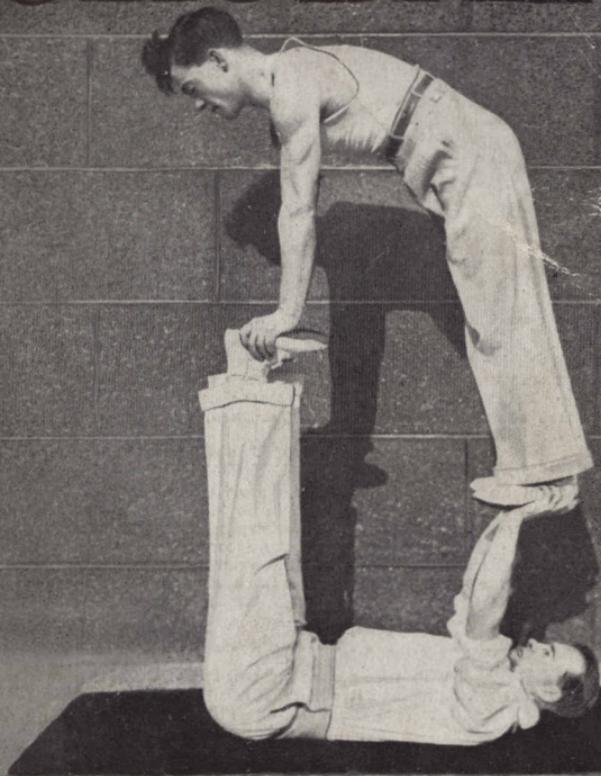


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PRACTICAL ACROBATICS



THE TYPOGRAPHY AND BINDING
OF THIS BOOK CONFORMS TO THE
AUTHORIZED ECONOMY STANDARD

PRACTICAL ACROBATICS

DESCRIPTIONS OF TUMBLING AND
ACROBATIC TRICKS AND EXERCISES
FROM SINGLE MOVEMENTS TO
MORE DIFFICULT COMBINATIONS

By

BERTRAM S. ASH

SECOND EDITION



LINK HOUSE PUBLICATIONS, LTD.
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THE AUTHOR

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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY JARROLD AND SONS LTD., NORWICH

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is presented in an endeavour to meet an often-expressed wish, the object being to give in a concise, clear and interesting manner, descriptions of tumbling and acrobatic tricks and exercises which will enable the reader to progress systematically from single and elementary movements to more difficult combinations.

Although the primary aim has been to provide a book giving complete teaching for the novice, it is felt that the instruction given may prove useful to Club Leaders and others who are seeking to train those not so advanced as they are themselves. Simple exercises and basic movements are described and variations and extensions explained, indicating the manner in which the leader may use his own initiative in the selection, grading and composition of tricks.

With a view to producing a work which may be understood by all, the simplest possible explanations have been used, the nomenclature being reduced to terms which should give no difficulty at all. In this manner it is hoped that the book will prove of real service to those who wish to take up an interesting and healthful pastime.

GENERAL HINTS

TUMBLING has long been recognised as a splendid means of gaining health, strength and a well-developed figure, and there is no doubt that those who are prepared to devote time and energy to the art will benefit. Good results, however, will accrue only if the training is balanced and progressive, and the elementary movements must be learned thoroughly in order to prepare the body for more strenuous work.

Concentrate on acquiring a good style. Without style you will not reap full benefit from your training, neither will you be in a position to give a pleasing and artistic display whereby others may enjoy your skill.

Stylish execution of tumbling tricks is essential, otherwise the beauty of the performance is lost and a spectacular and g-raceful trick becomes a whirling mass of arms and legs. From the very beginning of your training, the acquisition of elegance, or artistic portrayal of the exercise-i.e. **STYLE**-is most important, and ease of movement, just sufficient energy to ensure the successful completion of the exercise, and grace of execution, are essentials to which you must give attention. Good starting positions, correct intermediate positions and steady finishing positions must also be acquired. In balance, and other positions which are held for any length of time, see that your toes are pointed.

You will derive more pleasure from your training if this is undertaken in conjunction with friends, and you are more likely to make rapid progress. You will have somebody at hand to spot your faults so that you may eradicate them, also to give you a helping hand if necessary. In any case, you must take adequate precaution against accidents.

The various tricks have been grouped progressively in classes according to their type, and it is not necessary to begin with the first exercise of the first type and learn the subsequent movements in turn. Simple exercises, and in

time the advanced movements from each class, with the exception of the springs, can be taken together as this will lend variety to the training.

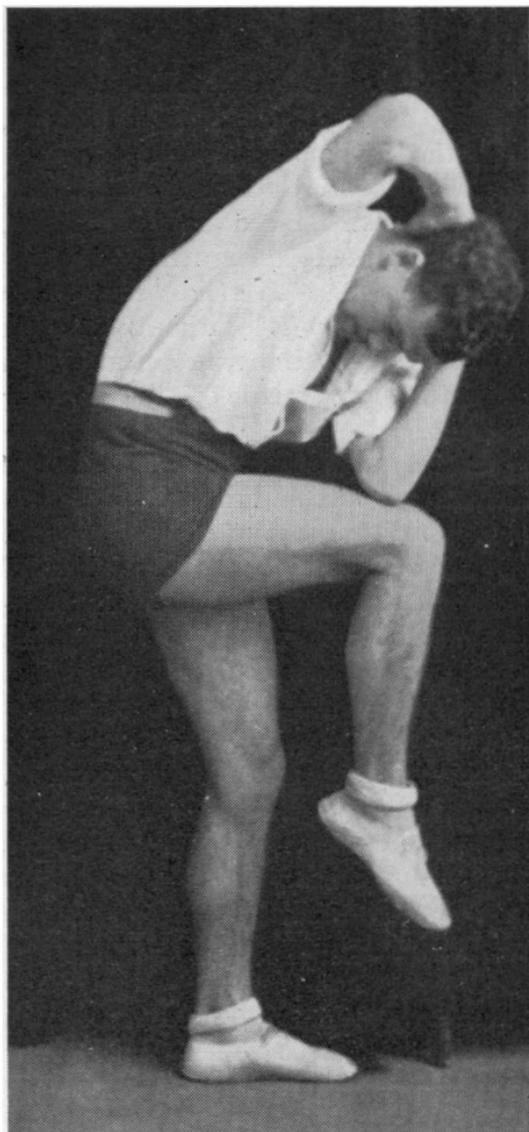


FIG. 1 (EXERCISE 1).-KNEE RAISING AND TRUNK TURNING AND BENDING.

You must be very supple in order to perform tumbling tricks really well and, although performance of the tricks will help to make your muscles and joints flexible, special suppling exercises will assist you to become lissom in a comparatively short time/The exercises which follow have been found to be very useful in this connection, and it is suggested that they be practised before you pass on to the tumbling movements proper.

Exercise 1. - Stand erect and clasp your hands behind your neck. Now bend your right knee upwards and at the same time turn your trunk so as to touch the knee with your left elbow (Fig. 1). Return to the erect

position and repeat with the left knee and the right elbow.

Exercise 2.-Lie face-downwards on the floor and clasp your hands behind your back. Pull downwards with your hands and at the same time bend your trunk backwards and lift your legs and feet from the floor (Fig. 2). Relax and repeat.

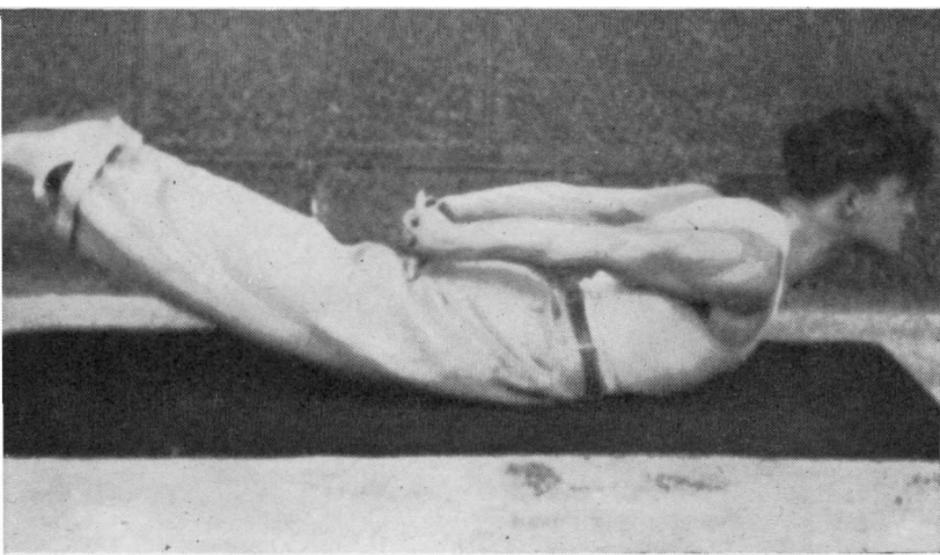


FIG. 2 (EXERCISE 2).-TRUNK BACKWARD BENDING AND LEG RAISING.

Exercise 3.-Stand erect with your arms by your sides. Fully bend your knees, then fling your arms forwards and upwards, stretching your knees as you do so. Reach as high as you can, then lower your arms and heels and repeat.

Exercise 4.-Stand with your feet wide astride and bend down to grasp your ankles, or your legs as low down as is possible without bending your knees. Now pull rhythmically on your arms and introduce a swinging motion so that your arms alternately bend and stretch. Keep your head between your arms.

Exercise 5.-Stand erect, feet wide astride and arms bent across your chest, elbows well back and at shoulder-height. Swing your right arm forward and to the right, at the same

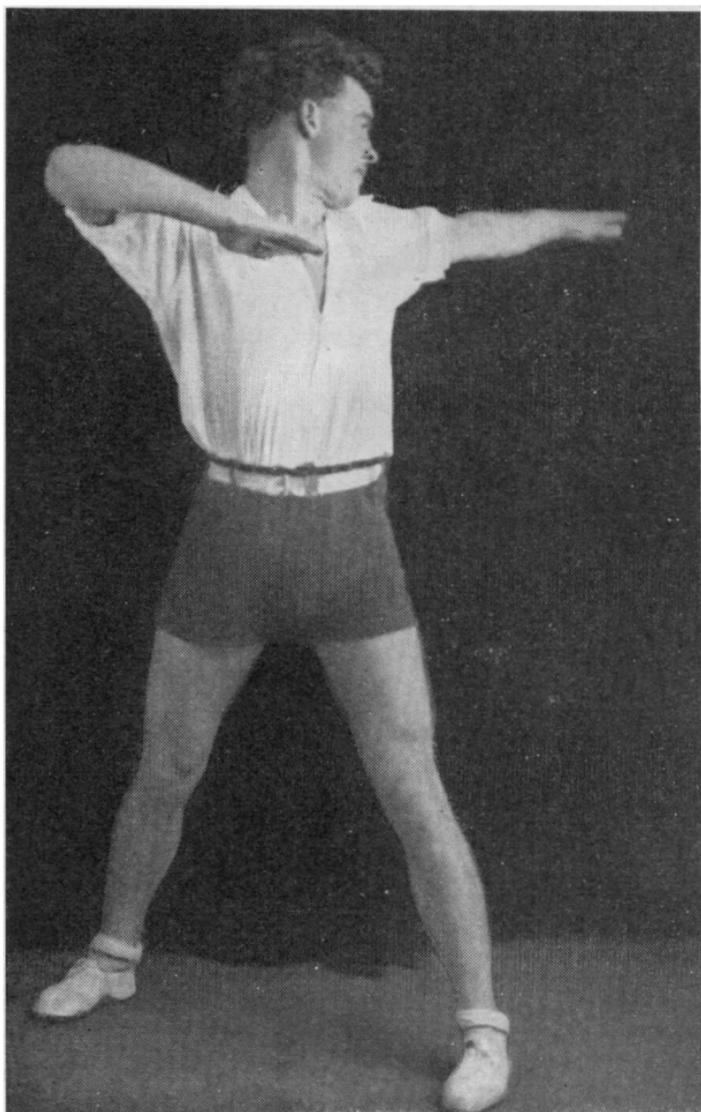


FIG. 3 (EXERCISE 5).-TRUNK TURNING WITH ARM FLINGING.

time turning your trunk to the right. Do not pause in this position but immediately swing round to the front, bending your right arm as you do so, and turn to the left, swinging your left arm forwards and sideways (Fig. 3). Continue rhythmically.

Exercise 6.-Stand erect with your arms stretched upwards and your feet wide astride. Swing forwards and downwards

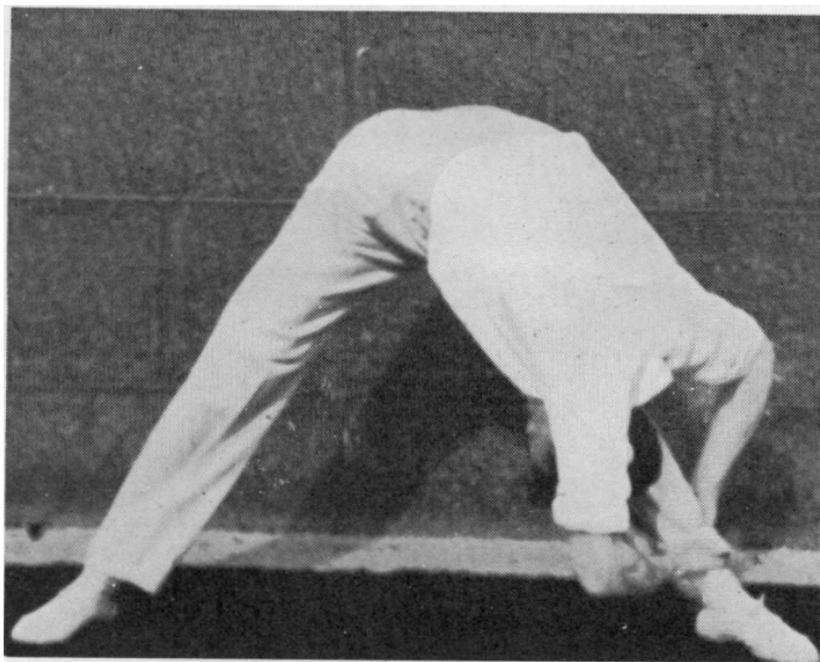


FIG. 4 (EXERCISE (J).)-PULLING HEAD TO KNEE.

to grasp your left leg with both hands as low down as possible without bending your knees. Now pull downwards rhythmically four times, and with a vigorous head movement bring your head as close to your left knee as possible each time (Fig. 4). Swing up to an erect position and, without pausing, swing downwards again to grasp your right leg and repeat the rhythmical movement.

