

POLE

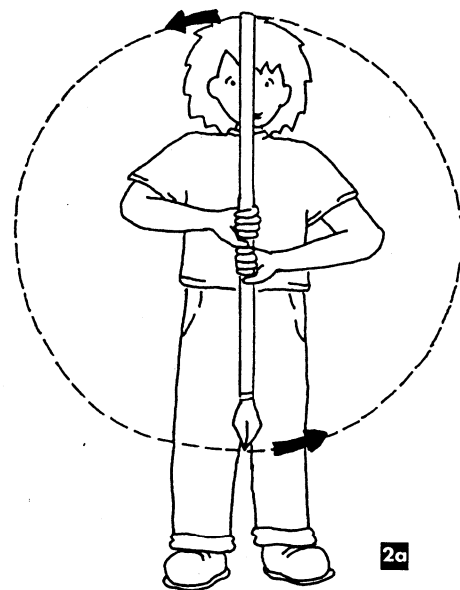
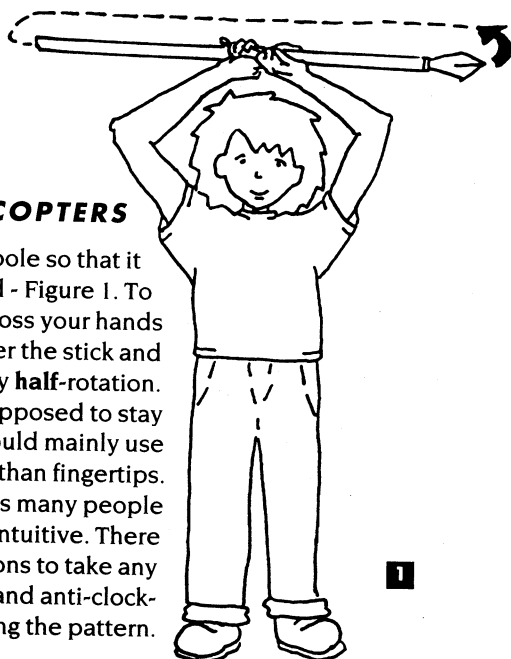
part 2

SPINNING

In the last issue I explained a family of pole spinning tricks based on a sideways figure 8 patter. This workshop describes three types of both-handed spins. Find a metre-long broom stick hand (or similar), enough space, and warm up your shoulder and wrist joints. With a long object, the fastest moves originate from power in the wrists rather than twirls through the fingertips. Hold the centre of the pole in the notch between your thumb and a loose fist. I have drawn a spear to distinguish the leading end (you could use coloured tape). Because the thumbs control direction, the leading end is always nearest the thumb.

HELICOPTERS

Start by lifting the pole so that it is flat overhead - Figure 1. To spin horizontally, cross your hands "thumbs up" under the stick and change grip every **half-rotation**. The hands are supposed to stay central and you should mainly use your palms rather than fingertips. Just have a go, as many people find the motion intuitive. There are two directions to take any circle (clockwise and anti-clockwise), so try reversing the pattern.



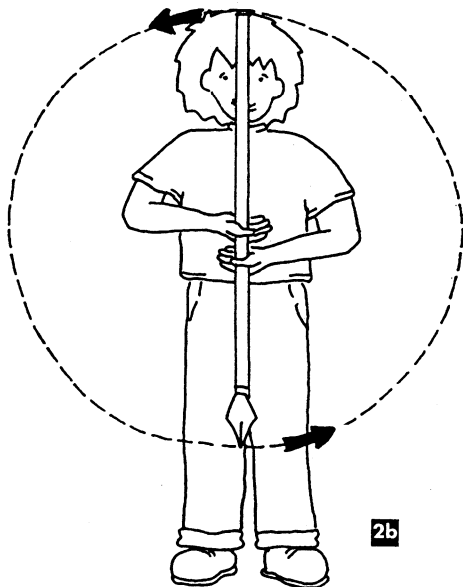
FRONT PROPELLER

To spin in a vertical plane, anti-clockwise (from the audience viewpoint), first hold the centre of the pole in the left hand (spear upright). Turn the pole clockwise (inward) for half a spin until the spear is pointing down and the pole 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 2a.

Release the left hand and 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.

