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By Darren Walch

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About the Author

Darren Walch started juggling as a teenager. He started busking in his spare time and found that good training for attracting and keeping the attention of people. But, Darren realized that juggling was also a good way to exercise. After a while, he started to make a handy, part-time income by entertaining for private parties and other events.

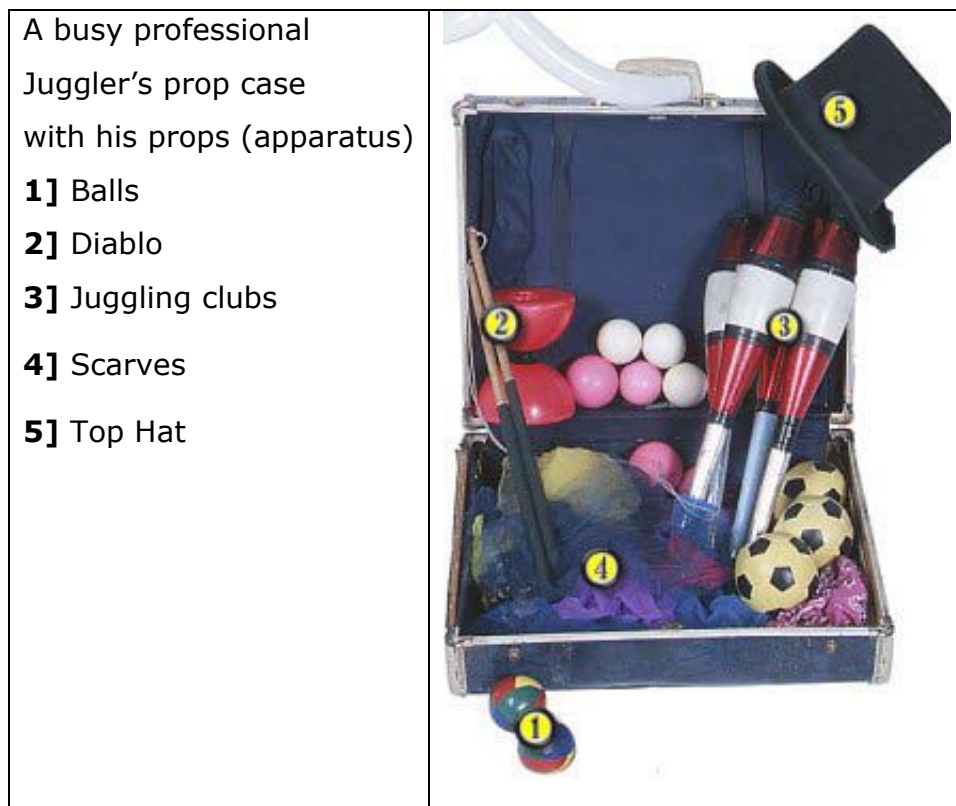
He has worked as a salesman and demonstrator in various industries through the years but always kept some juggling gear handy. He says that his ebook can help almost anyone to overcome any doubts about their ability to juggle. He explains everything you need to know about starting to juggle with bean bags, balls, plates (not the family china!) and other items. He shows how you can make some types of juggling props yourself.

He believes that juggling has given him greater confidence and helps with his fitness and flexibility. Darren said that it also greatly improved his inter-personal skills. He found entertaining at parties and other functions great fun and profitable. But, he also enjoys practicing juggling with friends. He thinks that every reader of his book can get similar benefits if they apply the same simple steps which he did.

Juggling really is for you & Everyone Else!

I believe that most people can learn to juggle even if they think that they can't! I've written this book to show how, probably with much less time and effort than you thought, you can start making balls, plates and other objects appear to defy gravity and spread some laughter and excitement in our dull, automated world.

Jugglers are always looking for something they can juggle which might make their performance more entertaining and a bit different to other jugglers. Many might be satisfied with throwing around bean bags, balls and rings, but more adventurous and, hopefully, well-insured performers set themselves apart by juggling everything from rubber chickens to bowling balls.



Juggling is believed by many people to be too hard for most people and that you need years of practise to develop any sort of routine. They see Circus people starting to teach their children at an early age which reinforces

the impression that children of circus people are very lucky (true!) and that reinforces their belief that most people can never become good jugglers because they don't get similar expert help and encouragement in their early years.

Of course, that second idea is false.

You can learn to juggle whatever your age or gender. You may not attain international fame with it but you can improve your own dexterity, suppleness, confidence and share your enjoyment with lots of other people. As you start making progress with your juggling, you will probably notice that it has a good effect on all other areas of your life. Juggling will help you to relax.

People who suffer from the effects of stress may find that they only start to make any progress with their juggling when they start to accept that dropping a club or a scarf happens to everyone – it's no big deal.

Juggling requires concentration and can improve our ability to focus on something for a longer period in a more concentrated way. You can't control three balls and think about next week's sales meeting at the same time. But, any improvement in your concentration from learning juggling will also help you with other, more serious tasks you do.

As you realize that your preconceived ideas about your limitations to ever be able to juggle were wrong, you will probably examine any other limitations which you have that may have held you back in other areas. Taking action on the material in this little ebook will help you to improve your confidence in the face of new challenges, disappointments and opportunities.

This Hand and the Other

Throughout this ebook, I followed a common practice of juggling instructors to call the hand which you use most your **dominant** hand and your other hand your **subordinate** hand.



If you are ambidextrous and equally comfortable writing or performing other tasks with either hand, you can please yourself which hand you start practising each type of juggling with.

If you do favor one hand, like most of us, then you will find that you start to use your other hand more as a result of the extra work you give it with your juggling.

This will give you more flexibility about how you do various manual tasks in the future.

Possible Problems



Relax – this won't happen unless you do it for a laugh!

