

# **The Aerial Hoop Manual**

## **Volume 2**

A step-by-step reference guide for teachers  
and students of any aerial lyra program

**Rebekah Leach**  
**with Julianna Hane**

Special Thanks to  
Circus Building

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When practicing aerial hoop, always perform warm up exercises before attempting any individual exercises. Also, when practicing aerial hoop, always do so in the presence of a trained professional, with load-tested hoop hanging from load-tested rigging, which has been set-up and inspected frequently by rigging professionals, along with crash mats underneath the hoop. It is recommended that you check with your doctor or healthcare provider before commencing any exercise program, especially one as rigorous as aerial hoop.

Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this material, there is a real chance of injury in execution of the movements described in this book. The Publisher and all persons involved in the making of this manual will not accept responsibility for injury to any degree, including death, to any person as a result of participation in the activities described in this manual. Purchase or use of this document constitutes agreement to this effect. Furthermore, rigging of aerial equipment is not discussed in this manual. Consult a professional rigger when it comes to using any hanging equipment.

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Happy Flying,  
Rebekah Leach  
Author of the Aerial Dance Manual Series  
Founder of AerialDancing.com

# DISCLAIMER

This manual is not intended for a layperson to pick up and start learning on their own. All use (and misuse) of this manual is done so AT YOUR OWN RISK. Your use of this manual constitutes your agreement to waive all rights and assume all risk associated with injury that may occur when applying the knowledge of this book.

If you have any health concerns whatsoever, check in with your healthcare professional. Inverting and going into positions on an apparatus can cause pressure to certain places on the body which can be a dangerous situation for persons with particular medical conditions. Risks include stroke, heart attack, dizzy spells, or further injury. As always, stop exercising if you feel any symptoms such as feeling faint or dizzy. As with any activity involving height, there is always a risk of injury including paralysis and/or death.

## BE SAFE

The top 5 things you can do to make sure that you are practicing safely:

1. Start by taking live lessons from a professional aerialist. Use this book for reference only.
2. Always inspect your rigging that was rigged by a professional.
3. Practice over a mat.
4. Never practice alone. Always have a spotter.
5. Practice safe progression. Do not attempt moves you are not ready for.

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# Preface

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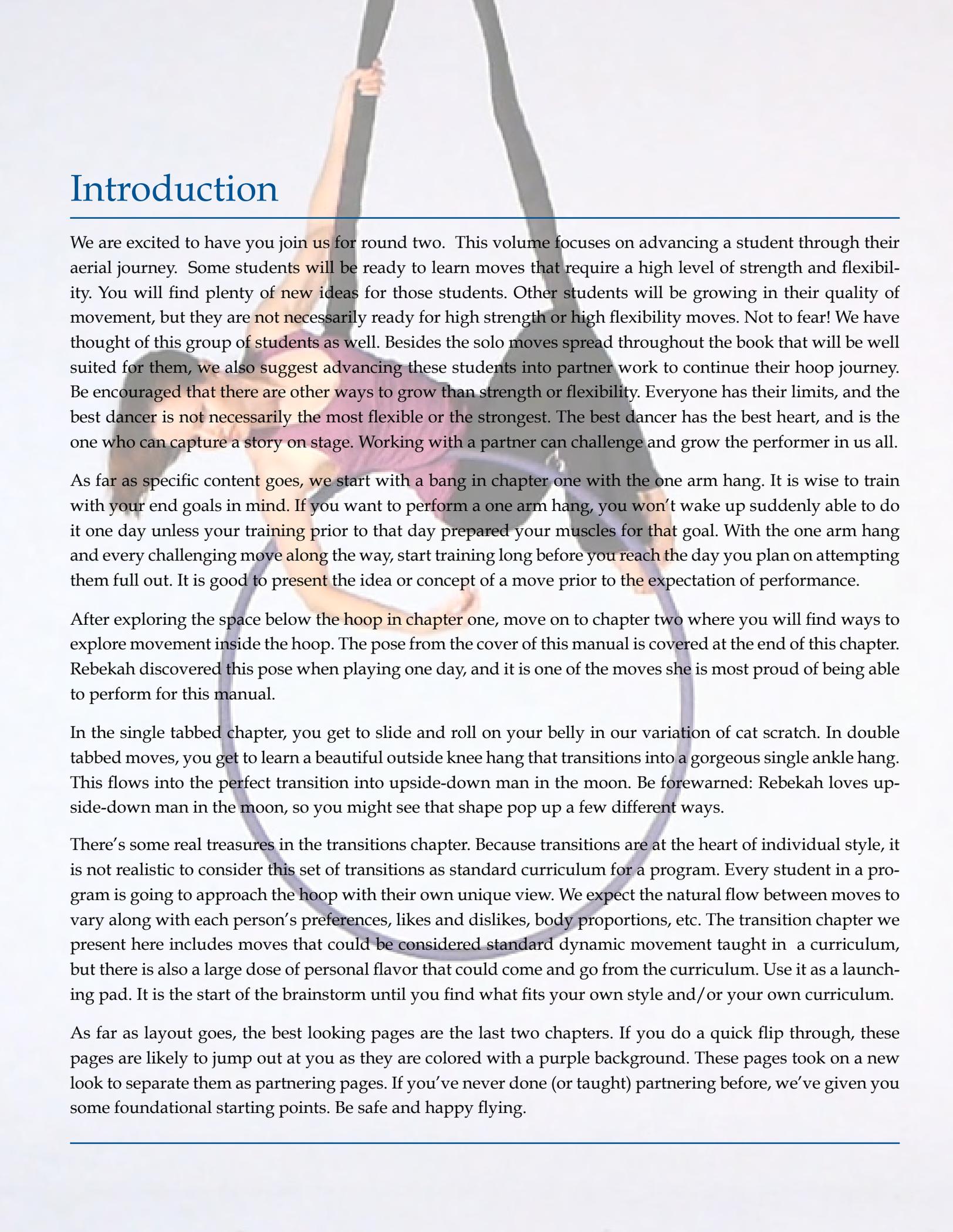
Dear Reader,

When writing Volume I, I wrote that I would cover tippy lyra in the second volume of aerial hoop. That was back when I figured that Julianna and I would only write two volumes on hoop. This series has exploded like all my projects seem to do. This book didn't have room for tippy lyra, especially not after adding two chapters on intro to partnering work. Also, as I did the photo-shoots, I started to get attached to my tippy lyra. Now I feel that there is so much to explore. The new plan is to perhaps write another volume of hoop after this one in which tippy lyra will be covered and possibly more partnering work as well. We will see.

If you purchase the download version of this manual from our website, *AerialDancing.com*, then video icons appear thorough the book to let you know there is an associated video. The icons are active links that will take you directly to the video for the moves on the page. You can view the video as long as you are a paying member on *AerialDancing.com*. If you are holding the paperback book, you are also welcome to jump onto the site to view corresponding video content covering the moves in this book and plenty more. It is especially helpful for those moves that can't quite be fully conveyed in pictures and/or writing. In the future, we plan on adding to the video content by uploading training ideas, workouts, warm ups, sequences, you name it, to help keep you and your students in aerial shape all along your journey, whether you are beginner or advanced, young or old, recovering from having a baby or at the top of your game. We're here to support your aerial journey. Thank you for bringing us along.

As always, Happy Flying,

*Rebekah Leach*



## Introduction

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We are excited to have you join us for round two. This volume focuses on advancing a student through their aerial journey. Some students will be ready to learn moves that require a high level of strength and flexibility. You will find plenty of new ideas for those students. Other students will be growing in their quality of movement, but they are not necessarily ready for high strength or high flexibility moves. Not to fear! We have thought of this group of students as well. Besides the solo moves spread throughout the book that will be well suited for them, we also suggest advancing these students into partner work to continue their hoop journey. Be encouraged that there are other ways to grow than strength or flexibility. Everyone has their limits, and the best dancer is not necessarily the most flexible or the strongest. The best dancer has the best heart, and is the one who can capture a story on stage. Working with a partner can challenge and grow the performer in us all.

As far as specific content goes, we start with a bang in chapter one with the one arm hang. It is wise to train with your end goals in mind. If you want to perform a one arm hang, you won't wake up suddenly able to do it one day unless your training prior to that day prepared your muscles for that goal. With the one arm hang and every challenging move along the way, start training long before you reach the day you plan on attempting them full out. It is good to present the idea or concept of a move prior to the expectation of performance.

After exploring the space below the hoop in chapter one, move on to chapter two where you will find ways to explore movement inside the hoop. The pose from the cover of this manual is covered at the end of this chapter. Rebekah discovered this pose when playing one day, and it is one of the moves she is most proud of being able to perform for this manual.

In the single tabbed chapter, you get to slide and roll on your belly in our variation of cat scratch. In double tabbed moves, you get to learn a beautiful outside knee hang that transitions into a gorgeous single ankle hang. This flows into the perfect transition into upside-down man in the moon. Be forewarned: Rebekah loves upside-down man in the moon, so you might see that shape pop up a few different ways.

There's some real treasures in the transitions chapter. Because transitions are at the heart of individual style, it is not realistic to consider this set of transitions as standard curriculum for a program. Every student in a program is going to approach the hoop with their own unique view. We expect the natural flow between moves to vary along with each person's preferences, likes and dislikes, body proportions, etc. The transition chapter we present here includes moves that could be considered standard dynamic movement taught in a curriculum, but there is also a large dose of personal flavor that could come and go from the curriculum. Use it as a launching pad. It is the start of the brainstorm until you find what fits your own style and/or your own curriculum.

As far as layout goes, the best looking pages are the last two chapters. If you do a quick flip through, these pages are likely to jump out at you as they are colored with a purple background. These pages took on a new look to separate them as partnering pages. If you've never done (or taught) partnering before, we've given you some foundational starting points. Be safe and happy flying.

---

# Safe Training Practices

*Since we cover some fairly advanced movement in this manual, I thought it would be a good idea to remind you what safe training looks like. As the teacher, you can promote safe training practices for your students and set the example in your own self-training time.*

## **1. Use spotters & mats.**

Spotters are essential for the learning process. Every aerialist, no matter how advanced, is going to be in need of a spotter at some point during their training. Every spotter also needs to be backed up by a mat. Always practice over mats. No one plans on falling, but you'll be thankful for the mat the day an accident happens. See the next page for more spotting guidelines.

## **2. Use proper progressions.**

In my curriculum, I use very light and/or very little physical spotting. The reason for this is that my number one tool for safe training is progressions. Every time a student of mine learns a new move, I am working with them on that move because I feel that they have the prerequisite strength to carry out the move on their own. If you are doing a lot of heavy spotting, then that may be a sign that you are working students at a pace that is too fast. In general, you should not be lifting students into moves. If you are carrying a student's weight because they are not strong enough for the move, then they are not ready for the move. They need to regress, gain strength (or flexibility, etc), and then reattempt the move at a later date when their body is ready. Also, always train both sides of the body as you work through progressions. This maintains a balanced body required for injury prevention.

## **3. Train the EXIT before the ENTRY.**

Some moves have harder exits than they do entries. Skin the cat is a good example of this. It is easy to go into a ball inversion and continue towards the ground. After you have dropped the hips towards the ground, it is extremely difficult to stop mid-air and retrograde back under the bar. Think about this as you train. Teach the exit first. Instead of letting the hips drop all the way towards the ground in skin the cat, drop them only an inch or two and come back up. If that was easy, repeat with an additional inch. Repeat again. Hopefully, you get the idea.

## **4. Teach self-spotting and bail techniques.**

At some point, students will be independently practicing moves. (Think open workout for example.) As a student practices a move, it is good if they know how to spot themselves as well as know how to safely bail out of a move. Give them a plan of action that you think they can follow safely on their own. In some cases, you may advise them to not practice a move on their own because they are not ready. If they are, give them the tools to safely spot themselves or properly exit a move when they need to.

Let's talk about that bail plan. If the student is half-way through a move, and they feel like they cannot complete the move, what do they do? My personal pet peeve is a drop to the ground. Unplanned drops or a bad habit of dropping, can lead to injury. Instruct student how to return to a base position on the apparatus if they feel they need to abort the move they were attempting.

## **5. Practice low to the ground.**

Keep all aerial apparatuses low to the ground when first learning. This will enable spotters to get in there and give the appropriate spot. The only negative is that students may not complete the movement to the very end. They might step or jump off the apparatus. Encourage students to act like the apparatus is 10 feet up. That is how they gain your trust to progress in height at a later date.

# Spotting Guidelines

*Physical spotting generally involves walking someone through a move, and using your body to decelerate theirs when necessary. Here are some tips to help make the whole operation safer for everyone.*

## **1. Always ask or announce touch prior to doing so.**

Some people are very sensitive to others touching them. It is important to enter their personal space with respect. A lot of times, people will be shy about telling you that they don't want to be touched, so you need to pick up on body language. If they pull away or flinch, that's a sign. Also, the student should always know what kind of spot is coming their way. Is it just a light hand? Or a full body hug?

## **2. Protect the head and neck.**

Use verbal cueing to remind students to flex or extend the spine as necessary so that if they were to fall, they would descend to the ground in a position that would be more likely to end flat on belly or flat on back. When performing a hands on spot for a more risky move, protecting the head and neck area is your priority. If the head and neck are fairly secure in the move, then you can spot other places.

Protecting the head and neck is not just for the student! When spotting, position yourself so that if the student were to fall, they would not crash into your head and/or neck. Be slightly off to one side so that they can fall over your shoulder and roll down your back. Your goal is to guide them to the floor.

## **3. Watch the mat.**

I have heard through the grapevine that more accidents happen from spotters tripping off a crash mat than by aerialists falling off an apparatus at many studios. So, use caution when navigating around the mats under the students. At times, there can be a drastic change in height from floor to mat. This is also a good reason to have a softer padding in the area outside of the mat area. For instance, it is a bad idea to practice over concrete. Instead, pad the entire floor, and place the crash mats on top of the flooring directly under the apparatus.

## **4. If you get hit, it's your fault.**

The student should never have to concern themselves with where the spotter is or what the spotter is doing. Their focus should be on their body placement and recruiting the mental and physical focus for the job at hand. Many times, spotters will appear to be in the way to the student and the student will feel like they are going to hit the spotter, so they will pull back from full out movement. The spotter needs to convince the student of their skills at dodging at the right moment. Encourage full out movement from the student. Reassure them that you will move if you need to avoid getting kicked.

## **5. Spot at the proper height.**

Always spot at a height so that you can properly spot. Many times this means working lower to the ground, but occasionally, this means working with a higher apparatus. You want to be in a position where you are ready to absorb weight by bending your knees, so you want to be able to have a comfortable stance. As a good basic rule, try to ensure the student's hips are no higher than your shoulders. You want to draw the student into your core - rather than support them over your head.

## **6. Think through the movement.**

Spotting is not as simple as standing under someone with open arms. Spotting needs to be planned. Analyze the direction of the movement. Students should be rolling into the spotter's arms, not away. Spotters need to be anticipating where the weight of the student is directed, what can go wrong, and how they are going to intervene to ward off accidents or safely guide the student to the ground.

Happy and safe flying!



# Chapter One: Under the Hoop

*Get dizzy spinning over the mat.  
Learn split planche, meathook, and skin the cat.  
Hang by your heels, and hang by your toes.  
This is how the chapter goes.*

## About This Chapter

---

This chapter includes some of the most hardcore moves on hoop. Do not feel you must work through this book in order. Otherwise, you might never get to chapter two! Chapter one includes such hurdles as the toe hang, in which you don't actually hang from your toes--not saying it's impossible, but it is very unsafe, not recommended, and not a move you will find any level-headed aerialist performing. Thought we would clear that one up before you got any weird ideas that you would actually hang from your toes. As for why it's called *toe hang*, it's because it's better than calling it *the-upper-part-of-the-top-of-your-foot-right-where-your-foot-meets-the-bottom-of-the-shin-hang*.

This chapter begins with one arm hangs and spinning technique. We pack in enough to make you dizzy. Speaking of which, we also address the ways to avoid getting overly dizzy and dish out tips for those who might get motion sickness. Breath mints anyone? Yes, it is rumored to help curb nausea.

The moves under the hoop are easily the most challenging because there is no bar underneath for you to sit and rest on. You're either hanging by some mighty muscle or inverting to climb up the hoop, neither of which are the easiest of tasks. Meathooks, skin the cats, split planche (also known as jigsaw); it's all here. You could put an entire piece together simply from your exploration of under the hoop moves. In fact, that is not a bad exercise to give your hoop students. Assign them the task of developing a piece devoted entirely to time under the hoop. Being under the hoop is common at the beginning and ending of aerial dance pieces, but what about the middle? Professional performers often utilize the space between hoop and ground during their pieces in order to have visible level changes. This chapter gives you options to choose from as you make your way from ground to air and back again.

That reminds me of another excellent lesson to teach young performers: level changes are an important element to any dance, ground or aerial. The most polished aerial performers explore every bit of vertical space available to them in their pieces. It is, after all, aerial art we are talking about. It is meant to fill the air, not just a little section of it. Fill the air with your grace, your artistry, your strength, your stamina, your perseverance, your dedication, and your passion. You wouldn't be into this book if you didn't have a love for the art. You have to overcome a lot to be here, climbing an apparatus, and feeling comfortable holding your own weight. It is motivating and inspiring to all who watch you.

---

# One Arm Hang



**Prerequisite(s):**  
grip strength

**About this move:** Welcome to the first move of Volume 2. We thought we would open with a bang by covering one of the hardest grip moves out there. Don't worry if you can't hang all your weight from one arm on day one. Just holding half your weight with one arm is an excellent exercise. This is also a very valuable exercise for injury prevention. It will reinforce all the good things you know about shoulder and scapular stability.

## The Preparation Exercise

### Preparation Exercise

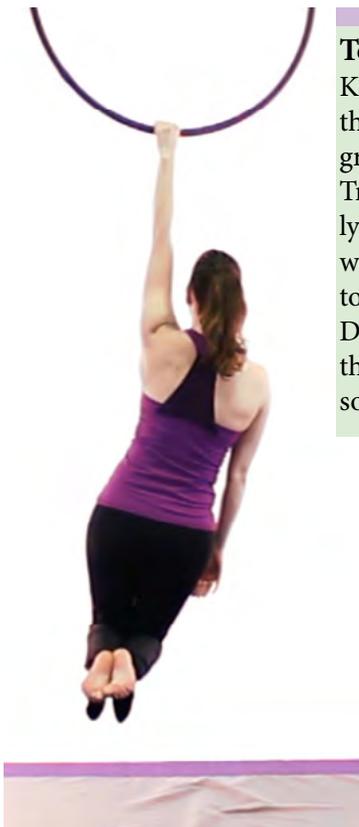
For one arm hangs, the plumbline of the body will necessarily have to shift. Think of your spine as a rod that was originally held by two strings, one on each side at the top of the rod. When one string disappears, how does the rod hang in space? This is how your spine should move. The hips will lift slightly towards the side as the obliques engage more and the lats are fully engaged on that side. In fact, you should check that they are. With your feet holding part of your weight, release one hand and reach back, feeling the engagement. Now that you have verified good scapular stability, return your hand to the bar without changing one gosh darn thing.



## Taking it to the Air

### To the Air

Keep in mind everything from above and gradually lift the feet. Transition gradually from 50% of your weight to 60% to 70%... to 90% to 95% to 99%. Don't jump through the last 10 or 20% as some do. Build quality.





# Lessons in Spinning

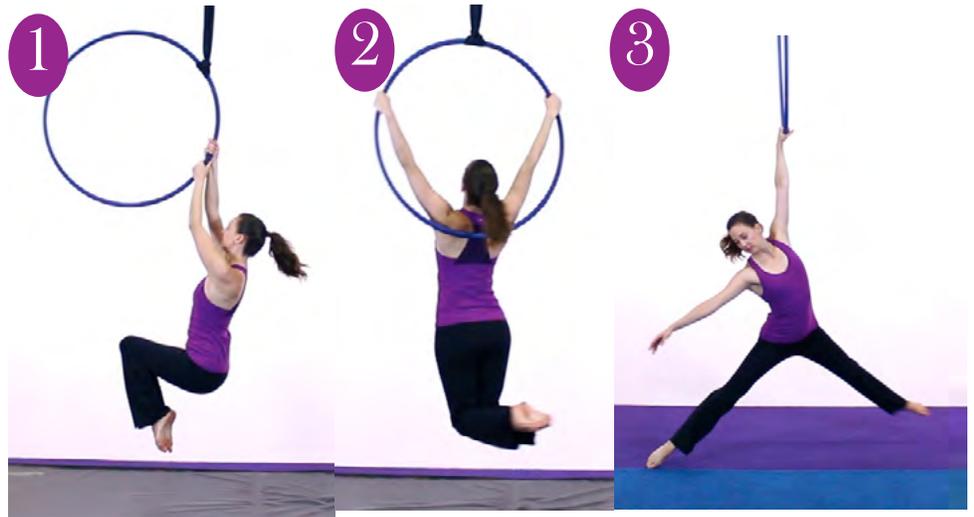
**Prerequisite(s):**  
grip strength

**About this move:** As you play, remember to maintain proper core positioning. If you enter a released position, do so with intention and caution (not by accident!). No sudden or dynamic movement is advised while in a disengaged body form. This is the surest route to injury. Instead, engage your shoulders with your shoulder blades tucked in your back pockets while spinning or performing other dynamic movement on hoop.

## Grip Variations for Spinning

### Grip Variations

You can spin holding onto the top bar, bottom bar and everywhere in between. Hold with hands wide, or hold with the hands narrow. Hold with two hands; hold with one hand; hold with no hands. No hands would entail holding with an elbow or inverting and “holding” with your knee, etc. We are going to start our discussion of spinning technique where you hold with one or both hands. Wrap your thumbs.

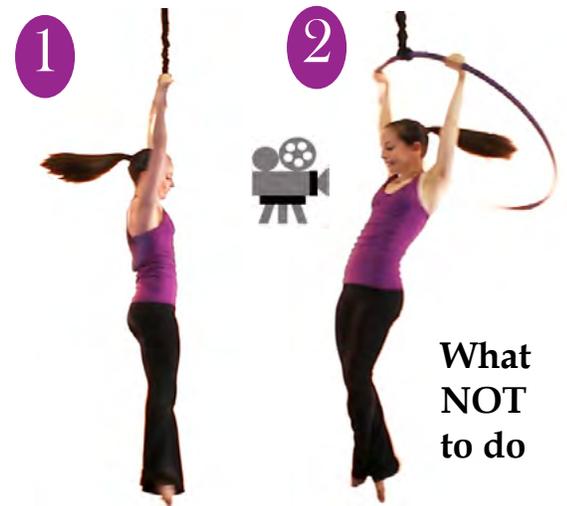


## Use Your Core

### Use Your Core to Spin On Axis

The axis is the vertical line or plumb line of the hoop. It is possible to spin off axis, but for beginning technique, we recommend spinning on axis to maintain more control.

The core muscles are the secret to maintaining control over spins. In the photos to the right, notice that the core is being utilized to remain spinning around plumbline in photo 1. In photo 2, notice that the core has been released and although the aerialist is still spinning, there is almost no control over the spin. The aerialist is being flung around, and the body position is floppy. The hoop is also out of control, which presents a danger as the hoop could fling back and hit the aerialist. If you are familiar with the hollow body concept of core position, these spins are the perfect time to put that knowledge to good use.



**What NOT to do**

### Finding the Sweet Spot of Minimum Inertia

If you have ever done any spinning in your life, you are likely to possess working knowledge of the fact that pulling limbs in makes you go faster and reaching limbs out makes you go slower. This has to do with inertia. Inertia refers to how mass is distributed from the axis of rotation. The more inertia you have, the more mass is distributed away from the center of rotation. So, limbs away from center means there is more inertia than when you pull in. With limbs in, you have less inertia.

Angular momentum must always be conserved as you spin. When the inertia decreases, something else has to increase in order to keep the momentum conserved. That something else is angular velocity. This is why you speed up as you pull in. The fastest spin can be accomplished by gradually pulling the entire body into a vertical line as close as possible to the axis of rotation. This is the same principle that ice skaters use as they go into those super fast spins. As you hunt for the sweet spot of minimum inertia and maximum angular velocity, there has never been a more appropriate time to get in touch with core control. Once found, you can use a similar core engagement in your handstands and more!

## Curbing Dizziness

Some people try to spot like a ballerina (whipping their heads around each time). We only recommend spotting an external point in space if you choose to spin slowly. To curb dizziness it helps to look at something not moving relative to your spin, i.e. your own body or the hoop. For example, gaze at the tips of your fingers as you reach out in space. Not only is this a lovely technique, you may find yourself less dizzy at the end of spinning. Another great way to avoid getting too dizzy is to slow down gradually instead of suddenly. You may find the dizziness completely gone by the time you stop. Also, try a bit of unwinding by spinning in the opposite direction. Alternatively, move around in other ways to distract your brain. If all else fails, carefully exit the apparatus and lean over or lie down.

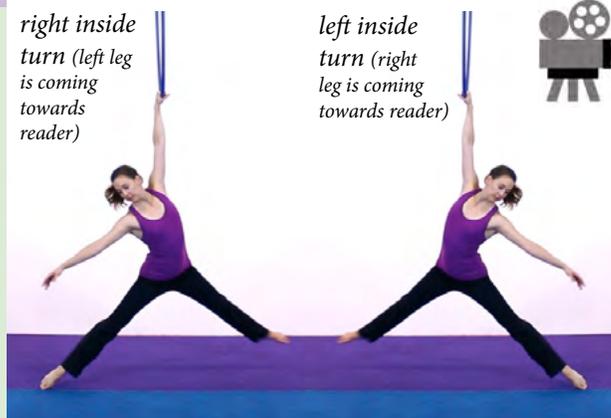
## Choose Your Direction

In a basic one arm spin, you can begin with either your right or left foot down on the ground. From this point there are two directions you can spin. We differentiate these spins by (1) which foot is grounded (or closest to the ground when airborne) and (2) the direction of the spin. In an inside turn (en dedans), the knee of the higher leg leads, while in an outside turn (en dehors), the back of the knee or heel leads.

1. Right inside (clockwise spin) a.k.a. en dedans
2. Right outside (counterclockwise spin) a.k.a. en dehors
3. Left inside (counterclockwise spin)
4. Left outside (clockwise spin)

*right inside  
turn (left leg  
is coming  
towards  
reader)*

*left inside  
turn (right  
leg is coming  
towards  
reader)*



## Vary Your Speed

We already covered the rule: Limbs out to slow down and limbs in to go fast. Another technique that you can use to vary speed is a momentary lapse in movement where your torso is completely stationary before moving again. The trick to accomplishing this is to turn your body in the opposite direction of the spin. You can only do this for about half a spin, but it is enough to create the momentary effect. You can stop a spin through the hula spin (a.k.a. fishtail) covered on the next page.



## The Spinning Continues - Don't Get Nauseous

This has been a lot of spinning, and keep in mind that not everyone can spin around all day without puking. Those prone to motion sickness will either need to limit their spin time/intensity or take action to help themselves tolerate the spinning. Attitude is the first thing to check. Wanting to spin goes a long way to overcoming any obstacles. We also have a few other tips you can try:

- Never spin on an empty stomach. Likewise, never spin on a stomach that is too full.
- Aim for just the right amount of food. A light meal that includes protein is known to help. Fatty, spicy foods are known to not be so gracious.
- Ginger has been known to curb nausea.
- Freshen your breath. Smelling good things and having pleasant aromas can help your brain to be happy, not sick.
- If all else fails, drugs may work. Dramamine and antacids are common. Seek medical advice. Good luck!

## Use Your Hula Spin



### Use Your Hula Spin to Pause Spin or Invert

A hula spin is a great tool to add into your spinning tool box. It can be a great break from spinning while keeping the momentum and flow of the piece going. In the middle of a spin, you can use the hula spin to hover in one spot prior to continuing the spin. You can also use the hula motion to lift up into an inverted straddle or meathook, etc. Imagine a spiral that your feet whirl around and climb as they lift into the air to invert.

## USE YOUR SPIN TO ENTER DIFFICULT-TO-ENTER MOVES

If you utilize the momentum of your spin just right, it works to your advantage. Working with the spiral of the hula can make it easier to pull up into meathooks and inversions. Be warned: If you do not use the momentum correctly, it can make the move more difficult.



## Driving the Spin

### Driving the Spin

As you enter into choreography with spin, you will be doing more than just moving limbs in and out. You will also be moving with your spin and against your spin. Plan your choreography in such a way to suit your desired affect. When do you want to speed up? When do you want a suspended or “melty” moment?

**Try this exercise:** From a fast spin in sitting, perform an outside mermaid to the right and then to the left. Notice the way you work with or against the spin. In one direction you may notice the entrance was quick with a suspended exit. In the other direction, you may notice the complete opposite (suspended then quick).



# Elbow Hangs

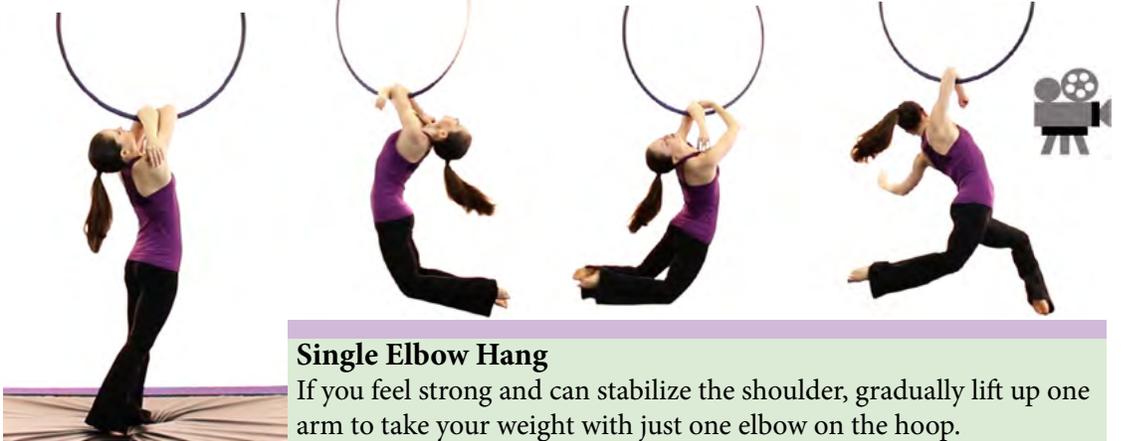
**Prerequisite(s):**  
willingness to  
take a little pain  
at the elbows

**About this move:** *Ah, the elbow hangs. I first hated these, and now I love them! The difference you ask? Well, two things really, and I can't decide which had more influence. Pain tolerance and strength. The first time I put my elbow over a bar, I was nearly grinding away my teeth as I forced myself to take some weight. As I got stronger, I think I was able to hold my weight better, and the combination of the two helped me push through.*

## Elbow Hangs on Bottom Bar

### Elbow Hangs

Start with hugging the hoop with both arms. Gradually take your weight into the crease of your elbows. It will likely hurt a little at first. Spinning may help distract from that. Spinning tends to give the body a little lift and may release just enough weight.



### Single Elbow Hang

If you feel strong and can stabilize the shoulder, gradually lift up one arm to take your weight with just one elbow on the hoop.

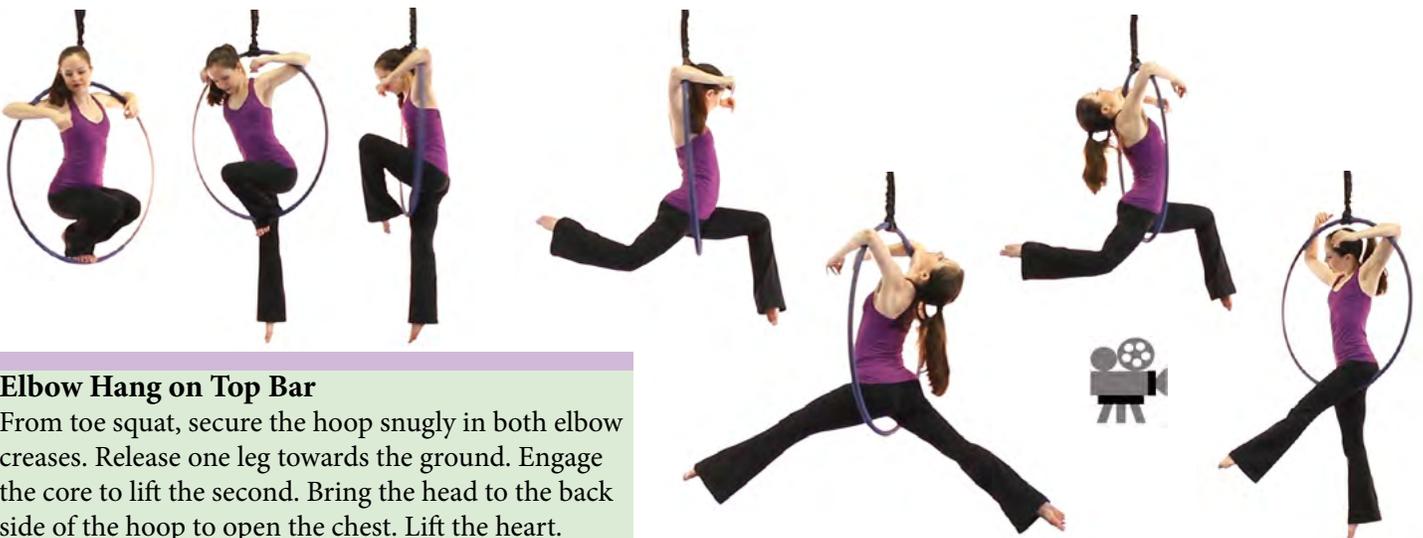
## Elbow Wrap Around Rope



### Hug Around Rope

From a toe squat position, wrap your arms around the span set or rope. Use your core to lift your feet. If you cannot maintain stability of the scapula, do not proceed into the full hang. Lift in the chest. Style the legs as desired.

## Elbow Hang Top Bar



### Elbow Hang on Top Bar

From toe squat, secure the hoop snugly in both elbow creases. Release one leg towards the ground. Engage the core to lift the second. Bring the head to the back side of the hoop to open the chest. Lift the heart.



# Rib Cage & Bicep Hangs

**Prerequisite(s):**  
some pain  
tolerance

**About this move:** *In my personal opinion, it is dangerous to hang on the lumbar spine as well as the cervical spine. These sections of the spine are simply too vulnerable. I believe the thoracic spine and the sacral spine (sacrum) are better places to support hanging. Sacrum hangs were in Volume 1. For the thoracic hangs, I like to start at the base of the back of the rib cage and work my way up the back until I am hanging under my armpits.*

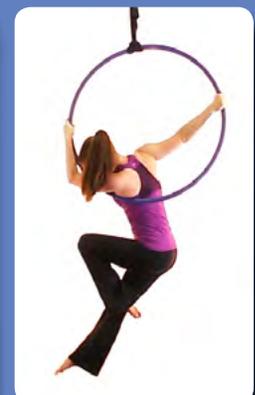


## Rib Cage Hang & More

There are two main entries into rib cage hang. You can either start in a foot block and carefully lower the legs or you can enter from a sacrum hang (back balance), being careful to avoid landing on the lumbar spine. This can be accomplished by rolling slightly onto your obliques as you lower to the bottom of the rib cage. Use your hands on the hoop to stabilize as you engage your back and gradually release your hands. Having bent legs makes it easier to maintain the back arch (photo 3). An easier position to enter is having the arms down as in photo 6. This brings the hoop higher on the back. At this point, you can transition into a bicep hang by bending your arms. Keep your forearms or hands pinned to your side. To continue the sequence, remove one arm from the hoop. Swim your second hand into the space created by the first. Carefully exit to two hand grip below the hoop.

## BOTTOM BAR BEAUTY

The rib cage hang position is a very powerful position on the hoop. It can look easy because of its simplicity, but as all hoop practitioners know, it is not an easy nor comfortable move when you first train it. Once you get cozy with the rib cage hang, and you start to choreograph it into your dramatic piece, you might try taking it to the side... and then the other side while you toss your head back in the transition. Beautiful.