Exercise 7.-Stand erect about twenty-four inches from a wall and with your back turned towards it. Now raise your arms upwards and bend backwards until your hands

touch the wall. Pause for a moment and return to the erect position. The distance from the wall may be increased as you become familiar with the exercise.

Each exercise should be continued until the muscles employed feel the effect of the movements, then a pause should be made before proceeding to the next exercise.

ROLLS

FIWNT-ROLL

RAISE up on your toes, bend your knees and, keeping them together, sink down to a squat position upon your heels, Lean forward and place the palms of your hands upon the floor about 12 to 15 inches in front of your feet, fingers pointing straight ahead, arms shoulder-width apart and outside the knees (Fig. 5).



FIG. 5.-BEGINNING A FRONT-ROLL.

Tuck your chin into your chest and rock forward so that the body-weight is supported almost entirely on your hands. Push away from the floor with your toes, allow the back of

your head to come in contact with the floor and continue the roll forward. The body retains its doubled position, so that the neck, shoulders, back and buttocks in turn take part in the movement. As your legs come down towards the ground, part your feet and the impetus gained from the roll will be sufficient to bring your body to an upright position.

CONTINUOUS FRONT-ROLLS

In this case the knees are not together but well apart, with the hands on the floor inside the legs. Start from a sitting position with your legs crossed and close to the body, arms by your sides and hands resting on the floor close to your seat. Bend forward and downward as far as possible, head right down with chin well into the chest, and press away from the floor with your hands. As your body goes over, bring your hands to the front and continue the roll as before.

The body and legs remain in their relative positions until the desired number of rolls have been completed, when the knees are brought close together and the feet straddled so that a standing position is gained/

BACK-ROLL

Lie flat with your back upon the floor and raise your legs. Carry them upwards and over your head and as your feet travel backwards, allow your body to roll over so that a position on the shoulders is reached. As you roll to this position, take your hands over your head and place them upon the floor near to your ears so that your fingers point towards your body and are almost touching your shoulders. The weight of your body is taken equally by hands and shoulders (Fig. 6).

Your knees are now above your head and to complete the roll give a vigorous kick backwards and slightly upwards and press hard upon your hands. This action will enable you to rise clear of the floor, and by dropping your feet towards the floor with legs straight you will be able to rise to an erect position. As you become familiar with this roll, you will find the need for hard pressure and a vigorous kick

diminish because the momentum of the body will be sufficient in itself to complete the movement.

The roll should be practised next from a sitting position and, finally, from a standing position. To avoid hurt it is necessary to fall back gradually, and particular care should be taken to ensure that no jar is experienced.

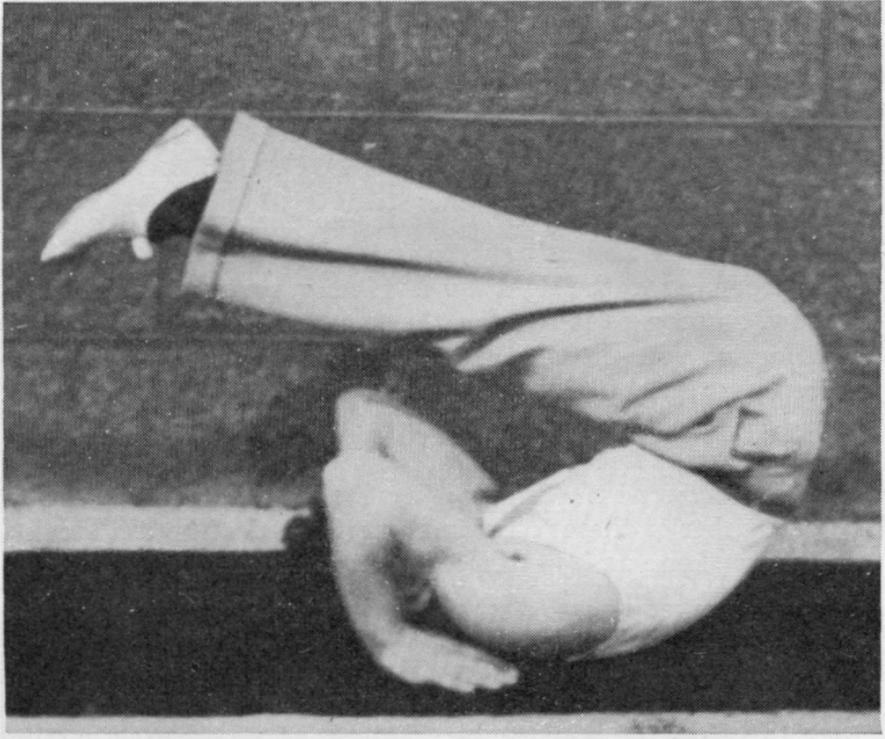


FIG. G.-BACK-ROLL IN PHOGRESS.

CONTINUOUS BACK-ROLLS

Begin rolling backwards in the same manner as before, but as you complete each roll, bend your knees so that your feet drop towards the floor near to your head and to enable your body to remain near to the floor, then drop on to your seat and continue rolling backwards. As it is not necessary to lift the body high, very little hand-pressure is required, the speed of the roll being sufficient to carry the bodyrightover.

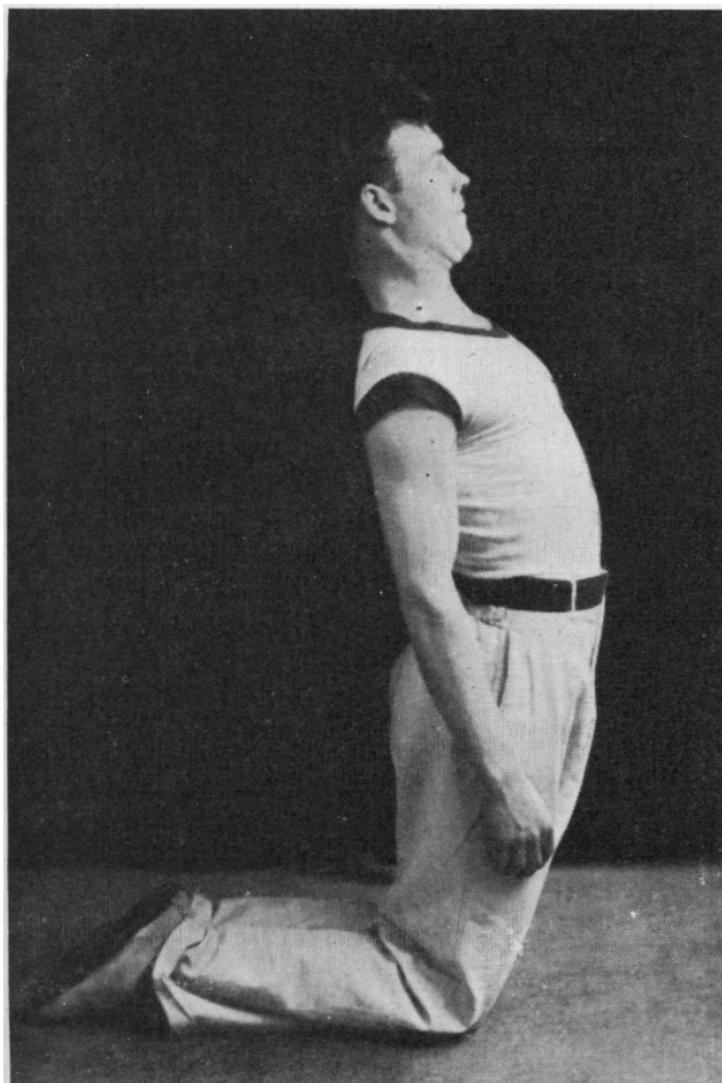
BACK AND SHOULDER-ROLL

Adopt a long sitting position on the floor with your legs stretched out and your feet about 18 inches apart. Lean forward and, without bending your knees, grasp your ankles on the outside with your thumbs on top and pointing inwards. Bend your head as far forward, between your arms, as possible, then slowly drop over to your left side in such a manner that your left arm bends and the elbow comes in contact with the ground just outside your left knee. Continue the rolling movement by pulling your right leg across your body, which action will enable you to roll over on to your back and then up on to your shoulders and neck. At this stage press away from the ground with your elbow and continue pulling on your right leg so that you roll across your shoulders and bring your right elbow into contact with the floor near to the right knee. Finally, press on your right elbow, as soon as it touches the floor, pull slightly on your left leg and you will come once again to a long sitting position. Keep your body well "folded-up" from the hips so that your head is close to your knees throughout the movement. Do not bend your knees and do not allow your head to leave its position between the arms.

A number of these rolls can be performed without a break between them and, in this continuous rolling, a complete circle is made so that the rolls can be continued indefinitely.

CHEST-ROLL

Kneel down upon the floor, draw in your chin and round out the front of your body as much as possible (Fig. 7). Starting with your knees, gradually roll forward so that you pass down on to your stomach and then up to your chest. As soon as your chest touches the floor, place your hands on the floor just in front of your waist, close to the body with the fingers pointing straight ahead. Continue the rolling movement and, as your back is strongly hollowed out the rolling action will lift your feet away from the ground (Fig. 8), when you must exert a strong pressure upon your hands. This pressure will enable you to lift your chest clear of the ground and you must now tuck your chin into your



:1'10. 7.-BEGINNING A CHEST-ROLL.

chest, double up your body and the roll can then be completed without difficulty.

CONTINUOUS CHEST-ROLLS

Adopt a kneeling position as before, with the front of your body well rounded, and then gradually fall forward. As soon as your chest touches the floor, place your hands just below your shoulders and press hard and evenly away from the floor. Your body, at this stage, must be completely extended with your toes pointed and your back strongly hollowed out, for then will the arm-pressure and rolling movement cause your feet and legs to leave the ground.

Continue the upward movement 'Of your legs, press up to a half-arm position, tuck your chin into your chest, bend your back as much as possible and allow your feet to pass over your head and drop down towards the floor. As your feet near the floor, bend your knees and this action will enable you to bring your feet to the floor very close to your head, followed by the lower" part of your legs and, finally, your knees. Press away from the floor, raise your body upwards -maintaining the hollow-back position-and go forward into the succeeding roll.

When some degree of skill is developed in this method of doing the chest-roll, your hands must be lifted from the floor just before the knees come in contact with it so that the intermediary pause is omitted. Sufficient pressure must be exerted throughout each roll to ensure that both head and chin are raised clear of the ground and sufficient space made for the head to be tucked into the chest.

DIVING FRONT-ROLL

This exercise involves a front-roll after a dive from the take-off point, and the distance covered by the dive is governed only by the performer's ability.

The run must be no longer than ten or twelve paces and should begin slowly and speed up gradually until, at the moment of take-off, the maximum speed is attained. For preliminary practice, go straight down to the roll, without a pause on completing the run, but take care that your head

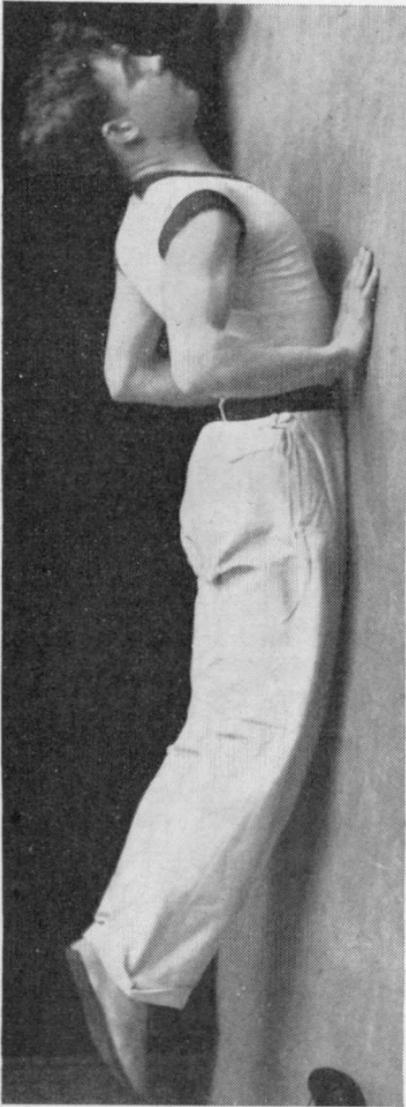


FIG. 9.-BACK BEND, KEELING.

FIG. B.-CREST-ROLL IN PROGRESS •

is tucked into your chest and that your body is doubled up as you begin the roll.

As soon as you are accustomed to the roll following a run, you can pass on to a short dive which can be increased as ability develops. Run up to the take-off as before, but just in front of it, spring from one foot so that you land on the balls of both feet on the take-off mark. Now spring from both feet, dive forward on to your hands, bend your arms, tuck in your head and, finally, roll forward.

You must be sure that your hands reach the ground well in advance of any other part of your body so that sufficient time is allowed to break the fall by a comparatively slow-arm bend. While the distance covered by the dive is small, your body will naturally remain bent, but as soon as the dive is far enough, the body must be straightened out so that a definite body position is shown in the air.

To get this position, the spring from both feet must cause the body to go upwards as well as forwards, the legs must be straightened immediately they leave the ground and the body hollowed out. The arms are thrown out to the side, level with the shoulders, but slightly backwards. This position, which is known as the "Swallow" position, is held only momentarily and, as the body drops downwards, the arms must shoot forward so that the hands meet the ground and break the fall, when the body is folded at the hips and the roll-over completed.

CHAPTER III

BENDS AND VAULTS

BACK-BEND (KNEELING)

ASSUME a kneeling position upon the floor with your trunk erect and your arms by your sides, or, if preferred with your hands upon your hips. Raise your chest high, draw in your chin and, after hollowing out your back, slowly bend backwards with your head leading the movement. Continue the "backward bending until your head rests upon the floor (Fig. 9), hold the position for a short while, and then return to the upright position.

Should difficulty be experienced in returning from the floor to an erect position, you may press away from the floor with your hands. Another and better means whereby assistance may be obtained is to have a friend place his hand under your shoulders and to furnish sufficient pressure on the upward movement, or resistance on the downward movement, to enable you to perform the bend. The assistance should be diminished gradually until you can do without it.

