

Lesson 11

Follow Time and the Cross-Follow

This lesson introduces some of the most exquisite movements in club swinging. Follow time patterns occur when one club exactly follows the path of the other by half a circle. Both clubs describe precisely the same figure 8, which effectively doubles up the visual force of the movement. Many follow time patterns look as if your wrists are hooked together with the clubs always level, as though they were attached like one straight pole.

Follow Time: Usually with a class of figure 8 pattern, one club leads and the other follows so that the clubs stay half a circle apart at all times.

Forward Cross-Follow with Full-Arm Circles, then Hand Circles

First learn the cross-follow (sometimes called the chase) with full-arm circles. Once you have the feel of the movement, it is possible to reduce the size of the pattern to the popular cross-follow around the wrists. With a club held in the solid grip, make forward full-arm figure 8 circles. These are enlarged versions of the forward figure 8 pattern in Lesson 10 (page 40).

One hand only swings forward, full-arm figure 8 sweeps. Swap hands and repeat. Still with a single hand, add asymmetry to the full-arm pattern by making each arm trace out one circle on its own side of the body and two circles on the opposite side - Figure 11.1.

The asymmetry is unusual in club swinging. Only for cross-follow patterns does each hand perform two swings on the far side of the body and one on the near side, with a total of three circles in a full cycle.

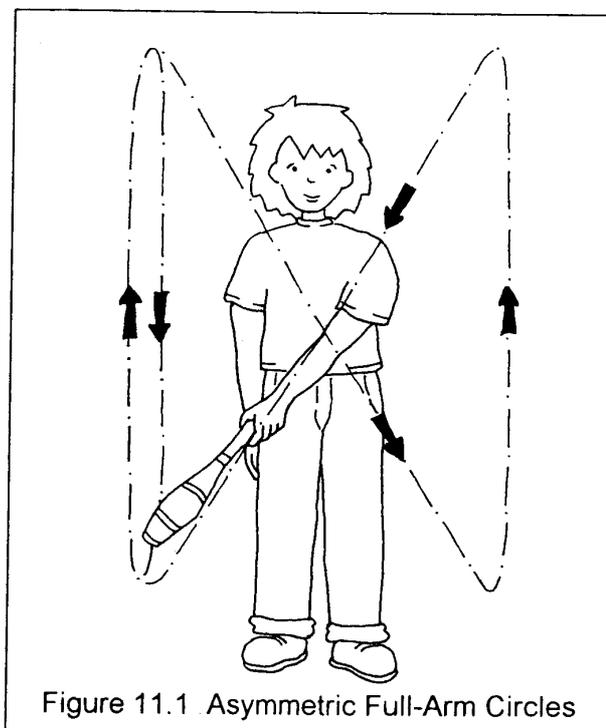
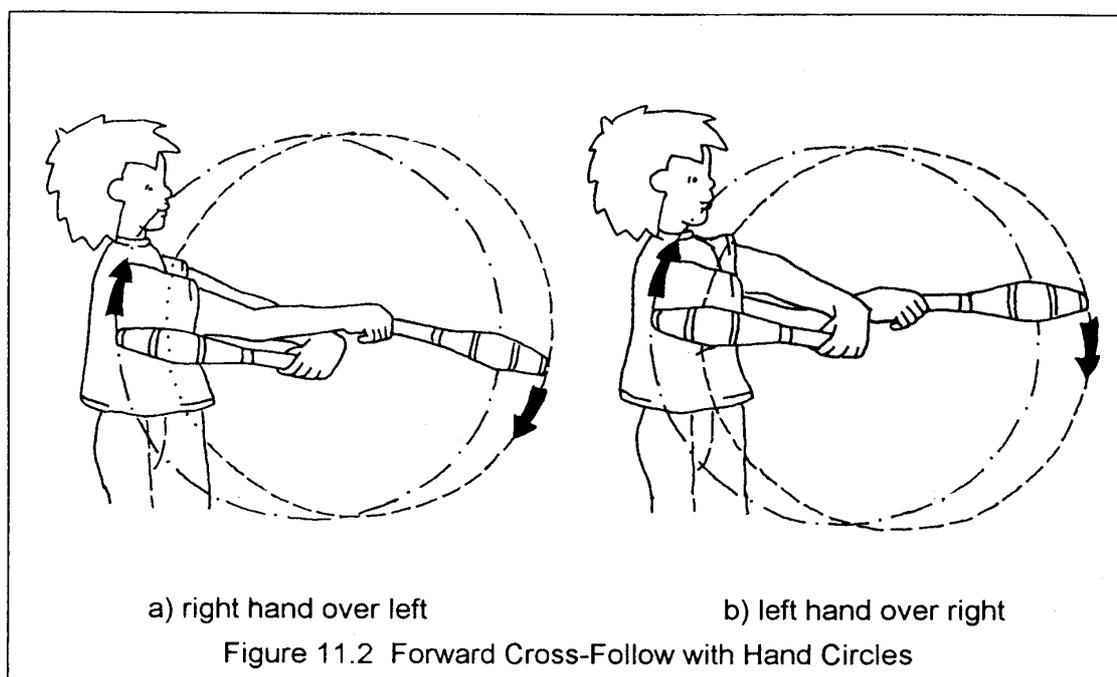