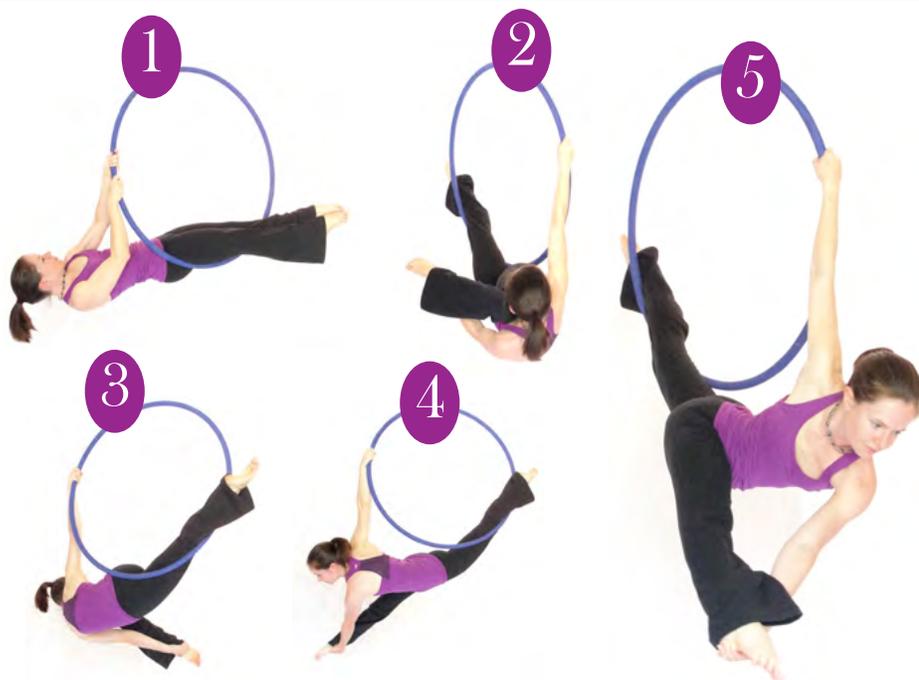


# Angel & Splits

**Prerequisite(s):**  
outside mermaid,  
angel roll

**About this move:** *In Volume 1 we called a low-hanging mermaid “dragoncatcher”. Here we are going to extend the dragoncatcher into the angel roll. The angel roll is an extension of the flow created in an outside mermaid, rolling towards the outside of the hoop. Follow the flow, pouring out of the hoop and you’re likely to find yourself in the angel roll. If your range of motion allows, add the element of splits for a beautiful reach.*

## High Grip Variation



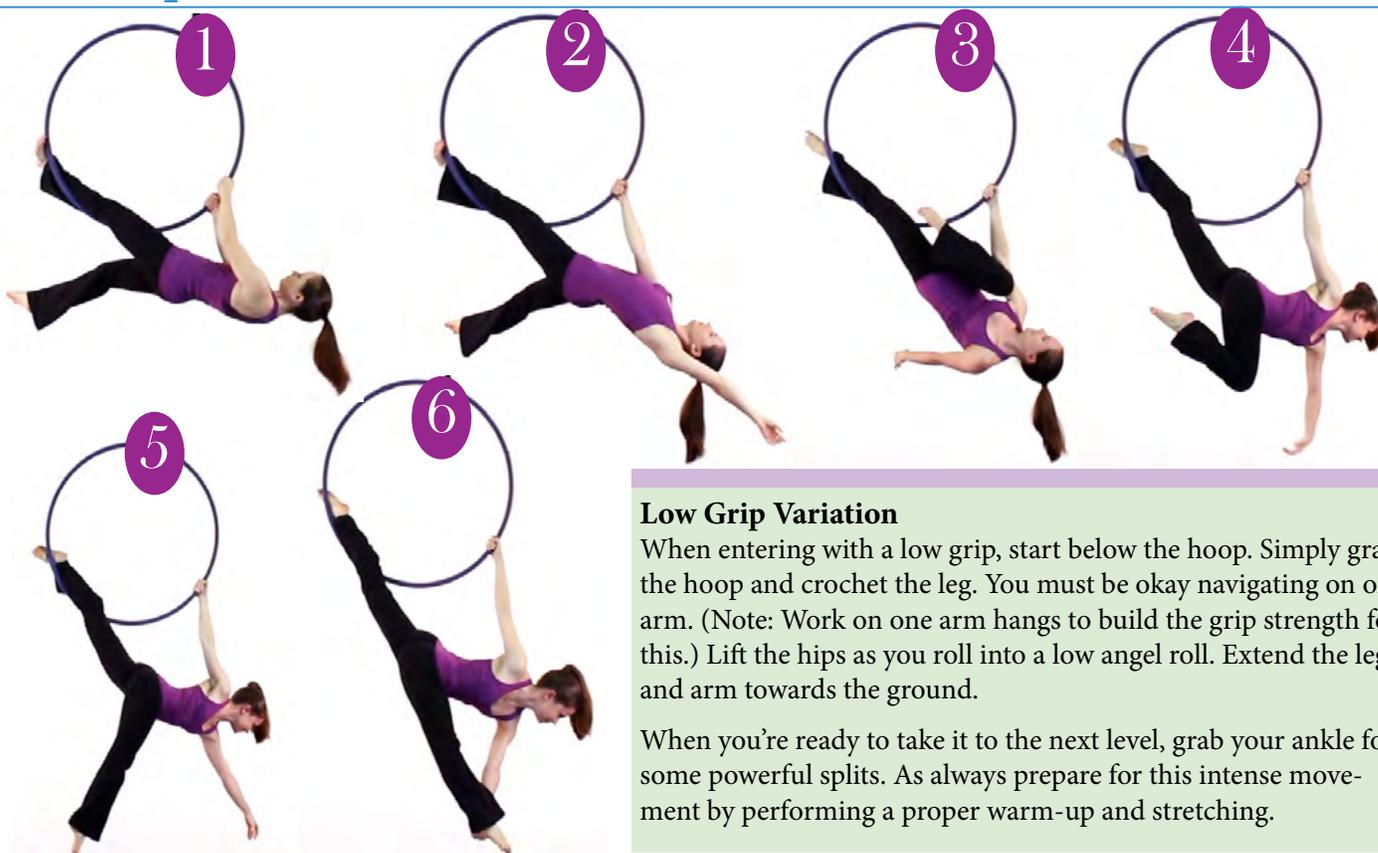
### High Grip Variation

*Make sure to perform a thorough warm-up and stretch before heading into this move.*

From sitting in the hoop, lay back and roll as if rolling into outside mermaid, but remove your top leg and grab your ankle. At this point you should have a secure grip on the hoop with the hand remaining on the hoop.

As you extend into the splits give yourself some lift by pressing into the hoop behind you. This allows for room to sink into the splits once you have your foot in hand. This is especially necessary for less flexible individuals.

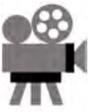
## Low Grip Variation



### Low Grip Variation

When entering with a low grip, start below the hoop. Simply grab the hoop and crochet the leg. You must be okay navigating on one arm. (Note: Work on one arm hangs to build the grip strength for this.) Lift the hips as you roll into a low angel roll. Extend the leg and arm towards the ground.

When you’re ready to take it to the next level, grab your ankle for some powerful splits. As always prepare for this intense movement by performing a proper warm-up and stretching.

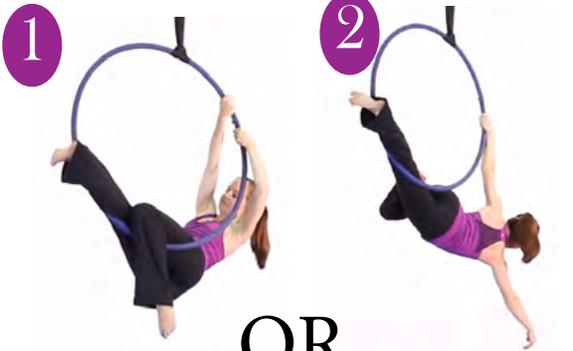


# Inverted Angel Splits

**Prerequisite(s):**  
angel roll

**About this move:** The name of this move is derived from the roots of trapeze. The “inverted” part of the name comes from the fact that the angel shape is inverted by transitioning the free leg on the opposite side of the hoop from where it normally goes. In the “normal” angel position the leg goes out in front of the body and is in front of the apparatus. In the inversion, the leg goes behind the body and behind the apparatus.

Entry Option #1



OR

Entry Option #2



3



4



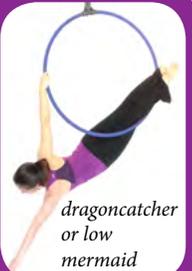
5



## Inverted Angel & Splits

The two entry options stem from the choice of entering from inside the hoop or from under the hoop. In the first option, flex your foot so that it catches as you lean back. Roll to the outside like you would in the normal angel roll. To enter inverted angel, tuck the free leg into your body and send it back behind you. In the second entry option, crochet the foot from a position under the hoop. The second entry typically results in a lower grip on the hoop.

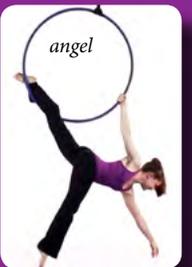
For those who have conquered their splits, grab your foot over your head and extend (photos 3-5). Stay lifted in the hips to keep a secure foot connection on the hoop.



dragoncatcher  
or low  
mermaid



angel roll



angel



inverted  
angel

## EXIT STRATEGY

From the splits or inverted angel, bring your free leg into the hoop. This happens to transition well into candlestick (Volume 1). You can take advantage of that and/or proceed right back up into the hoop.



## TERMINOLOGY REVIEW

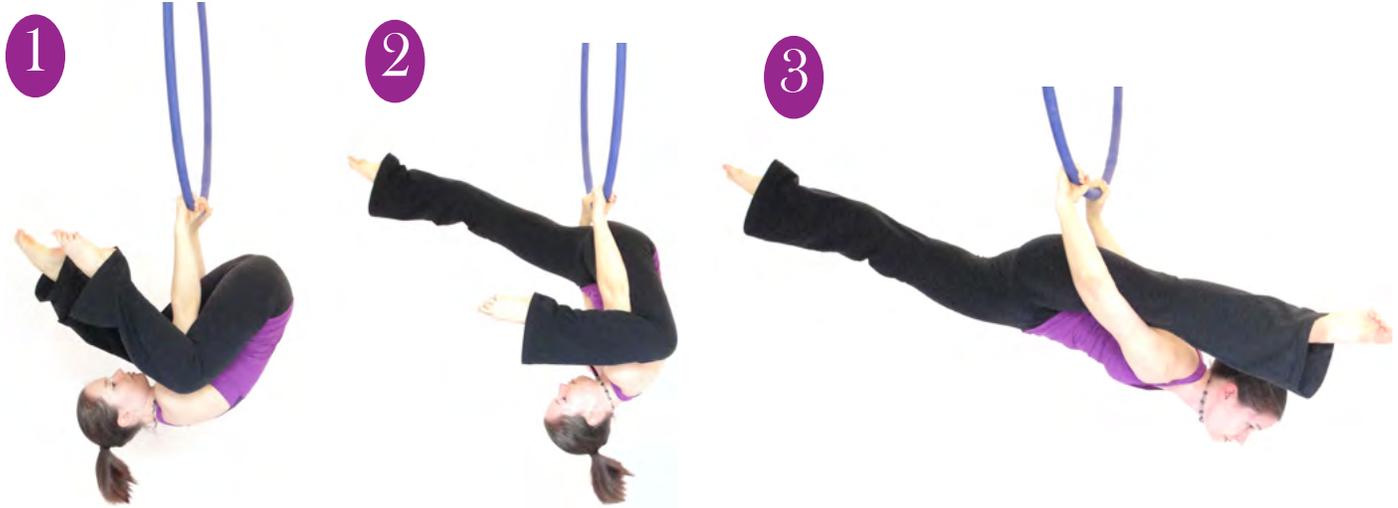
The terminology we use here comes to us from traditional trapeze. The angel is a move that is traditionally done by flipping back with an ankle on the ropes on one side; the opposite arm holding on the bar on the other side. The aerialist tilts back and extends the other leg towards the ground. This move is “inverted” by rolling the free leg under the trapeze bar. These names are highly confusing because the normal angel feels like it is the inversion. Maintaining consistency in naming schemes may not be worth the confusion. We’ll leave that up to you to decide.

# Split Planche



**Prerequisite(s):**  
ball, pike, solid  
shoulder  
positioning

**About this move:** *This movement is one of my personal favorites. It looks like a planche, which is a very impressive and difficult move, but it harvests the power and energy of a split, which looks gorgeous. You get the best of power and flexibility in one pose that looks hard, but is really more about technique than anything else. Don't misunderstand; this pose still takes some talent, but maybe just not as much as you think.*



## Into the Split Planche

Begin inverting like you would for inverted ball or pike position. The major difference is that you need to have one leg between your arms, and the other leg on the outside of your arms (photo 1). Keep rotating backwards as if going into a skin the cat rotation. Hook the outside leg over your arm as you pass your hips under the bar. Straighten this leg whenever you feel like it. If the position is feeling strong and your shoulder positioning is stellar, continue rotating until your body is parallel to the ground, or continue even more so that your legs are vertical. (In photo 3, we demonstrate the horizontal option). Retrograde to exit. It helps to bend the leg near your arm. As you advance in skill, try the entire movement with straight legs including entry and exit.

## TOP BAR BLUNDERS

You can perform the split planche from the top bar just as you do the bottom bar. However, be aware of one major difference: there's a bar that might get in your way. Notice in the pictures on the bottom row, the bar is over the foot. To avoid this awkward position, the leg that wraps the arm remains on the outside of the hoop, as in the picture on the right.



## FULL PLANCHE

The full planche technique is too advanced for this manual, but we at least wanted to give it a cameo mention. Ta-da!





# Skin the Cat

**Prerequisite(s):** solid shoulder strength and stabilization

**About this move:** *Skin the cat* is a favorite amongst school children playing on monkey bars. Most adults have done this move at least once as a child and will remember it well. However, proper shoulder placement must be emphasized to prevent injury to the rotator cuff. The play time habit of dropping off the bar can be risky behavior. If you let go, commit to the release. Do not drop unexpected weight into your shoulders.



## From Pike Under the Bar into Skin the Cat Exercise

Begin in a pike under the hoop. Slowly lower your feet toward the ground, shifting your hips past your arms. Drop your feet towards the ground. The shoulder position is unusual for aerial movement - shoulders are FORWARD (not back).

**Spotting:** Advanced practitioners sometimes spot themselves by placing their feet in elastic slings that are choked on the bar, or perform on a lower hoop so that the tops of the feet push off the ground. However, it is best to have a training partner. Spot the legs by giving gentle support under the heels and at the inner thighs (see photos). This method of spotting encourages proper muscle contraction and discourages improper habits. While bending the knees is not technically incorrect, it could become a bad habit if repeated often enough. It can lead to neglect of training the proper muscles.

## EXIT STRATEGY

To exit, reverse the motion keeping the chin tucked to the chest. Some coaches recommend looking up as you exit, so experiment with both methods to determine which works best for your body.

**Spotting Technique:** If a student gets stuck, you can spot under the feet so that the student can push off your hands. However, understand that this makes the exercise nearly null and void. It works completely different muscles (quadriceps instead of core). The only reason to spot this way is to help a student get unstuck. Train on a low hoop so that beginners also have the option of stepping off to exit. It can be helpful to train the negative, meaning slowly lower down without worrying about coming back up. For safety, heavily support the exit.

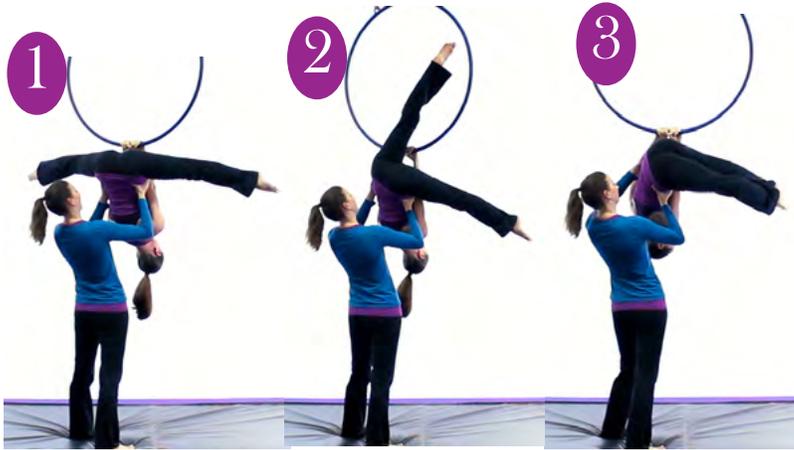


# Meathooks



**Prerequisite(s):**  
inverted straddle, solid shoulder stabilization

**About this move:** *The meathook gets its infamous name from the sensation of the ribs folding onto the arm. It demands a great deal of respect because of the twisting and compression of the ribcage. Solid technique and strength training can make this position more comfortable. One risk of meathooks is over-torquing as this can happen while holding or exiting the meathook. (See the exit strategy box at the bottom of the page).*



## SPOTTING

The spotter should be at the hips and sacrum. When bringing one leg over into the meathook, the spotter helps prevent too much torque from happening. Also, the spotter prevents the student from dropping out of the inversion as they rotate into and out of meathook.



## Straddle Fan into Meathook

Begin in a straddle under the hoop. Use a straight spine by sending the sit bones toward the hoop and pulling the shoulders away from your ears.

Slowly fan one leg behind the hoop like a windshield wiper. Keep the hips high. If your hips begin to drop here, return to your starting straddle position and try again.

Once the leg passes both sides of the hoop, fold over one arm by piking at the hip crease. The arm that isn't needed may start to bend because your weight has been transferred to the other arm.

If your hips are still high and you feel secure, gradually lessen the amount of weight held in the top bent arm. If you feel very strong, you can release the top arm for a one arm meathook, but this is an advanced progression. (See blue box.)

## EXIT STRATEGY

### *Retrograde Exit:*

Rewinding the move builds strength in the shoulders, back and core muscle groups.

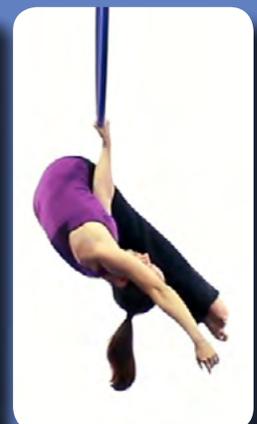
### *Meathook Descent:*

While this method is the easiest way out (and many students pop out of the move when first learning it), training a slow descent makes for a great strength workout. Don't over-torque the legs to the side.



## PROGRESSIONS

Once you have meathooks 100% mastered (up and down from a dead hang), your next challenge will be developing into one arm meathooks from the ground or dead hang. It helps to hold your own wrist and bend your legs as you develop into the one arm meathook. It's not easy.

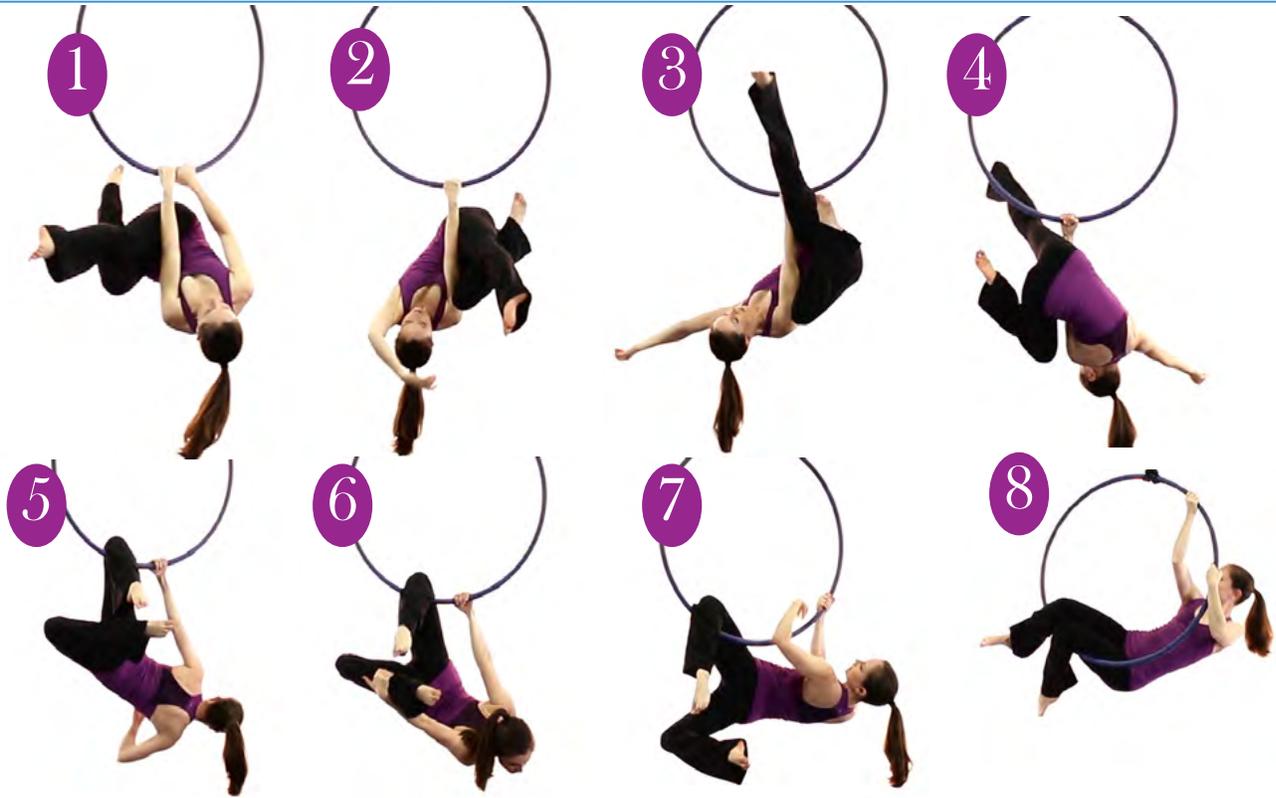




# Meathook Mount

**Prerequisite(s):**  
inverted straddle, solid shoulder stabilization

**About this move:** *The meathook mount is executed by hooking a leg onto the hoop from a meathook. Doing this places you in an outside knee hang. Since we didn't cover the outside knee hang too extensively in Volume 1, we thought we would elaborate here. The meathook mount can be as simple as the leg hook into a pose, or as complex as following your flow by climbing up the side of the hoop to arrive in sitting in the hoop.*



## Meathook Mount

The pictures demonstrate a version with one arm, but you can and should keep both hands on when first practicing this mount. From a meathook under the bottom bar, take the leg closest to the ceiling and lift it up, keeping your hips as close to your arm as possible. Bend this leg over the hoop. In the method pictured (photos 4-5), the hand on the hoop does a trade off for the other hand in order to be in a more comfortable position for an outside knee hook.

Once the leg is over the hoop, you are in an outside knee hook. To continue into the hoop, climb up and add your second leg into the hoop next to the first. You can also shift into a double knee hang and climb up from there.

## PLAY TIME

We very briefly introduced the outside knee hang in Volume 1, but not enough to really play with it. Here are some ideas to get you going now that you know an awesome entry into the outside knee hook. Enjoy exploring your own shapes.





# Heel Hang a.k.a. Talon Hang

**Prerequisite(s):**  
inverted pike,  
strong hamstrings

**About this move:** Unfortunately, the legs often get left behind in many training regimens for aerial. The best case is to train every muscle in your body. Training activity-specific muscles helps get the body ready for aerial, but cross-training is just as important for stability and muscular balance. If you do train your whole body, you may find yourself better prepared to tackle moves such as this one, which targets the hamstrings.

## Training the Heel Hang

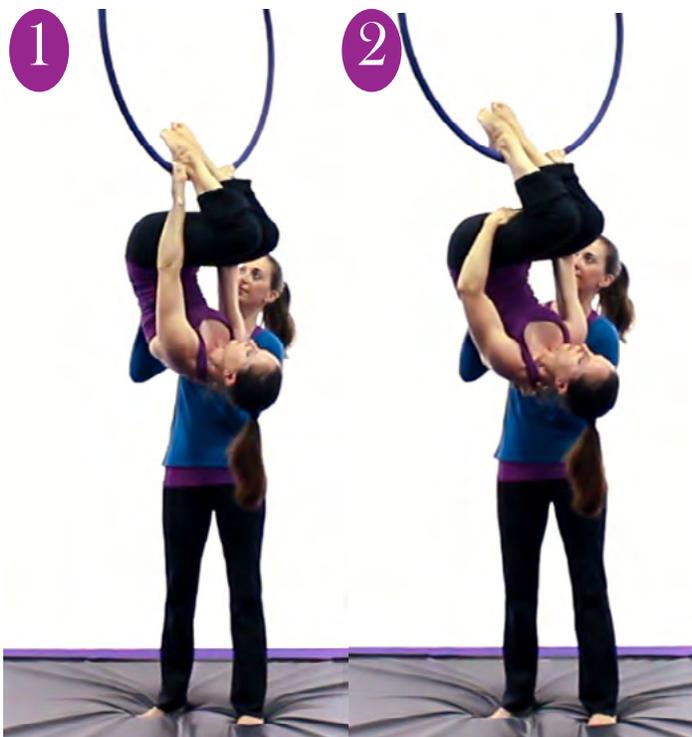
Begin in a pike inversion under the bar.

Place both Achilles tendons on the bar, reaching the toes toward the opposite wall. Point the feet fiercely so the heel bones create a hook. Some people like to place high and slide down into the position to create more friction with folds of skin pressing into the bar.

Keeping the knees very bent, gradually shift one hand from the bar to the back of one leg. Hug tightly. This is a good step to stop at when training. Practice transitioning one hand at a time to the back of the thigh.

If you are comfortable here (with your spotter standing by), repeat the same motion with the other arm so both arms are hugging the backs of the legs. Return one hand at a time to the bar.

**Spotters:** Spot under the head and neck. This includes the upper back area.



## TRAINING TIPS

My favorite training tool for the heel hang uses span sets choked to the bar. Invert below the hoop on the span sets. Set your ankles in place and do lifts. Pull the sit bones to the heels. Lower and repeat. Your hand grip assists as necessary. Bend at the elbows as you pull up. Extend at the elbows to lower.

It is important to train the hamstrings for aerial. Hamstring engagement is needed all over the place in hoop. Plus, you'll maintain a balanced body by working all major muscles of the body.



## SPOTTING TIPS

It can be helpful to use a span set or other sewn runner around the hoop to help a student self-spot in addition to having a spotter. A wonderful training exercise is the act of transitioning each hand one at a time to the runner and back to the hoop, to the runner and back to the hoop. Remind the student to keep the chin tucked to the chest. In case they pop out of the move the chin tuck will prevent a head first landing.





# Toe Hang

**Prerequisite(s):**  
hip hang,  
inverted pike with  
straight arms

**About this move:** *This move can cause a great deal of pain in the initial training stages. It hurts. And thus, it is one of the reasons that performing this move will gain you an automatic respect boost from aerialists and all other audience members who witness you perform it. Hats off to those who toe hang. Always have spotting options available, or just keep holding on with the hands until you are very confident with the foot placement.*



## Toe Hang from Hip Hang

Begin in a hip hang with a standard grip. Some people may want to flip the hands to a reverse grip, but the toe hang is much harder to set that way because of the elbow's outwards bending. It has the effect of decreasing the power of the shoulder stabilizers.

Slowly start rolling out of the hip hang, lowering down to the ankles with control. Flexing the feet, place the bar on the skin just above the ankle (think about your last sock tan and go there). Slide the bar against your skin and settle your weight right at the ankle joint. Keep holding onto the bar while in the toe hang position to build up tolerance to the pain.



## SPOTTING TIPS

As always, a spotter's main concern is protecting the head and neck. As the student sets the toe hang, have one hand supporting the upper back. The student may or may not need you to take their weight as they roll down. Remind the student to keep the chin tucked to the chest, because in case they pop out of the move the chin tuck will prevent a head first landing. Runners or span sets are great support tools for the student to hold as they roll down into the straight body position.



## EXIT STRATEGY

Climb the leg to return your hands to the bar.  
Point the toes and lower down.

**Spotter Tip:** If a student is not accustomed to working with straight arms, make sure that they are not micro-bending the elbows here. This leads to pain in the front of the shoulder. Arms straight!



# Chapter Two: In the Hoop

*"In the hoop" is a place I love.  
You're not below. You're not above.  
Should you get too far out  
Please do not pout.  
Spotters will help give you a shove.*

## About This Chapter

---

Chapter two opens with the side ball. The side ball gives us a chance to revisit a little hoop theory that we talked about in the opening pages of Volume 1. Remember how we discussed the idea that moves can be rotated 360 degrees in space to create new moves? Well, the side ball is simply a hip hang only you must fight gravity to "hang" in the position. Here's your challenge should you choose to accept it: how high up the hoop can you rotate a hip hang? Can you go all the way to a 180 degree rotation of a hip hang? What would that look like anyway? Have fun with your hoop theory challenge for the day.

Next, we cover the flag. The flag is the name for the position of the body where one arm is holding strong in a vertical position above the head and the other arm (or foot) is holding the apparatus directly to the side of the body. The flag is a classic move on any aerial apparatus. It is named for the fact that the body then looks like a flag waving on a flag pole. The ultimate version of flag is done on a pole where the entire body is horizontal. This is not possible with apparatuses that move in space, so we perform the next closest thing.

Other moves in this chapter share similar principles with the side ball in that they take familiar moves and rotate them up the side of the hoop. This includes side back balance, which is similar to taking back balance up the side of the hoop, and the Leana which is like taking a foot block up and rotating it sideways in the hoop. This one can be quite painful on the back and it also greatly varies with hoop size. You may find this one impossible on the particular size of hoop you work on.

After that, we cover splits, splits, and more splits. There are splits to be done from the top bar of the hoop. We have the clock series, prow and lever splits. We cover horizontal splits, and lastly shoulder stand, which includes some more splits. If splits are not your friend, you have two options: 1) Get friendly with the splits. Cozy on up in some comfy stretches and sleep there. (don't really) OR 2) You can find your own style that works just fine without the splits. Splits are over-rated and over-performed anyhow. You don't need 'em. Rock the stag and other artistic leg positions and movements.

At times, it can get a tad boring to watch someone run through a series of poses no matter what they do. Remember that it is the transitions (plug for chapter five) and how you express yourself in and through a pose that ultimately makes it interesting. How fast you move, how slow you move, how you vary the quality, all of these decisions makes a huge impact on a piece. Once you get the hang of poses, don't let them be poses anymore. Let them be places to pause to take a breath while you dance.

# Side Ball



**Prerequisite(s):**  
press support  
moves

**About this move:** *This movement comes from the choreographic theory we first talked about in Volume 1. All moves on the hoop are theoretically possible through 360 degrees of rotation. The question simply becomes "how?". Some of those questions are easier to answer than others. This move is akin to the arrow (leg block from hip hang) that was presented in Volume 1. It just happens to be tilted on the horizontal axis.*



## Into the Horizontal Arrow Then Side Ball

From sitting in the hoop, lean off to one side and place one foot at 9 o'clock. With one hand near the top of the hoop (1 o'clock), pull yourself up so that you can wedge the hoop into the crease of your body. Press your foot into the hoop at 9 o'clock and use your hands to pull your body into a horizontal plane. Once you have your torso set in space, your top arm should be straight. Bring your bottom arm to the hoop below you. If your hand block is strong, release the 9 o'clock leg and enter the ball press support. If you have enough stability in the press support, release the top hand. Keep the bottom arm straight while in the block.



## COSTUME CONSIDERATIONS

When you choreograph an aerial piece, sometimes it is driven by character and costume, and sometimes it is driven by shapes and moves. Depending on the priorities of a piece, you may find yourself forced to either limit your costume choices or your move choices. For example, one exit from ball is to slide down into hip hang. This would work best with a costume that is slick and allows for a smooth transition. If your costume will be sticky and get caught on the hoop as you slide, you may want to find another way out of side ball or find a new costume. Ahh the choices to make!

## EXIT STRATEGY

To exit, soften your grip and allow your body to slide down the hoop into a hip hang.





# Flag

**Prerequisite(s):**  
grip strength

**About this move:** A flag can be thought of in one of two ways: Your body is the flag waving in the wind while the apparatus is the pole. Or, as sometimes may be the case of a moving apparatus, your body is the pole and the aerial apparatus is the flag. The ultimate flag position is the former. It is performed on a pole with the body completely horizontal. Here, we do some variations that are all known to be part of the flag family.



**SPOTTING TIPS**  
To spot this position, a hug technique is often beneficial on the student's legs. The student might miscalculate their ability to hold with one arm at the top of the hoop or allow the bottom arm to slip, surprising them. If they drop, guide them to the ground. Remember the goal is not to catch them, but to guide them to a safe landing.

## Flag on a Double Point

Two common ways to enter flag are from splits down and sitting. Here, we demonstrate the latter. Begin sitting in the hoop. Shift so that your hips are no longer centered on the bar. Place one hand on the top bar at 12 o'clock with the thumb facing downward. Place your other hand on the bottom bar near 6 o'clock with the thumb in either an over- or an under-hand grip. Engage the top shoulder firmly and slide out away from the hoop. (Your one arm hang strength training will come in handy during this move.) Use tension in the bottom arm to send the hoop away from you. Both arms should be straight, and your body should be underneath the hoop (like wearing a large halo).



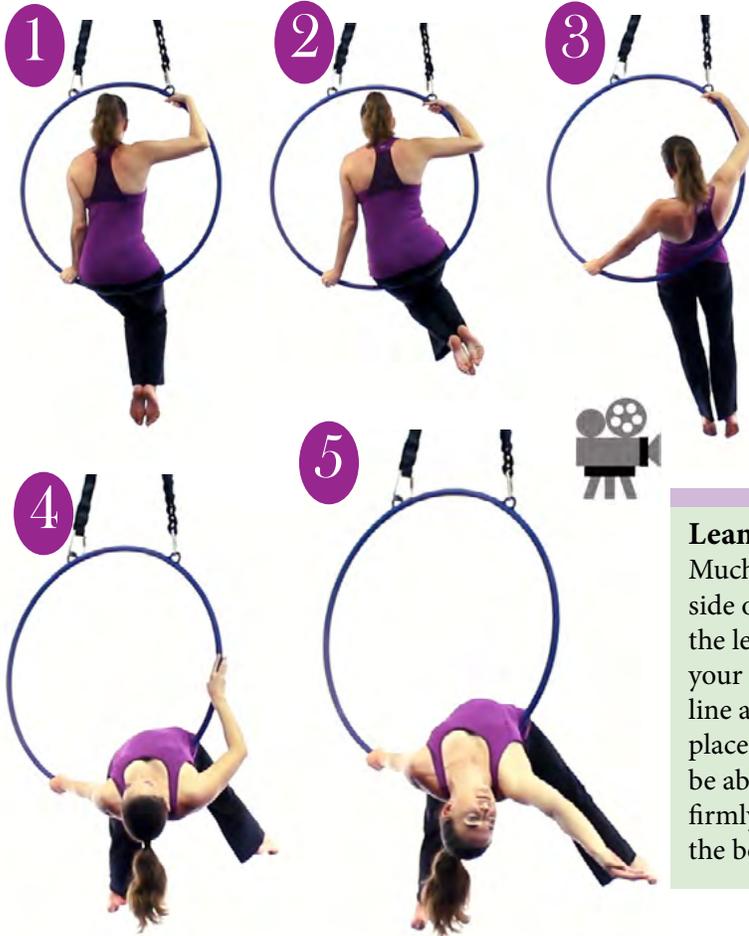
## Flag on a Single Point

Photos 4-6 demonstrate flag on a single point hoop with a hand loop. In photo 4, I am transitioning from splits down into flag. Placing a hand loop on a single tabbed hoop is one way to accomplish flag on a single point. Another way is to buy a hoop with a small space at 12 o'clock built into the rig point/tab. If you are in love with flag and with single point hoop, you may consider searching out a vendor that offers this option. If you have just a plain old regular single point hoop, photos 7 & 8 show one version of flag you may substitute. You can also consider holding the rope/span set above the hoop with the top hand instead of the top bar, but you have to feel comfortable holding the rigging at the same time you are holding the bottom bar. It would help to have a small hoop. Alternatively, if you do choose to go for the flag variation in photos 7-8, turn to chapter five to check out a transition around the hoop from here.

# Side Back Balance & Leana

**Prerequisite(s):**  
dragonfly, back  
balance,  
strong back

**About this move:** On this page are two moves that only differ by a leg. The side back balance is a cross between dragonfly and back balance from Volume 1. It is around the softer part of the back, which makes this position more vulnerable to spinal tweaks. The Leana is a wedge based move requiring the entire body to push outward for stabilization. It can be a back-wrecker to say the least. Exercise caution on these high-risk moves.



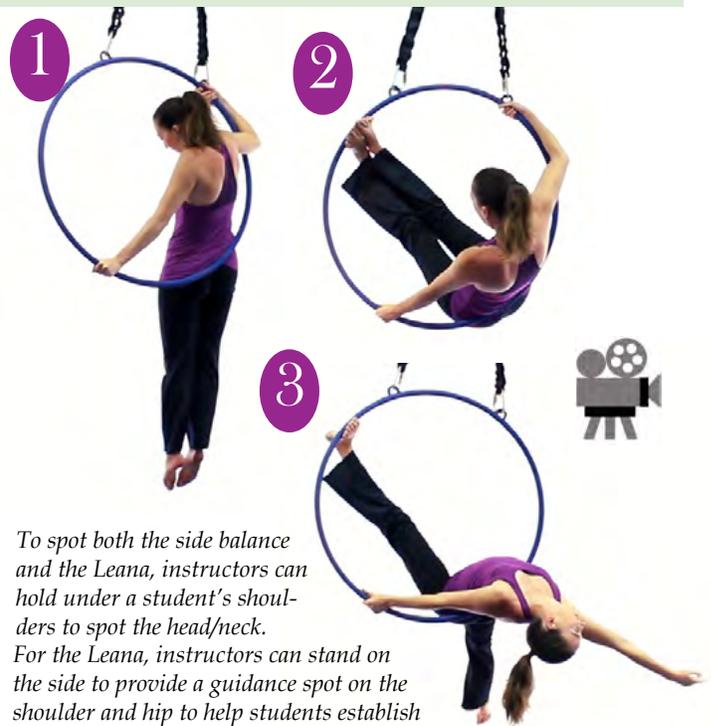
## Side Back Balance (photos 1-5 left)

Begin sitting in the hoop. Place one hand high (in the direction you are going) and the other hand low on the bar. Slide your hips forward off the bar and sideways so the side of the hoop cradles your body.

