

BASIC TECHNIQUES IN CIRCUS ARTS



AERIAL HOOP



FONDATION
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL™



CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

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* The masculine form is used in this text generically and for readability purposes only.

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FOREWORD

NATIONAL CIRCUS SCHOOL

Based in Montreal, the National Circus School is an institution for secondary and higher education whose primary mission is to train circus artists. It is the only institution in North America to offer a complete training cycle in circus arts, starting with the preparatory program, followed by the Circus and High School Studies program, and culminating in the higher education program (leading to the Diploma of Collegial Studies in Circus Arts). Since 1981, more than 400 artists have been trained at the School. A pioneer in the revival of circus arts in Canada and North America, the School has contributed to the emergence of Quebec's great circuses, which were to become *Cirque du Soleil*, *Cirque Éloïze* and *The 7 Fingers*, and has lent a helping hand to numerous foreign circus companies.

Today, the National Circus School enjoys a unique position in the world of circus arts instruction. With a team of more than 60 teachers providing a wealth of educational and artistic experience in circus arts, acrosports, performing arts and education, the School is regularly invited to share its expertise at educational exchanges, meetings and symposia in Canada and abroad, especially those organized by the International Network for Social Circus Training (INSCT), the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC), the European Youth Circus Organisation (EYCO) and the American Youth Circus Organization (AYCO).

With the enthusiasm for social circus, the spread of circus arts as a recreational activity and the overwhelming demand for qualified personnel, the School believed it was essential to support the development of services providing high-quality, safe introductory courses and training programs in the circus arts. Since 2004, its Instructor and Trainer programs – leading to an Attestation of Collegial Studies and recognized by Quebec's Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) – have trained some 100 teaching professionals. These teachers are actively involved in all areas of circus instruction, the education of young people, leisure activities, social circus and even the specialized training of professional artists.

In addition to the skills needed to introduce circus techniques, the role of a circus arts instructor – whether for recreational activities or social outreach purposes – requires particular knowledge of safety issues and of an individual's stages of motor, psychological and social development as well as the ability to organize and manage a class. This manual is intended as a useful and relevant educational tool, but it certainly does not replace actual training for teaching the circus arts. Although these techniques are essential for performing circus arts, these disciplines also need creativity and poetry in order to be truly artistic and meaningful, and this is true at both the professional and amateur levels.

On behalf of the teachers and professionals who were so enthusiastic and thorough in putting together the content of this manual, I would like to thank *Cirque du Soleil* for its generous contribution to the development of an educational work of this magnitude. By taking part in circus arts and with the help of qualified personnel, it will certainly help a great number of young people to achieve their potential more easily.

Daniela Arendasova
Director of Studies
National Circus School
Montreal



INTRODUCTION

The practice of circus arts implies knowledge of and proficiency in one or several techniques, which usually requires progressive and ongoing learning. Use of these techniques opens up a wide range of possibilities intended to develop physical abilities, as well as creative potential and social skills.

Today, there is growing interest in using circus arts for purposes other than performance and shows. Professionals involved in the fields of leisure and recreation, humanitarian development, mental health and physical rehabilitation are watching the development of current initiatives with great interest.

As the learning of these techniques is set to develop in various areas, and with rising interest in circus arts as a recreational pursuit, it seems appropriate at this time to develop a document that fulfils the need for technical knowledge, while also ensuring that learning is done in safety and progressively, according to the basic techniques in the circus arts.

We also believe that this document will be useful to all those organizations involved in the teaching of circus techniques. Circus schools, recreational circus programs, acrobatic gymnastics federations and the educational sector in general can use the knowledge and information contained here to improve their own teaching.

Collaboration between National Circus School and *Cirque du Soleil*

This multimedia educational kit brings together 17 circus disciplines and 177 technical elements. Written with the help of teachers at the National Circus School, it recommends and outlines the principles of teaching basic circus arts techniques. Illustrated by NCS students, this work recommends gradual development of skills and the mastering of various basic circus techniques.

The work comprises two main parts: written documents and video documents.

Written documents: The written part of *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* comprises 17 chapters, each corresponding to a colour-coded discipline. Every chapter is divided into two sections. The first section introduces the terminology specific to the discipline, the equipment required and, specific information, as well as advice about safety and the prevention of injury. The second section illustrates in detail the different technical elements that constitute the discipline. This section comprises a description of the technical elements, detailed explanations of the movement, educationals enabling step-by-step learning of each component, tips for manual aids, corrections and corrective exercises addressing the most common mistake and variants of the movement.

Video documents: The video part of *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* is intended to promote a better understanding of the written material and to provide a visual aid to learning. To make it easier to find information, the colours used for the disciplines in the written documents correspond to those on the video documents. Similarly, the photos shown alongside the explanations of the movement, the educationals and the variants are taken from the video documents. When necessary, close-ups and slow motion are used to make it easier to understand more complex technical positions and quick sequences. When movements are displayed, extra information or warnings about safety or injury prevention will pop up onscreen.



For practical reasons, the section on “Common Mistakes” is not included on the DVDs so that the focus is on showing the correct way of performing the movements. The educational elements required for learning the various technical elements however, are presented in the video documents. In any case, the written document must be consulted to see the complete list of educational elements.

All the exercises contained in the written documents and videos are presented in such a way so as to ensure they are performed as safely as possible (ideally under the supervision of an instructor or coach), with proper preparation and using the right equipment.

The written and video documents included in *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* are complementary: they were designed to be used together. The written documents contain information that is not available on the video documents. Likewise, the video documents allow a fuller understanding of the movements that is not possible from consulting the written documents alone.



