

# Circus Skills

## Self-Led Session Instructions







Use these instructions with the Scout Adventures Circus Skills kit to run a 90-minute Circus Skills session for a group (Suggestion of max 24 people).

### What is Circus skills?

Circus skills is a session where you can learn lots of different skills. It can help young people learn the fundamental skills of movement, co-ordination and balance. Build self-confidence whilst having fun and learning to trust your team-mates!

### Basic Session Structure

We suggest you split the session up into the sections below – this will take you about 90 minutes – of course you can change the plan to suit whatever you need!

Session section	Approx. Timing
 <b>Part 1 – Introduction</b> An introduction to the session and how it works	5 Minutes
 <b>Part 2 – Try different circus skills</b> Round robin of different Circus Skills, spending time learning each skill	40 Minutes
 <b>Part 3 – Perfect your skills</b> Choose your favourite activity and keep practicing to perfect your skills	25 Minutes
 <b>Part 4 – Show Time!</b> Show off your new skills to all your friends in the Circus Show!	20 Minutes

## What's in the Box?



Plate Spinning (x4 sets)



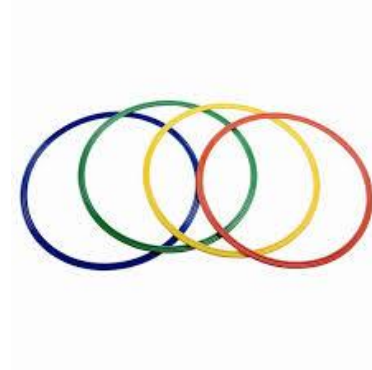
Juggling Balls x 15



9 x Bean Bags



Diablos (x4 sets)



Hula hoops x 4



Stilts (x3 sets)



Devil sticks (x3 sets)



Yo-yo (x4)

Please try to pack away the kit so all of the items are in their separate boxes. This makes it easier for the next group to run the activity.

## Part 1 – Introduction



**Time:** Approximately 5 minutes.

**Equipment:** None

### Before you start

- Collect the Circus skills box ready for you session.
- Check the contents of the kit against the list at the start of this document
- Choose where to run the activity. You'll need an area that is clear of obstructions.
- Set up the activity equipment in different bases around the area.

### Introduce the Session

The suggested introduction for the session is:

*“We’re going to spend the next 90 minutes playing Circus skills, Working together we are going to learn lots of different circus skills such as plate spinning, stilt walking, hula hooping and more!!*

## Part 2 – Try different skills



**Time:** 40 Minutes.

**Equipment:** All the circus equipment in your box

**Set-Up:** Place the equipment for each Circus Skill at different stations around the room. Skills are listed on the following pages, with instructions for each skill. We recommend pairing some similar activities, such as Balance Board and Stilts, or Devil Sticks and Diablos.

You may want to include “how-to” sheets and instructions for games at each station.

### Explaining the task

- Split your group into teams of 4
- Each group should start at a different activity station.
- Each group should spend around 10 minutes at each station before moving on.

## Part 3 – Perfect your Skills

**Time:** 25 Minutes.

**Overview:** Individuals choose their favourite skill, and practice using different techniques. You can play some games to make practice more fun.



### Explaining the task

- Split participants into groups based on their preferred circus skills.
- You should now support the participants to improve their skills.
- The QR codes give ideas on how to improve and test your skills.
- Make sure participants are ready to demonstrate their skills to friends by the end of this part!

### Things to Try

Can you do your new skill while standing on one leg or a balance board?

Can you do your new skill in a pair, e.g. throwing the diablo between two people?

Can you juggle against a wall?

Can you walk between a cone slalom while performing your skill?

## Part 4 – Show Time!

**Time:** 20min

Have a mini Talent Show to demonstrate your new skills!



# Juggling



Follow the link the right for a video of how to juggle.

## Juggling Instructions

**1**

**PICTURE #1**  
Put hands out, waist high, flat like a table. Take one ball and toss it just above eye level to the opposite hand. As you throw, say "One - Catch".

**2**

**PICTURE #2**  
Do the same starting with your opposite hand. Remember to say "One" as you throw and "Catch" as you catch. PRACTICE both these steps for several minutes until you are throwing at the same height with both hands.

