

CIRCUS PEDAGOGY FOR INCLUSION



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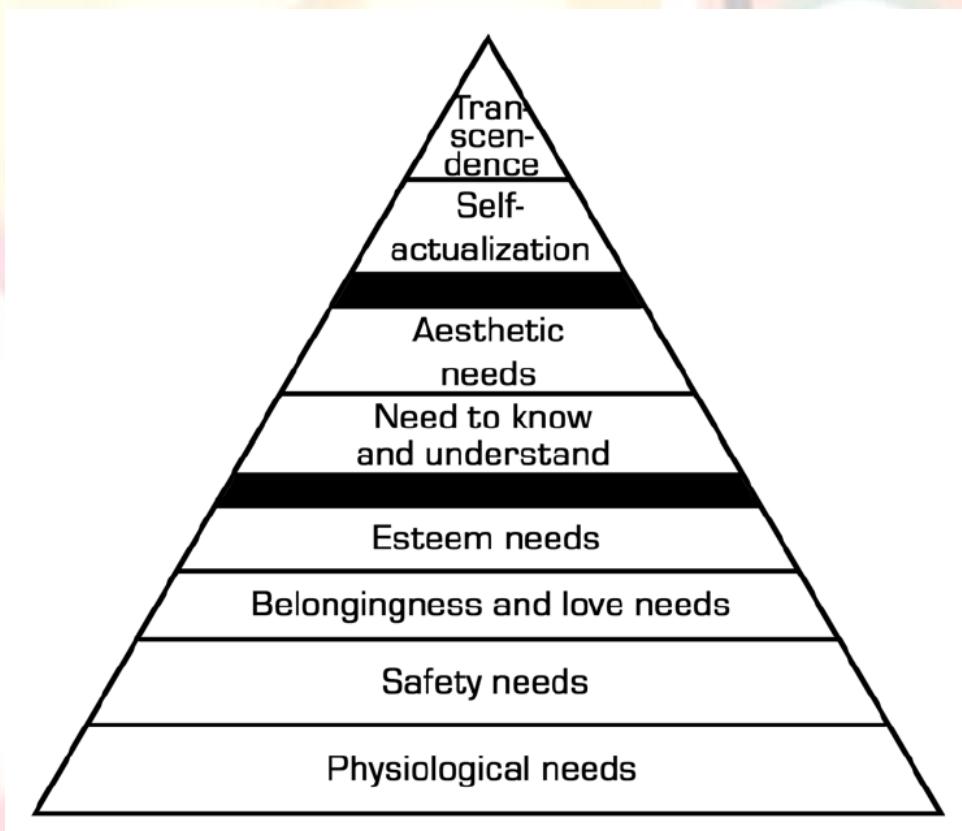
TIPS TO PREPARE A PERFORMANCE

HOW TO PLAN AND ORGANIZE A CIRCUS WORKSHOP

There are several things you should consider when preparing a program of circus workshops. The planning, organization and implementation of the workshop will depend on various factors:

THE BASICS

Hierarchy of needs: Maslow pyramid





The Rhythm of Differentiation and Integration :

Each participant in the group feels the need to be connected now and then (Integration, whole group activities), and to be divided into smaller groups, or work alone for a while (Differentiation)

The role of a trainer :

Officer, Nurse and Clown

Your activities should be

1. **Accessible:** Is it physically possible? Can participants come alone, or under supervision, and how? Are the hours OK?
2. **Affordable:** Are there financial barriers? Is it difficult to ask for a social fee?
3. **Available:** Is sufficient, applicable support available? Is there a designated contact person? Do they listen?
4. **Usable:** Do participants benefit? Do they get a say?
5. **Understandable:** Do the children or youngsters understand where support is possible or necessary, what is expected? Is the language used adapted accordingly?



THE GROUP

Origins of tensions in the group

1. Role: What can I do in this group? There is a role for everyone regardless of their abilities
2. Status: How am I perceived in this group? Everyone can shine in their own way
3. Norms: What is expected of me? It's okay to laugh a lot or play wildly amongst each other, and make physical contact in the process. People ask each other for help and applaud one another

Group Phases:

1. **FORMING:** A new group is established. Members sniff around to determine who the other members are and what are the roles and status they could take up in this new group. Conflicts are avoided but the participants are on guard.
2. **STORMING:** The storm gathers in the group! This is also referred to as the conflict-phase and is essential to shaping the group. Many groups don't get here, as conflict is avoided at all cost, or, a lot of groups get stranded as they can't get past conflicts that have arisen. However, it's important in this phase to speak up ourselves and make our dislikes clear.
3. **NORMING:** Members now get into a real, and tightknit, group. They know their roles and responsibilities, what to expect, how decisions are made, and can act as a loyal member of the group.



4. **PERFORMING:** There is an open and trusting atmosphere in the group. Members are flexible and the role of the facilitator moves more into the background. Participants independently take on a lot of responsibility. The group performs to its maximum capacity.
5. **MOURNING:** The group comes to the end of its process, members say their goodbyes, and hopefully look back on the experience favourably.

LEARNING

8 Key competences

1. **Multilingual competence :** Using native language in different life contexts. Expressing ideas, opinions, feelings, needs, facts by listening, speaking, writing and reading. Understanding others.
2. **Personal, social and learning to learn competence :** Ability to learn to learn, to manage one's own learning and to reflect on oneself. It is about time and information management. Social competences include working with others in a constructive way and managing conflicts in a supportive way. Personal competences include resilience, the ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity and to show empathy. Ability to support physical and emotional well-being is also relevant for this competence area.
3. **Citizenship Competence :** Citizenship competence is the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social,



economic, legal and political concepts as well as global developments and sustainability.

4. **Entrepreneurship competence** : The capacity to act upon opportunities and to turn ideas into action that has value for others. It includes taking initiative, creativity, innovation, critical thinking and problem solving. It requires the ability to work collaboratively and to plan projects of cultural, social or financial value.
5. **Competence in cultural awareness and expression** : The understanding of how ideas are creatively expressed in different cultures, through different arts. It involves developing and expressing own ideas. It requires the knowledge of local, European and global cultures and the ability to express ideas and emotions in different artistic and cultural forms. Openness and curiosity are important attitudes.
6. **Digital competence** : Involves the responsible use of digital technologies; communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation, safety, intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking. It includes the ability to use information via a range of digital technologies, to question available information; curiosity and open-minded attitude.
7. **Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, engineering (STEM)** : Is the ability to use mathematical thinking to solve problems in everyday situations. Competence in science refers to the ability to use knowledge; to identify questions and to base opinions on



evidence. It includes the ability to use logical and critical thinking, to handle technological tools and to communicate conclusions and reasoning behind them.