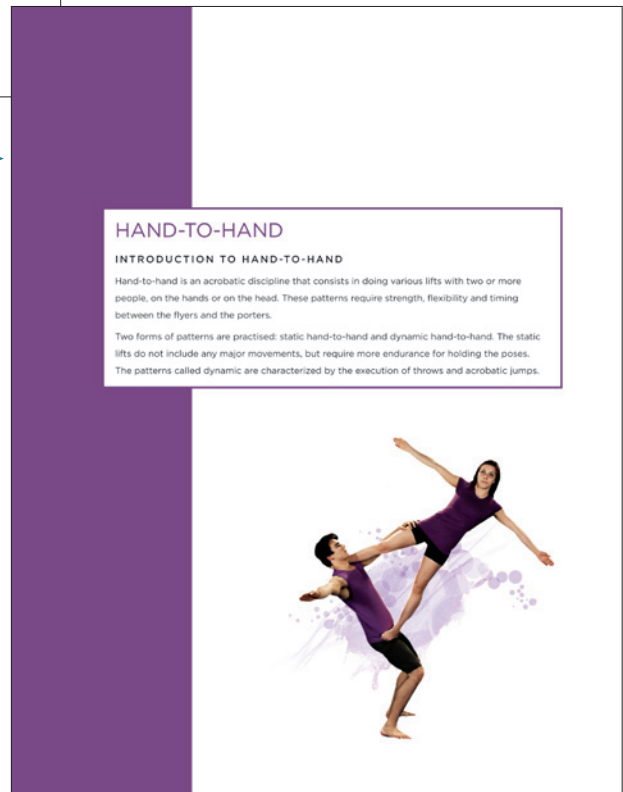
INSTRUCTIONS - WRITTEN DOCUMENTS



Introduction

The first page of each chapter describes in general terms the specifics and characteristics of each discipline.

Each discipline is colour-coded. →
The different colours, corresponding to those used on the video documents, make it easier to find what the user is looking for.



TERMINOLOGY

Centre of mass (COM)
Point in an individual's body where the body mass is considered to be concentrated and where the three axes of rotation meet.

Closed foot
Position with the foot straight on the wire.

Demi-pointe
Maintaining a standing position on the balls of the feet.

Frame
A-shaped structure that allows anchoring the wire while lifting it off the ground.

Open foot
External rotation of the foot of approximately 45°.

Retirés
Action of flexing a leg, bringing the foot up and placing it on the knee of the opposite leg.

Wire
Cable on which one walks.

EQUIPMENT

- A cable (the wire) to walk on;
- Two A-frames to anchor the cable;
- Side cables;
- A hand-operated winch to tighten the wire;
- A spring;
- Shackles for assembly;
- A floor mat the length of the wire and at least 1.40 m wide.



Side cables A-frame

2 Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - TIGHTWIRE - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil

Terminology

The technical terms essential to understanding the elements specific to each discipline.

In-depth terminology research was carried out in conjunction with teachers at the National Circus School in Montreal to determine the most commonly used expressions and terms in circus and acrobatic communities.

Equipment

The equipment needed to practise the different disciplines covered.

Specific Information

Specific information needed to practise the discipline and essential for performing the technical elements properly, bringing together such topics as identifying the dominant side when performing twists and body positions in aerial phases.

Safety

Essential information to consider when training with the aim of minimizing the risk of injury.

These points are specific to each discipline and are of the utmost importance. They concern both the instructor's role and the work environment.

TERMINOLOGY

Aerial silks
Fabric rigging, generally made of Lycra, folded in half and hung from an anchoring point, on which the acrobat executes various acrobatic patterns.

Flexed feet
Position with the ankle in flexion.

Hip flexion
Action of bringing the legs and the upper body together, or decreasing the torso/leg angle.

Iliac crest
Flat bone forming the upper edge of the pelvic bone.

Pike inverted hang
Hip flexion in the inverted position.

Rope
Aerial rigging made up of a twisted or braided cotton rope with a diameter of 3 to 5 centimetres, positioned vertically and from which the acrobat executes various acrobatic patterns.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The rope and silk practice is performed on a vertical axis, which requires sustained physical endurance. The participant is constantly subjected to gravity; the challenge is to limit the loss of height while executing placements and to find combinations that limit the necessary manipulations and the inevitable need to climb back up again.

The practice of these two disciplines requires general muscular endurance and develops good muscle tone. It specifically requires upper body strength in the arms, shoulders and abdominals, as well as grip strength.

Note: In order to simplify the text, the word "rope" will be used in the descriptions to designate both rope and silk, except for the parts specifically dedicated to silk.

SAFETY

As rope and silk allow plenty of room for freedom, creativity and exploration, safety remains the only real rule. Consequently, the equipment must be in good condition and properly installed. Also, it is essential to always use a landing mat. The instructor should be aware of his limitations and be able to assess those of the participants.

Rope and silk are practised without a lunge or safety device, but with a landing mat. It is therefore necessary to ensure that an element can be performed completely, which includes controlling both the movement and the release. During the descent, despite the use of a landing mat, the possibility of deliberately falling should never be considered.

Since rope and silk can cause abrasion burns, it is recommended to wear suitable clothing that covers the legs and torso as much as possible. Despite these precautions, it is normal for people new to these disciplines to experience some discomfort. The rope and silk may cause cramping of the feet, thighs and torso, and may sometimes cause minor burns to the feet or other exposed parts. In order to increase grip and limit involuntary sliding, a resin powder is used, applied to the hands and, if necessary, to the feet and back of the knees.