**3**

**PICTURE #3**  
Take two balls placing one ball in each hand, and throw the first ball. Just when it gets to the top of the arch, throw the second ball toward the opposite hand. The second ball goes inside the arch of the first ball. This time, you say "One" on the first throw, "Two" on the second throw, and "Catch" at the end. PRACTICE until you can do 8 out of 10 repetitions without dropping.

**4**

**PICTURE #4**  
**DON'T** Oops! Be careful not to two-ball shuffle. This is where you throw from one hand to the other and then shuffle the second ball to your first hand. Each hand should cleanly throw a mirror image of the other.

**5**

**PICTURE #5**  
Now you are ready for three balls! Place two balls in one hand and one ball in the other. You must always start with the hand that has two balls in it.

**6**

**PICTURE #6**  
Repeat as with two balls, but when the second ball gets to the top of the arch, throw the third ball. Say "One, Two, Three, Catch". You're juggling!

### TIPS

- PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE
- Always count out loud as you practice.
- If you are having trouble with three balls, go back to two or even one ball and practice some more.

- If you keep throwing the balls away from you and walking forward, you are doing "The Running Juggler"! Try standing in front of a wall to practice.

**REMEMBER**, the only way to learn to juggle is by dropping the ball.

So when you drop (and you will) feel good about it! You are closer to your goal! -Curtis Zimmerman

# Spinning Plates



Follow the link the right for a video of how to spin plates



1. Place the stick on the rim of the plate (just like a jacket hanging from a hook)
2. Slowly let your plate circle the stick, so that the rest of the plate is not touching the stick.



3. Steadily increase your circular wrist motion, so that the plate speeds up. (the stick should go round the plate, it should not stay at the same point on the plate).
4. Keep gradually increasing the speed and you will see the plate become horizontal. The underside is sloped towards the middle, so the stick will gravitate towards the middle of the plate.

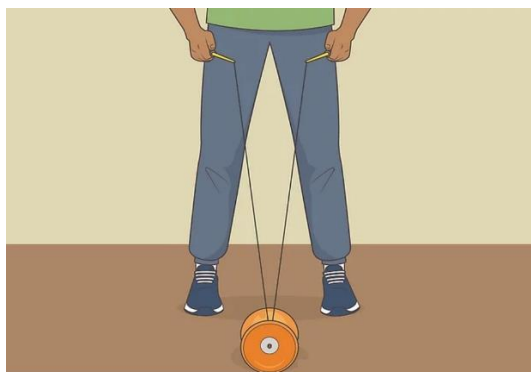


5. If the plate slows down, use the palm of your free hand to gently strike the side of the plate to speed it up.

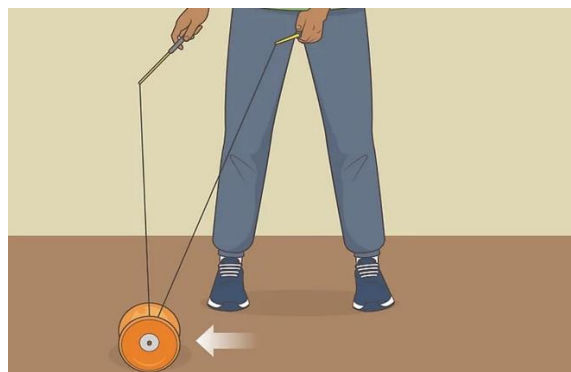
# Diabolo



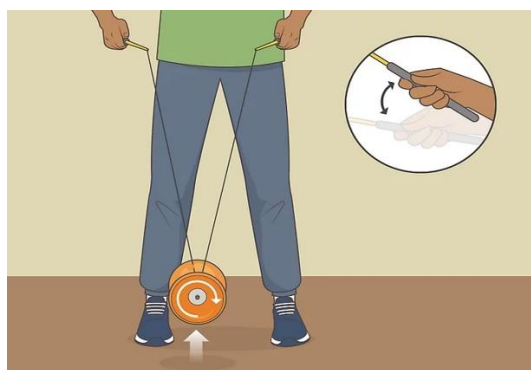
Follow the link the right for a video of how to Diabolo  
These instructions are for RIGHT handed use!