8. Literacy Competence : The ability to understand and express thoughts, feelings and facts orally, in writing or in other forms, and to interact with others. It is the basis for further learning. The openness to critical and constructive dialogue and the awareness on the impact of language on others are important elements of this competence.

4 Types of learning styles : the VARK model

- 1. Visual:** Visual learners enjoy analyzing and observing things like pictures, diagrams, and charts that showcase clear information in order of importance. You can oftentimes find visual learners by paying attention to students who are doodling, list-making, or note-taking.
- 2. Auditory :** Auditory learners prefer learning subject matter that is presented through sound. You can find auditory learners by paying attention to students who are actively engaging with a lecture. You may find them nodding along or asking frequent questions rather than taking written notes. Additionally, these learners might read slowly, read aloud to themselves, or repeat things you tell them to help with retention.
- 3. Reading and writing :** Preferring written word, reading, and writing learners are drawn to textbooks, novels, articles, journals, and anything that is text-heavy. Similar to visual



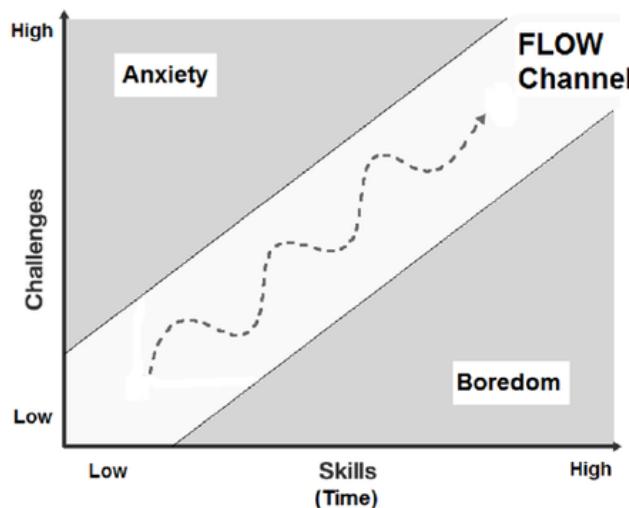
learners, you can find reading and writing learners by paying attention to students who take elaborate notes, reference the dictionary to learn new words, or use online search engines to find answers to their questions.

4. **Kinesthetic** : Kinesthetic learners are “tactile” learners, meaning they prefer to physically act out events or use all of their senses while learning. These types of learners are easy to find, as they likely have a difficult time sitting still and might need frequent breaks during heavy studying periods.

Zone of proximal development



The flow model



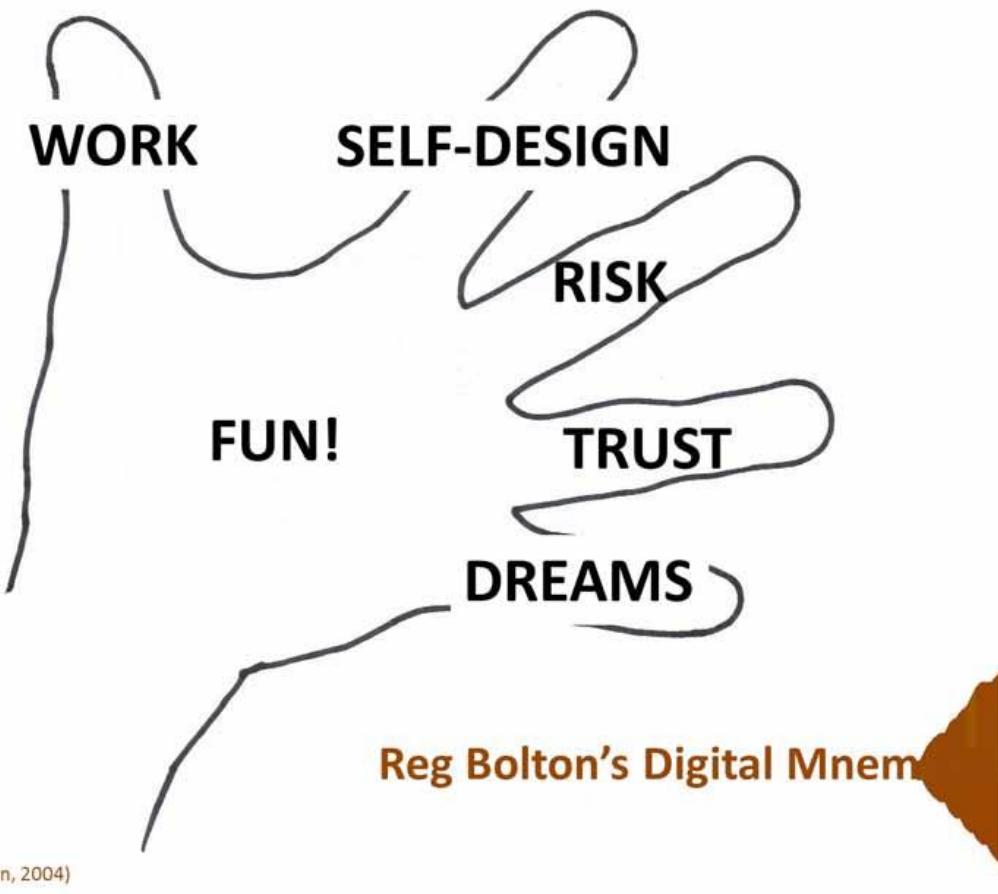
Conditions for Flow:

1. Clear goals.
2. Balance between perceived challenges and perceived goals.
3. Clear and immediate feedback

“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”



The circus hand of Reg Bolton



1. Pleasure palm of the hand
2. Self Expression, identity, showing (look at me) index finger
3. Taking Risk middle finger
4. Hard work Thumb
5. Imagination little finger
6. Trust and touch



BASICS OF ACROBALANCE

HOW TO CREATE AN ACROBALANCE WORKSHOP

There are several ways to organize an acrobalance workshop depending on the situation. But some rules are common to every workshop. These are the **safety rules**:

1. Acrobalance is a physical activity that can be strenuous.
Always make warm-up exercise before starting.
2. The trainer should adapt the acrobatic figures to the age and abilities of the participants.
3. The trainer should make sure that there is a **spotter** (safety person) at all time next to the one trying, ready to hold and catch in case of a fall!! This is very important!! It doesn't need to be the trainer but the rules are strict: No fooling around when being the spotter, stay focused. If not, change the person or stop the activity.
4. Organize a **clear communication** amongst the participants: If the bottom of the pyramid screams 'down!', everybody must go down IMMEDIATELY.



