

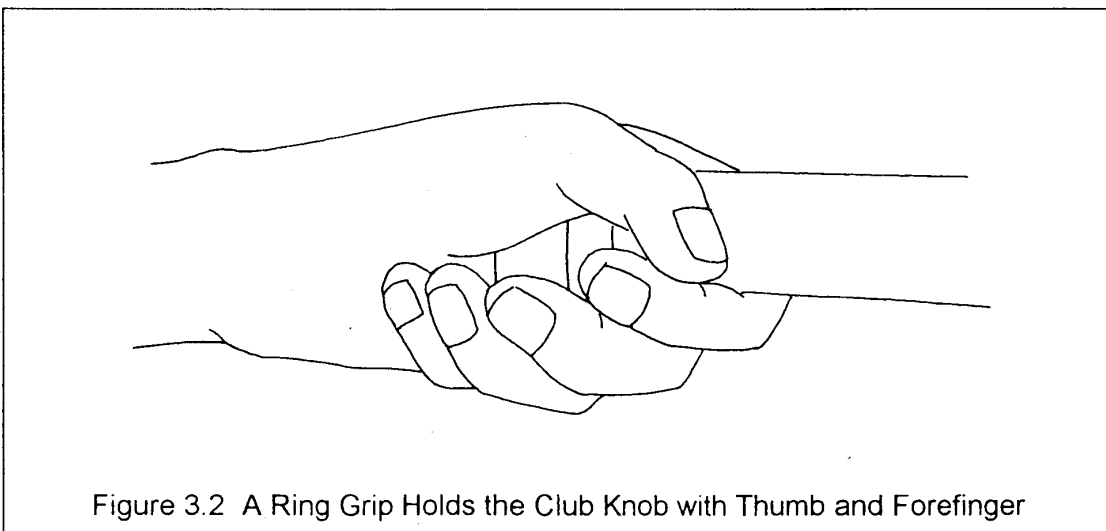
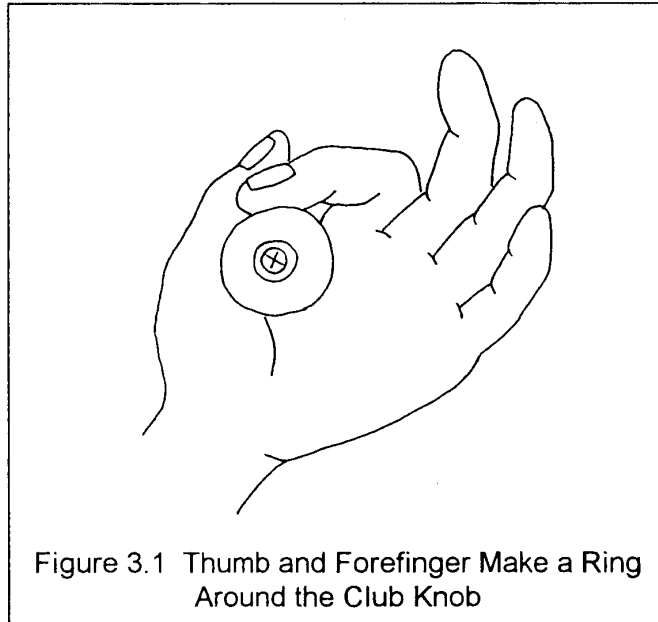
Lesson 3

Forward and Backward Hand Circles

Continuing from Lesson 2's exploration of full-arm patterns seen from the side, this lesson introduces two complementary moves - forward and backward hand circles. Hand circles have a much smaller circumference than the full-arm circle and they will add variety to your club swinging. A hand circle has a radius equal to the length of the club and pivots around the wrist joint. These patterns predominantly use the ring grip and look best if the swing is kept flat and as close to your arm as possible.

Ring Grip

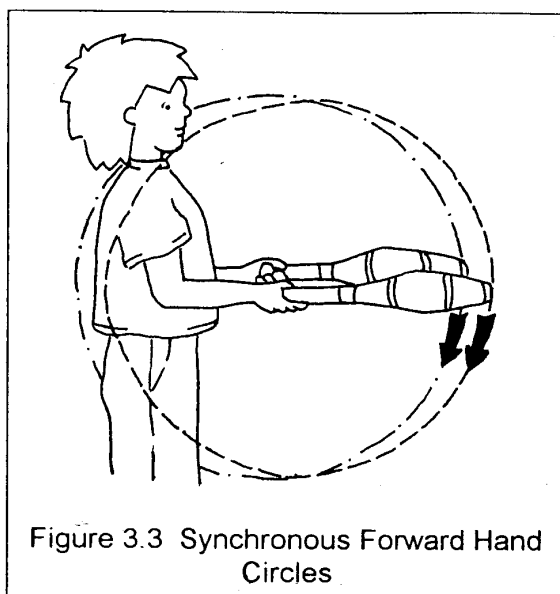
Put the knob of the club in the notch between your thumb and first finger and loosely make a ring, allowing the club enough play to rotate freely. Figures 3.1 and 3.2.



Forward Hand Circles Outside the Arms

With clubs held in a ring grip, begin making small circles to the front with your wrist at the centre. Hold your arms horizontal, at chest level and shoulder-width apart. The clubs swing on the outside of the arms with elbows slightly bent, as if you were turning a skipping rope.

With a single club in a ring grip, swing forward hand circles outside that arm. Repeat and swap hands. With both hands, make synchronous forward hand circles directly in front, at chest level. Figure 3.3.



