

Lesson 5

Combining Full-Arm with Hand Circles

Moves that incorporate a mixture of different sized circles are more interesting than single ratio movements (patterns with constant radius). The attraction lies in variety, an element of surprise, and in the slightly higher level of coordination skills and rhythm required to perform linked patterns.

Smooth Combinations

To create a series of flowing movements, large and small circles must swing in the same direction. So, for instance, if you have set in motion an *outward* full-arm swing, it feels much more harmonious to incorporate an *outward* hand circle than an inward move. When you decide to change the basic direction of a pattern, for now, the easiest method is to briefly return to the starting position to make the adjustment. With practice, you will be able to link smooth combinations with transitional moves.

Rhythm

A complete, full-arm circle normally takes twice as long as a small hand circle. Because the timing is different, successfully incorporating two types of circles requires a sense of rhythm. Counting time out loud is a useful aid to coordinating your arms. Playing music that has a strong beat as you practise will also enhance your own rhythm and add to your enjoyment.

Full-Arm and Lower-Front Circles in Synchronous Time

From starting position, begin an outward full-arm circle on count 1, adding an outward lower-front circle on count 2 and completing the full-arm circle on count 3.

Next for the combination move with both hands, Figure 5.1.

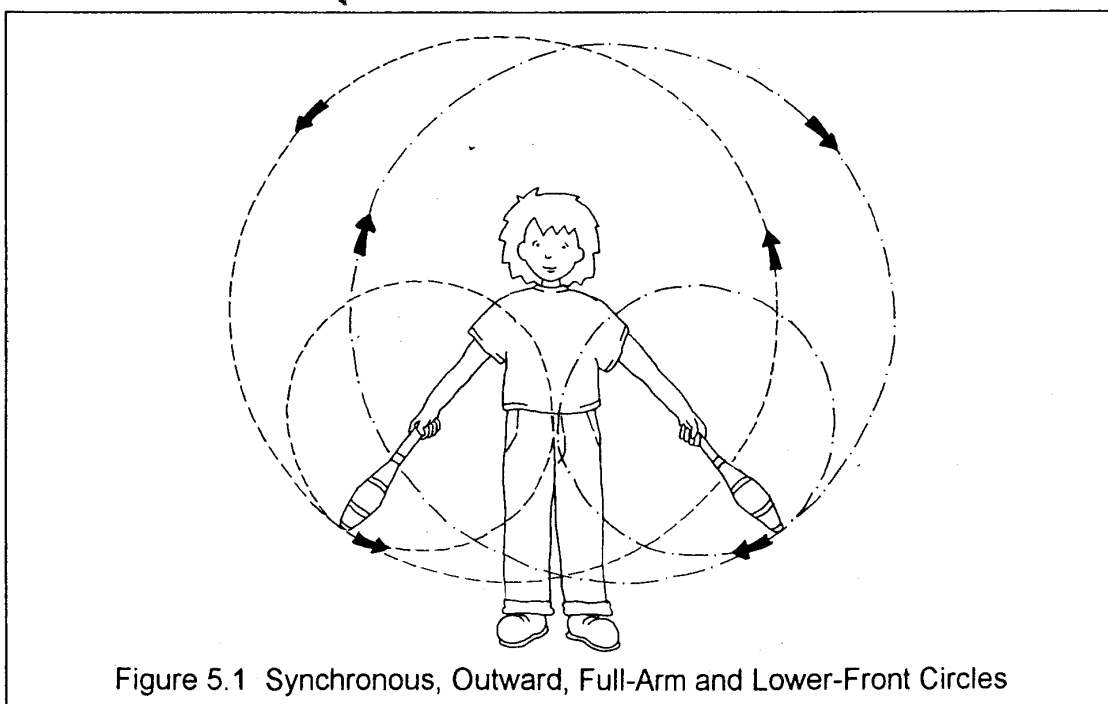


Figure 5.1 Synchronous, Outward, Full-Arm and Lower-Front Circles

Notice that synchronous time, lower-front circles must be kept a little apart to prevent collisions. Practise completing combinations with just one of each type of circle initially, then double up circles to make patterns in double time.

Double Time: All circles are performed twice.

**Double up circles by performing each circle twice.
Swing the previous patterns in the inward direction.**

Repeating a circle twice requires more concentration and control than a single revolution. This is true for all coordination skills. For instance, jugglers will know that continuous tricks take longer to perfect than a solitary trick.

Parallel Combinations

**From starting position, swing the clubs in parallel full-arm circles left, adding parallel lower-front circles on the second count.
Double up all circles (2 arm circles followed by 2 hand circles).
Change direction from the starting position to parallels right.**

Attempt to keep these parallel moves shoulder width apart. At no stage do the clubs touch and both arms should be moving at exactly the same speed.

To spice up your parallel moves, how about taking side steps in time with the full-arm arc, either left or right? Travelling with the pattern involves linking both the arms and the steps. Do this to music and you will begin to dance with your club swinging. This will greatly raise the level of your skill, although take care to avoid hitting your shins.

Alternating Time Combinations

From starting position, the weaker hand begins an outward full-arm and lower-front hand circle combination. When this is flowing, add the stronger side in alternating time by starting a full-arm outward circle just as the weaker hand begins its lower-front circle.

Alternating, or off-synch, timing may take a little while to find. Always practise the movement first with your less dominant hand (the left hand if you are right handed) This gives the weaker side more exercise and will help to strengthen it so that, eventually, both sides are equally adept. After the movement is mastered with one hand, introduce the other and, finally, use both so that circles remain a half cycle apart.

A tip is to stretch out when completing the full-arm movement with the elbow straight. The full-arm swing will then leave enough time for a neat hand circle. There's no need to hurry. Next try:

Inward, alternating time, full-arm and lower-front circles.

