

Mass Fire Swinging Routine

I was asked to write and teach a fire swinging routine for presentation at the 16th European Juggling Convention in Leeds, England. The central idea was to involve many club swingers from different nations in a mass, synchronised fire show. After just a few rehearsals the following large-scale routine was performed by 29 fire swingers, all of whom I would like to thank for their skill and enthusiasm. Thanks also to the fantastic hand drummers who accompanied us. As the entire routine is quite short (4 mins), we decided to perform it twice, at either end of the outdoor arena and just before and after the firework display.

The routine is pitched at an intermediate level. Where moves are especially difficult, you may want to substitute a similar pattern. Most music has 4 beats to the bar and you should **repeat each sequence in 4:4 time**. The count is given representing the number of times to repeat full combinations and you should count just from the right hand (RH). Hints are given after the routine.

If you decide to learn and perform a mass show with other fire swingers, then be aware of each other to keep your patterns synchronised. This routine contains a repositioning of the people (the floor pattern) between sections. The idea is to walk confidently as you change places. The performers begin facing the audience in a wide line, then walk into a circle looking inward. Section C is then swung with people standing in deep lines behind each other. The finale consisting mainly of parallel movements towards the middle of the performance space is designed to focus the attention of the audience as the routine closes.

Equipment: 2 torches each, paraffin fuelled, shaken and lit backstage **just before** the show.

Entrance: Each person has two clubs held high and crossed above their head whilst beating the clubs together (see page 73). Form neat lines facing the audience and give everyone room. Wait with your arms in start position, clubs held straight up at chest level.

Beats/Revolutions

Start: Section A

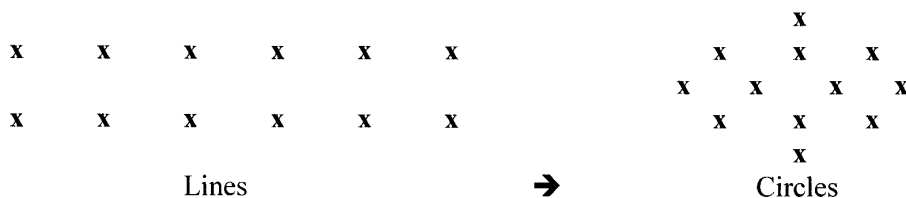
Walking Intro: 20

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1 RH (right hand) solo full-arm circles INWARDS. Stop high in start position. | 4 |
| 2 OUTWARD full-arm circles together in synchronous time. | 4 |
| 3 Synchronous upper-front & shoulder circles. | 4 |
| 3a Transition: double up two outward upper-front hand circles. | |
| 4 Alternating outwards, short reel done up high. Use a wide arm swing down to: | 4 |
| 5 Popular outwards reel (combination full-arm and shoulder circles, alternating). | Fast 8 |
| 6 Short reel low (alternating lower-front & backs) | 4 |
| 7 Short reel low with circles doubled up front and then back. | 4 |
| 8 PARALLEL figure 8 hand circles inside & outside-the-arms forwards to the front. | |

Floor Pattern

Walk into a CIRCLE floor pattern while swinging parallel figure 8 hand circles. 16

Face inwards to the circle. "X" denotes a performer with 12 people shown in the example.



Hints on Section B - Forward and Backward Directions

This section has two difficult aspects. The first is to rise up from the ground with backward cross-over circles. Expect the backward direction to feel awkward at first, but it becomes smoother after a little practice.

Perhaps the most flashy movement in this section is the full pirouette into the forward cross-follow. Practice full-arm pirouettes as explained on page 14 in order to learn a neat turn.

Hints on Section C - Parallel Movements

When performers are positioned behind each other and deep on to the audience, the effect of club swinging is greatly enhanced. The people directly in front appear to have many arms!

The most difficult transition in the final section is to swing between the legs and then change from parallel movements to an outward, synchronous time pattern. We stopped briefly at starting position to make the timing adjustment.

A loud "HUH" at the end is a signal to the audience that the routine is over and that they should start to cheer. This applause cue is reinforced by the stillness of performers as they statue in a star for 4 counts.

It is safer to alter a normal bow slightly so that the still lit torches are placed on the ground rather than in the air. Wait to blow out the torches at the side of the performance area.

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.