



Contact Training at Southern Edge Arts  
Student Information  
April 2024

At Southern Edge Arts we employ contact training techniques in all of our circus training programs and classes.

Historically we have operated under a notion of 'Implied Consent', sometimes called 'Implicit Consent'. The notion is that because Circus is a physical artform, participants understand, without being explicitly told, that they will be spotted, assisted, supported or lifted by Tutors/Teaching Artists to facilitate their training, and that they will be expected to interact physically with other students by connecting, balancing on, carrying, being carried or otherwise as part of learning group-based skills.

All our Teaching Artists sign a 'Code of Conduct' which is reviewed regularly, that governs their behaviour with students and with other people they will come into contact with while at work. This explicitly states that Teaching Artists must not touch a student without a valid reason.

We regard that valid reasons to touch a student include assisting, spotting, supporting, correcting positions, checking safety equipment, and demonstrating technique. We also acknowledge that a Teaching Artist has a responsibility to keep students safe and avoid harm – this may mean that a Teaching Artist will use their own body to redirect the fall trajectory of a student in order to reduce the harm of impact.

Where appropriate and available we employ mechanical safety processes, for example safety lines.

These days Teaching Artists are encouraged to inform students when and how they intend to use contact training techniques. If a student is uncomfortable with any of the techniques we employ, they are encouraged to make that known to their Teaching Artist and the SEA team.

Some contact training techniques you may encounter.

**Tumbling:**

- Spotting – dynamically lifting or supporting the body in motion. Usually the touch occurs at the hips, shoulders, under the arms or on the back of the thigh near the knee.

**Aerial disciplines:**

- Teaching – supporting upper back, ankles and feet to assist with technique
- Spotting – ensuring that if a student falls onto a crashmat that they are diverted from falling on their head or neck (redirection).
- Lifting – helping a student onto apparatus, usually by holding at the hips and assisting a jump.

- Checking safety equipment – securing fastening system on belts, checking belts for appropriate tightness.
- Correcting position – moving limbs, toes, fingers into correct positions.
- Demonstration – practically demonstrating a connection or hand position, particularly in duo or group work.
- Guiding through movements – supporting some or all of a student’s weight while guiding the body through a movement, usually at hips or end of legs (ankles).

#### Handstands:

- Spotting – moving a student’s body into the correct balance position and holding them there, usually at the hips, knees and toes.
- Correcting – touching to indicate areas that need correction, usually toes (pointing), elbows (straightening), stomach (pull in), shoulders (extend).

#### Pyramids:

- Spotting – catching or deflecting a falling or unbalanced student.
- Supporting – holding a student while they balance on another student.
- Lifting – helping a student onto a balance or into position.
- Demonstrating – a Trainer may put themselves into a balance, either basing or flying, to demonstrate correct technique.

#### Flexibility:

- Practical demonstrations that involve stretching with a partner

#### Safety:

- Contact with a student to ensure a student’s safety or the safety of others