the ability to maintain a flexed-arm hang.

Equipment

- stable horizontal bar;
- appropriate matting below the bar;
- means of safe access to the starting position if required;
- stopwatch when the flexed-arm position is maintained.

Starting position: The participant begins in a hanging position with the elbows extended.
The bar height and surrounding environment must allow safe testing.

Execution: From the extended-arm hanging position, the participant attempts to pull the body upward towards the bar using their own strength. The coach observes:

- the degree of elbow flexion achieved;
- control of the body;
- quality of the pulling action.

If the participant is able to reach a flexed-arm hanging position with the **chin above the bar,** the duration for which this position can be maintained is recorded in seconds, as specified in the existing project protocol.

Result: The current project protocol contains two forms of information:

PARTICIPANTS UNABLE TO REACH THE FLEXED-ARM HANG:	PARTICIPANTS REACHING THE FLEXED-ARM HANG:
degree of successful pulling movement/body control is observed;	holding time is recorded in seconds.

This makes the test accessible to participants with different ability levels, but it also means that the protocol is **not a single continuous numerical measure for every participant.** For project evaluation, coaches should therefore record the outcome consistently and distinguish clearly between movement achievement and holding time.

Coaching and safety points

- inspect the bar and surrounding area before testing;
- provide safe access to and exit from the bar;
- use appropriate matting;
- avoid uncontrolled swinging;
- do not force the participant into the final position;
- terminate the attempt if pain or loss of safe control occurs.

[5.5] FLEXIBILITY AND MOBILITY

Back Scratch Test

The **Back Scratch Test** assesses functional range of motion around the shoulder girdle through a combined reaching task.

Purpose: The test provides information about the participant's ability to reach the hands towards one another behind the back.

This movement requires a combination of shoulder and upper-limb mobility and therefore provides a simple functional assessment relevant to the upper-body movement demands of AGLE.

Starting position: The participant stands upright. One hand reaches over the same-side shoulder and down the back. The other hand reaches behind the back from below.

Execution: The participant attempts to bring the middle fingers of both hands towards each other without forcing the movement. The test is performed slowly and under control.

Result: The distance between the middle fingers is measured in centimetres.
Results can be recorded as:

- **negative value** when the fingers do not meet;
- **zero** when the fingers just touch;
- **positive value** when the fingers overlap.

The test should be performed on **both sides,** because differences between sides may occur.
The current project material specifies **three attempts for each side, with the best result recorded.**

Coaching and safety points

- avoid forceful pulling or bouncing;
- maintain an upright position;
- perform the movement slowly;
- stop if shoulder pain occurs;
- record right- and left-side results separately.

Importantly, the result should not be interpreted as a diagnosis of shoulder dysfunction. It is a practical field measure of performance in a specific mobility task.

Sit-and-Reach Test

The **Sit-and-Reach Test** is used to assess forward-reaching flexibility in a seated position.

Purpose: The test provides a practical measure related primarily to the flexibility of the posterior lower-body chain and the participant's ability to perform trunk-forward reaching in sitting.

Equipment

- flat surface;
- measuring tape, ruler or sit-and-reach measuring device;
- fixed reference surface.

Starting position: The participant sits with the legs extended and the knees straight.
The feet are positioned against a fixed surface according to the selected measurement setup.

Execution: With the arms extended and hands together or overlapping, the participant slowly reaches forward as far as comfortably possible while maintaining the prescribed leg position.

The movement should be continuous and controlled. Bouncing should not be used.

Result: The maximal reaching distance is recorded in centimetres.
For meaningful pre–post comparison, **the same reference point and measurement setup must be used at both assessments.**

Coaching and safety points

- use the same protocol at baseline and final testing;
- do not allow ballistic reaching;
- do not force the participant into the position;
- monitor whether the knees remain in the prescribed position;
- stop if pain occurs.

The Sit-and-Reach Test should be interpreted as a measure of performance in this specific flexibility task. A low score alone should not be used to diagnose shortened muscles, back dysfunction or injury risk.

[5.6] PARTICIPANT-REPORTED HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Physical tests provide only one perspective on programme outcomes. The Active Balance Gym project explicitly requires evaluation of **perceived health status, overall well-being and participant satisfaction,** in addition to physical fitness. This is consistent with the broader purpose of the project. Active Balance Gym is designed not simply to improve isolated physical capacities but to promote health, movement confidence, well-being and sustainable participation. Participant-reported assessment can therefore provide information that functional tests cannot capture.

Relevant domains include:

- **Perceived health:** How participants evaluate their general physical condition and health.
- **Well-being:** How participants perceive their overall physical and psychological state during the programme.
- **Movement confidence:** Whether participants feel more confident performing movement tasks that were previously unfamiliar or challenging.
- **Enjoyment:** Whether the programme provides a positive and engaging movement experience.
- **Perceived progress:** Whether participants themselves recognise changes in their physical or movement capacity.
- **Programme satisfaction:** How participants evaluate the content, organisation, coaching and overall experience.

These outcomes should be collected using the **standardised questionnaires selected by the project consortium,** as required by the project plan.

At the current stage of the material provided for this handbook, the exact questionnaire instruments and scoring procedures are **not specified sufficiently to reproduce them here.** They should therefore be inserted once the consortium confirms the final evaluation tools rather than creating new measures solely for the handbook.

[5.7] INTERPRETING INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS

Assessment results require appropriate interpretation. The simplest approach is to ask whether the participant has changed relative to their own baseline.

For each functional test



the direction and magnitude of change can then be documented. However, numerical improvement should not be interpreted in isolation.

Several factors can influence test performance, including:

- familiarity with the test;
- motivation;
- fatigue;
- daily readiness;
- measurement variability;
- consistency of test administration.

For this reason, small differences between baseline and final testing should be interpreted cautiously.

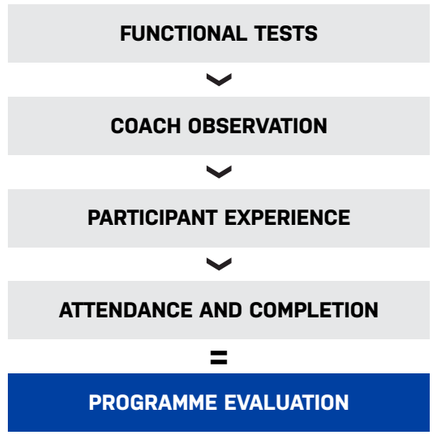
The AGLE assessment approach should also recognise that
progress is broader than the four test scores.

A participant may demonstrate meaningful improvement through:

- performing a previously inaccessible exercise;
- requiring less assistance;
- moving with greater control;
- progressing to a more demanding exercise variation;
- demonstrating greater confidence;
- participating consistently;
- reporting improved well-being;
- continuing physical activity beyond the programme.

This broader interpretation is particularly important because the current physical assessment battery does not directly quantify every principal AGLE outcome.

Assessment should therefore be viewed as part of a larger evidence picture:



At the individual level, assessment helps answer:
Where did the participant begin, and what has changed?

At programme level, it helps answer:
Did Active Balance Gym provide an accessible, meaningful and effective movement experience for the target population?

Neither question can be answered adequately by a single test.

From assessment to safe participation
Assessment provides the coach with information about the participant. The next responsibility is to use that information appropriately. Knowing that an individual has limited upper-body pulling capacity, restricted shoulder mobility or low confidence in jumping has value only if it influences exercise selection, assistance and progression. Assessment therefore leads directly to the next component of the AGLE methodology,, namely to safety and coaching responsibility.

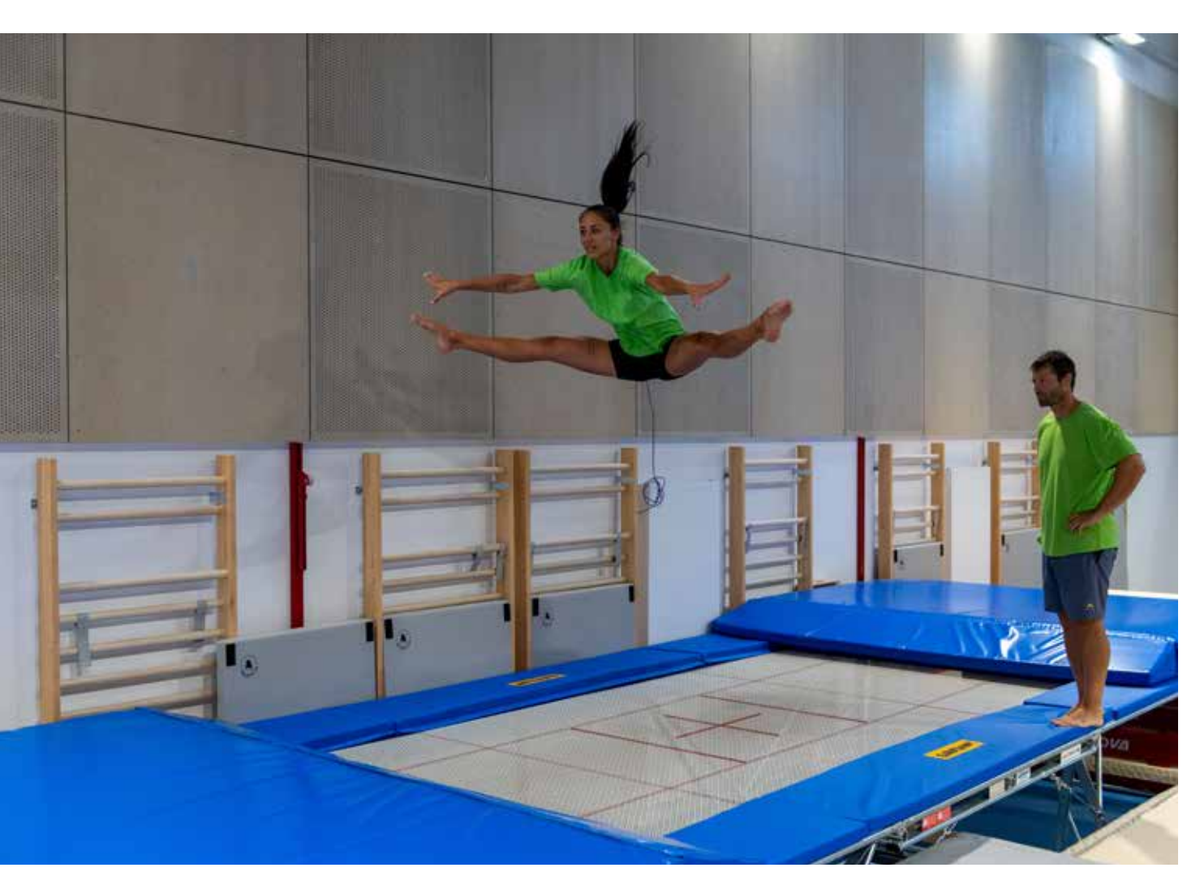
06

SAFETY AND COACHING RESPONSIBILITY

Safety is a fundamental condition for effective participation in the Active Balance Gym programme. Gymnastics-based activity offers a rich movement environment, but it also introduces tasks that may involve body-weight support, suspension, elevation, jumping, landing, rotation and changes in body orientation. These movement experiences can be highly valuable, but they require appropriate organisation, progression and professional supervision.

Within AGLE, safety does not mean removing all challenge. A programme without challenge would provide limited opportunities for adaptation, learning or development. Instead, safety means ensuring that the **level of challenge is appropriate to the participant and the task.**

This principle is consistent with the wider AGLE philosophy: **Challenge should be managed—not eliminated.** The coach therefore has an important responsibility. Safe participation depends not only on the exercise itself but also on how the task is introduced, how equipment is arranged, whether prerequisite abilities are present, how assistance is provided and whether the participant is ready to progress. Safety in AGLE should therefore be understood as a **continuous coaching process,** not as a checklist completed before the session begins.



