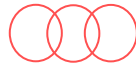




Insider Guide to Private Lessons

The who, why, and how of private lessons at CJ



Private lessons are an hour (or perhaps 30 minutes) where one student trains a specific act one-on-one with a coach. We do sometimes have more than one student train together within the lesson, but these are structured to be a smaller and more targeted training time than a typical class that meets once per week over a session. To date, a relatively small number of students have taken private lessons over the years. We know, however, that families have questions about what private lessons are utilized for and how a student gets to take a private lesson. Here are the most common and most useful ways private lessons can benefit a student's training:



Catching up after an injury or extended illness

Students miss classes for a large variety of reasons, but there are sometimes students who end up missing enough classes that they physically fall behind the others in the act. If the student has been deemed healthy enough to return to training and approved to perform in the upcoming performance, private lessons can be a great way for that student to have some extra time to get the body back into shape a little more quickly, or catch up on the routine more quickly than the one hour of class offered in the week.



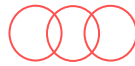
Working on a particular skill or trick that is hard for the student

Our students are amazing at overcoming fears and doing things with their bodies that they may not have ever thought they'd be capable of doing. Sometimes, though, a particular trick or skill can prove difficult for a student to accomplish. Private lessons offer a great way for the student to get one-on-one training from the coach that a class with several others might not be able to offer. It also is a more focused session just on the student, so identifying what the student is struggling with is usually much easier for coach and student to communicate without interruption.



Wanting to excel to greater personal achievements

Circus kids are often known for their drive. They love the feeling they get from great training and the benefits they experience both physically and emotionally. Some students want to achieve even greater heights in their personal training, and private lessons can provide the support for just such a student. These students not only want to train with their teammates in class, but they have the personal desire to go further and do more, pushing themselves to learn more than what the class structure may offer. Private lessons provide direct coach feedback for the student's personal goals.



What AREN'T Private Lessons Used For?

As with anything, misconceptions can occur, and we've noted some erroneous ideas regarding private lessons have developed over the years. Below are some of the most common myths of the use of private lessons and the facts to help address the confusion.



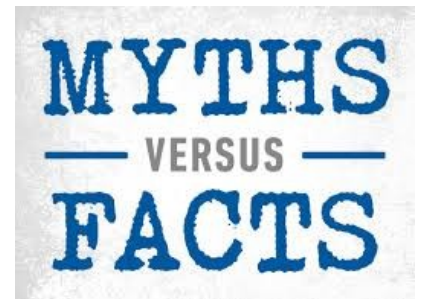
Myth: Private lessons should be used as way to advance quickly through the levels of an act

Fact: Private lessons are intended for use by students who need a little extra help before a performance or who have had to take a break from training due to illness. They are available to students who don't fit the age requirements of regular CJ programming and for those who are driven to achieve an extraordinary skill level. We do not encourage students, particularly those in the beginning and intermediate levels of training, to think about private lessons as a fast track. It's far more physically and emotionally beneficial to learn with your peer group and to take the time to practice skills in depth over an extended period of time. It's also more in line with our overall philosophical approach to the circus arts - to encourage teamwork, mentorship and mutual respect as a means to building a fulfilling practice.



Myth: Taking private lessons results in favoritism from coaches

Fact: It should go without saying that our coaching staff are professionals, and regardless of the extra time given to individuals in private lessons, they evaluate their students in fair and equal measure across the board. We have gone to great lengths to create a transparent and standardized system for student assessments. While it's true that skills may improve as a result of taking private lessons, the same can be said of simply working hard in regular classes, and coaches will notice your effort and improvement regardless of the forum in which it happens.



Myth: Students who do not take private lessons are held to a higher standard if someone in their class DOES take private lessons.

Fact: Coaches are only ever interested in seeing you do your best. They will push you to achieve higher and higher goals no matter if they are doing so in a one-on-one environment or in a full class. In a class setting, students are often called upon to illustrate new tricks and techniques - because what better way is there to explain something new than to show it in action? - and that can sometimes bring up feelings of jealousy or insecurity in others. Part of what we strive to create at CJ, though, is an environment in which teamwork is built by pushing each other to be better and supporting each other in that effort. Coaches are indeed responsible for ensuring everyone in a given class can perform at approximately the same level, but students should feel confident that they will always be given the time and space to learn at their own pace. They should never feel threatened, though, by someone else's ability.



Registration and Timing of Private Lessons:

Because private lessons are outside of our weekly scheduled classes, the registration and timing of each lesson has been flexible to a certain degree. There are times in the year when lessons simply are not possible - these are typically when we are in tech/dress or performance weeks when the building isn't set up for training, or when we are on a break and the desired coach simply isn't available. Private lessons are not held from the end of the summer session until the start of fall session in mid-September. When lessons are possible, they typically are held before 4pm on weekdays or after 2:15pm on Saturdays.

Still have questions?
Email rachel@circusjuventas.org