

The SNAKE

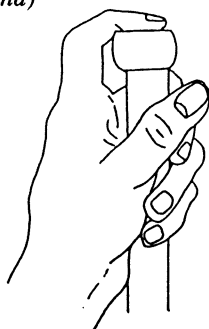
CLUB SWINGING PART III



Snakes are a category of club swinging move in which the clubs wrap around the arm like coiled serpents. They are intriguing to watch! The most popular snake is performed at shoulder level on the vertical or "wall" plane and is seen from the front. The clubs turn around the wrist, incorporating two full circles and a "throw-off". This workshop breaks this famous trick down into easy stages.

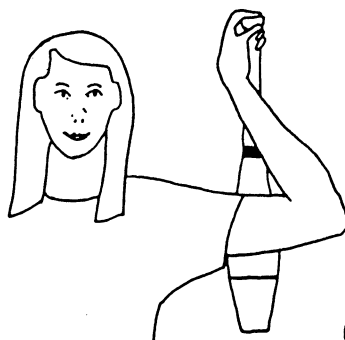
Warm up by stretching the arms while interlocking your fingers. Next hold an upturned club in the snake grip, with your forefinger over the end of the knob and your thumb and fingers around the neck (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Snake Grip (left hand)



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Figure 2 Starting Position for an Outward Snake



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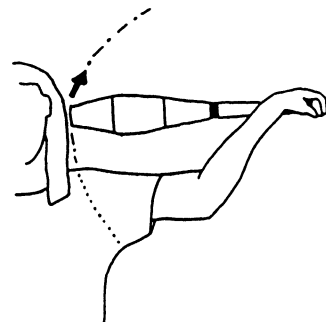
Figure 2 shows the starting position. Watch that your elbow is at the height of your shoulder and that the body of the club is resting behind your upper arm. The palm of the hand should face outward (away from your face) to begin a regular shoulder snake. In the following diagrams, arrows and dashed lines indicate the direction of movement for the club base.

First circle

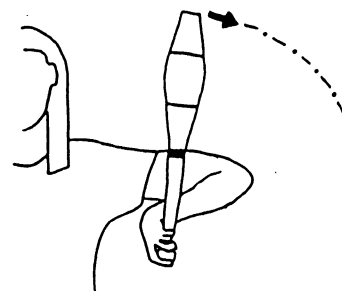
Start the club in an arc outward, away from your head. The base of the club is brought upward as the wrist turns down and in towards your chest. Continue the small circle until the club passes underneath the forearm, then turn the wrist to face outward again.

Figure 3: First Circle in the Outward Snake (by quarters)

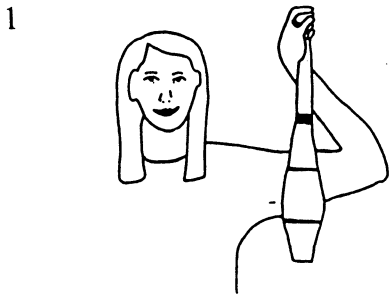
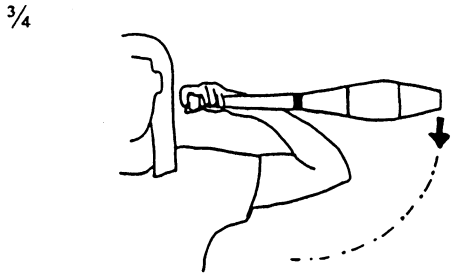
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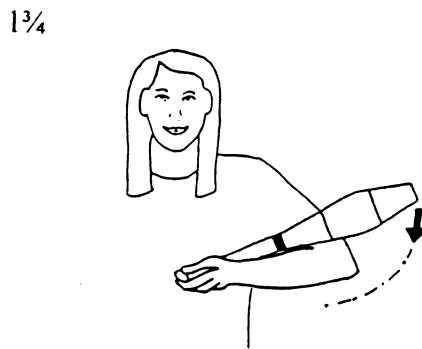
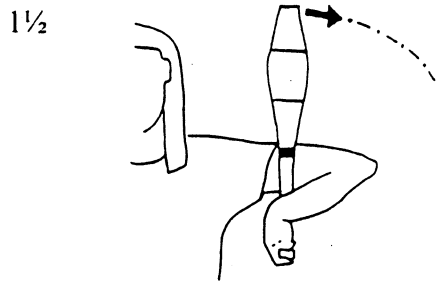
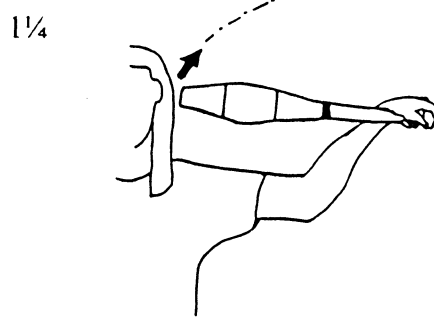
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Notice that at the end of the first circle you are in a position similar to the original start position (Figure 2), except that the club is now in front of the arm. Crucially, you must turn your wrist to face outward before beginning the second circle.

