

How To Use This Book

This book is a workshop guide to club swinging, with sections on the closely related skill of pole spinning.

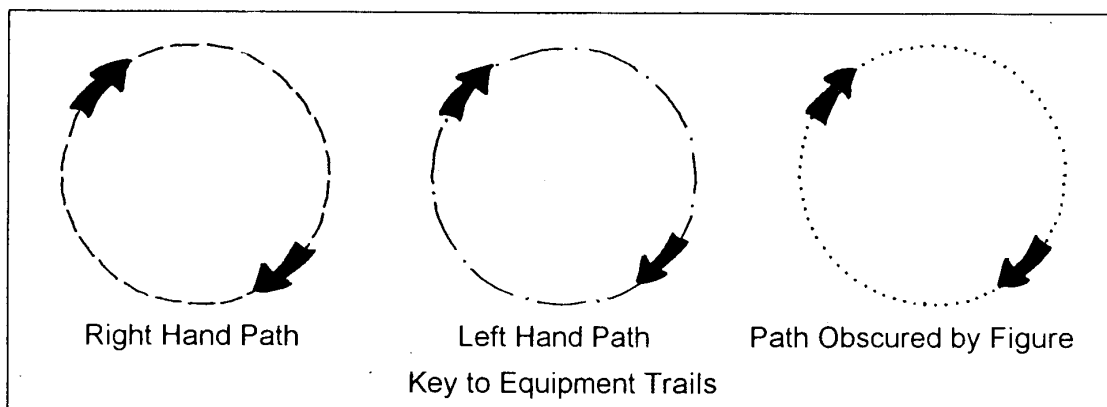
Although this is not an advanced text, readers will have to concentrate to follow the instructions given. This is partly as a result of the inherent difficulties of attempting to write down a dynamic movement skill on paper. You may have to study sections more than once and have the equipment at hand before you can follow a workshop lesson. However, if you find a good sized space to practice regularly and persevere, then your efforts will be rewarded.

When learning indoors you will need about 4 to 5 feet in head room above the place where you swing and also to remove all easily breakable objects from the room. Outdoor practice is invigorating in good weather. Many people find that playing music with a strong rhythm improves the energy and fun of a practice session.

Important summary directions are in large, bold print and indented from the margin.

Different sizes of text are designed to make it easier to read the instructions from a distance. You will learn faster if you prop this book open and read the bold directions while standing with the equipment.

Diagrams have broken lines to indicate the paths of the clubs in a complete movement. These path lines are dashed for the right hand club. For the left hand, lines with alternating dots and dashes mark the club's trail. Lines are dotted when the path of the swing travels behind the person in the figure. Arrows are used to show the direction of the movement.



Notice that the mirror image is presented when you check your reflection and that the sides in this book's figures are swapped.

Every circle has a twin circle that is made in the opposite direction. Your club swinging will be much more impressive and adaptable if you aspire to learn movements in all directions.

Always aim to make precise and symmetrical club swinging patterns with your arms straight.

You are strongly advised to watch yourself practising in a mirror since this is the best way to check if your body and patterns are in line. Whilst large mirrors are not always available a substitute is any reflective surface, such as glass. Mirrors are invaluable when putting together a routine as they will allow you to see which transitional moves can be used to link the separate movements together into a flowing sequence.

Because a person's concentration span tends to be quite short, it will be best to work through this book in modest sections. If you come across problems, then refer to the chapter on overcoming difficulties on pages 75 - 77. Every now and then, review the material that you have learnt by looking back at earlier sections.

When you have grasped a new pattern you could teach it to a friend. If they are interested, you will have someone to practise with and this leads to faster progress. In particular, verbal explanations will clarify the defining features of a pattern and this can enable you to adapt it with your own variations. A tip is to make notes on your personally devised tricks and there is space to do this at the end of this book. Notes will help in remembering your own moves later and serve as proof of your advancement. Choreographed swinging in groups is very entertaining - teach enough people and you will soon have a performance troupe.

As well as learning with the aid of this guide, ask others to show you what they know and use your own imagination to create new patterns

Be kind to yourself when learning to club swing. Warm up and use lightweight clubs with soft plastic bodies to minimise the danger from hitting yourself with a club. Suggested warm up exercises are given in the following pages. Take regular breaks and be mindful of your limits with this deceptively physical exercise. Remember also that if you want to improve, there is absolutely no substitute for practice. **Good luck.**

Club Swinging Summary

- Warm up, particularly the shoulders and wrists.
- Fully stretch out the arms and keep the clubs exactly in line.
- Allow gravity and the momentum of the swinging clubs to help the motion.
- Swing perfectly rounded circles.
- Straighten patterns by looking in a mirror.
- Swing close to the body and keep the wrists touching in follow time.
- Learn patterns with both hands in all directions to achieve true symmetry.
- Work on smooth transitions.

This chapter is taken from

Modern Club Swinging and Pole Spinning

Butterfingers 1994. ISBN 0 9513240 8 X. © Anna Jillings

www.cosmosjugglers.co.uk - see the *Holidays* pages for Anna's annual May and August UK events for club swingers, poi & pole spinners, jugglers, fire enthusiasts and glow-in-the dark/UV performers.