BACK-BEND

The simplest method of performing a full back-bend begins from a back-lying position on the floor.' Bend up your knees and place your feet upon the floor close to the buttocks and put your hands on the floor by your ears, with fingers pointing towards your shoulders exactly as described for the back-roll.

Press downwards with your hands and feet so that you are able to turn the top of your head on to the floor. Move your feet nearer to your head, then continue the pressure and raise your body upwards so that you come to a position supported by your hands and feet, with your body curved upwards, shoulders directly above your hands and your

head pressed well back (Fig. 10). After a little practice you will have no difficulty in obtaining the final position without the intermediary pause upon your head. When this is possible you should endeavour to bring your feet nearer to your hands after obtaining the full back-bend.

The advanced method of reaching the back-bend is by throwing the legs over the head. To do this, place your hands

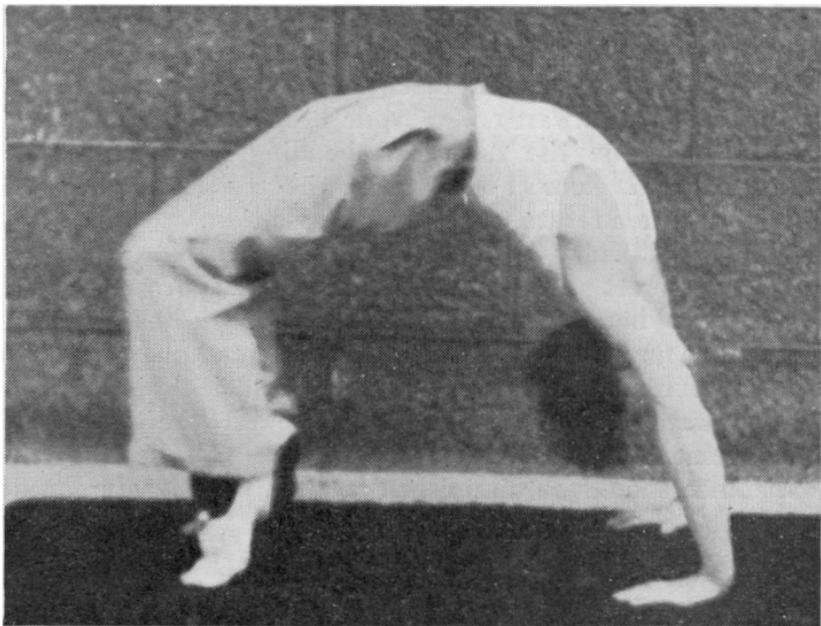


FIG. 10.-BACK-BEND.

upon the floor, shoulder-width apart, fingers slightly bent and pointing straight ahead, get into a position with your shoulders well over your hands and your head pressed back. Now throw your legs into the air and immediately hollow out your back, then let your legs pass over your head and drop down towards the floor. As your legs drop, bend your knees slightly so that your feet reach the floor as near to your hands as is possible, when you will arrive in a back-bend position •.

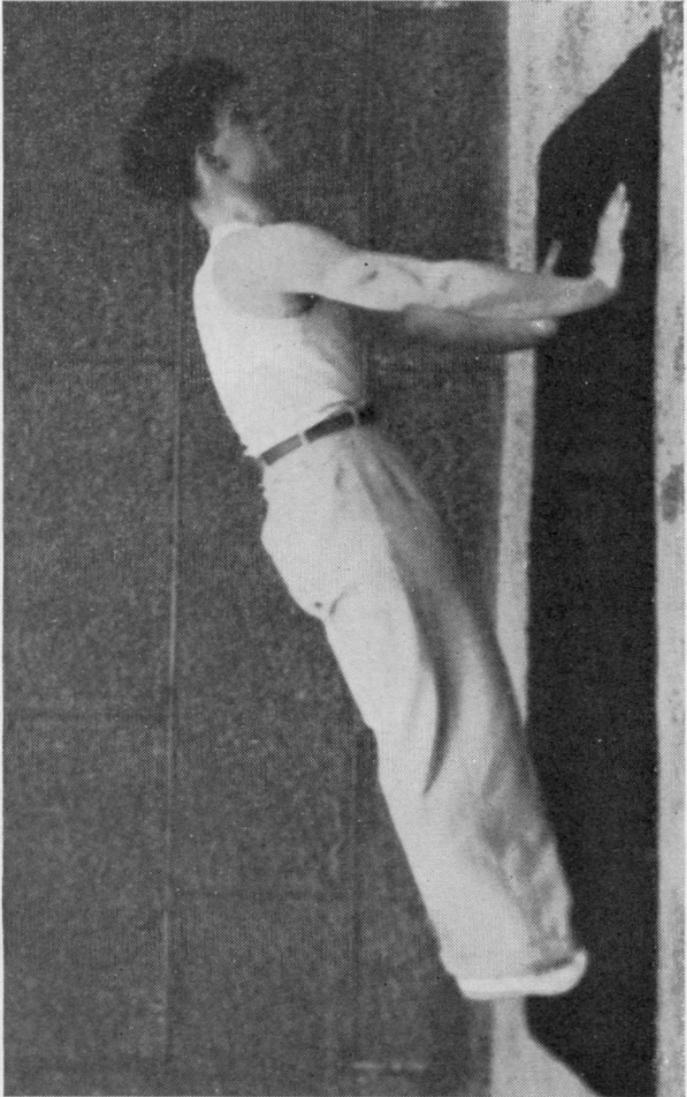


FIG. 11.-PHONE FALL IIIIADY FOn VAULT BETWEEN IIANDS.

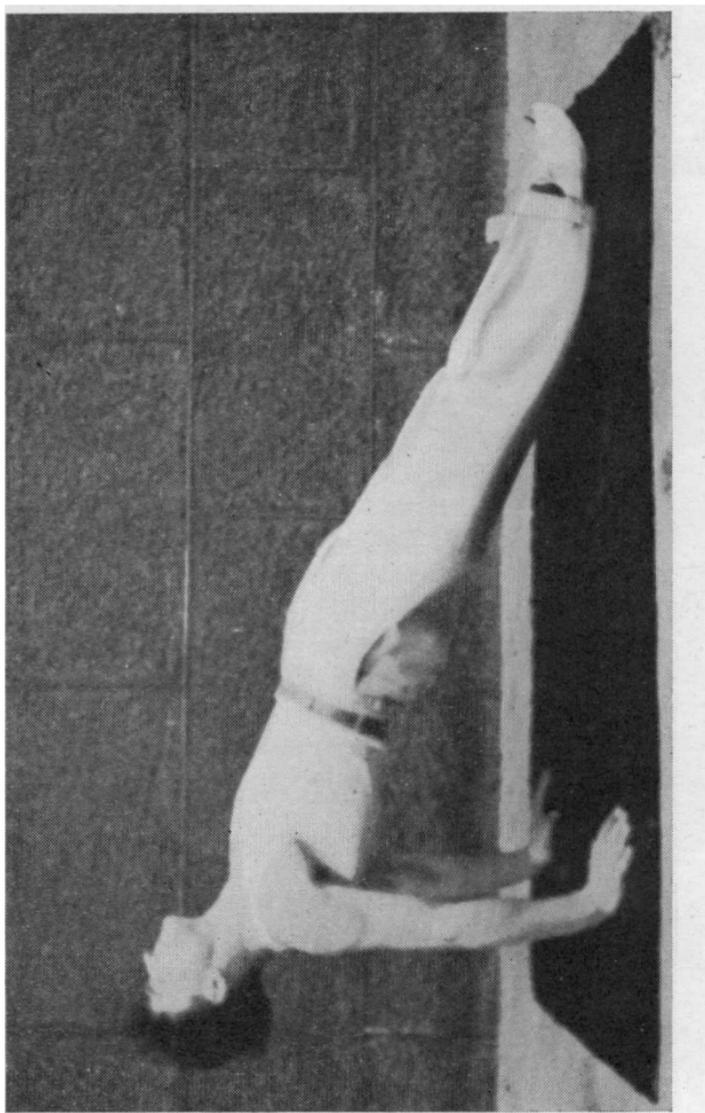


FIG. 12.-POSITION AFTER VAULT BETWEEN HANDS. READY FOR BACKWARD VAULT.

VAULT BETWEEN THE HANDS (FORW A/W)

Adopt the prone-fall position with your body supported on your hands, which are on the floor beneath your shoulders and shoulder-width apart, and your toes, the body being stretched between them and straight from head to heels (Fig. 11). Now sway your body backwards so that you can bend your knees slightly, then spring from your toes, bring your knees close to your chest and carry your feet between your arms and forward until the heels touch the floor with your body-back to the floor-stretched straight from shoulders to ankles.

Sliding the feet along the floor instead of lifting them clear, raising the hands away from the floor as the legs pass between them, or using the finger-tips-instead of the palms are easy variations which may be used as preliminary training, but the aim must be to do the vault in the correct manner—hands flat, feet clear of the floor.

VAULT BETWEEN THE HANDS (BACKWARD)

This is the reverse movement from the one described above, but it is far more difficult to perform. After attaining the final position of the forward vault with your back to the floor, weight resting on hands and heels (Fig. 12), the feet are carried backwards, between your arms and to the prone-fall position. To do this it is necessary to jerk the seat backwards, otherwise it will be impossible to pass your feet between your hands, and then to bend your knees up to your chest. The same variations as explained for the previous vault may be adopted should it be necessary to facilitate the movement in the early stages, but here again it is essential that attempts should be made frequently to perform the complete exercise.

BALANCES

ELBOW BALANCE

THE elbow balance is actually an exercise by means of which it is possible to acquire a sense of balance, and the position is such that no harm can result even should there be a fall. Furthermore, the position can be utilised as a beginning for other balances and movements and it is also a useful intermediary position.

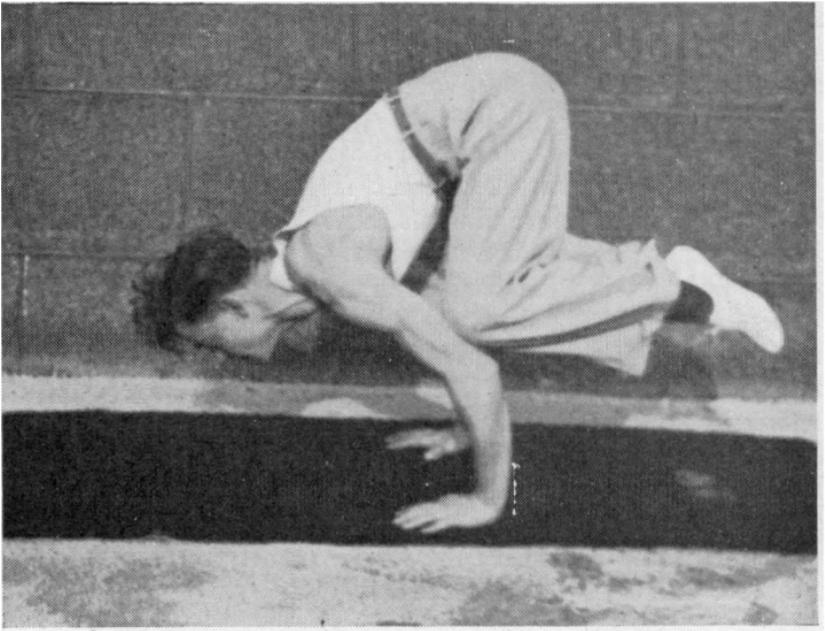


FIG. 13.-BALANCE ON ELBOWS.

To obtain the balance, fully bend your knees and adopt a squat position. Lean forward and place your hands flat on the floor, with fingers slightly bent and pointing straight ahead, arms straight with your elbows inside your knees.

Lean farther forward, bend your arms and rise high up on your toes so that your knees rest on your arms just above the elbow joints. From this position, the balance is obtained by carrying your body forward, well, over your hands, and lifting the toes from the floor (Fig. 13). Fix your eyes on the floor about 24 inches in front of your hands as by so doing you will be compelled to keep your head well back.

The balance can be held with only one leg supported, the other being stretched out to the rear. To straighten your left leg, transfer your body weight chiefly on to your right arm and bend this arm a little more so that your head is nearer the floor, then finally take your left leg from off your left arm and slowly straighten it out backwards. The right leg is straightened by transferring the weight to your left arm and bending this in the same manner as described for the right arm.

HEAD-STAND

This is generally accepted as being the easiest balance to hold, the body being supported on a triangular base formed by the top of the forehead and the two hands.

Get down into a squat position, then place your hands upon the floor, shoulder-width apart, fingers slightly bent and pointing straight ahead, and the top of your forehead-not the top of your head-on the mat, about 9 inches in front of your hands; Throw one leg into the air immediately followed by the other and check your feet as they come to a position above your head. Hollow out your back and move your legs until you secure a comfortable position with your weight distributed evenly over the supporting base (Fig. 14).

HEAD BALANCE

A difficult balance to hold, this is an extension of the head-stand, and care must be exercised when trying it. Adopt a head-stand, then bend your knees slightly forward and pass from the top of your forehead to the top of your head. Slowly raise your hands from the floor-one at a time-until you are balanced upon your head, then endeavour to straighten



FIG. 14.-HEAD STAND.

your legs. Keep your hands near to the floor until you are confident of holding the balance.

HAND-STAND

There are two simple methods of learning this balance. If you practise alone, the balance can be practised near a wall which will prevent your legs from toppling, but if you practise with a friend a more satisfactory way is open and this is described in detail.

Place your hands upon the floor shoulder-width apart, bend one knee and bring it close to your chest and stretch the other leg backwards so that it is almost straight. Only the toes of both feet are upon the floor. Your assistant, or "supporter", now steps up, advances his right foot so that it rests upon the floor just inside your right hand, and takes hold of your waist at the sides with his thumbs at your back (Fig. 15).