[6.1] GENERAL SAFETY PRINCIPLES

Several principles should guide all AGLE sessions.

Appropriate task selection
Exercises should be selected according to the participant's current abilities, previous experience and confidence. An exercise that is appropriate for one participant may be unnecessarily demanding for another. Task difficulty can be modified through:

- support;
- body position;
- equipment height;
- movement range;
- speed;
- complexity;
- assistance;
- stability of the environment.

The ability to modify these factors is one of the main safety advantages of AGLE.

Progressive learning
New movement demands should be introduced gradually. Participants should first demonstrate control in simpler conditions before progressing to more demanding versions. For example:

STABLE FLOOR BALANCE → **LOW BEAM** → **HIGHER BEAM** → **MOVEMENT COMBINATIONS**

or

PARTIAL SUPPORT → **GREATER BODY-WEIGHT SUPPORT** → **DYNAMIC SUPPORT**

Progression should therefore be based on **readiness rather than timetable.**

Quality before complexity
Increasing the difficulty of an exercise should not compromise movement control. If technique deteriorates substantially when complexity increases, the participant should return to a more manageable version. The AGLE exercise material already emphasises this principle repeatedly—for example, increasing swing amplitude only after stable shoulder control has been established, or introducing advanced rolling only after sufficient upper-body strength and confidence are present.

Clear communication
Participants should understand:

- the purpose of the exercise;
- the expected movement;
- important safety cues;
- how to enter and leave the apparatus safely;
- when to stop.

Instructions should be concise and given before the exercise begins.

Controlled environment
The coach should anticipate what could happen if the participant loses balance, grip or movement control. A safe environment includes appropriate matting, sufficient space, correct equipment positioning and absence of unnecessary obstacles.

[6.2] PARTICIPANT READINESS AND INDIVIDUAL LIMITATIONS

Safety begins with understanding the participant. Assessment results, previous experience and information provided by the participant should help the coach select appropriate movement tasks. Particular attention should be given to:

- previous injuries;
- current pain or discomfort;
- limited mobility;
- low upper-body strength;
- poor balance;
- uncertainty with jumping or rotation;
- fear of particular apparatus or body positions;
- fatigue and daily readiness.

The objective is not to exclude participants because they have limitations. The objective is to **adapt the movement appropriately.** For example, a participant with insufficient strength for a full hang may use partial body-weight support. A participant who is uncertain on a beam may begin on the floor or a low surface. A participant uncomfortable with rotation may start with rocking or partial rolling tasks. This is consistent with the AGLE assistance approach, which uses adapted equipment, progressive guidance and support to reduce fear and enable increasing independence. The coach should also recognise that readiness can vary from day to day. A participant who successfully completed a movement in a previous session may require a simpler variation when fatigued, stressed or physically uncomfortable. Regression in such circumstances is an appropriate coaching decision.

[6.3] SAFE EXERCISE ENVIRONMENT AND EQUIPMENT

Gymnastics equipment is central to AGLE and must be used purposefully. Before a session, the coach should inspect the exercise area and equipment to ensure that:

- apparatus is stable;
- height and positioning are appropriate;
- mats are placed correctly;
- landing areas are clear;
- bars and rings provide secure grip;
- springboards and trampolines are correctly positioned;
- movement pathways do not overlap unnecessarily;
- participants have sufficient space to perform safely.

The current project concept uses apparatus including airtrack and mats, balance beam, mini trampoline, springboard, Swedish box, mini horse, Olympic trampoline, parallel bars, asymmetric bars/high bar and rings. Each apparatus creates different movement demands and therefore different safety considerations.

Mats and airtrack

Provide cushioning and are especially relevant for rolling, falling, landing and introductory rotational tasks.

Balance beam

Height and width should be adapted to participant confidence and ability. Low or floor-level versions should be used before elevated variants when necessary.

Springboard and trampoline

Require control of take-off and landing. Participants should first understand landing mechanics before increasing jump height or complexity.

Bars and rings

Require adequate grip and shoulder control. Exercise difficulty should be adjusted according to the participant's ability to support or suspend body weight.

Vaulting equipment

Requires careful organisation of approach, hand contact, support and landing areas. Progression should begin with low, controlled tasks before introducing greater speed or complexity.

Importantly: **Equipment should improve the learning environment, not merely make the task more difficult.**

The current AGLE material explicitly describes apparatus as a means of support, scaling and progression.

[6.4] APPROPRIATE PROGRESSION AND LOAD

Progression is one of the most important safety mechanisms in AGLE. A participant should not progress solely because an exercise has been performed once. Before increasing difficulty, the coach should consider:

- consistency of execution;
- movement control;
- strength requirements;
- mobility requirements;
- confidence;
- fatigue;
- ability to stop or exit the movement safely.

The practical principle is: **Control first. Complexity second.**

Progression can occur through several dimensions:

LOAD	greater proportion of body weight;
RANGE	larger movement amplitude;
HEIGHT	higher apparatus or greater elevation;
SPEED	more dynamic execution;
STABILITY	smaller or less stable base of support;
COMPLEXITY	more movement components;
VARIABILITY	less predictable conditions.

Whenever possible, only one major demand should be increased at a time. This allows the participant to adapt while maintaining control. The same principle appears in the current practical AGLE material. For example, swing exercises begin with small amplitudes before range is increased, and springboard tasks progress from reactive push-ups and pogo jumps towards run-up and vaulting tasks.

[6.5] ASSISTANCE AND SPOTTING

Assistance and spotting are essential components of gymnastics coaching. However, they are not identical.

Assistance actively helps the participant perform the movement.
Spotting primarily provides protection if movement control is lost.

Within AGLE, both have three main purposes:

- increase safety;
- reduce fear;
- support progressive independence.

The existing AGLE methodology explicitly identifies assistance as one of its four central implementation approaches. Coaches may use physical support, adapted equipment, partner assistance and corrective feedback to support safe participation. The gymnastics textbook by Jovanović and Čeklić similarly structures individual elements around execution, methodological progression, assistance/spotting and common errors. This logic is particularly useful for the AGLE exercise library.

Principles of effective assistance

Assistance should:

- be provided only when necessary;
- support the critical phase of the movement;
- avoid forcing the participant through the exercise;
- allow the participant to contribute actively;
- be reduced as competence increases.

The coach should know:

- where to stand;
- where to make contact;
- which direction of force is required;
- when to release assistance.



Poorly executed assistance can itself create risk. For this reason, coaches should only provide manual spotting for movements in which they are technically competent.

Assistance as part of learning
Assistance should not create dependency.

The progression should ideally move from:



where appropriate.

In some exercises, environmental assistance may be more useful than physical assistance. Examples include:

- inclined mats for rolling;
- low beams for balance;
- elevated support for body-weight tasks;
- partial foot contact during hanging;
- reduced apparatus height.

This is strongly aligned with the AGLE principle of adapting the environment.

[6.6] SAFE JUMPING AND LANDING

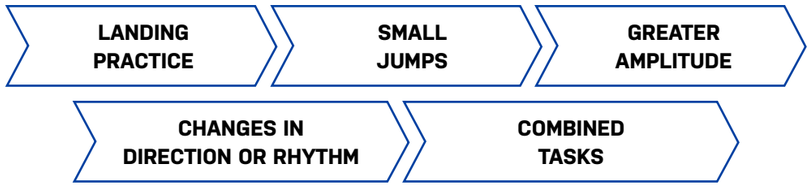
Jumping and landing occur frequently within the AGLE programme. The project specifically includes mini trampoline, springboard, vaulting equipment and Olympic trampoline, all of which require attention to take-off and landing mechanics. Landing should be taught before increasingly demanding jumping tasks. A controlled landing should generally include:

- stable foot contact;
- coordinated flexion of the ankles, knees and hips;
- control of trunk position;
- maintenance of balance;
- avoidance of uncontrolled collapse or excessive stiffness.

The PETIT manual repeatedly emphasises landing with flexion of the lower-limb joints to reduce impact forces during jumps and vaulting tasks.

Within AGLE, the emphasis should be on: **quiet, controlled and stable landings** rather than maximum jump height.

Jump progression should therefore follow a logical sequence:



The participant should demonstrate consistent landing control before higher or more complex jumps are introduced.

[6.7] INVERSIONS AND ROTATIONAL MOVEMENTS

Rotational and inverted movements are characteristic of gymnastics but may also create uncertainty among adults with limited previous experience. These movements should therefore be introduced carefully. Examples include:

- rocking;
- forward and backward rolling;
- shoulder stand;
- hand-supported inversion;
- rotational movements on apparatus.

The main safety principle is that **inversion is not an objective in itself.** If the intended movement capacity can be developed through a simpler version, there is no requirement to progress towards a full inverted skill. Rotational tasks should begin close to the floor and under controlled conditions.

Progression should consider:

- neck and shoulder control;
- upper-body support capacity;
- spatial orientation;
- confidence;
- ability to control entry and exit from the movement.

The Jovanović and Čeklić textbook provides clear methodological progressions for elements such as forward roll, backward roll and handstand, beginning with preparatory exercises before full execution. This stepwise logic is directly applicable to AGLE, although the endpoint may be simplified for recreational adults. For example:



rather than automatically progressing towards more advanced acrobatic elements.

[6.8] PAIN, DISCOMFORT AND STOPPING EXERCISE

Exercise can involve effort, fatigue and unfamiliar sensations. However, pain should not be treated as a necessary part of gymnastics-based training. Participants should be encouraged to distinguish between:

- normal muscular effort;
- stretching sensation within a comfortable range;
- fatigue;
- pain;
- dizziness or unusual discomfort.

An exercise should be stopped or modified when:

- pain occurs;
- movement suddenly becomes uncontrolled;

- the participant feels unsafe;
- dizziness, nausea or unusual symptoms appear;
- grip or support can no longer be maintained safely.

The coach should not attempt to diagnose the cause of pain. Instead, the immediate responsibility is to reduce or stop the relevant activity and, when appropriate, recommend further assessment by a suitable health professional. Within AGLE **Pain is information, not a progression criterion.** The participant should never be encouraged to "push through" pain in order to complete an exercise level.

[6.9] COACH RESPONSIBILITY

The coach plays a central role in creating the AGLE environment. Their responsibility extends beyond demonstrating exercises. The coach must:

- organise the exercise space;
- inspect equipment;
- select appropriate tasks;
- explain exercises clearly;
- observe participant responses;
- provide assistance when appropriate;
- recognise when progression is premature;
- modify tasks when necessary;
- maintain appropriate supervision.

The developing project material places particular emphasis on coach education and specifically identifies assessment, teaching, execution and assistance as the key components of programme delivery.

The coach should therefore combine technical gymnastics knowledge with the ability to work with a heterogeneous adult population. This includes understanding that the goal of AGLE is not competitive performance. A technically more difficult exercise is not automatically a better exercise. The appropriate exercise is the one that:

- serves the intended movement objective;
- matches participant readiness;
- can be performed with sufficient control;
- provides an appropriate challenge;
- can be delivered safely.



The coach should also create a learning environment in which participants feel comfortable reporting uncertainty, fatigue or discomfort. Safety depends partly on communication. Participants who believe they must complete every task regardless of readiness may conceal difficulties. A participant-centred environment encourages them to communicate and allows exercises to be adapted without stigma.