Lean backwards by pushing with your high hand, shifting the hoop onto your low back/sacrum (photo 4). If you feel stable here, release your high hand and lower the arm beside your ear (photo 5). Being high on the side of the hoop helps with weight distribution around the hoop. Keep the bottom arm straight and strong as it provides a press support.

## Leana from Sitting (photos 1-3 below)

Much like the side back balance, lift and shift the pelvis up one side of the hoop. As you lower the buttocks off the bar, pike the legs, flex the feet and place the toes on the bar opposite your torso around 10 o'clock. Your body will create a diagonal line across the hoop. Depending on the size of your hoop, foot placement could vary. If your hoop is too small, you will not be able to straighten your legs. Actively press the bottom foot firmly into the hoop. Remove the top foot and top hand. Open the body and relax, maintaining an active bottom hand.



## EXIT STRATEGY

*Foot on the bar exit:*

Return the free hand to the hoop. Place one foot in the hoop, then the other. A natural and common transition is to enter man in the moon from here.

*Roll to hip hang exit:*

Return your free hand to the hoop. Use this hand to push the bar away from you and roll toward your low hand. Pike the near leg under the bar to shift your weight forward, allowing you to lower into a hip hang. This move can be done slowly or quickly.



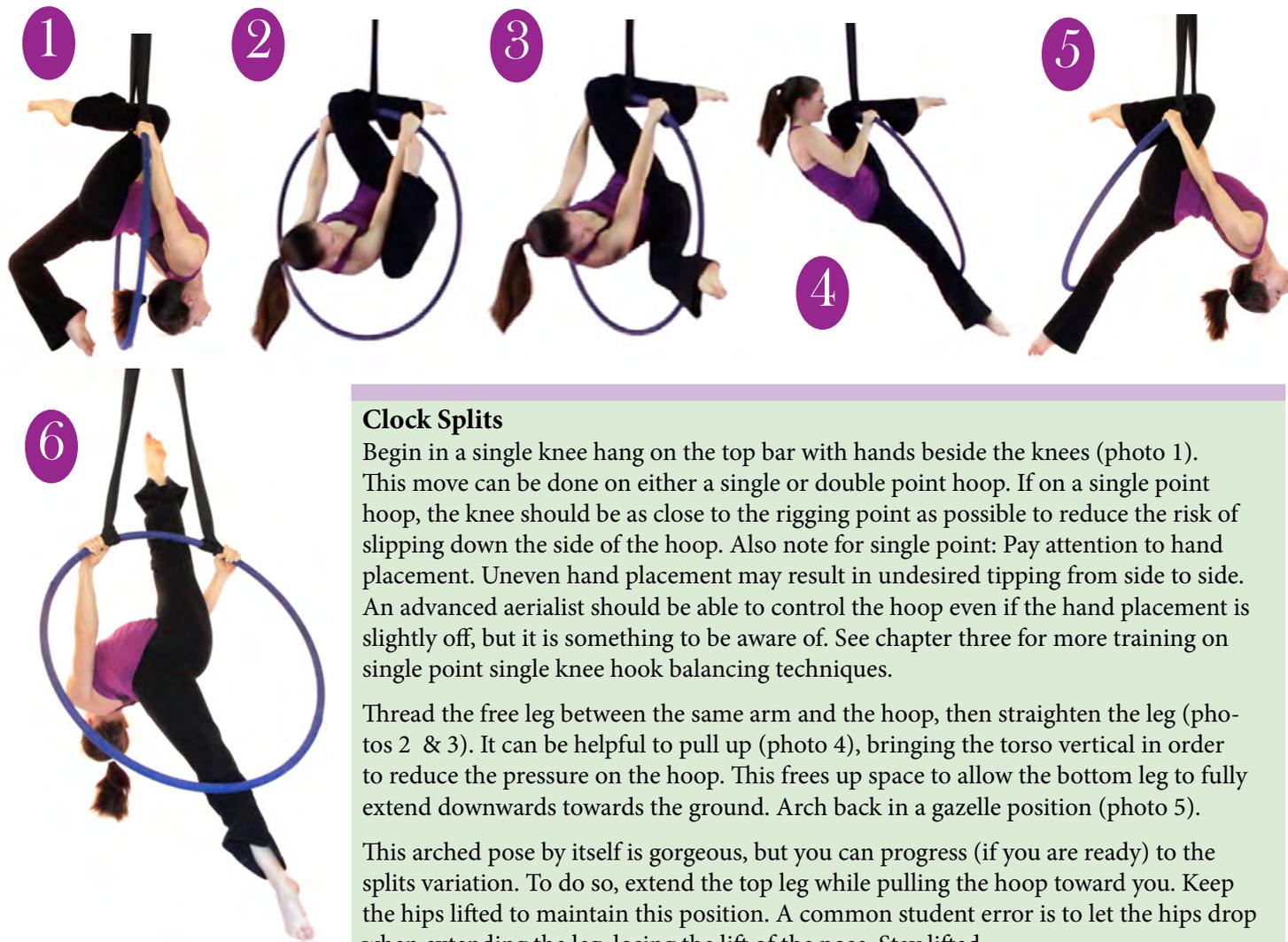
To spot both the side balance and the Leana, instructors can hold under a student's shoulders to spot the head/neck. For the Leana, instructors can stand on the side to provide a guidance spot on the shoulder and hip to help students establish their own individual balance point.



# Clock Splits

**Prerequisite(s):** single knee hang with hands on top bar

**About this move:** Splits in aerial pieces are always impressive. This version gets its name because the leg action is the same as the circular motion of a hand on a clock. Work on the variation that concludes with a gazelle (a.k.a. stag) position prior to attempting the full splits variation. It can be tempting to jump steps but you will miss out on the joys of discovering nuances if you skip steps. Don't rush the process. Take your time.



## Clock Splits

Begin in a single knee hang on the top bar with hands beside the knees (photo 1). This move can be done on either a single or double point hoop. If on a single point hoop, the knee should be as close to the rigging point as possible to reduce the risk of slipping down the side of the hoop. Also note for single point: Pay attention to hand placement. Uneven hand placement may result in undesired tipping from side to side. An advanced aerialist should be able to control the hoop even if the hand placement is slightly off, but it is something to be aware of. See chapter three for more training on single point single knee hook balancing techniques.

Thread the free leg between the same arm and the hoop, then straighten the leg (photos 2 & 3). It can be helpful to pull up (photo 4), bringing the torso vertical in order to reduce the pressure on the hoop. This frees up space to allow the bottom leg to fully extend downwards towards the ground. Arch back in a gazelle position (photo 5).

This arched pose by itself is gorgeous, but you can progress (if you are ready) to the splits variation. To do so, extend the top leg while pulling the hoop toward you. Keep the hips lifted to maintain this position. A common student error is to let the hips drop when extending the leg, losing the lift of the pose. Stay lifted.

## EXIT STRATEGIES

*Exit #1 (not pictured):* Slide the top leg down until the back of the knee lands on the bottom bar. Bend that knee to catch the bar.

*Exit #2 (pictured):* Bend both knees to create a stag position. Leg the bottom leg pop over the bottom bar by bending it enough to send it through the hoop. Eventually, return to a knee hang on the top bar.

**WARNING:** Use caution when performing the second exit on hoops that are small and heavy. The hoop may collide with your head, resulting in unpleasant sensations and a trip to the hospital. Use the assistance of a spotter for safety.

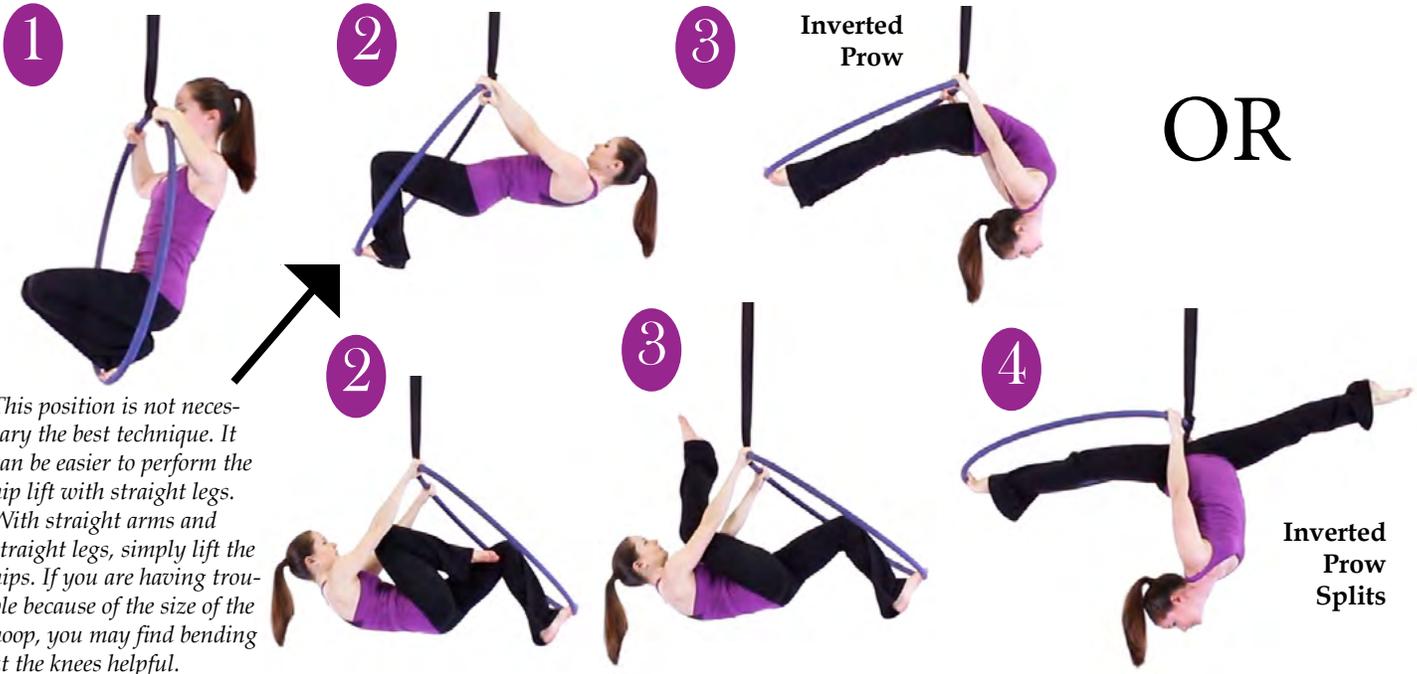




# Inverted Prow & Splits

**Prerequisite(s):**  
flexible back,  
splits under the  
bar

**About this move:** *The name makes more sense if you are familiar with the regular prow, but as this move is easier than the prow, we show inverted prow before we introduce prow in this course. Prow will come later in this chapter. For now, enjoy being upside-down. Extend one leg out and enter the inverted prow splits. Tip: Make sure that you are warmed up for both the back bendy prow and the splits (if you are going that route).*



*This position is not necessarily the best technique. It can be easier to perform the hip lift with straight legs. With straight arms and straight legs, simply lift the hips. If you are having trouble because of the size of the hoop, you may find bending at the knees helpful.*

## Inverted Prow

Begin in a toe squat on the lower bar with hands holding the top bar. Lean back as you straighten your arms and legs. Lift the hips up to the top bar.

Once the student is in the move, the safety spot for this move is at the feet to ensure that the feet do not slide off the bar. The ideal aesthetic choice is to have a pointed foot, with the ball of the foot on the bar. Grip with those toes. If this is too advanced, the foot may remain flexed.

## Inverted Prow Splits

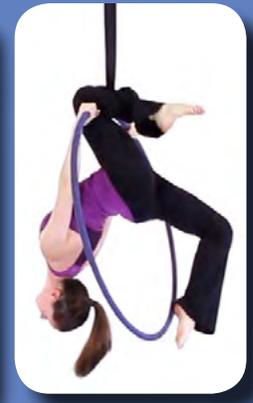
Thread one leg over the top bar as you go into prow. Let gravity help you out as you invert into a split hang.

## ALTERNATE ENDINGS

These transitions are especially fantastic if you are in a splits mood. It's just one gorgeous split after another!

In the first transition (pictured in the top row), carefully release the bottom leg from the hoop. The word carefully is of paramount importance, largely dependent on the size and weight of your hoop. If you have a solid steel hoop, that's a lot of hoop dropping down towards the earth. Ease into that transition by lowering the hoop slightly, then releasing the foot. Another reason to lower gradually: if the hoop is of the right diameter, it is possible the hoop can make contact with your head. Not a good day. My hoop is of said diameter, and so I am ultra-cautious about this transition.

The bottom two pictures portray another transition option. You can use this position to go into clock splits. Enjoy!





# Inverted Prow with Hooked Knee

**Prerequisite(s):**  
inverted prow

**About this move:** *When this manual was in the process of being created, originally this page was separated in two. One page was in the single tabbed chapter and one page was in the double tabbed chapter. However, during the last phase of editing, we decided that it seemed to make more sense to include these variations together next to the inverted prow so that you can compare and contrast their similarities. Enjoy.*



**Inverted Prow with Hooked Knee**  
From sitting on either single or double tabbed hoop, press one foot into the bottom bar and lift your second leg over the top bar close to the tab. Hold tightly as you arch back.  
If you are on a double tabbed hoop, it is helpful to transfer your hands to the ropes. Accomplish this by lifting up and firming your core as you transfer one hand at a time up to the ropes. Release one hand if desired (see purple box below).



**EXERCISE IN RELEASING A HAND**  
Get your core workout by maintaining balance with released hands. Exercise great caution. On a single tabbed hoop, if you release only one hand, the remaining hand performs a delicate balance with the knee on the opposite side. Together, you must work to maintain a stable hoop. The hoop is very prone to side-to-side tipping here.

unseen hand is still holding the top bar.

unseen hand is still holding.



# Prow via Skin the Cat



**Prerequisite(s):**  
skin the cat

**About this move:** *The prow is similar to a skin the cat, but instead of hanging at the end of the move you end up supported by your knees on the bottom of the hoop. We've named it after figurehead/woman carved into the prow of a ship. Other names you might hear in the aerial community include figurehead and hood ornament, all capturing the essence of this shape. Feel free to call it whatever you would like.*

## Prow

Begin sitting on the hoop with the hands in a standard grip at 11 and 1 o'clock. Your hands could be closer or further away depending on your comfort level, but the important part is that they must be wide enough to fit your hips fully through as you rotate your hips over your head.

Lift your hips off the bottom bar and tuck into a ball, inverting as you go. Depending on the size of your hoop, you may have to tuck very tightly and even pull up in your shoulders to avoid hitting your head on the bottom bar.

Slowly lower your knees or shins onto the bottom bar. Place the bar on the soft tissue below the kneecaps and above the leg bones, or place the bar on your shins.

Once the knees are in place, arch outward so your belly moves toward the ground. (photo 4)

**Spotting Tip:** It can be difficult to steer the hoop so that the knees land in the right spot. Spotters assist to make sure the hoop doesn't steer too far forward. The student should have enough strength to navigate through a skin the cat so they are ready to navigate the learning process, which always requires an extra dose of energy.



## EXIT STRATEGY

For starters, return to sitting by coming back to your knees and making your way carefully back into the hoop to sitting. (See pictures below.)



For upper intermediate and advanced aerialists, a proper challenge is performing the retrograde of this movement (not pictured). The key is not letting the grip change while you perform prow. If the grip slides out of position, rotating back to ball will be near impossible. As you forward roll inside the hoop, be mindful of the bottom bar near your head as you return to sitting.



# Lever Splits

**Prerequisite(s):**  
courage  
core strength

**About this move:** Below we have pictured the steps for the lever splits. This position is so similar to skin the cat splits, that we are going to include the explanation for skin the cat splits on this page, even though we are not fully demonstrating the move. This move has the same end result as the skin the cat splits but uses a different grip (and therefore feels like a very different move!). The grip feels a lot like steering a giant car.

## Lever Splits

From a toe squat, duck under the top bar to move your head in front of the hoop. Slowly shift your arms in front of the hoop, moving one arm at a time.

Place the hands at 11 and 1 o'clock using a standard grip. Since you are already in a toe squat, you could leave your feet as is or switch one foot to place the arch on the bar.

Lean forward and down, threading one leg out of the hoop. As you invert, extend the leg into space.



**WARNING:**  
Releasing the foot will likely result with the hoop colliding with your head. Spot that hoop!

## Prow into Splits (Skin the Cat Splits)

Use the same entrance as prow, ending with your knees on the bottom bar.

Place one foot on the bottom bar. Some people prefer to place the ball of the foot on the bar, while others place the arch on the bar. It all depends on what part of the foot feels more secure (or aesthetically pleasing) holding the bottom bar away from your head under tension.

Once the foot is firmly in place, lean forward and down while threading the free leg out of the hoop. As you invert, maintain tension and balance by pulling the hoop towards you with your hands while pushing the hoop away from you with your foot. Note: This ends in the same position as photo 5 except the hands are in a different grip. The grip may vary from narrow to extra wide. This will be a matter of personal preference, ability, and style choice.

Slowly extend your free leg out into a straight line. **Caution:** It is all too easy let the foot slip, colliding hoop and head. **Spotters:** Place your hand to block the hoop from hitting the head in case the foot slips off the hoop.

## EXIT STRATEGY

For either lever splits or skin the cat splits, you can use the same exit. Retrograde the leg back into the hoop, placing both feet on the bottom bar of the hoop. Bend your knees and sink your pelvis through the center of the hoop. Arch your upper back on the top bar, bending your elbows. Carefully change your grip, walking your torso down into the hoop.





# Shoulder Stand

**Prerequisite(s):** the right size hoop, advanced core control

**About this move:** Most moves on hoop can be adapted to fit a variety of sizes. A performer might prefer one size over others, but it is rare to find moves dependent on the size of the hoop down to an inch. Most moves have a range that works. For the shoulder stand, that range is very small. The diameter of the hoop must fit the aerialist's body from base of the neck to the back of the knees. Talk about being picky! Sheesh.



## Shoulder Stand

Begin in a knee hang. Open your hips and place your shoulders over the bottom bar. You may need to go find a smaller hoop for this move to work. (You can cheat a little by widening the knees, bringing the torso down an inch.) Carefully release one leg and thread it through the hoop to behind the body (photo 2 & 3). To protect the base of the neck, press your shoulders into the hoop. The more surface area pressing into the hoop, the less pressure there will be on any one point.

Another position is the straddle. Hold the sides of the hoop with your hands as you transition from the single knee hook. One leg remains behind the hoop and one leg remains in front in order to counterbalance weight. Press both legs into the hoop to maintain control. With hands on the hoop, rotate hips sideways to enter a splits variation. Also, try a stag with a part of the leg pressing on the hoop.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Continue to work with counterbalance all the way until you return to the double knee hang on the top bar. From there, play with exit variations.





# Pillar (Shoulder Stand) & Tilted Arrow

**Prerequisite(s):** the right size hoop, advanced core control

**About this move:** The pillar is also called an arrow shoulder stand, but because there are already so many arrows in this curriculum, we decided to call it something else to avoid confusion. Pillar can be thought of as the vertical hang of shoulder stands. The other move on this page is the tilted arrow. Now, this one actually is an arrow because you are holding onto the hoop with two hands (i.e. it's not a shoulder stand, etc) and both legs point in the same direction. You can keep the body straight as a board or slightly arched so it looks like you're diving.

## Pillar

The pillar is accomplished through a delicate balance where the legs are placed on either side of the top bar.

From a knee hang, prepare the shoulders on the hoop. If you are on a single point hoop, hook one leg on the rope and thread the second leg behind the hoop. Straighten both legs. If you are a double point hoop, perform a more advanced entry using the principles learned on the previous page.



## Tilted Arrow

### Tilted Arrow

Start in a double knee hang on the top bar. Slide one hand to around 4 o'clock. (A bit of trial and error will reveal the best placement for your proportions.) Hold the hoop steady with your hands as you thread the appropriate leg through the hoop. Press the top of the leg into the hoop. Brace your body with straight arms and a firm, unwavering core as you carefully lift your top leg out of the knee hook. Straighten through the entire body. Avoid dipping in the middle unless you are doing the purposeful dive position shown in photo 4.



### EXIT STRATEGY

Slide the legs down into inside lion.



# Swallow



**Prerequisite(s):**  
high back  
flexibility

**About this move:** *This move is no doubt the most back bendy move in this manual series. Make sure that you fully warm up not only the back, but the shoulders as well. Sometimes, students don't realize how much shoulder flexibility has to do with back bends. Shoulders matter just as much as the back. Those hip flexors also play a role and need to be opened up along with everything else. Always warm-up the body prior to stretching.*



## Swallow

Start with the top of your ankles on the lower bar and hands comfortably gripping the top bar in an overhand grip. Lean forward, letting the hoop drift behind you with your ankles on it. Gradually straighten the arms. Keep a space bubble between your ears and shoulders.

The last and most challenging part of this move is going from photo 2 to photo 3 where you must straighten the legs. I'll admit that I could not accomplish this without the help of a little cheat. I cushioned my ankles with padding because I couldn't handle the pain on my ankles. With the cushion, I was able to pull and press my way into the full sparrow position. I also cheated by performing this move on a huge hoop. I normally perform on a 32 or 33 inch hoop. This hoop is 39 inches!

In this context, another word for "cheat" is "taking care of my body and still getting the look I want". :)

## EXIT STRATEGY

To exit, carefully bend the knees and bend the elbows as you pull back to sitting. I like to keep the feel of the back-bend as long as possible, so I will normally lead with my head as I travel back into the hoop. You can see this in the picture on the left below.



## EXPLORING THEORY

Let me start by giving you a critical thinking assignment: Compare and contrast the position on the left with the position of swallow.

I would say that the two positions share the same concept of hands on top bar, ankles/feet on lower bar and the pelvis is far away from the hoop. It's like doing downward dog and a back bend. They are both moves where all fours are on the ground (or on the circumference of the hoop). Up next: Compare and contrast the two moves on the right. How do they compare to the ideas behind the swallow position?





# Front Balance Bird's Nest

**Prerequisite(s):**  
high back flexibility

**About this move:** It looks like a bird's nest, but doesn't feel like a bird's nest! There's no hook of the ankles in this bird's nest. This move requires some back flexibility, so take some time to warm-up. For those who are extremely bendy, this can be a fabulous move in which to show off your talent. While in this pose, bend one or both feet to your forehead. Create a comical effect by tapping your feet on your head. A sure crowd-pleaser.



## Front Balance Bird's Nest

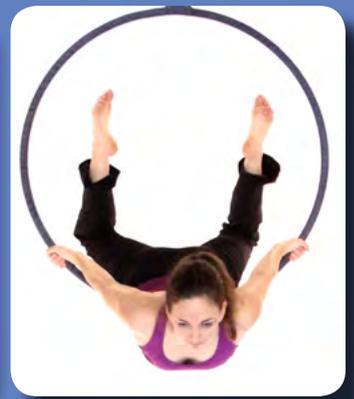
Begin in front balance. Place the hands at around 4 and 8 o'clock with the thumbs forward. Hand placement will depend on your body proportions, back flexibility, and size of the hoop. There is a small margin of allowed error in hand placement. (See the blue box at right.)

Slowly lean forward, maintaining enough tension so your hips remain in contact with the bar.

Thread both legs through to the front side of the hoop, and straighten the knees. Keep the chest lifted throughout the move.

## HAND PLACEMENT

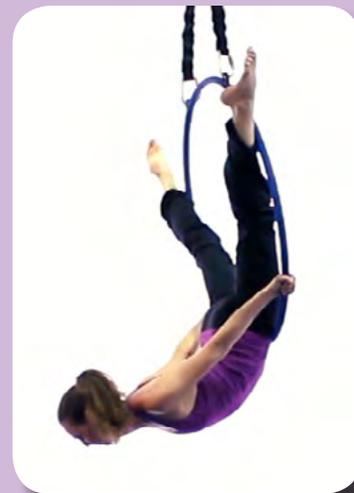
There is a Goldilocks effect on the hand placement. If you have the hands too wide, you will have trouble threading the feet through the hoop. If the hands are too close, you will certainly be able to thread the legs through, and you might just come right out of the hoop. Find the spot in the middle where it's just right.



## EXIT STRATEGY

Bend the knees and allow gravity to guide your body back into a ball over the bar (in hip hang position).

*Advanced Exit:* If you are super advanced, you can roll feet first out of this move by simply dropping the feet forward over your head. Keep the back bend as you roll (no bend at the hips). This can be difficult to control. Exercise caution.



# Horizon Splits



**Prerequisite(s):**  
strong arm-core  
connection

**About this move:** Another impressive split, this move requires a lot of brute force! Full body tension and pulling (or pushing depending on how you think of it) against the hoop keep this split in place. This powerful move can be performed on either a single tabbed hoop or a double tabbed hoop. If you are working on a single point hoop, it usually works best to place the top hand slightly closer to the back leg, just behind the tab.



## Horizon Splits

Begin in a knee hang on the top bar. Leave enough space for one hand to fit between the knees. Place one hand between the knees and the other hand on the bottom bar (photo 3). This placement automatically turns you toward one side. The leg you are facing will become the front leg in your split. Alternate sliding your legs down the hoop, stopping just before you get to the horizon line of the hoop.

Pull like crazy with your arms. Your front leg should arrive at 3 o'clock and the back leg at 9 o'clock, creating a horizontal line. Just before your back leg reaches horizontal, rotate your hips so the back leg locks in place. If you don't rotate soon enough, you will slide out of position. This is another reason to learn and practice the exit prior to learning the full split.

If you have a sticky hoop, you may have to do some extra weight shifts to get into place. The good thing about a sticky hoop is that the position will be easier to hold once you're there.

## EXIT STRATEGY

As you sink out of the splits position, send your sit bones through the hoop so that you can momentarily rest your grip. Thread one leg through the hoop to land in outside lion. Or explore other options.

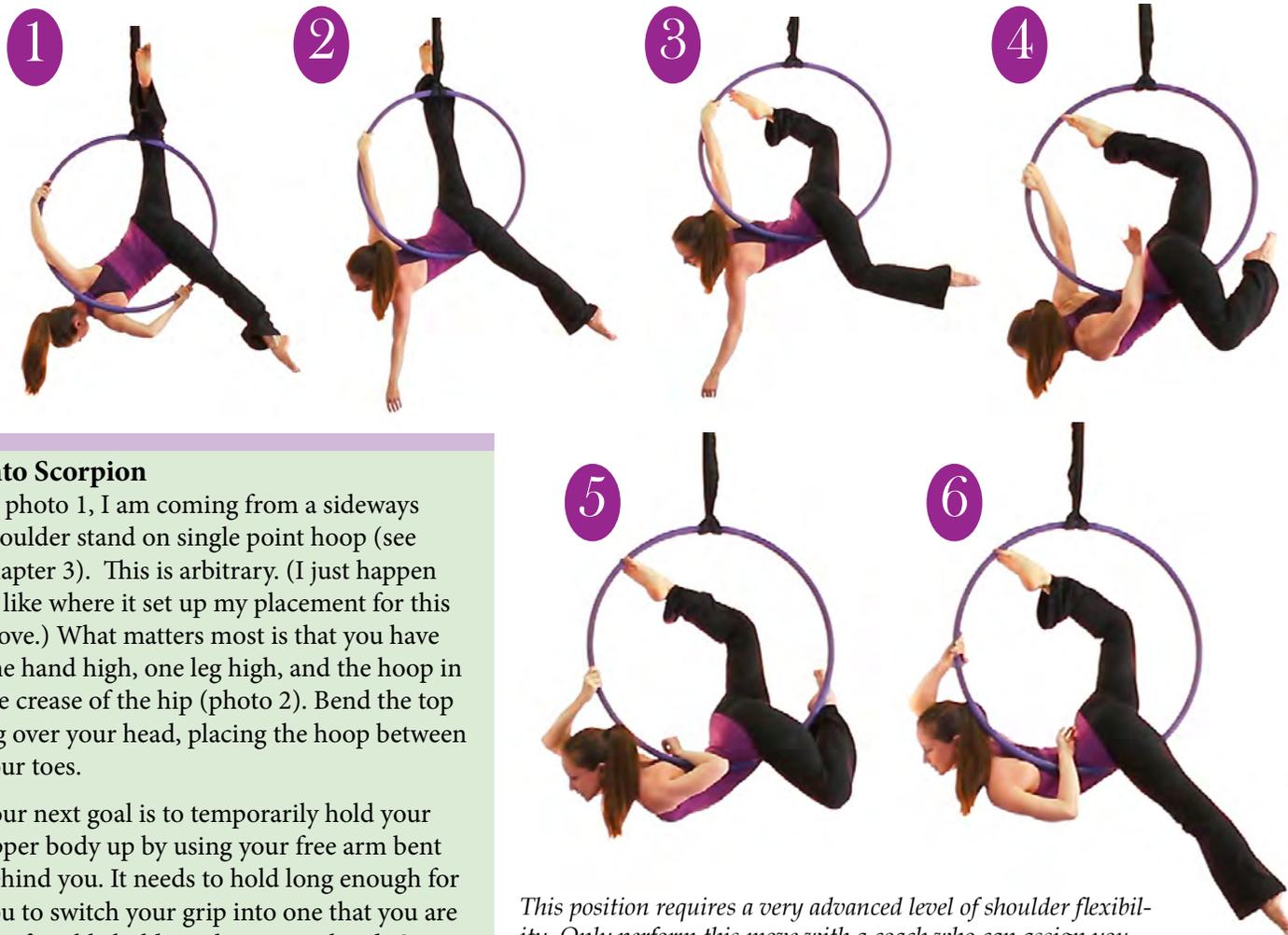




# Scorpion

**Prerequisite(s):**  
flexible shoulders,  
star,  
hip articulation

**About this move:** You may recognize this move from the cover. Out of any move in this book, I am most proud of this one. I discovered this pose while transitioning from the shoulder stand down into the hoop. As I was sliding down, I felt like my top leg wanted to go over my head. Then, I figured out how to position my arms so that I could finish the line of the arch that was happening in the back. And voila! I had a new move!



## Into Scorpion

In photo 1, I am coming from a sideways shoulder stand on single point hoop (see chapter 3). This is arbitrary. (I just happen to like where it set up my placement for this move.) What matters most is that you have one hand high, one leg high, and the hoop in the crease of the hip (photo 2). Bend the top leg over your head, placing the hoop between your toes.

Your next goal is to temporarily hold your upper body up by using your free arm bent behind you. It needs to hold long enough for you to switch your grip into one that you are comfortable holding above your head. Once you have this hand in your preferred grip and placement, the arm behind you can relax. Bend or straighten the bottom leg.

*This position requires a very advanced level of shoulder flexibility. Only perform this move with a coach who can assign you progression moves to determine your level of readiness to enter this move. It can do severe damage to the shoulder if executed when not warmed up properly or if the shoulder does not have the required flexibility.*

## EXIT STRATEGY

The first exit to mention is the roll into half hip hang. See chapter 5's roll into half hip hang for more.

The second exit is into lion roll. Also, reference chapter 5 for more information. This is the second half of the roll.





# Chapter Three: Single Tabbed Moves

*(to the tune of O Christmas Tree)  
O Single Tab, O Single Tab,  
How absolutely tot'ly Fab,  
You bring me moves that only can be done  
On hoops with points that count to one  
O Single Tab, O Single Tab,  
How lovely are the moves you bring me.*

## About This Chapter

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By now, you may know that I get excited about aerial theory. Aerial theory is basically the brain work of aerial. It's making connections, asking questions, thinking critically, analyzing the elements, abstracting ideas and then putting together a bigger picture of aerial moves. Aerial theory is at work when you ask: "Can I do clothesline (from fabric/rope) on hoop?" or "Can I do a hip key on hoop?" Some of these questions may even seem impossible at first. How are you going to hip key on a solid piece of metal? The idea caught up in the hip key is that the apparatus weaves under one limb and over the next. The torso then rotates towards the apparatus in order to create enough friction to hold oneself in place. If we abstract the idea behind the clothesline move, we get (1) the foot of standing leg is braced, and (2) the second leg hooks over tension created by the brace. The hands are either free, or hold the foot, etc. As it turns out, both the clothesline and the hip key appear in this chapter and you may be surprised at how they translate to the hoop.

You may recognize other moves from rope or fabric such as the vertical splits, hip lean, one leg bird's nest (which is also called foot block splits in this curriculum), and ball/front balance (which is called a hand block hip key in this curriculum). Of course, when we take to the rope above the hoop, moves readily translate directly from the vertical apparatuses. We briefly touch on performing a same side wrap in the rope above the hoop. There are too many possibilities of ways to play in the ropes, so we have decided to leave this part to the rope curriculum, and/or your hoop coach.

This chapter is very heavy on single knee hangs, so make sure to prepare your hamstrings well in advance to tackle these moves. There are so many knee hangs that they might all start to look alike after a while. The reason we included so many is so that you can compare and contrast the differences between positions. There is a distinct difference between an inside knee hook and an outside knee hook. Sometimes, it takes a keen observer to notice the difference. You may feel like you are doing one of those kiddie puzzles that have two pictures side-by-side and you're asked to find all of the differences between the two pictures. We even line up some pictures side by side so that you can get in some quality practice making observations. The sense of redundancy you feel should turn into an appreciation of the subtleties in how many different ways there are to create one shape. At the end of the day, you aren't going to perform these moves one right after another. You will pick the one that makes the most sense choreographically. If you didn't have so many choices, you would likely get trapped running silly ruts to get to the next desired shape. Now, you have options!

---

# Hip Lean Over the Tab



**Prerequisite(s):**  
sitting on top of  
the single point  
hoop

**About this move:** *There are so many connections to other aerial apparatuses, I wish we had time to talk about them all! But, we'll go ahead and sneak in a bit of that talk here: hip leans are hip leans no matter where you are. This hip lean is similar to one that can be done on rope or fabric. For those interested in aerial theory, you may notice the similarities of this move with the ball above the hoop near the end of the chapter.*



Start by sitting on top of a single tabbed hoop. Lean over to one side. As you lean, ensure the rope or span set is right in the crease of your hip and keep your bent leg close to your torso. Push the foot of the bottom leg into the hoop. This bottom leg can be bent or straight. If you feel secure, let go with the top hand as you continue to push the hoop away from you with your bottom hand. To exit, retrograde by pulling back up to sitting on top of the hoop.

## PLAY TIME

For aerialists who like weaving and contorting, they will love the possibilities of wrapping the body around the hoop from this position. In the picture below on the right, you may recognize the upside-down inside lion/sleeper pose that we highlighted in Volume 1 in order to drive home the theory of rotational possibilities for poses on the hoop.