5. If any of the participants feel that they are going to fall, they must tell the others by screaming loudly 'I'm falling'. This way the upper persons can prepare for the fall.
6. When you step on a person, **verify whether it hurts** and adjust the position of your legs, arms, knees ... so it will be painless (participant should not confuse pain with effort though).
7. **Never stand on someone's spine.** You should place your foot on the pelvis, above the legs, not higher up the body.
8. This will sound like evident but at the end of a figure, people should **climb down in the reverse order in which they climbed up.** First the top person climbs down then the middle ones and finally the bottom one.
9. The best way to organize an acrobalance workshop is based on a **step by step method.** For each figure, there is a progression of exercises that can be taught, each one preparing for the next skill level.



PART I

WARMING UP EXERCISES

WARM UP THE WHOLE BODY

Make a series of classic warm up exercises

THE RUN OF TRUST

- Participants form two rows that are facing each other. They stretch their arm in front of them so as to block the tunnel they form. One person is standing a few meters before the start of the tunnel.
- At the signal, this person starts to run as fast as possible through the tunnel.
- The people forming the tunnel have to raise their hands just before the passage of the running person.

PURPOSE: Testing self and group confidence.



ACROBALANCE EXERCISES

THE TUNNEL

- Four people kneels as shown in the figure.
- Four other people stand on the base's legs a little above the knee and hold hands.
- The base holds the flyer above the knee.



PURPOSE: Getting to know the feeling of what it's like if you stand on someone.

BASIC POSE: THE CAT

- Position your knees right under your hips and your wrists right under your shoulders.
- Keep your back straight.



CORRECT POSITION



NOT CORRECT POSITION



THE SURFER

- The base assumes the position of the cat.
- The flyer stands on the base with one foot on the pelvis and one foot between the shoulder blades.
- The spotter is there at all times and holds the flyer hips.
- **To come down, step down, don't jump !**



PURPOSE: Get to know one of the fundamental elements for setting up pyramids.

WARNING: Each person has a different constitution, it is necessary to be cautious and always check with the base where we stand.

If it hurts, come down immediately !



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VARIATIONS



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PYRAMID WITH THREE PERSON

- One participant assumes the cat position.
- The second step over and position his/her hands on the base's shoulders.
- The third person climbs up on the pelvis of the base and holds the shoulders of the middle one.
- Going down from the pyramid takes place in the reverse order



of the assembly.

PURPOSE: The use of cat position in an easy pyramid.

THE CHAIR

- The base lay down and put his/her hands flat next to his/her ears.
- The flyer lightly steps in the hand of the base and seat on the base feet.
- The base simultaneously pushes his/her hand and leg so that they are stretched vertically.
- Come down the opposite way you came up. **do not forget to let go of base's feet so he/she can step down.**



PURPOSE: Feel the balance and be relaxed in the position.



THE FLAG WITH THREE PEOPLE

- One person assumes the position of the cat.
- The second lean on the base.
- The flyer steps straight up on the middle person's knees.
- Both lean back and try to find the balance point between the two.
- If they are stable, the base can move away so that the pair stands on their own.



PURPOSE: To learn the principle of counter balance.



THE FLAG

- With practice, you can do the flag without the base person in the cat position and deep balance holding only one hand.





THE TOWER

- One person assumes the position of the cat.
- The second person rest his/her hand on the base's shoulder and keep a flat back.
- The third person does the same on the pelvis of the first.
- The fourth also climbs on the pelvis of the second.
- Come down the opposite way you came up.



PURPOSE: Getting used to balance a bit higher.

THE ROOF

- Two persons assume the cat position facing each other.
- Two other are placed bottom to bottom in the middle.
- Two other climb on the pelvis of the cat's persons.
- The last one stands on the pelvis of the middle persons.
- To come down, the flyer carefully climbs down in front or back then the others come down the opposite way they came up.



PURPOSE: Strengthen the feeling of togetherness, cooperation, responsibility from the entire group.



THE DOUBLE ROOF

- Follow the building order just as the roof but had two persons in the middle.
- The top person climbs up from the shoulder of an assistant.
- This one is quite high so there must be at least 3 spotters !!!



PURPOSE: Strengthen the feeling of togetherness, cooperation, responsibility from the entire group.

VARIATION OF THE CLASSIC PYRAMID

- Four persons are placed in the cat position.
- Three persons stand in between.
- Two other climb on top.
- Come down the opposite way you came up.



PURPOSE: Very adjustable pyramid which can include all the participants.



CLOSING EXERCISE

- Everybody lie down on their stomach next to each other very tightly and put their hands over their head.
- The person at the start of the group begins to roll over all the others taking care not to hurt them with his/her elbows.

PURPOSE: Relax, calm through physical touching, fun.



Part 2

Warming up exercises

Warm up the whole body

Make a series of classic warm up exercises

I am falling !

Participants walk around the room and at any time can decide to scream "I'm falling!". At the same time, this person begins to fall backwards. The goal for the other participants is to immediately rush to him and catch him/her.

At the beginning, only one person should be falling at one time but later on it can be more people at once.

Upgrade: The same game can be played but without warning others by screaming 'I'm falling'. Someone just start to fall and the other should jump to help him/her. Somebody can also tell the others: such and such is falling!

PURPOSE: Observing, directing attention to the other members of the group, readiness to react, strengthen confidence.

WARNING: This exercise can be dangerous and the leader has to give very clear guidance.



Acrobalance exercises

The flower

- Two person seat on the floor as shown.
- Two other sit down and hold their legs together.
- The fifth one steps up on the legs. The middle person holds the flyer a little above the knee.
- Come down the opposite way you came up.



PURPOSE: To realize a simple, visually attractive pyramid.

The fan with three people

- The three persons stand next to each other and hold each other's elbows (first figure).
- They slowly lean sideways their arms are stretched (second picture).



PURPOSE: The importance of coordination, sense of balance.

The fan with 5 people

- Two persons kneel together.
- Another one climbs on their pelvis.
- All the other stand close and hold hands.
- They slowly lean sideways their arms are stretched so they can reach the persons extremely left and extremely right.



PURPOSE: The importance of coordination, sense of balance, upgrade from the fan with three people.



Preparation exercise for the plane

Lifting boards:

- One partner lies on the floor face up and keep his body as hard as a board, back muscles tight.
- Other grabs him/her by the ankles and lifts him/her into the air.
- You can do the same exercise lying on the side.

PURPOSE: Body tension (the tension of all body muscles is very important in acrobatics). These exercises give a sense of what it means to have means to have whole body tensed.

Exercise for stability on the ground:

- Lying on the floor with your back touching the floor.
- Tighten the pectoral muscles and the muscles under your arm so that you feel the bones on the back that assist in stability.
- Raise your hands in the air to form the letter O
- Ask your partner to lean on your hands to test the stability.

PURPOSE: Obtaining stability on the ground.

The plane

- One person is lying on the ground.
- The second stand close and they hold hands (left image).
- The flyer leans down while the base pushes his/her leg straight (right).
- The flyer must keep his/her body tension all the way through.