A practical AGLE safety sequence
Before introducing a new or more demanding exercise, the coach can use the following sequence:

1. PARTICIPANT
Is the participant ready for this task?

2. PURPOSE
What movement capacity are we trying to develop?

3. ENVIRONMENT
Is the apparatus and surrounding area safe?

4. PREREQUISITES
Does the participant have sufficient strength, mobility, balance and confidence?

5. ASSISTANCE
Is support or spotting required?

6. EXECUTION
Can the task be performed with appropriate control?

7. DECISION
REGRESS – MAINTAIN – PROGRESS

This sequence reflects the broader AGLE methodology. Safety is therefore not a limitation placed on progression. It is the condition that makes **meaningful progression possible.**

From safety to practice
The first six chapters establish the rationale and methodological foundation of Active Balance Gym:

WHO is the programme for?
WHY use gymnastics?
WHAT characteristics of adult movement should be considered?
HOW does AGLE adapt movement?
HOW are participants assessed?
HOW is movement delivered safely?



The handbook can now move from principles to application. The next part presents the **AGLE Exercise Library**, in which these principles are translated into gymnastics-based movement tasks across the equipment selected within the Active Balance Gym project.

07

AGLE EXERCISE LIBRARY

The AGLE Exercise Library translates the principles of the Adaptive Gymnastic Learning Environment into practice. It provides coaches with a structured selection of gymnastics-based movement tasks that can be adapted to employed adults aged 30–50 with different levels of physical capacity, previous experience and movement confidence. The library is not intended to reproduce the technical content of competitive artistic gymnastics. Nor should it be understood as a fixed sequence of exercises that every participant is expected to complete. Instead, each exercise represents a **movement opportunity.**

The coach selects and adapts exercises according to:

- the intended movement objective;
- participant readiness;
- available equipment;
- previous experience;
- movement control;
- confidence;
- and the role of the exercise within the training session.

The practical content is organised according to the gymnastics apparatus selected within the Active Balance Gym project:

AIRTRACK AND MATS	**RINGS**
⌄	⌃
BALANCE BEAM	**ASYMMETRIC BARS / HIGH BAR**
⌄	⌃
MINI TRAMPOLINE	**PARALLEL BARS**
⌄	⌃
SPRINGBOARD	**OLYMPIC TRAMPOLINE**
⌄	⌃
SWEDISH BOX WITH SPRINGBOARD ›	**MINI HORSE WITH SPRINGBOARD**

Together, these environments provide opportunities to practise fundamental gymnastics-based movement patterns including:

BALANCING	**SUPPORTING**	**HANGING**	**ROLLING**	**ROTATING**
JUMPING	**LANDING**	**LOCOMOTION**	**MOBILITY**	**BODY CONTROL**

The objective is not mastery of the apparatus itself.
The apparatus provides the environment. Movement development provides the purpose.

[7.1] HOW TO USE THE EXERCISE LIBRARY

Each section of the library is organised around a particular apparatus, but coaches should not plan sessions simply by moving from one apparatus to another.

The first question should always be: What movement capacity do we want to develop?

Only then should the coach consider which apparatus and exercise variation can best support that objective. For example, balance can be developed on a beam, but it is also required during landing, support, trampoline activity and transitions between positions. Upper-body strength can be developed on bars and rings, but also through floor-based support tasks. Spatial orientation can be developed through rolling, jumping and rotational activities across several environments. The apparatus categories therefore provide **organisational structure,** while movement objectives provide the **functional structure** of the programme.

The AGLE exercise card
To ensure consistency throughout the library, each exercise is presented using a standardised format.

EXERCISE NAME	**FINAL POSITION / COMPLETION**
A clear and concise name of the movement task.	How the exercise should be completed or exited safely.
PRIMARY MOVEMENT GOAL	**KEY COACHING POINTS**
The main capacity or movement pattern addressed by the exercise.	The most important cues for effective execution.
SECONDARY MOVEMENT GOALS	**COMMON ERRORS**
Additional capacities meaningfully involved in the task.	Typical movement errors that may affect successful or safe execution.
AGLE LEVEL	**SAFETY**
Beginner / Intermediate / Advanced.	Exercise-specific safety considerations.
STARTING POSITION	**ASSISTANCE / SPOTTING**
How the participant prepares for the exercise.	How the coach, partner or equipment can support the participant when required.
EXECUTION	**REGRESSION / EASIER OPTION**
The essential sequence of the movement.	A less demanding version that preserves the primary movement objective.
PROGRESSION / HARDER OPTION	
A more demanding version for participants demonstrating appropriate readiness.	

AGLE levels within the exercise library
Exercises are classified into three levels:

LEVEL 1 – BEGINNER

Level 1 introduces the movement pattern in accessible conditions.
The emphasis is on:

- understanding the task;
- movement confidence;
- safe execution;
- basic body positions;
- controlled movement;
- familiarisation with apparatus.

LEVEL 2 – INTERMEDIATE

Level 2 increases the movement demand through changes such as:

- reduced support;
- greater body-weight loading;
- increased range of motion;
- greater balance demand;
- more dynamic execution;
- movement combinations.

LEVEL 3 – ADVANCED

Level 3 provides additional challenge for participants who demonstrate sufficient physical capacity, movement control and confidence. Advanced in AGLE means **advanced within the recreational programme,** not advanced competitive gymnastics. Participants do not need to progress through all three levels on every apparatus.

A participant may simultaneously use: **Level 3 balance exercises + Level 2 jumping exercises + Level 1 hanging exercises.** The level therefore describes the **exercise–participant relationship,** not the participant as a whole.



[7.2] AIRTRACK AND MATS

Airtrack and mats provide the fundamental learning environment for many AGLE activities.

They allow participants to explore movement close to the ground and provide a relatively forgiving surface for learning body positions, rolling, supporting, balancing and landing.

Primary movement areas

- fundamental movement patterns;
- rolling;
- supporting;
- body control;
- balance;
- mobility;
- safe landing;
- introductory rotation.

Floor-based work is particularly valuable at the beginning of the programme because it allows participants to develop confidence before moving to elevated or more dynamic apparatus. The current AGLE material already includes floor-based progressions from basic body positions and rolls towards more demanding support and rotational tasks. Within the final library, these should be selected according to their relevance to adult recreational participants rather than according to the traditional competitive gymnastics syllabus.



Suggested progression logic

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
basic body positions ⌄ rocking ⌄ quadrupedal support ⌄ basic balance ⌄ landing positions ⌄ assisted/simple forward rolling	controlled forward/ backward rolling ⌄ support transitions ⌄ dynamic floor movement ⌄ movement combinations	more demanding support positions ⌄ controlled inversion preparations ⌄ combinations of rolling, support and locomotion

The mat should be considered not only protective equipment but also an **adaptive tool.** Inclined, raised or differently positioned mats can substantially change task difficulty.



[7.3] BALANCE BEAM

The balance beam provides a clear environment for developing postural control and confidence under progressively reduced bases of support.

Primary movement areas

- static balance;
- dynamic balance;
- posture and body control;
- coordination;
- concentration;
- lower-limb stability.

The beam is particularly suitable for AGLE because difficulty can be modified without fundamentally changing the movement objective.

A participant can perform the same basic locomotor task:

ON THE FLOOR → **ALONG A MARKED LINE** → **ON A LOW BEAM** → **ON A HIGHER BEAM**



Suggested progression logic

Level 1

standing positions
⌄
weight transfer
⌄
forward walking
⌄
controlled stop
⌄
simple balance positions

Level 2

backward/sideways movement
⌄
single-leg positions
⌄
changes of direction
⌄
turns
⌄
combinations

Level 3

more complex locomotion
⌄
balance combined with additional movement
⌄
increased height or reduced visual dependence where appropriate

The coach should avoid interpreting beam progression exclusively as increasing apparatus height. Complexity can also be increased while keeping the beam low.

For adult participants, **control and confidence are more important than elevation.**



[7.4] MINI TRAMPOLINE

The mini trampoline introduces dynamic movement, elastic take-off and short flight phases in a controlled setting.

Primary movement areas

- jumping;
- take-off;
- landing;
- rhythm;
- coordination;
- spatial awareness;
- movement confidence.

Before using the mini trampoline, participants should demonstrate basic controlled landing on the floor.



Suggested progression logic

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
approach familiarisation ⌄ simple take-off ⌄ straight jump ⌄ controlled two-foot landing	greater rhythm and approach demands ⌄ changes in arm position ⌄ simple shape changes during flight	more demanding coordinated flight tasks or combinations appropriate to participant competence The objective is not maximum height.

A successful jump ends with a controlled landing.
This principle should remain constant throughout all levels.



[7.5] SPRINGBOARD

The springboard provides an opportunity to explore the relationship between approach, take-off, elastic response and landing.

Primary movement areas

- take-off mechanics;
- explosive movement;
- body alignment;
- coordination;
- jumping confidence;
- preparation for vaulting tasks.

The springboard should first be introduced independently of complex vaulting.

Participants need time to understand where and how to contact the board and how to control the movement that follows.



Suggested progression logic

Level 1

standing springboard familiarisation
⌄
small rebounds
⌄
two-foot take-off
⌄
controlled landing

Level 2

short approach
⌄
coordinated take-off
⌄
jump to landing surface
⌄
simple support-related tasks

Level 3

integration with progressively more demanding vaulting tasks.

The springboard becomes particularly useful when combined with the Swedish box and mini horse, but the quality of take-off should be established before greater apparatus complexity is introduced.



[7.6] SWEDISH BOX WITH SPRINGBOARD

The Swedish box provides a highly adaptable environment for learning support and introductory vaulting.

Its height can be modified, individual sections can be used separately, and the apparatus can support tasks ranging from stepping and climbing to progressively more dynamic vaulting actions.

Primary movement areas

- progressive vaulting;
- upper-body support;
- coordination;
- agility;
- take-off;
- landing;
- movement confidence.



Suggested progression logic

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
step-up and over ⌄ supported movement across low box ⌄ hands-on support ⌄ controlled dismount	springboard approach ⌄ supported passage over apparatus ⌄ introductory vaulting patterns	more dynamic vaulting variations with appropriate support, flight and controlled landing. For AGLE, the Swedish box is particularly valuable because the environment can be modified before the movement itself needs to change.

Reducing apparatus height may transform an inaccessible task into an achievable one while maintaining the same fundamental movement objective.



[7.7] MINI HORSE WITH SPRINGBOARD

The mini horse introduces a more gymnastics-specific vaulting environment.

Because it offers less structural flexibility than the Swedish box, it should generally be introduced after participants have established confidence with take-off, hand support and landing.

Primary movement areas

- basic vaulting;
- body support;
- coordination;
- agility;
- controlled landing.

Suggested progression logic

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
apparatus familiarisation ⌄ supported passage with minimal flight ⌄ low-complexity hand-support tasks	short approach and springboard take-off ⌄ controlled support and passage over the apparatus	more dynamic recreational vaulting variations where participant readiness permits.

The objective is not to reproduce competitive vaulting technique. The mini horse should be retained only where it provides an appropriate progression from simpler AGLE environments.





[7.8] OLYMPIC TRAMPOLINE

The Olympic trampoline provides a unique dynamic environment in which participants experience repeated elastic bouncing and short periods of flight.

Primary movement areas

- bouncing;
- rhythm;
- dynamic balance;
- spatial orientation;
- coordination;
- body control.

Because the apparatus can generate substantially greater height than floor or mini-trampoline activities, progression and supervision are particularly important.

Suggested progression logic

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
apparatus familiarisation ⌄ controlled low bouncing ⌄ stop position ⌄ basic body control	rhythmic repeated bouncing ⌄ simple changes in body position ⌄ controlled directional or coordination tasks	more demanding combinations and spatial tasks appropriate to recreational participants.