Learning to juggle is learning a systematic way to do something so smoothly that it seems entirely natural. Some people will have a mental barrier to really accepting that they could ever learn to juggle anything to a good standard. These are the most common things which can slow your progress or even stop you from developing your juggling ability to its full potential.

All can be overcome, but you need to check your own actions and attitude regularly and weed these problems out before they get a real hold.

Shortcuts: Almost everyone that starts to learn juggling tries passing the second

ball to their dominant hand instead of doing the regular scoop and release movement. This is usually a reaction to an ungrounded fear that they won't have enough time to do the scoop before they have to catch the first ball.

Something similar can occur when you are learning to use any of the other juggling items. Thousands of jugglers have done these exercises. We have all dropped balls, clubs or other props many times, but have persevered and become capable and popular jugglers. Take your time, follow the steps, R-E-L-A-X and keep smiling.

Fear of Failure: This is particularly common with adults. They feel that they no longer have the strength or flexibility to juggle anything and will never do it well enough to not look foolish. But, learning even the simplest juggling routines can help to strengthen your body, maintain and even improve your mental processes and your self-confidence.

You select the props you use and the level of activity which you and your medical advisor are comfortable with. After you have been learning to juggle for a few months, you might ask your doctor for an unbiased opinion as to whether it is helping your general fitness.

Getting out of Frame: Most juggling is done in two dimensions. If you find that you start to throw things too far forward or behind you, or you start grabbing them with more force than necessary, take a step back. Just go through the exercises you have already done again to reinforce those new actions more firmly.

Lack of Balance: This refers to the balance between the actions of each arm. You may start to use more force with one than the other and break the rhythm which the sequence relies on. If you can do a video of your action or get a friend to watch you practice. If you can do a video of your action or get a friend to watch you practice, it can be a great help in fixing this problem.

Otherwise, just go back one step and reinforce the basics of the routine a bit more before moving forward. That can be frustrating but it gives much better results than trying to push forward when you have not got the basics firmly programmed into your body and your mind.

Freezing: Some people have a sudden panic where they just can't accept they can keep juggling even at the level which they have already achieved. It's a last-gasp effort of your subconscious to keep you in the comfortable mental rut you have endured for several years.

Just give yourself a break and remember the effort and time you have invested to be able to do these actions successfully. Focus a little harder on the goals which you have set for your juggling; better concentration, more confidence, more fun with family and friends, extra money or whatever. You are too close to reaching those dreams to drop them now, aren't you?

The Remedy

To prevent or fix these problems, make sure you invest the time and effort to get each of the basic steps etched into your mind without skipping

anything. Don't try to rush or skip any step. Set mini-goals for yourself. Some people focus only on completing a whole routine. If your mind is not yet ready to accept that you can juggle 5 balls, focus on two and raise your goals as your confidence and skill build.

Accept that you too will drop a lot of balls and other props. Every Juggler drops quite a few balls.

You only fail if you don't pick them up and toss them again.

Starting Small.

My dad, Max Walch, taught me a few magic tricks before I became interested in juggling.

Roller Coin

One thing he showed me was more of an eye-catching flourish than a trick; rolling a coin across my fingers and then back again. I think it probably helps to keep your fingers flexible and it's a really good way to amuse children and most adults in casual situations.

Tip: People are always attracted to anything which involves money.

This is fairly easy to learn but it could take you a few weeks to get the action smoothed out. You'll see it in a lot of movies, especially if gambling or crime is involved. There's no coin that is always the one to use for this. Just try it with the various coins you have available and choose the coin which best fits your hand.

You can also use some poker chips. But avoid very light chips or coins because they don't tip as readily as slightly heavier ones. Coins with grooved edges are slightly easier to control and I suggest that you use the largest coins which you can handle. They are easier for people to see. They're also a little easier to manage, but we don't tell anyone that!

You will probably drop the coin many times when you are learning this, so practice it over your bed or desk so you don't have to bend so far or as often to get your coin. Put something soft on your desk before you start practicing if the clatter of the falling coin might disturb people nearby or alert your boss to what you're really doing! Bend your elbow at 90 degrees with the palm down. Keep all the fingers together and pointing away from you. Bend your fingers downward at the first joint (nearest the palm).

As you do this, tip your hand slightly downward so that the smallest finger is slightly lower than the thumb. It makes the flourish a bit easier to do and the people watching you probably won't notice this.

Use your other hand to place the coin upright between the ball of the thumb and the first joint of your first finger.

Now, your thumb gently pushes the coin up a little until it tips over the first finger.

Raise your second finger and clip the edge of the coin. The coin turns over as your second finger draws it away from your first finger.

Raise your third finger as the coin starts to tip over the second finger.

Now, your third finger grabs the top edge and the coin turns over again as you lower the third finger back level with the others.

Raise your smallest finger so it can grab the top edge of the coin in turn.

Bring your thumb under the palm and let the coin drop on to it as you lower your smallest finger.

Now, your thumb can draw the coin back and then up into place alongside the first finger so you can roll the coin again.

Variations:

Instead of doing the same thing in exactly the same way again, it is a good idea to vary what you do. That makes it more interesting for yourself as well as anyone that you display your growing skills to.

When you can consistently do the coin roll with your dominant hand, you might put your other hand palm up underneath and let the coin drop into it instead of using your thumb to grab the coin.

Then, you could do the coin roll with that hand.

Or, when you finish the first coin roll across your dominant hand, pick up a second coin in your other hand and do the roll across both hands at the same time!

Roller Ball

You can do something similar with a small ball. I’ve used small plastic or wooden balls, but those made from rubber or similar materials are much easier to handle.

You could use those super bounce balls if you can find a size which your fingers can handle comfortably. They don’t slip out of your fingers so often while you are just starting to learn this flourish.