PURPOSE: Obtaining stability on the ground and maintaining physical tension.



The airport

- This is a combination of three or four pairs doing the plane.
- The pairs set up facing head against each other in the form of a cross (if there are four), or in the form of "peace" sign (if there are three).



PURPOSE: Encourage the group to creativity

The Galion pyramid

- The lower three persons stand in a circle, in a slightly squatting position, with the torso bended slightly forward and holding each other by the shoulders.
- The flyers put their right foot on the right thigh of the base standing in front of them, close to the hip.
- Together, the flyers step up stabilizing by holding their base shoulders (second image).
- The flyers straighten and take their neighbors hand and lean slowly back (third image).



PURPOSE: Feel the balance and be coordinated.



The wall

- The bases stand next to each other and slightly bend their knees.
- The flyers put their right foot on the thigh of the base standing on their right side, close to the hip.
- The flyers stand up simultaneously while the base holds them just above the knee.



PURPOSE: To promote coordination and collective creation.

Upgrade



The waterfall

- Two persons assume the cat position facing each other.
- Two other stand facing each other, put their hand on the shoulders of the 'cat people' and maintain a straight back.
- Other two do the same but climbing on the 'cat person' and so on...
- The top persons are brought into position by first sitting or standing on the shoulders of someone.



NOTE: There is a need for at least two spotters for this pyramid.

PURPOSE: To develop a sense of responsibility to the whole group.



The mixed pyramid

- Two persons on their back.
- Two other sit down on their knees.
- Two person climb up in a sailor pose.
- Two other make a hand stand.
- The last one lie down on the base's hands.



PURPOSE: Encourage cooperation and coordination between the participants.

IMPORTANT Do not force participant to do hand stand.



Closing exercise

The Gordian Knot

- Everybody stand in a circle. Everybody close their eyes and stretch their arm in front of them. The participants have to each grab someone's hand, right and left so that every hand is linked to someone else's. They should not cross their arms and grab their neighbors' hand.
- With open eyes the group has to try to undo the 'knot' without letting go of the hands.

PURPOSE: Group dynamic, cooperation, physical contact.



BASICS OF CIRCUS PROPS

HOW TO CREATE A PROP JUGGLING WORKSHOPS

There are several ways to build a program of workshop to learn the basics of juggling and the use of circus props. The choice of the workshop format will depend on a few factors.

First of all, material factors: the equipment. Do I have enough of each prop for every participant? The location of the workshop. How big is it? Is it indoor or outdoor? The duration of the activity. How long is it going to be? How many sessions?

This consideration leads to other factors, human factors: the size of the group. How many people will join the activities? The age of the participants. How old are they? Their background and/or their physical or mental limitations. The consistency of the group. Will people join and leave throughout the activity or will they all come and go at the same time? For a multisession program, will the participants be the same each time or will they change?...

Knowing these information, there are few options to create a workshop program that depends also on the goals and choices of the trainer: Do you aim to develop personal and social competences



of your participant or do you want them only to have fun? Do you want to create a show with the participants?

In any case however, there is a way to lead a circus prop workshop that is flexible and can adapt to most situation:

The trainer disposes all the props he has on a table. There must be at least one for each participant regardless of if it is a diabolo or a Chinese plate. Each participant must be able to have an object in his hand. The trainer then demonstrates how to use each props. He explains how to do the basic moves as he shows to everybody, but until he is done, no participants get to pick the props and try.

The trainer then gives a final rule to his speech: when the participants are done with whatever they are using, they must bring it back to the table and they must not use the props for anything else than what they are intended for (they are not swords or rugby ball...). Props get lost or damaged quite fast if not taken care of (though very rarely get stolen).

Each participant chooses whatever he feels like and gets to try it as long as he wants for the duration of the workshop. The role of the trainer is now to wander around and mingle amongst the participant.

He stops regularly to direct, correct and explain individually to each participant how it should be done. He must keep an eye also on the equipment that comes and go from the table.



This format of workshop allows a lot of flexibility: it works for open or closed groups, it works for every age, usually there is enough equipment to share between everybody, it is very dynamic for the participant that gets to try many things and it is fun.

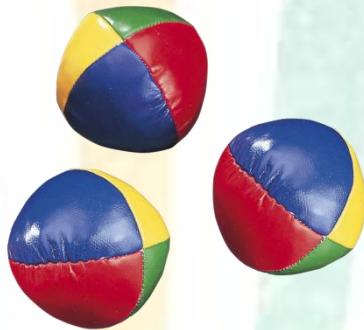
It does mean though, that the trainer should master the basics of each prop he puts on the table.

This format can serve 2 purposes: for a single workshop as a fun thing to do or as a first contact with juggling props to identify the competences of the participant in the frame of a longer project involving a show. During the workshop, the trainer gets to see individually each participant and can recognize the preferences (there is always one) of such and such participant. It becomes clear that this participant or the other is more attracted or talented for this or that prop and therefore should work more on this one.

There is another way to organize and implement a workshop or a whole program about teaching the basics of juggling props: a step by step method. For each discipline like juggling with balls, spinning pois or using flower stick... there is a progression of exercises that can be taught, each one preparing for the next skill level.



Juggling with balls



In this section, we will look at a way to teach and learn how to juggle the basic cascade pattern with three balls. Here under are a few simple exercises that will give the participant enough confidence and skills to juggle with three balls.

Trying to juggle alone with three balls can be difficult and discouraging but following a step by step method of teaching provide participants with quick reward for each exercise and keeps them involved and motivated. It is a very special feeling for people to realize that they can indeed, juggle and the excitement and pride that they get out of it is a very big boost of self-confidence.

1. Group juggling

This exercise is a very good and fun introduction to juggling. Everybody is involved including the trainer and it is also good to remember the names of the participants. You can do this exercise with large groups. Juggling is about throwing and catching so during this exercise you can check quickly the abilities of the participants.



What do you need?

- Around 10 balls depending on the number of participants

First round of group juggling

- Arrange participants in a circle, not too close, not too far from each other
- The trainer is included in the circle
- The first participant calls the name of someone and throws a ball to her/him/them.
- The next person calls someone else and throws her/him/them the ball and so on.
- Everybody gets the ball once and at the end of the circle the ball come back to the first participant.

Second round of group juggling

- Try again to do the same circle. Follow the same order as before and keep calling the name of the next person.
- Keep going like this but try to do it as quickly as possible.

Third round of group juggling: add more balls

- Again, let's start in the same order
- When the first ball comes to the third participant, add another ball.
- If it works, slowly add more balls
- The game can finish when a certain number of balls are rotating nicely or you can keep adding more and more balls until the participants can no longer handle it.



The beginning of this exercise is a bit slow and requires quite a bit of concentration from the group but as soon as the energy starts to rise, it is very fun and gives a taste of what it feels to be juggling to the participants.

