

Manual for Chinese Pole

Part1

Technical specifications

Part2

Physical conditioning

- 1.General conditioning
- 2.Specific conditioning for 1 pole

Part3

Basics of Chinese Pole

1.Climbs

- 1 Classic climb
- 2 Little monkey climb
- 3 Monkey Climb
- 4 Turning climb
- 5 Jump climb
- 6 Shoulder stand climb
- 7 Flag Climb
- 8 Handstand climb
- 10 Invert turning climb

2. Rest Positions

- 1 Held positions using the legs
- (ii) Inverted leg holds and variations

3. Planches and flags

- 1 Superman
- 2 Shoulder planche
- 3 Tucked shoulder planche
- 4 Planche 1 leg bent
- 5 Full planche
- 6 Handstands
- 7 Classic flag

4. Descents on the pole (slides)

- 1 Inverted leg slide
- 2 Hip lock slide

5. Other descents

- 1 Hip lock slide changes
- 2 Leg change descent
- 3 Variation on leg change descent
- 4 Back turn to hip lock
- 5 Star drop to hip lock

6. Simple skills

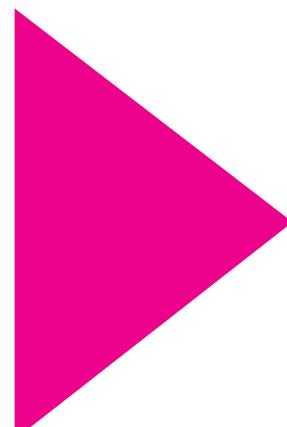
- 1 Walkabout
- 2 Back full turn

7. More advanced skills

- 1 Swing pirouette
- 2 Drop pirouette to donut
- 3 Cartwheel
- 4 Pirouette

8. Using 2 poles

- 1 Jump •'5f turn to catch hands and feet
- 2 Prep stage 1
- 3 Prep stage 2
- 4 Prep stage 3
- 5 Jump to leg catch
- 6 Preparation for leg catch



Part1 / Technical Specifications

Technical Specifications



Figure 1

Pole measurements:

Height:

This is usually 6metres but can differ depending on personal preference

Diameter:

Range from 52mm – 60mm, thinner is easier to grip

Rigging points:

Poles are normally held by three cables spaced equally in a circle at 120° . The ideal downward angle for the cables is 45° so for a 6m pole the rigging points need to be 6m from the pole

Cable tension:

Strap ratchets should be used on each cable, normally it is best to tighten to 120kgs pressure. The cables should be attached to the top of the rope. The bottom must be secure and not slipping. Slings on the cables should be short. If they are too long there is too much elasticity and therefore too much movement on the pole.

Materials:

The pole

This should be made of minimum 5mm gauge (thickness) steel tube preferably with no welding

Cables:

These should be minimum 6mm in diameter

Floor points:

If the pole is to be permanently set up then it is best to put plates in the floor with four bolts into concrete.

Pole Covering:

Modern poles are usually covered with neoprene, the same as for a wind-surfers grip bar. It is possible to use tape but



Part1 / Technical Specifications

this is far more abrasive.

Setting up two or more poles:

For two poles it is normal to have two floor fixings for each pole and connect the two poles at the top. This can be achieved with fixed poles or (as in the picture) a cable between the two. The advantage of this as shown in the example (figure 1) from Rosny is that a travelling lunge can be attached to it for movements between the poles.



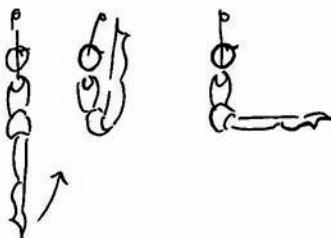
part2/ Physical Conditioning

1/ GENERAL CONDITIONING FOR CHINESE POLE

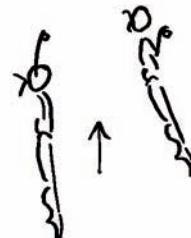
Obviously, the pole requires a great deal of strength in the upper body to perform. If we look at the nature of the movements performed on it we can see that there are certain types which occur frequently and require the same muscle groups. The biceps is nearly always involved in climbing as are the abdominal muscles. The action of closing the shoulders is much used requiring strength in the triceps, posterior deltoid and pectoral muscles. There is also a fair amount of static work performed on the pole and so any conditioning programme should include isometric exercises. Apart from specific actions performing a number on the pole requires a great deal of local muscular endurance, so this should also be taken into account when formulating a conditioning schedule.