2 Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - ROPE AND SILK - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil



ACROBATICS
MENICHELLI

Technical Element Description
Rotating 180° around the transversal axis, going into a handstand and finishing with a walkout.

Prerequisites

- Back walkover.
- Handstand with stride split.
- Walkout.

Explanation of the Movement

- From the standing straight position with the arms on either side of the head, rock backwards slightly and lower the arms. Flex the arms until they are in line with the body and extend the legs and hips. **M 1**
- Transfer the COM over the hands and go into a handstand with the legs in a stride split, with the gaze on the hands. **M 2**
- Walk out and get back to the standing straight position, with the gaze forward. **M 3**

Note: Once the leg push is finished, the arms should remain aligned with the body.

Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - ACROBATICS - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil

Technical Element Description

A concise description explaining the nature or the key movements of the technical element in question.

Prerequisites

Figures, body patterns and technical skills to master before starting to learn the element.

Explanation of the Movement

A detailed description of the different sequences of movements making up the element.

Identified by the icon **M**

These explanations are illustrated by one or more photos. The use of numbers added to the letter **M** allows the user to follow the sequences represented visually: **M 1, M 2, etc.**

Safety Notice

In addition to the information provided in the first section, the safety notices set out essential aspects to consider when performing the movement in order to avoid injury.

PYRAMIDS
EGYPTIAN PYRAMID

Technical Element Description
Seven-person pyramid.

Prerequisite

- Flyer standing on a porter in a sumo pike position.

Explanation of the Movement

- Four porters are positioned next to one another in a sumo pike position, interlacing their legs with those of neighbours so as to stabilize the base of the pyramid and form a straight line. Their backs must be horizontal and all at the same height. **M 1**
- A first flyer gets up on the two central porters supporting himself with his hands on their backs, ascending either directly or by stepping on a porter's thigh. Once up, the flyer puts one foot on each of the central porters' pelvises and rests his hands on their shoulder blades. Two other flyers repeat this sequence, one positioned on the left porters' backs and the other on the right porters' backs. **M 2**
- When the three flyers are stable, they lift their torsos so as to have their backs horizontal. Simultaneously, porters and flyers extend their arms out to the side, resting on their neighbours' shoulders, if they have a neighbour. The porters complete the sequence by straightening their legs. **M 3**
- During the descent, the flyers again put their hands on the porters' shoulder blades, then jump backwards one after the other, from the centre, avoiding any sudden movement.

Safety Notice: It is important to have a landing mat behind the pyramid in case of falls. In this case, the participant should fall on the person below. This way, the speed and height of the fall will be reduced.

Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - PYRAMIDS - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil



Educationals


1. One person holds the diabolo with his hands and moves it so that the participant practises corrections with the handsticks. The diabolo is corrected with the hand that provides the rotation speed, that is, the right hand. While correcting it, continue to give it speed by making up-and-down movements with the right hand. **ED 1**

Three corrections:

1. Stand facing the diabolo; if it turns, follow it.
2. If the diabolo leans inward toward the feet, move the right hand forward; the string will then rub the diabolo's cup and the diabolo will straighten out.
3. If the diabolo leans toward the outside, move the right hand back; the string will then rub the diabolo's cup and the diabolo will straighten out.

Corrections should be made more quickly with practice and therefore should become increasingly smaller.

2. Roll the diabolo along the ground using the handsticks and lift it into the air.



Manual Aid

- The spotter stands behind the participant and manipulates the handsticks with him, providing the rotation speed and applying the corrections.

Common Mistakes	Corrections and Corrective Exercises
1. From the beginning, the participant places the diabolo on the wrong side on the ground.	1. Placing the diabolo on the correct side. If the participant wishes to manipulate it with the right hand, it is placed on the right side.
2. The participant is badly positioned.	2. Staying facing the diabolo.
3. The participant waits too long to make a correction.	3. Correcting the diabolo from the first signs of instability. With practice, one will be able to anticipate corrections.
4. The diabolo becomes unstable and loses speed.	4. Always providing speed when applying the correction.
5. The participant overcorrects and tips the diabolo.	5. Making small correction movements.

6 Basic Techniques in Circus Arts - DIABOLO - © 2011 Cirque du Soleil

Educationals

Step-by-step exercises and sequences of movements recommended to successfully perform the technical element. They make the principle of progressive learning easier, focusing on coordination and physical preparation as well as concentrating on the movements.

Identified by the icon **ED**

These educationals are often illustrated by one or more photos. The use of numbers added to the letters **ED** allows the user to follow the sequences represented visually: **ED 1**, **ED 2**, etc.


Manual Aid

Assistance that the instructor or the spotter should provide when teaching the movements. The images allow the user to see the movements to make and the actions to take to ensure learning is carried out safely.

Identified by the icon **MA**

Manual Aid

- To assist the participant, the instructor stands with his arm solidly extended into a fist in front of the participant. The participant supports himself on the fist, trying to let go of it for as long as possible. **MA 1**
- The instructor should not hold the participant by the hips, because he will not control his balance.



Common Mistakes	Corrections and Corrective Exercises
1. The participant's arms drop during the half turn.	1. Developing the reflex of lifting the arms during the half turn. EX
2. The participant puts too much weight on the right foot.	2. Keeping the COM over the left foot. The right foot must assist in the turn.
3. The participant bends his body.	3. Bending the knee of the left leg more, lifting the arms.

