

Lesson 14

Regular Snakes

The most popular snake in club swinging is performed at shoulder level on the vertical or 'wall' plane and seen from the front. Your elbows should be the stationary centre points around which the clubs rotate. The clubs coil around the wrists, incorporating two full circles and a 'throw-off,' making three circles in all. The turns are labelled by quarters from 0, $\frac{1}{4}$ all the way up to 3.

Outward Full Snake

Hold an upturned club in a snake grip (Figure 13.1, page 49), forefinger over the club knob. Figure 14.1 shows the starting position. Watch that your elbow is at the height of your shoulder and that the body of the club is resting behind your upper arm. The palm of the hand should face outward (away from your face) to begin a regular shoulder snake.

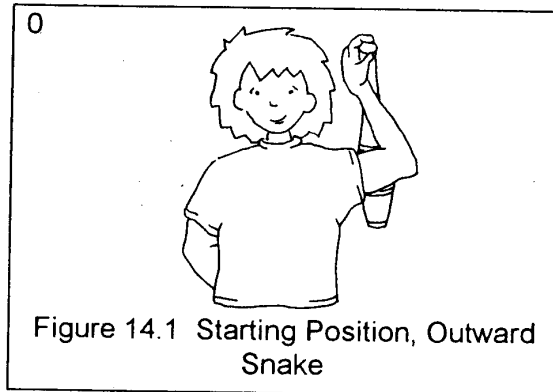


Figure 14.1 Starting Position, Outward Snake

First Circle - Start the club in an arc outward, away from your head. The base of the club is brought upward as the wrist turns down and in towards your chest. Continue the small circle until the club passes underneath the forearm, then turn the wrist to face outward again.