Following is a general conditioning programme designed to increase endurance and general strength for the pole. This is followed by a number of specific exercises.

1. Leg lifts on bar or trapeze



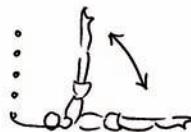
2. Chins on bar or trapeze



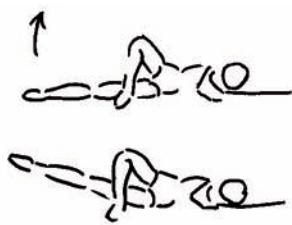
3. V-sits



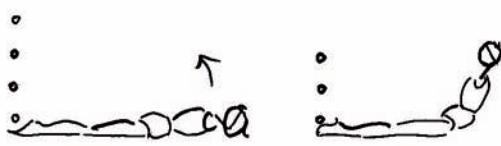
4. Lift up and down in shoulder stand



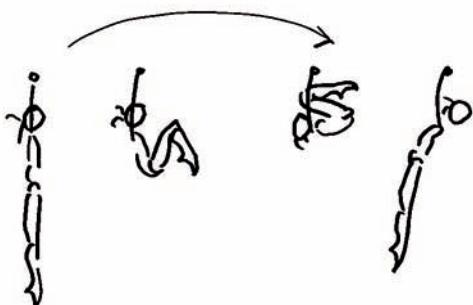
5. Adductor lifts



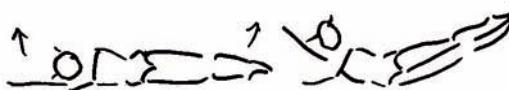
6. Dorsal lifts



7. Skin the cat, on bar or trapeze



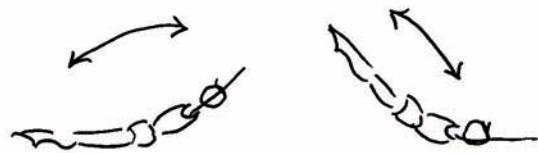
8. Side lifts



part2/ Physical Conditioning

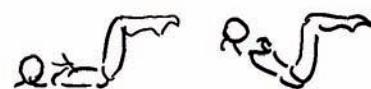
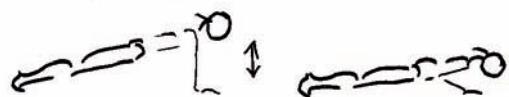
9. Roll to stand 1 leg alternating

