

A Solid Routine



Name: Jackson Payne

Age: 18

Hometown: Edmonton,
Alberta, Canada

Accomplishments: Placed first in gymnastics at the 2007 Canada Winter Games and first in the 2008 Junior National Championships; recently earned a bronze medal at the Montreal World Cup and competed in the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in London in October 2009. He plans to compete in the World Championships again this year in the Netherlands and hopes to be on the 2012 Olympic Canadian team, after which he plans on serving a full-time mission.



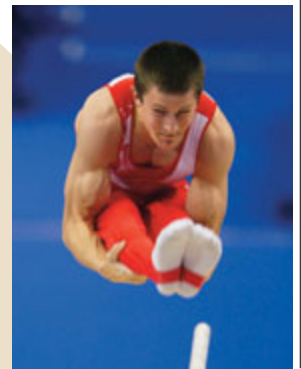
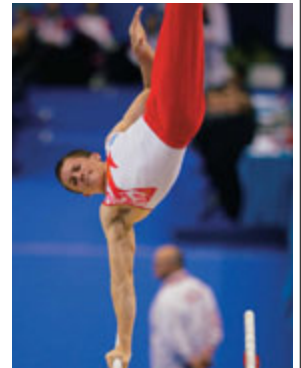
By Charlotte Wood Wilson

Jackson Payne's life is busy and wouldn't seem to leave much room for early-morning seminary or priesthood responsibilities, but he knows where his priorities are. Hailing from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, 18-year-old Jackson started participating in artistic gymnastics when he was 6 or 7 and has since made it to several national and international championships. The high bar is his best event, but he's decided to reach for something even higher.

Instead of spending his time before school at the gym squeezing in extra practice time, Jackson attends early-morning seminary. This daily routine is just as important to him as his gym routines. "I think if I disrupted my routine by not going to seminary for a couple of days, it would really mess up my day. It's important for me to stick to that routine." He observes that "if you keep messing up your gymnastics routine, you don't gain any confidence or consistency for competition. In the same way, if you don't go to seminary or church, you're more likely to fail in the real world."

When it comes to gymnastics, precision is key. "You're judged on everything you do; everything affects your score," Jackson says. He also says that the better you perform a routine or skill, the easier it is to execute and the more it becomes second nature. No one can perform a perfect routine in gymnastics, just as none of us lives a perfect life in mortality. But Jackson says that unlike in gymnastics, we have a perfect example to strive toward: Jesus Christ. And in our paths to perfection we're given commandments like tithing, the law of chastity, and the Word of Wisdom, commandments we can execute with exactness right now.

Gymnastics teaches Jackson about dedication and faith, principles he can directly apply to the gospel. "I go into the gym every day and have certain things I have to do. It gives me a test of my dedication and faith in knowing that if I do all the things I'm supposed to do, I can get better at gymnastics. In the same way, if I do things I'm supposed to do with church and Mutual and fulfilling my priesthood duties, my testimony will strengthen and I'll learn more about the gospel." **NE**



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