Press from the floor with your near foot, throw your back leg into the air and immediately hollow your back while the supporter supplies sufficient impetus, if such is necessary, to ensure that your legs come to a position immediately

above your head. Once you are in an inverted position, the supporter must help you to find a true balance by manoeuvring his control at your waist. This is not difficult as the waist-grip gives perfect control without a struggle, and as the supporter's shoulders will prevent you from falling

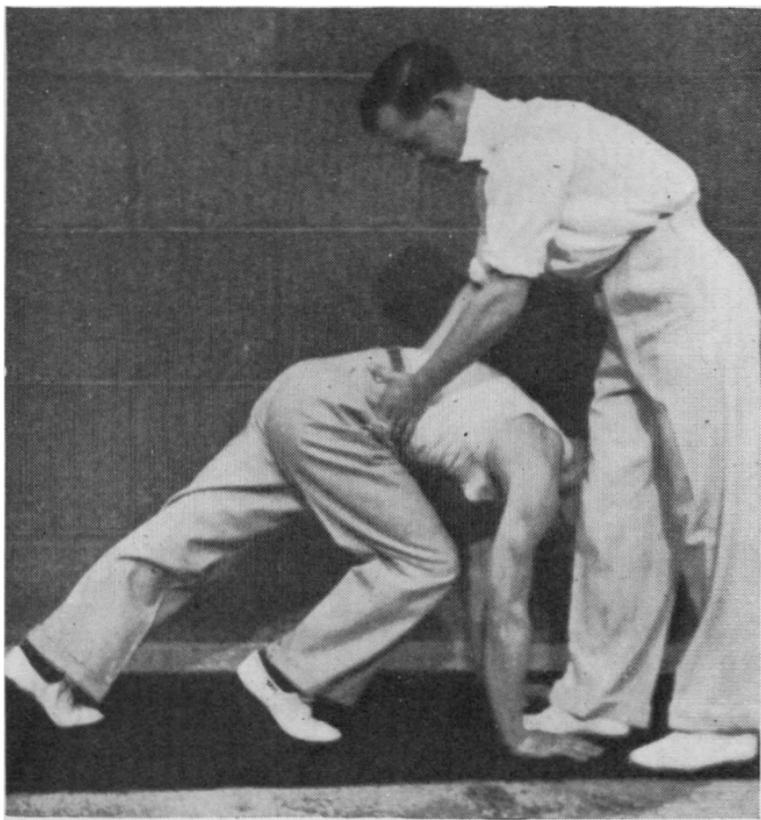


FIG. 15.-SUPPORT FOR HAND STAND.

backwards. When you feel you have a steady position, the supporter must relax, but not release his grip, and allow you to hold the balance on your own).

Having gained a sense of balance and some degree of confidence from the above method, it is time to practise without assistance, but for the early solo efforts some help should be at hand. Bend down and place your hands upon

the floor, fingers slightly bent and pointing straight ahead, and shoulder-width

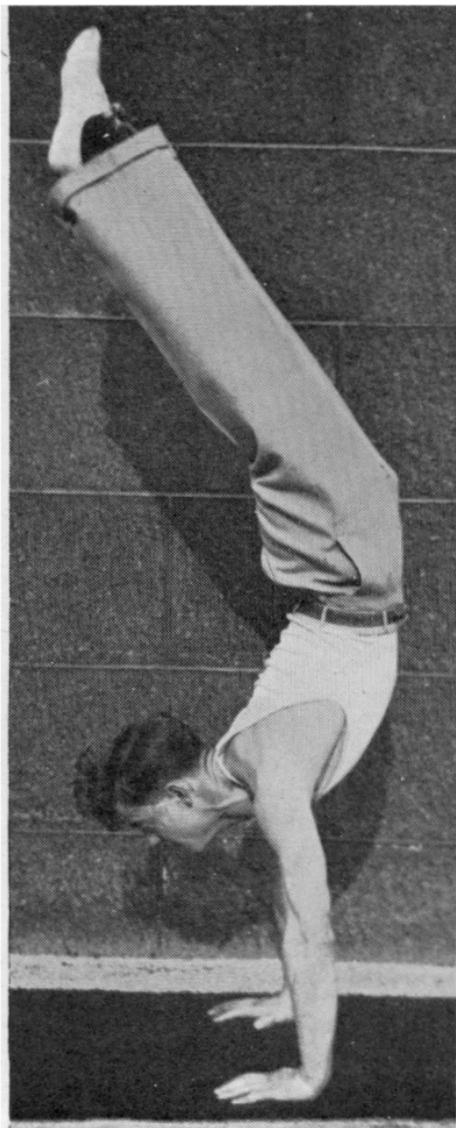


FIG. 16.-HAND STAND.

apart. Bring your shoulders over your hands, bend your head back so that your eyes can look on the floor at a point about 24-inches in front of your hands, adopt the leg position as before and keep your arms quite straight. To obtain the balance, throw your back leg, immediately followed by the bent leg, into the air, and as they come to a position above your head, check the movement by pressing your head still farther back and, similarly, if your feet are not high enough, a slight forward movement will secure the desired result (Fig. 16).

TIGER BALANCE

Place the palms of your hands and your forearms upon the floor with your hands just a few inches apart and your elbows shoulder-width apart so as to form a base almost triangular in shape. Bend your left leg to bring the knee close to your chest

and have your right leg, nearly straight, stretched behind with the toes resting on the floor. Press away from the

floor with your left foot, throw your right leg into the air and follow it immediately with your left leg. Check both legs when the feet come to a position over a point on the ground 6 to 9 inches in front of your hands. Your legs must be curved, but not bent at the knees, and your toes must be pointed (Fig. 17).

HORIZONTAL

HAND-STAND

- Lie face-downwards on the floor and place your hands upon the floor with your fingers, pointing towards your feet, by your waist. Press your upper arm and elbows close to your sides, hollow your back and press hard from the floor so that your body rises to a position parallel with the floor.

HORIZONTAL ELBOW

BALANCE

Adopt a prone-fall position with the body supported on hands and toes and then place your right hand on the floor underneath your waist and your right elbow well into your waist. Lean slightly to the right and raise your legs from the floor, making your back

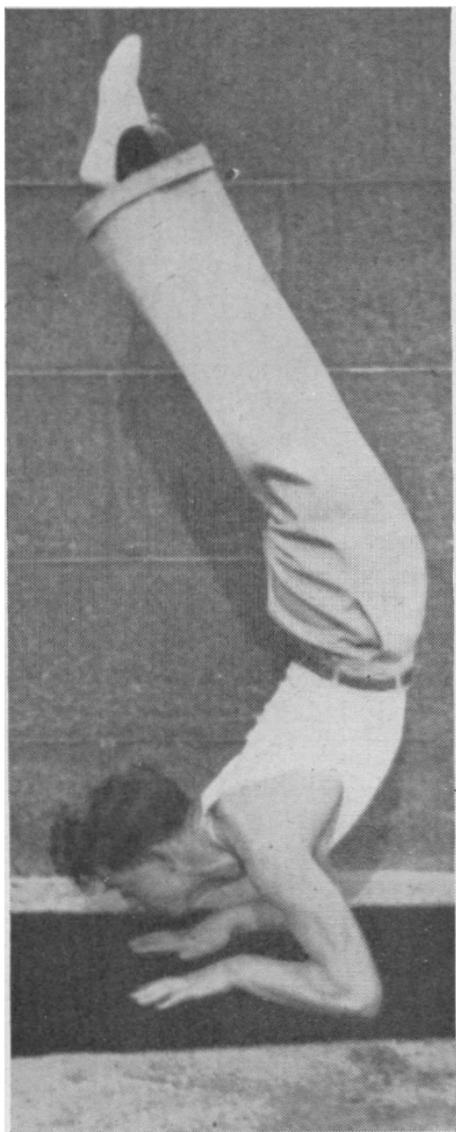


FIG. 17. TIGER BALANCE. (NOTE THE BALANCE IS EASIER TO HOLD WITH THE FEET MORE FORWARD).

hollow as you do so. Now raise your left hand from the floor and rest it on your hip so that you are supported entirely on your right arm. Practise the balance on each arm in turn to guard against one-sided development.

The three balances which follow might well be spoken of as "drawing-room" tricks, inasmuch as a chair is used in their performance. They serve to indicate how balancing may be varied, and made more interesting by the use of improvised apparatus. A fairly heavy chair which will remain steady should be used and the balances must be practised on each arm in turn to ensure symmetrical development.

DOUBLE SHOULDER-STAND ON CHAIR

The chair, if it has a flat back, should be placed with the back on the floor, or, if the back is shaped, with the front legs lying along the floor. Take up a position astride the chair and grasp the legs about 9 inches from their ends, then bend forward and place your shoulders in front of your hands. To obtain the balance, throw or press your legs upwards and check them when they attain a position above the head. In the final inverted position, the body weight is distributed evenly over the hands and shoulders, which base makes a steady balance easy to maintain (Fig. 18).

SINGLE SHOULDER-STAND ON CHAIR SEAT

Stand at the side of the chair with your left side nearest to the back, then lean forward and place your left hand on the front edge of the chair, over the near leg, and your right hand on the floor just in front of the far leg. Rest your left shoulder on the edge of the chair well in front of your left hand and press away from the floor with your feet. Throw your legs up into the air, hollow out your back and check your feet as they come to a position immediately above your head, which must be pressed well back (Fig. 19).

SINGLE SHOULDER-STAND ON CHAIR BACK

Stand at one side facing across the chair with your right side nearest the back. Grasp the top of the chair at the



FIG. IS.-DOUBLE SHOULDER-STAND ON CHAIR LEGS.

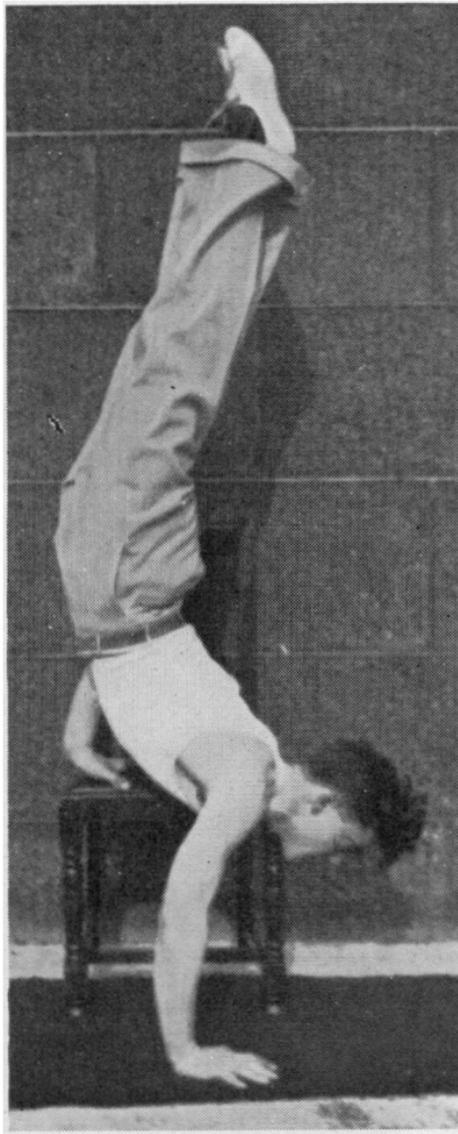


FIG. IO.-SINGLE SHOULDER-STAND ON CHAIR SEAT •

nearest corner with your right hand and place your left hand on the seat, over the far front leg. Now jump upward and



FIG. 20.—SINGLE SHOULDER-STAND ON CHAIR BACK.

slightly forward so that your right shoulder comes to a position on the back of the chair in front of your right hand, and so that your legs shoot upwards to the balance position above your head. Your right arm is bent, while the left one remains straight or nearly straight (Fig. 20).

A more polished method of reaching this balance begins from a sitting position on the chair with the body turned slightly to the right so that the right leg hangs over the side of the chair and the other leg hangs over the front of the seat. Place your left hand on the front edge between your legs and over the chair leg and your right hand on the back at the near side as before. Now press on your hands and raise your body from the chair (Fig. 21) bend your legs and carry the right one backward between the back of the chair and the left arm so that the legs come together.

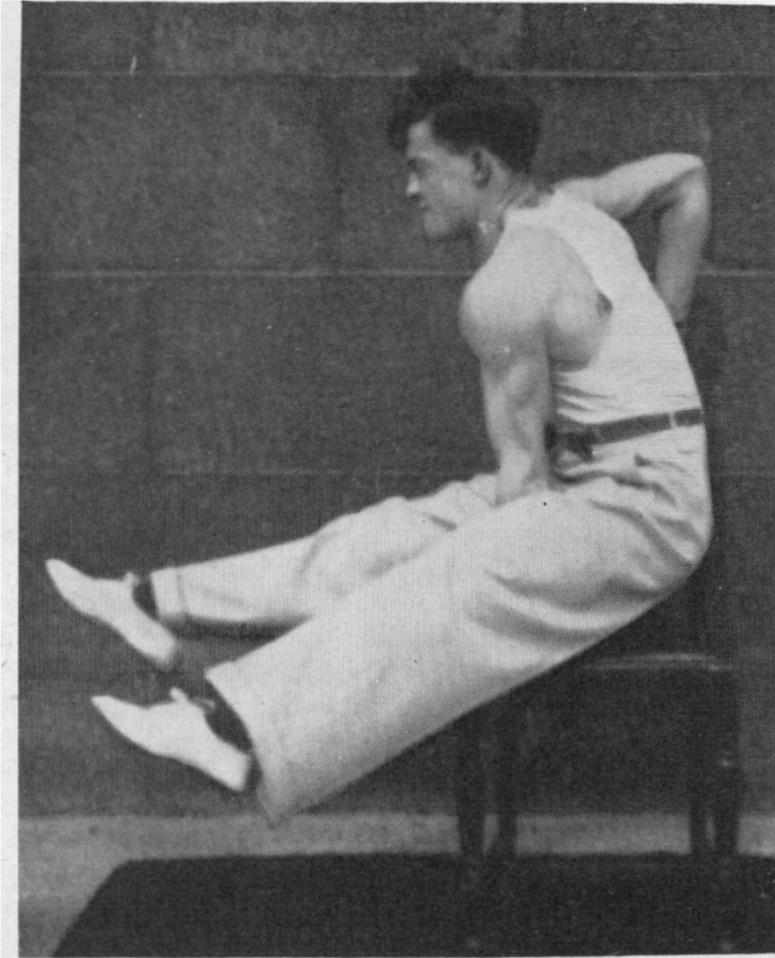


FIG. 2] .-READY TO GO UP TO A SHOULDER- TAND ON CEIAIR BACK.

Maintain the bent position and lean forward, which movement will bring your right shoulder into contact with the 'back of the chair, when the body can be tilted farther forward and your legs raised upwards to the inverted position.

To return to the starting position, slowly lower your legs and bend your knees then, by pressing on your hands, raise your shoulder from the back of the chair and gradually return to an upright position, and lower your body until y?U can sit upon the chair once again.