10. Dish rocks, front and back



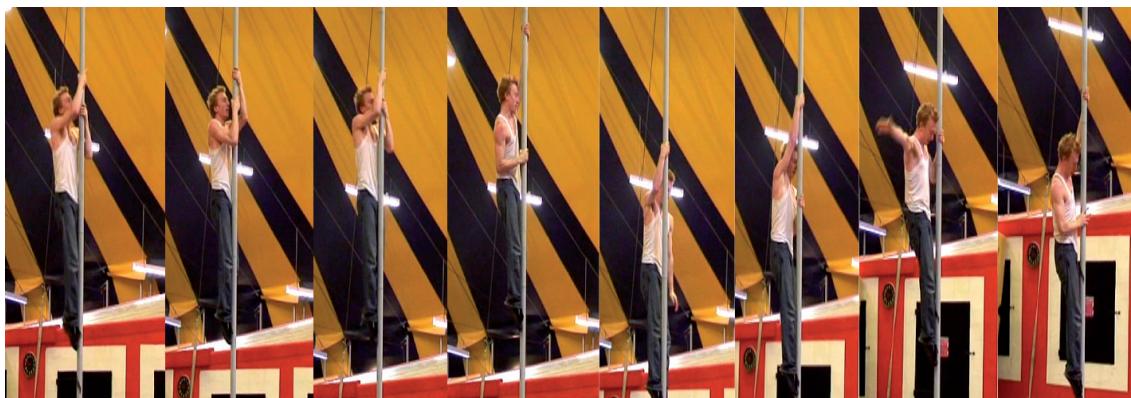
11. Press ups

12. Abdominal crunches



2/ Specific exercises for pole

Obviously working on the pole is a conditioning exercise in itself and each training session should begin with basic work which will help to strengthen the student. Ascending the pole is particularly good for strengthening. The climb shown below is possibly the most physically demanding on the arms but very good for strengthening.



For further strength and range of movement training the reader is directed to the Training theory manual from this series.



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

1/ CLIMBS

Classic Climb

- Shoulders should be lifted so that the back is vertical
- Hips should be rotated inwards to maintain a flat back
- Don't over-reach
- The same – side arm and leg reaches at the same time
- Feet can be parallel or turned out

**Little Monkey Climb**

- Move the body weight from side to side
- The hand moves at the same side as the leg swinging out.
- Try to maintain a rhythm

**Monkey Climb**

- This is basically a bigger version of the swing climb
- Use a pendulum action with the leg swinging out straight

**Turning climb**

- The grip of the support hand must be changed before turning (see pic. 1)
- Reach high behind the back
- At point 3 it is important to lean out with arms straight



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

Jump climb

- The body must be kept vertical as in classic climb
- The start position for the hands is around eye level
- Swing the leg out, straightening the arms
- Use the leg swing to take the weight off the body whilst the arms pull



Shoulder Stand climb

- The tempo of the legs and the upper body creates the impetus to climb
- As the legs are straightened and the upper body pulled in towards the pole, the arms pull to create the lift.



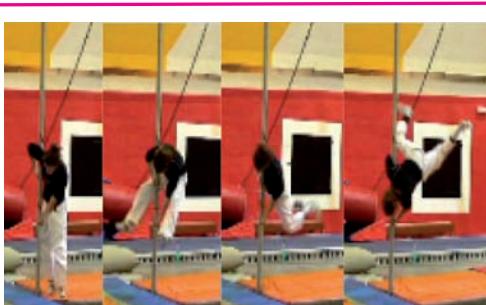
Flag climb

- The lower shoulder must be locked out strongly
- Time the pull with the leg extension
- The upper arm pulls and the lower arm presses



Handstand climb part 1

- Keep the lower arm strong as the body swings up to the handstand
- Don't allow the shoulders to go too far forwards
- One leg hooks around the pole behind the knee the other leg extends and the foot hooks around the pole



Handstand climb part 2

- Swing the body to invert
- Hook the right knee and left foot (in this case)
- Once secure curl up to reach for pole above



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole



Figs 1 - 3

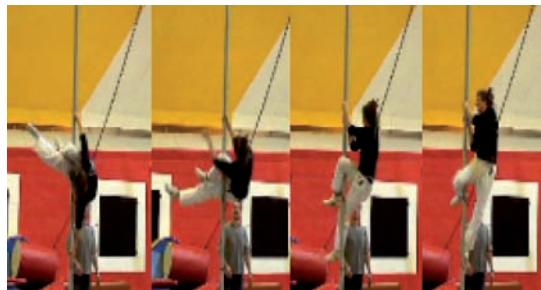
Practise swinging into this inverted position as a preliminary practice for the inverted climb, notice the strong lower arm (1 & 2). The knee hooks around the pole before the other leg is extended (2) and locked in. at this point (3) it is possible to release the pole with the hands and curl up to re-grasp above the legs.