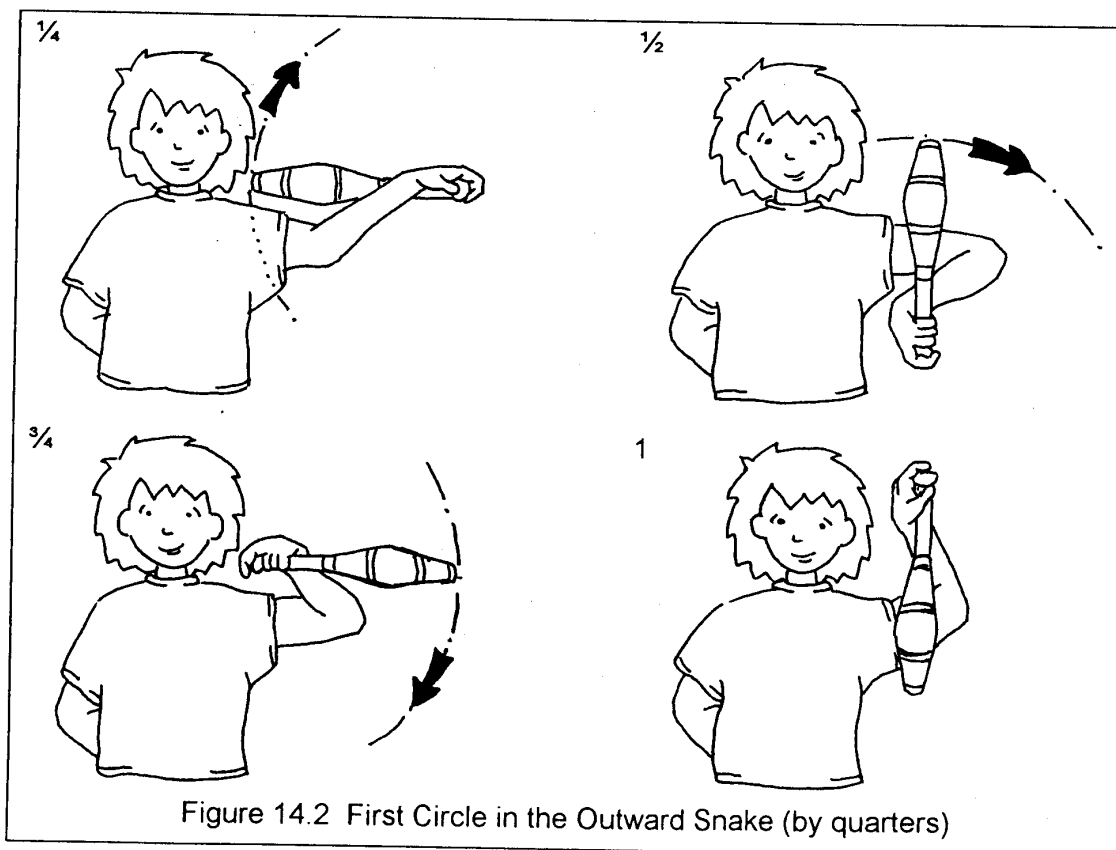


Figure 14.2 First Circle in the Outward Snake (by quarters)

Notice that at the end of the first circle you are in a position similar to the original starting position (Figure 14.1), except that the club is **now in front of the arm**. Crucially, you must turn your wrist to face outward before beginning the second circle.