During the game, observe the participants and notice how do they throw the ball (upwards with their hand's palms facing up or straight in front of them with their hand's palm facing forward.) Bring the attention of the participants on the correct way of throwing a ball for our purpose: upwards with their hand's palms facing up.

2. Juggling in pair passing three balls face to face

For this exercise, the trainer form groups of 2 people and give to each pair 3 balls.

The goal is to pass three balls between the 2 participants in a special pattern: One participant will pass his balls in a straight line to the opposite hand of the other participant, and the other participant will pass his balls across to the other:

Here is how to do it:

- The participants stand facing each other, one of them has one ball in each hand, the other, only one ball in one of his hand.
- They agree which one will pass straight and which one will pass across
- The participant that has two balls starts first: He passes the first ball to the other person aiming for the only hand that is empty. The second person does the same and so on.



- At first the passes are very slow. Participants should concentrate on throwing the balls at eye level and focus on accuracy rather than speed. Once the participants integrate the movement, they can try to accelerate the rhythm, increase the distance between them...

The main mistake beginners do during this exercise is that they pass the ball to themselves. They tend to exchange the ball from one of their hands to the other but they must not! They must pass only to the other participant's free hand.

For the younger participants, you can try the same exercise but instead of throwing the ball in the air, you can seat down and roll the balls on the floor.

3. Juggling in pair passing three ball face to face with one hand

The goal of the second passing exercise is to understand the basic principle of juggling with three balls: there is always one ball in the air while the other two are in the hand of the juggler.

Here is how to do it:

- The 2 participants face each other. One has 1 ball in her/his/their dominant hand, the other has 2. They will work only with one hand. They can bring the hand that is not working behind their back to avoid using it.
- Participant 1 who has two balls in her/his/their start by throwing one ball to participant



- When it reaches the middle of the trajectory, participant 2 throws his ball and catches the first incoming ball.
- The movement continue so that at any given time there is always one ball in the air, one in the hand of participant 1 and the other in the hand of participant 2. The participants should not pass the balls at the same time but rather alternate the throw. It help to count out loud: 1-2-1-2-1-2...

4. Juggling in pair passing five balls face to face

The patern of the forth exercise is the same as exercise 2, passing 3 balls face to face, except that it is twice as fast. The speed of juggling is very close juggling 3 balls alone.

Here is how to do it:

- The position of the participants is the same as exercise 2 but now participant 1 has two balls in the dominant hand and one in the other hand and participant 2 has one ball in each hand.
- Participants agree which one will pass straight and which one will pass across
- The movement start with the hand that has 2 balls. Just as the previous exercise number 3, Participant 1 who has two balls in her/his/their start by throwing one ball to participant. When it reaches the middle of the trajectory, participant 2 throws his ball and catches the first incoming ball and so on.
- At first participants wil only manage 2 or 3 throw but soon, once they understand the logic and find a common rhythm, they will manage more throws. The accuracy of the throw and the catch is now more



important than before but the feeling for the participant when they succeed to keep up the rhythm is very satisfying and motivating.

5. Juggling in pair passing three balls face to face

The fifth passing exercise in pairs mimics the basic juggling pattern with three balls, the cascade. The objective is to understand the pattern using a partner to slow down the movement.

Here is how to do it:

- The participants stand facing each other very close. The helping participant stand on a step or a bench so as to be higher than the other one and the working participant stand on the floor.
- This time, the working participant has all three balls: two in the dominant hand and one in the other. The pattern is the same as exercise 2 but this time it is done vertically.
- The movement start from the working participant's hand with 2 balls and the passes are always across.
- The working participants throw the first ball vertically and across to the hand of the helping participant who catches it.
- The working participants throw the second ball from her/his/their other hand vertically and across to the other hand of the helping participant who also catches it.
- The helping participant then lower the first ball in the free hand that is directly under her/his/theirs.
- The participants slowly continue the pattern until they get comfortable and can increase the speed.
- The participants then exchange roles.



6. Solo juggling

This is the ultimate goal of this workshop. At this point, each participants gets 3 balls and is going to practice alone.

- We start with one ball. At first we just pass it from one hand to the other making sure it fly to about eye level before it fall back in the hand. It is possible to play a bit and try to pass the ball under the leg or behind the back before catching it. Be creative! You can invent as many throws as you like.
- Then each participant gets two balls. Spontaneously the participant will want to through one ball up and simply pass the other to their free hand. They should not do that! Both balls have to be thrown up in the air, even if you don't catch them at first. First, throw the first ball, and when it comes to the highest position throw the other. Try this for a while until you get it right.
- Only then participants can get their third ball in the hand. On one side they have 2, on the other only one. They must start with the hand that has two: first one fly, come to its highest point, then second one fly and so on...

During this exercise you will notice that some participants will get it faster than others. As they practice individually you will have to pay attention and adapt the pace to each participant. To help participants visualise the pattern, the trainer can mention the square method: tell the participant to imagine a square that is in front of them and get them to throw the balls aiming at the corners of this imaginary square.



CHINESE PLATE



Spinning a Chinese plate is a relatively easy thing to do provided you get the right technique. A few exercises can help participant to get to know this fun prop.

PASS THE PLATE

- The participants form a circle. Only the trainer has a plate and a stick. The trainer explains that everybody will be passing the one rotating plate between each other and of course that the plate should not stop or drop.
- The trainer then spins the plate with his stick and passes it on to his neighbor. The plate is then passed on until it reaches back to the trainer.



- Then, each of the participants gets his/her own stick. This time the participants will be passing only the plate to their neighbor.
- The exercise finishes after a whole round is successfully completed without the plate dropping or stopping.
- For a bit more fun, the trainer can add more plates to the game.

BASIC EXERCISE WITH A CHINESE PLATE

Spinning a Chinese plate is not difficult but it is very important for success that the participant has a very relaxed wrist.

- Grab the stick so that the pointy end looks upwards. It is important to keep the stick strictly vertical and not to tilt it forward.
- Place the plate on the stick
- Gently begin to rotate the wrist so that the plate starts to spin and slowly rise to an almost horizontal position. It is important that the stick follows the plate (as if drawing a circle with the pointy end), and not that the plate rotates around the stick.
- Spin the plate as fast as you can and if you stop abruptly, the center of the plate should slide on top of the stick and the plate will start rotating freely without any further action of the participant. This is it! Congratulations!





OTHER TRICKS

- Instead of spinning the plate on the stick you can start it and when it is ready, that is spinning fast on the point of the stick you can replace the stick by your index finger. Gently raise your straight finger toward the middle of the plate and quickly move the stick away.
- It is possible when the plate is spinning freely to balance the whole thing on a finger or chin
- 2 people can exchange their plate
- Throw the plate in the air and flip the stick upside down



DIABOLO



Diabolo is not such an easy prop to handle at first because there are so many things to think and do at the same time. But once you understand the basic principle it is so much fun ! It is very popular, especially with boys and simple tricks can be very impressive.