AGILITY EXERCISES AND LEVERS

KICK TO PRONE- FALL

STAND erect, feet together, and your arms hanging loosely by your sides. Raise your right foot forward (Fig. 22), swing it backwards, then forwards again, bringing it in front of the left or stationary leg-and, without pausing, swing it backwards as though to kick your left leg. At this moment make an almost imperceptible hop on your left foot and slide it backwards along the floor-the swing of your right leg will enable you to do this fairly' easily. Your body, held straight, will now drop towards the floor and your arms must be thrown forwards, elbows slightly bent and hands out.

Your hands must reach the floor at points immediately below your shoulders, and as soon as they touch the floor your arms must bend to absorb the shock of the fall. When the fall is broken-at this stage. your body -will almost be touching the floor-straighten your arms and you will attain the true prone-fall position with your body straight from head to heels and resting upon your hands and toes. Practise with each leg swinging in turn.

After much practice you will be able to do this trick with both feet off the floor, but in this case your arms must bend fully when your hands reach the floor. The only difference is that for this method the hop is made backwards and the swinging leg joins the other in the air to enable both feet to reach the floor at the same time.

CATHERINE WHEEL

Stand with your feet slightly apart and with your left side turned towards the taking-off point. Extend your arms sideways on a level with your shoulders, bend your body slightly over to the right side and raise your left leg from the floor. Pause in this position only long enough to establish a steady balance, then quickly drop- your left

foot to the floor, bend over to the left, press away from the floor with your left foot and throw your left hand down towards the floor, at the same time kicking your right leg into the air.

The movement is continued so that your right arm passes over your head and comes to a position with the hand on the floor in advance of, and in line with, the left hand, and your left foot leaves the floor and follows through the same arc as described by your right foot. Thus the body attains an inverted position while both legs pass above the head, describe a semi-circle in the air and come to the floor on the other side of the hands.

When both hands are upon the floor and your feet are in the air, it is necessary to hollow out your back so that you pass through a position with your feet directly above your head, which is the same as the inverted hand-stand position except that the feet are wide apart instead of together. In order to introduce more polish into the move-

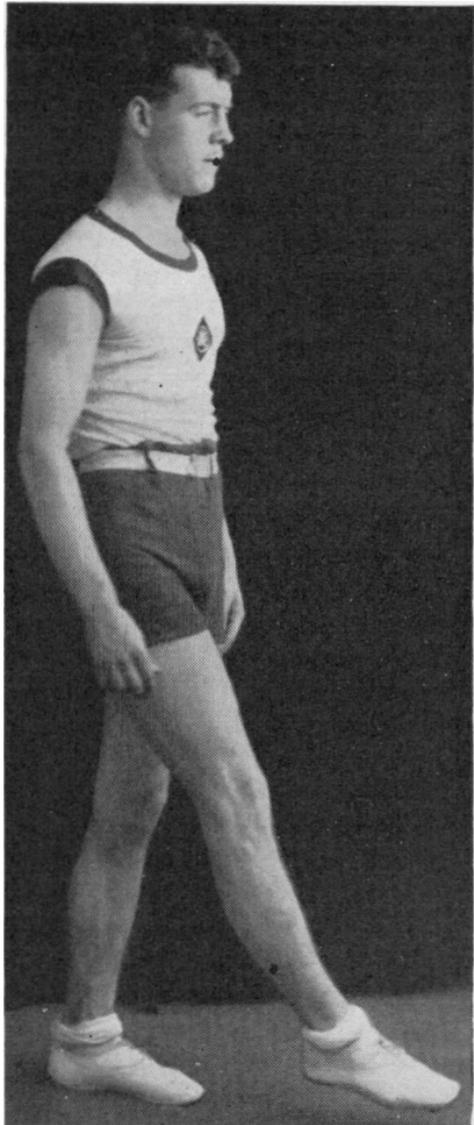


FIG. 22.—READY FOR THE KICK TO PRONE-FALL.

ment, the legs can be brought together for a brief moment, then separated and the wheel finished as before with the right foot reaching the floor first,

No pause in the body-bent position which begins the movement will be necessary as you become familiar with the exercise; in fact you will ultimately do the exercise starting from an erect position. Practise the exercise with each arm leading in turn—first as described starting with the left side turned to the taking-off point and then with the right side toward the taking-off point.

CATHERINE-WHEEL WITH A ROUND-OFF

Begin exactly as for the ordinary wheel from a side position to the taking-off point and carry on in the same manner until your feet reach a position immediately above your head, the back, of course, being fully hollowed out. At this juncture bring your legs together, which action will cause you to adopt the inverted handstand position, and as your legs pass out of the vertical position, snap them downwards, turn your body to face the starting-point, and press away from the floor with both hands. The movement must be continuous from beginning to end, no pause being made at any stage as speed is essential if the movement is to be completed satisfactorily by the body arriving at an erect position facing the starting position.

If the Catherine-wheel is taken from a stand with the left side towards the take-off point, the turn for the round-off will be towards the left hand and, conversely, towards the right hand if the starting position is adopted with the right side towards the take-off mark.

WALKING ON THE HANDS

If you can hold a steady inverted hand-stand, you will experience little difficulty in moving forward and backward on your hands and, even if you have not mastered a steady balance, you can progress for a short distance.

For the first attempts, go up into an inverted hand-stand but H-t your feet pass slightly beyond the true balance position as this movement will cause your body to topple

over. Instead of falling, however, move each hand in turn a short distance forward and continue until you can no longer check the fall. Keep your head well up, as in the balance position, arms straight, and take only short paces forward.

Having accustomed yourself to progression upon the hands in the manner described above, you are now well prepared for a controlled walk with your body perfectly balanced. The progressive movements are the same, with the exception that the hands are moved without haste but, in order to maintain a steady balance, it is essential that only short paces be taken. If long paces are taken, the shoulder is turned each time the hand reaches forward and, as the balance is held momentarily on one hand, an exaggerated shoulder-turn will disturb the balance and cause the body to rock.

The head position is very important and to ensure the head is carried correctly, as well as to induce some degree of concentration, the eyes should follow an imaginary object which maintains a position on the floor about 24 inches in front of the hands.

HAND- WALKING DOWN STAIRS

Start by practising from the bottom stair and, as you gain confidence, begin from a higher stair. Adopt the hand-stand position with your fingers curled over the edge of the stair and then bend one arm and lower the other to the floor, Pause in this intermediary position to ensure that you have a steady balance, then bring the other hand to the floor, straighten your arms and walk away.

BACK-ROLL TO HEAD-STAND

Begin in the same way as for a back-roll-from a back-lying position. Raise your legs upward and carry them over your head, roll up on to your shoulders, bring your knees as close to your face as is possible, and swing your hands over your shoulders in order to place them on the floor, near to your ears, with the fingers pointing towards your shoulders.

Now, after a preliminary leg-swing, kick vigorously

upward and slightly backward, press upon your hands and, as your body rises, roll upon your head until the top of your forehead meets the floor in advance of your finger-tips. Hollow out your back as soon as the upward kick is made and you will arrive at the head-stand position. It has to be stressed that all movements must be continuous and speedily executed otherwise the trick will degenerate into a ragged exhibition of brute force.

BACK-ROLL' TO HAND-STAND

The movements are the same as in the roll to a head-stand except that the kick is more vigorous and your arms must be straightened as your body rises from the floor. Your head must leave the floor at the earliest opportunity and be pressed well back to counteract the tendency to topple forward which results from the vigorous leg-action.

In order to introduce more speed into this trick with a view to simplifying its performance for preliminary practice, a start may be made from a sitting position instead of from the back-lying position. Roll backward from this position and, immediately your hands and shoulders meet the floor, kick upward, begin to straighten your arms and then continue as before.

LEG-FLIP

This is an attractive method of regaining your feet from a hand-stand, and is nothing more than an extension of a leg-lowering movement. Instead of bringing your legs downward in the usual manner, snap them down and, at the same time, push away from the floor with your hands, bringing them upwards from the floor while your feet are still in the air.

LEVERING TO BALANCES

Only the elementary method of gaining balances from an erect position has been described. This method, in which the legs are thrown upward, is the most common, but there is a more polished method-levering-which adds tone to the balance.

LEVER TO HEAD-STAND

Place your head and hands on the floor, your head being about 9 inches in front of your hands. Now stretch your legs

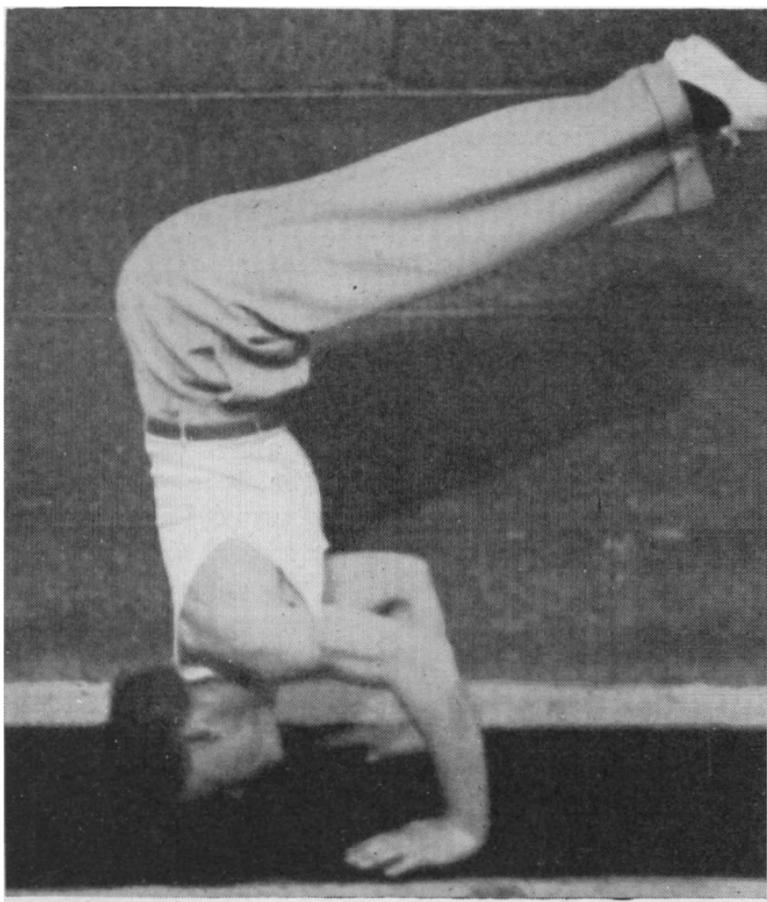


FIG. 23.-LEVERING TO A HEAD-STAND.

out behind so that your toes are resting on the floor, and then raise your legs upward in a circular movement (Fig. 23), your toe describing an arc. You will find the movement is facilitated if you move your hips slightly backwards, over your head, for this action will cause your feet to shoot upward. Your back must be hollowed out just before your legs reach the balance position.

Pressing away from the floor with your toes will also prove helpful in the early attempts, but this, together with the hip movement, should be omitted as soon as possible.

LEVER TO HAND-STAND

Place your hands upon the floor, shoulder-width apart, and place your toes a comfortable distance behind them so that your shoulders are above your hands and your legs are straight. Now press away from the floor with your toes and move your legs, from the hips, upward. As they near a vertical position; hollow out your back and complete the leg movement, carrying your feet to a position above your head. Continue to practise until you are able to do without the press which starts the movement.

LEVER TO TWER-BALANCE

Kneel down and place your hands and forearms on the floor, then raise your knees from the floor so that your weight is supported on your toes and arms. Lean well over your hands and press away from the ground with your feet, knees slightly bent, and, as your legs come to hip-level, straighten them out and check the upward kick. Slowly raise your legs up to the balance position, hollowing out your back just before they reach their highest point. Again you must practise until you are able to do the trick without pressing from the floor and without bending your knees.

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SPRINGS, FLIP AND SOMERSAULT

SPECTACULAR ROLLS

THE diving front-roll has been described in its simplest form, and now some variations of this trick which make it really spectacular will be described. To achieve this object, the dive, instead of being made from a taking-off mark to a landing point, is taken over various obstacles, the height and breadth of which can be increased as confidence and ability develop.

An ordinary rope is used as the first obstacle. This should be arranged about one foot above the floor level in front of the mats so that the dive can be made across it. As the rope has practically no width, it will be necessary only to fall forward on to your hands, then to bend your arms slowly and finally to make the roll forward. Your feet, however, must be lifted clear of the rope and, consequently, the jump from the floor must be vigorous. This jump will send the lower part of your body high into the air, which action in turn will tend to throw your body out of control and, to maintain this essential control, it is necessary to drop the feet down again towards the floor as soon as they have passed over the rope. This folding-up of the body helps to break the fall and ensures an even and harmonious roll.

Having become accustomed to clearing the height, it is time to practise with height and breadth, and for this purpose two ropes are necessary. These should be arranged about 12 inches from the floor and about 12 inches apart and the dive made across the two ropes. For facile performance, the earlier attempts should be to dive straight down to a mark on the floor about one foot in front of the far rope, the fall being broken by a comparatively slow-arm bend and a final backward drop of the legs.

Ropes have been suggested for this early practice as, if

they are fixed loosely, little harm can result if a foot catches in one, but other obstacles must now be introduced.

The simplest method of arranging an obstacle is for one of the "tumblers" to kneel on the floor and to place his fore-arms flat on the floor so that a very low back is made, the dive then being made across the back. A chair, placed on its side, serves the same purpose but, as this is made of a hard substance, it may well prove a deterrent in some cases.

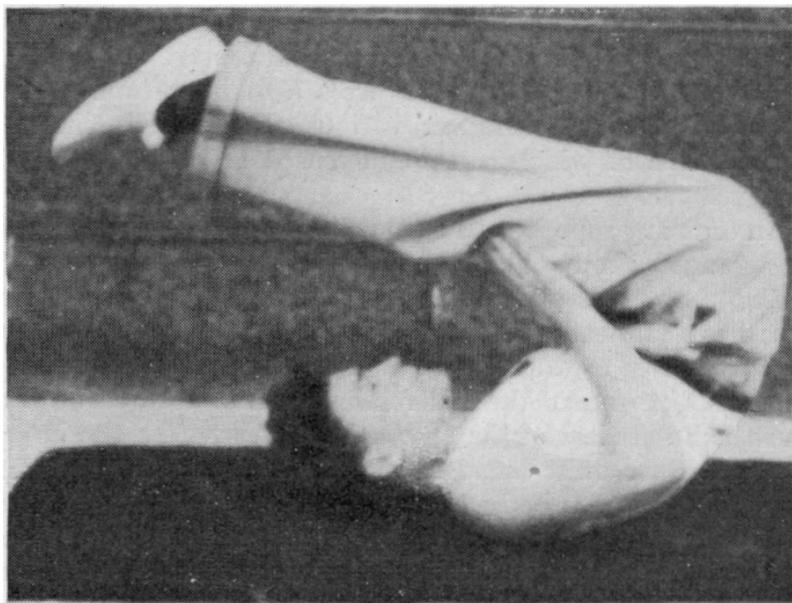


FIG. 24.—HEADY FOIL A BACK-SPRING.

