

Lesson 19

Essential Pole Moves

Club swinging and pole spinning are two closely related manipulation skills since they are both founded upon the development of strong, supple wrist motions. Three very useful pole spinning moves are described in this lesson. These central hold tricks will help you to put together a pole routine once linked with pole spinning adaptations of the club swinging movements you have already learnt.

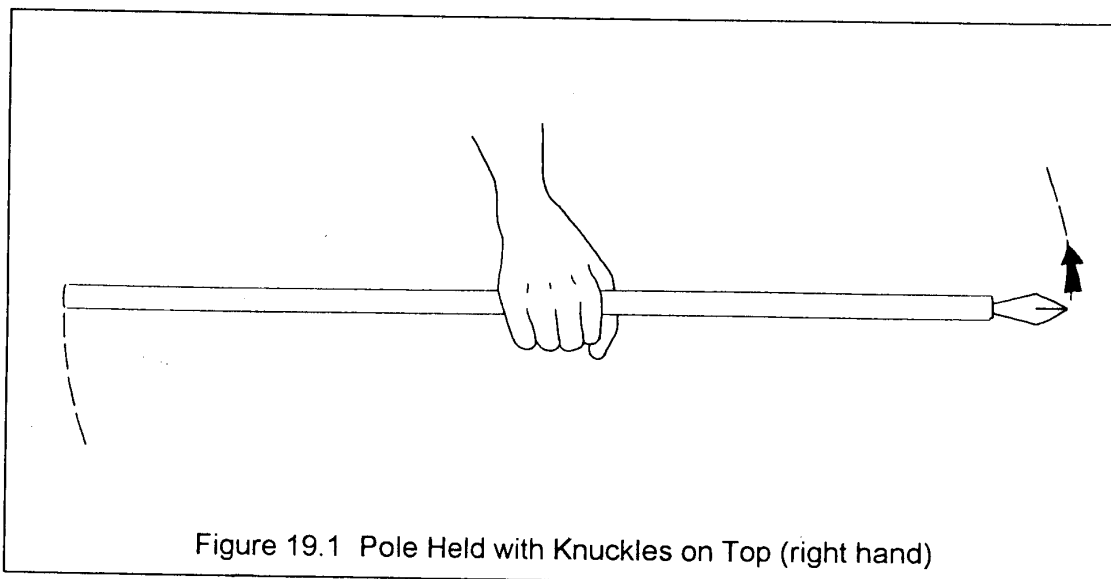
I originally planned to write about the relationships between club swinging and pole spinning. But, since club swinging is a long subject in itself, a more comprehensive coverage of pole tricks will have to be published separately. My next book will include circular pole moves, off centre moves, twirling and placements, plus work with two poles. But, for now, this lesson's pole spinning relies on always holding the stick inside the hand - there is no twirling through the fingers.

Use a wooden broomstick, as these are cheap, strong and available from any DIY shop. A spearhead has been drawn to distinguish between the pole's two ends and is not compulsory. Wrap a coloured strip of tape around one end of your pole to help tell the ends apart.

A spinning pole can be thrown in many different ways. One of the most controlled methods is characterised as building speed and lift from a smooth one-handed rotation of the pole - the cradle rotation. First warm up and shake out your arms and wrists well.

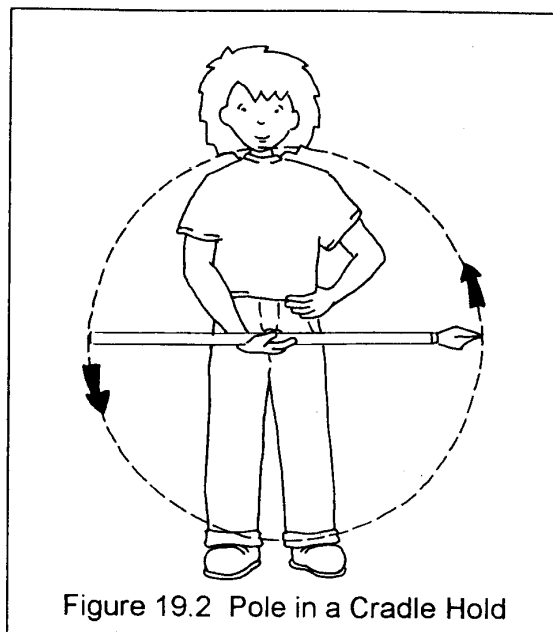
Cradle Rotation

Hold the centre of the pole with your right hand so that it is horizontal in front of you with the knuckles on top. Loosen your grip slightly.



Turn your hand over 180° outwards - (i.e., right hand turn clockwise and left hand anticlockwise). The pole is now visible in the palm. Twist another 180° so that the pole has one end over the wrist as though you were cradling it - Figure 19.2 opposite.

After one complete circular spin, only the thumb is keeping the pole in place over the wrist in a cradle and this may feel uncomfortable at first. This pole cradle is directly analogous to the cradle position used when performing club swinging snake patterns see Figure 13.2 on page 49.