Second Circle - Start position shown in the last picture of Figure 14.2. Push the club outward and downward, slowly circling in front of the arm. The club moves into the cradle position after three quarters of a circle before resting vertically behind your upper arm. Figure 14.3.

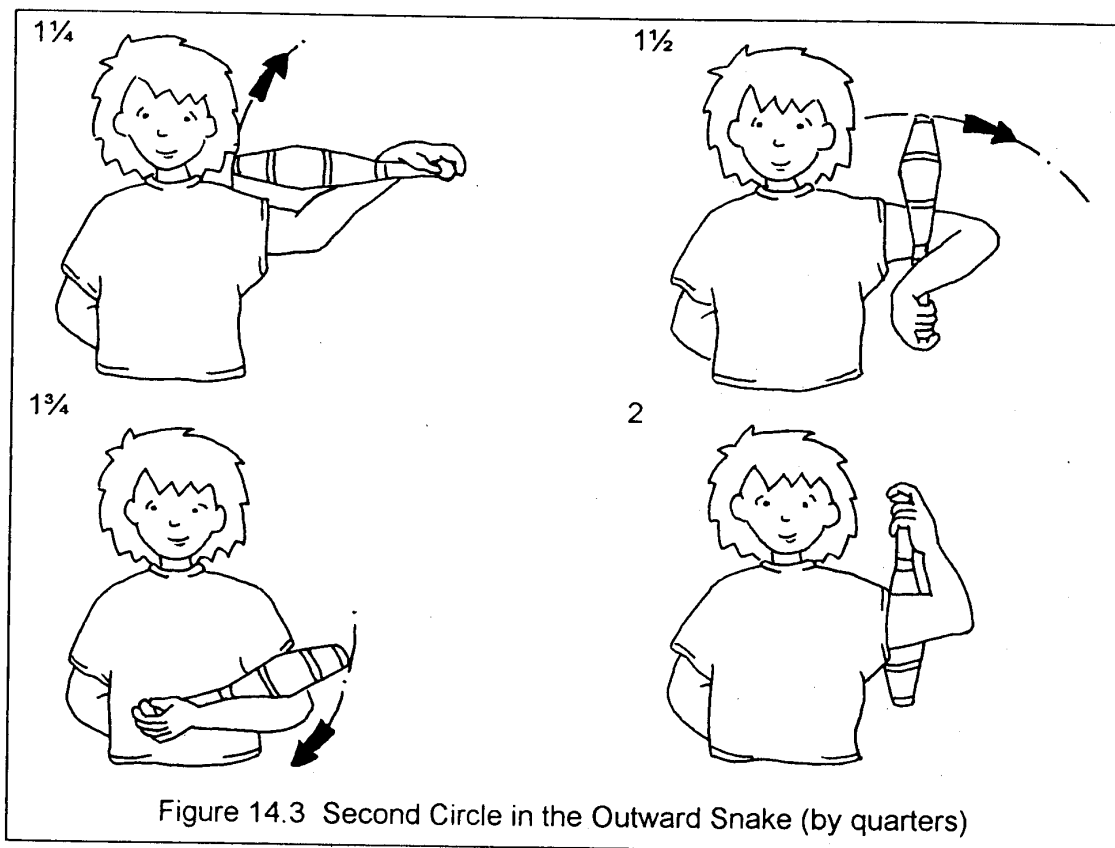
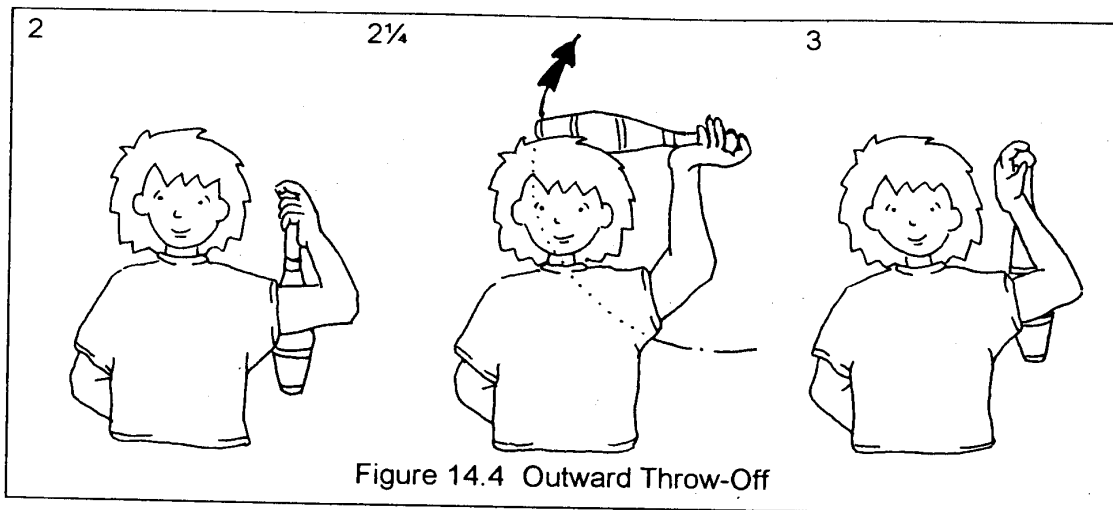