Tip: If you use plastic or wooden balls and continue to have a problem with the balls slipping out of your fingers, you can get a sticky substance which lawn bowlers use until you get more used to the balls. But, if possible, avoid using this sort of artificial aid.

Start with your hand in the same position as when you started the coin roll. Put the ball between the ball of your thumb and the third joint of your first finger.

Use your thumb to roll the ball under the first finger and lower your middle (third) finger so that the ball contacts the back of that finger.

Move your thumb back out of the way. Press your first finger against the ball and then lower that finger so that the ball rolls under the third finger.

Lower your smallest finger so that the ball contacts the back of that finger. Press your smallest finger against the ball.

Then, raise your smallest finger so that it draws the ball up above your hand.

Tip your hand slightly so that the thumb is just a little lower than any of your fingers.

Now, lower your third finger so that the ball rolls over and contacts the back of the last joint of your second finger.

Press your third finger against the ball and then raise the finger so that the ball rolls over the second finger and contacts the back of your first finger.

When the ball has good contact with your first finger, press your second finger against the ball.

Then, raise your second finger to rotate the ball over the first finger to where the thumb can grip it again.

Roller Pencil

Another variation is to roll a short pencil around your fingers in a similar fashion. A pencil is probably better than a pen to avoid the chance, however slight, of some ink being spilled.

This is probably the easiest of the three “Rollers” so you could use it as a confidence builder before learning the others.

TIP: Even professional jugglers include some easy routines in their performance as long as they look good to the audience. In fact, sometimes the spectacular routine they finish their act with is easier to perform than some of the other material they used. But, they build it up to be a spectacular finish to their act.

Start with your hand in the same position which you had it for starting the coin and ball rolls.

Put the pencil upright between your first and second fingers alongside the first joints (those nearest the palm).

Press the first finger against the pen so that it rotates over your second finger.

Raise your third finger and then press it against the top of the pencil.

Use your third finger to draw the pencil over the second finger until it is upright between the second and third fingers.

Raise your smallest finger and press the second finger against the pencil so that it spins over your third finger. Now it is upright between your third and smallest fingers.

Then, you might reverse the sequence to bring your pencil back to where it started.

Cod Juggling

“Cod” juggling is a term for juggling which is achieved by simple trickery. Although the juggling part is rigged, you still need to practice with your gear so that you entertain your audience and do it smoothly. Otherwise your audience may work out that something is being faked.

You may have seen some clowns doing this sort of stunt. Then, they reveal the trick they used and get another laugh and more applause.

The Umbrella Juggle.

This is apparently based on a traditional Asian form of juggling. Of course, this way is much easier. But, I will give you some details about the original version later in this ebook.

What your audience sees: You open a dark-colored umbrella and put a small ball on the outer surface.

You gently spin the umbrella and the ball keeps rolling around it. Even though you wave the umbrella around, you “skillfully” keep the ball on the spinning umbrella.

The trick is very simple. Before you started your performance, you tied a piece of thread which was the same color as the umbrella to the shaft at the top of the umbrella.

Make a small hole in the ball and glue the other end of the thread there.

Carry the umbrella and the attached ball in the same hand.

Open the umbrella and openly place the ball onto the outer surface.

Then, start to spin the umbrella. The ball will roll around the surface and, inevitably, roll toward the edge of the fabric.

Of course, you (and the thread) ensure that the ball does not fall despite your waving the umbrella around.

Then, you close the umbrella and spread your arms wide as if ready to accept their applause.

Of course, this reveals that the ball was always firmly attached to the point of the umbrella’s shaft.

Bowling Balls Without Headaches.

I include this for information only. Juggling these sorts of items always has some risks and you should not try this unless you have the experience, strength and agility needed to handle all possible consequences.

I advise you not to do it. After that, it is up to you.

If you decide to, make sure you have sufficient insurance covering yourself and everyone around you, and you have spelled out the details of what you intend to do directly to your insurer.

What the audience sees: The juggler start to toss up and catch a bowling ball. Then he picks up a second and starts to juggle them. Something distracts him and glances away while one of the balls is above his head. It comes down onto him with a loud crash. But, miraculously, he is uninjured!

The ball which hits head (or that of an assistant) is much lighter than the other real bowling ball. The loud crash comes from the real bowling ball being tapped against a piece of wood or even a recorded sound effect.

Making Your Own Equipment.

Juggling equipment can be bought from juggling shops, magic suppliers and even some toy stores. The professional equipment is more expensive because it is more durable, better balanced and made for constant use. If there are none available where you are, you can find many suppliers who have their own web sites on the Internet. But, many jugglers make some or all of their own equipment and accessories.

The suggestions I give you here should help you produce some serviceable and attractive props but the end result in appearance and durability will depend on your skills, the care you take in their preparation and the quality of the materials you use. Be careful and always take your time to do it right.

Be careful and always take your time to do it right. Always keep your own safety as a priority above saving a few cents or minutes.

Scarves

Scarf juggling is probably the easiest way to help anyone, even very young children, to learn to juggle something. But, I suggest that anyone who intends to become a good juggler using a variety of items is better to



start with bean bags. That’s because the action used for scarves is different to the action we use to juggle other items.

Materials: This is the easiest juggling prop to prepare as you just need a few scarves or hemmed squares of material.

Many people use a fine net called tulle, but other fabrics made of nylon or polyester may also be okay. You can usually get a wide range of bright colors which will show up well. They are much cheaper than the “silk” squares offered by magic shops and just as good for this purpose. Start with squares about 15 inches wide.

Be aware that scarves that you buy are likely to be slightly smaller than advertised – many suppliers quote measurements taken from the material before the hems are made.

Clubs

Professional juggling clubs are made from a variety of materials. You may have the skills to make your own from wood or high-grade plastic, or know someone that can make a set for you for a much lower price.