Variants


1. Sequence: Walking, half turn at the end of the wire, walking.
2. Sequence: Four half turns in the middle of the wire.

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HANDSTAND
THE "L" SIT

Technical Element Description
Sitting up straight with the legs extended with support on the hands.



Explanation of the Movement

- Press the hands into the ground with the index finger facing forward and the COM over the palms of the hands. Keep the legs together and outstretched with the feet pointed. Press with the arms while contracting the abdominals and bring the pelvis slightly backwards.

Educationals

- "L" sit on canes or on parallel bars.
- "L" sit with the legs tucked.


Manual Aid

- Watch out for possible backwards falls, especially when the exercise is done with balancing canes or when the participant lifts the legs very high.

Common Mistakes	Corrections and Corrective Exercises
1. The participant cannot lift the legs.	1. Performing strengthening exercises for the abdominal muscles. EX
2. The participant cannot keep the arms straight.	2. Turning the hands toward the outside, the index finger facing front.

Variant

- "L" sit with legs in a straddle position. V 1



Basic Techniques in Circus Arts • HANDSTAND • © 2011 Cirque du Soleil

Common Mistakes

The most common mistakes to avoid.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

Modifications to make either by correcting movements or by corrective exercises.

The corrective exercises are identified by the icon EX

Variants


Images illustrating the technical elements give the user the opportunity to progress and to vary his learning.

Identified by the icon V

Manual Aid

- The instructor puts his hand on the participant's ankle to make sure the angle of his knee does not exceed 90°, otherwise the participant could fall. MA 1



Note: Avoid pressing too hard on the leg; the angle should not be tighter than that of the double knee hang position. If the trapeze is higher, the instructor puts his hands under the participant's shoulders.



Common Mistakes	Corrections and Corrective Exercises
1. The participant lets the free hip and leg fall and has difficulty returning the knee to the bar.	1. Keeping the hips even throughout the movement.
2. The participant stays in a pike position and has difficulty maintaining a secure knee angle.	2. Opening the hips by tightening the buttocks and pressing the pelvis forward, pulling the heels toward the buttocks.

Variants

- Front leg to the side in a split. V 1
- Arabesque: Leg to the back, foot pulled toward the head. V 2





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ROPE AND SILK HANGING

Technical Element Description
Secure hanging of the silk.



Explanation

- Always anchor the silk onto a steel part, preferably circular, with an inner circumference of a minimum of 9 centimetres and a diameter of 15 centimetres. The ring should be forged and not welded. A pear- or oval-shaped part is also acceptable if it conforms to the same criteria; make sure the part has a sufficiently wide base to prevent the silk from moving up.

Set-up

- Fold the silk lengthwise into two equal parts and nestle the ring in the fold. Wrap the ends of the silk around the ring from the outside and bring them through the centre of the ring, from front to back, under the centre of the silk.

<p>Common Mistake</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Using an aluminum alloy part, intended for a use other than anchoring. For example, using an "eight-shaped" descender for mountain climbing, which is a part that is too small and also more fragile than steel since it is made of alloy. 	<p>Correction and Corrective Exercise</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Obtaining the equipment from a supplier specialized in acrobatic rigging.
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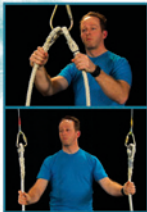
Maintenance and Rigging of Aerial Devices

Information on the set-up, maintenance and safe rigging of aerial devices.

Information found at the end of the chapters of each of the aerial disciplines.

FIXED TRAPEZE RIGGING AND MAINTENANCE

Technical Element Description
Secure rigging, maintenance and storage of the trapeze.



Explanation

Rigging

- Basic rigging:** Make sure the carabiners are screwed downward. The structure or system to which the trapeze is anchored must be checked by a rigger or engineer.
- Adjustable-height trapeze:** There are two methods for safely attaching a trapeze onto an adjustable-height system:
 - Safety knot for the ascender;
 - Pin rail fastening knot.

Maintenance

- Trapeze maintenance is done at least once a year.**
- Considering how the trapeze is used, it is important to check the rope-bar attachments under the sleeve. The fabric should be unstitched and the padding material should be unwrapped in order to check the welds, shackles, thimbles, cables and ropes, and replaced if necessary.
- Periodically, the tape on the bar should be changed if it becomes too slippery, dirty or dry, or if it starts to unroll. Take care to always remove the old tape and any excess adhesive from the bar before replacing it. Stretch the tape while covering the bar to prevent forming folds.

Storage

- Store in a clean and dry place. Both ropes must be rolled up; avoid rolling them too tightly or folding them.

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INSTRUCTIONS - VIDEO DOCUMENTS

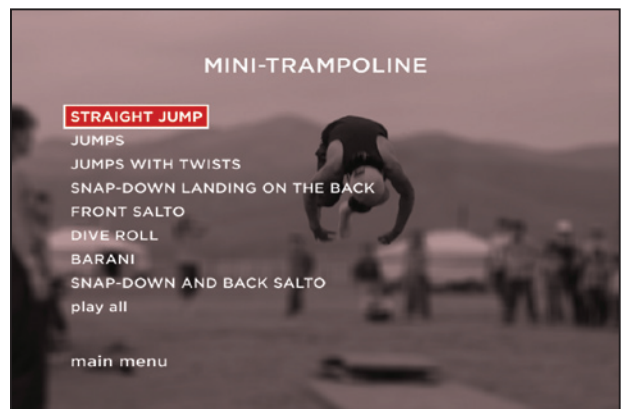


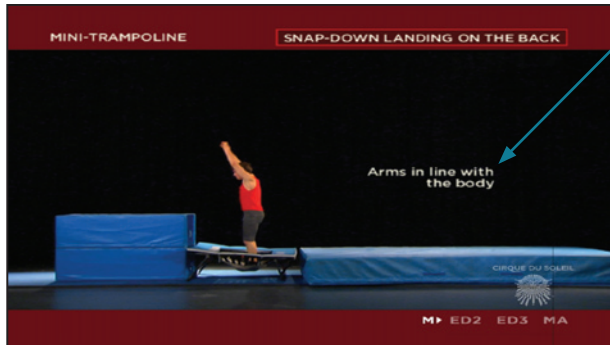
Main Menu

After the opening sequence, a first window presents the disciplines covered on the DVD.