Another very showy dive can be performed between the legs of a fellow who adopts a head-stand or hand-stand position. It is very essential that a steady balance be held and, for this reason, only an expert balancer should furnish the obstacle.

The head-stand is the simpler balance to hold and for general purposes will be sufficient. When the balancer has obtained a steady balance position, he must open his legs wide; the diver then takes a speedy run, jumps from both feet and dives between the balancer's legs. The dive must

be well forward so that the feet of the person making the dive do not kick the balancer as they drop downwards to break the fall.

BACK-SPRING

Lie flat with your back upon the floor and then raise your legs upward, carrying them over your head and down

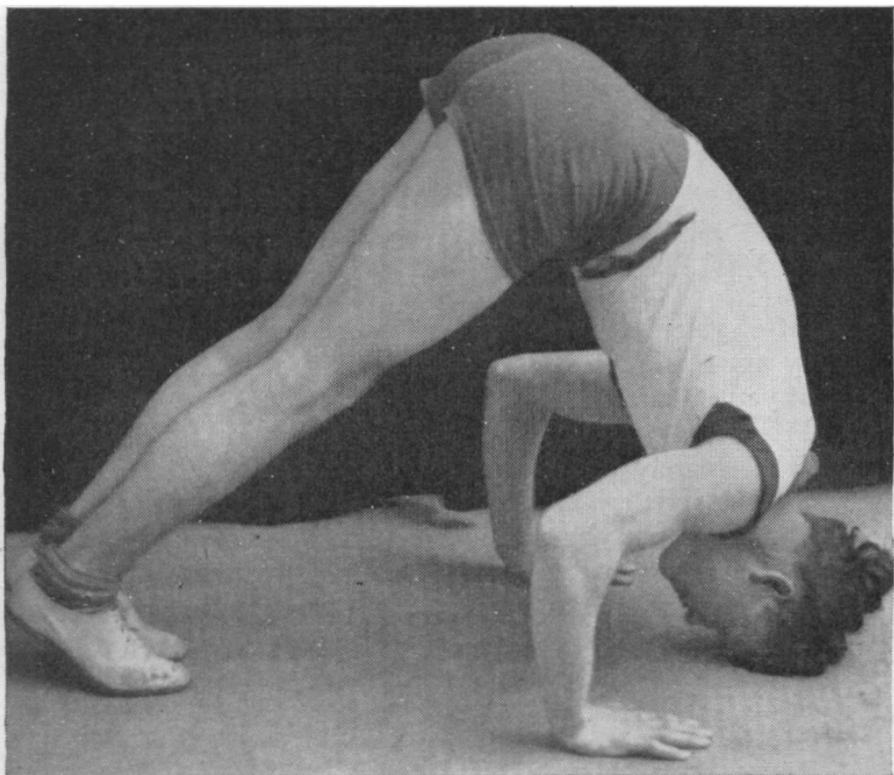


FIG. 25.—READY FOR A HEAD-FLIP.

towards your face until your weight is supported on the upper part of your back and your head. Place your hands upon the front of your thighs with your finger-tips just above your knees (Fig. 24). [ow begin to roll forward, as though to return to the back-lying position, and at the same time swing your legs vigorously upwards, forwards and downwards,

assisted by pressure from your hands. Press hard away from the floor with your shoulders, hollow out your back and the combined movements will bring you to your feet with your knees slightly bent.

The back-spring, and other springs which follow, can be simplified by taking off from a raised platform or piece of apparatus, the advantage being that the movements need not be so fast nor so vigorous and attention can be given to the gaining of correct intermediate positions. A low vaulting box or form can be utilised for this preliminary practice and then you can try the spring on the side of a hill, starting from a higher spot than the intended landing mark.

HEAD-SPRING

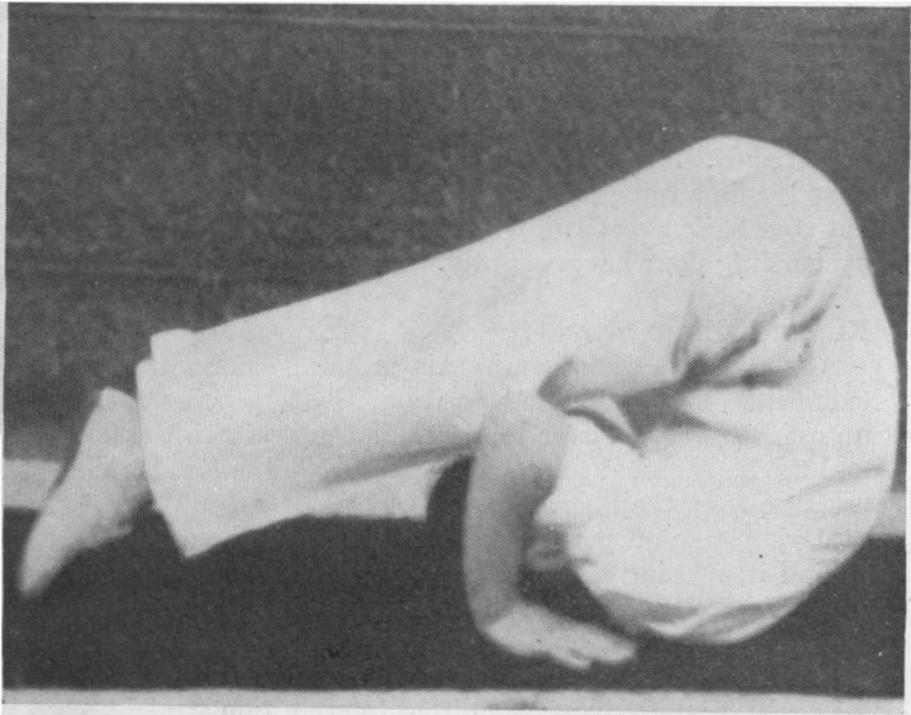
Place your hands upon the floor, shoulder-width apart, with your fingers very slightly bent and pointing straight ahead. Now place the top of your forehead about 9 inches in front of your hands and extend your legs backward so that they are straight, with the toes resting on the floor and so that your trunk is almost upright (Fig. 25).

From this position move your hips forward, taking your weight entirely upon your head and hands, and bringing your feet and legs as close to your body as you can. This action will cause you to lose your balance and you will begin to fall forward, so quickly swing your legs upwards, forwards and downwards. As your feet drop towards the floor, push hard away from the floor with your hands and as your head and hands leave the floor, hollow out your back strongly, flick the upper part of your body forward and throw your arms forward and you will then come to your feet with your knees bent outwards.

NECK-SPRING

Lie flat on your back upon the floor and swing your legs upwards, over your head and downwards for your toes to rest upon the floor well behind your head. As your legs move backwards, roll up on to your shoulders and neck and carry your hands over your shoulders to place them on the floor, near to your ears, with the fingers pointing towards your

shoulders (Fig. 26). While in this position, and without moving away from your shoulders, swing your legs upwards and back again to the floor and continue to practise this leg swing until your legs move smoothly and easily without disturbing the balanced position of your body.



ITO. 26.-READY FOR A NECK-SPRING.

To make the spring, give your legs a preliminary swing then, without pausing, swing them upwards, forwards and downwards. As soon as your legs come into line with your trunk, press hard away from the floor with your hands, snap your legs downwards, strongly hollow out your back and bend your knees slightly to bring your feet well under your body. No part of your body below the shoulders must touch the floor while your legs are making their swing.

NECK-SPRING FIWM A HEAD-STAND

Adopt the head-stand position, roll to the top of your

head, then tuck your chin into your chest at the same time lowering your feet backwards and you will arrive in the starting position as before when the neck-spring can be done in the approved style.

NECK-SPRING FROM A HAND-STAND

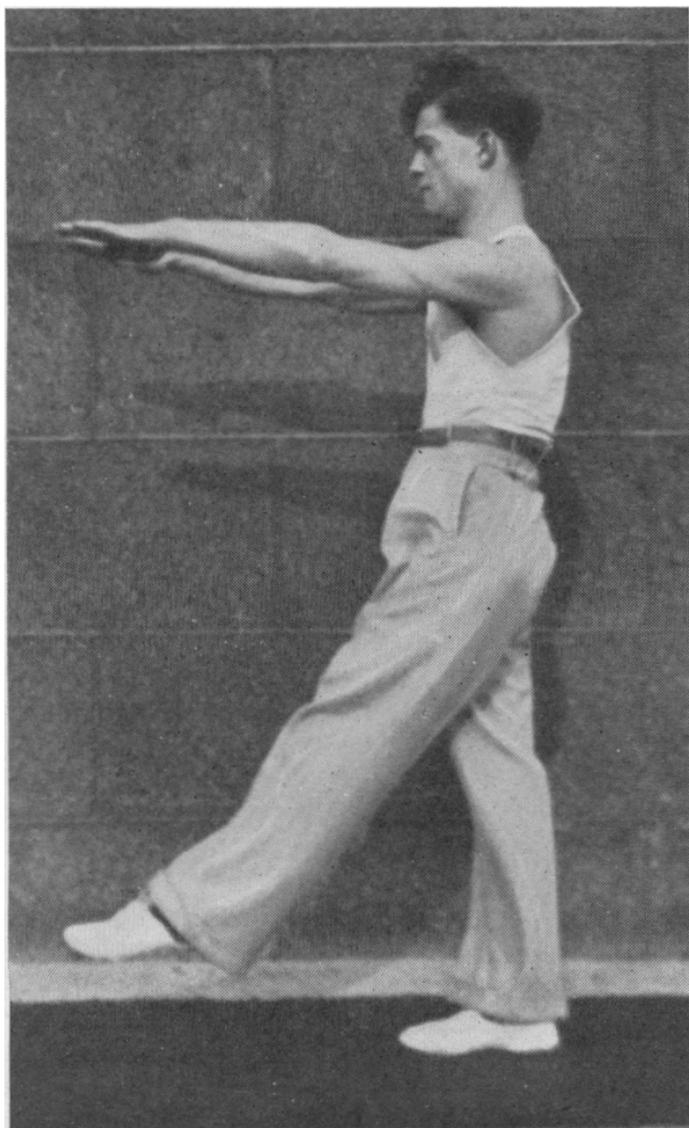
Secure a steady hand-stand position and then slowly bend your arms until your head is almost touching the floor, then tuck your chin into your chest and allow your shoulders and neck to come in contact with the floor just in front of your hands. As soon as your neck touches the floor, flick your legs in a full circular movement over your head, hollow out your back, press away from the floor and finally complete by bending your knees slightly.

RUNNING HAND-SPRING

Actually, the hand-spring is nothing more than an extension of a hand-stand position, the legs being thrown up quickly, carried over the head and dropped to the floor, and the body raised to an erect position on the feet by hand pressure from the floor.

Mark a take-off point and begin your run about 10 yards behind it, moving slowly at first and increasing your speed until you are travelling really fast at the moment of leaving the floor. The last step of your run must be in the nature of a skip, or hop forward on one foot while the other foot is raised forward and your arm lifted to a position straight out in front of your body at shoulder height (Fig. 27). Now swing your leading foot backwards and, at the same time, throw your hands down to the floor and follow the movement so that when your hands reach the floor your legs are travelling upwards, your shoulders are immediately above your hands, and your head is pressed well back. Your arms must be slightly bent.

Allow your legs to continue their vigorous movement upwards, strongly hollow out your back, pass through the hand-stand position and then, as your feet drop near to the floor, press away with your hands and swing your arms upwards and over your head. The arm movement will help the



Fro. 27.-TAKE OFF FOR HAND-SPRING.

body to attain an erect position as you make a neat landing with your legs slightly bent.

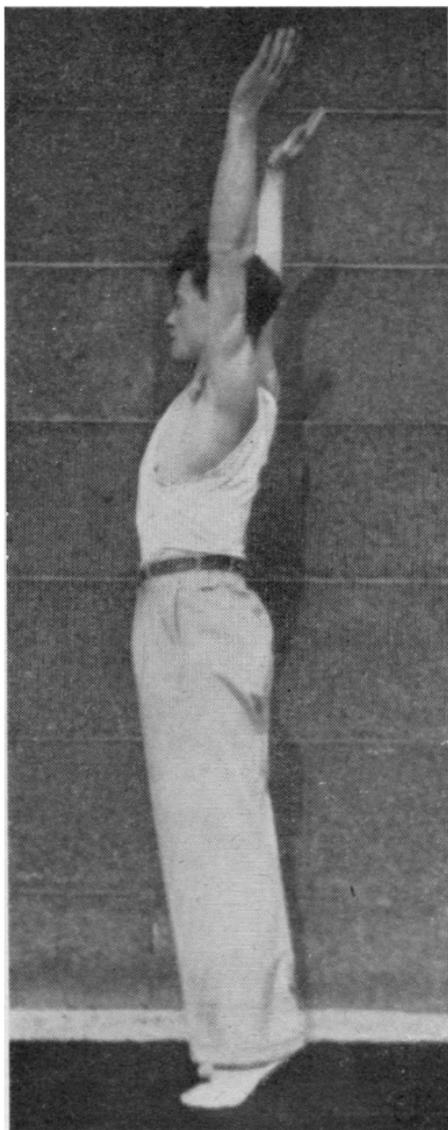


FIG. 28.-TAIHI OFF FOR FLY-SPRING.

Very little hand pressure will be required when you are thoroughly conversant with the hand-spring, as the impetus gained from the run-up and vigorous leg-action will enable you to make a good spring and a safe landing. Bent arms do not facilitate the performance of a hand-spring, but do detract from its appearance, so bend your arms only slightly and acquire a good style.