Otherwise, you might want to try this method which only requires the most basic equipment and some things which you can probably find round your house.

If you don't have anyone in your family that buys large bottles of soda drinks, check with your friends and neighbors. You will need three the same size and appearance. If you're not a better handyman than me, you should try to get a couple of spares in case you cut one in the wrong place.

You also need a few extra things, some of which you'll have to buy. But, your clubs should cost only a fraction of the set you saw in that catalog.

Materials: It would be a good idea to have a few spares of each item.

- 3 large soda bottles, three the same size and appearance.
- 2 rubber balls, slightly smaller across than the width of the base of a bottle.

Some people use tennis balls but these are more difficult and potentially dangerous to cut in half. You still need to be very careful when cutting the rubber balls and they may need replacement after some use.

- 3 large screws and washers.
- 3 rubber furniture leg caps.
- Rolls of colored vinyl tape
- Rolls of masking or packaging tape
- Plastic or wooden dowel. You use one 18 inch length for each club.
- Screw driver. A drill with screwdriver attachment will save some time but I always start driving the screws with a regular screwdriver.

How to do it:

Wash the bottles and remove all traces of the labels as well as the plastic ring on the neck of each bottle. Cut your three 18 inch pieces of dowel. Put one of your dowels into a vice and carefully drill a 3/32" hole into the exact center of one end for the screw. Repeat for each of the other dowels. Drill a hole in the bottom of each bottle. Mark a line around the diameter of each ball. Use a small cutter (the type with disposable blades) to cut around the ball. Be very careful; always cut slowly and while moving the knife away from yourself.

Get a good quality box cutter for this – the extra cost will be worth it for the time you save and the accuracy of the cutting. Drill a hole through the center of each of the half balls. Set the first bottle upright and then drop a dowel in it, making sure that the end with the drilled hole lines up with the bottom of the bottle. Push a half-ball against the base of the bottle.

Then, put a screw with a washer under it into the bottom of the bottle and the dowel. The half-ball will protect the bottle when it falls, but make sure you don't drop it on any surface which might be damaged or badly marked.

Some people will put glitter or other material inside the bottle to add a little weight and make it look better. But, unless the glitter is glued all over the inside of the bottle, it will not look very good.

You could decorate the outside of the bottle but the best way might be to wrap a band of colored vinyl tape around it, just above the base. Wrap tape around the mouth of the bottle and the dowel so that they are firmly fixed together and there is no movement.

Now, wrap colored tape around the exposed part of the dowel in an even spiral. Make sure that the edges of the tape overlap just a little so that no dowel can be seen.

Push the furniture tip down onto the top of the tape covered dowel. It will reduce the chance of the tape unwinding or fraying and will also make it easier for you to catch the club.

Now, follow the same procedure to make the other two clubs. Try to get all three to look the same.

Boxes

Cigar boxes are less common today but most jugglers have been using specially made boxes for years anyway. After all, we’re showing our skill and entertaining the people who watch us, not trying to improve sales for the cigar makers!

If you have reasonable carpentry skills or can get help from someone that has, making your own boxes is not very difficult. Don’t use cardboard or other light-weight; flexible materials for your boxes because they will not last long enough with the constant battering which you will give them.

Materials: You need:

- Thin ply or wall paneling for the panels.
- Pine or other light, low-cost timber, about half an inch square, for the internal support frame.
- Real or imitation suede to cover the ends so those surfaces have more grip. Some carpet laying double-sided tape to attach the suede to the ends of the boxes.
- Wood glue.
- A heavy duty stapler.
- Colored vinyl or electrician’s tape to reinforce the edges of the boxes.

If you have someone cut the wood for you, it would be a good idea to pay them to make a few extra at that time. That will probably work out cheaper than if you get two separate smaller quantities a few weeks or months apart.

How to do it:

Decide the size which you will make your boxes. They need to be a comfortable fit for your hands. About five inches by eight inches by three inches suits me.

Cut some pieces of strong cardboard to the size you intend to make your wooden pieces and make sure that they will all match up squarely. Make the end pieces big enough to cover the edges of the longer pieces. They are easier to replace and this will extend the life of your boxes.

Assemble the internal frame. Use wood glue and then a few small tacks or heavy duty staples for extra strength. Check that everything is correctly aligned at each stage. Apply the side pieces. Glue them in place.

When everything is completely dry, carefully line up the end pieces and glue them in place. Sand all the edges and then stick the pieces of suede to the ends with the double-sided tape. Put strips of colored electrician’s tape, adhesive vinyl or bookbinding tape over all the edges.



You can decorate the sides of the boxes if you want, I suggest that you use the same pattern but different colors on each box so that the audience can easily follow the changes which you do in the arrangement of the boxes during your routine.

Bean Bags

Bean bags are possibly the best thing to first learn to juggle. They are strong but won't hurt your hands when you catch them, and you can even make your own fairly quickly, if you know how to sew, even just a little.

I suggest you use a sewing machine to make your bags so that the stitching is strong and even. If you can't sew or don't have a machine, it's probably worthwhile to pay someone to sew them for you. I'll show you how to make bags but you'll have to adjust the pattern to suit yourself and the material you use.

You need four pieces cut to the shape of a lemon. A friend said the shape was like an egg, but it's slightly more pointed than round at each end. My panels are about 9 centimeters (about three and a half inches) high and about 5 centimeters (about two inches) wide. The seams are about 5 millimeters wide (very narrow).

People make these from all sorts of materials. I'm always willing to try something new but it must be very strong, comfortable to hold and manipulate and, preferably, thin. Bags and balls should have absolutely no stretch in them.

Solid colors look more professional. But, of course, you can have two, three or four different colors on each ball.

I'll leave the actual choice of colors to you.

Many synthetics, cotton, denim and imitation leather can be used.