Figure 14.3 Second Circle in the Outward Snake (by quarters)

Throw-Off

A throw-off completes the outward snake by turning the wrist from facing inward (towards the head) to an outward angle and ready to restart the snake movement. During a throw-off the club swings a full circle behind the shoulder.

Begin with a snake grip facing inward and the club behind your shoulder. Release all your fingers except your forefinger and thumb from the neck of the club. Use a sharp flick of the wrist to spin the club once outward - Figure 14.4 on the following page. Regain a snake grip in the start position.



An interesting variation on the straight throw-off shown in Figure 14.4 is to direct a vertical club around the back of your head.

The regular shoulder snake is mastered when you can link smooth cycles consisting of first circles, second circles and a throw-off. With a club in each hand try to make:

Synchronous time outward snakes.

Alternating time outward snakes.

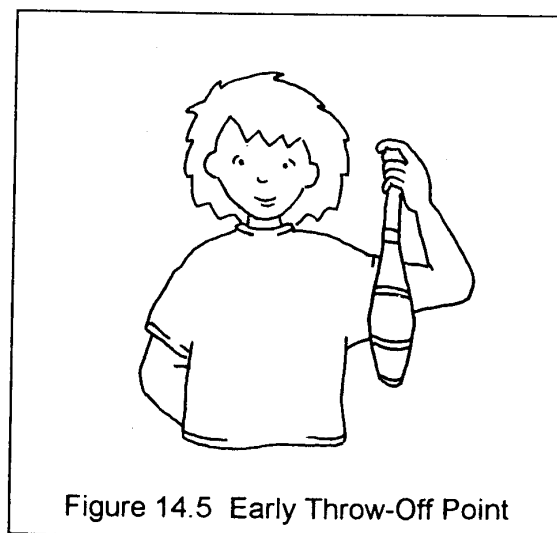
Well done! Snakes work the wrist and arm fairly hard and so it will be an effort to keep the clubs held high and exactly on the vertical wall plane. Either swing some full-arm and hand circle patterns or else take a rest before learning the following half snake movements.

Outward Half Snakes

First or second-half snakes can be performed without the other circle by making slight adjustments to the regular snake. The snake is thereby shortened to two circles instead of three.

First-Half Outward Snake

To complete just a first-half snake, start as for a regular snake with the club behind the shoulder and make an early throw-off. This throw-off is after the first circle when the arm is in the position in Figure 14.5. Importantly, your hand still faces the head just before the throw-off instead of turning outward as in Figure 14.2,(1). The early throw-off returns the club to a normal start position (Figure 14.1).



Second-Half Outward Snakes

Begin later in the snake with the club resting in front of the arm, as shown in Figure 14.2,(1). Complete the second-half snake (Figure 14.3). The throw-off is slightly different from normal because you aim to end with the club in front, rather than behind, the shoulder.

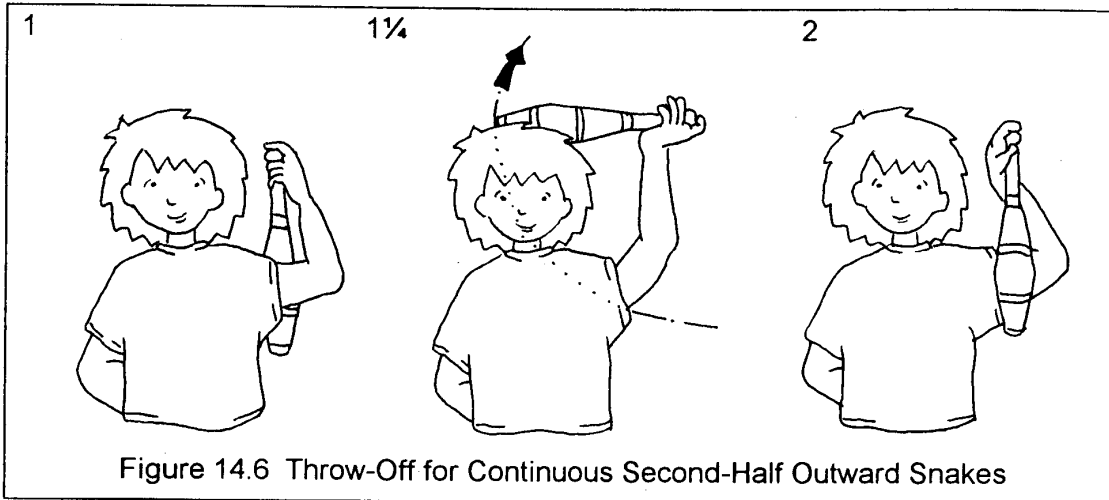


Figure 14.6 Throw-Off for Continuous Second-Half Outward Snakes

Transition From Full-Arm and Shoulder Circles Into a Snake Grip

From an outward full-arm circle, bend the elbow as the club comes past the head, allowing the club to swing down into a shoulder circle. Catch the club in a snake grip during the outer half of the shoulder circle as the club is lowered from its peak. Keep the momentum going and straight away begin an outward regular snake. Throw-off into a full-arm circle and repeat.

The transition from an outward shoulder circle into a regular snake can be very smooth as these circles are of similar sizes. Try linking various moves to form interesting snake combinations mixed with the classic wide arm swings in both synchronous and alternating timings.

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.