

Don't you love the feeling of accomplishment? I think everybody loves to feel like they have completed something that not everybody can complete. In cheerleading, my coach goes through with that feeling every Friday when we perform at the football games. Our routines run pretty smooth, and we make it look so easy, but there is much more to putting a cheer routine together. Miranda, our cheer coach, must go through many hours of planning to help us start putting a routine together. There are 3 major steps to putting a routine together and they are: 1. Putting groups together 2. Finding the order of stunts, tumbling, and dancing and 3. Polishing up the routine. With all these steps completed, we have mastered a confident performance.

When we first start off, we have to learn who works the best together on certain stunts. Sometimes others timings can be off, or one can be much taller than the other causing the stunt to wobble if even able to get up. A basic stunt consists of four people. There are two bases that lift the girl up, one flier that gets tossed up, along with one back spot that supports the stunt from behind. While the stunts up she catches the girls upper body when cradled or when caught after coming down. When we are first learning a routine we find who works the best with each other. We start putting those stunt groups in a certain formation and add counts to make everyone go at the same time. We then learn several different stunts with many different groups to eventually feel comfortable putting them all together and doing them in sequence with one another.

Not only is stunting in the routine though, dancing is also a major part of the show and tumbling has progressively grown to be a big part of cheer. So in order for us to fit all of these procedures into a two-minute routine, it takes careful planning and guidance. You must first figure out what order you want to go in with the stunting, tumbling, and dancing. You have to decide how you will want the beginning and the ending to look. Once you have that figured that out, you have to put the groups into a formation. In this you have to put the most experienced or skilled groups in the front, try to cover up flaws, and make sure everyone can get to their spot in the specific time that you have given them. Next you have to create the music. In the music you will want to add certain sound effects to specific parts of the performance. For example, if you were twisting out of a stunt, you might want a scribbling sound to emphasize the twist. With the music done, everyone will know where and when they go in the routine, so now all that is needed is the polishing.

Polishing is the most tiring part for the cheerleaders. When we polish a routine, Miranda usually starts us off with the first stunt and starts critiquing everything. We break everything down and try to fix anything if it doesn't look clean and sharp. Once we are finished going through every stunt's flaws thoroughly, we will start to run through the routine all the way through. At first we mark everything, or don't actually do the stunts or tumbling full out because we don't remember where we are going after each stunt. This helps us to learn muscle memory so we can just perform and almost not even have to think, just do. We only do this a few times before doing everything altogether.

With everything ready to go, we usually stretch and warm up about thirty minutes before we actually perform our routine, and we take aside every stunt group individually. We warm the stunts up, and make sure they are completely stable with wobbles or drops. At this point we don't have to work as much on getting the routine ready, now we get ourselves ready and pump ourselves up for the rush of performing in front of the many people in the stands watching. With the three steps of putting the groups together, figuring out the order, and polishing we have a wonderful feeling of self-assurance, and we can perform the routine boldly, confidently, and without flaws.