Other Materials:

The thread must be strong – pay for quality. Filling; some people use dirt or sand but I prefer seeds; either millet or flax. Of course, that means you can't wash the balls without unpicking a seam (not recommended).

How to:

Carefully align two pieces on top of each other with their outer surfaces together and then sew one seam.

Lay another piece on the stack of two. Make sure that all the outer surfaces are touching each other.

Fold two adjacent surfaces over so that you can sew that seam without also sewing extra layers together.

Continue to fold over and sew two adjacent surfaces until there is just one seam left open.

Sew up part of the open seam but leave a generous amount open because you are about to turn the ball inside out so that the outer, better looking surface is on the outside.

Your bag is almost complete except for the filling and sewing the last seam (the only one which has to be sewn from the outer surface).

Push the other end of the bag out through the hole in the seam and continue gently pushing until the outer surface of the whole ball is exposed. Now, use a funnel to fill the ball with your preferred filling material.

Sew the rest of the open seam closed by hand. Use fine, strong stitches. I always have this double sewn to reduce the chance of breakage when being used.

Unless you, or the person who makes the balls for you is an experienced seamstress, you can expect a few balls that are not quite right before you get the knack.

It's just like most people's first attempts at juggling.

Juggling Balls

The best balls are real juggling balls, though some people use tennis balls, lacrosse balls and other types.

Tennis balls don't bounce right for juggling. I've heard of people who filled some with earth and then covered them with cut-down balloons to adapt them for juggling. But, that's not easy to do.

If you are not able or ready to invest in a set of good juggling balls, you can just use the other types that I have listed.

Over time, you can get proper juggling balls and the other props which I've discussed in this section.

Just work up a routine with what you have or can make for now.

Juggling Rings



Juggling rings are usually made from wood or plastic such as ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene) or polypropylene. Both those materials have good shock resistance and plastic rings are usually lighter than wooden ones of a similar size.

You could make rings from wood or plastic sheet if you have right equipment but the cost might approach that of commercial juggling rings. Rings are usually about one third of a centimeter thick (roughly 1/8th of an inch) and about 30 centimeters or about 12 inches wide.



How to Juggle

How to Stand

Something which many books fail to mention is how to place your feet when you are juggling. That’s more important than you might think. Start with your heels together and your toes pointing out at a 45 degree angle to each side, not straight forward.



This has you ready to move to either side and helps to keep you focused on the two important dimensions with juggling; vertical and left and right.

Put Yourself in a Frame

You will probably find that you sometimes throw your bags or other props too far forward or backward to catch them easily. That happens when you let go of the prop either a little too early in your movement or too late.

Try to imagine yourself in a frame like a picture or a TV screen where there is little space in front or behind you. That will, after a little while, help to reduce the number of times that you have to stop your routine and retrieve the bag or other prop.

It may help to do some of your practice in front of the wall of your room or garage. Having the wall near you will encourage you to “stay in the two dimensional frame”. You learn each part of juggling by do each little step over and over.

There’s No Rush

You need to master each part before you move on to the next or you will take much longer to become confident and proficient.

Scarves

This looks easier than it is to do well, so it may not hold the interest of an audience as much as other types of juggling. But it can be made interesting if you can develop routines which involve your audience. If you have some children watching, you could get one up and show them how to juggle one or two scarves.

This form of juggling is easier for many people because the scarves drop more slowly, so they are easy to catch. But we use our whole arm to lift and drop them and that puts more physical pressure on us.

Many people say that juggling scarves is something which they do to relax.

How To:

Holding your scarves: You grip the first scarf by pressing one corner of it with your thumb against your first and second fingers.

When you start using a second scarf in the same hand, hold it in place with your third and fourth fingers pressing one corner of it against the palm of your hand.

The handling of the scarves is different to the way we handle other juggling props.

Start with your forearms pointing forward at right-angles to your body, palms downward and all your fingers bent down at the first joint, nearest the palm.

Pick up a scarf with the thumb of your dominant hand pressing one corner of it against the fingertips of your first and second fingers. Remember that you will always catch a scarf and grip it with the thumb and those two fingers if it is the only scarf in that hand.

If you already have another scarf there, you will have to grab it with the other two fingers and press it against the palm of that hand.



You will find it much easier that way to manage the throwing and catching one or two scarves by the same hand.

Instead of keeping the upper part of your arms pointing downward as you usually do with other props, you move the whole arm upward as you push the scarf up in a small arc across your body and you also swing your whole arm when you grab the corner of the scarf as it falls downward.

Throw the scarf in a gentle arc. Let it go as your hand is at chest height. You should use just enough force to have the scarf start to fall when it is about nine inches above your head and nearly above your other hand with which you will catch it.

You grab a scarf from above as it falls rather than opening your hand under it like you do with other objects. When you start practicing, just use one scarf until you have the throw and catch working fairly smoothly.

Don't worry if your scarf doesn't fly up and straight across your body each time when you begin this form of juggling. Almost everyone needs time to find the right amount of force to apply to the scarf. You will also have to experiment to find the right point where you should release it. That will vary a little with each person.

If you let a scarf go too soon, the scarf will drop too far in front of you. If you keep hold of the scarf a bit too long it will tend to fly over your head and land somewhere behind you.

When you are comfortable with that first important step, start to practice this same move, but using your subordinate hand to throw it to your dominant hand in exactly the same way. The amount of force and the arc which the scarf takes from either hand should be as close to a mirror image as possible.

When you are happy that your hands are making an almost identical pattern, you can start throwing it from one hand to the other and then throwing it back.

This will help you to improve your ability to use your other hand. You will soon be able to start this routine with either hand equally well.

Then, you can start using two scarves. Choose two bright and contrasting colors or patterns.