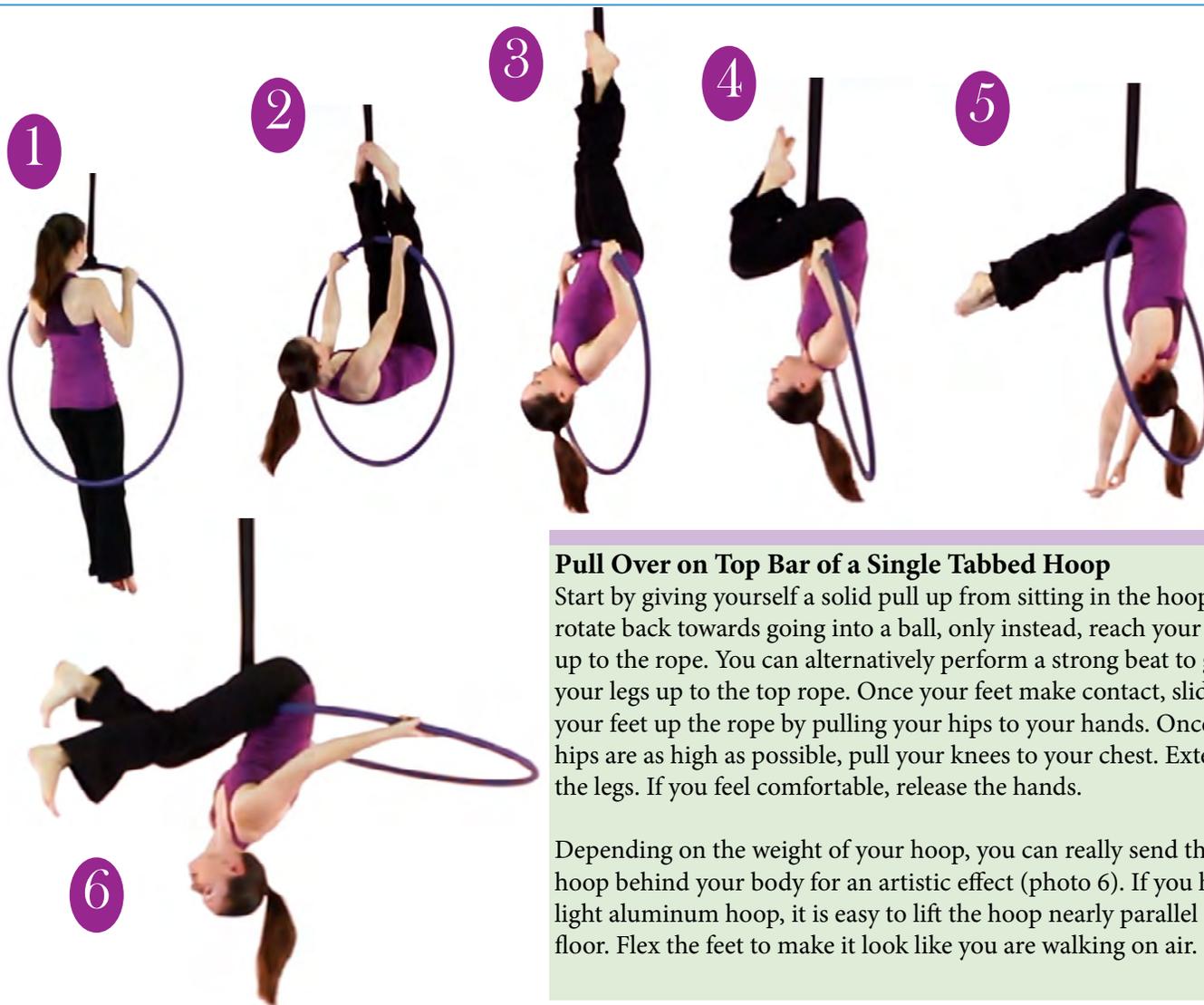




# Pull Over on Top Bar

**Prerequisite(s):**  
pull over on  
bottom bar

**About this move:** *The pull over on the top bar has a very different dynamic than a pull over on the bottom bar. For one, the concavity of the hoop is down instead of up. This means you have an extra inch or two that you need to pull up and over. Don't be surprised if this catches you off guard at first. Many who pull over on the bottom bar with no problem expect it to be the same on the top bar. This is not necessarily true.*



## Pull Over on Top Bar of a Single Tabbed Hoop

Start by giving yourself a solid pull up from sitting in the hoop and rotate back towards going into a ball, only instead, reach your feet up to the rope. You can alternatively perform a strong beat to get your legs up to the top rope. Once your feet make contact, slide your feet up the rope by pulling your hips to your hands. Once your hips are as high as possible, pull your knees to your chest. Extend the legs. If you feel comfortable, release the hands.

Depending on the weight of your hoop, you can really send the hoop behind your body for an artistic effect (photo 6). If you have a light aluminum hoop, it is easy to lift the hoop nearly parallel to the floor. Flex the feet to make it look like you are walking on air.

## DOUBLE TABBED

Start with hands outside of the tabs. With either a beat or a ball/pike inversion, rotate back and place your feet on the inside of the ropes. Slide your feet up by lifting your hips to the hoop. When your hips are high enough, pull your knees to your chest and extend through the backs of the legs.





# Arabesque

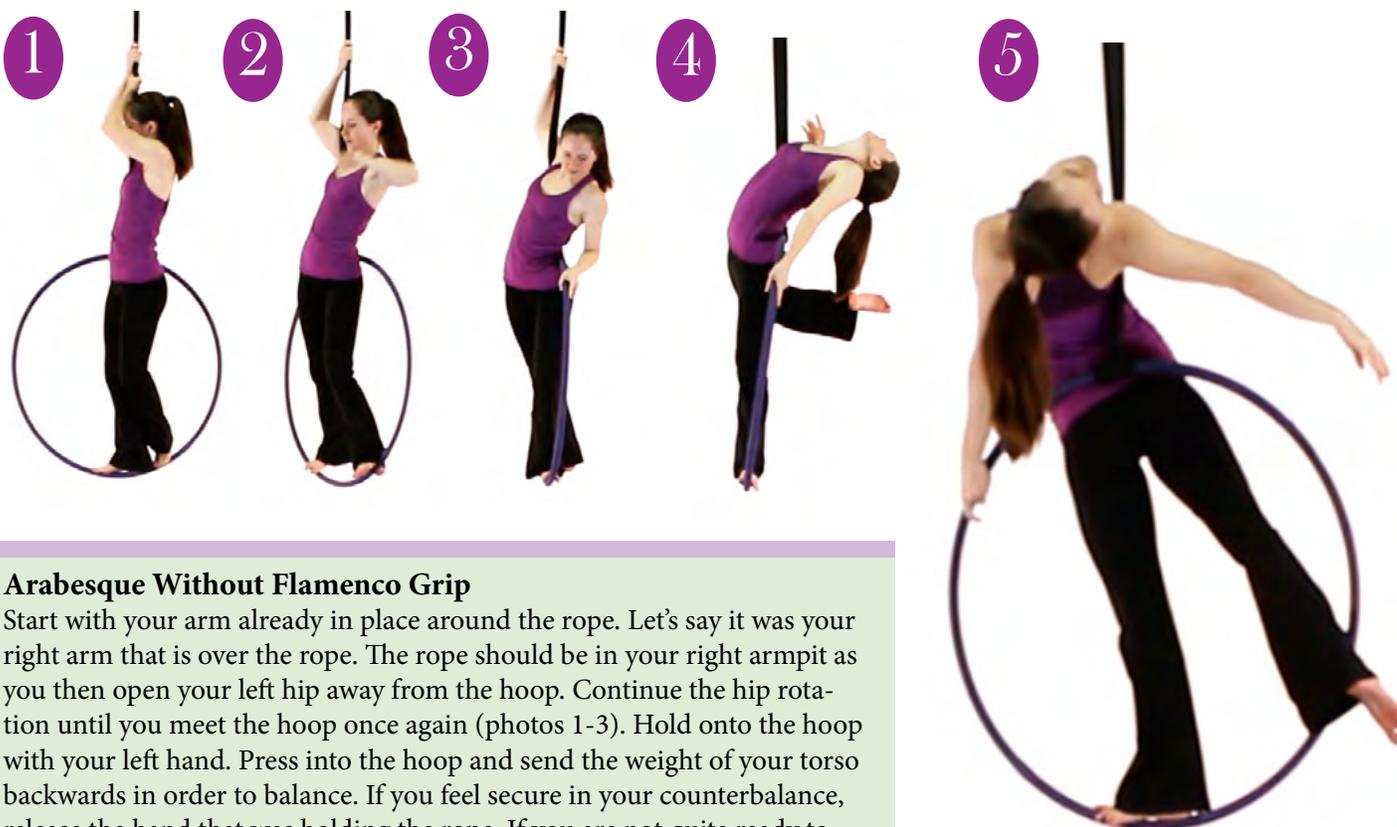
**Prerequisite(s):**  
flamenco grip

**About this move:** It helps to be familiar with flamenco grip from vertical aerial apparatuses (such as rope or fabric). A flamenco grip is an internal rotation of the wrist above the head. When placed on the rope, you then follow your grip to undo the rotation. This brings your body around the rope. This can be used on any vertical apparatus and is very useful for minimizing grip changes.



## Using Flamenco Grip into Arabesque

From standing up on the bottom bar, flamenco grip the rope with your outside arm. Weave the inside arm between your torso and the rope. Follow your arm until you can get your elbow of the outside arm around the rope (now the inside arm). Open your hips into an arabesque position. Your bottom foot can be in a variety of places on the hoop, depending on the size of the hoop. Keep the lower hand on the hoop to stabilize as you release the top hand.



## Arabesque Without Flamenco Grip

Start with your arm already in place around the rope. Let's say it was your right arm that is over the rope. The rope should be in your right armpit as you then open your left hip away from the hoop. Continue the hip rotation until you meet the hoop once again (photos 1-3). Hold onto the hoop with your left hand. Press into the hoop and send the weight of your torso backwards in order to balance. If you feel secure in your counterbalance, release the hand that was holding the rope. If you are not quite ready to release this hand, press into the rope with an open hand.



# Vertical Splits (& Faux Back Balance)

**Prerequisite(s):**  
arabesque

**About this move:** *The vertical splits are a common move on fabric and/or rope. Here, instead of a footlock on your foot, you have a hoop! You will need to adjust your style to compensate for that fact, but the principles involved are the same. You still need to lift that bottom leg in order to stay connected in the body and to the apparatus. Depending on the weight and size of your hoop, you may have a challenge ahead of you.*



## From Arabesque to Splits (above)

Enter the arabesque one way or another (photo 1). From the arabesque, hold the rope with both hands and lift your leg up to the rope. Sickle your foot so that the inner part of your arch secures on the rope. Open those splits as wide as you can. (Reminder: warm up and be ready for this step) Press into the hoop with your bottom arm and you can release the top arm. Or hold the rope with the top arm and release the bottom arm.

**Note:** If the hoop is large, you can perform this move with your leg halfway up the hoop and it still works. Adjust as necessary for your lyra size.

**Teaching Tip:** Step 2 is the most difficult part of this sequence. To initially enter the straddle, the pelvis should remain tucked with the legs extending through the transverse plane of the body.

## Faux Back Balance (pictured below)

The faux back balance has the appearance of being a really difficult back balance, but it's more like a side balance because you can sink the hoop into your thoracic spine rather than having the bar under the sacrum. You need a strong back arch in order to counterbalance the weight enough to let the feet go. The secret is maintaining a strong hook of the knee over the top bar. Always keep the bottom arm straight and press the hoop away from you, causing it to cradle around your back. If you feel secure in the press, remove your top hand. Keep the top knee bent as you arch.



## EXIT STRATEGY

To release the top leg, retrograde by using both hands to lift up on the rope, or press into the rope with your top hand, leaning back as the top leg releases. Exercise control to prevent swinging away from the hoop. Without proper control, this exit is dangerous.





# Inside-Out Foot Block Splits

**Prerequisite(s):**  
working on skin  
the cat strength

**About this move:** We demonstrate this move on a single point hoop, but it can also be performed on a double point. All you do is simply use one of the ropes. If the tabs are far apart, this might make the move too wonky. This move requires a solid warm up of the splits, back and shoulders. I like calling this move inside-out splits because it feels like I am turning my body inside-out as I enter the move. There are many names for this move.



## Inside-Out Block Splits

Start with a knee hang on the top of the hoop with your hands on either side of your knees. Remove one leg from the bar and thread it over your opposite arm and under the hoop. This hook may remind you of the tofu hook from Volume 1.

As you slide your bottom leg down the hoop and straighten it, also straighten your top leg. Flex the foot so that your ankle hooks on the rope. Extend both legs until they are straight. You can remain in this pose, or allow the hips to drop slightly, lifting the chest away from the legs, allowing the back to arch. Don't let the hips drop down too far. Remember you have to exit any position you enter.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Retrograde! If you allowed your hips to lower at all, bring them back up. Slide your bottom leg back up the hoop. The last step is removing your ankle from the rope to return to a knee hang on the top bar.





# One Leg Bird's Nest Splits

**Prerequisite(s):**  
bird's nest, high  
body awareness

**About this move:** I use this pose to let gravity stretch my splits. It's awesome. I simply hook a foot, engage my core to protect my back, and let my bottom leg relax towards the ground. This position could also be called skin the cat with a foot block or inverted foot block splits. You can use this move to train some of your skin the cat muscles as you slide your hips back up to the top bar and lower with control. Be kind to those shoulders.



## PLAY TIME

Play with various positions of the free leg. I like to drift the free leg up and down while spinning. I also like to cross it over the hooked foot. This can smooth out transitions.



## One Leg Bird's Nest Splits

Start in a ball inversion or double knee hang on the top bar. Thread one leg over the top bar and behind the rope or span set so that the ankle is hooked. Maintain the hook by keeping the foot flexed for the duration of the move.

Extend the bottom leg out into space as your level of flexibility allows. Only drop the hips as far down as you feel you can easily pull back up from. See the blue box above for variations for the free (bottom) leg. See the next page in this manual for more information about the theory of this move. You may have already noticed the only difference between the last two moves have been which side of the hoop the bottom leg is on.

## EXIT

### STRATEGY

Retrograde by pulling your hips towards the top bar. Slide the top leg up the rope or bend it. Return to a double knee hang.

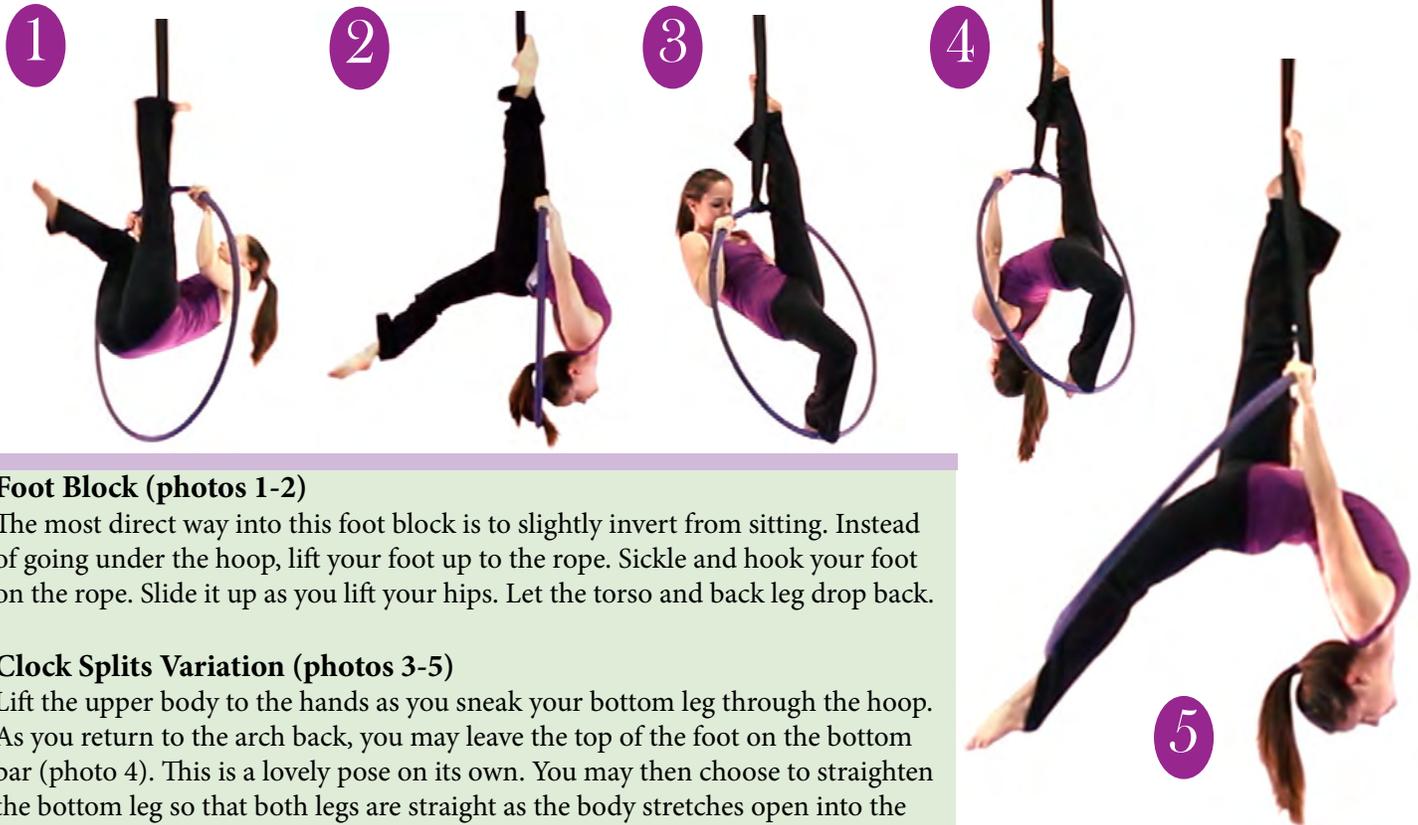


# Foot Block Splits (Belly Up)



**Prerequisite(s):**  
ball, pike  
inversion

**About this move:** The box in the lower left on this page illuminates the following observation: There are four ways to perform splits with a foot block: (1) Belly facing the ceiling and the bottom foot on the same side of the hoop. (2) Belly up splits with bottom foot on the opposite side of the hoop. (3) Belly down with bottom foot on the same side of the hoop. (4) Belly down with bottom foot on opposite side of the hoop.



## Foot Block (photos 1-2)

The most direct way into this foot block is to slightly invert from sitting. Instead of going under the hoop, lift your foot up to the rope. Sickle and hook your foot on the rope. Slide it up as you lift your hips. Let the torso and back leg drop back.

## Clock Splits Variation (photos 3-5)

Lift the upper body to the hands as you sneak your bottom leg through the hoop. As you return to the arch back, you may leave the top of the foot on the bottom bar (photo 4). This is a lovely pose on its own. You may then choose to straighten the bottom leg so that both legs are straight as the body stretches open into the pose demonstrated in photo 5.

## THEORY TIME

Compare and contrast these moves in the foot block split family.



## EXIT STRATEGY

One way to exit is to carefully bend the back leg so that it releases the hoop. Do this in such a way as to avoid a collision of the hoop with your head. Alternatively, bend the bottom leg into the bottom bar and slide the top leg off, entering into the sitting position.



# Leg Up the Rope Splits

**Prerequisite(s):**  
advanced level on  
hoop, splits,  
right size hoop

**About this move:** For the past few pages, we have been taking a look at the splits in the foot block family. This move is a cousin of that family. The major theory difference is that weight is in the bottom foot whereas in foot blocks, all the weight is in the hands. Another difference is in the hand grip. Here the grip is underhand. For your safety, please note: **If you release the bottom leg you will NOT be in a secure foot block.**



## Leg Up the Ropes

Do not attempt this move without a spotter. While the entrance is fairly straightforward, you can get stuck once you are there.

Begin in a toe squat with your head threaded to the front of the hoop. Lift your hips so you are in a mini-squat with your back pressed against the top bar. Transition your arms to the top side of the hoop one hand at a time (photo 2).

Stand up on your toes with your sacrum on the top bar. Hoop size may change the dynamics of this move significantly. Lower the heels if you need to, but avoid performing this move with a bent bottom leg. If need be, get a bigger hoop.

Lift the leg behind you. Once your foot finds the rope, straighten the leg and lower the torso.



## EXIT STRATEGY

Retrograde by releasing the leg from the rope. Again, the presence of a spotter cannot be emphasized enough. The hoop should be low enough so that the spotter can appropriately spot the release of the leg.

Once the leg is released, return it to the hoop. Sink the pelvis back and return back to toe squat.



# Bicep Hang on Top Bar

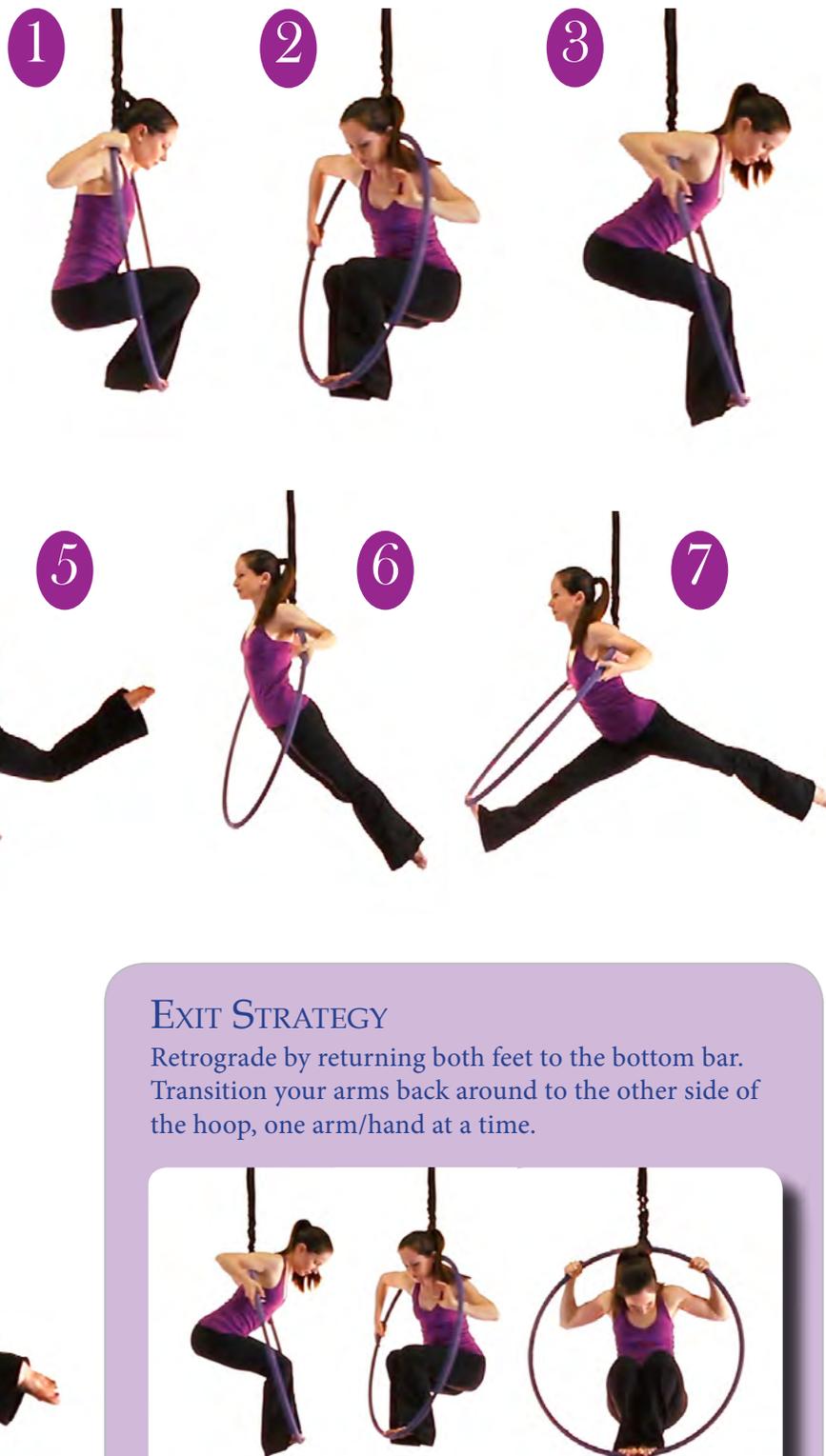
**Prerequisite(s):** exploring the upper bar, body & hoop awareness

**About this move:** *I am still debating what to call this move. It is not a full bicep hang because you keep the hands on the hoop. The only time you can remove the hands is when the foot is blocking the bottom bar of the hoop. I'm okay with calling it a bicep hang for ease of the name, but please don't try to take your hands off! There is a very delicate balance happening on either side of the rig point and the hands keep you safe.*

## Bicep Hang on Top Bar

From a squat in the hoop, press your upper back into the upper bar. Transition your arms around, one at a time, to the other side of the hoop. Keep your weight sunk in your pelvis to prevent falling forward. Use your feet on the bottom bar to steer the hoop forward and help keep your weight in the hoop where it should be.

Once you have a comfortable position of the arms on the top bar, press your shoulders down and engage the core to lift one leg behind you. Gradually lift the second.



## EXIT STRATEGY

Retrograde by returning both feet to the bottom bar. Transition your arms back around to the other side of the hoop, one arm/hand at a time.

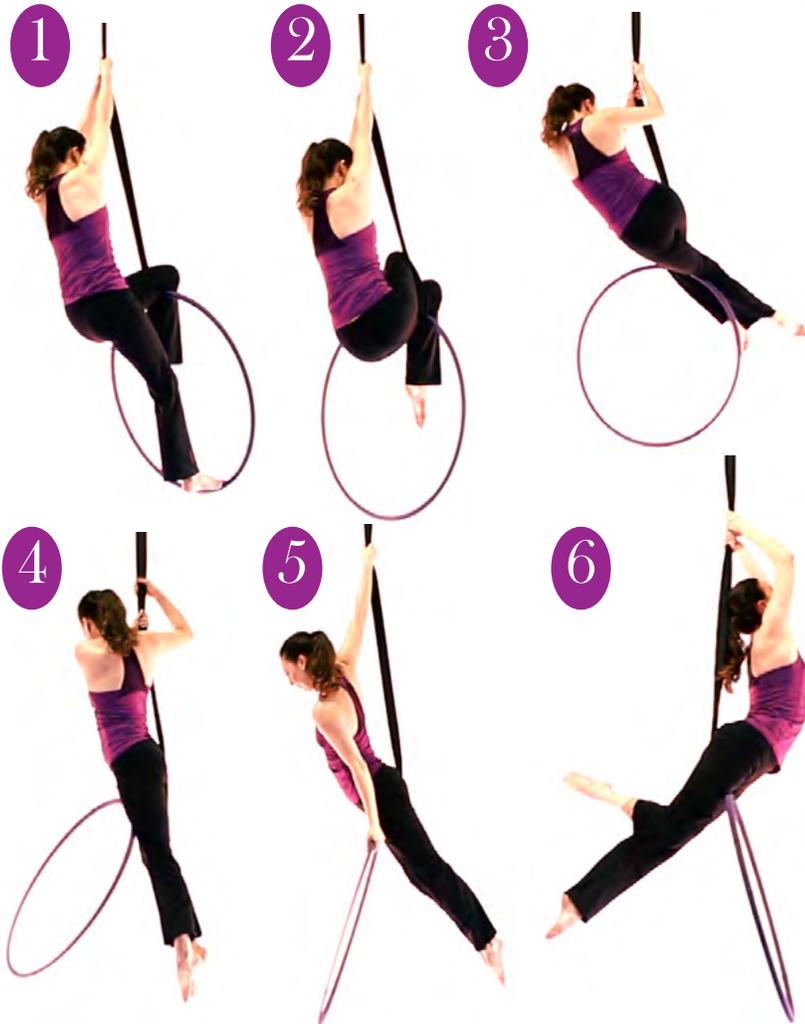




# Dive Prep

**Prerequisite(s):** sitting on top of the single point hoop

**About this move:** When Julianna and I were discussing whether or not this move would make the cut for the manual, we were considering the release move done from this position. While the drop itself did not make the cut, the entry to the drop is a beautiful position in and of itself. You are likely to have your hands full learning this preparatory move, as well as variations on the entrance. The drop is too dangerous for this manual series.



## Dive Prep

From standing on a single tabbed hoop, bend the left leg over the right side of the top bar (or vice versa). Sink your weight in your hands. Keep a light touch on the hoop with your first leg as you thread your second leg over to the opposite side of the hoop. Too much force here will send the hoop flying away from you.

Once the legs are crossed around the rope, lift up, pulling with your arms. Rotate the hips towards the ground and begin a flutter kick action with the legs. The flutter kick will help prevent the hoop from going sideways. If it gets that far, you'll have to exit and start again. The only other way to recover is to lift even higher, kicking and fluttering, forcing the hoop to twist parallel to your hip bones.

If the hoop is secure, maneuver the hands around the rope so that you can enter a lovely arch. Point your toes. Bending one leg backwards is an optional aesthetic choice.

**You might try:** Once you master the ball above the hoop, thread your second leg over the span set from the ball. Transition your hand grip so that you land in the dive prep.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Finagle your upper body around the rope so that you are in a position to return back to standing. Once you feel more comfortable with this transition, you can work on the next challenge. Try to use as few hand grips as possible to minimize the "fuss" in this transition. This is an appropriate goal of any clean transition.





# Single Knee Hang Training

**Prerequisite(s):**  
advanced core control, hamstring strength

**About this move:** *The remainder of this chapter is very heavy on knee hooks and hangs. I will freely admit I was previously not a huge fan of knee hooks and hangs. I had very weak hamstrings. Because of their weakness, they were constantly trying to fight my strong hip flexors and hence, my hamstrings were terribly tight. As I practiced knee hangs, my hamstring strength improved. Flexibility followed because my hamstrings developed the strength to balance my hip flexors. I got both strength and flexibility. Two for one. Awesome deal!*



## Single Knee Hang Control

Begin with one knee hooked next to the rig point and both hands on the hoop. On a single point lyra it is not possible to release both hands because the weight of the single knee would tip the hoop. Therefore, the goal is to counterbalance the weight on either side of the rig point. Begin by pulling the hoop down with the hand on the opposite side as hooked knee (photo 2). Pull down really hard to create a nice platform or even crevice (between hoop and span set) for that hooked knee to remain on the hoop. Carefully release the hand next to the hooked knee. Do not release the head back until you are very secure. During training, try different placements of the hand on the hoop.

*In the picture on the right, notice how the hoop is slightly tipping down on the side where the knee is hooked. This is a very precarious and dangerous position. If tilted a little farther, the knee might not be able to hook and instead, may slide down the hoop unexpectedly. To prevent this precarious position, put as much weight as you can into the side of the hoop opposite the knee so that you look more like the picture on the left instead (photo 4).*



## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Can you tell the difference between these two poses? It can be hard to tell from the pictures. In the picture on the left, the thigh passes behind the top bar of the hoop and then the leg hooks over the span set. In the picture on the right, the bar is underneath the thigh and the leg crosses over the top of the hoop to hook on the span set.



inside knee hook  
←-----



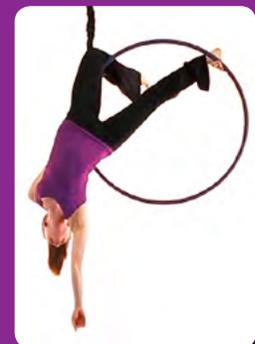
outside knee hook  
----->

## MORE AERIAL THEORY

Can you tell the difference between these two poses? If you learned your lesson from that blue block over there to your left, then perhaps now you can spot the difference between an outside knee hook and an inside knee hook.



inside knee hook  
←-----



outside knee hook  
----->

# Tilted Shoulder Stand with Knee Hook



**Prerequisite(s):** the right size hoop, advanced core control

**About this move:** In Volume 1, we introduced the idea about rotating poses to find new poses. This shoulder stand can be stumbled across if you ask the question, "How can I do a shoulder stand with my shoulders at 4 o'clock instead of 6 o'clock?" On a single point, this position is possible with a hook of the leg next to the rig point. On either a single or double point hoop, you can perform the tilted arrow. See chapter 2 for more.



## Shoulder Stand at 4 o'clock

From a ball inversion, hook one knee on the opposite side of the span set. From here, the next goal is to transition the shoulders to 4 o'clock. In order to accomplish this goal, I like to press my free leg next to my hooked knee in order to block the hoop as I release the corresponding hand (photos 2-3). Then, I carefully transition my shoulders and arms into the position shown in photo 4. Ensure the shoulders are in a comfortable position prior to releasing the free leg. Release it behind the bottom bar.

The arms pass behind the hoop as you straighten them to the best of your ability. It will take much practice to find an aesthetically pleasing position of the arms. I find that many times the arms are not where you think they are. It helps to receive feedback through pictures, video or another person. The head can look up (photo 6) or down (photo 7).

## EXIT STRATEGY

Bring both arms to the front of the hoop (especially the bottom arm!). Slide the top leg down the hoop. Land in inside lion position.



## TRANSITIONS

It was in exiting this shoulder stand that I discovered the move that I call scorpion. See chapter 2 for more about scorpion.



# Clothesline

**Prerequisite(s):**  
strong ham-strings, single knee hangs

**About this move:** *The whole reason I have included this move in this book is to demonstrate the overlap between the various aerial arts. Clothesline is a move you may be familiar with from fabric or rope. Also, if you have ever dabbled in the art of pole, you may recognize this move. This is not my favorite move, so I had to spice it up and make it interesting for myself. I've thrown in the upside-down man in moon with a knee hook.*



## Outside Knee Hook to Upside-Down Man in Moon to Clothesline

Start with a vicious pull of the hands and push of the feet to propel your hips up high enough to perform an outside knee hook over the span set. Place your torso in the hoop for an upside-down man in the moon variation. With top hand on the hoop, take your hips out of the hoop. Hold a tight grip for safety in clothesline.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Retrograde back into the hoop and turn yourself right side up, entering normal man in moon.



## SPOTTING

If you have the prerequisite strength, right size hoop, and good positioning of the body on the hoop, it is possible to release the hands in clothesline. As you attempt this pose, whether or not you fully release the hands, it is a good idea to work with a spotter. Spotters can spot at the hips. Also, work over crash mats as always.

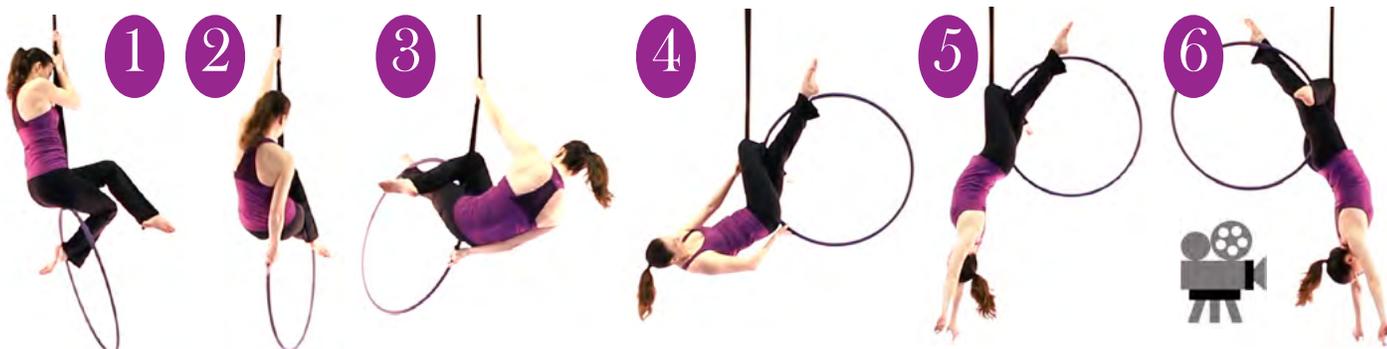


# Single Knee Hang Laybacks

**Prerequisite(s):**  
strong hamstrings, single knee hangs

**About this move:** *I am so grateful to be working with Julianna on these hoop manuals in order to include moves such as these knee hangs. Due to my very weak hamstrings, I do not have the strength nor desire to perform these knee hangs. But I stand in awe of those aerialists, such as Julianna, who can and do perform them. If you want them in your repertoire, work those hamstrings. Play to your strengths and/or train hard.*

## Single Knee Hang with Second Leg Hooking Under Top Bar



### Vertical Knee Hang

Begin sitting on top of a single point hoop. Adjust sideways hooking one knee over the rope and hoop. Cross the free leg underneath the top bar and press the leg into the hoop while keeping the knee straight. Use one hand behind you to steer the hoop as you lean back. Make sure that the top knee is securely hooked on the rope the entire time. Self-spot this move by holding onto the top foot. Note: Self-spotting is never a replacement for good ol' fashioned real live spotting.

### EXIT STRATEGY

Use the core to lift the torso upright. Return the hands to the rope and lift out of the position. Finish sitting atop the hoop or exit down.



## Single Knee Hang with Second Leg Hooking Under Bottom Bar



### EXIT STRATEGY

Use that core to return your hands to the span set or rope. Climb up and release the hoop off the legs. Finish sitting atop the hoop.



### Horizontal Knee Hang

Sit profile atop the hoop as in the previous knee hang. Hook one knee over the rope and the hoop. Drop the free leg down to the base of the hoop, turn the leg out and flex the foot. Hook the foot under the base of the hoop. The toes of the top and bottom foot should be facing the same direction. Slowly lean back. Self-spot by keeping your hands on the rope until you feel secure enough to release the hands.

# Knee Hook Variations into Cat Scratch



**Prerequisite(s):**  
pull over on  
top bar, single  
knee hang

**About this move:** Over the next two pages, we cover prerequisites for the cat scratch and then we go over the cat scratch move itself. We also cover a similar variation of cat scratch in the chapter on double point. In both, we have chosen to belly roll around the hoop on the way down rather than sliding all the way, but it has the same principles as a traditional cat scratch. On single point there are two main knee hook preparatory moves.