Next, give a small lift while releasing the grip so that the pole leaves the hand and undergoes a 180° turn over the back of the wrist. Twist your hand inward to catch the middle of the pole again with a gentle snatch down as the pole completes a half circle.

You end the trick with a "knuckles on top" hold, as in Figure 19.1 but with the ends changed as the pole has undergone a rotation of 1½ spins. The crucial half spin is over the back of the wrist in the outward direction (thumb to little finger). Because the pole is always in contact with your hand, with practice, this method leads to a very reliable one handed spin. Try the cradle rotation with each hand turning outwards at the front, in the backwards direction and without looking at the pole.

The cradle rotation can be performed with two sticks in synchronous or alternating time, either outwards at the front (as described) or with a spin backward at the side of the body.

Throwing and Catching a Spinning Pole

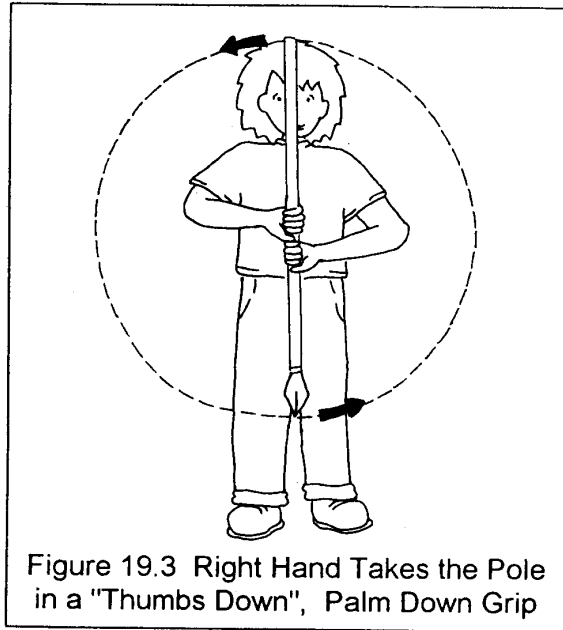
From cradle position - Figure 19.2, increase the amount of lift when you let go so that the pole completes a half rotation in the air. Watch the spin and catch the pole when it is horizontal (knuckles on top - Figure 19.1) from above, if catching with the same hand, or else from below with the other hand.

Notice that if you catch with the other hand, you cannot immediately continue this outward spinning move. This is because the pole will be rotating the wrong way (i.e., inward instead of outward) to enter the cradle in that hand. Some intermediate move will be needed, such as the front propeller (page 72), to change hands or the direction of spin before starting another cradle. You could throw higher to make a full spin in the air, but mind your light bulbs if you try this trick inside! Extra speed and height can be gained by throwing just **before** the stick wraps around the wrist in a cradle. However, more control is then needed to make the flight take the desired path.

Front Propeller

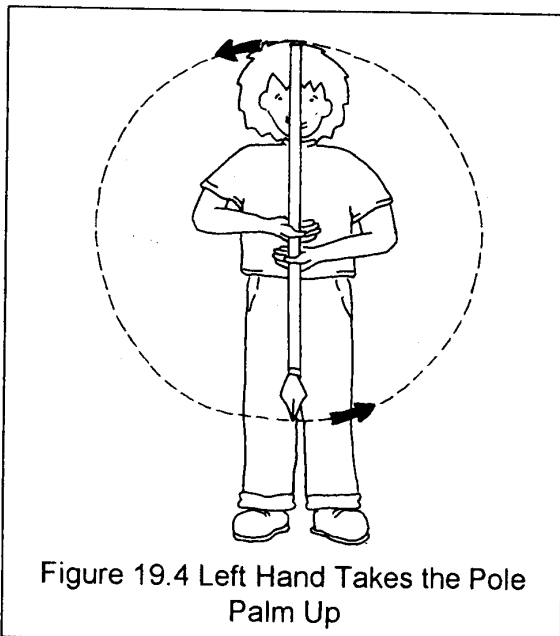
To spin anticlockwise (from the audience viewpoint) first hold the centre of the pole in the left hand, upright, parallel to your legs (spear upright).

Turn the pole clockwise (inward) until it must almost travel over the back of the hand. At this point, the right hand reaches over the left hand and takes the pole just above the left hand in a "thumbs down", palm down grip - Figure 19.3.



Introducing the right hand will make the spin steady. Try to continue using the momentum of the circle that has been started as the right hand spins the stick around for a full outward turn.

Release the left hand. The pole will then be twisted round by the right hand which will turn until the palm faces upwards. At this point, the left hand should reach under the right hand, palm up and take the pole Figure 19.4.



Each hand takes the pole in a grip that allows it to spin the pole around by **one full turn**. When one hand is released you must turn it around during the gap to allow maximum twist when that hand regains the pole.

Try also spinning the front propeller in the opposite direction (for a clockwise spin seen from the front swap hands and follow the instructions replacing right hand for left hand and vice versa). Change neatly between the two directions with a sharp stop when the pole is horizontal.

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.