Elements Menu

Once a discipline has been selected, a second window allows the user to go from one technical element to another. The “play all” button, at the bottom of the window, provides the option to watch the elements one after the other.



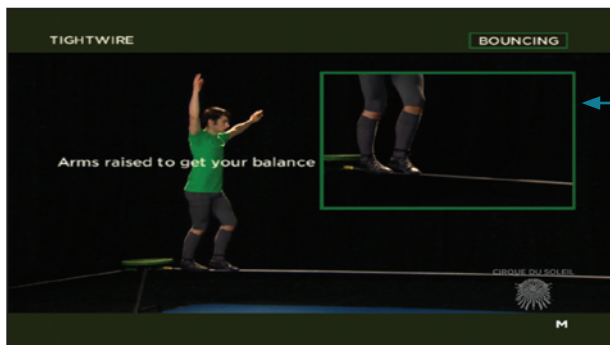


Warnings

Extra information or warnings about safety or prevention of injury pop up onscreen at key moments while the movements are being viewed.

Icons

When highlighted, the icon corresponding to the one in the written document indicates the technical element component being played.



Close-ups

In some cases, special attention is given to an image, part of the body or manual aid as a movement is being demonstrated by showing a close-up or by showing the movement from a different angle.

Technical Notes

The different parts of the element may be viewed out of sequence using the “Skip” function to select the icons at the bottom of the screen. The slow-motion function, available on most DVD players, also allows the user to watch each movement more closely.





AERIAL HOOP

INTRODUCTION TO THE AERIAL HOOP

The hoop is an aerial apparatus that can be used in a static position, for swinging, large circles or spinning in place. Performing this discipline mainly uses two categories of technical elements: flexibility and strength moves, and dynamic acrobatic moves.

During a performance, these two categories of elements are linked choreographically to give both colour and vitality to the act. This discipline specifically requires upper-body strength: arms, shoulders and abdominals. Therefore muscular tone, grip strength and general muscular endurance are needed.

TERMINOLOGY

Arabesque

Leg bent to the back.

Back support

The lower back is supported on the bar; the hands can grip the bottom, side or top of the hoop.

Dance bar

Horizontal bar fixed at about 1 metre from the ground used to performing gymnastic movements.

Front support

The pelvis is supported on the bar with the arms slightly flexed; the hands press down to lift the body.

Hands in pronation

Palm-down grip.

Hands in supination

Palm-up grip.

Hip extension

Action of moving the legs and the upper body away from each other, or increasing the torso/leg angle.

Hip flexion

Action of bringing the legs and the upper body together, or decreasing the torso/leg angle.

Hollow chest position

Position in which the body forms a slight curve to the front, with the arms extended on either side of the head or of the torso and the pelvis in posterior tilt.

Large circle

The trajectory of the hoop is circular below its anchoring point.

Pin rail

A vertical wall bracket with regularly spaced notches or projections used to store, fix or hang various circus riggings.

Posterior tilt

Action of tilting the pelvis backwards without flexion.

Pull-up

Action of lifting the body, hanging on a bar or an aerial hoop, by pulling up with the arms.

Spinning in place

The hoop spins quickly below its anchoring point.

Static position

The hoop remains in the same place below the anchoring point.

Swing

The hoop swings below the anchoring point in a straight line.

Tape

Tape covering the hoop.



SAFETY

As the aerial hoop allows plenty of room for freedom, creativity and exploration, safety remains the only real rule. Consequently, the equipment must be in good condition and properly installed. Also, it is essential to always use a landing mat. The instructor should be aware of his limitations and be able to assess those of the participants.

The aerial hoop is practised without a lunge or safety device. It is therefore necessary to ensure that an element can be done in a static position before trying it swinging, circling or spinning.

Since the aerial hoop can cause bruises, it is recommended to wear suitable clothing that covers as much of the body as possible. Despite these precautions, it is normal for people new to this discipline to experience some discomfort. In order to increase grip and limit involuntary sliding, a resin powder is used, applied to the hands and, if necessary, to the feet.



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AERIAL HOOP

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AERIAL HOOP KNEE HANG

Technical Element Description

Hanging by the knee, two legs to one leg.

Prerequisite

- Supporting the body weight by the back of the knee.

Explanation of the Movement

- Hang from the lower bar of the hoop by the back of the knees, legs bent, hips in posterior tilt and arms extended. **M 1**
- Maintain the position. Next, straighten one leg, make a quarter circle with this leg and hold it to the rear, in arabesque. **M 2**
- Return to the knee hang position and repeat the movement with the other leg.