Grip one scarf in each hand with the thumb and first two fingers. Raise both your hands and toss the scarf in your dominant hand up just as before.

Then, drop your other hand and then bring it up across your body and release that scarf. Time your action so that the subordinate hand comes back over the first scarf and you grab it ready to take that up and throw it. Don't worry, you will get the sequence working smoothly after only a few tries.

The important thing to remember is not to rush your movements – the scarves don't move as fast as the other props you use.

And they are not likely to hurt anyone if you drop one.

Bean Bags and Juggling Balls



Bean bags and juggling balls are handled in the same way but the physical properties are different, so you can do different things with each. I'll suggest that you start learning these moves with your bean bags even if you have got juggling balls. But, that is your choice.

Using bean bags is similar to using juggling balls except that you can also take advantage of the way the balls bounce to add more variation to your routines and the balls look harder to control.

Stand with your heels together as explained earlier, your arms at your sides with your forearms pointed toward the front and your loosely cupped palms upward.

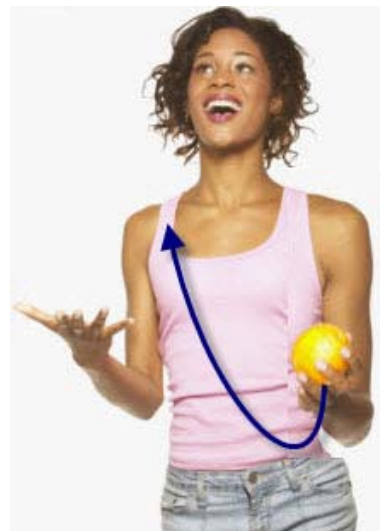
One Ball Juggling: Start with just one ball. Yes, this is real juggling. It's a vital first step in learning to juggle properly.

Everything else depends on you getting this right.

It will take however long it takes. You will probably find this one of the best investments of your time that you ever make.

Master the throw and catch from your dominant hand to your subordinate hand before going to the next step. Pick up the ball with your dominant hand and move it slightly to the side. With a gentle scooping motion; down and then up, move the hand toward the center of your body and release the ball when is near your chest.

You only want the ball to reach no more than 12 inches above your shoulder, so no



it

great force is needed. Too much force will send the ball out of your reach.

Having to stop to pick up whatever you are juggling is no problem – it happens to everyone. It’s not dropping the ball, it’s the time it takes you to pick it up and get on with your practice which determines how long it will take you to start getting consistently good results.

You shouldn’t have to move your other hand to catch the ball. Jugglers say that, “If the throw is right, the catch will be (almost) automatic”.

When you begin to learn to juggle, it’s natural for you to move the hand quickly to catch the ball, like you would in any ball game, but try to keep your movement to a minimum and focus on getting the movement of the tossing arm right. Just move your other hand slightly to the side, ready to receive the ball.

As you do more practice throws, the arc will smooth out and you will find the ball or bag drops easily into your open palm more and more often. Because your subordinate arm has been less used than the other through your life, the way the bag travels will vary slightly depending on which hand you throw it from. Keep tossing from the same hand until you are getting good results.



Then, start practicing the same throw from your subordinate hand. Keep practising with that hand until you are sure that the results you get with each hand are comparable.

This sequence will demonstrate to you some of the benefits we get from juggling;

- ✓ Gentle but sustained exercise.
- ✓ Greater flexibility and strength in the subordinate arm.

- ✓ Better coordination all round.

Two ball juggling: Probably sooner than you think, you will be ready to start two balls juggling with a ball in the palm of each hand. Use that familiar scooping motion to launch the first ball.

You can start with your dominant hand but it’s a good idea to start sometimes with your other hand instead, so that you become more comfortable doing that.

As that first ball reaches the top of its arc, do the scoop and release with your other hand. The second ball should travel between the first ball and your body as it arcs over to your waiting dominant hand.

After releasing the second ball, your other arm moves back to be level with your elbow and the hand stops just to the side of your body, ready to accept the first ball.

Your dominant hand has already performed the same action on the other side.

You will probably find that you get this section fairly smooth and then have a day where you have a lot more drops. That may make you think that you have lost the progress you made but it’s just a common occurrence and not a cause for worry.

Your improvement takes time because you are reworking of some of the basic actions you have been doing one particular way for years.

You are, according to recent research, rewiring some of the pathways in your brain. The results will be worth the little bumps of disappointment along the way.



Three ball juggling: Three balls are next. It’s not really much harder if you just do each step in turn. Take a ball in your subordinate hand and two in your dominant hand.

There is a set way to hold two balls in the same hand. This method makes it easy to catch and throw a ball without dropping another ball which is in that hand:

- 1) One ball is cupped in the lower part of your palm and pinned by the tips of your third and fourth fingers.
- 2) The other ball, which will be the first that you toss, is pressed by your thumb against the underside of your extended first and second fingers.



When you start to practice throwing three balls, focus mostly on getting the release of each ball and the arc it makes right. Then, the catching will mostly take care of itself.

If you keep dropping one or more of the balls, look carefully at where they land so that you can see how you need to adjust your actions.

If a ball lands well to the other side of you, you need to reduce the amount of force you apply to it or perhaps release the ball a little sooner.

If it lands behind or in front of you, you need to focus more on staying in “the frame”.

You start by tossing one ball from your dominant hand.

Then, toss the ball from the other hand as the first ball reaches the top of its arc and starts to fall.

You have plenty of time for these actions.

Try for smoothness rather than speed. You might be surprised how well you start to do and the results you get.

When the first ball drops into your subordinate hand, your dominant hand will be in position and ready to throw the third ball.

Continue the sequence by throwing a ball from your subordinate hand. This three ball juggling sequence is called a **three ball cascade**. You can use this as the basis for all sorts of more advanced routines.

Once you have this in your repertoire, the sky really is the limit!