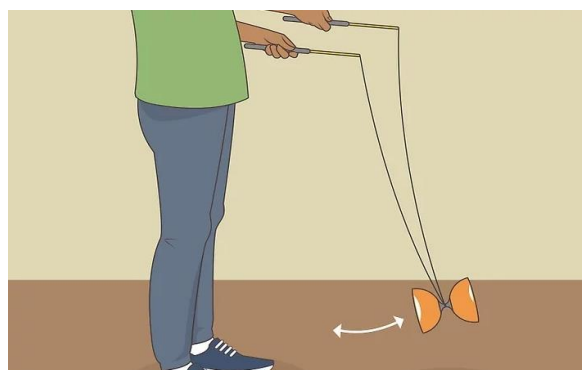
1. Place the diabolo down on the ground directly in front of you. Put the string under the axle (the metal bit).



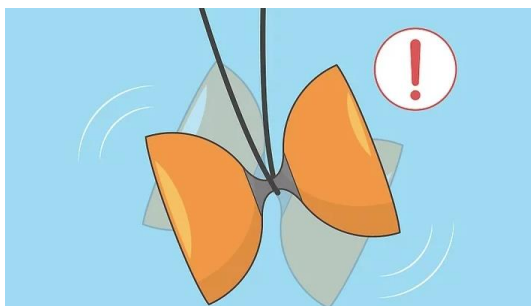
2. Roll the diabolo to the left and lift the sticks into the air. This gives the diabolo initial speed that stabilizes it when you lift it into the air.



3. Before it stops spinning, move the right stick up and down in a "hitting" motion. Imagine cutting a carrot with a kitchen knife. Try to keep this up as long as possible without the diabolo falling off.



4. If the diabolo is tilting towards you, move your right hand forward. If it is tilting away from you, move your right hand back. Do this while continuing to move the right stick up and down.



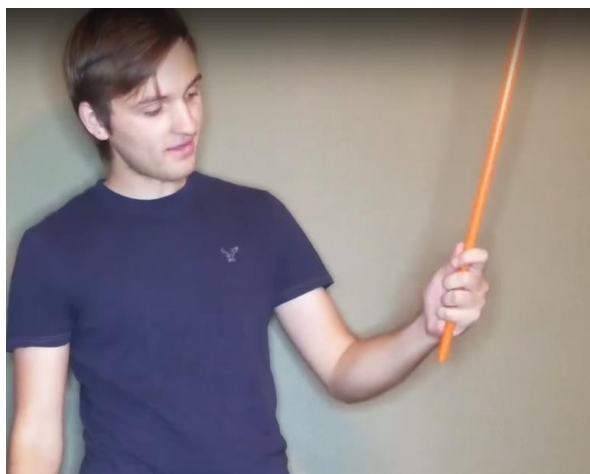
5. The diabolo tends to unbalance until you learn to keep it at high speeds. Work on keeping the diabolo spinning fast and stable before you move on to any tricks.



6. Throw and catch - pull the two hand sticks apart rapidly, causing the diabolo to fly up. To catch, position the string underneath the axle of the diabolo.

# Devil Sticks

Follow the link the right for a video of how to Devil Stick



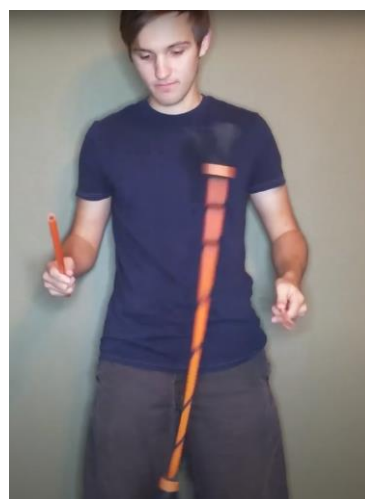
1. Hold the sticks towards the bottom with a “hammer” grip – one in each hand.



2. Place the Devil Stick on the ground and lean the top part on one of your hand sticks.



3. Knock the devil stick over to the other side (like a pendulum) so it rocks from side to side.



4. Continue rocking it from side to side faster and faster until the devil stick comes up off the floor.

5. Try to maintain a steady rhythm so the devil stick stays off the floor and bounces from hand stick to hand stick.



# Hoola Hoops



Follow the link the right for a video of how to Hoola Hoop



1. **Grip the hoop firmly with two hands.** Relax the hoop against one side of your torso.



