

NOTE TO READERS: THIS IS A REAL STORY ABOUT A REAL KID WHO THIS REALLY HAPPENED TO. REALLY.

IHTM

(IT HAPPENED TO ME)

by Lola, Age 15

TUMBLING THROUGH THE YEARS

My mom registered me in tumbling and gymnastics class almost every year. I loved to tumble—it was my favorite thing to do! It kept me occupied during the summer, and I really enjoyed being with my friends. A friend invited me to join a cheer team that she had belonged to for many years. Tumbling and cheer are similar, so my mom got the needed information and within a few days I was ready to start!

STARTING OUT AND BREAKING IN

When I got there, I was extremely nervous. The group wasn't very welcoming so I was regretting signing up. It felt like they were comfortable with the team they had, it seemed that they didn't want anyone added to it. But after working together for a few days, we all soon became friends. Two weeks passed and I learned how to do so many things. I was excited and ready to move on to the next step—back handsprings. Back handsprings are one of the main things you need to know for cheer and gymnastics because they are done so often. In my opinion, they are the hardest to do, but I was ready to try.

UP TO THE CHALLENGE

My friend was the queen of back handsprings, so she helped me understand each and every step. Our coach pulled out a handspring machine to help the kids who were learning how to do them for the first time. This machine is a Pacman-shaped block that has cushion all around it. You basically sit in the mouth of the machine and push off with your feet and go backwards until you land on your hands, then feet.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WATCH

Even with the handspring machine, I couldn't get my feet right so I had to try again over and over. Impatient, some of the girls began to get irritated and then angry. I was feeling like the new kid in the group again. The new kid that didn't know what she was doing and everyone knew it!

THAT WASN'T HELPFUL, THANK-YOU!

When it was my turn again to work on the machine, the coach left to help out another peer. There I was, by myself, with some very frustrated girls, knowing I wasn't doing well with my attempts. Some of the girls began sighing loudly and talking about me behind my back, even though I could hear them. I straightened my shoulders and with renewed determination, sat onto the machine. I pushed off going backwards slowly, hoping that I wouldn't fall. Then all of a sudden, someone pushed the machine. I flew back so fast I landed on my left thumb, it bent back to my wrist. I stood up slowly, staring at the girl that pushed me, and then burst out crying. I'd never felt so much pain in my life. I not only felt it, I heard the bone CRACK—which traumatized me even more. I was in so much pain, I never told on the girl who pushed me over, I just wanted to get out of there. Thank goodness my mom was still waiting for me, so we left.

THERE'S SOMETHING VERY WRONG

My mom took me home because we weren't confident that it was broken. But everything I did with my left hand was very hard because my thumb was just throbbing. I pulled out my homework and tried to write my name (since I'm a lefty) and couldn't. Even with just an itty bit of pressure, I was in excruciating pain. So we went to the hospital. I found out it was broken and would need to have it wrapped for months.

LEARNING TO HAVE FUN AGAIN

That experience gave me a fear of doing back handsprings, and still to this day I haven't mastered them. But I didn't let it stop me from enjoying tumbling again. I continued with gymnastics, but in smaller classes to help avoid any accidents. ☺

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