The ability to **stop bouncing under control** is as important as the ability to initiate it. Increasing height should never be treated as the primary indicator of progress.





[7.9] PARALLEL BARS

Parallel bars provide opportunities for body-weight support, shoulder stability and trunk control.

Primary movement areas

- support;
- upper-body strength;
- shoulder-girdle stability;
- core control;
- balance;
- body-weight management.

For adults with limited upper-body strength, full body-weight support may initially be inappropriate. Equipment height, foot support and assistance should therefore be modified.



Suggested progression logic

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
supported standing tasks ⌄ partial body-weight support ⌄ stable support positions	fuller support ⌄ weight transfer ⌄ controlled movement within support ⌄ simple locomotion or swing preparation	more demanding dynamic support and movement combinations.

The coach should monitor shoulder position and control throughout. If stable support cannot be maintained, reducing body-weight demand is preferable to compensatory execution.



[7.10] ASYMMETRIC BARS / HIGH BAR

Bars create opportunities for hanging, pulling, grip development and controlled rotation. For AGLE, the primary value of the bar lies in its capacity to introduce movement in **suspension,** a condition largely absent from contemporary adult daily life.

Primary movement areas

- hanging;
- grip;
- pulling;
- shoulder control;
- rotation;
- mobility;
- body control.



Suggested progression logic

Level 1

supported grip
⌄
partial hanging
⌄
brief controlled suspension
⌄
basic body positions

Level 2

longer hanging
⌄
weight shifts
⌄
assisted pulling
⌄
introductory controlled rotational movement

Level 3

more demanding pulling, suspension and recreational movement combinations.

The participant does not need to perform a pull-up before hanging activities can be useful. Foot support, lower bars and assistance can substantially reduce body-weight demand.



[7.11] RINGS

Rings provide a highly adaptable environment for pulling, supporting and stabilising the body. Unlike fixed bars, rings can move independently, increasing the requirement for active control but also allowing hand and arm position to adjust naturally.

Primary movement areas

- hanging;
- support;
- functional upper-body strength;
- core stability;
- postural control;
- balance;
- body control.

Suggested progression logic

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
standing supported ring exercises ⌄ assisted leaning/pulling ⌄ partial body-weight support	increased body-weight loading ⌄ controlled pulling ⌄ supported hanging ⌄ stable support-related tasks	more demanding suspension, support and integrated body-control tasks.

Ring height and body angle provide simple ways of adjusting difficulty. For example, a standing ring row can progress by gradually changing the participant's body angle, thereby increasing the proportion of body mass that must be controlled. This makes rings particularly compatible with the adaptive philosophy of AGLE.



MOBILITY, FLEXIBILITY AND RECOVERY

Mobility and flexibility are important components of the Active Balance Gym programme. Gymnastics-based movement requires participants to move through different body positions, support or suspend body weight, land safely, rotate, balance and interact with different apparatus. Adequate movement range helps participants perform these tasks comfortably and with appropriate control. Within AGLE, however, the objective is not to achieve the extreme flexibility associated with competitive gymnastics. The purpose is much more functional: **Participants should have sufficient movement range to perform the selected task comfortably, safely and with control.** Mobility work therefore supports the gymnastics-based content of the programme rather than existing as a separate goal. Shoulder mobility contributes to hanging and supporting tasks; hip and ankle mobility support squatting, balancing and landing; trunk mobility facilitates rotation and transitions between body positions. Mobility exercises can be incorporated throughout an AGLE session, particularly during movement preparation and cool-down.



[8.1] THE ROLE OF MOBILITY IN AGLE

Mobility contributes to the ability to access and control the body positions required during movement. Within AGLE, mobility work has three main functions:

PREPARE
Prepare the participant for the movement demands of the session.
ENABLE
Provide sufficient movement range for effective execution of gymnastics-based tasks.
RESTORE
Provide lower-intensity movement at the end of the session and support the transition from training to recovery.

Mobility should therefore be related to the exercises planned for the session. If the main content involves hanging and supporting, greater attention can be given to the shoulders and upper body. If the session emphasises jumping, landing and balance, ankle, hip and lower-body mobility become particularly relevant. This task-specific approach is preferable to performing the same stretching routine before every session.

[8.2] MOBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Although the terms are often used interchangeably, mobility and flexibility can be distinguished for practical purposes.

Flexibility refers primarily to the available range of motion.
Mobility refers more broadly to the ability to access and control movement through an appropriate range.

For AGLE, mobility is therefore particularly important. A participant may have sufficient passive flexibility but still find it difficult to actively control a particular position. Conversely, successful recreational gymnastics does not require maximal flexibility. The aim is: **usable range of motion rather than maximal range of motion.** This principle should guide both exercise selection and progression.

[8.3] DYNAMIC MOBILITY AND STRETCHING

Dynamic mobility involves controlled movement through an available range of motion. Examples include:

- arm circles;
- controlled trunk rotations;
- leg swings;
- ankle movements;
- dynamic lunges;
- squat-based mobility;
- movement between different support positions.

Dynamic mobility is particularly appropriate during the **warm-up and movement preparation** phase because it allows mobility to be combined with increasing movement intensity, coordination and body awareness. The movements should begin with comfortable amplitudes and gradually increase where appropriate. The objective is not to force greater range but to prepare the participant for the movement demands that follow. A simple principle is:

SMALL	❯	**LARGER RANGE**
SLOW	❯	**MORE DYNAMIC**
GENERAL	❯	**TASK-SPECIFIC**

[8.4] STATIC STRETCHING

Static stretching involves moving into a position in which a muscle or muscle group is lengthened and maintaining that position for a period of time. The current AGLE material already includes static stretching as one of the basic stretching methods used within the programme. Static stretching can be particularly useful when the objective is specifically to address flexibility or during the lower-intensity part of a session. Within AGLE, static stretching should be:

- controlled;
- comfortable;
- gradual;
- free of pain;
- appropriate to the participant.

Participants should avoid bouncing or forcing the body into positions beyond a comfortable range. Static stretching does not need to be complex. A small number of well-selected exercises targeting areas relevant to gymnastics-based movement is sufficient.

[8.5] PNF STRETCHING

The existing AGLE material also includes **proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF)** as a stretching method. For the purposes of this handbook, an extensive theoretical explanation is unnecessary. In practice, PNF stretching combines a stretching position with a brief muscular contraction followed by relaxation and a subsequent controlled increase in range. A simplified sequence is:

STRETCH ❯ **CONTRACT** ❯ **RELAX** ❯ **MOVE GENTLY INTO THE NEW RANGE**

PNF should be used selectively rather than as a required component of every AGLE session. It may be appropriate when flexibility development is a specific objective and when participants understand the technique. The contraction and subsequent stretch should remain controlled and pain-free.

For most regular AGLE sessions, dynamic mobility and simple static stretching will provide the principal mobility content.

[8.6] UPPER-BODY AND SHOULDER MOBILITY

Shoulder mobility is particularly relevant to gymnastics because many activities require the arms to move overhead or support part of the body weight. This includes:

- hanging from bars or rings;
- support on parallel bars;
- floor support;
- assisted inversion;
- selected vaulting activities.

Useful movement categories include:

- **shoulder flexion:** raising the arms overhead;
- **shoulder rotation:** controlled internal and external rotation;
- **scapular movement:** controlled movement of the shoulder blades;
- **chest and anterior shoulder mobility:** opening positions relevant to posture and upper-body movement.

Exercises should be selected according to the participant's available range and the demands of the planned gymnastics task. Mobility should not be forced simply to reproduce the positions observed in competitive gymnastics.

[8.7] TRUNK AND SPINAL MOBILITY

The trunk connects upper- and lower-body movement and contributes to changes in body orientation. AGLE activities may involve:

- flexion;
- extension;
- lateral movement;
- rotation;
- combinations of these movements.

Trunk mobility is particularly relevant to rolling, turning, transitions between body positions and general movement variability. Appropriate exercises can include controlled trunk rotations, flexion–extension movements and lateral movements performed in standing, sitting, kneeling or quadrupedal positions. The emphasis should remain on **comfortable and controlled movement**, rather than achieving maximal spinal range.

[8.8] HIP MOBILITY

The hips contribute to many fundamental AGLE tasks, including:

- squatting;
- jumping;
- landing;
- balancing;
- rolling;
- stepping;
- changing body position.

Hip mobility exercises should therefore involve several movement directions rather than focusing exclusively on one muscle group. Relevant patterns include:

- hip flexion;
- hip extension;
- abduction and adduction;
- internal and external rotation.

Lunges, squat positions, leg movements and floor-based hip rotations provide practical ways of incorporating these movements into the programme.

[8.9] LOWER-BODY MOBILITY

Lower-body mobility is particularly important for balance, jumping and landing. Attention should be given to the interaction between the **HIPS – KNEES – ANKLES,** rather than treating each joint in isolation. Ankle mobility is particularly relevant when participants need to control deeper positions during squatting or landing.

Lower-body mobility can be incorporated through:

- ankle rocking;
- calf mobility;
- controlled squats;
- lunges;
- hamstring mobility;
- dynamic leg movements.

These exercises can simultaneously prepare participants for the main movement content.

[8.10] MOBILITY DURING THE WARM-UP

Mobility should form part of the AGLE warm-up rather than automatically becoming a separate stretching block. A useful sequence is:

GENERAL MOVEMENT → **DYNAMIC MOBILITY** → **MOVEMENT PREPARATION** → **APPARATUS-SPECIFIC PREPARATION**

For example, before a session focusing on bars and rings:
general locomotion

- shoulder circles and trunk mobility
- scapular control and support positions
- assisted hanging
- main exercises.

Before a jumping and landing session:
general locomotion

- ankle and hip mobility
- squats and lunges
- low jumping and landing
- springboard or trampoline activity.

The warm-up therefore prepares participants for **what they are about to do,** rather than following an identical routine regardless of session content.

[8.11] MOBILITY AND STRETCHING DURING THE COOL-DOWN

The end of the session provides an opportunity to gradually reduce exercise intensity. Mobility and stretching can be used to create a controlled transition from the main gymnastics content towards rest. A simple AGLE cool-down may include:

LOW-INTENSITY MOVEMENT → **CONTROLLED MOBILITY** → **SELECTED STATIC STRETCHING** → **RELAXED BREATHING**

The cool-down does not need to be long or technically complex. Exercises should primarily address body regions that were meaningfully involved during the session and provide participants with a calm, comfortable conclusion to training.

[8.12] RECOVERY AND RELAXATION

Recovery is part of the training process. For the target population of Active Balance Gym, this is particularly relevant because participants combine exercise with occupational and everyday demands. The same participant may arrive at different sessions with different levels of fatigue and readiness.

AGLE therefore does not treat fatigue as the objective of training. A successful session should provide sufficient stimulus while allowing participants to maintain movement quality and return for subsequent sessions ready to participate. At the end of training, simple recovery strategies can include:

- gradually reducing movement intensity;
- low-intensity mobility;
- comfortable stretching;
- relaxed breathing;
- brief awareness of general physical state.

The coach can also use this period to encourage participants to reflect on how they responded to the session.

Recovery extends beyond the gym. Regular physical activity should be considered together with appropriate rest and the broader demands of daily life. Within AGLE **More fatigue does not necessarily mean a better session.** The objective is consistent, progressive and sustainable participation.

[8.13] AGLE MOBILITY EXERCISE LIBRARY

The mobility component should remain deliberately compact. Rather than providing a large catalogue of stretching exercises, the handbook can present a core set that addresses the movement demands most relevant to AGLE.