M 1



M 2



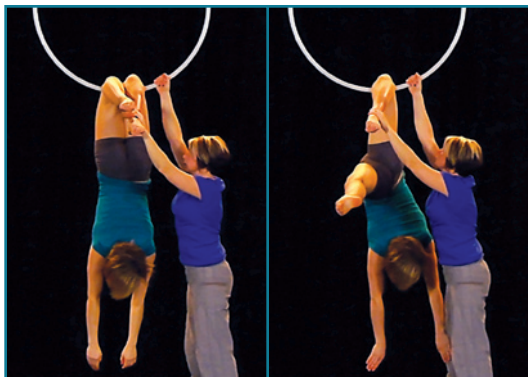
Educational

1. Lying on the stomach, with the pelvis in posterior tilt, the arms extended alongside the body and the knees bent, the participant must try to keep his knees bent while the instructor pulls on his heels to straighten his legs.

Manual Aid

- The instructor holds the participant's legs closed against the hoop by pressing on the participant's tibias or above his ankles. **MA 1**

Note: Avoid pressing too hard.



MA 1

Common Mistakes

1. The participant has his hips flexed.
2. The participant has difficulty holding on when he removes one leg from the hoop.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Performing exercises for strengthening the hamstrings. Lying on the stomach, with the pelvis in posterior tilt, the arms extended alongside the body and the knees bent, the participant must try to keep his knees bent while the instructor pulls on his heels to straighten his legs. **EX**
2. Repeating the element: The instructor holds the legs of the participant closed against the hoop by pressing on his tibias or above his ankles.

Variants

1. Front leg alongside the head. **V 1**
2. Leg to the rear in arabesque. **V 2**
3. Knee hang while swinging.
4. Knee hang while circling.
5. Knee hang while spinning in place.

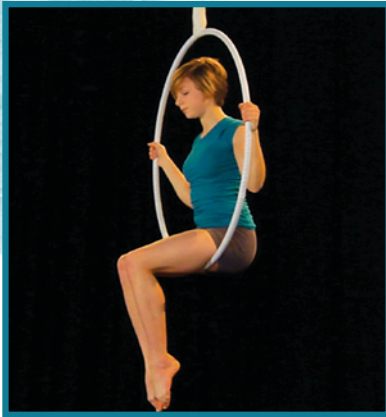


V 1



V 2





AERIAL HOOP FROM KNEE HANG TO SITTING POSITION

Technical Element Description

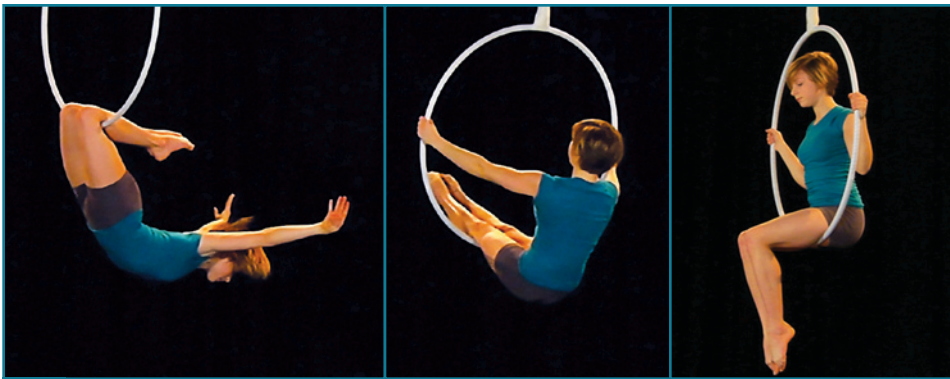
From a tempo in knee hang to the seated position.

Prerequisite

- Knee hang.

Explanation of the Movement

- Hanging by the knees, extend the hips and then flex into the hollow chest position. Take the hoop by each side with the hands in pronation, pull up and slide the bar under the thighs up to the bottom of the buttocks and finish in the seated position. **M 1**



M 1

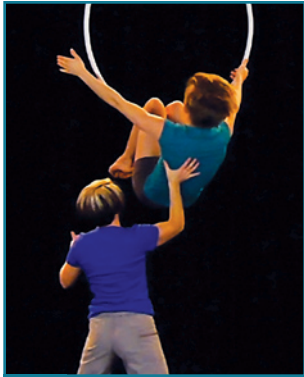
Educational

1. Start by kneeling on the floor; do a snap-down. (See *Snap-down, Acrobatics*, p. 18.)

Manual Aid

- The instructor supports the participant's back during the ascent. **MA 1**





MA 1

Common Mistake

1. The participant does not place his hands high enough on the hoop.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Increasing the tempo.
Working on flexibility for the extension of the hips or on muscle strength for the flexion of the hips. **EX**

Variant

1. Knee hang to seated with tempo while swinging.





AERIAL HOOP PULLOVER

Technical Element Description

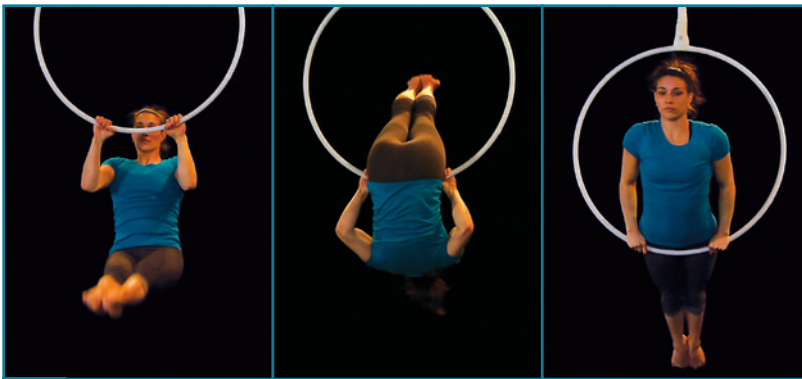
Rotating the body around the bar, so as to end up in front support.