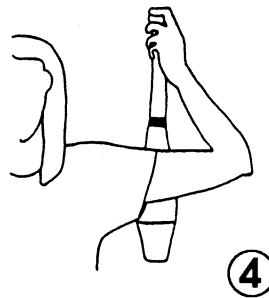
Second circle

Start position shown in the last picture of Figure 3. Push the club outward and downward, slowly circling in front of the arm. The final quarter circle brings the club to rest vertically behind your upper arm. Figures 4.

Figure 4: Second Half Outward Snakes (by quarters)



2



Throw-Off

A throw-off completes the outward snake by turning the wrist from facing inward (towards your head) to an outward angle and ready to restart the snake movement. During a throw-off, the club swings a full circle behind the shoulder.

Begin with a snake grip facing inward and the club behind your shoulder. Release all your fingers except your forefinger and thumb from the neck of the club. Use a sharp flick of the wrist to spin the club once outward - Figure 5. Regain snake grip at start position.

This snake trick is mastered when you can link smooth cycles of outward snakes consisting of first circles, second circles and a throw-off. With a club in each hand try to make:

Synchronous time outward snakes (i.e. with both hands together)

Alternating time outward snakes (i.e. off-synch, hands half a beat apart).

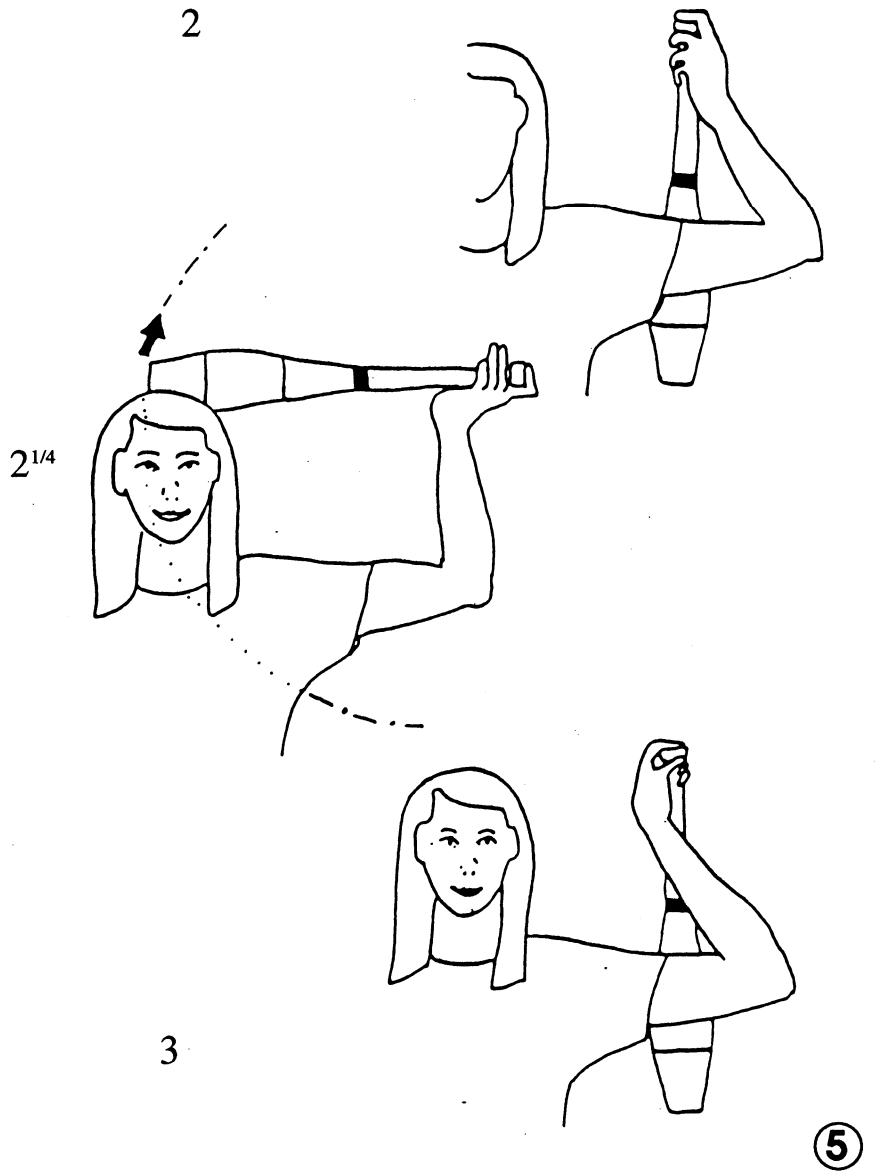
Well done! Snakes work the wrist and arm fairly hard and so it will be an effort to keep the clubs held high and exactly on the vertical or "wall" plane. But persevere, as snake movements are satisfying and will add a true mark of class to your club swinging repertoire. The inward direction is also possible and there are other types of snake to try, including spirals, half snakes, hip snakes and travelling body snakes as well as variations on the throw-off.

In the interests of safety, it is best not to try to do snakes with lit fire torches - unless you can do these tricks extremely fast!

The above workshop is an extract from a forthcoming book on Club Swinging by Anna Jillings, which is soon to be published by Butterfingers.

Anna Jillings, York, England

Figure 5: Outward Throw-Off



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.