PASS THE DIABOLO

- All the participants have a pair of sticks and form a line. Only the trainer has a diabolo. The trainer explains that everybody will be passing the one rotating diabolo between each other and of course that the diabolo should not stop or drop.
- The trainer then spins the diabolo passes it on to his neighbor. It is then passed on until it reaches back to the end of the line.
- The exercise finishes after a whole round is successfully completed without the diabolo dropping or stopping.
- For a bit more fun, the trainer can have more diabolos to the game.



BASIC EXERCISE WITH A DIABOLO

A diabolo set is composed of a pair of sticks connected with a string and a yoyo looking object. The goal is to spin the diabolo using the stick and the string. Once the diabolo spins fast enough, it become stable and the player can make a lot of tricks.

- To start if you are right handed, follow the instructions. For left handed do the opposite. First hold one stick in each hand, place the diabolo on the string and on the ground in front of your right leg. Gently roll it to your left to start the rotation but if you pull too fast, the diabolo will not roll but only slide and it will not work.
- Once the diabolo rolls past your left leg, lift up the stick to pick up the diabolo from the ground. Now the diabolo is spinning slowly in front of your tibia. It is important to always maintain such a position when you play. If the diabolo moves from this position you have to rotate your body to follow its movement. In any case, the axis of the diabolo must be perpendicular to your knees.
- At this point you have to know that there is an active stick and a passive stick. Basically, the active stick is used to spin the diabolo and the passive one doesn't move. So to keep the momentum of the diabolo, you have to repeatedly move the active stick (right one for right handed) up and down while



you just hold the passive one steady. The active stick movement should look as if you would be gently drumming.

- The next step is to keep the diabolo spinning straight on its horizontal axis. Sometimes one side of the diabolo tilts up or down. When this happens, the diabolo loses its balance and falls down from the string. To keep the diabolo straight, push the active stick in front of you or pull it towards you.

THROWING AND CATCHING A DIABOLO

- The first trick you can learn is to throw and catch the diabolo: when it is spinning fast enough, stop moving the active stick and pull the sticks quickly apart until the string is fully stretched. This will catapult the diabolo in the air. Do not try to just lift your hands up because this will most likely end up with the diabolo tangled in the string and flying towards your head faster than you think ...
- To catch the diabolo keep the string stretched and lift the end of the active stick, aiming at the middle of the diabolo. As soon as it falls back on the string, bring your hand together to cushion the catch.



4. OTHER TRICKS

There are many tricks you can do with a diabolo. They all have colorful names like the lift, the Eiffel tower...

I will only mention here the passing: the two person stand next to each other and pass the diabolo from one to the other.



POIS



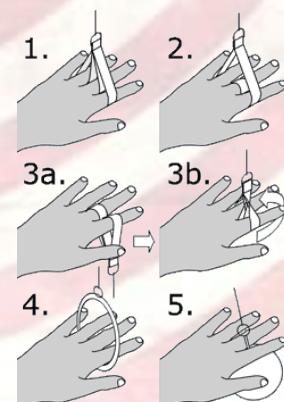
Basics of Poi

Length of poi:

Poi should be the length of your arm. Hold the handle of the poi and put your arm out. Hold on to the Poi with the other hand. The Poi should only just reach the side of your arm pit. It can be shorter, or you can have it longer but if longer then this can limit the number the moves you will be able to do. If it is too long you can wrap it around your hand.

Holding the poi:

There are many ways of holding onto poi. Here are just a few of them.



Typically you put one finger through each loop. It



really does not matter which two fingers. Use the fingers that give you the most comfort and control.

TRICKS

Keep in mind that most of the moves you make from the wrist. So be relaxed put your elbows close to your waist put the lower part of the arm up (like you would be holding a plate or a book). Hold the poi and try to make the moves from your wrist not with the whole arm.

- Forward swing - Hold poi in each hand facing the palms down and forward. Just spin both pois in front.
(http://www.homeofpoi.com/lessons_all/teach/Forward-swing-3_7_8)
- Backward swing - Hold poi in each hand facing the palms up and forward. Just spin both pois backwards.
(http://www.homeofpoi.com/lessons_all/teach/Backward-swing-3_7_9)
- Split time swing in front - Start swinging the Poi forward. Now increase the speed slightly on one of the Poi until it swings around the top when the other Poi is swinging at the bottom. This is "split timing".
(http://www.homeofpoi.com/lessons_all/teach/Split-time-swinging-3_7_10)
- Split time swing backwards - Start swinging the Poi backward. Now increase the speed slightly on one of the Poi until it



swings around the top when the other Poi is swinging at the bottom. (http://www.homeofpoi.com/lessons_all/teach/Split-time-swinging-3_7_10)

- Turn forward- Spin pois forward once they are above your head and start to fall down put both of them on the right side of your hips let them both pass your body and follow them so that you turn around and start spinning them backwards.
- Turn backward – spin pois backwards and once they start to come from down towards the top of your head put both of them on the right side of your head so they both pass your head and follow them so that you turn around and start spinning them forward.
- Butterfly – Put hands apart start spinning each poi towards each other (so you spin your left poi towards right and your right poi towards left). Important is that you hold one hand above the other. When pois are up (in front of your head) you put both hand on top of each other and keep on spinning. (http://www.homeofpoi.com/lessons_all/teach/Butterfly-3_15_11)
- Giant butterfly – Make a normal butterfly once your pois start to come down stretch your arms and make a big circle in front of you and then join them in a normal butterfly. (http://www.homeofpoi.com/lessons_all/teach/Giant-Butterfly-3_15_129)



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YOU WILL FIND LOTS OF TUTORIALS ON

<http://www.homeofpoi.com>



To sum up

We have seen 4 different juggling disciplines but there are of course many more prop that you can use. This document is a technical guide line for these disciplines but also a pedagogical aid to build a workshop. The method we present here can be applied to any juggling discipline.

- Always start with a warming up exercise. It has multiple purposes: a physical warm up, it provides a first contact with the prop that the participant will be using and it also create a group dynamic. Many times, (but not always) these exercises are based on cooperation. As prop juggling can be a highly individual activity, group warm up provide a nice balance to that.
- Adapt the progression of tricks to your group: too easy and it is boring, too hard and participants get discouraged.
- Again at the end, finish with a collective exercise that will brush off any personal frustration that could be felt by the participants and create the sense of belonging to a group no matter your skill level.

Circus and prop juggling offers an infinite array of possibilities and some disciplines will appeal to some and less to other. We believe that every person can find something attractive and be good at it.