## Single Knee Hang Over Tab



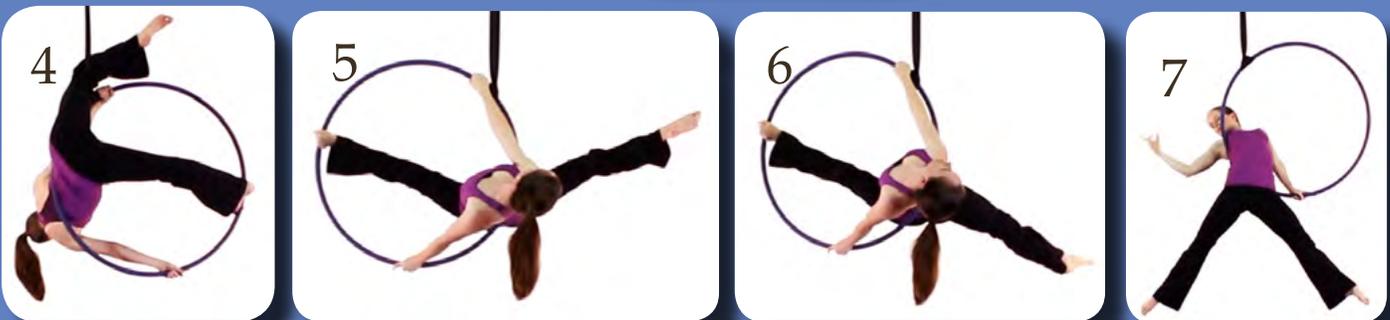
### Pull Over to Knee Hook

Start with a pull over on the top bar. Holding the hoop, hook one knee over the rope. Allow the second leg to drift down behind the body for a lovely pose (photo 2). Hook your knee (of the free leg) over your ankle. If you feel secure release the hands.



### PLAY TIME

This is a transition I created from the knee hang on the rope. The skeleton of the steps are: (1) insert the torso thru the hoop. (2-3) Place the shoulder on the bottom bar (or not) for upside-down man in moon pose. (4) Grip hands high and low to brace for release of top leg. (6) Splits then (7) Dragonfly.



## Foot Press Plank

### Foot Press

Hold in an alternating grip relatively close to the rig point. Cross the corresponding leg over and place it around 9 o'clock. Press through your feet and pull aggressively with your arms as you enter a horizontal body position.



# Knee Hang Prep for Cat Scratch

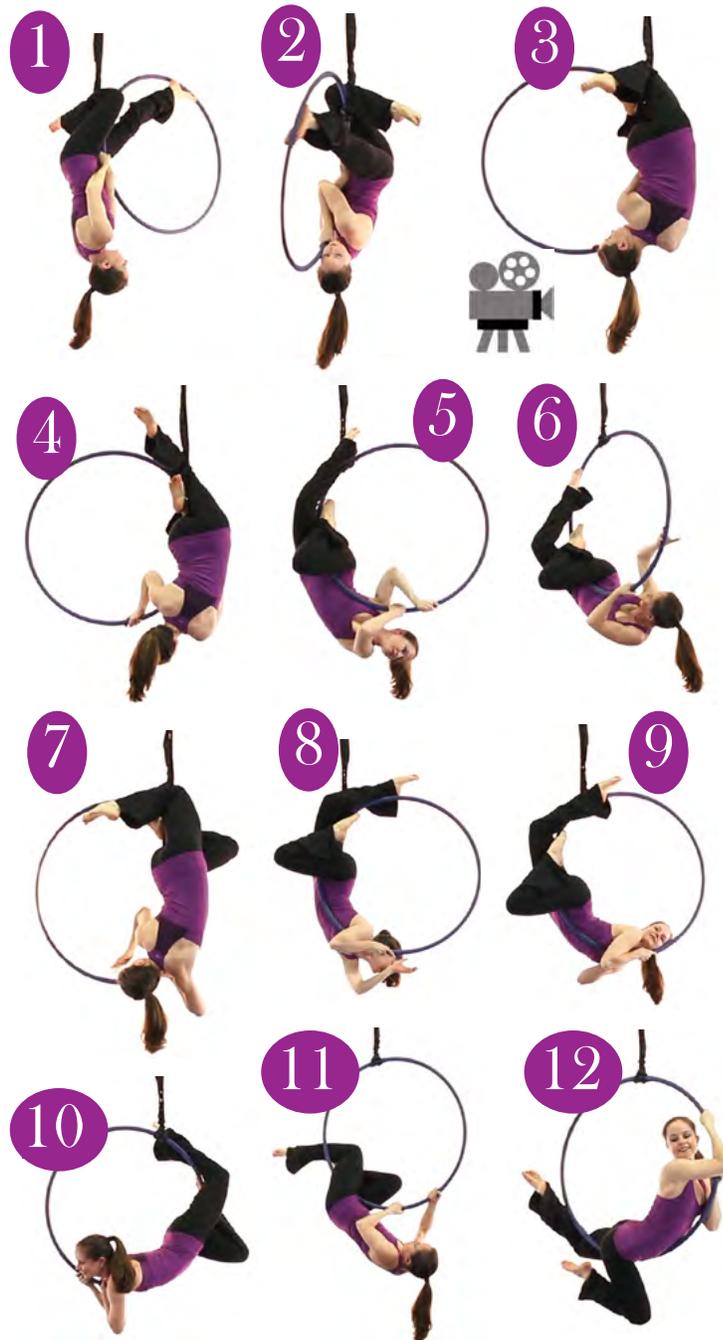


**Knee Hang**  
 From the horizontal foot press plank, bring the outside leg towards the span set. Hike your hips up higher if need be using your foot on the top of the hoop as leverage. Get a strong, secure hook of the knee over the span set. If you are secure you may release the hands.

**EXIT STRATEGY FOR KNEE HANG PREP**  
 Grab high on the hoop next to your knee. Transfer weight into your hands as you gradually slide your hips down the hoop to the bottom bar. Once your sit bones are on the bottom bar, return to sitting.



## Cat Scratch Belly Roll



**First Cat Scratch Progression**  
 From the knee hook over tab with a foot press, first make sure you feel comfortable. You are about to enter a very vulnerable position and it is important that you are in control at all times. When ready, gradually slide your hands down the hoop and bend your free leg so that the hoop is next to the inner thigh. This serves as a safety as well as sets you up for the coming steps.  
 In the first progression (photos 1-6), simply slide down the hoop along the inner thigh of that second leg. Walk your hands down, slide as far as you can and then simply pull yourself up to mount inside the hoop, landing in horse.

**Cat Scratch Belly Roll (photos 7-12)**  
 For the next progression, instead of sliding on your inner thigh, you get to slide down on your belly. At any point in time, you are free to tilt out to the side and return to the inner thigh slide. This is what you are going to do anyway at the bottom of the slide. It's fun and common to see a belly roll at the end of this movement, landing in a lovely pose in the hoop.



# Ball Atop Hoop

## Prerequisite(s):

hip lean on top of the hoop, high body awareness

**About this move:** Remember the hip lean from the beginning of this chapter? The move on this page is a close relative. In the hip lean, the body creases around the tab with the inner thigh on the top of the hoop. The second leg is under the tab and in the hoop. In the ball above the hoop, the body again creases over the tab, but the outside of the thigh is on the top of the hoop. The second leg stacks on top of the first and hugs the rope.



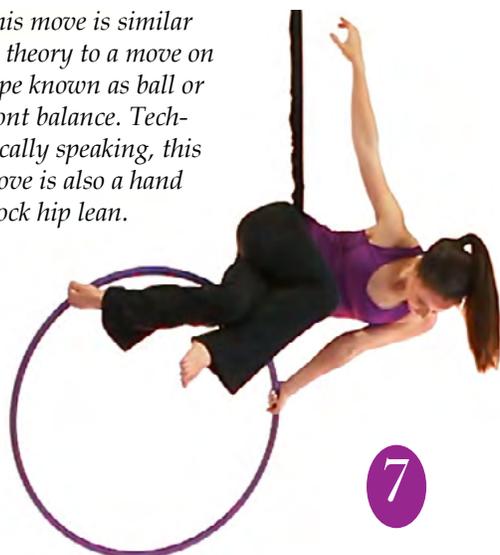
## Ball Atop Hoop

From standing, place the right hand slightly above your head on the span set and your left hand on the hoop at your side. Place the left thigh on the right side of the rig point.

Test the stability of your hand block by cautiously removing your bottom leg (photo 3).

If you are secure, float the right leg up and over to join your left (photos 4-5). Stack your hips and lean towards your hand block. Pull the top knee into your chest. While it is possible to remove the top hand, it is high risk. Exercise caution.

*This move is similar in theory to a move on rope known as ball or front balance. Technically speaking, this move is also a hand block hip lean.*



## EXIT

### STRATEGY

Retrograde back upright. You may find it preferable to exit to the front of the hoop where your feet naturally land as you straighten your legs down.





# Hip Key Over Tab

**Prerequisite(s):**  
hunger for  
hip key on hoop

**About this move:** Aerial theory caused Julianna and me to find this move one day while playing with ideas. Theory is about abstracting the ideas of aerial skills so that they apply to more than one setting. The theory of a key is the idea of the apparatus weaving under one limb, and over the next. In the hip key described below, the hip key results from a weave that includes both the hoop and the span set. It helps to have no hardware.



## Hip Key with Hoop and Rope

*Note: This move is only possible with a very light hoop. You may find it impossible on a steel hoop.*

**Terminology:** A left hip key is one in which the body rotates towards and rests on its left side in the hip key.

To perform a left hip key, set up the left leg over the top of the hoop on the right side of the rope. Photo 3 shows an optional hook of the legs on the hoop. This can help steer the hoop and get the hoop nestled against the legs, but it is not essential.

Tuck the right leg towards the chest lifting the hoop up as you do. Continue to lift the right hip as you tilt to the left. While you can release the arms in a tight hip key, we recommend keeping the hands connected to the rope for safety. The hoop is more volatile and precarious than fabric and may act in unexpected ways.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Retrograde by releasing the body out to the side. Hold with your hands on the rope as you release your legs from their entanglement on the top of the hoop. At [AerialDancing.com](http://AerialDancing.com), we show some other variations.



# Same Side Wrap in Rope/Span Set

**Prerequisite(s):**  
same side wrap  
knowledge on rope  
or fabric

**About this move:** *Much of the exploration of the ropes will come naturally if you have experience on rope or fabric. Having a rope attached to your hoop is best if you plan on spending time above your single point hoop. A rope is more secure than a span set, but to each his own. Whether it be a rope or a span set, you can go to town with all of the rope tricks hiding up your sleeve. If you don't have any, go take a class in fabric or rope.*

## Same Side Wrap in the Ropes

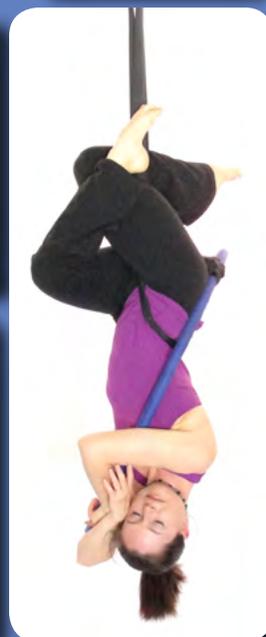
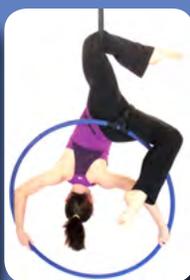
Begin by learning same side wraps without a hoop underneath you, i.e. start on a traditional rope or fabric. When you take your knowledge to the hoop, you can use the same side wrap in a variety of ways. You can use the straddle back, the knee hook, the knee hook plus waist wrap or the full same side wrap above the hoop. In the four pictures below this box, we demonstrate stopping at the waist wrap. Practice exiting from here above the hoop prior to exploring more.

The most challenging step to this is the exit. We leave this to your rope/fabric instructor to cover the many variations.



## PLAY TIME

You may recall how I love weaving my way through aerial apparatuses. I loved playing with this intersection of hoop and fabric for this photo-shoot. I was very happy I had such a light hoop to work with. It made this exploration a whole lot easier. The hoop for these pictures is aluminum. It also helps to work without hardware, i.e. span set or fabric attached directly to the hoop. This topic is controversial depending on who you talk to. A span set is said to be too slippery and risky to climb. It does not provide an ideal surface for grip. As with anything, weigh the pros and cons, consult with professionals, know your body & abilities, and then make your own informed decisions.



# Opening the Span Set Exploration

**Prerequisite(s):**  
passion for exploring new options

**About this move:** My aerial home is the sling. Since opening up the span set on the top of the hoop is like entering a sling, you can imagine how comfortable I feel snuggling in between the open span set. Since these moves are not really hoop moves in the truest sense, we are not covering them in great detail. We are including them to say, hey, there are ways to keep life interesting. Use this as a launching pad for your own play.





# Chapter Four: Double Tabbed Moves

*Double the tabs, double the fun.  
Do moves you know from bottom bar.  
Lion, straddle - there's a ton.  
Cuddle, bird's nest, even star!  
Then try some new moves, transitions and flips.  
Try them with new style, pizzazz, and grips.*

## About This Chapter

The space between the tabs on the top of the hoop, in a way, is like having a second bottom bar. This second bar just happens to curve differently. Moves such as lions, mermaids, lean outs, and more can be translated onto the top bar, as long as you don't mind the curvature. It makes sense to use what you know as your starting ground for exploration of the top bar. Your teacher is the one who can help you navigate how to adjust the classics in order for them to work on the top bar. You are also welcome to skip over some. Don't feel like you have to translate every pose to the top bar. Some moves don't translate so smoothly. And some may require creative solutions.

You are practicing the art of aerial theory when you think in this way. Aerial theory is all about translating a familiar idea to a new place. For example, you may be familiar with a hip key on fabric. In the last chapter, we translated that concept to the top of the hoop. Understanding aerial theory gives you a way to systematically be creative. Students get to make discoveries that are led by a thought-process rather than random rabbit trail chases. (Those random creative chases are good too, but they rely much more on luck than problem-solving skills.) Since we covered all the classic beginner poses in Volume 1, we are not going to rehash their counterparts here. Instead, we will explore moves that are unique to the nature of the double tabbed hoop. In this chapter, we will explore moves such as bird's nest in the ropes, the ankle hang with ankles in the ropes, outside knee hang, and transitions that take you from the ropes to down inside the hoop (such as cat scratch). We will even cover a few moves that flip the lyra on its head. Working with double point is a good precursor to working with a partner. Once you feel comfortable moving around a double tabbed hoop, grab a partner and flip to chapters six and seven for more fun! We cover beginning partnering on a double point hoop.



# Exploring Double Tabbed Hoop

**Prerequisite(s):**  
a sense of  
adventure

**About this move:** A double tabbed hoop (a.k.a. double point) presents a new challenge to dancing in the air. It has a certain amount of tippiness that may be more or less depending on many factors. Every double tabbed hoop will be different. Whether you are new to hoop or are an experienced aerialist mounting a hoop that is new to you, it is important to do some tests of tippiness to see what you're working with. Know your hoop.

## Test of Tippiness 1: The Pull Up from Sitting in the Hoop

### Pull Up and Lock Off

From sitting on a double tabbed lyra, place your hands on the inside of the span sets and carefully start a pull up. If you have a super tippy lyra, you might not want to pick up all of your weight. Tippy lyras can potentially tip all the way upside-down. This test is a good measure of how tippy the lyra is. You are finding out how far the lyra will tilt under your weight. Keep in mind: the closer you place your hands to 12 o'clock, the tippier the hoop will be.



## Test of Tippiness 2: Tip from Sitting Above the Hoop

Even just the process of climbing up into sitting on top of the hoop can give you a feel for how much the lyra tips. Once you are up there, lean forwards and backwards to see the movement. Also, get up on your toes and see how easily you can steer the hoop forwards and backwards. Warning: watch out for a sudden burst of upward swing.



### TIPPINESS IN OTHER MOVES

The whole reason you want to test the tippiness is to get an idea of what to expect as you go about performing all your usual double point moves. There often comes a time when you will be changing hoops and you want to get a feel for how the new hoop acts. The span sets may be set closer or farther or perhaps the hoop is heavier or lighter. Test out all the moves that use tilt so that you understand how your hoop feels. It is very important that a performer never be surprised by their apparatus. Safety is all about predictability. A safe performer knows exactly how their apparatus will respond given any movement, etc.

*One example of a tippy move to test is inverted prow. Even just the entrance to prow can give you a good feel for tip.*



# Standing & Front Lean

**Prerequisite(s):**  
ready to explore,  
decent dose of  
grip strength

**About this move:** On this page, we cover the basics of standing in front of and behind the hoop. We also cover front lean. While we don't cover back lean, don't forget about it! Simply hold onto the span sets from standing behind the hoop and lean back. It's like splits down, only the move is being translated to the ropes instead of holding the top bar. This changes the dynamics of the movement, but not the underlying concept.

## Standing Behind the Hoop

### Standing Behind the Hoop

Stand behind the hoop and thread your arms through the ropes one at a time. This is a very basic beginner move, but that means it can be dangerously simple. Many beginners will nearly fall out as they transition their arms through if not properly cued. Never forget the struggles of the beginning stage.



## Standing in Front of the Hoop & Front Lean

### Standing in Front of the Hoop

From toe squat, bring your head to the front of the top bar. Secure it against the hoop and carefully thread your arms around to grasp the ropes. As you stand, bring the arms to the backside of the ropes one at a time. See if you can grab high so you can pull yourself up to standing without a grip change.



### Lean Out

For the lean, hold the hands high. Lean the hips away from the hoop. Be cautious when lifting one leg. The hoop will shift when this happens.

### Teaching Tip

If the hands are held too high, there's nowhere to go for the lean. If the hands are too low, it can be difficult to pull back when ready to exit. If this happens, have the student bend the knees and return to the hoop via a seated position inside the hoop rather than a standing position. In order to safely navigate this terrain, it is good to have a healthy dose of grip strength, so make sure to properly test that prerequisite.





# Armpit Hangs

**Prerequisite(s):** standing in front of and behind the hoop

**About this move:** *These hangs are similar to the bicep hang on top of the single tabbed hoop. Perhaps you might try the splits with this move like we showed with the bicep hang on single tabbed lyra. The dynamics of your particular hoop may present challenges to working comfortably in these hangs. For example, if the tabs are far apart, it may be difficult to get your armpits around the span sets. Also, hardware may pinch the skin.*

## Outside Armpit Hang

### TERMINOLOGY

I have recently started using the terms *outside* and *inside* throughout my aerial curriculum to try to create connections and common threads between moves. I use the term *outside* to denote that the aerial apparatus is posterior to the body, i.e. on the outside of the torso - such as around the back or under the knee. The term *inside* denotes that the aerial apparatus, in this case, the hoop, is anterior to the body, or in front of the body.



### Outside Armpit Hang

From standing in front of the hoop, squat down, securing your arms around the span sets. Keep your shoulders pressed down as you gradually take your weight in your core. Use your hands to steer the hoop in front of the body. Positions like this are a great opportunity to condition your leg lifting strength. Work on those air splits.

## Inside Armpit Hang



### Inside Armpit Hang

From standing behind the top bar, bend your knees so that you can place the arms over the top bar of the hoop. Wrap your arms over the ropes and under the hoop. From here, you can control the hoop with your grip. Gradually, lift the weight of your body into your core. All dead weight hangs should be passed into with control. Gradually increase the percentage of weight lifted from 0% to 10% to 25% to 50% to 75% and keep going, pausing at about 95% to ensure everything is holding fine before releasing the last 5%. Many times students jump from 50% to 100%. Not only is this unsafe, it is also not aesthetically pleasing. Audience members can tell the difference in the level of control in the body.



# Bird's Nest on Top of Hoop & In the Ropes

**Prerequisite(s):** *bird's nest* | **About this move:** *Bird's nest has some plot twists when performed on the top of the hoop in conjunction with the ropes. On this page, we examine three variations of bird's nest including variations of holding the hands on the hoop, holding the hands on the ropes, and various positions of the legs, especially with one leg. When removing one leg, this newly free leg can relax down in two directions. One direction requires a unique entry.*

## Bird's Nest in the Ropes with One or Both Leg(s)

From a knee hang on the top bar, reach up and grab the ropes. Proceed into bird's nest making sure that the ropes remain in front of your calves the entire time. Sickle your feet on the ropes for added security. Once in position, you can flex your feet. If you feel secure, remove one leg and extend it towards the ground, keeping it either bent or straight.



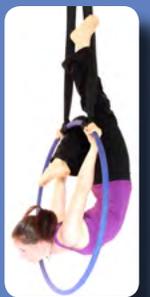
## Bird's Nest on the Top Bar with One or Both Leg(s)

From a knee hang on the top bar, grab the bar (instead of the ropes). Proceed into bird's nest making sure that the ropes remain in front of your calves. Sickle your feet on the rope for added security. Once in position, you can flex your feet. If you choose to keep the feet pointed, press your legs outward into the ropes to stay in position.



### ANALYZE

Typically, if you try to do a one legged bird's nest with the leg behind the head, the leg motion is impeded by the hoop. This is why we present an alternative entry into one legged bird's nest below.



## Bird's Nest on the Top Bar with One Leg Overhead



Start in a vertical arrow position on the top bar. This requires one leg to be on each side of the top bar. Wrap the applicable leg around the rope, as if you were going into bird's nest with one leg (because you are!). The leg in back can now go into a variety of positions including a basic bent position, straight, or for those who are more back bendy, that foot can end up on your head. Retrograde these steps to exit.



# Corkscrew to Bottom Bar

**Prerequisite(s):**  
strong one  
hand grip

**About this move:** *This move might earn you a few burns on the back of the shoulder blade. In my opinion, this move is well worth the burns. I love the flow of this spiral down into the hoop. It is graceful and smooth. The transition allows for endless possibilities. It can take you into lion just as easily as into Amazon. By the way, this is one of the few poses that I named in this curriculum. It's not a common name. It's a new name!*



## From Standing in the Hoop

From standing in the hoop, reach up and flamenco the right hand on the left rope (or vice versa). Weave your head between the ropes to hook your neck and send the inside leg out behind your body.

*Optional: Slightly sink your upper body while pressing the hoop away from you with the front leg. (photo 3)*

Loop your back leg around the hoop and over the lower bar to the front. The next part requires a delicate balance between sinking the weight of your body in the top hand and releasing the outside leg out of the hoop. If you release the leg too soon, there will be too much weight in the top hand and the hoop may fly away from you. You can place the free hand on the hoop to control the slide (photo 5). Delay the release of the outside leg until the last second (photo 6).

However it happens, at some point, the leg should be released and the top hand continues to slide you down into the hoop. Sink the pelvis back and melt into inside lion.

## OTHER OPTIONS

As you spiral down, instead of landing in inside lion, press into the hoop with a strong bottom arm. Lift your following leg out of the hoop as you complete the spiral action into the hoop. Release the top arm into Amazon.

You could also keep the flow going from lion by executing lion roll into half hip hang.



# Ankle Hang & Arch Back

**Prerequisite(s):**  
strong foot  
flexion & back  
flexibility

**About this move:** *When I first tried this move, I doubted I could perform the arch back on my small hoop. I thought I would need to switch to a larger hoop. But, lo and behold, it was possible after all. I found that the hardest parts were the entry and exit. Once in the pose itself, it is a lovely stretch. On your journey to and from, please take the utmost caution in how you move your shoulders. Warm up thoroughly and be safe!*

## Ankle Hang in Ropes

### Ankle Hang

From a double knee hook on the top bar, straighten your legs so that your toes land on the outside of the ropes. Keep your feet strongly flexed as you sink your weight gradually into your straight legs. This step requires both strength and flexibility.

Slide your hands down the hoop. If you feel one hundred percent safe and secure, release the hands. As always, if there is any doubt, keep your hands on the hoop. Keep the feet flexed.



*In this one, a heavy hoop ends up working to your advantage. The risk of a light hoop is that it could swing up when letting go with the hands.*

## Arch Back from Ankle Hang in Ropes



### Arch Back in Ankle Hang

From the ankle hang with feet in the ropes, carefully bring one hand to the hoop behind you. Stabilize the shoulder as you lift up. When you are high enough, reach the second hand to the hoop. Take a moment to check that your shoulders are not compromised. If they are able to engage and support, extend into the full arch. Release one hand for a lovely variation.

### EXIT STRATEGY

Exiting arch back can be tricky if it was a tight squeeze to enter. It can help to slide one hand up the hoop, but ultimately trial and error will reveal the best path for your body. With the arch released, bend your legs. Return the hands to the hoop and return to the knee hang.





# Outside Knee & Ankle Hang

**Prerequisite(s):**  
strong hamstrings  
and ankle flexion

**About this move:** *The outside knee hang leads right into the outside single ankle hang, so they are presented together here. The term outside generally refers to when the apparatus is crossing along the back as opposed to in front of the torso. Recently, we made a revision to the overall terminology of the hoop books to be more consistent with the use of "inside" and "outside." This corresponds to rope and fabric as well.*

## Outside Knee Hang on Top of a Double Tabbed Hoop

### Outside Knee Hang

From a ball inversion, hook one knee on the top bar. Hook the knee near the opposite span set so the knee is slightly off center. It can make the move easier to transfer the same hand as hooked knee up to the rope.

With a snug knee hook holding steady, slide the other hand down the hoop and open your hips towards the ground. If secure, release the bottom arm.



## Single Ankle Hang

### Single Ankle Hang

From the outside knee hook, hold your weight mostly in your top hand and straighten the top leg, hooking the ankle on the rope. Keeping a strong flex, sink your weight and release the bottom arm when secure.



### ADDING ON

From the single ankle hang, place your bottom foot on the hoop around 4 o'clock and your bottom hand around 8 o'clock. Push into the hoop as you lift your hips away from the hoop. In this push out, lift the hips towards the ceiling slightly more than it feels necessary to prevent a droopy middle. Keep those obliques engaged.



# Transition to Upside-Down Man in Moon

**Prerequisite(s):** *outside single ankle hang* | **About this move:** *This move is placed here because this is where my body naturally ends up after exiting the move on the last page (the hip push in the blue box at the bottom of the page). In my opinion, this transition is the natural exit of ankle hang hip push. It follows the flow lines and spiral paths that are started when the exit is initiated. This is also a fabulous route into upside-down man in the moon, which is one of my favorites.*



## Into Upside-Down Man in the Moon

From the push out from outside ankle hang, hold most of your weight momentarily in your top hand. Sink your hips back into the hoop. Next, pull your hips up using the strong flex of the top foot on the rope. Assisting this action is your bottom hand on the hoop. Keep pulling and lifting until your hips are as high as possible (photo 4).

Press your bottom foot firmly into the hoop so that your weight is being supported. This frees the top leg so that you can transition it to a knee hook. Hook the knee close to the rope. As you do this, sneak your arm and then your shoulder inside the hoop so that you can rest with the hoop under your back. If comfortable and secure, release the arms.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Return your hands to the hoop. With one hand high and one hand low, carefully release your shoulders from the hoop. As you rotate out, release the top leg and swivel over your back into man in the moon.



# Flip Up



**Prerequisite(s):**  
high body awareness

**About this move:** *The first time I wrapped for this position I wrapped incorrectly and had the scare of a lifetime as I crashed into the ropes unexpectedly. Thankfully, no harm was done, but a powerful lesson was learned. It is altogether too easy to wrap incorrectly for this flip of the hoop. Ensure that you are one hundred percent correct before you dare take any weight into your hands. Practice low to the ground over mats.*



## WRAP TEST

This wrap test serves two main purposes. The first purpose is safety. The second purpose is to explore.

With just one arm wrapped, tilt sideways and make sure that the wrap does a good job of holding.

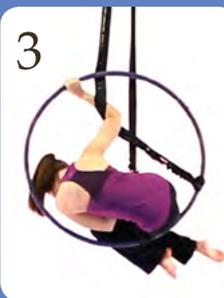
If you pass in front of the second rope you can key over to the side in a surprisingly secure position. The word “key” here is referring to a crease of the hips around the span set.



1



2



3



4



6



7

## Flip Up the Hoop

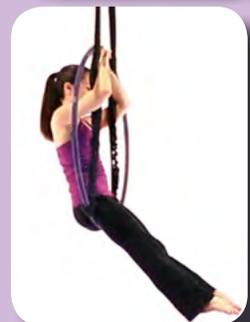
From sitting, flip up the hoop behind you (photo 1). Guide the hoop over your head so that it connects with the ropes. Wrap your arm around the outside of the rope, back inside the hoop, and then grab the hoop. Repeat with the second arm. Once secure, lift up in a lock off, hang from your hands, and proceed into a variety of movements.

*Note: It is very important to perform this move correctly. Flipping or wrapping the arm the wrong way can lead to a serious fall from the hoop.*

## EXIT STRATEGY

If you were in the long hang, perform a pull up or use a beat to return to sitting in the hoop.

To exit the arm wrap, transfer your hands back to the ropes one at a time. Use caution to ensure the hoop misses your head as it comes around. Always be aware of where your hoop is in space.



# V Leg Hangs with Flipped Hoop

**Prerequisite(s):**  
strong hip  
abductors &  
extensors

**About this move:** This move is typically called an ankle hang, but there are so many ankle hangs that it almost makes more sense to call this one a leg hang. The "V" is from the shape of the legs. There are two ways to flip. You can go backwards or forwards, and we cover both methods on this page. You may find this ankle hang feels different than the one we covered in Volume 1. Your legs get put to work in a new way.

## V Leg Hang Backwards with Flipped Hoop

### V Leg Hang Backwards

From sitting on top of the hoop, hook your legs on the hoop. Rotate backwards with your hands on the ropes. Strongly engage the legs into the hoop. There are two technique methods, but the one that I prefer is pushing the legs outwards to stay in position. Very strong hip abduction will keep you in place. Only release the hands if you are secure.



## V Leg Hang Forwards with Flipped Hoop

### V Leg Hang Forwards

From standing facing the hoop, grab the span sets and do a pull up. Wrap around and pinch the ropes between your legs and then straighten your legs, weaving your feet under the hoop. Use those hip extensors to straighten the body and sink your weight. Bring your arms in front of the ropes one at a time. As you lean forward, do not go past horizontal without your hands on the span sets behind you. If you were to relax the legs, you could slide right out. Your safety depends on active engagement of those hip abductors pressing outwards to keep you secure. Retrograde to exit.

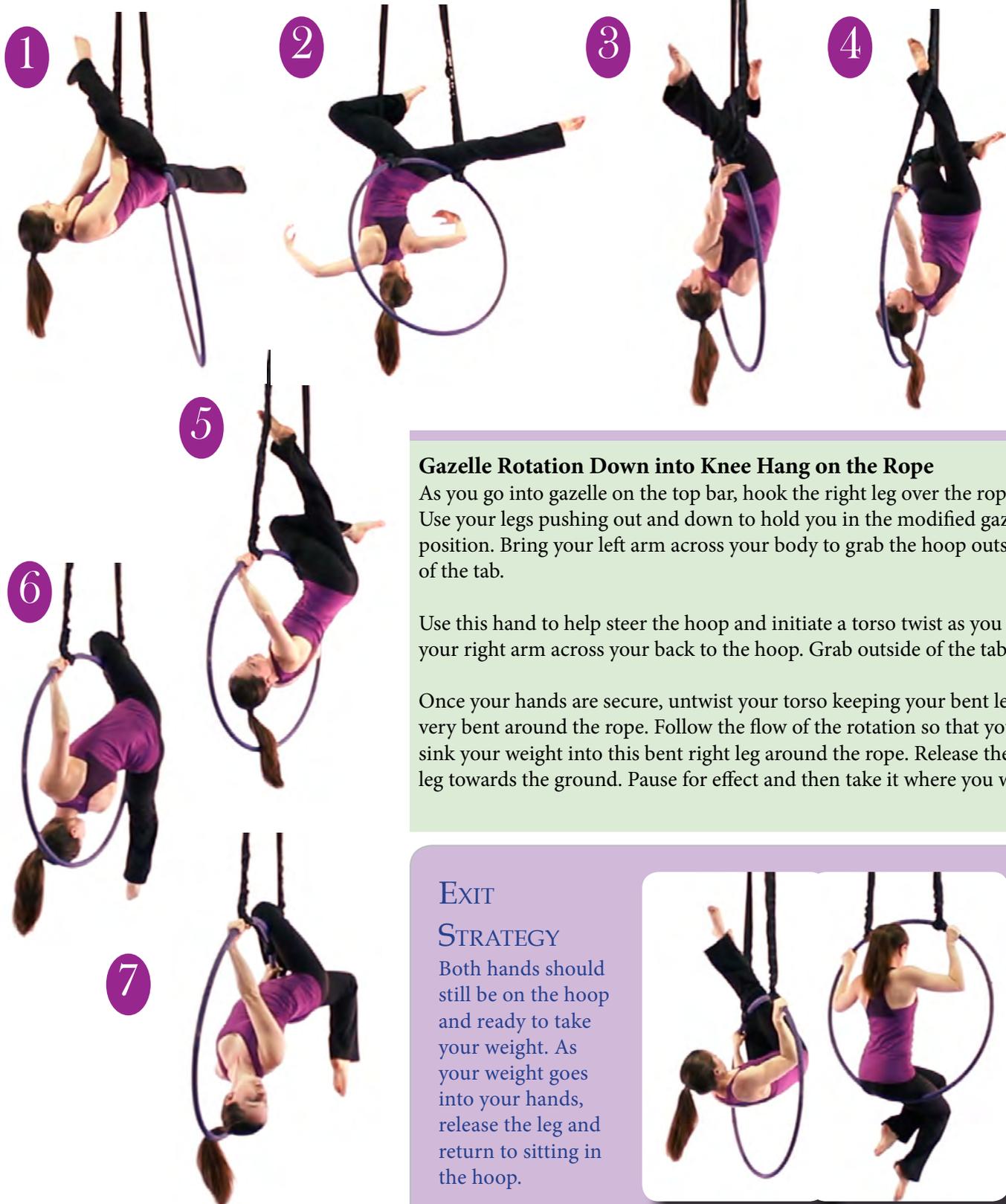


# Gazelle Rotation Down



**Prerequisite(s):**  
gazelle, spine  
twist flexibility

**About this move:** This rotation down the hoop from gazelle is the prerequisite for the cat scratch variation on the next page. This move gets you ready for the kind of spiral action you'll need for the twisting and rotating into the hoop. Practice this gazelle rotation down plenty before moving on. Camping out here will not only be the perfect preparatory work, it will be fun and a nice move all on its own. No rush. Enjoy the process.



## Gazelle Rotation Down into Knee Hang on the Rope

As you go into gazelle on the top bar, hook the right leg over the rope. Use your legs pushing out and down to hold you in the modified gazelle position. Bring your left arm across your body to grab the hoop outside of the tab.

Use this hand to help steer the hoop and initiate a torso twist as you reach your right arm across your back to the hoop. Grab outside of the tab.

Once your hands are secure, untwist your torso keeping your bent leg very bent around the rope. Follow the flow of the rotation so that you sink your weight into this bent right leg around the rope. Release the left leg towards the ground. Pause for effect and then take it where you will.

## EXIT

### STRATEGY

Both hands should still be on the hoop and ready to take your weight. As your weight goes into your hands, release the leg and return to sitting in the hoop.