Never skip the inward move as a true balance in your swinging requires conscious effort, even self-discipline to learn moves in **both directions**. Eventually, patterns will become smooth and you will be able to change directions and timing with an even-sided grace and beauty.

Full-Arm and Shoulder Circles in Synchronous Time

With one hand, begin a single outward full-arm circle. Once it has gained momentum, add a single outward shoulder circle.

Then try with both hands to swing synchronous time, full-arm and shoulder circles. Figure 5.2.

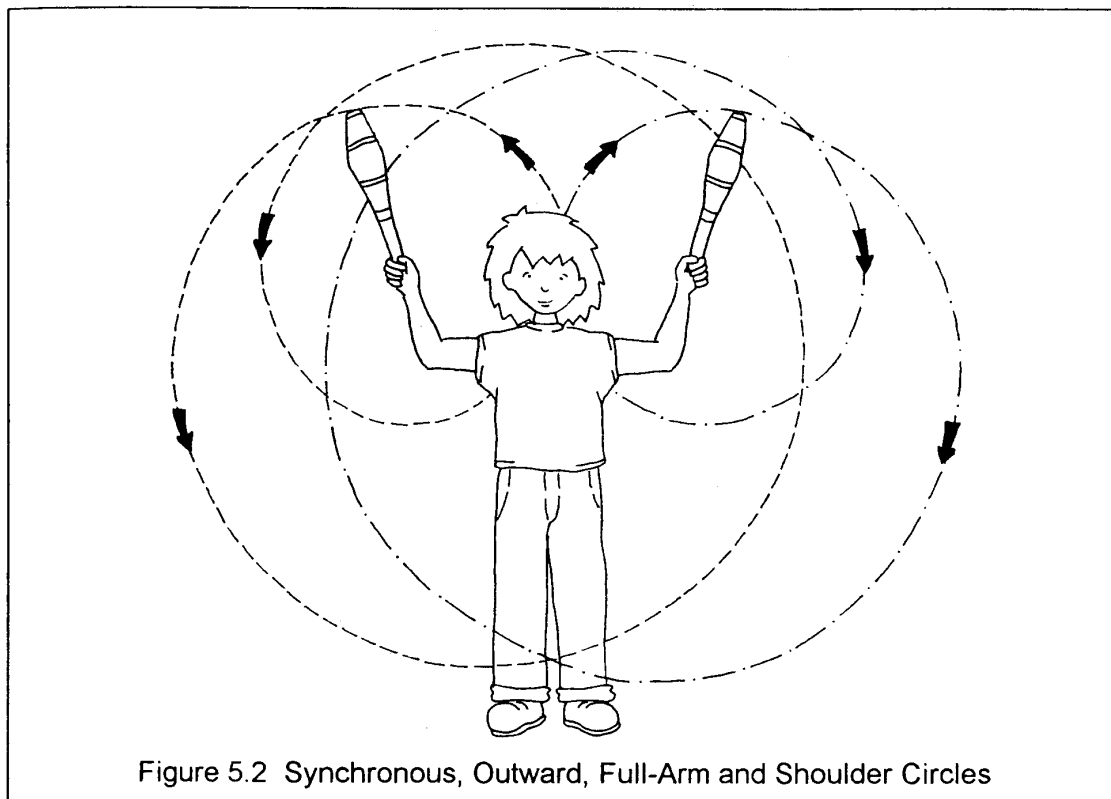


Figure 5.2 Synchronous, Outward, Full-Arm and Shoulder Circles

The arms are outstretched for most of the full-arm circle, except when dipping into the shoulder circle. Then the elbow bends to sink the club behind the shoulder and towards the nape of the neck.

The arms will cross at front chest level and so you must decide whether to swing the right wrist over the left or vice versa. A worthwhile exercise is to change between placing the left hand and then right hand on top. Next for the inward combinations:

Inward, synchronous time full-arm and shoulder circles.

Double up all circles.

The inward, synchronous time involves the arms crossing twice - they pass once above the head and then again at waist level. At neither point should the clubs knock against each other. If they do, then check the symmetry of your pattern in a mirror. It is likely that your weaker hand is tracing circles that are uneven against the wall plane (they will look oval rather than round). The solution is to work the weaker hand in isolation before re-attempting an improved synchronous time pattern.

Parallel Time: Parallel combinations of full-arm and shoulder circles are attractive. Try some now. You will find more comprehensive advice in Lesson 12.

Alternating Time: This very popular move is known as the reel. It is explored in detail in Lesson 6.

Combining Three Circles In A Series

Linking all the positions for circles that we have covered in this lesson will enable you to create an impressive club swinging sequence. It's up to you how many of each type of swing you add in any combination. The most attractive moves will be those that retain symmetry and a smooth sense of rhythm.

Try a synchronous time, outward combination of all three circles. i.e. full-arm, lower-front and shoulder circles.

There are the options of varying:

- direction;
- timing;
- doubling up any, or all circles;
- swinging one arm in isolation.

Short Practice Routine

The following short routine begins at starting position, Figure 1.4. Most music has four beats to the bar, so you should repeat each swing four times.

1. Both hands, synchronised, outward full-arm circles.
2. Synchronised outward, full-arm and lower-front circle combination.
3. Synchronised outward, full-arm and shoulder circle combination.
4. Stop at starting position to begin synchronous time, inward full-arm circles.
5. Briefly stop just one hand to go into alternating time inward full-arm circles.
6. Stop at start position then make parallel full-arm circles left.
7. Parallel left elbow circles, (medium sized circles with the elbow at the centre).
8. Parallel left lower-front hand circles, up with half a full-arm circle to finish with clubs

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.