

## **GYMNASTICS GRIPS INFORMATION SHEET**

Grips are a critical piece of equipment for competitive gymnasts. We recommend that all Xcel Gold-Diamond and Levels 6-10 have two pair of competitive grips. If your gymnast only has one pair of grips and they are damaged prior to a meet, it can impact their ability to compete bars. We prefer that level 6-10 have double buckled grips.

Our preferred vendor for grip is American Gymnast (<https://www.american-gymnast.com/>) and you can order your grips directly from them. Girls team members need:

- Resiport Uneven Bar Grips
- Buckle
- Wrist Bands

### **What are Grips and why are they used?**

There are two types of Grips: Palm and Dowel. Basically, palm grips are only used for class level participants and are not necessary to the gymnast. Dowel Grips are generally used by competitive gymnasts. They are designed with a wooden dowel positioned on the grips to help gymnasts have a better hold on the bar during circling, swinging and catching release moves. The dowel acts as a clamp on the bar making it easier for gymnasts to hold onto the bar. This is especially helpful for gymnasts who have small hands that do not fully surround the bar. Dowel grips are made to transfer the body weight of the gymnast from his or her hand to the wrist. This increases the amount of time a gymnast is able to hold onto the bar. To reap the full benefit of the dowel grip, it must be accurately fit for the hands of the gymnast. Below are things you need to know about grips:

- Normally kids get bar grips somewhere between level four and level 5. The child's bar coach will let you know when your child is ready to begin using grips. It is important grips are not introduced prior to kids learning to use their own hands and develop their finger strength. Often the coaches will place a group order of grips when they determine the child is ready, and may do so without consulting the parent. Please know to expect to be asked for payment after the order is placed.
- The gymnast needs to be sized properly before ordering grips. Measurements that fall between two sizes should always be ordered closer to the smaller size, as grips that are too large can be unsafe and could cause injury to the gymnast.
- Grips for girls should NEVER be used on equipment designed for Boys. It can cause something called grip lock and injure or break the wrist.
- Our preference for grips are US Glove or Reisport uneven bar grips. Younger gymnasts normally order Hot Shot Uneven Bar dowel grips. The price range is \$30 to \$40.

- Gymnasts should always go ahead and order wrist guards/bands. These are worn under the grips and help pad and protect the wrist, as well as keep the grips from sliding around the wrist. Order several and wash them often.
- After receiving the grips, they MUST be properly broken in for maximum safety. Parents should open the instructions and follow the steps to work with the grips to help soften them prior to sending them to practice with them. Coaches should safely spot kids through initial weeks of breaking grips in. Names should be written on grips in permanent marker after trying the grips on to ensure fit. Grips are expensive so label them.
- There is an adjustment time for gymnasts to learn to use grips properly. It is common for kids to temporarily lose a skill when first wearing grips. Don't panic, the normal time for adjustment only lasts a couple of weeks max. It is recommended to learn to use grips in initial weeks following the competitive season, rather during competitive season. Some coaches prefer learning kips from the beginning with grips, while others prefer learning the kip without grips and then introducing them. The two week delay in learning to use grips should be considered when determining when it is best for the gymnast to go through this process.
- Grips are normally reordered once a year or possibly last slightly longer than this time period. The basic way to tell if your child needs new grips is if they become very stretched out and roll off the palm of the hand or the fingers become so stretched out that they don't stay on the hand properly or that palm becomes so smooth that it cannot be roughed up with a grip brush (at gym). If it appears the grips are not fitting according to the instructions, a child should order new grips. If you need replacement grips, first check with our staff, to determine if a bulk order is being placed for the gym. If not, you may go online to [American-gymnast.com](http://American-gymnast.com) and place your own order.
- Grips should be taken from the gym on the last practice prior to a competition and brought to the meet for the gymnast to use, but they must also be returned to the gym the first practice after the meet. This is a huge responsibility and it is very important parents help the child to develop this routine. Coaches may remember to tell kids, but often the child must remember this on their own. Kids that come to practice without grips may be asked to condition on bars or skip bars for that day.