



Polishing Techniques I

Memory mistakes, sloppy transitions and improper execution all contribute to less than perfect performances. After you've taught a routine, watch it all the way through for 'rough' spots and use these three polishing techniques to smooth it out. Your team will perform uniformly and more confidently.

The Freeze

Use this technique when you can't get body alignment, arm or leg positions exactly right. You've demonstrated over and over, but each individual executes her own interpretation of what you are doing.

Isolate the count causing the trouble, let's say, count 5. Have your team execute the eight count and then freeze on count 5. Have the team hold that position until you make individual corrections. Repeat the process until everyone freezes count 5 in the proper place. Then have the team execute the entire eight count a few times so they remember to connect count 5 with counts 6, 7 and 8.

Last Eight, First Eight

Most memory mistakes happen during a transition from the end of one phrase to the beginning of another. It often occurs when you stop teaching a routine one day and pick up teaching the next day. The brain hasn't connected the two thoughts together yet. The 'last eight, first eight' technique is the perfect cure.

Isolate the last eight count of the first step and the first eight count of the next. Have your team execute just those two eight counts until the transition is planted in their heads. If memory still isn't improving, isolate just the exact transition from count eight to count one. Repeat those two counts several times, then add the full eight counts to complete the transition.

Warp Speed

As you're watching a routine you'll sometimes see an eight count that team members just keep stumbling through. Or, as you're teaching, they can't quite pick it up. Isolate that eight count and have your team repeat it five or six times in a row, increasing speed each time. Don't give them time to think in between each repetition. Once they complete an eight count immediately give them a faster '5,6,7,8' to cue the repeat at the new tempo. By the last time through, you should be counting almost too quickly for them to dance. Then take the eight count back down to normal tempo. Now you should see dancing, not stumbling!