2. **Spin the hoop.** If you're right handed, firmly spin the hoop anti-clockwise. If you're a lefty, spin it clockwise.



3. **Continue spinning the hoop.** Keep moving your waist in a circular motion as you let go and aim to get the hoop to wrap itself around your waist, round and round and round.
- If the hoop falls below your waist or falls to the ground, pick it up and try again.
  - When the hoop falls, try spinning it in the other direction. Though right handed people prefer to spin the hoop counter-clockwise and left handed peoples prefer to spin it clockwise, you should still find the direction that works best for you. The direction you prefer is called your "first direction" or your "in-flow."

# Stilts

To use the stilts, simply stand on the cans, holding the ropes in each hand. While pulling on one can's rope, lift your foot and take a step.

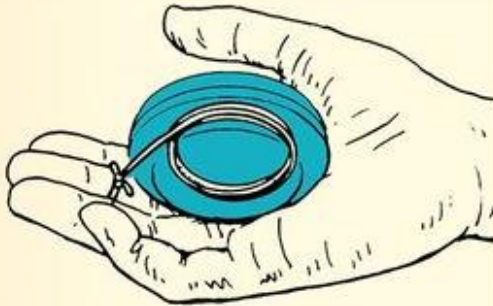


# YoYo

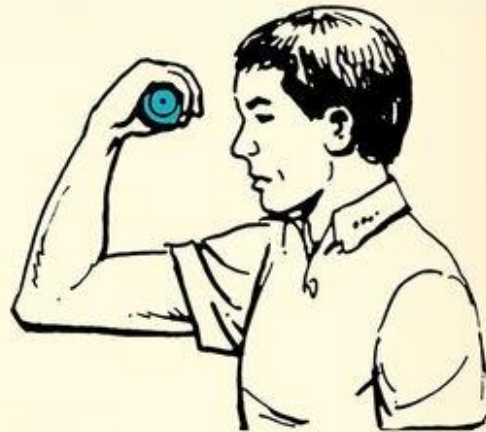
Follow the link the right for a video of how to YoYo



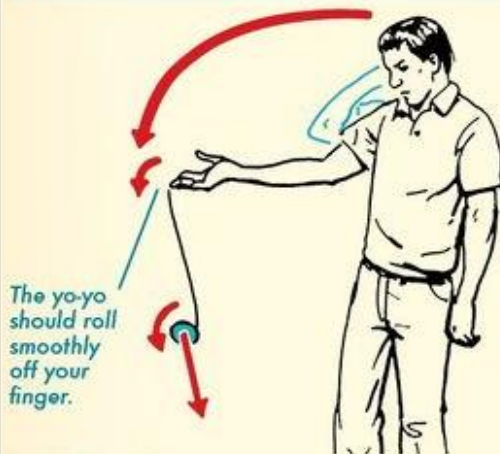
## SLEEPER THROW



**1: HOLD** the yo-yo in your palm so that the string passes over the yo-yo to your middle finger.



**2: CURL** your arm up like you're flexing.



**3: EXTEND** your arm quickly to fling the yo-yo toward the ground.



**4: DROP** your hand slightly to cushion the yo-yo as it reaches the end of the string.

## WALK THE DOG



**5: GENTLY** swing the freely spinning yo-yo forward and lower to the ground. The yo-yo will propel itself along.



**6: TUG** on the string to return the yo-yo to your hand.

# Circus Skills– Risk Assessment

This risk assessment covers the significant hazards associated with instructing and supervising a circus skills session. As the supervising adult you may need to supplement this with specific knowledge of individuals in your group – for instance any health condition.

You will also need to dynamically risk assess as you supervise the activity. CLAP is a useful tool to help you supervise and provide dynamic risk assessments:

- C** Communicate – give your group clear simple instructions and check they have understood the key points of the information,
- L** Line of sight – set boundaries and rules to ensure that you can see your group when they take part in activities with medium rated hazards.
- A** Avoid – Look for existing hazards and anticipate developing hazards, then take action early to avoid these becoming a risk to your group.
- P** Positioning – Try to move to the place where you can be the most effective in managing risk. This will change throughout the activity.

## Severity Factor & Remaining Risk Assessment

Please pay particular attention to the “Medium” residual risk rating - these are items you must take action over during your activity.