Figure 11.1 Asymmetric Full-Arm Circles

Move on to using two clubs and try to link both sides together into a continuous figure 8 cycle. There are now a total of six swings in the cycle, three on each side.

Start swinging forward full-arm circles in alternating time. Right arm swings to cross-over the left and the left arm completes a circle under the right arm before the right swings back to its own side.

Next swing the right hand over and then under the left arm. The arms uncross as the right hand returns with a figure 8 sweep to the right. Cross them again on the right side of the body with the left hand over the right. Continue crossing and uncrossing arms, changing sides each time - Figure 11.2.



Both arms are taking the same path, but at a staggered rhythm, with the right hand leading by half a circle and the left following behind. The right hand chases the left hand over to the right side, then the left hand chases the right hand to the left side. The clubs are always at 180 degrees to one another as if they were a single pole rather than two separate objects.

If your arms get into a knot, return to swinging forward full-arm circles in alternating time before attempting the trick again. Once the full-arm crossing movement begins to flow, reduce the size of your circles from those centered on your shoulders, to your elbows and finally to circles rotating around your wrist. Use a loose ring grip and aim to make the palm side of both wrists stay permanently in contact.

Try counting how many times a club passes your hip on each side. It should be three times past one side, then three times past the other. This is a difficult trick to understand. However, with several practice sessions, you will eventually master the popular swinging motion of fast circles chasing around the wrist, the forward cross-follow.

Backward Cross-Follow with Full-Arm Circles, then Hand Circles

It is possible to swing a cross-follow motion in the backward direction, although many people find the movement rather unnatural. Nevertheless, it is worth learning the pattern backwards in order to progress and eventually master the cross-follow in a full circle (the fountain) which has six individual circles making up this beautiful, if technically demanding pattern. As before, start with wide large arm-sweeps, making them slowly smaller until your wrists seem hooked together. Use a solid grip for full-arm patterns and the ring grip for hand circles.

One hand only performs backward full-arm figure 8 swings. Add asymmetry by making each arm trace out one circle on its own side of the body and two circles on the opposite side, still going backward.

With a single arm, swing the backward movements of the cross-follow, first with large circles then reducing the size to small hand circles. If the hand circles are problematic, re-attempt Lesson 10's description of backward figure 8 inside and outside hand circles (page 39). Your inside backward hand circle is initially likely to be weak. Now for the move with both hands.

Swing backward full-arm circles in alternating time. Make your right arm swing to cross-over the left and the left arm completes a circle under the right arm before swinging back to its own side. The arms have uncrossed and you should next cross them again on the right side of the body.

Continue to cross and unravel your arms using the extended figure 8 motion of the cross-follow. There must be three circles in the backward cross-follow with each hand and you could check this by counting how many times the clubs pass your hip. Always sweep the clubs backward and away from you.

Don't worry if your arms get tangled when you first attempt to make backward cross-follows. Decide where your arms should have gone in order to keep the crossing and uncrossing cycle going. If you find yourself swinging forwards instead of backwards, stop and play back the motion in reverse using wider circles. You are ultimately aiming to make a small, backward figure 8 pattern centre around the wrists in follow time.

Move around your space and also practise going from a cross-follow in either forward or backward directions into an alternating time full-arm pirouette (Lesson 2, page 14).
Fantastic!

This chapter is taken from

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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.