#	EXERCISE / EXERCISE FAMILY	PRIMARY MOVEMENT GOAL	SUGGESTED PROGRESSION
1	**Neck and Head Controlled Movements**	gentle cervical mobility	small range → comfortable multidirectional movement
2	**Shoulder Circles**	shoulder mobility	small circles → larger controlled circles
3	**Overhead Shoulder Reach**	shoulder flexion	bilateral reach → greater controlled range
4	**Shoulder Rotation**	rotational mobility	elbows close to body → different arm positions
5	**Scapular Control**	shoulder-girdle mobility/ control	standing → quadruped → support
6	**Trunk Rotation**	rotational mobility	standing → wider range → integrated movement
7	**Trunk Flexion–Extension**	trunk mobility	small range → controlled larger range
8	**Lateral Trunk Movement**	lateral mobility	standing reach → combined movement
9	**Quadruped Spinal Mobility**	trunk/spinal control	basic flexion–extension → combined movement
10	**Hip Rotation**	hip mobility	supported → floor-based → active controlled range
11	**Dynamic Lunge**	hip mobility	short range → deeper lunge → reach/rotation
12	**Squat Mobility**	hip–knee–ankle mobility	supported squat → independent → deeper controlled position
13	**Leg Swings**	dynamic hip mobility	supported small swings → larger controlled swings
14	**Ankle Rocking / Dorsiflexion**	ankle mobility	bilateral → unilateral → integrated with lunge/squat
15	**Posterior-Chain Stretch**	lower-body flexibility	supported → standing/seated → individual comfortable range

DESIGNING AN AGLE TRAINING SESSION

The AGLE Exercise Library provides coaches with a wide range of gymnastics-based movement opportunities. However, individual exercises do not constitute a programme. They need to be selected, combined and adapted within a structured training session. An effective AGLE session should have a **clear movement objective,** provide sufficient opportunities for learning and practice, accommodate participants with different abilities and maintain an appropriate balance between challenge, safety and enjoyment. Within the Active Balance Gym project, training is organised as **60-minute sessions,** delivered twice per week over a six-week period. The individual session therefore represents the basic practical unit through which the AGLE methodology is implemented.

Session planning should not begin by asking:
Which apparatus will we use today?

Instead, the coach should first ask:
What do we want participants to experience, practise and develop during this session?

The apparatus and exercises are then selected to support that objective.



A simple planning sequence can be used:

OBJECTIVE
↓
PARTICIPANTS
↓
MOVEMENT CONTENT
↓
EXERCISE SELECTION
↓
ADAPTATION
↓
LOAD AND ORGANISATION
↓
REFLECTION AND PROGRESSION

This approach ensures that the session remains participant-centred rather than apparatus-centred.

[9.1] PRINCIPLES OF AGLE SESSION PLANNING

Every AGLE session should follow several basic principles.

Define a clear primary objective
A session should have one dominant movement theme.
Examples include:

- balance and postural control;
- support and upper-body strength;
- jumping and landing;
- coordination and agility;
- rotation and spatial orientation;
- integrated body control.

Secondary objectives can also be included, but too many unrelated objectives may make the session fragmented. A session focused primarily on **balance and postural control,** for example, may also develop lower-limb strength and coordination. These secondary effects do not require separate training blocks.

Build the session around movement capacities
The same capacity can be developed using several apparatus.

For example:

BALANCE AND POSTURAL CONTROL

- floor balance
- beam walking
- single-leg tasks
- controlled landing.

Similarly:

SUPPORT AND BODY CONTROL

- floor support
- Swedish box support
- parallel bars
- rings.

This approach creates continuity between exercises.

Match challenge to participant readiness
Exercises should be selected according to the current abilities of the group, with appropriate adaptations available for individuals. The AGLE levels provide a useful framework:



However, an entire group does not need to work at the same level. Participants can perform different variations of the same exercise family while working towards the same movement objective.

Plan progression and regression in advance
For every major exercise, the coach should know:



This allows the coach to respond immediately when an exercise is either too difficult or insufficiently challenging.

Keep the session coherent
More exercises do not automatically create a better session.
A smaller number of well-selected tasks with sufficient practice time is generally preferable to moving rapidly through many unrelated exercises.

Variety should support the objective—not replace it.

[9.2] STRUCTURE OF A 60-MINUTE AGLE SESSION

A consistent general structure can help coaches organise training while still allowing considerable flexibility in content.

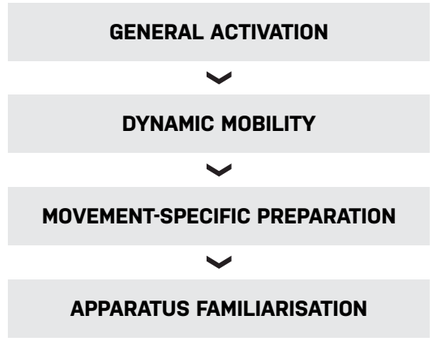
For Active Balance Gym, the following model can be used as a practical framework:

#	SESSION COMPONENT	APPROX. DURATION	MAIN PURPOSE
1	Introduction & readiness**	3–5 min	welcome, session objective, participant readiness
2	Warm-up & movement preparation**	8–10 min	general activation, dynamic mobility, preparation
3	Fundamental movement preparation**	8–10 min	prepare movement patterns used in main content
4	Main AGLE content**	25–30 min	gymnastics-based learning and physical stimulus
5	Integrated movement challenge**	5–7 min	combine capacities, movement or apparatus
6	Cool-down & reflection**	5 min	mobility, relaxation, brief participant reflection

The exact duration of each component can vary according to the objectives and characteristics of the session. A session emphasising new or technically unfamiliar movements may require more time for movement preparation and teaching. A session using familiar tasks may devote more time to continuous practice or an integrated movement circuit. The 60-minute structure should therefore be understood as a **framework rather than a rigid timetable.**

[9.3] WARM-UP AND MOVEMENT PREPARATION

The warm-up prepares participants physically and mentally for the session. Within AGLE, it should gradually progress from general movement towards the specific demands of the main content. A useful sequence is:



General activation may include walking, light jogging, changes of direction or simple whole-body movements. Dynamic mobility should then address the body regions most relevant to the planned content. For example, a session involving bars and rings may emphasise:

- shoulder mobility;
- scapular movement;
- trunk control;
- wrist preparation;
- introductory support and hanging.

A jumping session may emphasise:

- ankle mobility;
- hip mobility;
- squatting;
- low-level bouncing;
- landing positions.

This connects the mobility principles presented in Chapter 8 directly with the gymnastics content. The warm-up should therefore not be identical in every session. **Prepare participants for what they are going to do.**

[9.4] FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT PREPARATION

Before progressing to the main apparatus or more demanding exercise variations, participants should practise the fundamental movement pattern under simpler conditions. This component creates a bridge between the general warm-up and the main AGLE content.

For example:

Jumping session

- landing position
- small floor jumps
- repeated low jumps
- springboard or trampoline.

Balance session

- weight transfer
- single-leg stance
- floor-line walking
- balance beam.

Rolling session

- rounded body position
- rocking
- assisted/inclined rolling
- independent rolling.

Upper-body support session

- quadrupedal support
- elevated support
- body-weight transfer
- parallel bars or rings.

The principle is: **Prepare the movement before increasing the environmental demand.** This is particularly important for adults with little or no recent gymnastics experience.

[9.5] MAIN GYMNASTICS-BASED CONTENT

The main part of the session provides the greatest opportunity for practising the selected movement objective. Approximately **two to four exercise families** are generally sufficient for one main training block. Each exercise family can contain several variations, allowing participants to work at different levels without requiring completely different exercises.

For example, a session focused on **balance and body control** could include:

EXERCISE FAMILY 1 – STATIC BALANCE

FLOOR → LOW BEAM → BEAM

EXERCISE FAMILY 2 – BEAM LOCOMOTION

FORWARD → SIDEWAYS → BACKWARD

EXERCISE FAMILY 3 – SINGLE-LEG BALANCE

SUPPORTED → INDEPENDENT → COMBINED WITH LEG MOVEMENT

EXERCISE FAMILY 4 – BALANCE AND LANDING

STEP-DOWN → LOW JUMP → JUMP-AND-STICK

Participants can therefore share the same session objective while performing different variations.

Practice organisation

The main content can be organised in several ways:

GROUP PRACTICE
All participants work on the same task with individual variations.
STATIONS
Small groups rotate between several apparatus or exercise families.
PAIRED PRACTICE
Participants work in pairs where appropriate, particularly for observation or simple assistance.
CIRCUIT FORMAT
Several familiar tasks are combined into a continuous sequence.

For technically unfamiliar movements, group or station-based teaching may be preferable because it allows greater coach supervision. Circuit organisation is more appropriate when participants already understand the exercises.

[9.6] INTEGRATING DIFFERENT MOVEMENT CAPACITIES

Although a session should have a primary objective, gymnastics naturally integrates several physical and perceptual capacities.

A balance task may simultaneously involve:

BALANCE + **COORDINATION** + **LOWER-BODY CONTROL** + **CONCENTRATION**

A hanging task may involve:

GRIP + **UPPER-BODY STRENGTH** + **SHOULDER CONTROL** + **CORE STABILITY**

A jumping task may involve:

POWER + **COORDINATION** + **SPATIAL ORIENTATION** + **LANDING CONTROL**

This integration is one of the strengths of gymnastics-based exercise. Coaches therefore do not need to create a separate training block for every physical capacity. Instead, exercise selection can be used to emphasise particular combinations. For example:

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE	SECONDARY CAPACITIES
Balance	coordination, lower-limb stability, concentration
Support	strength, shoulder stability, trunk control
Hanging	grip, pulling strength, body awareness
Jumping	coordination, power, landing control
Rolling	spatial orientation, mobility, coordination
Vaulting	agility, support, jumping, landing
Trampoline	rhythm, dynamic balance, spatial orientation

[9.7] MANAGING EXERCISE INTENSITY AND VOLUME

AGLE is not intended to maximise fatigue. The amount of exercise should be sufficient to provide a meaningful physical and motor-learning stimulus while allowing participants to maintain appropriate movement control. This is particularly important for technically demanding tasks. When fatigue begins to substantially affect balance, landing, support, grip or coordination, continuing the same task may no longer provide useful practice.

The coach can manage training load through:

- number of repetitions;
- duration of exercise;
- number of sets;
- rest intervals;
- body-weight contribution;
- movement complexity;
- apparatus height;
- movement speed;
- circuit duration.

Different exercise types also require different approaches.

SKILL-ORIENTED EXERCISES

For rolling, balancing, vaulting and unfamiliar coordination tasks:
fewer high-quality repetitions + sufficient recovery
are preferable to large numbers of poorly controlled repetitions.

STRENGTH-ORIENTED EXERCISES

For support, hanging and pulling tasks, volume should be adjusted to the participant's capacity to maintain appropriate body control.

CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Simple locomotor, mobility or familiar circuit tasks can be performed for longer periods where appropriate.

The coach should observe movement quality throughout.
When fatigue removes control, the task should be adapted.

[9.8] MANAGING HETEROGENEOUS GROUPS

One of the main practical challenges of adult recreational exercise is that participants may have very different abilities. AGLE addresses this through **parallel exercise variations.**

Instead of preparing completely different programmes for each participant, the coach can establish several versions of the same movement objective.

For example:

Hanging

Option A: feet-supported hanging
Option B: partial body-weight hang
Option C: full hang
Option D: active hang or assisted pulling.

Balance

Option A: floor line
Option B: low beam
Option C: standard beam
Option D: beam + additional movement task.

Support

Option A: elevated support
Option B: lower support
Option C: parallel-bar support
Option D: dynamic weight transfer.