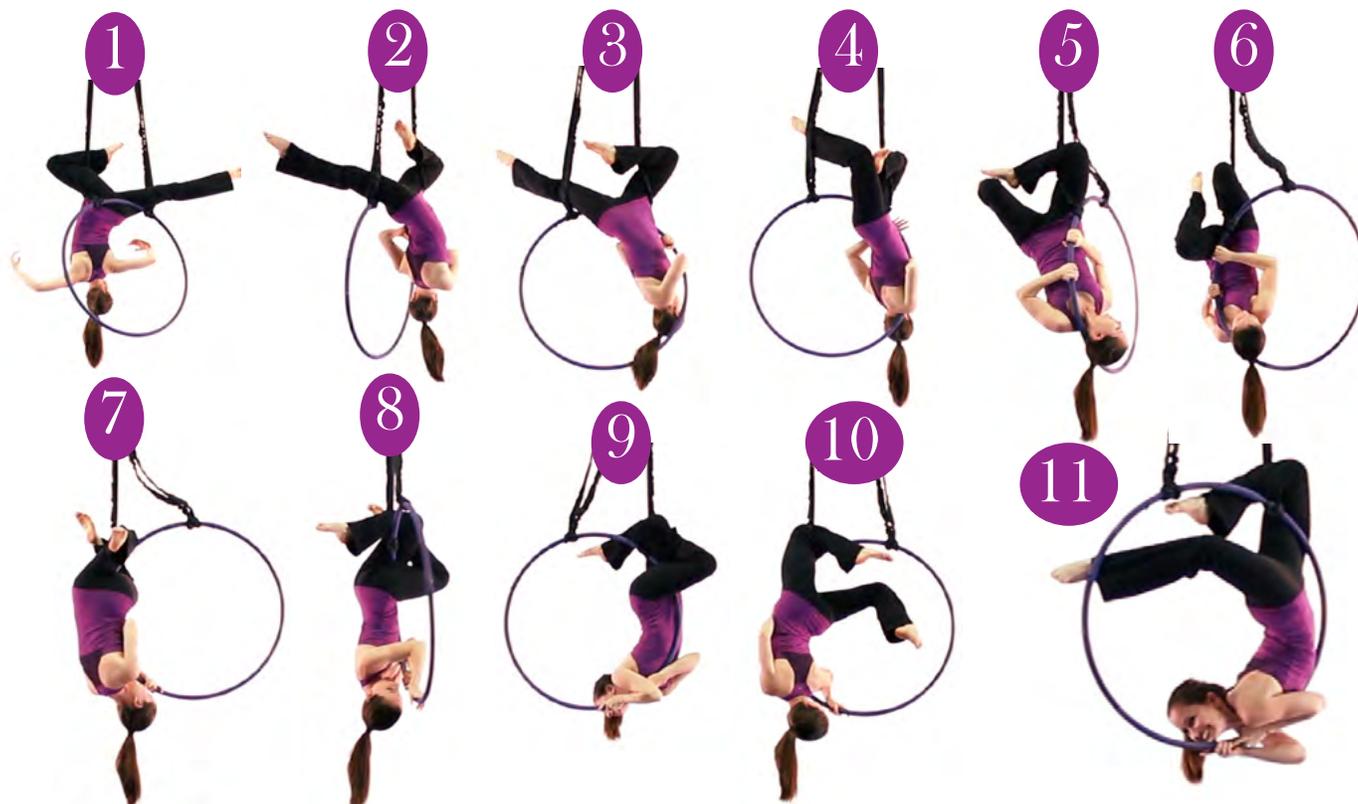




# Cat Scratch Variation

**Prerequisite(s):**  
gazelle rotation  
down

**About this move:** *This move is not the full out cat scratch. The traditional cat scratch slides you down the hoop, but you sacrifice your collarbone as you scrape along. It is not a move that is in my repertoire. Instead, I propose this substitution. It sets up like a cat scratch, only instead of sliding down, you rotate around the outside of the hoop. Also, as I slide down, I like to belly roll back into the hoop. Note: This part is not pictured.*



## From Gazelle into Cat Scratch on a Double Tabbed Hoop

From the gazelle with knee hooked over the rope, hold both hands on the same side of the hoop as the hooked knee. Carefully release your straight leg and sink your weight into your knee bent around the rope. Tuck your free leg into your body and steer the hoop so that it is tucked in next to the inner thigh on the free leg. Note that this serves as your safety. If you were to release the top leg at this step, you would transfer weight into the bent free leg and be able to control the descent. It is up to you how to proceed from here. I like to return to the position shown in photo 9 with the legs crossed around the hoop and slide down. Part-way through the slide I like to belly roll into the hoop. See below for a modified exit. This is your "I gotta bail" exit. PS: Don't ever really bail! Always reserve enough strength to safely exit.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Hold the hands securely on the hoop. Carefully release the legs and collapse into a half or full hip hang. Shift the hands as you feel necessary to exit. Safe and careful improvisation is the way I like to go.





# Chapter Five: Transitions

*Dive & twist. Weave & loop.  
As you transition around the hoop.*

## About This Chapter

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In Volume 1 we stressed the value of transitions for creating beautiful works of art on aerial apparatuses. Of course, this is all still true. Transitions are where the dance is located. They are the space where all the flow and movement come to life. Every time you enter or exit a move, you are transitioning. Value those moments just as much as you do the grand pose you were headed into.

We begin by exploring the rather under-explored part of the hoop sphere – the outside. We travel through the space around the outside of the hoop. We present three options, one of which arrives in advanced splits. Other transitions presented in this chapter move into and out of front hip balance. In this book, we show front hip balance into an arabesque lean out, but you will likely find that it easily leads into outside lion as you follow the flow of the transition. You may also find some other transitions hidden here as well.

In long hang transitions, we show you three ways to enter the hoop after having been in a long hang in front of the hoop. None of these are easy. They require the strength of a straight arm inversion to execute with clean form. You can cheat them if you don't have this strength, but they won't be the same. When we present the long hang transitions, we challenge the reader to be analytical with us in our list. With only two legs, there are a limited number of ways in which to hook a leg or two. If you sit down and think, you can systematically come up with the various ways you can re-enter the hoop from the long hang. Let's get the brainstorm started together: You could use two legs - entering one leg on each side (this is the straddle through). You could also enter two legs on one side together. This leads into mermaid. You could also use one leg. You could swing one leg on the same side or swing one leg on the opposite side. Using this brainstorm, you have all the tools needed to discover the missing transition from the long hang transitions page.

And of course, we present my favorite, the rotations. This manual contains so many rotations that I find them next to impossible to name clearly. Although the names can be terrible, the moves are not. These rotations are very useful in finding new ways to move between old moves. You will find new ways to get to, from and between the lions. We also introduce a more advanced transition that rolls you from lion right back into lion, but please work with a coach on this one! As with almost all of the rotations, there is a large amount of shoulder flexibility required for the rotation. The lion roll and many others will wreck your shoulder if you neglect proper injury prevention techniques of working through warm-ups, proper progressions and working with a spotter. A coach is the one who can expertly guide you through this process. As always, use this book as a reference, never as a primary learning tool.

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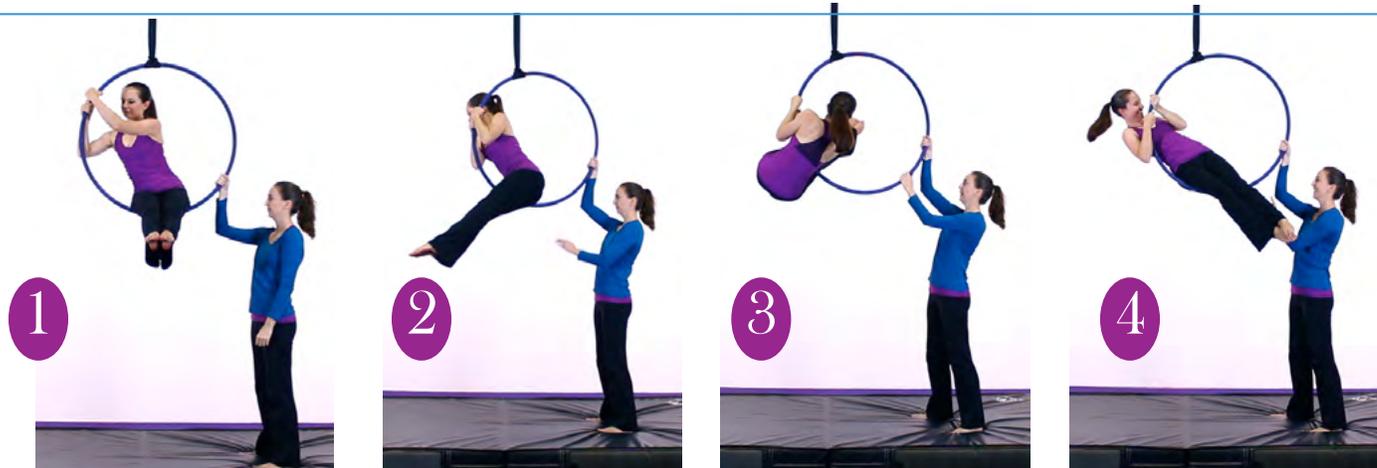


# Around the World

**Prerequisite(s):** pull up strength, good steering skills

**About this move:** As with all aerial skills, this move has many variations. The version presented here is the most technically challenging version in that it requires strength to lift your hips high and sail around the hoop. There are variations that do not require that much lift, but if you are able to master this version then all other variations will be easier to learn.

## Pike Around



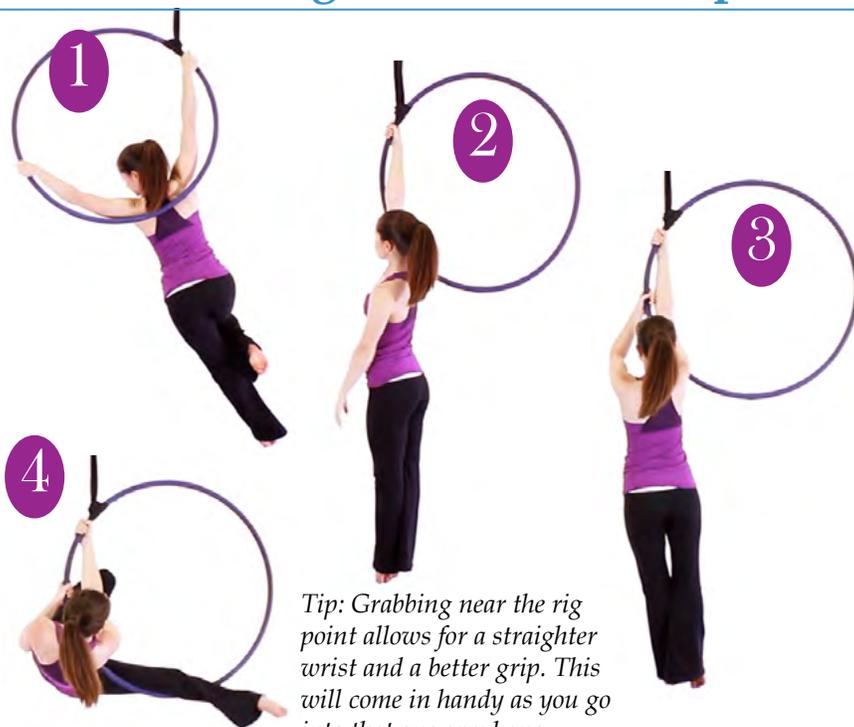
### Around you go

From a seated position, face one side of the hoop. Place your opposite hand on top, and your same-side hand underneath with the forearm pressing into the hoop.

Holding a pike (or tuck) position, lift your body out of the hoop. Continue pressing the forearm into the hoop to send your body around. Drive with your toes (or knees in a tuck position) through the center of the hoop and return to a seated position. A common issue with students is that the hips are too low as they exit the hoop. Keep those hips up!



## One Arm Hang Around the Hoop



*Tip: Grabbing near the rig point allows for a straighter wrist and a better grip. This will come in handy as you go into that one arm hang.*

### One Arm Hang Around

Start in a version of flag, hanging mostly on one arm. Hold your top hand as close to the tab as possible. This will ensure stability as you carefully release the bottom arm.

Be sure the supporting shoulder is engaged as hanging from one arm requires strength and focus. Hanging on one arm is not easy.

The body will naturally turn towards outside the hoop. If it doesn't, you'll have to do a little steering using your grip strength. Bring your free arm back up to the hoop to steer and lift your body back onto the bar. Place either the outside or the inside leg into the hoop to remount. Photo 4 shows using the inside leg leading the way into the hoop, but students may find the outside leg is easier to get back into the hoop at first.



# Other Ways Around the World

**Prerequisite(s):** splits, good navigation skills with the hoop

**About this move:** *This move took me quite a few tries to nail down. I learned it from Nina Chubrikova. Nina was the first person to teach me lyra. I learned while on tour with Aerial Experience when I was performing as a silks artist. In our downtime, Nina taught me the tricks of the trade, so to speak. She is a part of Duo Resonance, which you might have seen if you are a fan of the show America's Got Talent.*



## Around the Outside of the Hoop & Into Splits

If you want to end up in a left split, start by changing your left hand to an under-hand grip and grab close to the tab. Keep your right hand in its usual overhand position. Next, slightly pull up so that your buttocks leave the bar. Your next goal is to get your left leg over the bar, but you need to rotate around the outside of the hoop to get there. Do this by steering the hoop in your hands and lifting your legs to the left. Eventually, leg should meet hoop. Once you get that left leg in, you can release the right arm and stylize into a stag or splits position. For the splits, grab under the leg, close to the knee if not under the knee. Push into your hand to straighten.



## EXIT STRATEGY

(pictured left)  
Using your hands for assistance, bring your upper body into the hoop so that you can hook your neck. From here, one possibility is to lift into Amazon. Another option is below.

## EXIT STRATEGY

After hooking your head against the hoop, bring your free leg into the hoop. Grab the hoop or even the rope if that helps. This will land you in inside lion.

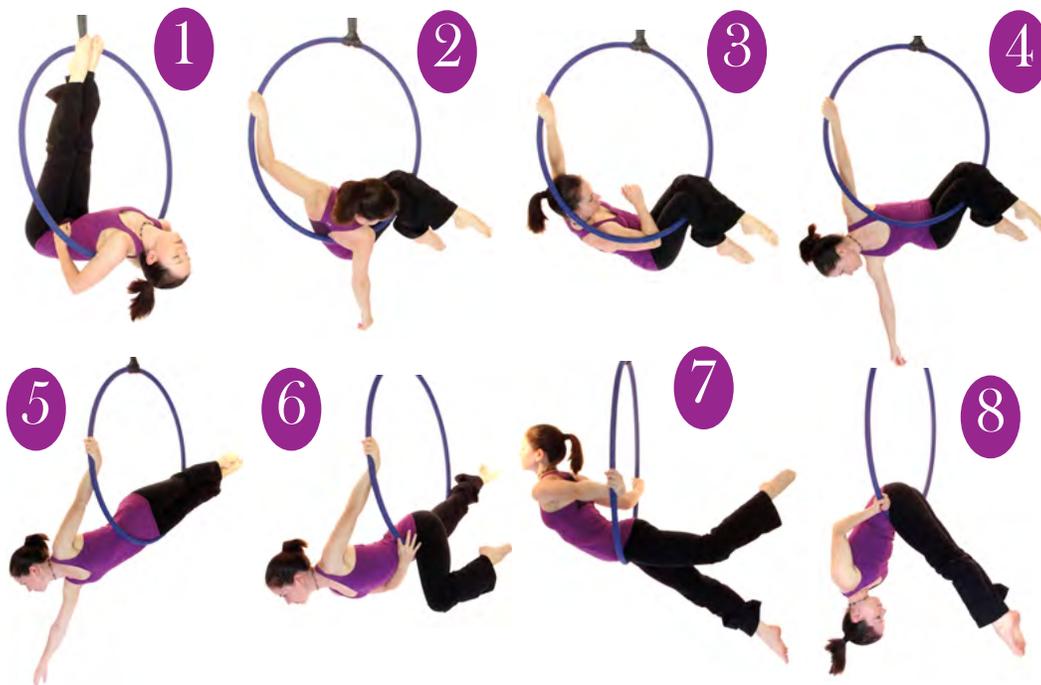


# In & Out of Front Hip Balance



**Prerequisite(s):** front hip balance, sleeper, lean out, outside lion

**About this move:** The foot block position shown below is an arbitrary position and you certainly don't have to start here. However, it does set the body up nicely to enter the deep cuddle position with legs high on the bar. That will come in handy as you roll down the hoop over 6 o'clock. Feel free to use this concept with a variety of starting positions. Likewise, the starting and ending positions in the roll out of front hip balance can vary.



## Sleeper/Cuddle into Front Hip Balance

Starting in a foot block means that you get a nice deep cuddle position. With top hand on the hoop, release your opposite arm and your torso from the hoop. Extend the body as if entering inside mermaid (photo 5). With the style of your choice, roll the hips over to land in front hip balance. You should not need to change hand grip. If you do, try the move again with the hand repositioned.

# Hip Balance Roll Over (to Lean Out, etc)



## Front Hip Balance Roll Over

From front hip balance, hold one hand fairly high on the hoop (low enough to allow for movement). Tip forward and send your same leg as gripped hand through the hoop. Rotate your body towards the ceiling. Reach your free hand up to the hoop. It may be difficult to reach all the way to the other side of the hoop at first, so grab where you can. If you lift up with the hand already on the hoop and rotate on the leg, you can enter a nice lean out arabesque. You can also transition smoothly into outside lion.





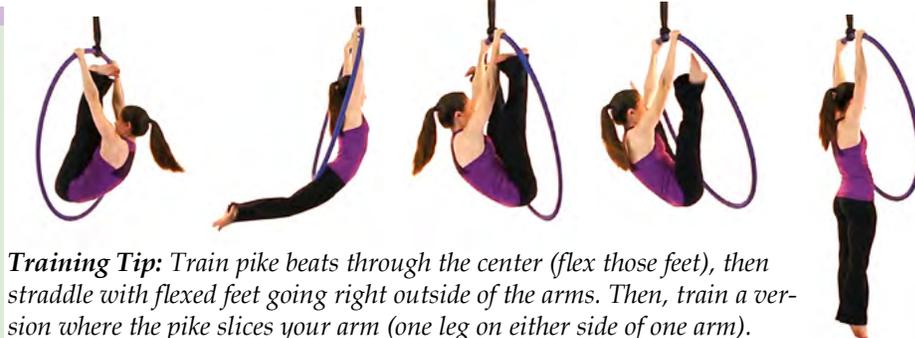
# Hang on Top Bar Transitions

**Prerequisite(s):**  
long hang  
inversion with  
straight arms

**About this move:** *This page has a very purposeful rhythm to it. Let's highlight the progression so you don't miss it: in the first transition, you send one leg on either side of the hoop; in the second, you send one leg off to the opposite side of the hoop; and in the third, you send both legs off to one side. The puzzle I am going to leave you with, because I love getting you to think critically is: What transition are we missing from this page?*

## Hang on Top Bar: Front to Back Transition (Illusion Straddle)

A good prep for this transition is a pike beat where you flex your feet so that they pass underneath the top bar. Don't look up at your feet. Keep your hips as low as possible. Now use this same technique as you take a beat and pass your feet under the hoop right on the outside of your fore-arms. As soon as your clear, you can point your toes and close behind the hoop.

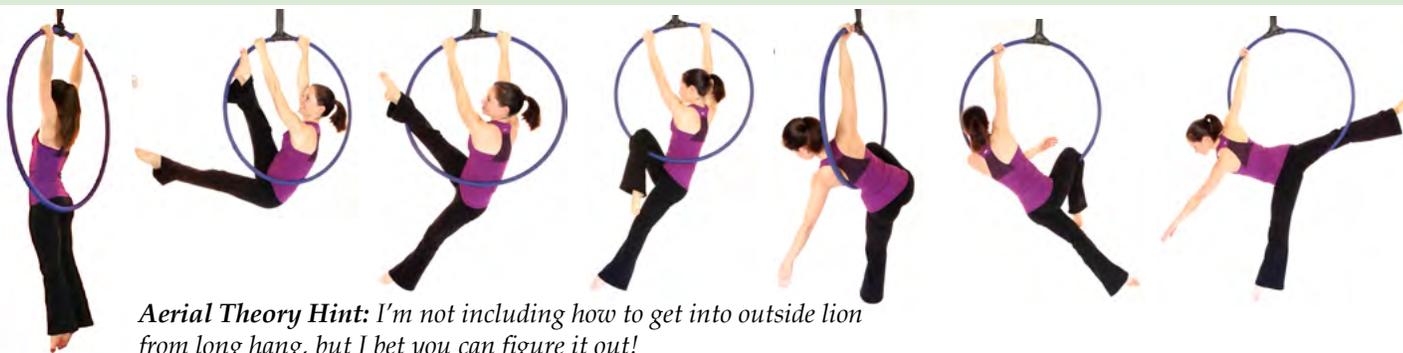


**Training Tip:** *Train pike beats through the center (flex those feet), then straddle with flexed feet going right outside of the arms. Then, train a version where the pike slices your arm (one leg on either side of one arm).*

## Hang on Top Bar into Inside Lion (or Arabesque)

### Long Hang Transition with One Leg to Side

This transition is hard to do without bending the leg into the hoop, but in theory, it is possible. In short, take one leg to the opposite side of your body through the hoop. Once that leg is through, bend the knee and release the same arm as the side you just landed on. (If you landed on the left side of the hoop with your right knee, release the left hand.)



**Aerial Theory Hint:** *I'm not including how to get into outside lion from long hang, but I bet you can figure it out!*

## Hang on Top Bar into Inside Mermaid (or Cuddle)

### Long Hang Transition with BOTH Legs to Side

Again, this transition is nearly impossible without some serious cheating and bending of the knees to get the legs through, but, in theory, it is possible. Once you get both of the legs as a unit on one side of the hoop, release the same hand as side of the hoop you just landed on and proceed into inside mermaid. From here, cuddle is a nice option as well.





# Into Hip Hang

**Prerequisite(s):** double knee hang on the top bar, hip hang, Amazon

**About this move:** Because we are presenting this material through writing and not live, we thought it best to stay away from release moves as a rule, but we are making this one exception. While it is easy to land a centimeter or two off and get bruised, it is difficult to fully miss the bar, and that makes this a fairly safe release move. However, we are still trusting the reader to use full and utmost caution as with every move.

## Drop into Hip Hang



### SPEED VARIATIONS

This move can be executed with quickness and full body impact to the bar, or it can be decelerated through different gripping techniques or by sliding the leg down the side of the hoop. Gripping technique is too easily misinterpreted to explain in a book, so the authors recommend working with several live coaches to give you access to different methods.

### Knee Hang Drop into Hip Hang

Begin in a knee hang on top of the hoop. Thread the body through the hoop, placing the hands on the bottom bar wide enough for your hips to fit between them (photo 1). Release one leg from the top bar and straighten it (photo 2).

Shift into a hollow body position in the ribcage. Release the other leg and extend it away from you, allowing your hips to drop to the bottom bar in a hip hang. If your last leg is bent on the release, your heel could catch the top bar on its way down (more startling than dangerous).

**Teaching Tips:** There are many different ways to teach this move. Some coaches recommend that you think of bringing the bottom bar to your hips, but I have found that instruction less necessary for technique and more useful to comfort the student. The key element that slows the drop is maintaining a hollow body position. With the core engaged, the legs come down with control and the landing is relatively soft. Without this engagement the legs flop uncontrollably, the drop speeds up, and the landing can be painful.

## Amazon into Hip Hang

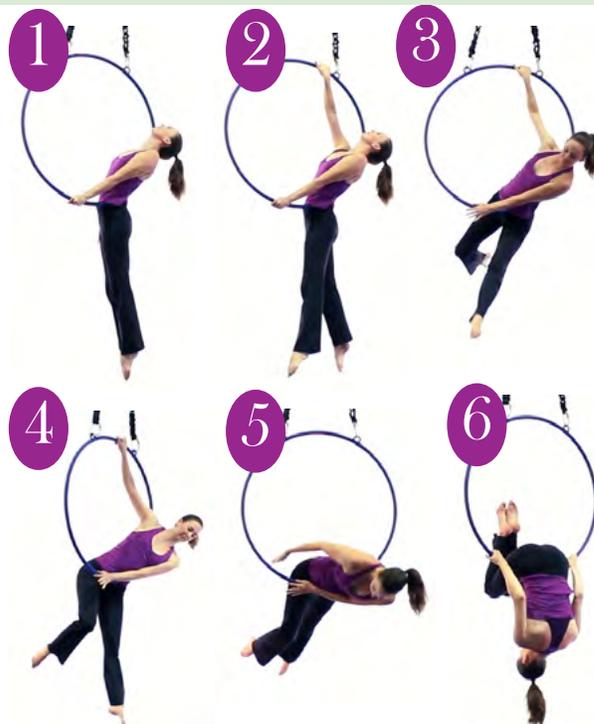
### Amazon to Hip Hang

Begin in Amazon (photo 1). Place the free hand on the top of the hoop, pushing in the direction that allows your hips to fold over the bar (photo 2). As you push with the top hand, pike with your opposite leg. Your torso should start moving down toward the leg (photo 3).

Start to open the bottom hand, uncurling the fingers to avoid rolling onto them (it pinches and your hand gets stuck otherwise) (photos 3 & 4).

Finish the move in a hip hang.

**Transition Idea:** From here, it can be satisfying to continue the momentum and flow of the movement by proceeding to roll forward into something else. There are a few ideas in Volume 1 that come to mind such as rolling into outside knee hang, a half hip hang, or perhaps even candlestick, etc.

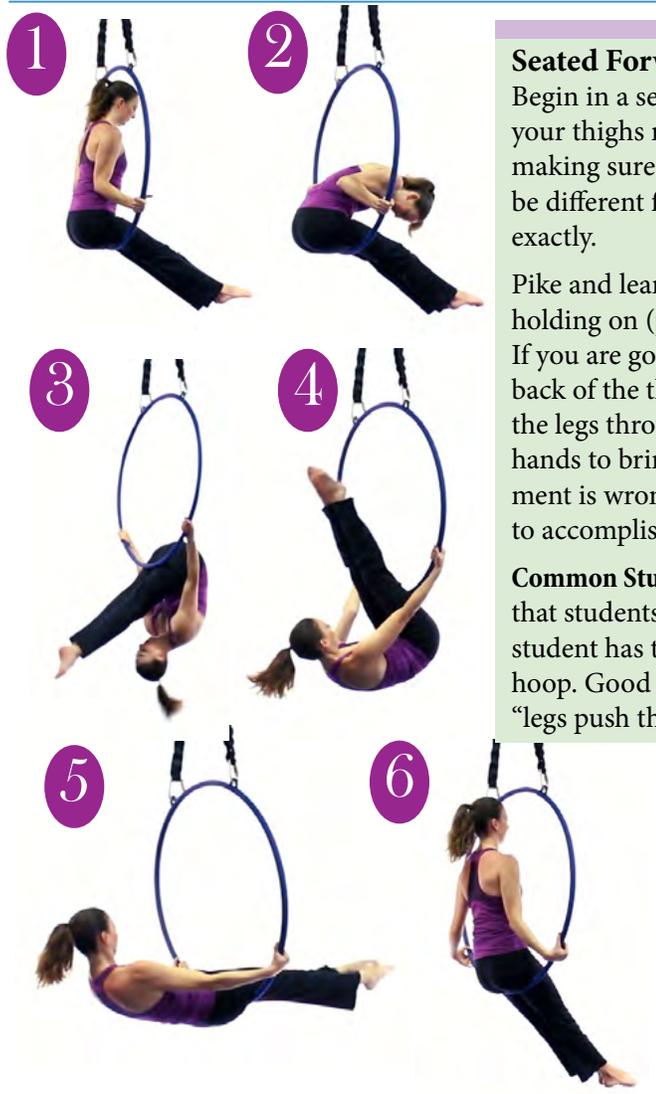




# Seated Forward Roll a.k.a. Hip Roll

**Prerequisite(s):**  
pike inversion,  
monkey rolls

**About this move:** *This move is definitely tension-based! This move can be performed in slow motion or very quickly. For quicker versions, be absolutely sure that your hand and leg placement is correct to avoid ripping the palms of your hands. For training this move, you may consider breaking it into two parts. 1) The roll forward under the hoop. 2) The see-saw action that takes you from under the hoop to sitting in the hoop.*



## Seated Forward Roll

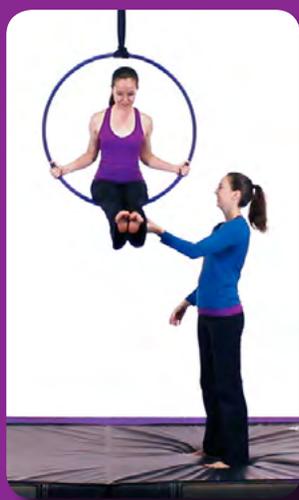
Begin in a seated position. Slide backwards just enough so that the middle of your thighs now rest on the hoop. Place your hands at around 5 and 7 o'clock, making sure the elbows are glued to your sides (photo 1). Hand placement will be different for everyone, and requires some experimentation to determine exactly.

Pike and lean forward, allowing your body to roll under the hoop while still holding on (photos 2 & 3). If you were to bail here, land in a double knee hang. If you are going for the full roll around, then keep contact with the hoop at the back of the thighs by pulling into the hoop. As you pass under the hoop, press the legs through the hoop to lift the chest in a see-saw action. Pull with the hands to bring your body back up to sitting (photos 4-6). If the hand placement is wrong, this part of the move will reveal that because it won't be possible to accomplish the return into the hoop.

**Common Student Issues** include sitting too far forward at the beginning. Ensure that students scoot back so that the bar is in the middle of the hamstring. If the student has trouble going forward, the hands may need to be adjusted on the hoop. Good cue words include "nose to knees" when first starting the roll and "legs push through the hoop to lift the chest" on the way back up.

## SPOTTING TIPS

As you are spotting, here are some things to watch for: The arms need to continually be pulling the bar into the thighs so that the connection is never lost throughout the roll. Encourage students to keep the pike position. If the legs bend, typically the student gives up and ends in a knee hang. The pike position, or pressing the legs aggressively into the bar, is what gives the body leverage to pull back into the hoop. Spot under the shoulder as the student initially tips forward and then transition to spotting under the hips as the student comes up into the hoop.



# Rotating Transition: Star to Lion



**Prerequisite(s):**  
flexible shoulders,  
star,  
lion family

**About this move:** *I absolutely love these twisty, roly moves. For me, this is just a natural extension of the winding and twirling that I love to do on aerial silks and rope. In Volume 1, we covered some transitions with lions and encouraged you to think about ways to move between the lion family. This movement is a more advanced transition from a star variation into lion, but note that you could be coming from anywhere.*



## Setting up the Roll from a Variation of Star/Arabesque

*Before you even begin, make sure those shoulders are nice and warmed up. This one will use all of your shoulder flexibility. Begin on the hoop with the opposite hand as leg on the hoop. (Because you have one hand and one thigh on the hoop, it is in the star family, but it is not the same as the classic star position.) Bring the free arm across your body and between the hoop and your torso. Follow that arm, lifting the back knee to help encourage the roll over the top of the thigh. Photos 2 & 3 show this step from different angles, and they demonstrate the incremental rotation of the leg and torso. Finishing this rotation requires flexibility throughout the shoulder and wrist. Note: There should be extra high focus on proper shoulder rotations throughout all rotating transitions.*



## Completing the Roll into Sleeper

Open your elbow, rotating it open away from the body to help complete the roll while preventing shoulder injury. (This is a very important point. There is a high risk of twisting too much at this step.) Lean way forward so that you nearly roll over your belly as your back leg is ready to drop and transfer the weight to the back of the now-in-front leg. Lay back onto the hoop, sink your weight into that bent leg, and you have arrived in sleeper position, a variation of lion in a tree.

Another wonderful variation of this roll is rolling into Amazon. Simply pick up your leg and anchor your hand on the hoop as a press support. As you roll around, instead of stopping to hook the knee, continue into Amazon.

# More Rotating Transitions

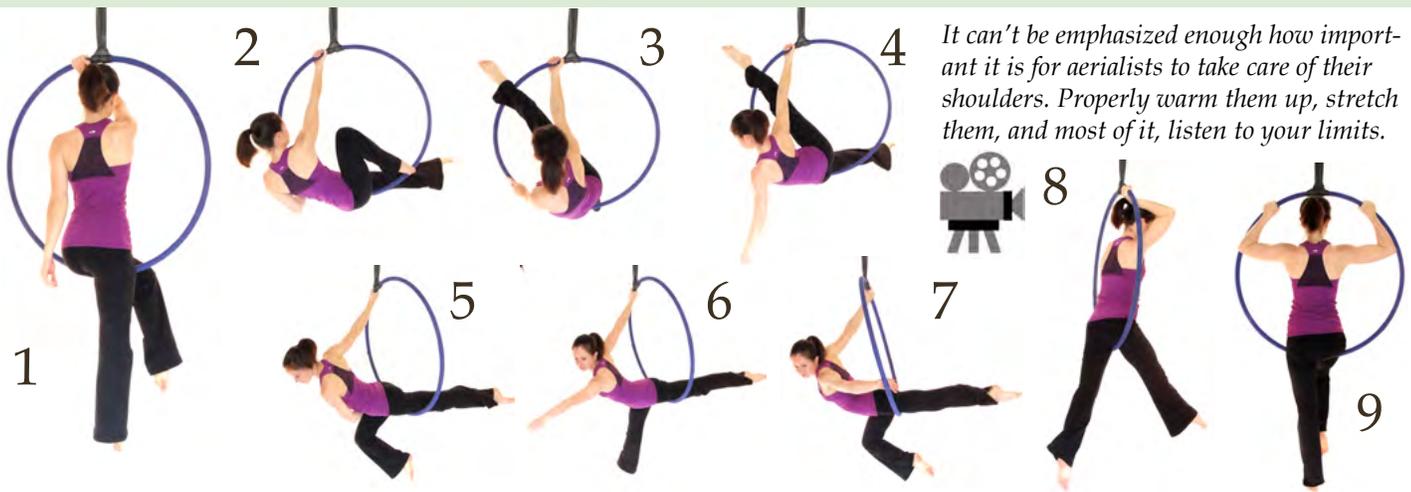
**Prerequisite(s):**  
flexible shoulders,  
star,  
lion family

**About this move:** *If you have challenges with the transition on the last page, you might not want to venture onto this page just yet. The transitions on this page are a ramp up and can certainly cause some tweaks in the shoulder if the proper technique is not present in the body. The first transition may seem pointless at first, but it is a prerequisite to the second transition, and can be elegant even on its own once it grows on you.*

## Rotating Transition: Horse into Arabesque into Horse

### Horse Rotation Back into Horse

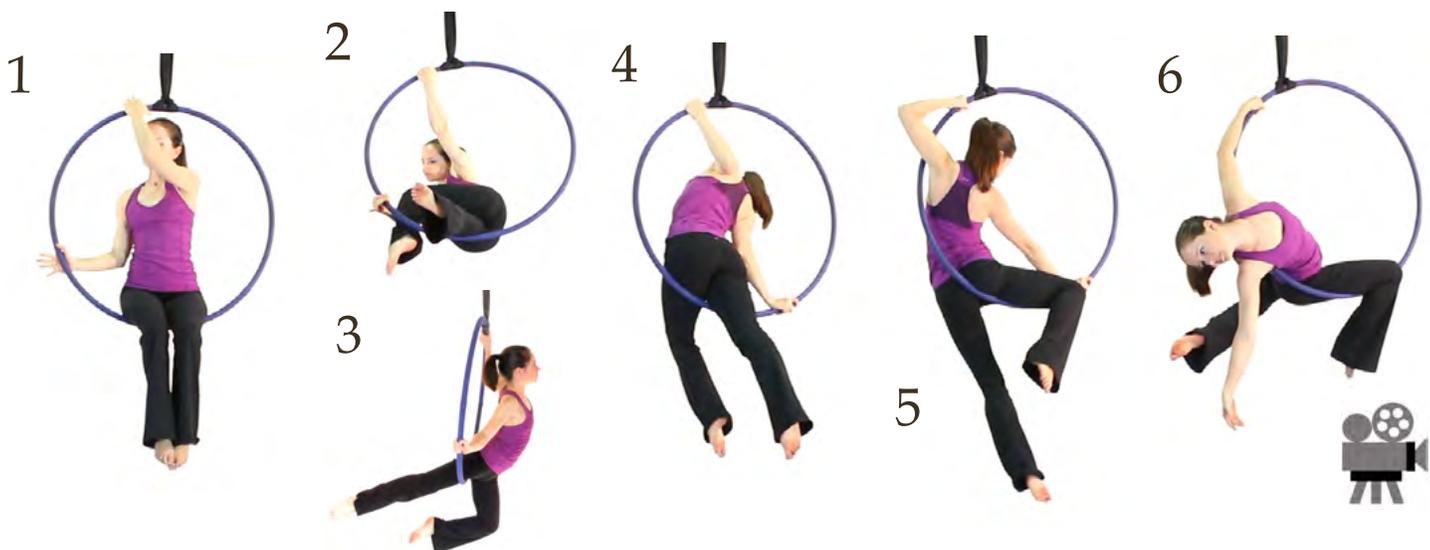
Begin in horse with your opposite hand (as leg in front) crossed over your body holding the hoop in underhand. Take your back leg over your front leg and onto the hoop as you lean back. Continue this rotation of the leg towards the ground. Lean out with a straight arm still holding in underhand. At this point, simply pull back into the hoop, lifting your pubic bone over the hoop so that you are now in horse on the opposite side from what you started with.



## Same Thing Ending in Outside Lion

### The Rotation Continues

Do exactly what you did in the first rotation from horse. (We've shown a slight variation in the pictures to show you how you can also start from sitting and simply slip the leg over and directly down, but it is essentially the same movement.) Next, continue the rotation by rolling over your leg that is on the hoop, sinking the buttocks down and leaning back, arriving in outside lion.