STANDING HAND-SPRING

Stand erect and raise your right leg forward, then hop a short distance on your left foot, raise your arms forwards, throw your right leg backwards and finally carry through the movement in exactly the same way as when starting with a run. The leg kick upwards must be particularly strong and the back must be hollowed out without delay, the hands leaving the floor as the legs drop downwards. /

FLY-SPRING

This is a hand-spring with a double-foot take-off and is performed with the body nearly straight. A fast run up to the take-off point will be essential in order that speed through the air may be obtained. Just in front of the take-off mark, take a short jump forward, throw your arms forward and upward to a position above your head and land upon your toes with both feet together (Fig. 28). The body at this stage is erect except for a slight knee bend which serves the double purpose of breaking the fall after the jump and providing spring for the take-off.

As soon as your feet meet the floor, spring upwards and forwards without bending your body and, when the highest point of the jump is reached, drop your hands down to the floor, arms still straight, hollow out your back and allow your legs to continue their circular movement through the air. Your legs will then pass over your head and drop towards the floor, when a press away from the floor with your hands will enable you to land upright upon your feet.

BACK-FLIP

Stand erect with your back towards the take-off mark and raise your arms forward and upward above your head. Now raise up on your toes, bend your knees slightly, incline your body forward and swing your arms forwards and downwards to a position in front of your thighs, arms slightly bent. Without pausing in this position, spring upwards and backwards, bending your body so far backwards as possible when making the spring and flinging your arms over your head to place your hands upon the floor as your body turns in the air and drops downwards. When your hands meet the floor, swing your legs over your head and drop them to the floor, pressing upwards with your hands as you do so in order to come to an erect position.

Preliminary practice may be obtained by dropping backwards from a standing position to a back-bend position and then throwing your legs over your head.

To drop to the back-bend position, stand erect and raise

your hands above your head. Now bend backwards as far as you can and push your knees forward to counteract the

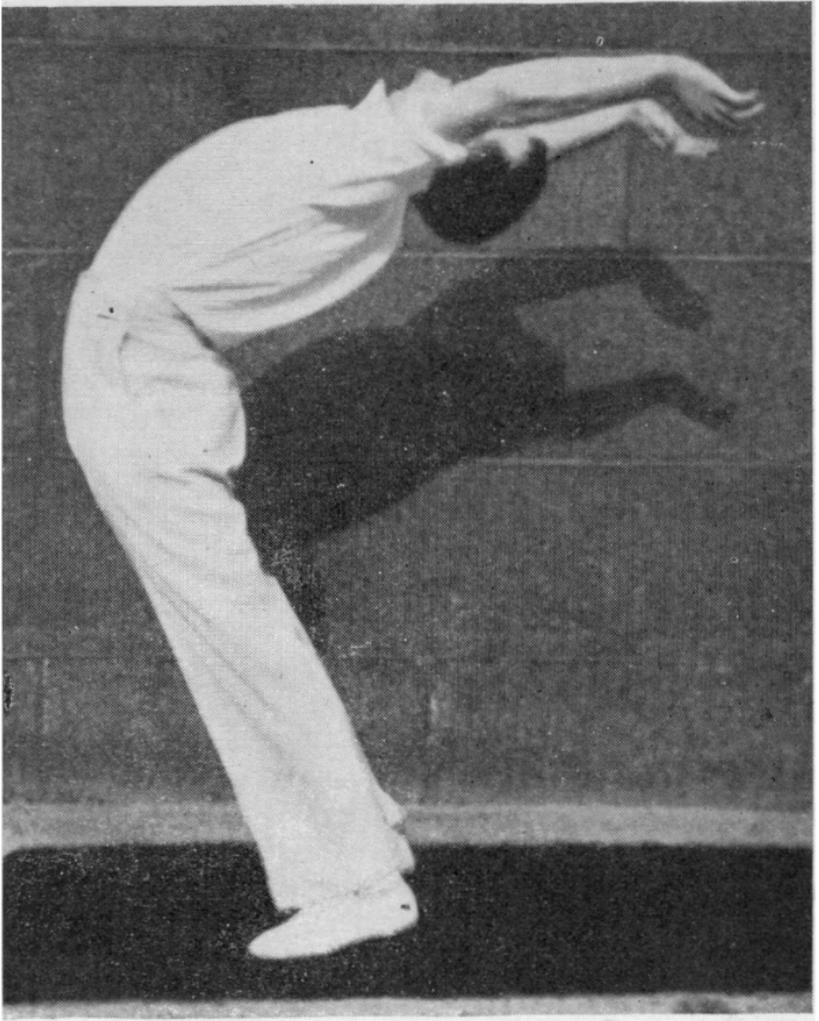


FIG. 29.-DROPPING TO A BACK-BEND.

tendency to fall heavily and to keep your body under control (Fig. 29). Push your knees farther forward as you bend lower and you will experience no difficulty in placing your hands on the floor immediately underneath your shoulders with

your fingers pointing towards your feet. When you reach the back-bend position, bring your feet close to your hands and then swing your right leg upwards, at the same time pushing away from the floor with your left foot. These combined movements will send your feet over your head and down to the floor on the other side of your hands.

The next step is to attempt the back-flip in a correct manner and for this purpose the help of two friends should be enlisted. Stand as before, with your back to the take-off mark, and have one person on each side holding a strong belt taut across the small of your back. This support will enable you to perform the flip without difficulty as the belt will keep you from the floor until your hands are in position to take your body weight when you can complete the trick as described. The assistance given by the belt should be reduced gradually until you become capable of performing the flip entirely unaided.

FRONT SOMERSAULT

To ensure absolute safety while learning the front somersault, a gym mat or stout blanket is required, this being held firmly by four fellows—one at each corner. The mat must be held about 3 feet from the floor. Run hard to a mark about one yard in front of the near side of the mat and with a double-foot take-off (as described for the fly-spring) leap upward and slightly forward, bend your arms at the elbows, bring your knees up to your chest, making your body as much like a ball as possible, and allow the momentum of your spring to carry your feet over your head. As your feet drop towards the floor, straighten out your body and alight upon your toes, bending your knees outwards to allieviate the shock.

When first trying the somersault, you will find that your back drops on to the mat, but continue the roll-over and you will roll from the mat to land upon your feet on the floor. Continue to practise hard and in time you will be able to perform the somersault without coming in contact with the mat, and you can then try the trick confidently, dispensing

with the mat. Until you are absolutely certain of making a good somersault, however, have somebody standing by 'to give you a helping hand if required.

Once started on a somersault, go for it for all you are worth. If you hesitate for a moment you may have a bad fall.

CHAPTER VII

COMBINATION EXERCISES

HAVING developed a certain degree of skill you are now, no doubt, eager to demonstrate your ability by means of display work, and it must be stressed that the primary consideration is the appearance of the trick to the onlookers. Continuity of movement is essential, and for this purpose it is necessary to link up different tricks, but only such tricks as will unite smoothly must be combined. The final movement in a display combination must bring you to an erect position.

A few examples, which will serve to indicate the manner in which combination exercises may be built up, are given and, if you study the method used, you will experience no difficulty in devising attractive exercises for yourself.

PRONE-FALL-THROUGH-VAULT-BACK-ROLL

Adopt an erect standing position, then swing your left leg and drop to the prone-fall position, immediately-but without undue haste-straighten your arms, vault between them and lie flat on your back. Raise your legs upwards and do a back-roll, pressing hard upon your hands so as to come to an erect position upon your feet..

ROLL AND BALANCE

Roll over and up to a sitting position, reach forward and touch your toes, then roll backwards and press to a head-stand. Roll forward again, back-roll to a hand-stand and, complete the exercise with a leg-flip.

ELBOW-BALANCE - HEAD-STAND - ELBOW-BALANCE - FRONT-ROLL

pet clown to a balance on your upper arms with your head

well back and your toes pointed. Now lean forward and bend your arms as much as possible and at the same time let your head drop forward so that the combined movements of head and arms bring the top of your forehead very near to the floor. From this position, make a slight forward movement which will break the balance, enable the top of your forehead to come into contact with the floor about 9 inches in front of your hands, and shoot your legs upwards into the air. Pauses have been introduced only to facilitate the explanation of the various movements and continuous action is essential to the easy completion of the exercise.

To return to the balance-on-elbows, slowly bend your knees until you are able to rest them upon your arms just above your elbows. Now push away from the floor with your hands and let this pressure incline the whole body backwards so that your head comes up from the floor. Bend your head backward, bring your shoulders forward and you will arrive at the elbow-balance position.

For the next stage-from balance-on-elbows to front-roll-bend your arms as much as possible, just as though you were going up to the head-stand once again, but as you topple forward let your legs straighten out backwards as this will check a heavy fall. Finally, turn your head right under, press away with your hands and complete the roll in the usual manner,

HEAD-STAND-HAND-STAND-HEAD-STAND

Get down into the head-stand position, then shoot your legs upward and at the same time press away from the ground and straighten your arms. Immediately your head leaves the floor bend it backwards to counteract any tendency to topple over and hollow out the back a little more than in the head-stand position. Having obtained a good hand-stand position, return to the head balance by bending your arms slowly, at the same time move your legs backward a little and you will have no difficulty in regaining the position. In the polished performance of this exercise there will be no

preliminary leg-kick and the upward movement will be obtained solely by straightening the arms.

HAND-STAND- TIGER- BALANCE- HAND-STAND

Secure a steady hand-stand position and then turn your body slightly to the left (or right) so that most of your body weight is supported by your left arm. Now slowly bend your right (or left) arm so that the forearm and elbow come into contact with the floor, then turn your body slightly in the opposite direction and bend your other arm.

When you become proficient in the single-arm change; you can attempt the exercise by bending both arms at once /-a more difficult proposition. The change from hand-stand to tiger-balance must be made quickly, but the body must remain under control throughout and not allowed to drop heavily. Your legs must be carried backwards slightly away from the balance position, as the downward movement begins, and carried back again, well beyond your head, immediately your elbows reach the ground.

Hold the tiger-balance for a moment, then move your head forward so that it passes over and in front of your hands, bring your legs backward from the balance position and you will find the combined movements lift your elbows away from the floor. All that you need do now is to straighten your arms and carry your legs back again to the balance position. The arm-straightening must begin as soon as your elbows leave the floor, and a steady, even pressure must be exerted until your arms are quite straight.

ADVANCED BALANCE COMBINATION

This combination is an extension of the previous exercise and is described briefly to indicate how more advanced movements can be built up.

First adopt a tiger-balance, then press up to an inverted hand-stand, front-roll to a sitting position-hands touching toes, back-roll to a head-stand, press up again to a hand-stand and finish with a leg-flip which will bring you to your feet. Pause in each balance position long enough to demonstrate a steady balance.

SPRING COMBINATION

Begin from an erect position, roll to a back-lying position, back-spring to your feet and then do a head-spring, or start with a head-spring, then roll to a back-lying position and finally come to your feet by performing a back-spring.

CHAPTER VIII

GROUP EXERCISES

OVERBACKROLL

YOUR friend, we will call him Brown, stands with his back towards you and then bends forwards so as to make a back. Place your hands just below his waist, spring from your toes, tuck your head between your arms and perform a front-roll over Brown's back. The height of the back can be increased as you gain confidence.

DOUBLEROLL

Brown lies flat upon his back and raises his legs in the air. Now stand with one foot on each side of his head, grasp his ankles firmly and place your head between them and let Brown take hold of your ankles (Fig. 30). He now bends his knees, bringing them down to his chest, and you take a little jump forward, tuck in your head and go down with Brown's ankles to the floor (Fig. 31). As you roll forward, Brown gradually rises and the rolling is continued along the floor. You can roll backwards by reversing the movements.

TRIPLE ROLL

You will need the help of Brown and another friend—Jones—for this roll. Jones lies down upon his back and bends his knees so that his feet are flat upon the floor and close to his seat. Brown stands with his feet one" on each side of Jones' head and leans forward to grasp his ankles, then you take hold of Brown's ankles, lift him up and step his into place so that Jones can take hold of your ankles. You no)' push Brown forward and he bends his arms,' turns his head on to the floor and begins to roll over. Jones pushes you upwards and, as you follow Brown, Jones rises to his feet. This is not an easy trick and it must be practised very carefully.

BACK-BEND. HAND AND FOOT SUPPORT

Brown lies upon the floor and raises his arms and legs straight upwards. Take hold of his feet, one in each hand,

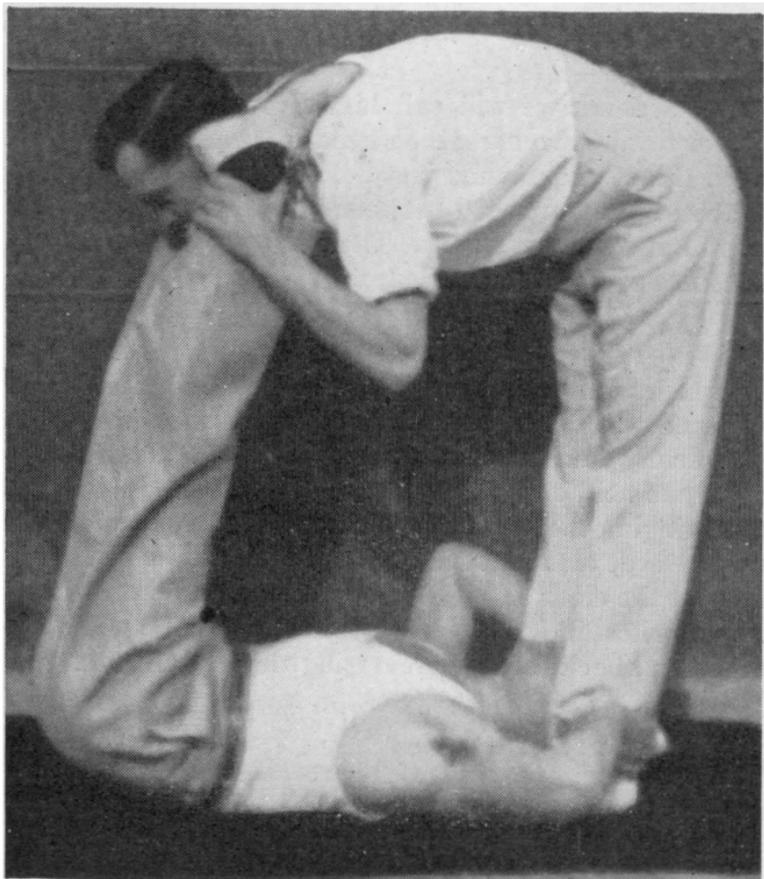


FIG. 30.-BEGINNING A DOUBLE ROLL.

spring upwards, pass through the inverted hand-stand and let your feet drop downwards to be caught by Brown, whose arms must be quite straight. The bend can also be performed with your feet on Brown's and your hands grasping his wrists as he grasps your wrists in a similar manner.