Level	Severity Description	Residual Risk Description
Low.	Minor Injury requiring no treatment, or simple first aid.	Control have reduced the severity and/or likelihood of occurrence to minimal levels.
Medium.	Injury would require the participant/worker to stop continuing the activity/task; medical treatment is beyond the skills of a basic first aider.	Control measures have reduced severity and/or likelihood to an adequate level but hazard still requires dynamic risk assessment & conscious consideration.
High.	Injury would require expert medical attention and/or result in fatality.	Control measures are not sufficient to reduce the severity or likelihood to an acceptable level.

## Standard Risk Assessment – Self-led Circus Skills

Hazards	Who may be harmed?	Foreseeable Severity	Control Measures in Place	Residual Risk
Injury from damaged or faulty equipment	Participants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Check all equipment is in good condition prior to use. Report any defects to the centre team and don't use that item of equipment.</li> </ul>	Low
Injury by someone being hit by a projectile or moving object	Participants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Ensure the participants are using the equipment as per the activities suggested</li> <li>o Ensure Participants do not practice skills too near each other.</li> <li>o Supervision of adult at all times</li> </ul>	Medium
Falling off the equipment	Participants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Where needed adults explain how to use the equipment as per the instructions.</li> <li>o All activities to take place on flat ground.</li> <li>o Adult supervision at all times.</li> </ul>	Low
Injury from poor handling diablo and devil sticks	Participants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Adult to monitor group and ensure that the equipment is not waved around or used inappropriately.</li> <li>o Remind participants to maintain appropriate spacing, introduce rules to control this if needed.</li> </ul>	Medium
Hazards of the activity area	Participants	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Complete a visual check to ensure the activity area is suitable (e.g. flat and clear of slip and trip hazards)</li> <li>o Do not operate where the hazards of the location might be a risk to participants who are focusing on the activity equipment – e.g. don't use diablos near overhead lines or trees, don't operate next to open water, etc. – dynamically consider each location used.</li> <li>o Set clear rules about boundaries, and provide ongoing supervision.</li> </ul>	Medium
Injury or accidents associated with group behaviour and adventurous activities	Participants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o A ratio of 1:12 for supervising adult to group members is recommended.</li> <li>o Supervising adult member to give a briefing and follow the session structure to ensure participants stay engaged.</li> <li>o Supervising adult to complete a visual check of the area before beginning the session to identify any unexpected hazards.</li> </ul>	Low
Health issues including personal injury or illness	Participants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Supervising adult must be aware of significant medical requirements and ensure any essential medication is accessible.</li> </ul>	Low
Unsupervised use of the activity	Anyone in vicinity	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o All groups are made aware not to use activity equipment without supervision.</li> <li>o Equipment to be returned to staff team after use (or agreed location)</li> </ul>	Low

# Self-led Circus Skills

## Minimum requirements

If you choose not to follow the structure in this guide then you must as a minimum follow the requirements set out below.

### Supervision and Leadership



Please note it's a self-led session – as the adult in charge you are responsible for the supervision of your group, including ensuring the safety of all participants. You should complete a risk assessment for your activity.

### Supervision, Equipment

Please read the following guidelines for use during your session.

- Scout Adventures may curtail the session at any time if it is deemed unsafe.
- Ensure equipment is suitable for your needs, and you understand how to operate it correctly.
- Participants should be supervised in line with your risk assessments.
- Suggested group size for this activity is 24 or per your risk assessments.
- Please report any damage to the equipment at reception.

### Safety Requirements

- Ensure that you carry out the activity on flat ground, away from buildings etc.
- Supervising adult must ensure general safety precautions and supervision are in place – e.g. supervising those on stilts/balance board.
- After your session please return equipment to a member of staff.

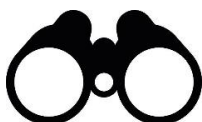
### Help and Assistance

If you have any questions about these guidelines please ask a member of staff before commencing the activity. Please contact the Duty Manager if you need assistance.

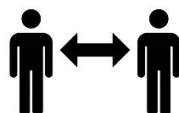
### Visual reminder of key Controls



Inspect equipment  
prior to use



Check the  
location prior to  
use



Maintain space  
between  
participants



Supervise your  
group at all times.