Synchronous time forward hand circles feel like skipping. Try adding a little bounce to your knees to aid your sense of rhythm. The clubs should pass perpendicularly outside the arms, i.e., parallel to the arms, again flat to the vertical or "wall plane." This class of pattern look good when seen from the side as only from this angle is a full circle visible.

Alternating time forward hand circles.

For all alternating time patterns the aim is to keep two circles exactly half a revolution apart. This takes some practice as you will need to learn how to keep both hands' circuits turning at precisely the same speed. Learn a new timing by swinging circles with just the weaker hand (the left hand if you are right handed) and then bring in your stronger hand to make opposite sides of the pattern swing out of synch. Start practising alternating time at a slow speed and then build up the control to go faster. It may help to count a rhythm out loud to yourself 1.2 1.2. 1.2, with one circle peaking on 1 and the other reaching its peak on the count of 2.

Hand circle movements in alternating time are initially difficult to sustain. Add variety as, for instance, it looks great when the swinger changes the position of a standard pattern by raising the clubs high above the head and then lowers the clubs to the ground.

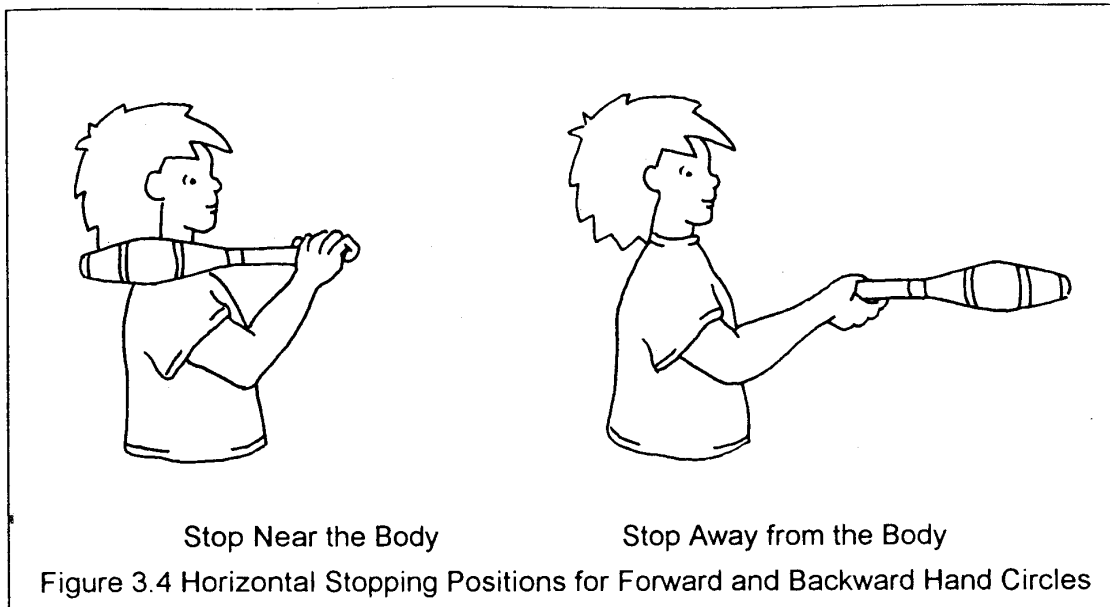
Backward Hand Circles Outside the Arms

Clubs are again held in a ring grip and these moves involve hand circles swinging backward.

Synchronous backward hand circles at chest level.

Alternating time backward hand circles outside the arms.

The first pattern is similar to skipping backwards. Learn to stop the clubs neatly and to go from forwards to backwards and back at will, with both hands. I find that it is easiest to stop at either of the two points when the club is parallel to the floor, on the horizontal plane - see Figure 3.4 opposite. Gain further control by isolating the movements of each hand and changing the direction of one hand independently from the other.

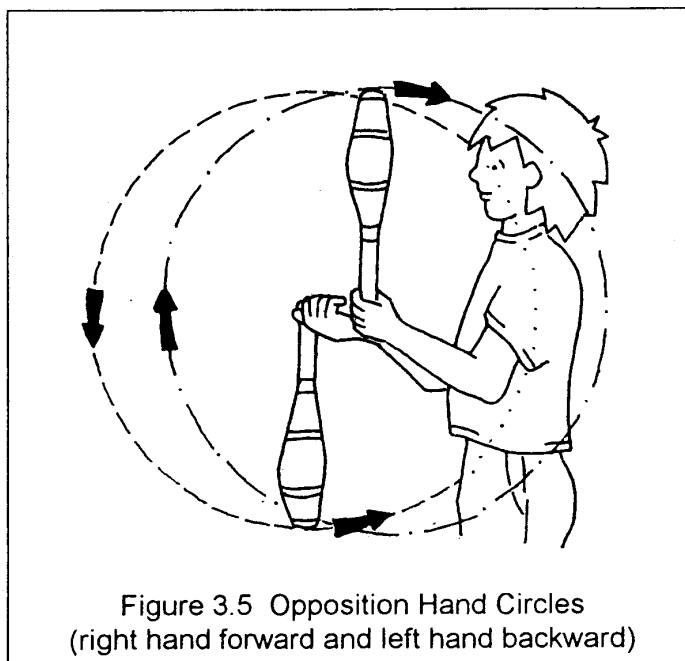


Opposition Time Hand Circles Outside the Arms

One side circles forward and the other backward, in opposition.

From starting position, make synchronous time hand circles turn in different directions, e.g. with the right hand going forward while the left rotates backward. Figure 3.5. Stop neatly, change directions and repeat the move with circles always moving in opposition.

This pattern took me many attempts. I could master the control only after a lot of effort had been put into strengthening my weaker left wrist.



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.