This can be summarised as:
ONE OBJECTIVE – MULTIPLE ENTRY POINTS
Participants can therefore train together without being required to perform identical exercises.

Avoid ability labels
The Beginner–Intermediate–Advanced classification describes exercise difficulty, not participant identity. Coaches should therefore avoid unnecessarily labelling participants as "beginners" or "advanced". A participant may need an introductory variation in one movement family and a demanding variation in another.

[9.9] ADAPTING SESSIONS TO AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT

The full Active Balance Gym environment includes a broad range of gymnastics apparatus, but not every organisation will have access to all equipment. This should not prevent implementation of the basic AGLE approach. The key is to preserve the **movement objective,** even when the apparatus changes.

For example:

BALANCE BEAM unavailable

- floor line
- low stable bench
- other suitable narrow stable surface.

RINGS unavailable

- bar-assisted pulling
- suitable suspension equipment where safely installed.

AIRTRACK unavailable

- gymnastics mats.

SWEDISH BOX unavailable

- appropriately stable raised platform or other suitable gymnastics equipment.

However, equipment substitution must never compromise safety.
Not every object can safely replace certified gymnastics apparatus, particularly for:

- suspension;
- elevated support;
- jumping;
- vaulting;
- dynamic loading.

The coach must therefore distinguish between:

FUNCTIONAL SUBSTITUTION

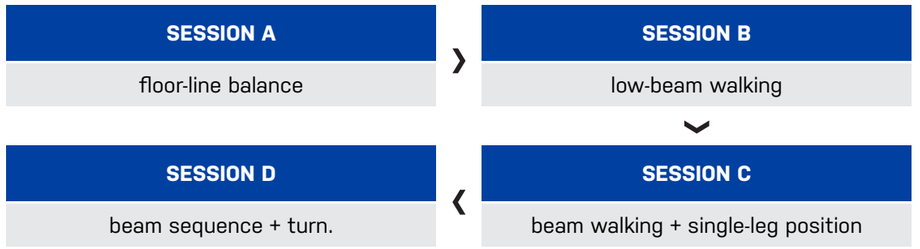
and

UNSAFE IMPROVISATION

Adapt the programme to the environment, but never adapt safety standards to inadequate equipment.

[9.10] PROGRESSION BETWEEN SESSIONS

Progression should occur not only within an individual exercise but also across the programme.
A movement introduced in one session can reappear later under slightly more demanding conditions.
For example:



This creates continuity and allows participants to recognise their own development.

Progression between sessions can involve:

- greater independence;
- reduced assistance;
- greater range;
- increased body-weight loading;
- more dynamic movement;
- additional movement components;
- greater environmental variability;
- integration of previously separate skills.

However, progression should not occur simply because the programme has moved to the next week. The principle established in Chapter 4 remains:

Progress according to readiness, not according to the calendar.
A participant can continue using an earlier variation while others progress. This flexibility is essential to the AGLE model.

[9.11] THE INTEGRATED MOVEMENT CHALLENGE

Near the end of the main part of a session, participants can be given an opportunity to combine previously practised movements. The **integrated movement challenge** is not a test or competition. It is a short activity that connects different movement experiences.

For example:

BALANCE CHALLENGE

- floor locomotion
- low beam
- single-leg position
- controlled step-down landing.

Or:

SUPPORT AND HANG CHALLENGE

- floor support
- Swedish box transfer
- supported hang
- ring row.

Or:

JUMPING CHALLENGE

- low floor jumps
- springboard
- controlled landing
- balance position.

The challenge can also be organised as a short circuit.
Its purpose is to:

- integrate movement capacities;
- increase variety;
- provide a sense of accomplishment;
- encourage movement problem-solving;
- create an enjoyable conclusion to the main training content.

Participants can use different difficulty levels within the same challenge. The objective is successful participation, not comparison between participants.

[9.12] COOL-DOWN AND REFLECTION

The final part of the session should gradually reduce intensity.
As already described, this can include:

- low-intensity movement;
- mobility;
- selected static stretching;
- relaxed breathing.

However, the final minutes of an AGLE session can also serve another purpose: **reflection.**

The coach can briefly ask participants:

- Which exercise felt most comfortable today?
- Which movement was challenging?
- Did any movement cause discomfort?
- Where did you notice progress?
- Which exercise would you like to practise again?

This does not need to become a formal discussion after every session. Even one short question can provide useful information about participant experience and help the coach plan subsequent sessions. It also reinforces the idea that participants are active contributors to the learning process.

[9.13] PRACTICAL AGLE SESSION-PLANNING TEMPLATE

To make the methodology directly usable, each session can be planned using a standard template.

AGLE SESSION PLAN

Session: _____

Primary movement objective: _____

Secondary objectives: _____

Equipment:

1. INTRODUCTION & READINESS | 3–5 min

Session objective: _____
Participant considerations: _____

2. WARM-UP & MOVEMENT PREPARATION | 8–10 min

General activation: _____
Dynamic mobility: _____
Task-specific preparation: _____

3. FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT PREPARATION | 8–10 min

Exercise family: _____
Easier option: _____
Progression: _____

4. MAIN AGLE CONTENT | 25–30 min

Exercise family 1: _____
Adaptation: _____
Exercise family 2: _____
Adaptation: _____
Exercise family 3: _____
Adaptation: _____
Exercise family 4 – if appropriate: _____

5. INTEGRATED MOVEMENT CHALLENGE | 5–7 min

_____

6. COOL-DOWN & REFLECTION | ~5 min

Mobility/stretching: _____
Reflection: _____

COACH NOTES

What worked well? _____
What should be adapted next time? _____
Participants requiring individual adaptation: _____
Potential progression for the next session: _____

[9.14] A SIMPLE PLANNING EXAMPLE

To illustrate the model, a session with the primary objective **Balance and Postural Control** could be organised as follows:

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE
Balance and postural control

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES
Coordination, lower-limb stability, movement confidence

WARM-UP

- general locomotion
- direction changes
- dynamic ankle and hip mobility
- weight-transfer activities.

FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT PREPARATION

- single-leg stance
- tandem stance
- floor-line walking.

MAIN AGLE CONTENT

1. BEAM FAMILIARISATION AND WALKING

FLOOR LINE → LOW BEAM → STANDARD BEAM

2. SINGLE-LEG BALANCE

SUPPORTED → INDEPENDENT → DIFFERENT FREE-LEG POSITIONS

3. BEAM TURNS

QUARTER TURN → HALF TURN → TURN DURING LOCOMOTION

4. LANDING AND BALANCE

STEP-DOWN → LOW JUMP → JUMP-AND-STICK

INTEGRATED MOVEMENT CHALLENGE

- walk
- beam
- balance position
- turn
- step/jump down
- stable landing.

COOL-DOWN

- ankle mobility
- hip mobility
- posterior-chain stretching
- relaxed breathing.

The entire group therefore works towards the same objective while individual participants use different levels of difficulty.

From a single session to a programme

A well-designed AGLE session combines **purpose, structure and adaptability.** The coach identifies the movement objective, prepares participants for the required movement, selects appropriate exercise families, provides different entry points, manages load and observes how participants respond.

The process can be summarised as:

DEFINE
What do we want to develop?

⌄

PREPARE
What movement does the participant need?

⌄

PRACTISE
Which exercise families provide that experience?

⌄

ADAPT
Which version is appropriate?

⌄

INTEGRATE
Can movements be combined?

⌄

REFLECT
What should happen next?

A single session, however, represents only one part of the learning process. The next challenge is to organise individual sessions so that movement experiences develop systematically across the entire intervention. This leads to the practical core of the Active Balance Gym curriculum:

THE 6-WEEK ACTIVE BALANCE GYM PROGRAMME

The **6-week Active Balance Gym programme** translates the AGLE methodology into a structured and directly applicable intervention for employed adults aged 30–50.

The programme consists of **6 weeks × 2 sessions per week × 60 minutes = 12 AGLE sessions.** The 12-session curriculum provides a structured implementation model rather than a rigid prescription. Coaches should retain the sequence of programme objectives while adapting individual tasks, exercise levels and progressions according to participant readiness and response.

The purpose of the programme is not to teach competitive gymnastics skills within six weeks. Instead, gymnastics apparatus, fundamental movement patterns and progressive learning environments are used to improve movement competence, balance, strength, mobility, coordination, body control and confidence in movement.

The programme follows the principles established in the previous chapters:

- participant-centred exercise selection;
- safe and progressive learning;
- individual adaptation;
- movement quality before complexity;
- gradual reduction of assistance;
- variation of movement and equipment;
- progression according to readiness;
- positive movement experiences and enjoyment.

The twelve sessions form a **progressive curriculum** rather than twelve independent workouts. Fundamental movement patterns introduced during the first weeks are revisited and developed under progressively more demanding conditions.

The general progression is:

FAMILIARISE → **CONTROL** → **DEVELOP** → **COMBINE** → **ADAPT** → **INTEGRATE**

[10.1] PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The programme progresses through six thematic weeks.

WEEK	MAIN THEME	PRIMARY MOVEMENT FOCUS
1	Introduction to AGLE and movement confidence	fundamental movement, apparatus familiarisation, basic control
2	Balance and postural control	static/dynamic balance, stability, controlled landing
3	Strength, support and body control	support, hanging, pulling, trunk and shoulder control
4	Jumping, landing and agility	take-off, landing, rhythm, dynamic coordination
5	Coordination, rotation and spatial orientation	rolling, rotation, body orientation, movement combinations
6	Integrated gymnastics and movement challenge	integration, individual progression, movement confidence

The themes provide emphasis rather than strict separation. Balance, mobility, coordination and body control occur throughout the programme. Similarly, previously learned movements are intentionally repeated. **Repetition provides familiarity. Progression provides development. Variability provides adaptability.**

WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION TO AGLE AND MOVEMENT CONFIDENCE

The first week introduces participants to AGLE and establishes the foundations for subsequent training.

The main objectives are to become familiar with gymnastics-based movement, experience selected apparatus and establish basic movement patterns without unnecessary performance pressure.

Session 1 | Discovering AGLE

Primary objective	Secondary objectives	Equipment
Movement familiarisation and confidence.	Body awareness, mobility, balance and basic movement control.	Mats / airtrack, low balance beam, rings or bars.

Introduction and readiness — 5 min

Briefly introduce:

- the purpose of AGLE;
- the structure of the programme;
- the principle of individual adaptation;
- communication about discomfort and uncertainty.

The first session should clearly establish that participants are **not expected to perform the same exercise at the same level.**

Warm-up and movement preparation — 10 min

- walking and light locomotion;
- direction changes;
- shoulder circles;
- trunk rotations;
- dynamic lunges;
- squat mobility;
- ankle mobility.

Fundamental movement preparation — 10 min

Body positions and floor movement

- standing → squat → kneeling → quadruped;
- weight transfer;
- basic support positions;
- rocking;
- controlled return to standing.

Main AGLE content — 25 min

01 | Airtrack / mat familiarisation	02 | Basic balance
walking → basic locomotion → reactive bouncing.	floor stance → tandem stance → single-leg stance.
03 | Beam familiarisation	**04 | Supported upper-body activity**
floor line → low beam → forward walking.	supported ring/bar grip → partial body-weight support.

Integrated movement challenge | Short sequence: — 5 min

WALK → LOW BEAM → BALANCE → MAT → SUPPORT POSITION → STAND

Participants select the appropriate variation.

Cool-down and reflection — 5 min

Shoulder and hip mobility, relaxed breathing.

Reflection:
Which movement felt most unfamiliar and which felt most comfortable?