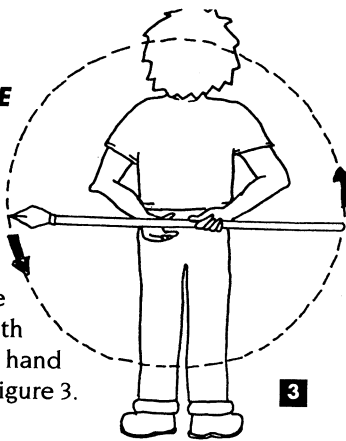
The pole will then be twisted round by the right hand which will turn until the palm faces upwards. Then, the left hand reaches under the right hand, palm up, and takes the pole - Figure 2b.

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 (as though repeatedly turning a tap) to allow maximum twist before regaining the pole.



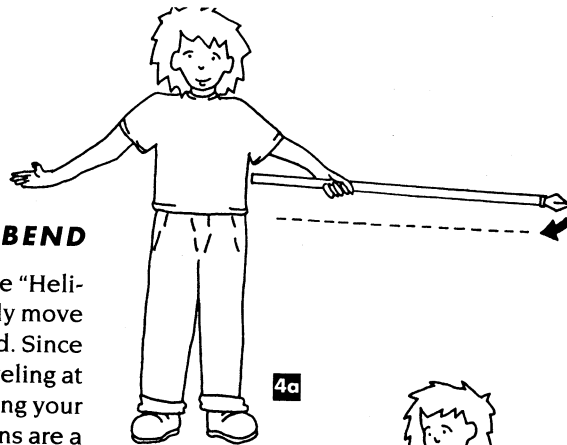
ADDING A PIROUETTE TO THE PROPELLER

When the left hand has just taken the pole (Figure 2b), turn your feet and whole body towards your right. Leave the pole spinning in the same place as for the front propeller, but pirouette with your body. Regain the pole with your right hand, so that the back of the hand is against your back, Figure 3.

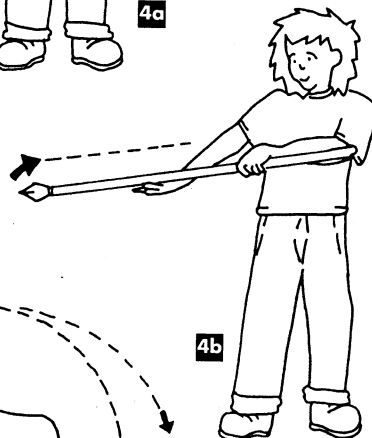


CHINESE BACK BEND

We will build the first trick, the "Helicopter", into a spectacular body move called a Chinese Back-Bend. Since the back-bend involves swiveling at the waist, warm up by rotating your hips. The following illustrations are a mirror image.



To pass the pole from right to left, first hold it flat in your right hand - Figure 4a. Next place the pole horizontally into the waiting "palm up" left hand - Figure 4b. Continue the direction of the spin by "curling"



the left wrist upwards overhead and in a backward figure 8 (like the ball spinning move but going over-arm first). As you curl the wrist, lean forwards, bending at the waist and knees to allow the pole to spin over your back -

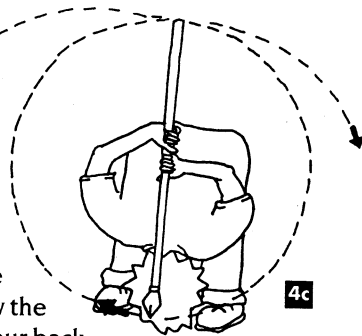


Figure 4c.

Exchange to the right hand by reaching for the centre of the pole underneath the left with the wrists turned so that both hands are against your back, thumbs up. Keep the flat spin going as your body straightens up and the pole comes back to the starting position. This Peking Opera-style move has a total of three circles, with the body always bent away from the pole.

I hope you've enjoyed trying this workshop. Like juggling and club swinging, pole spinning has many variations and looks great, particularly in a fire or UV show.

Anna Illings

References:

Modern Club Swinging and Pole Spinning, by Anna Illings, Butterfingers, 1994

Ball Juggling - The Fundamentals of an Art and a Skill, by Catherine Atwater, Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1984

From more workshops like this get the book:

**Modern Club Swinging
and Pole Spinning**

Butterfingers 1994. ISBN 0 9513240 8 X. © Anna Jillings

Download the entire book for free from:

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.