This is why we intend to use the circus disciplines as a non-competitive activity. Specially with prop juggling, the goal is



to get better at what you like and not to be better than the other at everything.

And even though juggling with prop is an individual activity and the main benefits are personal (better physical coordination, better concentration...), some exercises involve more people and stimulate a different set of skills (more social skills like mutual trust...). The trainer should play with these various exercise to reach his/her pedagogical objectives. Of course the technical level of the trainer will greatly influence the structure of the workshop but success does not depend entirely on it. Most of the very good jugglers are bad teachers.

One more thing: circus disciplines are creative disciplines! In this document, we only give you the basic skills and principles of each discipline. There is of course a lot more you can learn from others in workshops, on the internet... But don't underestimate the creative power! Trainers and participants should take time to invent new thing and imagine new tricks. Not everything is written and the possibilities are endless...



BALLOON TWISTING

HOW TO CREATE A BALLOON TWISTING WORKSHOP

Organizing and leading a balloon twisting workshop can present certain challenge.

A balloon twisting workshop obviously involves a public but that public can either be active or passive. In the first case the public just look and collect the sculpture once it is done. In the other, the public are participants, they learn actively to create the sculptures.

In the first case you would not be exactly leading a workshop but more doing a performance.

But for the second case you should know that in general, a balloon twisting workshop doesn't work well for big and open groups but is very nice If you have a smaller, closed group.

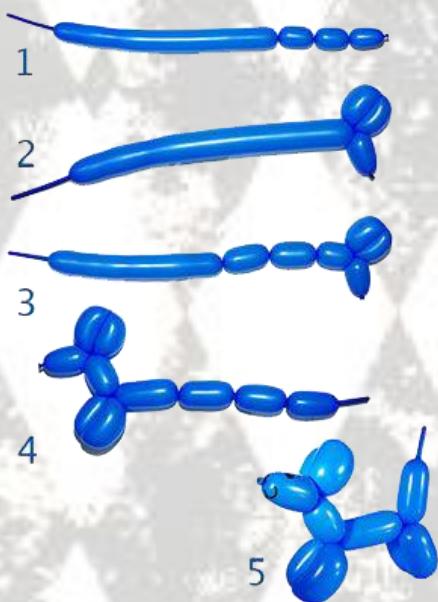
IN ANY CASE DON T LET CHILDREN TAKE THE BALLOONS UNSUPERVISED. HAVE A BAG OF BALLOONS WITH YOU AND YOU GIVE THE BALLOONS TO THE CHILDREN.

- It is very hard to blow the balloons with your mouth. Trying to do it without knowing the right technique can occasionally lead to fainting so tell the participants **not to blow the balloon with their mouth**.
- Show them **how to use the pump correctly** (not press it on anything as it blocks the air, hold on to the balloon when pumping...)
- **Never pump balloon until the end**, always leave little space so the air can move to it when you twist. If you do have to pump it until the end do it but then just let some air out.

- **Start twisting the balloon on the part where is the knot** so the air can move to the empty part.
- When you twist **hold the part of the balloon where is the knot** (otherwise it will all untwist) and keep on **turning the not twisted part toward you**.
- Tell people not to be afraid to **grab the balloon** and turn it- they are made for it. Sometimes **they do burst and that is ok** so they should not be afraid of that.
- Long nails can be a problem as they make balloon burst😊.
- It is good to be **two leaders** so one can show the figure and the other goes around and helps people. Especially with tightening the knot.
- You can also prepare in advance and **blow some balloons in advance**.

The four following animals are all based on the dog shape. There are only variations in the length of the twists

DOG



GIRAFE





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ELEPHANT

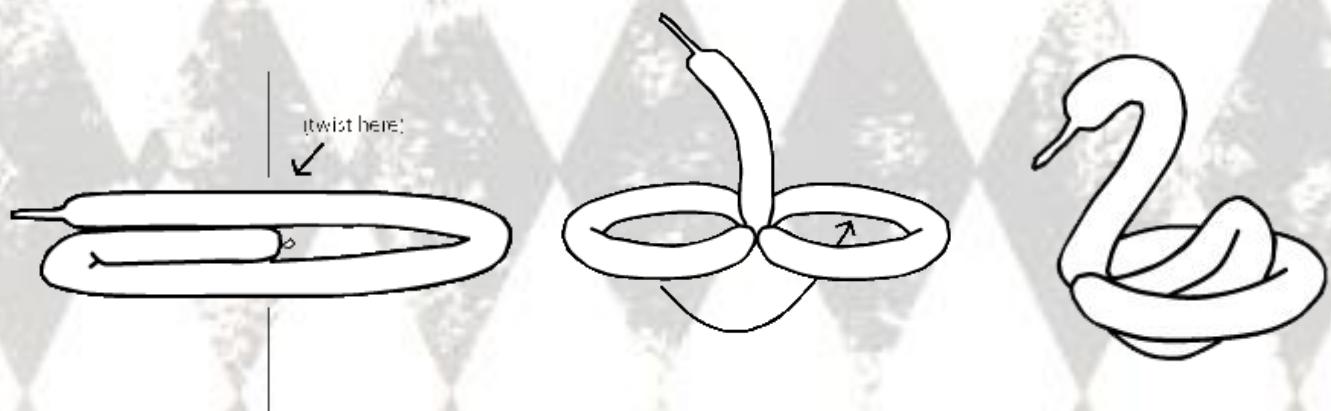


RABBIT



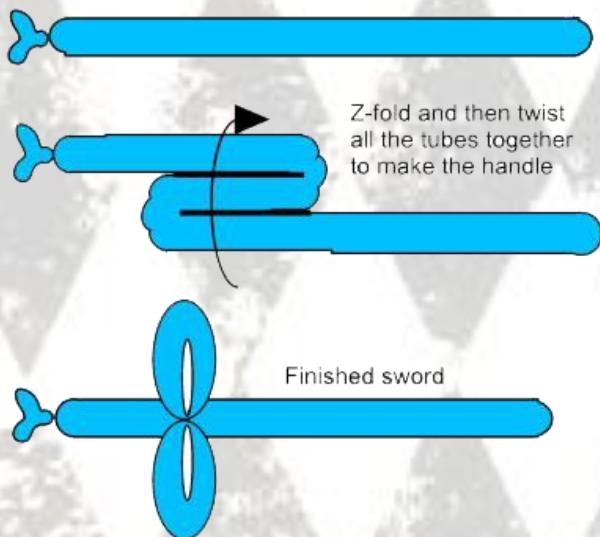
THESE NEXT TWO ARE OTHER EASY SCULPTURES WITH ONE BALLOON:

SWAN



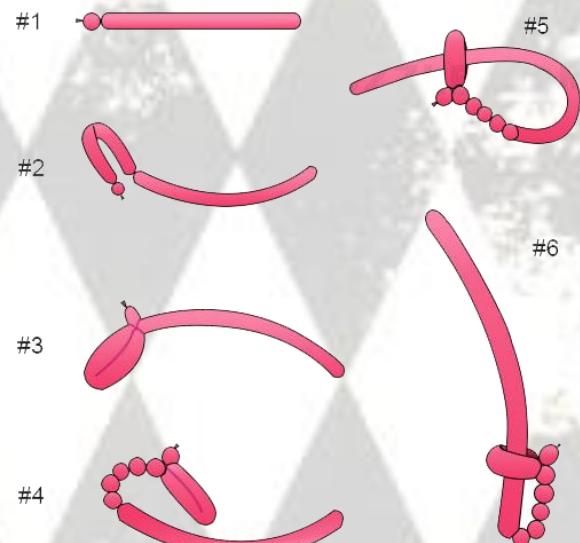


SWORD



Z-fold and then twist
all the tubes together
to make the handle

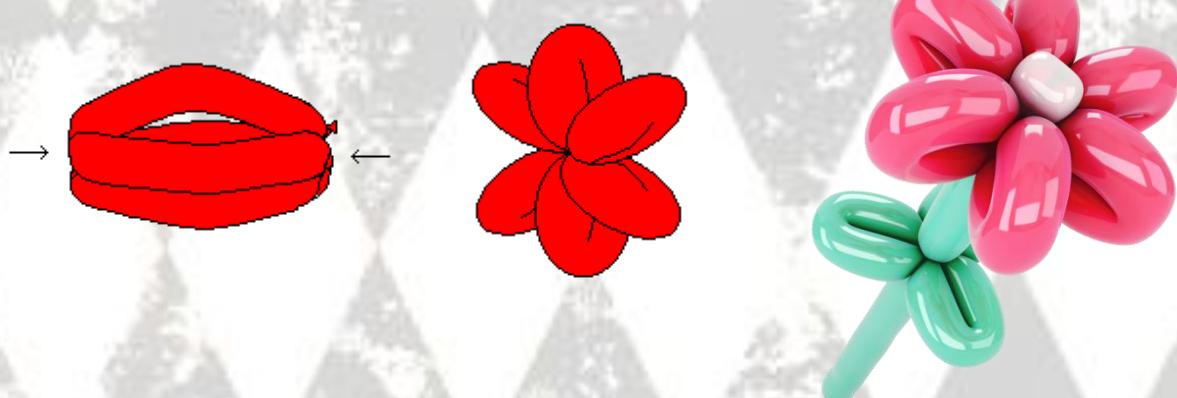
Finished sword



© Buzzle.com

AND HERE ARE SOME SCULPTURES WITH TWO BALLOONS:

FLOWER





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VIKING HAT



BIRDS IN A HEART





HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN PROPS

MAKING JUGGLING BALLS

MATERIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Inflatable balloons: For one ball you need 2 or 3 balloons
- Rice, coucous, sand or anything like that.
- Plastic wrap
- Scisors
- A plastic glass for measuring

INSTRUCTIONS

- Take a piece of plastic wrap.





- **FILL THE MEASURING GLASS WITH YOUR RICE, COUSCOUS SAND.**



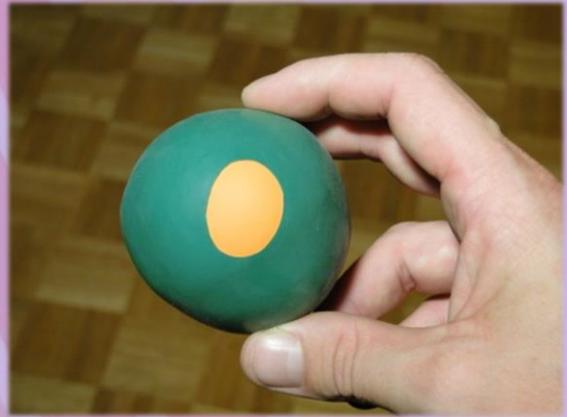
- **CLOSE THE WRAPING TO MAKE A SMALL BAG**



- TAKE A BALLOON AND CUT THE 'TAIL'



- PUSH THE WRAPPING BAG INTO THE BALLOON.



- PUT 1 OR 2 MORE BALLOON ON TOP OF THE OTHER MAKING SURE THE OPENING ARE OPPOSITE SIDE AND THE BALL IS DONE.



HOW TO MAKE POIS

MATERIAL

- Long socks
- Tennis balls or juggling balls

INSTRUCTIONS

- Put a ball in each sock and tie a knot at the end.



HOW TO PREPARE A PERFORMANCE

Preparing a performance at the end of a circus project is always a special experience for children, young people and adult. In our case, we are talking about a very simple presentation that can be assembled in a short time. It is a critical part of the project and managing it is not always easy. The trainer assumes then the role of an artistic director and must manage and combine the skills, personality and wishes of the participants and his own wishes, goal and material requirement. The performance must be treated as a part of the pedagogical process and therefore the outcome should be positive for the participants.

Here are some tips to help in the preparation of such performance.

- The group should first decide what will be shown: who knows what, who wants to show something... We should not set our goals too high! It is better to choose something that we can do well than something that we are not so confident to do!
- We should encourage voluntarism. Nobody should be forced!
- And of course we should practice many time the thing we intend to show...



Some people are confident by nature, some are shyer and for them performing in front of an audience can be a traumatic experience if not prepared properly! Therefore, we must take care that nobody is ever "thrown" onto the stage unprepared because it can do more harm than good. Knowing how to do tricks and performing them are two different things but just as learning juggling and other disciplines, there are steps that will get you use to perform on stage.

- The participants should first create a short presentation in small groups and show them to other participants (safe environment). Everybody will be in turn the audience and the performer.
- If it is possible, the next step could be performing short acts in front of outsiders, for example, another class, but in a familiar environment.
- Solo appearances are difficult for many, and only those who wish may it in a safe environment.
- The role of the trainer is to create a pleasant atmosphere. He must ensure that the participants don't find themselves in an embarrassing situation (feeling ridiculous) in front of a group. The trainer is actively involved in creating the show and he is the ultimate decision maker: he must sometimes be firm and impose his decision. So for him there is a fine line between too much control and not enough.



Concretely, the performance itself will most likely look like that: A series of acts performed in small group (or solo) and a few acts involving all the participants.

Apart from their hard skills, the participants should think about their character (costumes?), eventually a little story for their act or the whole show and a way to present it (visual effects like juggling with giant balls, music...)

There are many expression games that can give ideas for the creation of a small act (for example:

<http://www.bbbpress.com/dramagames/>).

The trainer can let the participant free or give them special request to help them. For example: all the act should start by a roll entry show some juggling trick and finish with a group acrobatic...