Session 2 | Fundamental Movement Patterns

Primary objective	Secondary objectives	Equipment
Develop basic control across different movement patterns.	Support, balance, landing and spatial awareness.	Mats / airtrack, low beam, low raised surface or Swedish box, bars/rings.

Warm-up — 10 min

General locomotion followed by dynamic mobility.
Introduce simple:

- low bouncing;
- squat-to-stand;
- weight transfer;
- arm-support positions.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min

rocking

- rounded-back control
- squat return.

Landing position

- small jump
- controlled jump-and-stick.

Main AGLE content — 25 min

01 | Rocking / introductory rolling family	02 | Support family
rocking → assisted/inclined roll where appropriate.	quadruped → elevated support → weight transfer.
03 | Beam walking	**04 | Basic hanging/pulling**
forward → sideways where appropriate.	supported grip → partial hang → assisted pulling.

Integrated challenge — 10 min

BALANCE → SUPPORT → ROLLING → LANDING

The purpose is familiarisation rather than speed.

Cool-down — 5 min

Trunk, shoulder and posterior-chain mobility.

WEEK 2 – BALANCE AND POSTURAL CONTROL

Week 2 develops the basic balance experiences introduced during the first two sessions.

Progression occurs from relatively stable and predictable conditions towards dynamic balance, reduced bases of support and integration with landing.

Session 3 | Building Balance

Primary objective
Static and dynamic balance.

Secondary objectives
Lower-limb stability, posture, coordination and concentration.

Equipment
Mats, floor markings, balance beam.

Warm-up — 10 min

- multidirectional walking;
- changes of direction;
- ankle mobility;
- dynamic lunges;
- single-leg weight transfer.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min

bilateral stance

- tandem stance
- single-leg stance
- different arm positions.

Main AGLE content — 30 min

01 | Forward beam walking	02 | Sideways and backward walking
floor line → low beam → standard beam.	according to individual readiness.
03 | Single-leg balance	**04 | Lower-level beam positions**
supported → independent → free-leg variations.	partial squat → controlled lower position → return.

Integrated challenge — 5 min

WALK → STOP → SINGLE-LEG BALANCE → CONTINUE → CONTROLLED DISMOUNT

Cool-down — 5 min
Ankle, hip and posterior-chain mobility.

Session 4 | Dynamic Balance and Landing

Primary objective
Maintain balance while changing position and direction.

Secondary objectives
Landing control, coordination and movement confidence.

Equipment
Beam, mats, low platform/box.

Warm-up — 10 min
Dynamic locomotion, direction changes, low jumping and landing preparation.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min

- floor-line walking;
- tandem walking;
- 90° turns;
- small jump-and-stick;
- step-down landing.

Main AGLE content — 30 min

01 | Beam turns	02 | Dynamic beam locomotion
quarter turn → half turn.	forward → sideways → combinations.
03 | Beam movement sequence	**04 | Landing and balance**
walk → balance → turn → continue.	step-down → landing → stabilise → balance position.

Integrated challenge — 5 min

FLOOR LOCOMOTION → BEAM → TURN → CONTROLLED DISMOUNT → STABLE LANDING

Cool-down — 5 min
Lower-body mobility and relaxed breathing.

WEEK 3 – STRENGTH, SUPPORT AND BODY CONTROL

The third week shifts emphasis towards managing body weight.

The objective is not maximal strength performance but the ability to create and maintain controlled support, hanging and pulling positions.

Session 5 | Supporting the Body

Primary objective
Upper-body support and trunk control.

Secondary objectives
Shoulder stability, strength and body awareness.

Equipment
Mats, Swedish box, parallel bars, rings.

Warm-up — 10 min
- general activation;
- shoulder mobility;
- scapular control;
- wrist preparation;
- quadrupedal movement.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min
quadruped
- elevated support
- front support
- controlled weight transfer.

Main AGLE content — 30 min

01 | Basic floor support
stable support → weight shifts.

02 | Swedish box support
hands-on support → increased body-weight transfer.

03 | Parallel-bar support
feet-supported → partial loading → straight-arm support.

04 | Ring-supported positions
standing assisted support → increasing body-weight contribution.

Integrated challenge — 5 min

FLOOR SUPPORT → BOX TRANSFER → PARALLEL-BAR/ RING SUPPORT → CONTROLLED EXIT

Cool-down — 5 min
Shoulder, wrist, trunk and chest mobility.

Session 6 | Hanging and Pulling

Primary objective
Develop functional pulling capacity and controlled suspension.

Secondary objectives
Grip, shoulder control, trunk stability and confidence.

Equipment
High/asymmetric bars and rings.

Warm-up — 10 min
Shoulder mobility, scapular movement, grip preparation and supported pulling.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min
standing bar/ring grip
- body lean
- partial loading
- supported hang.

Main AGLE content — 30 min

01 | Grip and partial hang
feet-supported → greater unloading of the feet.

02 | Active hang / scapular control
supported → partial → full where appropriate.

03 | Assisted pulling
feet-assisted pull → partial pull → pull-to-hang.

04 | Ring row family
upright body → greater lean → increased body-weight demand.

Integrated challenge — 5 min

SUPPORT → PULL → BRIEF HANG → CONTROLLED RETURN

Participants choose the appropriate body-weight contribution.

Cool-down — 5 min
Shoulder, chest and upper-back mobility.

WEEK 4 – JUMPING, LANDING AND AGILITY

Week 4 introduces more dynamic movement.

The foundation remains landing control. Height and complexity are increased only when participants demonstrate sufficient control.

Session 7 | Rolling and Rotation

Primary objective
Controlled jumping and landing.

Secondary objectives
Lower-body power, rhythm and coordination.

Equipment
Mats/airtrack, springboard, mini trampoline.

Warm-up — 10 min

- locomotion;
- ankle and hip mobility;
- squats;
- low pogo jumps;
- landing positions.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min

landing position

- small bilateral jump
- repeated low jump
- jump-and-stick.

Main AGLE content — 30 min

01 | Reactive bouncing	02 | Springboard familiarisation
floor → airtrack.	pogo → standing take-off.
03 | Straight springboard jump	**04 | Mini-trampoline straight jump**
standing → short approach.	low jump → controlled flight → stable landing.

Integrated challenge — 5 min

APPROACH → TAKE-OFF → JUMP → LANDING → HOLD STABLE POSITION

Cool-down — 5 min
Ankle, hip and lower-body mobility.

Session 8 | Dynamic Jumping and Introductory Vaulting

Primary objective
Combine approach, take-off, support and landing.

Secondary objectives
Agility, coordination, movement confidence and body control.

Equipment
Springboard, Swedish box, mini horse where appropriate, mats.

Warm-up — 10 min
Dynamic locomotion, low jumps, landing and support preparation.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min

- springboard rhythm;
- hand-support position;
- reactive push-up/support;
- low obstacle passage.

Main AGLE content — 30 min

01 | Springboard jump progression	02 | Run-up–take-off–support
straight → simple shape variation.	short approach → hand contact → controlled return.
03 | Supported mount onto Swedish box	**04 | Basic vault family**
step → jump → springboard where appropriate.	low supported passage → assisted vaulting progression.

Mini horse is used only for participants who demonstrate appropriate readiness.

Integrated challenge — 5 min

SHORT APPROACH → SPRINGBOARD → SUPPORT/ PASSAGE → CONTROLLED LANDING

Cool-down — 5 min
Lower-body, shoulder and trunk mobility.

WEEK 5 – COORDINATION, ROTATION AND SPATIAL ORIENTATION

Week 5 develops the participant's ability to control movement while body orientation changes. Rotational tasks remain progressive and are performed close to the floor before more dynamic conditions are introduced.

Session 9 | Rolling and Rotation

Primary objective
Controlled rotation and spatial orientation.

Secondary objectives
Coordination, trunk control and movement confidence.

Equipment
Mats / airtrack, inclined mat where available.

Warm-up — 10 min
General locomotion, trunk mobility, rounded-body positions and quadrupedal movement.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min
rocking
- tuck rocking
- longitudinal-axis rolling
- squat return.

Main AGLE content — 30 min

01 | Longitudinal-axis rolling	02 | Forward roll family
flat surface → altered surface where appropriate.	inclined/assisted → independent.
03 | Backward rocking / backward-roll preparation	**04 | Roll-to-balance transition**
progress according to shoulder control and confidence.	roll/rock → stand → stable position.

Integrated challenge — 5 min

LOCOMOTION → CONTROLLED ROTATION → STAND → BALANCE

Cool-down — 5 min
Trunk, shoulder and hip mobility.

Session 10 | Coordination and Orientation in Different Environments

Primary objective
Adapt movement to changing environments.

Secondary objectives
Rhythm, balance, rotation and spatial orientation.

Equipment
Beam, mini trampoline or Olympic trampoline, mats.

Warm-up — 10 min
Direction changes, turning, balance and low jumping.

Fundamental preparation — 10 min
- quarter turns;
- half turns;
- jump-and-stick;
- floor balance after rotation.

Main AGLE content — 30 min

01 | Beam turn combinations	02 | Mini-trampoline turning jump
walk → turn → balance	straight → 90° → 180° where appropriate.
03 | Olympic trampoline basic bouncing	**04 | Shape or orientation changes**
controlled bounce → stop.	simple shape change/turn → controlled return.

Integrated challenge — 5 min

BALANCE → TURN → JUMP/BOUNCE → STABLE FINISH

Cool-down — 5 min
Whole-body mobility and relaxed breathing.

WEEK 6 – INTEGRATED GYMNASTICS AND MOVEMENT CHALLENGE

The final week brings together movement capacities developed during the programme.

The objective is not to introduce large amounts of new content. Participants revisit familiar exercise families, select appropriate levels and experience how their movement competence has developed.

Session 11 | Integrated AGLE Circuit

Primary objective
Integrate previously developed movement capacities.

Secondary objectives
Integrate previously developed movement capacities.

Equipment
Selected apparatus from previous sessions.

Warm-up — 10 min

Participant-familiar warm-up combining:

- locomotion;
- dynamic mobility;
- balance;
- support;
- low jumping.

Movement preparation — 10 min

Brief rehearsal of:

balance + support + landing + hanging + rotation

Main AGLE circuit — 30–35 min

A possible six-station circuit:

01 | Balance	02 | Support	03 | Hanging and pulling
beam walk → balance → turn.	floor/box/parallel-bar support.	bar or ring variation.

04 | Jumping and landing	05 | Rotation	06 | Integrated movement
springboard or mini trampoline.	rocking or rolling variation.	short combination of two or more familiar tasks.

At every station, provide at least:

EASIER → STANDARD → HARDER

Participants select the appropriate challenge together with the coach.
The circuit should prioritise quality rather than speed or competition.

Cool-down and reflection — 5–10 min

Ask participants to identify:

- a movement that has become easier;
- an exercise in which they progressed;
- a movement they would like to continue developing.

Session 12 | Personal Movement Challenge and Programme Completion

Primary objective
Demonstrate individual progress and encourage continued participation.

Secondary objectives
Autonomy, confidence, enjoyment and integration.

Equipment
Selected apparatus according to participant experience and available environment.

Warm-up — 10 min

Use familiar movements from previous sessions. Where appropriate, allow participants some choice in mobility and preparation exercises they have learned during the programme.

Movement preparation — 10 min

Revisit selected fundamental patterns:

- balance;
- support;
- hanging;
- jumping/landing;
- rotation.

Personal AGLE movement challenge — 30 min

Participants complete a selection of familiar movement tasks.
Rather than prescribing one identical difficulty level, the coach provides several options.