Plate Spinning

This is one of the easiest forms of juggling.

The sticks are normal, but the plates are special! Each plate has to have a deep rim on the underside which holds it against the stick when it starts spinning. The plate also has a depression on the underside which is deepest at the center of the plate. You put the end of the stick behind the rim on the underside of the plate and gently hold it in place.

Start it spinning by turning the wrist of your other hand which is holding the stick. This will cause the end of the stick under the plate to start making a circle and the plate will start to spin. Then, you raise the stick and just let the plate move until the stick is right in the center. It will be fairly secure.

Just make sure that the plate doesn't slow down too much.

Cigar Boxes

Start with three boxes in a row on your table with the



table with the largest face upright. Grip each of the end boxes at the center of the top narrow side, your fingers at the front and thumbs at the rear of the box. Lift the boxes with both hands to just above the level of your waist.

Now, you do two moves at the same time.

1] You lift the row of boxes about another six inches.

2] At the same time, you move one of the end boxes about fifteen inches to the side and then back again.



The larger sideways motion masks the smaller upward lift. The spectators will think that all you did was to take the end box away and then replace it.

But, the smaller upward motion gives you the extra time to make the larger flourish. Without it, the middle box would crash to the floor.



Now, you can lift the boxes as your dominant hand releases the end box which it holds and grips the top center of

the middle box. As the boxes start to drop, you Lift the middle box and then take the middle box to the end of the row.



Then, you press it against the end of the box which you just released. Now,

you have a row of three again with the original end box firmly held in the center of the row.

Juggling Rings

A friend said that she felt she was only a real juggler when she started to learn to juggle rings because they are a prop you don't see anyone but a juggler use. Of course, you can be a real juggler and never use rings but I understand how she felt.



You need more space and especially higher ceilings to be able to juggle rings safely. But, apart from that, they are probably as easy as balls to use and their thin structure means you could probably juggle four or five more easily than four or five balls or clubs.

Start by throwing and catching just one ring like you did with the balls or bags. You will hold the ring with your fingers inside it and your thumb at the back. When you progress to have more than one ring in your hand, you might want to separate them by putting a finger between them when you are ready to throw them.

You will probably find it more comfortable to stand with your feet apart while you do the ring portion of a performance. You toss the ring higher than you do the other props but don't try for too much height when you are just starting; you need to learn to control the ring's flight before you go for more height.

As you toss the ring upward, give it a little back-spin and tilt your throwing hand very slightly toward the center of your body to guide the ring so that it will come down closer to your other hand. Catch the ring on the palm of your hand and grip it between your thumb and first finger.

Avoid letting go of the ring too soon when you toss it; this is a very common cause of rings escaping from your "frame". After you are comfortable with tossing and catching one ring from your dominant to your subordinate hand, start practicing the toss from your subordinate hand to your dominant hand.

When you have mastered that, you are ready to start with one ring in each hand. Toss the ring from your dominant hand and then toss the other ring when the first one reaches the top of its arc.

Don't try for too much height with your early throws; focus on making the path of each ring as nearly the same as possible, just like you did with the balls and bean bags. While you have a smooth two ring routine, start with another ring in your dominant hand as well. Separate the two rings with a finger or you may send the two rings up together.

When you have tossed and caught the first ring and the second ring (from your subordinate hand) is at the top of its flight, toss the second ring from your dominant hand.

You can keep adding more rings to your routine or keep with three. I think that makes for a good display. The color changing ring is fairly popular with jugglers and audiences. It is a ring that is colored differently on each side. You can buy a professionally prepared one or just paint one side of a normal juggling ring or cover one side with a ring-shaped piece cut from a differently colored adhesive vinyl sheet.

To do the color change, simply catch it from above instead of holding your palm underneath. Then turn your hand over to put the ring in the normal tossing position and reveal the “color change” before you throw it. It's no great mystery but still very effective in a routine.

To finish your routine, you can either drop each ring as you catch it over your head to settle around your neck or just spread your arms in the usual “applause, please” gesture after you catch them all.

Rings are a great addition to your routines and there are many other variations which you can add if they are your particular interest.

Juggling Clubs

It's best to have learned to juggle one or two other types of props before starting with clubs. Your first step is to take up one club in your dominant hand and toss it up, then catch it in the same hand after it has spun just once.



Hold the club pointing at a 45 degree angle to the side with your thumb where the body of the club starts to bulge and wrap your fingers around it. Drop your hand and then bring it up in a smooth scooping motion. Most of the power comes from your arm with little wrist movement.

Release the club when it is about level with your elbow. Throw the club upward, not outward so that you can catch it without changing your position or protect your head as it falls into your hand. Catch the club with the same grip that you had on it before. Drop your hand gently as you catch it so that you don't have to absorb the impact.

Like juggling with rings, you will need more space above you to use your clubs. Unlike your rings, you can practice outside with your clubs. Clubs can cause damage to people and property. Being careful is not enough. make sure that there is little chance that your actions will cause damage to others or their property, even if you carry insurance.

When you have practiced the one handed throw, spin and catch with each hand enough, start tossing the club from one hand and catching it with the other. Throw each club upward and across your body. Aim to catch it smoothly rather than quickly. Do the scoop and toss with your subordinate hand when the first club gets near the top of its arc and starts to spin.

You might want to learn to include one club and two balls in a routine before you proceed to learn juggling with more clubs. Since you are already comfortable with three balls, this will not take too long to add to your repertoire of juggling routines.

This will take less time than adding more clubs, so you will build your confidence and that will help as you increase the number of clubs you use together. It also gives you something a little different to perform while you are still learning the more advanced moves with your clubs.

When you start to use two clubs in one hand, lay the handle of one club across your palm with the body extending out from between your thumb and first finger. You're third and smallest finger press on the handle to keep it in place.