Invert turning climb part 1

- Half turn to hang with back to pole
- Curl up and hook the knee (right)
- Reach up with right arm, holding with left

**Invert turning climb part 2**

- Once the right hand is on bring the left hand up and begin the half turn to start again

**Invert turning climb part 3**

part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

2/ REST POSITIONS

held positions using the legs



Fig 4



Fig 5

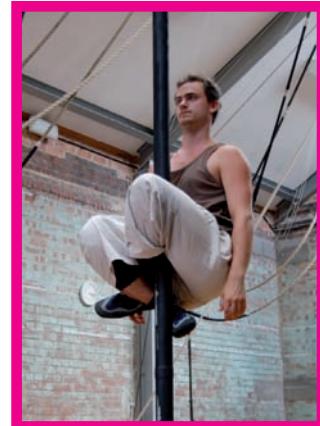


Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9

In all these positions the body should be relaxed. Allow the weight to settle into the pole and friction takes over to keep the position. In positions 7 and 8 the pole needs to be locked into the hips.

inverted leg holds and variations

Lift into inverted 1 leg hock and cross leg hang



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole



These are variations on the basic one leg hock hang

3/ PLANCHES AND FLAGS



Fig 10



Fig 11 (Superman)

The ‘superman’ above is probably the simplest of the planches, but still requires strength to maintain the straight body position and to lock in the pole under the arm. This is achieved by keeping the hand by the top of the hip and pulling the elbow in hard towards the body.

Shoulder Planche

The planche is considerably harder than the superman and will require a fair amount of strength training. There are a number of intermediate steps that can be taken.

part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

Tucked shoulder planche

- Training exercise for front planche
- Start from inverted planche and lower to tuck
- As the student gets stronger the hips are taken further from the pole
- Press back to invert, repeat, sets of 3 or 5



Shoulder planche 1 leg bent

- Lower to planche with one leg bent, foot next to other knee
- Hold and return to tuck
- Press to invert



Horizontal planche

- It is easier with the arms slightly bent
- Make sure the hips are kept fully extended
- If the hips start to drop then more strengthening should take place.



* There are conditioning exercises for this exercise shown on the DVD



Handstands

- From the start, make sure the bottom arm is strong and extended
- Squeeze the pole into the upper armpit
- Lift the hips with the legs tucked, when the hips are directly overhead, extend the legs



- This requires a strong pull from both arms and a strong contraction of the abdominal muscles
- Make sure the hips are as high as possible before extending the legs



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

- The bottom arm must press away as hard as possible and the upper arm pull in as hard as possible
- Keep the hips as close to the pole as possible as this requires less strength



Classic Flag

The flag can be reached from the same position as the handstand above and can be done straddled as in the Fig 12 below or with legs together (the more difficult option)



Fig 12

To achieve this position the student must lock out and push hard with the lower arm and pull with the top hand. The lower hand is turned so that the fingers are downwards and the weight can be braced against the heel of the hand.

4/ DESCENTS ON THE POLE

Descents can be done in a number of positions but these are the most common..

A safety mat should always be used when learning these descents.

- To begin with the performer should be comfortable in maintaining the slide position on the pole.
- Start close to the floor with safety mats under the pole, then gradually start higher
- The slide is initiated by relaxing the held position on the pole and reducing the friction
- Begin by descending slowly and build up the speed when the braking technique is consistent



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

Inverted leg slide

- For this it is important to maintain the tension in the back extensors to prevent the chest from hitting the pole
- The hand can be used to help the body position when braking and to assist with the slowing down



Wrap slide

- Hold the legs tight to maintain the position
- Relax with the arms to begin the slide
- Pull in tight again to brake



5/ OTHER DESCENTS

Hip Lock Slide Changes



Starting from 1 leg wrap the body and legs are extended and the chest is moved across the pole to the opposite side to wrap again, as the body is extended the performer releases pressure on the pole and slides into the next wrap.

Leg Change Descent



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

In this descent the body alternates from a position of chest facing the pole to back against the pole. From the 'stag' position with the back to the pole the leg is brought in and the foot wrapped. At this point the pressure is lessened and the performer slides a little on the pole before braking and once again releasing with the same leg.

Variation on Leg Change Descent



This is similar to the descent above but the free leg is brought in and wraps the pole releasing the other leg. The free leg is brought across the pole as in picture 4 causing the body to rotate around the pole. The upper leg must wrap the pole before the other leg is released.