Balance	Support	Hanging and pulling
floor line ▸ low beam ▸ beam + turn.	elevated support ▸ parallel-bar support ▸ dynamic support.	supported hang ▸ full hang ▸ assisted pull.

Jumping and landing	Rotation
small jump ▸ springboard ▸ mini trampoline.	rocking ▸ assisted roll ▸ independent roll.

Participants are encouraged to select a variation that demonstrates **their own development.**

The purpose is not: Who can perform the most difficult exercise?
The purpose is: **What can I perform now with greater control, confidence or independence than at the beginning of the programme?**

Final integrated sequence — 5 min

Participants combine several familiar movements into a short individual or small-group sequence.

For example:

LOCOMOTION → BALANCE → SUPPORT → JUMP → LANDING

The sequence should remain simple, safe and adaptable.

Cool-down and programme reflection — 5 min

Finish with comfortable mobility and relaxed breathing.
Participants briefly reflect on:

- perceived physical changes;
- movement confidence;
- preferred activities;
- personal progress;
- interest in continued physical activity.

Where required by the project evaluation protocol, the final programme assessment is subsequently completed using the same procedures described in Chapter 5.

[10.2] PROGRESSION ACROSS THE SIX WEEKS

Although each week has a thematic focus, the programme follows several parallel progression pathways.

BALANCE

floor stance
- floor-line locomotion
- beam walking
- single-leg balance
- turns
- integrated beam sequence.

SUPPORT

quadruped
- elevated support
- weight transfer
- parallel-bar/ring support
- dynamic support.

HANGING AND PULLING

supported grip
- partial hang
- active hang
- assisted pulling
- greater independent body-weight control.

JUMPING AND LANDING

landing position
- small jump
- reactive bouncing
- springboard
- mini trampoline
- integrated jumping task.

ROTATION

rocking
- longitudinal-axis roll
- assisted forward rotation
- independent roll
- rotation integrated with another movement.

COORDINATION AND SPATIAL ORIENTATION

basic body positions
- direction changes
- balance + turn
- jumping + orientation
- movement combinations.

The curriculum therefore creates both **horizontal variety** and **vertical progression.**

[10.3] INDIVIDUAL PROGRESSION WITHIN THE PROGRAMME

The weekly curriculum provides structure, but participants should not be forced to progress at the same rate.

For every exercise family, the coach should maintain three possible decisions:

REGRESS ❮ **MAINTAIN** ❯ **PROGRESS**

A participant may therefore remain with a Level 1 exercise during Week 5 or use a Level 3 variation during Week 3 if appropriate.

The six-week structure determines **what movement experiences are offered,** not the exact level every participant must achieve.

For example, during Session 6:

PARTICIPANT A	PARTICIPANT B	PARTICIPANT C
feet-supported hang.	full controlled hang.	active hang and assisted pulling.

All three participants successfully fulfil the session objective. This is fundamental to AGLE:
Shared objective does not require identical execution.

[10.4] MONITORING DURING THE PROGRAMME

The coach should monitor participant responses throughout all twelve sessions.
This does not require extensive testing during every training session.

A short coaching record can include:

- attendance;
- exercise variations used;
- movements requiring assistance;
- progression or regression;
- discomfort or limitations reported;
- participant confidence;
- relevant observations for the next session.

A simple individual progression record can be used:

MOVEMENT FAMILY	INITIAL VARIATION	CURRENT VARIATION	ASSISTANCE	COACH NOTE
Balance	Floor line	Low beam	No	Improved confidence
Support	Elevated support	Parallel-bar partial support	Minimal	Maintain
Hanging	Feet-supported	Partial hang	Yes	Progress gradually
Jumping	Floor jump	Springboard	No	Stable landing
Rolling	Rocking	Inclined forward roll	Yes	Continue practice

The purpose is not to produce excessive documentation.
The record should help answer one practical question:
What is the appropriate next challenge for this participant?

[10.5] PROGRAMME FLEXIBILITY

The proposed curriculum should be implemented consistently enough to preserve its core objectives, but it should not be treated as an inflexible script.

Adaptation may be necessary because of:

- participant ability;
- attendance;
- group size;
- available equipment;
- fatigue;
- previous experience;
- individual limitations;
- organisational conditions.If a specific apparatus is unavailable, the coach should preserve the movement objective whenever possible.

For example:

NO BEAM	❯	**floor line or suitable low stable balance surface.**
NO RINGS	❯	**appropriate bar-based pulling activity.**
NO AIRTRACK	❯	**mats.**

However, substitutions must remain technically appropriate and safe.
The programme's identity therefore lies primarily in its:

MOVEMENT OBJECTIVES + **AGLE PRINCIPLES** + **PROGRESSION**

rather than in mandatory use of every apparatus during every implementation.

[10.6] WHAT PROGRESSION SHOULD LOOK LIKE AFTER SIX WEEKS

The programme should not be evaluated according to whether participants have reached advanced gymnastics skills.

A successful outcome may instead mean that a participant:

- balances with greater confidence;
- controls landing more effectively;
- supports a greater proportion of body weight;
- hangs with less assistance;
- performs a basic roll independently;
- moves through a greater comfortable range;
- combines movement patterns more successfully;
- attempts unfamiliar tasks with greater confidence;
- participates regularly and enjoys the activity.

For some participants, progression will be primarily physical. For others, the most important change may be **movement confidence.** Both are relevant within AGLE.

[10.7] FROM A SIX-WEEK INTERVENTION TO CONTINUED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Six weeks can introduce participants to a new form of movement, provide opportunities for learning and establish initial progression. However, six weeks should not represent the endpoint. The broader purpose of Active Balance Gym is to use gymnastics-based activity as a pathway towards **continued engagement in physical activity**.

The final sessions should therefore help participants recognise what they have learned and encourage them to continue developing those capacities.

Possible continuation can involve:

- continued AGLE sessions;
- recreational gymnastics;
- other forms of structured physical activity;
- independent mobility and strength exercises learned during the programme;
- participation in community or workplace physical-activity programmes.

The six-week intervention can therefore be understood as:

ENTRY INTO A NEW MOVEMENT ENVIRONMENT,

rather than

COMPLETION OF MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENT.

IMPLEMENTATION, EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Active Balance Gym programme was developed as more than a six-week exercise intervention. Its broader purpose is to provide an **adaptable gymnastics-based approach to physical activity** that can be implemented in different environments and used with adults of different physical abilities and previous movement experience. The AGLE methodology described in this handbook provides the framework for such implementation. Its core principles remain the same regardless of where the programme is delivered:

- participant-centred exercise selection;
- individual adaptation;
- safe and progressive learning;
- appropriate use of gymnastics equipment;
- movement quality and control;
- progression according to readiness;
- positive movement experiences;
- and support for continued participation in physical activity.

The practical content presented in the previous chapters should therefore not be understood as a rigid programme that can only be implemented under ideal conditions.

AGLE is designed to be **adaptable, transferable and sustainable.**

Who Can Deliver AGLE?
AGLE is designed to be delivered by **qualified physical activity professionals** who have the knowledge and practical competence required to work safely with adult participants. Depending on the setting, these may include gymnastics coaches, physical education teachers, exercise professionals, kinesiologists, physiotherapists, and other appropriately trained practitioners.

Previous experience in gymnastics is valuable but should not be viewed as the only prerequisite for delivering AGLE. More important is the ability to understand participant readiness, select appropriate movement tasks, provide safe instruction and assistance, and adapt exercise difficulty according to individual needs and responses.

Professionals implementing AGLE should therefore be familiar with its core principles of **assessment, individualisation, adaptation, progression, safety, and participant-centred coaching.** The role of the coach is not simply to reproduce a predetermined set of exercises, but to create an appropriate movement environment in which participants can develop movement capacity, competence, and confidence.

Where Can AGLE be delivered?
AGLE is intended to be **transferable across different physical activity settings.** A fully equipped gymnastics facility provides the widest range of movement opportunities, but access to a specialised gymnastics hall is not essential for implementing the programme.

Depending on available space, equipment, participant characteristics, and programme objectives, AGLE can be delivered in:

- gymnastics and sports clubs;
- school and university sports facilities;
- community and recreation centres;
- workplace physical activity and well-being programmes;
- fitness and exercise facilities;
- multipurpose sports halls and other appropriately equipped movement spaces.

The setting should therefore be viewed as a **movement environment rather than a fixed requirement.** Coaches can select and adapt exercise families according to the opportunities provided by the available space and equipment. The essential requirement is not access to every gymnastics apparatus, but the ability to create safe and meaningful opportunities for balance, support, locomotion, coordination, strength, mobility, and controlled whole-body movement.

How Can AGLE Continue After the Pilot?
The six-week AGLE curriculum provides a structured entry point into gymnastics-based physical activity rather than a finite intervention that ends after 12 sessions. Its longer-term purpose is to establish a foundation from which participants can continue developing their movement capacity, confidence, and engagement in regular physical activity.

Continuation beyond the pilot can take several forms. Clubs and organisations may repeat the programme with new participants, offer follow-up AGLE groups, integrate selected exercise families into existing adult physical activity programmes, or develop longer-term programmes based on the same methodological principles.

For participants who continue with AGLE, progression does not necessarily mean performing increasingly complex gymnastics skills. Progress may involve **greater movement control, improved quality of execution, increased independence, reduced need for assistance, greater task variability, or the ability to perform familiar movement patterns under more demanding conditions.**

Long-term implementation should therefore preserve the central AGLE process:



As participants develop, the programme can evolve with them. Exercise families can remain familiar while task difficulty, equipment, movement complexity, volume, and degree of independence are progressively modified.

In this way, AGLE can move beyond a time-limited intervention and become a sustainable framework for adult physical activity, adaptable to different participants, organisations, facilities, and levels of previous movement experience.

The future of AGLE

Active Balance Gym demonstrates how gymnastics can be reconsidered for adult recreational physical activity. Traditional perceptions often associate gymnastics with childhood, competitive sport and technically demanding skills.

AGLE offers a different perspective.

- Gymnastics apparatus becomes a means of adaptation.
- Gymnastics skills become movement opportunities.
- Progression becomes individual rather than competitive.
- Performance becomes secondary to movement competence.

This creates opportunities for future development in:

- recreational gymnastics;
- workplace health promotion;
- community physical-activity programmes;
- adult sport programmes;
- coach education;
- and other initiatives promoting lifelong movement.

Future implementations can also provide further evidence about which programme components are most effective, how participants respond over longer periods and how AGLE can be adapted to different populations and settings.

The methodology should therefore remain open to development. **AGLE is adaptive not only because exercises can be adapted to participants, but because the programme itself can evolve through experience, evaluation and practice.**

CONCLUSION

Active Balance Gym was developed from a simple idea: **gymnastics can offer meaningful movement experiences far beyond childhood and competitive sport.** Adults do not need to become gymnasts to benefit from gymnastics. Through appropriately selected and adapted activities, they can balance, support, hang, jump, land, rotate and explore movement in ways that differ substantially from many conventional forms of adult exercise. The Adaptive Gymnastic Learning Environment provides the methodological framework for this process. Its central principle is: **The exercise should be adapted to the participant—not the participant to the exercise.** This principle connects assessment, coaching, safety, exercise selection and progression.

AGLE does not seek the most difficult movement.
It seeks the **appropriate movement challenge.**

It does not require identical performance.
It creates **multiple pathways towards a shared movement objective.**

And it does not view the completion of a six-week programme as the final goal. The broader objective is to contribute to movement competence, confidence, enjoyment and continued participation in physical activity.

The gymnastics apparatus, exercises and programme presented in this handbook are therefore tools rather than endpoints.

Ultimately:
Gymnastics is not the goal. Better movement is the goal.



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