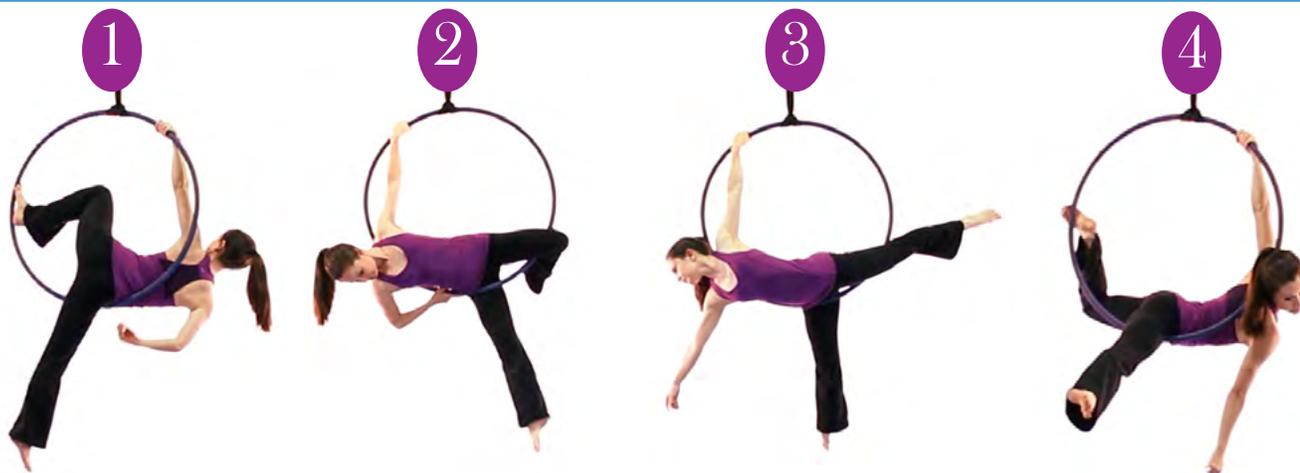


# Roll to Half Hip Hang Over Inner Thigh



**Prerequisite(s):**  
flexible shoulders,  
star,  
hip articulation

**About this move:** *This is a transition that I am in love with. I wasn't going to include this move in the manual because I didn't think it was a move that other aerialists did, but one day I visited a group of aerialists and saw that this was not true! Others love this move too, and so I decided to include this transition here. Plus, I realized that book was incomplete without it. It is the perfect prerequisite for some other moves coming up.*



## Rotation into Half Hip Hang

Begin by situating yourself however you need to so that the weight of your body rests at the very top of the thigh in the crease at the hips, and one hand held around 1 or 2 o'clock. See photos 3 & 4.

From here the goal is to control the rotation into half hip hang. You can do that in many ways, and we suggest trial and error to find how your body likes to move. The way that is demonstrated in the pictures includes melting into the roll by sliding the top hand down the hoop. Hold the hoop at 6 o'clock with the bottom hand. At some point, let go with the top hand, but try not to make it a sudden movement. That will come later. Reach for a state of control first.

Another version of the mini-release is demonstrated in photos 8-10. Wrap the elbow behind the body so that it will catch as you roll. Keep the hip lifted higher than you think prior to letting go and control the last half of the roll just from the hips.

## Spotting Tip

On this move, it is especially important to have a spotter to help protect the fragile shoulder joint. Spotters can spot at the rib cage to minimize the momentum of the roll.

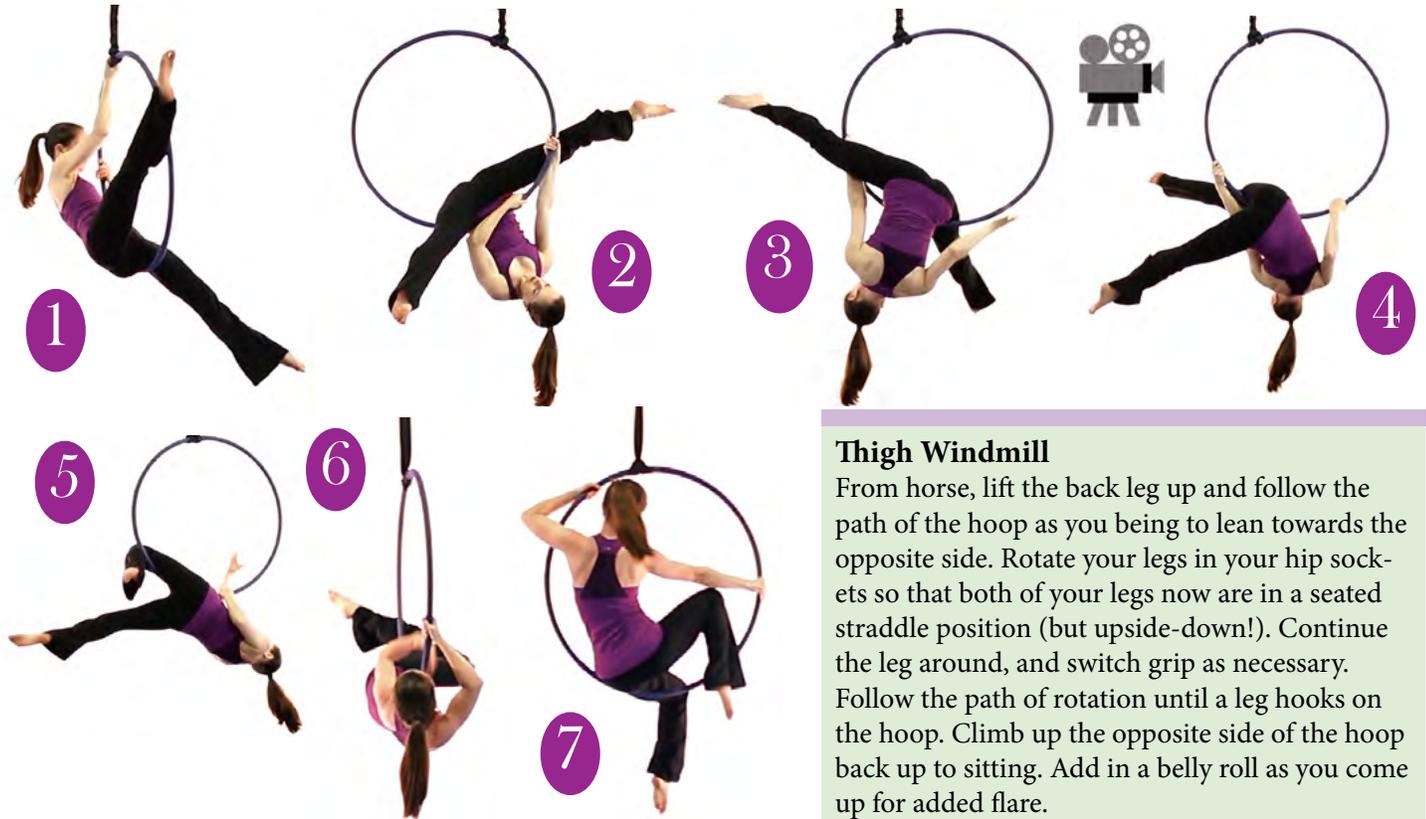


# Thigh Windmill & Belly Roll Transition

**Prerequisite(s):**  
half hip hang,  
belly roll

**About this move:** *These are some of my own creations. Anything that is hip based seems to work really well on my body, and these moves are all about rotating around your hip basin. I think these are the hardest moves in this book to follow through pictures & words, so this is a good time to remind you that videos to every one of these moves exist online at [AerialDancing.com](http://AerialDancing.com). It may be helpful to view these in live action!*

## Windmill Around the Thigh



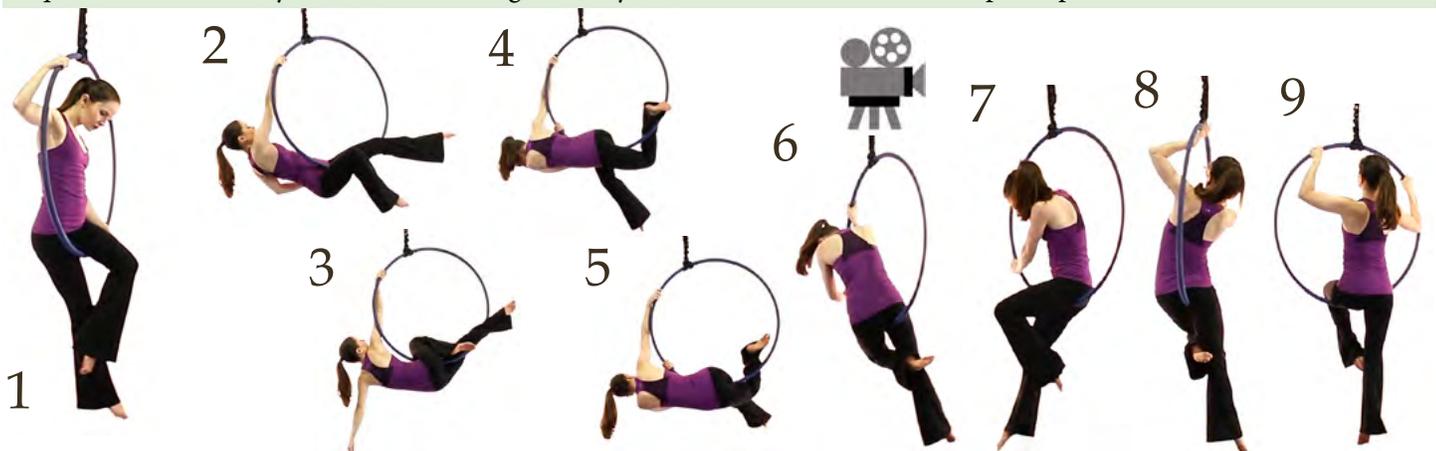
### Thigh Windmill

From horse, lift the back leg up and follow the path of the hoop as you begin to lean towards the opposite side. Rotate your legs in your hip sockets so that both of your legs now are in a seated straddle position (but upside-down!). Continue the leg around, and switch grip as necessary. Follow the path of rotation until a leg hooks on the hoop. Climb up the opposite side of the hoop back up to sitting. Add in a belly roll as you come up for added flare.

## Belly Roll Transition...Belly Roll Optional

### Belly Roll Transition...Belly Roll Optional

In Volume 1, we introduced a belly roll from climbing up from under the hoop. Here, a belly roll is initiated from the side of the hoop. However, in this variation, we flow through the belly roll and rotate into horse. Start with a hand high on the hoop as you lean out to the side. A little finagling gets that arm to the other side in order to position it where you can pull and push your way up into horse. There's a moment where you have to pass over the fragile region of the body. Squeeze and lift or stay forward on the thighs until you are free and clear. Roll the spine up into horse.





# Knee Sliders

**Prerequisite(s):**  
Knee Hangs  
Body Control

**About this move:** *These sliders strike a happy medium between slides and drops. It is perfect for the timid folks who like to be in control at all times - you can take the transition nice and slow, sliding down at an even pace. For those who are risk-takers and know where you are going in space, you can speed these up to be drops. Just make sure you know how to stop all/any momentum that you let loose - you wild and crazy one.*

## Slide into Inside & Outside Lions

### Slide to Lions

Photos 1 & 2 show the slide from hooking the knee on the opposite side of the span set and sliding down. Keep the elbow in front of the hoop.

Photos 3-5 show the slide on the other side of the span set into outside lion.



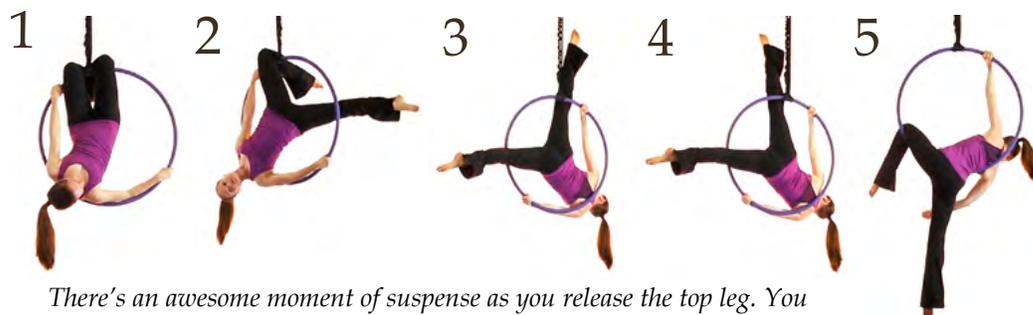
Slide into **inside lion** by hooking on the **opposite side** of the span set.

Slide into **outside lion** by hooking on the **same side** of the span set. Keep the lower hand out of the way as you slide.

## Arrow Pop into Inside Lion

### Pop into Inside Lion

If you were to hook your knees on the normal sides of the span set, you can still head into inside lion by popping over the span set. This extra couple inches of movement will make the entire slide bigger and more dramatic. This is my personal favorite slide.



*There's an awesome moment of suspense as you release the top leg. You can draw it out with a slight pause before you drop or just go for it.*

## Double Knee Slider



### Double Knee Slider

If you start in a normal double knee hang on the top bar, pick up one leg and shift it to the other side of the tab (while maintaining hand grip on the hoop). Slide the corresponding hand down the hoop. For the slide, loosen the grip of the legs on the hoop. Be mindful not to land on your bottom hand. Also, don't drop too much too fast while unaware of the upper arm still holding high on the hoop. In fact, it can help to sneak this hand sufficiently low on the hoop prior to initiating the descent in order to prevent injury to the shoulder. Land in cuddle. (I call it cuddle when both legs are crossed over the hoop together.)



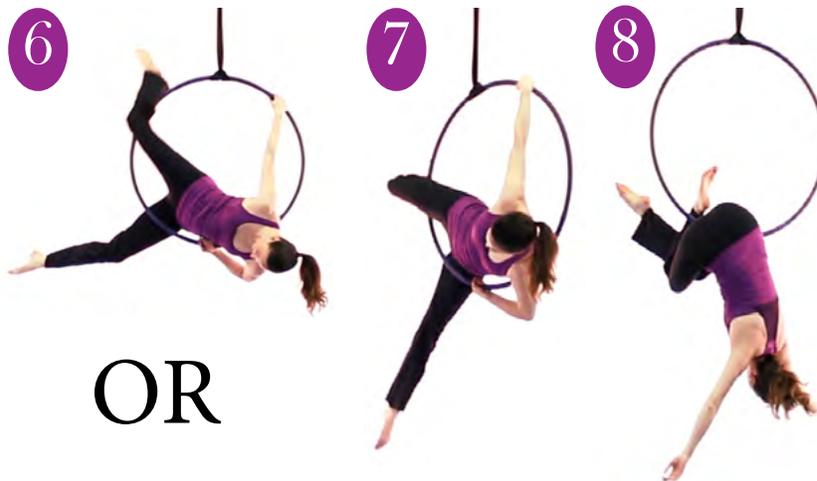
# Slide & Roll into Half Hip Hang

**Prerequisite(s):** roll into half hip hang over inner thigh

**About this move:** Pay attention to the prerequisite of the transverse roll into half hip hang. This is basically a sped up version of that roll. And not only is it sped up, but you get the added bonus of some potential energy transferring into kinetic energy just before you roll. This is like the drop into hip hang (another recommended prerequisite, but it's not necessary), only you are dropping into half of the hip hang - as the name suggests.



To the Hand



OR

To the Elbow



## The Set Up

Start with a ball inversion. Hook one leg on the hoop on the opposite side of the rope or span set. For example, hook the right leg on the left side of the span set. Hook the other leg under the span set itself. Use this hold to take some of your weight as you shift one hand down the hoop in preparation for the drop and roll. Release the top leg and thread it through the hoop so that you are set in position to land on the crease at your hip.

## The Drop & Roll

For the drop and roll, you have two main options. These options concern the position of the bottom arm. You can either hold with your hand or tuck your arm around the hoop to drop to your elbow as you roll.

As you drop, do your best to land right at the top of the thigh. It would be painful to land directly on the bone at the front of the hips (iliac crest), so try to anticipate the roll like you learned in the transverse roll into half hip hang. As you roll, keep the bottom leg heavy so that you don't fly out of the hoop.

# Cuddle Roll into Double Knee Hang



**Prerequisite(s):**  
cuddle, double  
knee hang under  
the hoop

**About this move:** *The cuddle roll has become one of my favorite “scary” moves lately. I am always in need of a psychological spot when I do this move. In other words, I’m always looking for that reassurance. Clayton, who is my spotter for this move, doesn’t really ever do much but the knowledge of him there is what gets me through this move. Sometimes, that’s the kind of support you need. Gotta love those spotters. :)*



## Cuddle Roll into Double Knee Hang

Start in cuddle with both legs hooked over the bar together. Place your hands on the hoop at 6 o’clock. I like to have my palms facing away from me, but you are welcome to make other grip choices. Kate Edwards, of Spin City Fitness, likes to grip one hand on the other side of the knee grip to help self-spot. As you rotate forward out of the hoop and into the grip of your hands and knees, the key factor is bending at the knees as much as possible. With your knees bent around the hoop, at some point during the fall you will notice a “catch”. That means your knees have your weight and you no longer need your hands. I like letting go with one hand at the end of the roll. It seems to fit with the flow of the roll, but of course, it all depends on where you are headed next.



## SPOTTING TIPS

As the student performs this roll, the spotter should be ready near the head and neck remembering that this is the primary place to protect. As the student enters the roll, the spotter can be at the hips helping to moderate the momentum of the body falling out of the hoop. As the roll continues under the hoop the spotter can transfer to holding under the upper back since the hips have gone as far as they are going to go. Now the concern returns to the neck and shoulders and not letting the student fly out of the hoop for whatever crazy reason.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Reach up to the hoop. Grip with both hands. Lift the legs off the hoop and lower to the mat below.

Or you can go into a host of other transitions. It’s up to you. Own it.

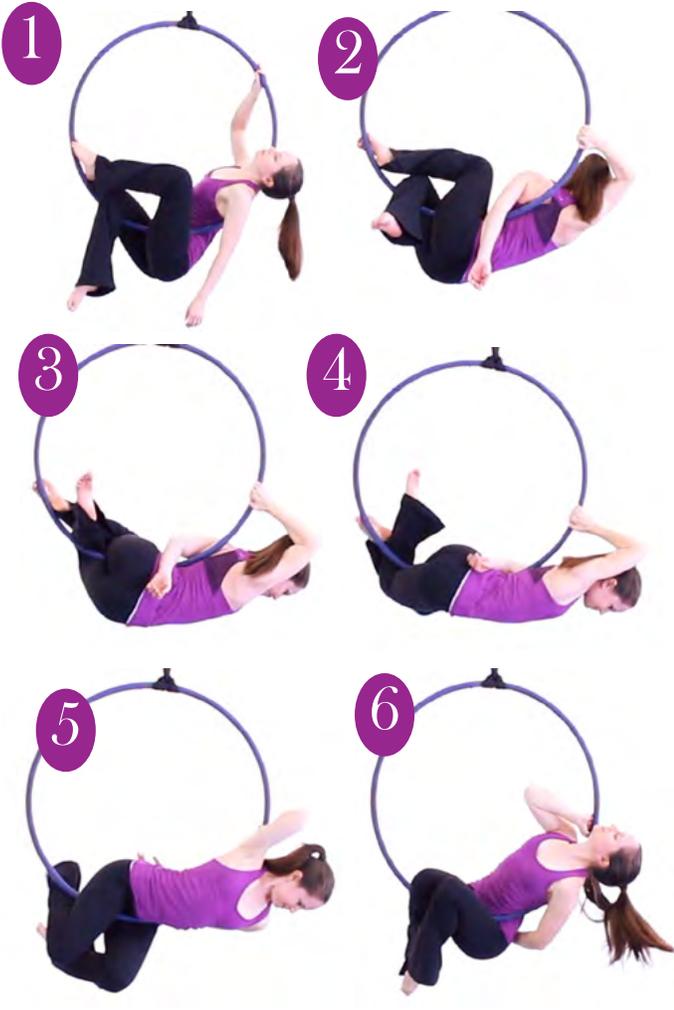




# Lion Roll

**Prerequisite(s):**  
very strong and flexible shoulders

**About this move:** *As I am obsessed with lion poses, this is one of my all time favorite moves. It can be absolutely brutal on the shoulder. You should know that going into this move. Anyone with shoulder issues or inflexible shoulders, or unstable shoulders, steer clear! For those ready, this move feels impossible, but yet it is actually do-able. Train this one with a professional coach who can make the impossible possible.*



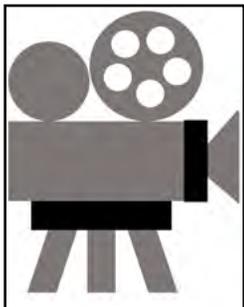
## Lion Roll (from Inside Lion)

Start in inside lion with the hips towards the ceiling. I like to press my leg into the hoop above my knee, but this is not actually required for the movement. The foot pressing into the hoop can assist as you roll away from the hoop. Place your same hand as hooked knee over your head. Too high and you won't get around. Too low and you'll tweak your shoulder. Placement is everything in this roll. As you roll, adjust your shoulder as necessary. Once the rib cage rotates, follow with the hips back into the hoop, landing back in inside lion. The rhythm to this roll is: hips, shoulders, hips.

## SPOTTING TIPS

After experimenting with different spotting techniques, Clayton and I discovered that it worked best to spot around the rib cage when the move is first starting. This alleviates pressure from the shoulder and allows room for the shoulder to move into the proper positioning required for a safe roll. When the student is first walking through this roll, it helps to hold both hands on the hoop above the head in order to have a backup for shoulder safety. We can't emphasize enough how precarious this move can be for shoulders. Great care must be taken to warm up and proceed with extreme caution through this move, if you choose to do it at all. For some, it is a move that simply should not be done.





**Reminder: Access Video Content Through *AerialDancing.com***

Some of the moves in this book can be hard to follow through pictures and words alone. If seeing live action would help you understand the dynamics of the movement, consider a membership to *AerialDancing.com*. There, you will find all of the moves from this book (and others!) in video form. Ask questions, take part in a discussion, browse articles, find resources, and be a part of a supportive environment to encourage you along your aerial journey. See you there!

# Chapter Six: Partner Work - Side by Side & Mirroring

*Mirror, mirror, on the hoop  
Is that me or my awesome duo partner?*

Adding another person to the mix can allow for more variety in shapes using different facings. There are three primary directional relationships in starting duo work:

*Side by Side (Same Facing):* Face the same direction as your partner, as if you were posing for a picture and both of you had to look at the camera.

*Mirroring (Opposite Facing):* Sit or hang facing your partner as if you were looking at a reflection of yourself. This is also known as opposite facing.

*Stacking:* One partner sits/hangs above the other. Since the hoop has both a top and bottom bar, stacking is simple enough for beginners to explore. Stacking opens up an entire new category in which you can have same and opposite facings as well as a host of other relationships which we will cover in the next chapter.



*Side by Side  
(Same Facing)*



*Mirroring  
(Opposite Facing)*



*Stacking  
(Same Facing)*



*Stacking  
(Opposite Facing)*

The building blocks of these moves are not covered in great detail because they are all moves that have been previously covered in this manual series. Many of the moves are the basics from *The Aerial Hoop Manual Volume 1*. We have certainly not exhausted all possibilities. Our goal here is to get you started, and give you a launching pad into your own exploration of working together on the hoop.

Before you even get on the hoop together, try some partnering exercises on the ground to get used to having someone else in your dance space. We cover some ideas in this chapter.

# Beginning Partner Work



**Prerequisite(s):**  
willingness to  
work with a  
partner

**About this move:** *Some will have a natural preference for partner work. Others may be hesitant but willing if the opportunity presents itself. And then there are those who solely enjoy solo work. If you are of the latter group, do not leap away too quickly. There is an unexpected satisfaction when your passion for the aerial arts gets to be shared with someone else in such a unique way. To be cheesy, "double the pleasure double the fun".*

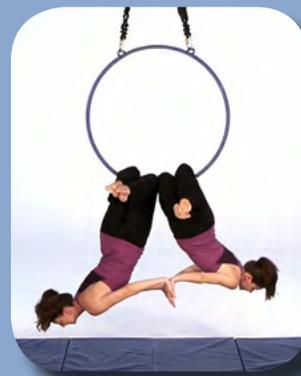
## Let's Get Real

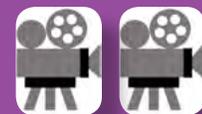
I have to begin by admitting to you that duo work is not all roses. When Julianna and I first started tackling duo work, I was not too happy. I felt like we were on two separate pages and it almost felt like arguing. We were good at hitting the end pose, but all the transition time getting into the pose was messy because we each had our own way of doing it. It was hard enough to see what the other person was doing, much less replicate the movement play by play. The first couple days we worked together were discouraging.

But take heart! We pressed on and saw improvement. I was surprised how quickly we were able to adapt and overcome the challenges in front of us. It only took a few days of working together and we knew what to do next, where the other person was moving through space, and could even anticipate what they would like to do next! It took two main ingredients: **patience** and **compromise**.

**Patience** is required to press on through the initial challenge of getting to know how your partner operates. This includes more than just how they move, but also how they organize their thoughts, and how they plan their next move. As a team you have to decide how to operate. Are you going to plan it all out before getting on the hoop? Are you going to get up there and talk through it? What kinds of decisions are you talking through? Which battles are worth fighting in that moment? Are you thinking about functional movement or creative flow? Does the other person need a break and need to exit the hoop?

**Compromise** is required in order to match the other person. Everyone has their ruts that they get into with movements. Everyone has their own personal style. In partner work, one person should not take on all of the movement qualities of the other person. It should be give and take the whole way. Change leaders often. At first, it helps to have one person leading just to get things started. But then, intentionally switch leaders so that the other person is leading. As you switch back and forth more quickly with practice, the leadership will balance into a matched partnership. This is when you know you are truly a duo pair.



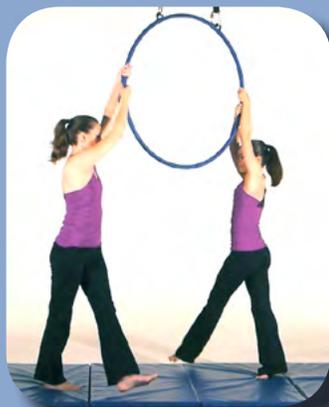


# Spinning Shapes Below the Hoop

**Prerequisite(s):**  
lion in a tree,  
sleeper,  
Amazon

**About this move:** *Spinning with a partner on the hoop requires synchronized movement. You will notice how much heavier the hoop seems because there is another person on board. We present various hanging poses to get you acquainted with the weight of the apparatus, and then add a layer of spinning to spice it up. Hanging poses are often easier while spinning because the rotating motion lifts you slightly.*

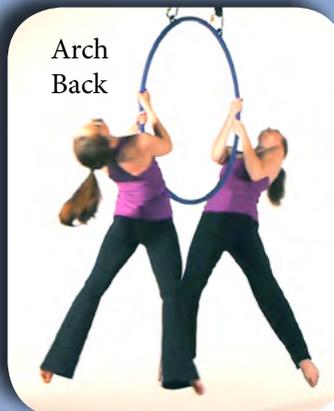
SPINNING



## Entry

Take a couple steps in a circle to start the spin and then give yourself a push off into your spinning shape.

Arch  
Back



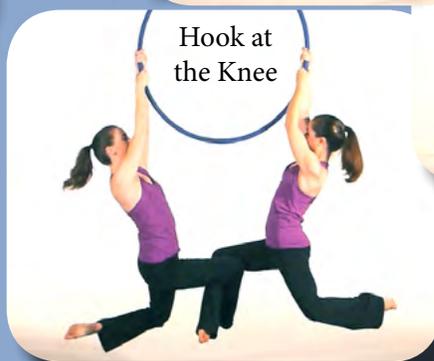
## Partnering Tip

We generally like to take 3 steps starting with the inside leg. This means that the lift off will be off the inside leg, and

Bend Knees  
& Face  
Each Other



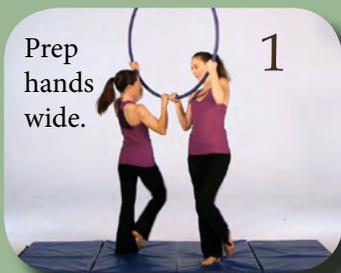
Hook at  
the Knee



this helps propel the spin by spiraling the outside leg into the rotation.

Prep  
hands  
wide.

1



Hook  
knee  
between  
hands.

2



Release  
outside  
hand.

3



Grab  
partner's  
foot.

4



5



Retrograde  
Exit

6



SPIN  
PRETZEL

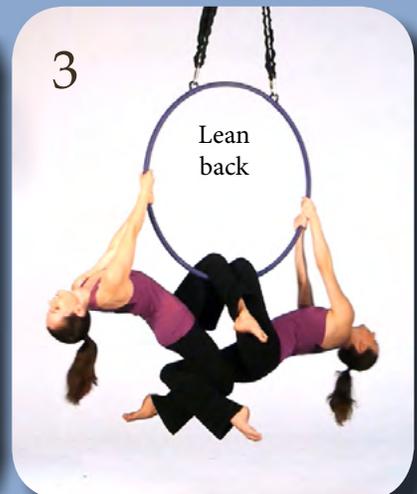
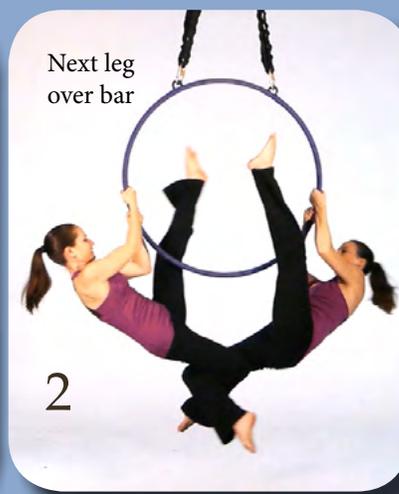
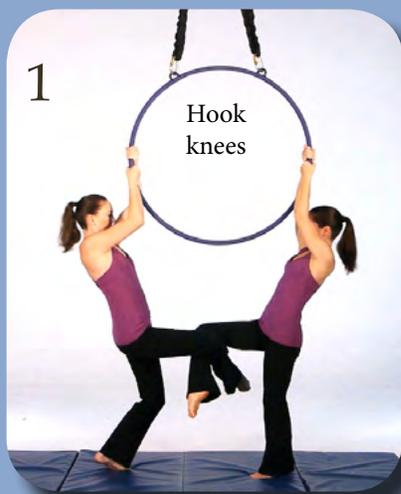
# Knee Mounts



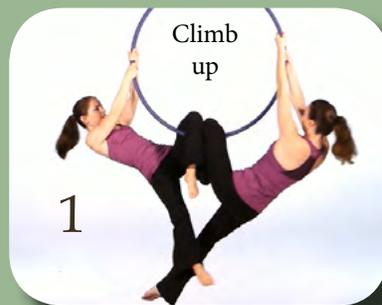
**Prerequisite(s):**  
straddle inversion  
mounts

**About this move:** *The knee mount is another staple of duo work. It allows for a variety of shapes below the hoop and has a straightforward transition to sitting. The following steps outline the basic mount and shape possibilities below the hoop. This mount works best if you can hold yourself off the ground with bent arms and invert slowly into a straddle. Clarity in spatial intent is important because another person is in your space.*

ENTRIES



**Vine climb** is one of the easier mounts in duo hoop work. It is quick and requires minimal adjustment of the body once you have arrived on the hoop. Small adjustments that may have been easy on solo hoop will be more difficult with another person on the bar beside you! Once you are up, if one person does a horse to horse transition, then you can easily switch between same and opposite facing.



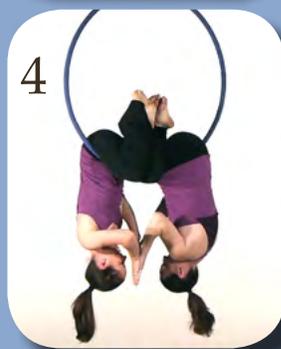
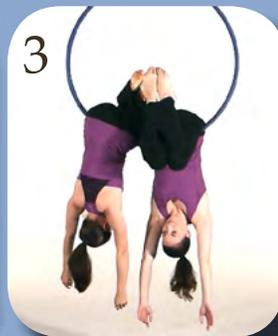
& EXIT MOUNT

# Pull Over, Hand Push & L-Pop to Sitting



**Prerequisite(s):**  
pull over  
L-pop to sitting

**About this move:** Since the pull over mount places you belly down on the hoop, we have outlined ways of getting to a seated position. Two techniques are popular: **rolling**, and **popping**. The popping version is more comfortable than rolling over the legs, but it takes accuracy in timing and body placement to be effective. Each duo will discover their own preferences, so we like to mention both options here.



PULL OVER &  
HAND PUSH

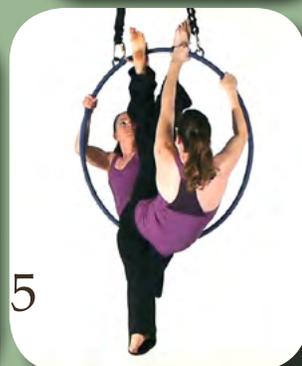
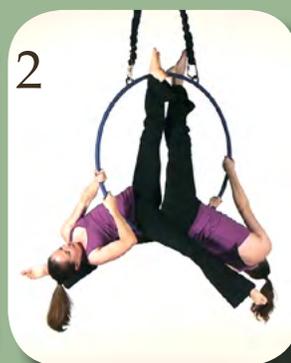
## Entry

Depending on the size of your hoop, space may be very limited near the center of the hoop for your hands. We usually have a “pop the hands” out moment to get the hands from under the thighs.

## L-Pop

While you could simply climb up and roll up out of the hip hang, you may want to make things more interesting with the L-pop.

The L-pop will take some practice before it comes with ease. The key is making the transition of hips happen quickly, and ideally at the same time as your partner. Plan out your hand grips up the hoop so that they match.



L-POP

# Focus on Transitions



**Prerequisite(s):**  
any mount  
any two poses on  
the hoop

**About this move:** *If you have been a faithful reader for these two hoop manuals, then you might be aware that we strongly believe in the importance of progressing your work into a study of transitions whether it is partner work or solo work. Transitions are where the dance happens. They are what give each person or duet their own personal quality and style. They are what bring life to the art form. Spend time exploring options.*

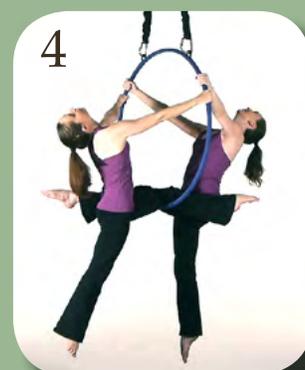
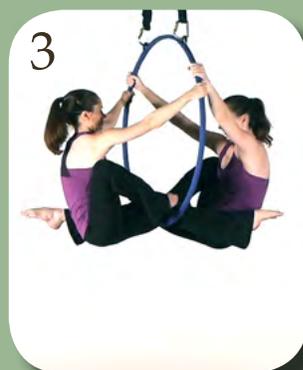
## It's in the Flow

Two bodies on an apparatus create a powerful dynamic! Performing the same solo moves in a duo looks far more impressive to an audience. Julianna once had an aerial dance teacher who said that if you have two bodies in the air, you don't have to actually do much else! Audiences automatically see a story when two people are on stage, whether or not one is actually present.

You will quickly find that the dance, just as much in partner work as in solo, happens not in the poses but how you get from one pose to the other. The transitions are what give a piece quality, and a unique one at that.

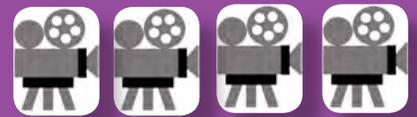


## TRANSITION HORSE TO SITTING



The first transition you may encounter besides mounting the hoop is simply putting your leg over the bar to go from horse into sitting. This occurs so often that partners soon get in the habit of having a particular way that they do it each time. The way that Julianna and I often transition is through a layback with straight legs. The bottom leg comes up and over. Then, pull up to sitting with legs straight. At the last moment, the legs bend.

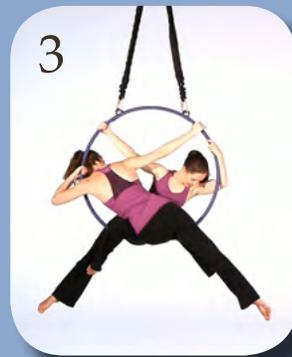
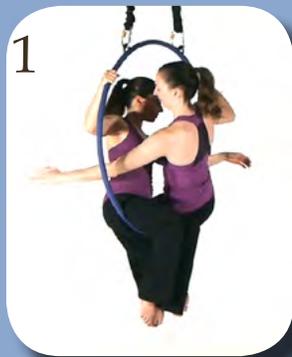
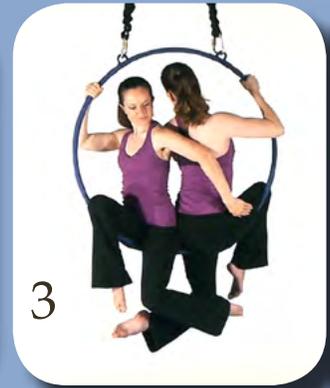
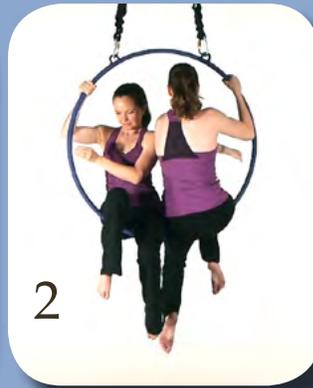
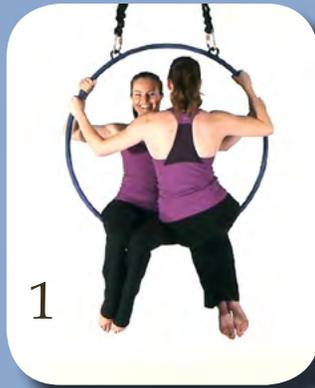
# Back to Back, Cuddle & Laybacks



**Prerequisite(s):**  
sitting family  
layback family

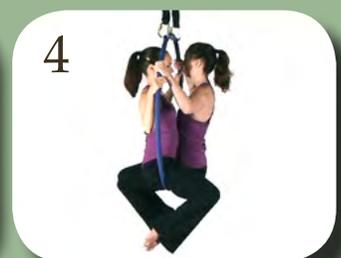
**About this move:** New positions on the hoop emerge by adding simple movements such as twisting, extending the limbs outwardly, and contracting toward your center. While these moves feel simple and basic, they can create powerful effects when performed in perfect synchronization. These moves/positions also make great transitions, allowing the flow of a spin or spiral motion to continue fluidly.