SIDE-ROLLING PLAIT

Lie face-downwards on the floor with Brown on your left and Jones on your right. Now roll over and over to the left and as you do so Brown rises from the floor and dives in a sideways direction across your back, and as soon as he

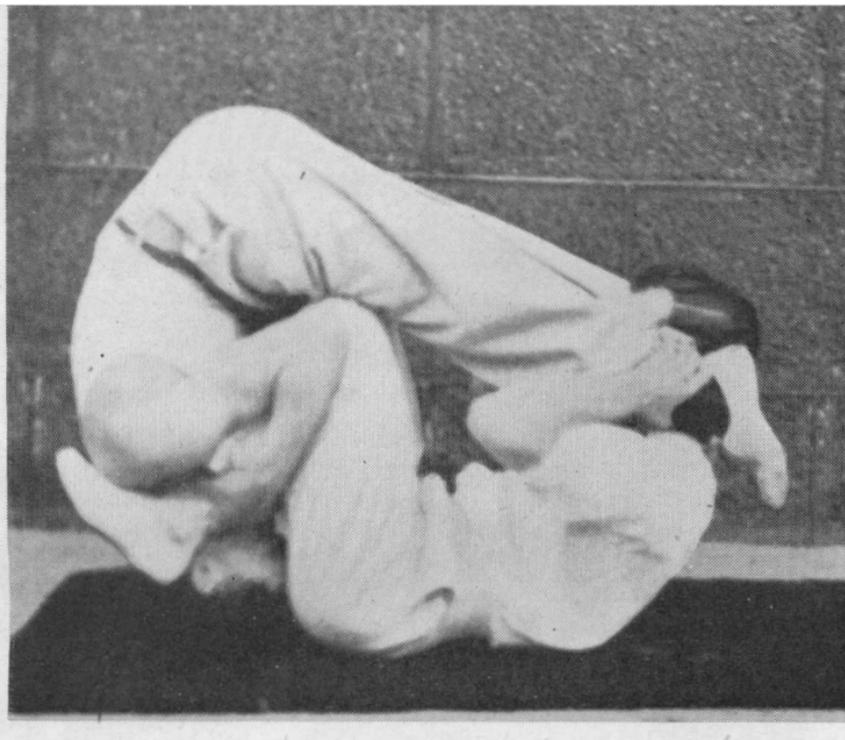


FIG. 31.-DOUBLE ROLL IN PROGRESS.

touches the floor begins to roll towards Jones who, in his turn, rises from the floor and dives over Brown's back. Jones rolls towards you and the plait is continued.

FORWARD PLAIT

Stand erect with your back towards Brown and do a front-roll toward Jones who, as you finish your roll, dives over your head and back and rolls towards Brown who dives and rolls towards you for the plait to be continued.

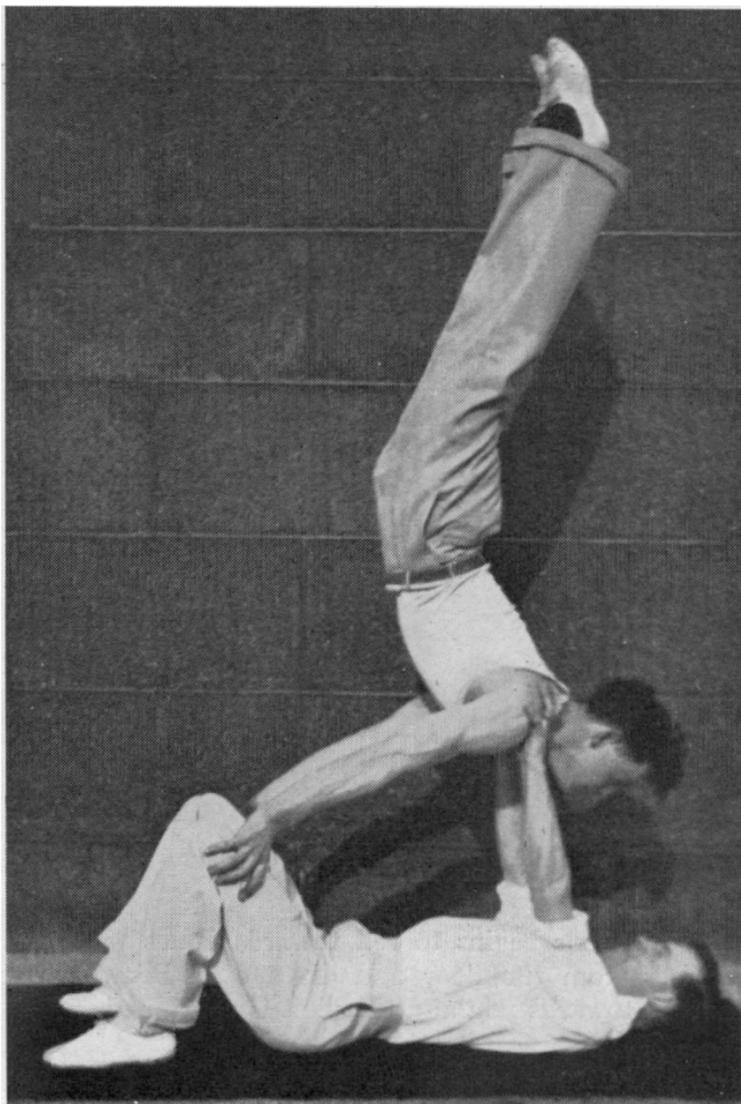


FIG. 32.-KNEE AND SHOULDER BALANCE.

KNEE AND SHOULDER BALANCE

Brown lies on the floor with his knees bent up so that his feet are flat upon the floor and close to his seat. You place your hands upon his knees and lean forward, then throw your legs upwards into the air, allowing your shoulders to drop into Brown's hands as you do so. Brown's arms reach straight upwards from the shoulders and your arms are straight from his knees to his-hands; your back is hollowed out and your feet immediately above your head (Fig. 32).

KNEE AND SHOULDER SPRING

Brown adopts the same position as in the previous trick and the movement is the same until you reach the balance position when, instead of holding the balance, you allow your legs to pass right over and drop towards the floor. As they near the floor, Brown presses your shoulders upwards and you then alight safely upon your feet.

THROWING THE WEIGHT

Brown lies flat upon his back, bends his knees upwards to his chest and raises his feet in the air. Sit upon Brown's feet with your toes just touching the floor (Fig. 33) and, as Brown, by vigorously straightening his legs in an upward and forward direction, throws you forward, throw your arms upward and straighten out your body to alight on the floor some distance in front of Brown.

...

KNEE BALANCE

Brown stands erect with his feet astride and his knees bent forward. Place your hands on Brown's knees and throw your legs upward into the air, keeping your arms quite straight. Brown raises his hands to take hold of your waist (Fig. 34) and then sinks down to a fuller knees bend position.

FRONT FEET BALANCE

Brown lies flat on his back with his feet in the air, legs at right-angles to his body and his upper arms on the floor with the forearms bent upwards. Stand facing his feet and take hold of them with your thumbs on the inside, then

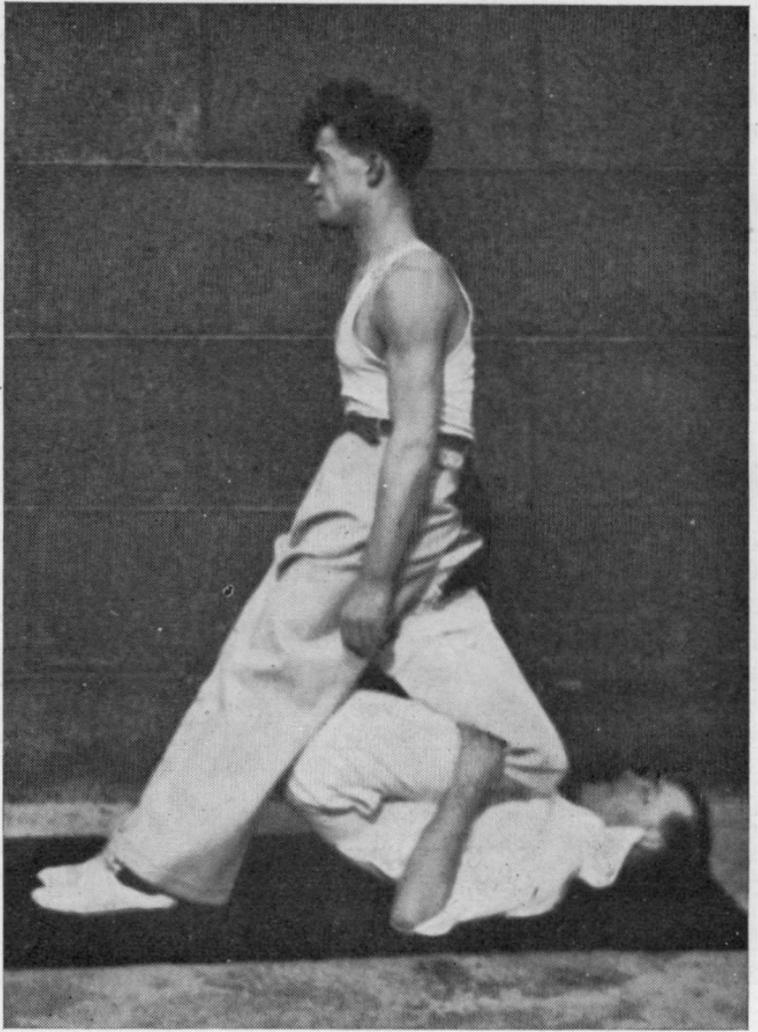


FIG. 33.-READY FOR "THROWING THE WEIGHT".

stand on Brown's hands and lean forward so that Brown can straighten his arms (Fig. 35). When Brown is quite steady, slowly take your weight over to your hands and lever your legs upwards until they come to the balance position. Great care is necessary as the support is apt to move either to one side or the other.

REAR FEET BALANCE

Brown now lies face-downwards with his fore-arms on the floor underneath his face and bends his legs backwards so that the lower leg is at right-angles to the upper leg. Now stand astride his body, facing towards his feet, and place your hands upon them with the thumbs inside (Fig. 36). Lean well over Brown's feet and slowly and evenly raise your legs upwards until you attain an inverted hand-stand.

LOW HAND-TO-HAND

BALANCE

Brown lies flat upon his back and raises his arms straight upwards. Stand astride his head and clasp his hands, then lean over your hands and, with a



FIG. 34.-KNEE BALANCE.



FIG p5.-FRONT FEET BALANCE-READY FOR THE PRESS.

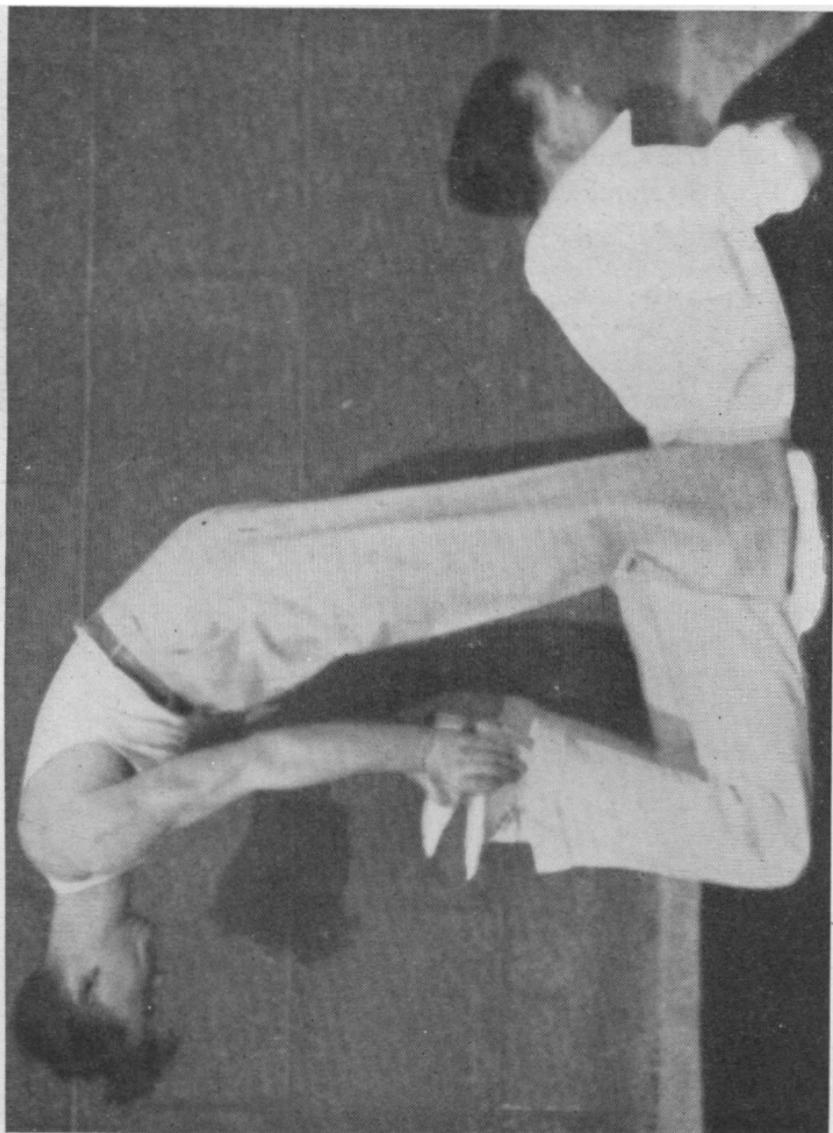


FIG. 36.—STARTING POSITION FOR REAR FEET BALANCE.

little jump, press up to a balance. It is essential that both your arms, and Brown's, are kept perfectly straight and locked at the elbow..

UPPER HAND-Ta-HAND BALANCE

This balance is similar to the previous one except that Brown stands erect with his hands stretched upwards above his head. The simplest way to gain the balance is to stand upon Brown's shoulders and then to press up to the balance position; but a more polished way is to start from a standing position on the floor with your back towards Brown. Grasp his hands in the same way as before, then jump upwards. As you jump, Brown straightens his arms and you bend your knees well up to your chest, so that the jump carries you to a position immediately above Brown's head. Having attained this position, you proceed to the balance as before.

It must be pointed out that only the very simple methods of hand-to-hand balances have been given, but more advanced methods will become apparent as your ability increases. Particular care must be taken in learning these balances, and until you are really confident have somebody at hand to assist.

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