Back Turn to Hip Lock



Turning to the left, the left arm is extended from a normal climb position and reaches down to grasp the pole. The body is then turned, the right hand released and the left leg wraps around the pole to end up in hip lock.

Star Drop to Hip Lock



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

From cross leg hand one arm is placed on the pole at arms length underneath the body. The rear leg swings out whilst the front leg maintains the hold. When the free leg gets to its maximum stretch the hooked leg is released from the pole but the upper hand remains in place whilst the legs move in to wrap the pole. The upper hand is then releases and the performer drops into hip lock.

6/ SIMPLE SKILLS

Walkabout



Turning right, the right hand is placed over the left hand with in over-grip as the right leg is swung over the head. The left leg must push hard against the pole. As the right leg completes the circle and comes near the pole again, the right hand is released and the right foot placed on the pole. As soon as this happens the left leg is rotated above the head and swung down to return to a normal climbing position.

Back full turn



Turning to the left, the releases with the left hand and turns his back to the pole, pushing with the left leg. The left hand is placed on the pole, low down with the arm straight. It is important to keep the pressure on the left leg, rotating the foot on the pole. Once the body has rotated so that the chest is facing the pole the right hand is released and replaced in normal grip to climb.

7/ MORE ADVANCED SKILLS

Swing Pirouette



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

This is a more advanced version of the back turn, rather than keeping the foot on the pole the performer pushes away and completes the turn on one hand swinging back in to wrap the pole with the legs. The upper hand must be placed in reverse grip first.

Pirouette to Donut



From a straddle planche position hand supporting the body underneath, the legs are twisted to create the rotation and the performer pulls in with the upper hand to ensure the body stays close to the pole. Once the body is facing downwards the left arm is put in front of the pole and the knees are drawn in to wrap the pole ready for the braking slide. As the full tuck is reached the other hand comes around the pole and both hands grasp the knees.

Cartwheel



This is taken from a monkey climb. As the leg swings out (right in this case) the right arm reaches down to grasp the bar underneath. As this happens the legs are swung over the head as a continuation of the monkey climb. The upper hand remains on the pole until the right foot makes contacts. Then the other leg swings in and the upper hand is changed. This skill can be practised on the floor to learn the technique, as below.

Cartwheel Preparation



The skill can also be supported as below:

part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

Supported Cartwheel



Pirouette



From a tempo swing downwards of the leg, the arms pull hard as the leg pushes. The shoulders are turned as the push develops and the trailing hand remains on the pole to help keep the body close to the pole. On re-grasp the right leg is hooked around the pole. The leading hand will re-grasp the pole first. This should be practised as a dismount first to land on a mat from a low position on the pole. Once the student can land on the mat in the correct position for re-grasp then the correct technique can be taught, but still at the same level.

8/ USING TWO POLES

Some Chinese pole acts use more than one pole. We will now look at a couple of ways to transfer from one pole to another. The distance between the poles is obviously variable and depends upon personal preference. For the purposes of the transfers shown here the distance is 1.9m. This is so that the performer has to fly between the poles as it is too far to reach.

Jump half turn to catch hands and feet:



This skill can be built in stages:



part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

Preparations for Jump - turn

Stage 1 Jump and return to pole

- The arms must be pressed straight and the direction is straight up bringing the body into the pole
- Use the flex of the pole, especially in the middle
- Try to land higher on the second pole as this leads to a smoother catch



Stage 2 Jump to dismount

- This is to ensure that the body stays upright and enough elevation is created
- A mark can be made on the mat where the other pole should be



Stage 3 Jump - turn to dismount

- The performer should learn to land in the correct position for catching the other pole



Jump to leg catch (Advanced)



The performer uses the swing of the free leg to gain momentum but must push with the arms. The head must be kept up and the chest high. The leg that hooks around the pole first bends from the knee downwards, not tucking. As the second leg wraps the upper body must resist the momentum taking it into the pole.

part3/ Basics of Chinese Pole

Preparation for jump to leg catch

- The performer should land in the position to catch the second pole
- A mark can be made on the mat to give the distance to the pole