Put the handle of the other club across the ball of your thumb with you're first finger under the body and the thumb and second finger pressing on the handle. This will take some practice because of the size and weight of your clubs. Proceed slowly.

Learning to use clubs will probably take longer than any of the other props but it is good exercise and performing well with the clubs makes a really great impression on spectators.

Juggling an Umbrella and a Ball

This Japanese traditional routine originally involved the use of a Japanese umbrella which was made from bamboo and oil paper. But, other types of umbrellas have been used successfully.

The Japanese umbrella has ribs that are almost straight which probably helps the juggler. Choose an umbrella with a thick shaft, if possible, because this will make spinning it easier to manage.

If you can get an umbrella which is light-colored so that you can see the ball; or at least the shadow of the ball, through the fabric then that can be a great advantage.



Open the umbrella and hold it so that your eyes are just above the level of the fabric.

Put the ball about one-third of the width of the fabric from the center. Start to spin the umbrella anti-clockwise. The ball rolls around the top because of the spin. But, it also is drawn or pushed toward the edge.

You have to keep the ball on the fabric by tilting the shaft of the umbrella a very small amount each time as the ball changes direction.

When you have started the umbrella turning, you raise it above your head.

But, you can still watch the movements of the ball through the fabric. That's why an umbrella with light-colored fabric is preferred. Many of the

umbrellas are decorated with Japanese designs but, of course, this may block your ability to watch the ball at times.

You are spinning and tilting the umbrella while also watching the position of the ball, so you must keep clear of the spectators or some sort of accident might occur.

You can use other objects like rubber rings from the pet toys section of your supermarket or large coins.

Some performers have developed this to where they can do it with two umbrellas. Some have used three umbrellas on a single shaft. The lowest umbrella was bigger than the one above it while the top one was a little smaller than either of the others.

The juggler could not only manipulate the ball on each of the umbrellas, he or she could make it hop from one umbrella to another! But, there is also a faked version of this routine which I give brief details of in the “Cod” Juggling section.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I improve my juggling more quickly?

Many people try to do things too quickly when they are just starting. Focus on smoothness and keeping whatever you are juggling in your frame. If you can get the use of a video camera, filming yourself can help a lot. The best way is to get someone to film you because they can keep you in focus and they may also notice things themselves which don't show up on the video.

Be very appreciative of their help and listen carefully to their comments and suggestions, even if you don't think some of them are accurate. They may not know anything about juggling but neither will most of the people that you want to entertain in the future.

Their feedback as an audience of one can give you a better idea of the impression you are projecting to other people when you perform as well as point out any points they notice about the mechanical part of your routine. Don't erase all of your early videos. Keep one or two to look at again after you have had some more practise. When you see how far you have progressed, it will give you some encouragement and you might also get a laugh or two from your early efforts.

Should I use some fake juggling moves?

You will see some jugglers, as part of their routine, juggle two balls in one hand and just wave the other ball about. There are various fake moves of this type.

You can start to include them into your routines later on as you look for variations to add to the basic moves and develop your own personal routines. You might insert some of these moves into your routine without pointing them up or you might add some humor by making your use of the fakery very obvious.

But, it is very important to be a master of the basic steps before you do that.

You can't "fake it until you make it" in juggling. You will never make it unless you build your routines on a sound understanding of the basics.

Should I practice in public?

I've seen people take out a couple of small balls in airports and other public places, and start juggling them as a way to pass the time and improve their actions.

I advise against it because it looks very amateurish if you keep dropping the balls. Finding them and picking them up inside your house can be hard enough. In an airport forget it!

There is little chance you will improve your actions by doing this because the many distractions will be a severe test of your concentration. Some people find it helps with their rhythm to say each step as they do it when they are just starting to learn their moves.

Tips for my first public performances?

This could be a book in itself. Maybe, one day! Make sure that you are very good at the routines you will perform.

Check the cost of insurance. It may seem high but the possible damage to your finances and your reputation from someone being injured during your performance, even if it is not your fault, can be serious.

Somebody could be injured by a misguided club or even prick their finger on a staple in one of your cigar boxes. Most countries are experiencing a steep rise in insurance claims and people being sued for these sorts of incidents and the courts are often very sympathetic to the claimants.

Think about any problems which might occur when performing in the places you are going to. Juggling rings in open areas is much more difficult than inside, for instance.

If you are going to busk, you need to be very good or you will only get "pity pence". Buskers may need a permit in the areas where you want to do

it. Make sure that you are not using a spot where someone else customarily busks.

Some people advise that you do free shows for rest homes and charitable institutions which probably can't afford to pay for regular entertainment. I believe that these audiences also deserve a professional standard performance or, at least, one that will make them smile rather than be a feat of endurance.

Juggling in costume?

That can be worth doing, especially if you wear a costume that relates



This Lady has an act where she wears tennis gear and juggles tennis balls etc.

Great for Tennis Club functions!

to the objects which you juggle.

Don't think that you can put on a clown costume and people will forgive you when you drop your clubs or other props. If you are a juggling clown, you need to be good at clowning and juggling.

In the Circus, the clowns are usually very good at a number of the circus skills such as juggling, rope walking, balancing - but probably not lion taming. They use their comedic skills to get laughs with their other skills, so the audiences laugh with them and not at them.

Learning with someone else?

This can be very helpful but it is best if you are both at about the same level of experience. You must be able to accept constructive criticism and offer it in a supportive way.

That’s all, folks!

I hope this book will encourage you to start juggling and smooth your path toward your personal juggling goals. I’ve got great benefit from it and I continue to juggle for exercise and to amuse young relatives and friends. Juggling with other people is another good idea. There are many ways which your juggling can improve your own life, and bring enjoyment to friends and your community.

I wish you good fortune and great success,

Darren Walch.

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