Prerequisites

- Pull-up.
- Back roll on the floor. (See *Back roll*, *Acrobatics*, p. 42.)
- Leg lift.

Explanation of the Movement

- Hanging from the hands in pronated grip, perform a pull-up, bring the legs to the bar in the pike position and roll the body around the bar, keeping the gaze on the body. Raise the shoulders over the bar by turning the wrists. End in front support on the bar. **M 1**



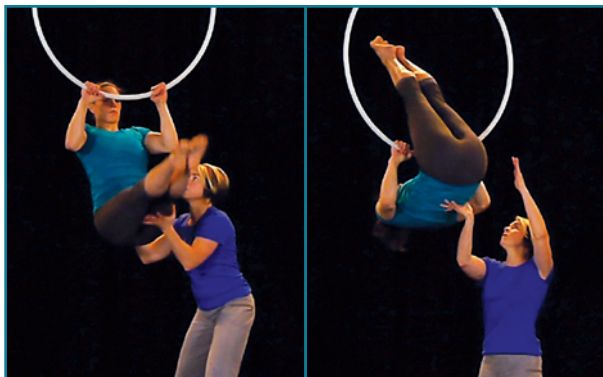
M 1

Educational

1. Set up in pike position on the bar, hands pronated, and raise the shoulders over the bar. The instructor can assist the participant by holding his feet down.

Manual Aid

- The instructor places one hand on the participant's thighs and the other on his back, and supports him during the ascent. **MA 1**



MA 1

Common Mistakes

1. The participant lacks strength in the arms or abdominals.
2. The participant lifts the shoulders too high.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Performing strengthening exercises for the arms and abdominals.
2. Making sure to take the pike position on the bar, hands pronated, before raising the shoulders.

Variant

1. Pullover while swinging.





AERIAL HOOP FORWARD ROLL

Technical Element Description

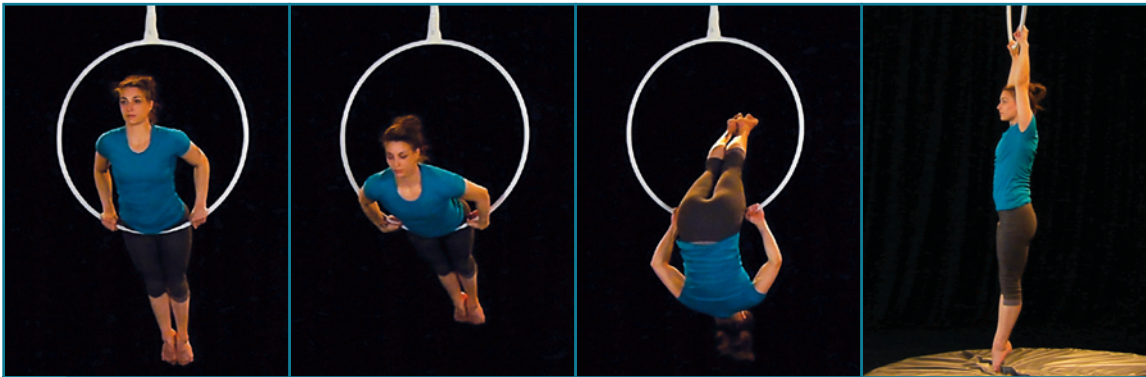
From front support, rotating the body to hanging.

Prerequisites

- Front roll on the floor.
(See *Front roll, Acrobatics*, p. 23.)
- Front support.
- Leg lift and controlled lowering.

Explanation of the Movement

- From front support, hands pronated, move the shoulders down and slightly bend the arms while releasing the legs from the hoop. Control the lowering of the legs and extend the arms until a hanging position is reached. **M 1**



M 1

Educational

1. Do a forward roll on the floor and end in an outstretched position on the back while in control.

Manual Aid

- The instructor places one hand on the participant's thighs and the other on his back, and supports him during the descent. **MA 1**





MA 1

Common Mistake

1. The participant lowers his legs too quickly.

Correction and Corrective Exercise

1. Performing strengthening exercises for the abdominals, such as leg lifts.

Variants

1. Forward roll while swinging.
2. Forward roll while circling.
3. Forward roll while spinning in place.





AERIAL HOOP STRADDLE SPLIT

Technical Element Description

With the back on the hoop, straddle split on the lower bar.

Prerequisite

- Straddle split.

Explanation of the Movement

- Start in back support on the lower bar, hands pronated at shoulder height on the sides of the hoop. Put one foot on the upper bar, pull up and slide the bar to the fifth lumbar vertebra. **M 1**
- Perform a straddle split with the legs, let go of the hoop with the hands and stretch the body while hanging, with the arms held overhead in line with the body. **M 2**



M 1



M 2



Educationals

1. Lying on a block, perform the straddle split.
2. Slide only to the fifth lumbar vertebra.

Manual Aid

- The instructor holds the hoop still throughout the movement. He supports the participant's back and then his shoulders. **MA 1**





MA 1

Common Mistakes

1. The participant slides the hoop too high up the back.
2. The participant does not maintain his position after releasing his hands from the hoop.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Sliding only to the fifth lumbar vertebra.
2. Pressing the thighs strongly against the hoop.





AERIAL HOOP BRIDGE

Technical Element Description

Hanging by the knees from the upper bar and, with hands on the lower bar of the hoop, opening to a bridge.

Prerequisites

- Double knee hang.
- Bridge on the floor. (See *Bridge, Acrobatics*, p. 19.)

Explanation of the Movement

- From the knee hang on the upper bar of the hoop, with the lower bar under the back, put both hands in pronation on the lower bar with the arms flexed. **M 1**
- Press the bar away until the arms are extended. The flexibility for the bridge can come from the shoulders or the back. **M 2**



M 1



M 2

Manual Aid

- The instructor protects the participant's head during the descent, in order to prevent contact with the lower bar. **MA 1**



MA 1

Common Mistake

1. The participant does not fully extend the arms.

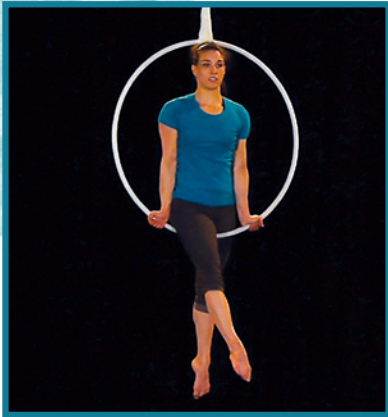
Correction and Corrective Exercise

1. Performing arm-strengthening and back flexibility exercises.

Variants

1. From the knee hang, removing one leg.
2. Bridge while swinging.
3. Bridge while circling.
4. Bridge while spinning in place.





AERIAL HOOP PINWHEEL FORWARD

Technical Element Description

With the legs scissored, forward rotation around the lower bar.

Prerequisite

- Front support with one leg over the bar.

Explanation of the Movement

- Start in front support with one leg over the bar in scissor position, hands supinated. **M 1**
- Direct the body forward and whip the back leg to create rotation. **M 2**
- Keep the thighs tight on the bar throughout the circle. **M 3**
- During the ascent, turn the wrists and bring the shoulders over the bar. Return to front support and repeat the movement. **M 4**

Note: The hips should be in line with the hands.



M 1



M 2



M 3



M 4

Educational

1. Do a pinwheel forward on a dance bar.

Manual Aid

- The instructor supports the participant's back during the ascent. **MA 1**



MA 1

Common Mistakes

1. The participant does not complete the circle.
2. The participant falls into a knee hang under the bar.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Increasing the starting momentum; throwing the shoulders forward harder and whipping the leg more.
2. Keeping the thighs tight against the bar.





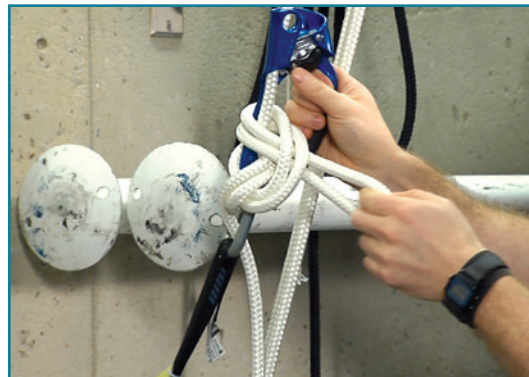
AERIAL HOOP HANGING THE HOOP

Technical Element Description

Secure hanging of the hoop.

Explanation

- The structure or system on which the hoop is hung must be checked by a rigger or engineer.
- The rope to which the hoop is attached can be of various lengths. The diameter of the hoop can also vary according to the height of the user and according to the chosen acrobatic possibilities.
- There are two methods for safely attaching a hoop onto an adjustable-height system:
 - Safety knot for the ascender;
 - Pin rail fastening knot.





AERIAL HOOP CARABINERS AND SWIVEL HOOKS

Technical Element Description

Basic types of carabiners and swivel hooks and their use.

Explanation

- Carabiners intended for acrobatic rigging are made of steel and equipped with a screw or spring closure. Once attached, place them upside-down and screw toward the bottom.
- Swivels are mandatory. The most commonly used ones are made of alloy, which makes them more fragile; avoid banging them together and dropping them.
- Handle any rigging element with care and never use second-hand equipment unless its history is known and it has been thoroughly inspected.

Common Mistakes

1. The rigger forgets to spring or screw a carabiner closed.
2. The rigger assumes that the apparatus is correctly anchored.

Corrections and Corrective Exercises

1. Always checking twice. In case of doubt, checking a third time.
2. Checking the anchoring before each use, even when it is believed that no one has touched the equipment.





AERIAL HOOP MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE

Technical Element Description

Basic knowledge about maintenance and storage.

Explanation

Maintenance

- Depending on how the hoop is used, check the condition of the rope for attaching the hoop, under the sleeve, at least once a year. Remove the protection and unwrap the padding material to check welds, shackles, thimbles, cables and ropes. Replace them if necessary. Change the tape when it becomes too slippery or dirty, or if it dries out or starts to unroll. Take care to always remove the old tape and any excess adhesive from the hoop before replacing the tape.

Storage

- Keep the hoop in a clean and dry area, ideally on a bracket. The rope should be rolled up. Do not roll it too tightly and do not bend it.



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Produced in collaboration with the National Circus School, and translated into multiple languages, *Basic Techniques in Circus Arts* aims to introduce the public to circus arts. As both a technical guide and an educational tool, this document illustrates 177 technical elements drawn from 17 basic circus arts disciplines. Accompanied by video documents, this work offers in-depth expertise and technical content that will enable the delivery of progressive and specialized instruction in a safe environment.

In collaboration with



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