## BACK TO BACK and CUDDLE



The **back to back** move is as simple as it sounds. Simply rotate so that you are back to back with your partner. In **cuddle**, you can snuggle in or simply lean across your partner's lap. Hint: Wear nice smelling deodorant because your partner's nose will be right in your armpit.

## LAYBACK WITH ONE OR BOTH HAND(S)



This **layout** progresses from two hands to one hand on the bar. This progression allows students to test their grip strength as the move adds rotation to the torso and other parts of the body. When exploring these possibilities, notice how your body and the apparatus adjust to meet the demands of each position. Our stylistic choice for the one arm layout is to bend the same leg as arm that stays on the bar. This creates one nice long line with one side of the body while the other side is in more of a contraction.

# Starburst & Splits Down

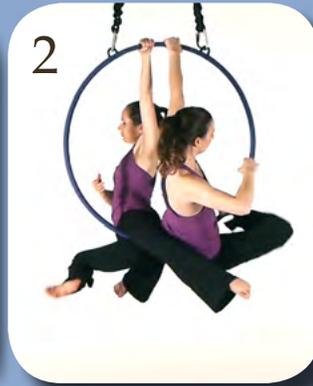
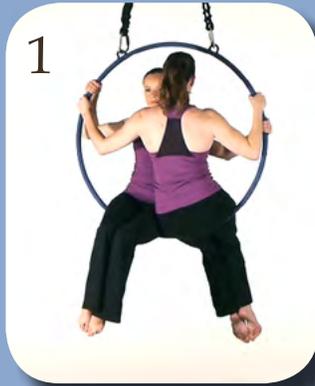


**Prerequisite(s):**  
star  
splits down

**About this move:** *Star* is a classic aerial move, so it comes as no surprise that it is a classic move for duo partners to perform together. The dynamics are pretty much the same whether you have one or two people on the hoop. This is not the case with the other move covered on this page. In fact, the complete opposite is true. When performing *splits down* with two people, the dynamic is entirely different than going solo. It's a bit wild.

## STARBURST

Two stars gather to make a burst of stars.



## SPLITS DOWN



**Splits down** is an entirely new move with the weight of someone else on the hoop. This move uses a counterbalance of weight and requires perfect hand placement depending on the height of each partner. Julianna and I are very different in height, but they are able to do this move by adjusting timing and hand placement. It was discovered that if the smaller partner started the movement, it made the counterbalance easier to accomplish.

# Mermaids



**Prerequisite(s):**  
mermaid family

**About this move:** Remember how outside mermaids have that awkward roll-over-the-thigh part? Well, you are going to get another taste of awkward rolling as you smooth out this double outside mermaid. Rolling into mermaid has never been trickier. Everything from hand placement height to the timing of when each person pushes their legs makes this move unpredictable at times. Communication is key.

## MERMAID OUTSIDE



For **outside mermaid**, begin sitting next to each other on the hoop. Overlap the legs. Once the legs pass the knees, arch out simultaneously. Play with hand height on the hoop to find the height that allows you to arch just enough to make the position work.



Outside mermaid looks the best on partners close in size. One thing that helps is putting the smaller person on top because the bottom person is at risk of having their ankles squashed.

## INSIDE MERMAID



For **inside mermaid**, start in opposite facing (facing each other). It helps to sink down to the knees as far away from center as you can finagle. Roll into center, switch your hand grip and extend out to mermaid. Optional: Rest your head on your partner's feet.



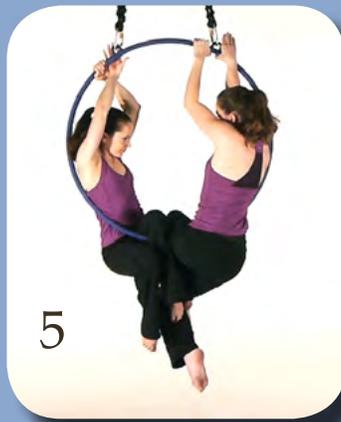
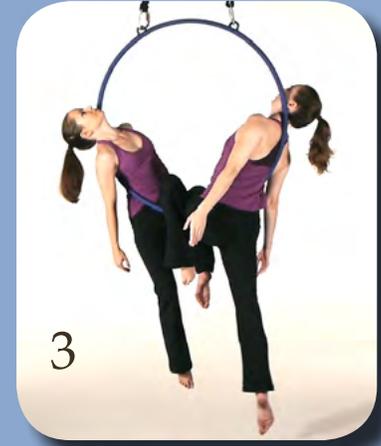
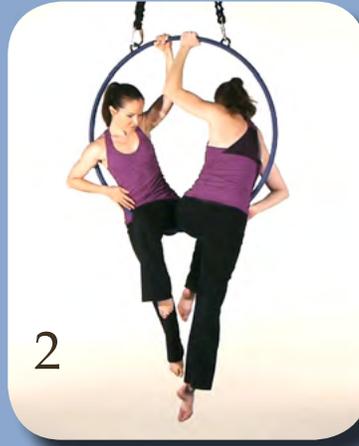
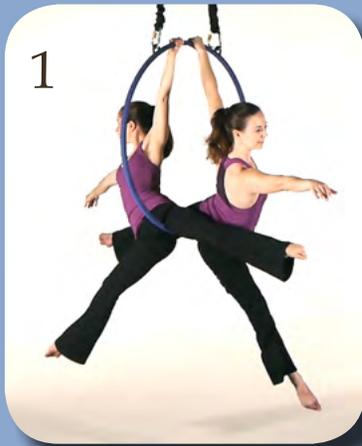
# Lion in a Tree (Inside Lion)



**Prerequisite(s):**  
lion in a tree,  
sleeper,  
star

**About this move:** Here we take a classic transition and put it to work on two bodies simultaneously. This transition takes you from star into lion in a tree. Talk with your partner about leg and arm placement. Sometimes it can be helpful to choose a position of the arms that makes the shape “clean”, such as hands behind the back. A clean position makes it harder for partners to look different, and the result is a sharper image.

ENTRY



EXIT



## Play Time Is Vital to the Creative Process

As dancers, Julianna and I thrive on improvisation to allow the creative process to happen. Improvisation time is when creativity can burst forth and surprise you at every turn. It was during such a time that Julianna and I stumbled upon this variation of lion. While playing, one made the suggestion *what if we go into lion around each other?* This was not something plotted out before hand, but it was felt in the moment. *Yeah, I think we can go there. Hey, this is cool! That's a keeper.* The next step is to explore how to get in and out of poses you like, but that comes later.

IDEAS  
POSE

# Amazon



**Prerequisite(s):**  
Amazon

**About this move:** On the previous page we talked about making choices for the limbs that make a clean position. For the Amazon, the clean choice for the arms is by the side. If you have the legs together, decide where they will be in space. Are you going for straight down? Are you going for an arched look? It will take some practice to achieve the desired goal. It will also take practice to break habits you might be used to doing.

## AMAZON

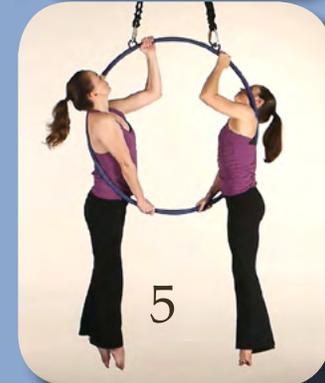
### Amazon Entry

Start in lion in a tree. Practice the sleeper variation in order to connect the back of the shoulder into the hoop.

Hold the hoop and remove your leg. Remove your top arm and press on the hoop with the other arm.

### Partnering Tip

It helps to aim for legs that are straight down towards the ground in order to match each other.



### Amazon Exit

It can be tricky to bring both of your feet over simultaneously. Lift the knee as high as you can towards your chest first and sickle your foot, sneaking it right past your partner's foot. A larger hoop can be helpful, but not entirely necessary.

## EXIT

# Back Balance



**Prerequisite(s):**  
back balance

**About this move:** *Precarious, yet powerful! This move requires perfect timing and placement on the bar. There is a moment when both bodies are suspended above the hoop, and it is quite tempting to hog the bar. Be kind enough to allow your partner enough space while still allowing space for your own body. The trial and error process may lead to a few battle wounds, but that is part of the journey. Show them off with pride!*

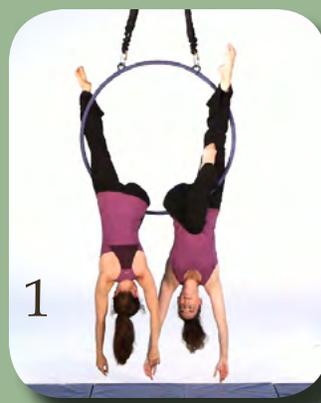
## ENTRY TO BACK BALANCE



Even if you rock at getting into **back balance** as a soloist, you are still likely to run into bumps and bruises when first performing as a pair. We created some nice black and blue patterns on our sacrum when first exploring how to steer the hoop together into this pose. At first, we tried side to side wiggling into the position, but we kept rolling into each other's space. We finally settled on balling back simultaneously as our preferred method, but that's not to say that's what the next pair will choose. Explore! Explore!

## EXIT TO HIP HANG

From back balance, grab with both hands on the outside bar. Roll over your hips away from each other into **hip hang**. Decide as a partnership which leg will be bent and which leg will be straight. In the hip hang, play with shapes.



# Standing Sequence



**Prerequisite(s):**  
standing,  
steering

**About this move:** More possibilities for poses spring up from the top of the hoop. Figuring out the counter-balance is key, and can become quite difficult for partners of different heights/weights. Working on an apparatus with a swivel makes it even more precarious since there is very little torque to stop your body from swinging out of position. Top of the hoop moves require plenty of practice and patience.

## TOE SQUAT TO STANDING



## TO KNEE HANG ON TOP BAR



## AND BACK TO TOE SQUAT



From mirrored toe squat, stand up. The most precarious part of this entire operation is getting your legs around the outside of the hoop while maintaining a balanced hoop. It helps to come from opposite sides with your weight far off center as you begin the transition. With one leg around the hoop, explore various shapes. From here is a good place to transition into stacking poses. One person climbs up the ropes and one person sinks back to the hoop. Alternatively, proceed into a knee hook or knee hang on the top bar as we have decided to show here. Shown is lean out with first the outside hand removed, then the inside hand. Then, transition both hands to the hoop and get your toes on the bottom bar. From here, transition your hands to the hoop and lift off your leg from the top of the hoop. End in side by side toe squat.



# Chapter Seven: Partner Work - Stacking & Weight Sharing

*Learn how to trust your partner.  
Learn how to be trustworthy.*

It certainly makes sense that you desire a larger hoop if there will be two people on it, but it may not be necessary. My normal solo hoop is 33 inches, and Julianna's solo hoop is 36 inches. Since Julianna's hoop was larger, we used her hoop for our duo work. We felt surprisingly comfortable in side by side moves, but at the same time it was nice to depart from each other's side and enter stacking moves. You have all the room that you normally do as a soloist. The big difference is the weight bearing on the hoop. In some ways, the added weight is helpful because it brings stability and less tippiness. The hoop becomes more predictable and easier to work with in some ways. However, for all the same reasons, it has downsides. Sometimes the hoop does not shift out of the way in the manner you expect, and the extra weight makes the pain of collision more intense than usual. Sometimes the person on the top bar gets squished above the ropes, but it's nothing that a dancer cannot adapt to.

In this chapter we cover stacking and weight sharing moves. Stacking moves are those where one person is on the top of the hoop, typically between two ropes or two span sets. While not impossible to perform duo work on a single tabbed hoop, it makes more sense to work on double tabbed for most duets starting out. While stacked, you can still apply many of the principles you have been learning about duo work. For example, mirroring is a powerful partnering image. You can continue to work with mirroring while stacked. As a warm up, try the following exercise:

Stand on the ground and face your partner. Put your hands up so that your palms face each other, but do not touch hands. Start by having one person lead and improvise movements through the space all while keeping the hands about 2-3 inches apart. Switch who leads. Then, try the exercise with no leader.

As for weight sharing moves, there are plenty of warm up exercises for that as well. To start out, simply start learning how to hold one another. One person stands behind their partner, and cradles them under the arms as they sink their weight into their partner's arms. Experiment with body positions that make you heavy and positions that make you light. In general, keeping firmness throughout the body will help lighten the load.

Another exercise that first comes to mind is trust falls. One partner stands behind the other, a few feet back, with arms out to the side ready to catch. The other person falls back with their arms out in a T, letting their partner catch them under their arms. Start with just a little bit of space and gradually grow the amount of space to your comfort level. The partner catching should feel 100% confident that they can catch their partner, and then the falling partner should be able to trust their partner's confidence. When the distances get large, it gets challenging to maintain the trust. Everyone wants to look back to make sure that their partner is really there, and questions how far away they are standing. This one can definitely test trust.



# Stacking Under the Bar Moves

**Prerequisite(s):**  
ball, pike, splits  
under the bar,  
& more

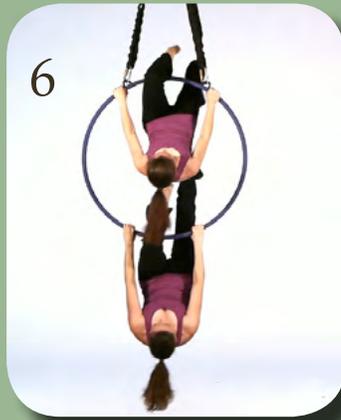
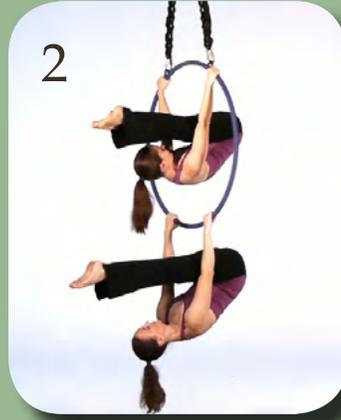
**About this move:** *Performing a duet is a way to breathe life and excitement back into old or ordinary moves. With a heightened attention to detail that a partnership necessitates, you may find new ways of improving or moving through these old moves. Perhaps you'll find yourself escaping out of a rut that you didn't even know you were in! Just that reason alone is a great justification for dabbling in partner work, even if just for warm-ups.*

## Stacking Sequence with Under the Bar Moves

The order of this sequence is: ball, pike, splits, single knee hook, double knee hang.

In the double knee hang, there is an awkward moment where the top person's neck may land right on the knees of the bottom partner. To avoid this neck tweak, place the arms on the side of the hoop and press the torso forward. The bottom person can match by placing their arms out to the side as well.

BALL,  
PIKE



SPLITS

SINGLE KNEE  
HOOK  
DOUBLE KNEE  
HANG



# Stacking Permutations



**Prerequisite(s):**  
laybacks

**About this move:** At first glance, you may notice that many of these photos look exactly the same! But, when you take a closer look, they are different. It may take a moment to figure out what is different. You may feel like you are in math class, and we even have a vocab word from mathematics. A brief definition of permutations is: All possible arrangements of a collection of things. Here are the ways to arrange your partnership on the hoop.



## Opposite Versus Same Facing

The vocabulary remains the same for stacking moves as it was for in the hoop moves. Both partners could be facing the same way or facing opposite directions. The facing is not dependent on where the gaze is actually going, but where it would be going if the person was sitting.

The pictures on the left demonstrate the layback position in opposite facing and then in same facing. Since this is a symmetrical pose, the number of variations is limited.

## Put Your Heads Together: Same Facing

Since the one arm layback is an asymmetrical pose, there are 4 combinations, and 8 permutations (if you account for whether it's the left or right hand on top). There are 2 variations in same facing:

- *same side grip* (same top hand is gripping)
- *opposite side grip* (each partner uses a different top hand to grip)



## Go Your Separate Ways: Opposite Facing

There are also 2 variations in opposite facing

- *same side grip* (notice that each partner actually uses different hands but on the same side of the hoop)
- *opposite side grip* (this means that each partner uses the same hand, but since this is opposite facing, the partners lean away in opposite directions)

## Your Turn!

Try the following exercise with the mermaid position. Perform the 4 permutations:

- *same facing same side grip* (pictured on the right for you)
- *same facing opposite side grip*
- *opposite facing same side grip*
- *opposite facing opposite side grip*

Note that you could list the last two as:

- *opposite facing opposite top hand grip*
- *opposite facing same top hand grip*

Which way do you like to reference the moves? Do you like thinking about it from a shapes perspective (first method) or through the mechanics of the movement (second perspective)? Do you see it the same way as your partner? Learning how your perspectives differ can help you communicate about moving on the hoop.



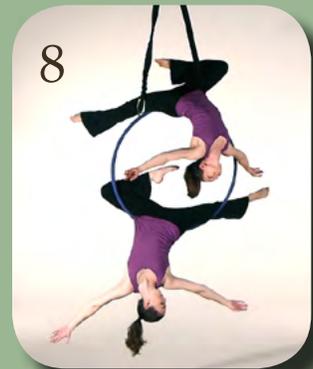


# Stacking Lions, Gazelle, Hip Hang

## Prerequisite(s):

lion, sleeper, gazelle, transitions, hip hang

**About this move:** On this page, we introduce a simple stacking sequence that goes as follows: outside lion (reverse lion), sleeper, gazelle, rotation to half hip hang with foot block, full hip hang. What you don't see in these pictures are all of the transitions and hand grips that take you from point A to point B. Take time to work these out with your partner so that you minimize the "fuss" of getting from move to move.



## Retrograde Exercise

While retrogrades are typically avoided in actual choreography, figuring out a retrograde of a movement sequence can be a fabulous exercise. It can lead to the discovery of new sequences and then your retrograde becomes the actual sequence because it turns out to be more interesting. Some parts of the above sequence may be too difficult to retrograde, but other parts are equivalent in skill level to doing it forwards. With your partner, see how much of this sequence you can work in reverse. Find anything new?



# Stacking Straddles, Bird's Nest, etc.

**Prerequisite(s):**  
Lion in a Tree  
Sleeper  
Amazon

**About this move:** Here's another sample sequence performing in opposite facing. Opposite facing can be a nice choice for performances because you are nearly guaranteed to have at least one partner facing the audience at all times. Opposite facing can also allow for some unique shapes, such as the two bird's nests combining in the S shape when viewed from the side. However, don't lock yourself into ruts. Try this sequence with same facing!

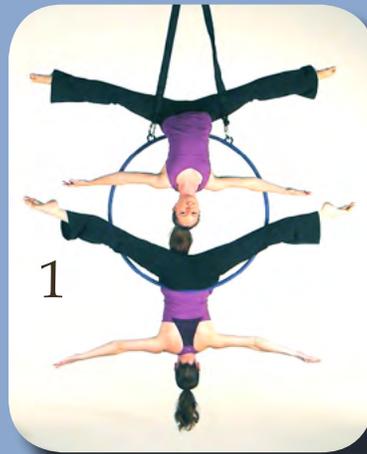
## STACKING

### Straddle

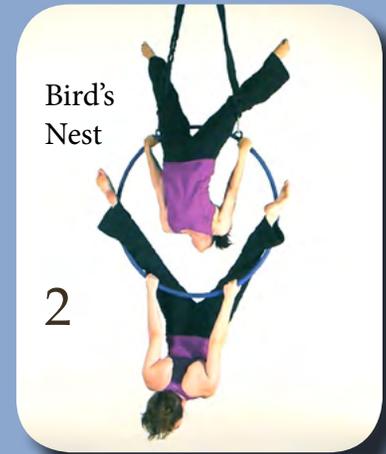
Stacking straddles, whether same or opposite facing, makes for a wonderfully wide pose. This is perfect when performing in a large venue where you need to fill the air space.

### The Sequence

From straddle, place your hands on the hoop and push your hips forward to sink into bird's nest. For here, a straight-forward transition is double knee hang. This can be a little awkward for the top partner due to where their head and neck lands in relation to the bottom partner's knees. For one idea on overcoming this, flip a couple pages back and review the under the bar stacking sequence.

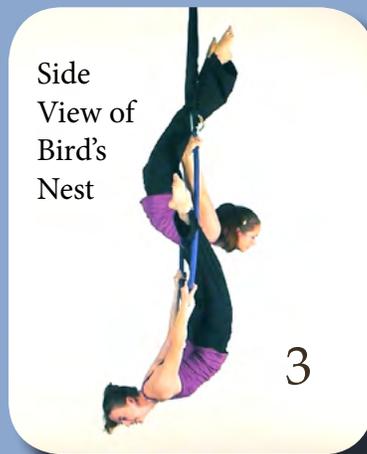


1



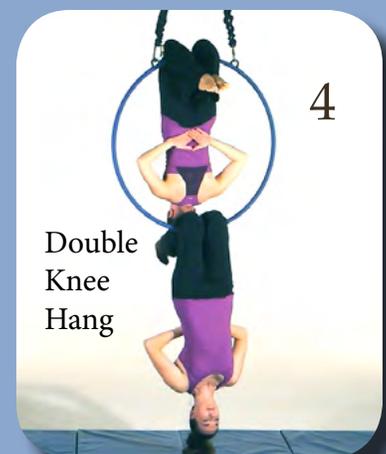
Bird's Nest

2



Side View of Bird's Nest

3

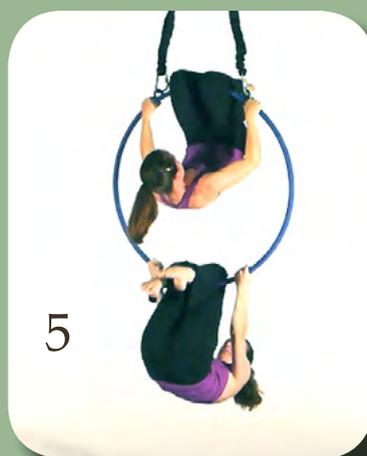


Double Knee Hang

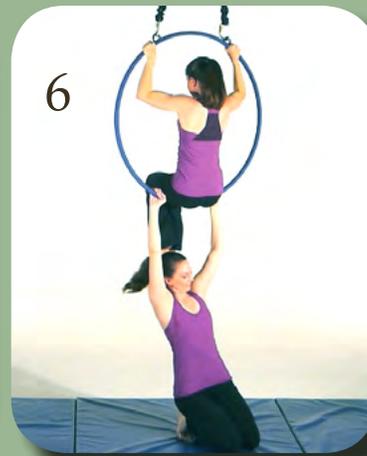
4

### The Exit

As you exit from double knee hang, the top person sits with caution, doing their best to avoid landing on their partner's hands. The bottom partner can put their hands extra wide as they exit to help avoid this undesired scenario.



5



6

## EXIT

# Synchronization



**Prerequisite(s):**  
just a little life  
experience

**About this move:** *The moment you have two bodies on the hoop moving arms and legs, you have a work of art that is reminiscent of kaleidoscope patterns. As you work together and create beautiful shapes together, naturally, parts of your movement will become more and more similar. You will pick up the quirks of your partner's movement style, perhaps on purpose and perhaps on a subconscious level as well. This is all a part of syncing up.*

## Synchronization

Have you ever worked or trained with a group of people for a length of time and accidentally start wearing similar clothes on the same days? Or, as a female, spent too much time around girls and start to sync up cycles? Some may believe this is urban legend, but there is no denying that there are parts of our brain and our hormones that like to “join” or be part of a group. Aerial partners can tap into this part of the brain by spending time working together.

Synchronicity is the process of tuning into one another's timing and finding a happy medium. Parts of this process are conscious and other parts are beneath the surface of your awareness. There are several ways to practice and develop synchronicity, both on the ground and in the air. It does take time, but the payoff is worth it.

**Breathing Back to Back:** Sit or stand back to back with your partner. Begin breathing normally. Gradually start to notice the differences in breathing patterns, and see if you can sync up with your partner's breath. Breathing together can help you initiate (or start) movements at the same time by feel rather than by sight.

**Mirroring Improvisation:** This improvisation comes from dance training. Begin seated or standing facing your partner. Moving your hands as if seeing your own reflection in a mirror, try to stay perfectly in sync with your partner without talking.

Remember that there will always be a leader and a follower, but leadership could alternate quickly and spontaneously. Hopefully you become so skilled at this game that an observer would never be able to pick out the leader. If you get too good at this game, try it again with a paper grocery bag over each person's head!

**Mirroring in the Air:** Now try this same exercise in the air. Begin with a sequence that is easy and already in your muscle memory. How well can you connect with your partner's movements? Is one partner being too bossy and the other partner too submissive? How can you find an equal partnership?

As you begin working in the air, there are many instances when you will not be facing your partner, and sometimes you won't even be able to see them! Try using your peripheral vision to notice when your partner shifts hand or body positions, and also go by feel through the breath. If one person is on top of the hoop and the other is on the bottom, let the top person be the leader since it will be harder for him/her to see.

*In the pictures below, we demonstrate a partnering exercise where each person is in a “chair” position. Without talking, use your kinesthetic awareness to simultaneously extend one leg at a time to a straight position. See if you can get on the same wavelength as your partner so that you both move the leg out and back in at the same pace.*





# Exploration: Negative Space

**Prerequisite(s):**  
some partner  
poses to play with

**About this move:** *The moment you have two bodies on the hoop moving arms and legs, you have a work of art that is reminiscent of kaleidoscope patterns. The hard part is nailing down what shapes you want to do and how you want to perform them to put together a piece. Here are some great ways to jump-start the creative process. On this page, we discuss the negative space exercise and other movement improvisation exercises. Enjoy!*



## The Exploration Process

Creating shapes that mirror or match your partner serve as a foundation for partner work. However, it isn't until you start working with asymmetry and complimentary shapes that things really start to get spicy. The pictures on this page were taken during an improvisation time where Julianna and I worked with creating *counterposes* to each other's poses.

If you do not have a solid hoop vocabulary, this exercise can also be done on the ground. One person makes a shape and the next person comes in to fill the negative space. This is a common exercise in modern dance classes. It can be a fabulous way to create pieces, or just have fun exploring and getting comfortable working with other people through space.

Improvisation exercises like this are excellent for taking your artistic creative process to the next level. Once you have found a set of moves that you like, set a brief outline of the moves and look for pathways between the poses. Once you have a general outline, it's time to refine your quality of movement. The next level of the exercise is one that gets you thinking about how you move. It should assign intention and alter the pacing, rhythm, and lines of the movement.

Below are some movement words to jump-start your improv sessions. Some words are more based on shape and style. Some are based on emotion that can help define new shapes and lines through space, whether emotion is intended or not.

## Movement Words

slice, jab, moving through molasses, carving out space, withdrawn, sleepy, melt, wring out like a rag, slither, teeter, drive, meander, zigzag, spiral, reach, yawn, emerge, push, pull, choppy, smooth, dash, hug, hang, drape, pluck.

Now it's your turn to brainstorm words and phrases!

# Introduction to Weight Sharing

**Prerequisite(s):**  
just a little life  
experience

**About this move:** *There are many fun activities to do to practice trusting another person with your weight. These are great for groups who want some team-building activities. This is also the perfect crossover into contact improvisation. Contact improv teaches you how to carry your own weight as you give it to someone else, as well as how to handle weight given to you. It is a great practice to blend with your aerial work.*

## Intro to Weight Sharing

When working with a partner for the first time on hoop, take as much time as you need to feel the weight of the apparatus as well as the weight of the other person. Simple hangs and shifts of weight will provide important information for future, more complicated moves. Spending time sensing each other's weight can also provide a wealth of creative options, such as the discovery of various hanging positions.

## Balancing Weight

When one person hangs on the hoop before the other, the hoop will tip sideways. When both partners weight the hoop simultaneously, the hoop remains balanced. It does help if the partners are roughly the same weight, but it is possible to modify positions for varying weights and heights. Try slowly lifting the feet off the ground at the same time with your partner. Start sensing when the other person is going to commit to the movement by feel. This is the beginning of becoming synchronized with your partner. The more you work together, the more you will understand each other's natural rhythms. Compromise becomes possible for the good of the whole.

## Forces

The overall goal of sharing weight is to create stability for either transitioning to a new place or maintaining a pose for a short length of time. In order to understand basic principles of physics, let's look at bridges. There are two primary forces involved in weight sharing. The official force term is shown first, followed by the term used in either dance or rock climbing:

1. **Compression (Wedge):** This involves pushing or pressing toward the center. The keystone in an arch bridge uses compression for stability.
2. **Tension:** This involves at least two directional forces (i.e. people) pulling away from the center for balance. A suspension bridge uses tension in its cables to transfer loads from the roadway to the piers.

These terms can also be translated from body/body relationships to body/apparatus relationships. For example, any press support move like the Amazon uses compression, or pushing toward, for stability. A star uses tension (pulling away from) or counterbalance since the body pulls away from center.

## Percentage of Weight

In either case (tension or compression), the percentage of one's body weight being supported yields a need for several other dance terms:

1. **Lean:** One person leans either toward or away from center, giving part of their body weight to another.
2. **Counterbalance:** Weight is equally distributed between partners; one partner still needs the other for balance.
3. **Yield:** Weight is distributed unevenly, with one person carrying more weight than the other.
4. **Carry/Lift:** One person holds the other person's entire body weight. The person doing the lifting is known as the base, and the person being lifted is known as the flyer.

## Carries and Lifts

Even though the base is doing most of the heavy lifting, the flyer must contribute to the effort by maintaining a fully engaged body and a focused mind. An active flyer is much lighter than a limp flyer! Try this experiment:

- While standing firmly on the ground, hold your partner in a standard carrying position (think how you would carry a young child). Have the flyer engage all of their muscles and focus on what's happening.
- Try the same exercise again, only allow the flyer to go completely limp in the entire body. Notice how much heavier the flyer is when the muscles are relaxed.



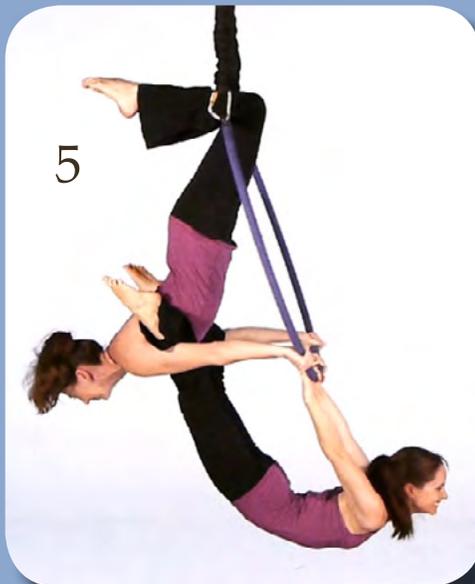
# Bird's Nest on the Armpits

**Prerequisite(s):**  
bird's nest,  
body awareness

**About this move:** This is a classic beginning partner move. It is a variation of the one where the hands are being held. Instead of holding hands, the hoop is there acting as a go-between. Both partners are using the hoop to stabilize. It makes the partner work easier and more stable. It also puts a nice variation to this move. The feet are farther away from the center allowing for a sort of fish pose. It is also a wonderful stretch for the flyer.

## Entry into Bird's Nest on the Armpits

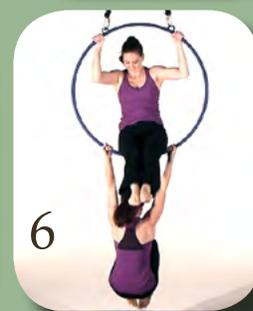
Start in opposite facing stacking double knee hangs. The top person needs to finagle their body over the bottom person's knees in order to set up for this pose. Larger hoops come in handy here. Once the top person is set up with straight arms pressing into the hoop, the bottom person can place their ankles on their partner's armpits and develop into bird's nest.



BIRD'S NEST  
ON THE  
ARMPITS

## Exit

The bottom person lifts their hips up and under the bar, then bends the legs back into the double knee hang position. The top person finagles their way back through the hoop and exits through the ball. The bottom person also exits through the ball. The top person watches to make sure they are not landing on their partner or their partner's hands.



EXIT

# Foot Under Neck



**Prerequisite(s):**  
high body  
awareness

**About this move:** *The foot under the neck move always reminds me of one of my favorite partner moves in swing dancing where the girl drops on the foot of her partner and he gets to kick her around like a hacky sack, all in good fun. When I used to swing dance, we would do the version where you catch with the hands. While the hands are always an inch away, the partner doesn't actually catch until the last moment. Talk about trust!*

## FOOT UNDER NECK



### Entry

The top person sits facing the bottom person. The top partner situates her foot under her partner's neck, bending the other leg so it's out of the way.

Once the foot is in place, the bottom partner raises her arm overhead in order to lock her partner's foot in place under the neck. The other arm can be released anywhere in the space. The top partner can pose as desired.

### Relationship Exploration

Now that two people are in the picture (in addition to the third partner, the apparatus), let's discuss terms of the new relationship. Here is a simplified list of relationship categories defined in the book, *Your Move* by Guest and Curran (2008):

1. Away (Far or Retreat)
2. Toward (Approach)
3. Near (Close)
4. Contact (Touch)
5. Interlace (Entwine)
6. Support/Carry (Weight Sharing)

This list serves as a great improvisation score for exploring relationship. Try it out with your partner. Begin far away from your partner. Gradually approach or move toward them. Spend time being near your partner to establish a spatial relationship. Explore ways of initially contacting your partner and/or the apparatus. Try interlacing shapes where the arms or legs are entwined (lovely in mirroring shapes). Finally, experiment with weight sharing, either using the apparatus or your partner as a support.

## EXERCISE IMPROV

# Sleeping Beauty



**Prerequisite(s):**  
sitting,  
trust, body  
awareness

**About this move:** This popular duo move is impressive and relatively simple to do. You must have a strong base that can hold full body weight from the ankles first. Also, try this move on a lower hoop so you can easily abort by rolling onto the ground if you need to. Note that this doesn't replace the need for a spotter. It's always good to have the essential safety items: spotter, mat and low to the ground whenever possible. Safe flying!



BEAUTY  
SLEEPING

## Sleeping Beauty

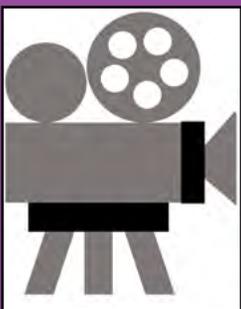
The base begins by sitting on the hoop with the legs straight below in a parallel position. The sit bones should feel that “lock” on the bar that creates stability for duo moves. The flyer begins by holding on to the hoop on one side of the base’s body, facing profile to the hoop. The base bends the knee that is closest to the flyer to get that leg out of the way. Flex the feet so you’re ready to take some weight.

The flyer pulls up and straddles onto the far leg of the base. The base simultaneously shifts that leg toward the flyer’s pelvis. The flyer clamps down on the base’s ankle like a clamshell, crossing the ankles. The position will not be stable until the base’s foot is in full contact with the flyer’s pelvis (photo 2).

The base then moves the bent leg, scooping underneath to catch the back of the flyer’s neck. The flyer slowly lowers down until the neck is fully supported on the base’s ankle (photo 3). When the flyer is ready to release hands, reach the arm closest to the base’s leg over the head to lock the base in place (photo 4). Once this hand is in place, the second hand can release from the hoop. At any point, use this hand to hold onto the base’s leg for added support and stability.

## Exit

The flyer must grab back on to the hoop with at least one hand. The base may need to bend the neck holding leg to allow the flyer to reach the hoop (photo 6). Once the flyer is supporting his/her own weight with the hands, the legs can be released.



**Reminder: Access Video Content Through *AerialDancing.com***

Some of the moves in this book can be hard to follow through pictures and words alone. If seeing live action would help you understand the dynamics of the movement, consider a membership to *AerialDancing.com*. There, you will find all of the moves from this book (and others!) in video form. Ask questions, take part in a discussion, browse articles, find resources, and be a part of a supportive environment to encourage you along your aerial journey. See you there!



# BONUS: Hand Loop Moves

**Prerequisite(s):**  
a hand loop,  
a little hoop  
experience

**About this move:** *Thought you might enjoy a random page on what you can do with a hand loop. The hand loop has many advantages for professional performers. If you are going to be flying high over a crowd, it is nice to have your grip secured. For your safety, make sure that the hand loop is nice and snug. Lower the small safety loop down to your wrist so that even if your grip fails, the loop will not. Be safe.*



## Hand Loop Moves

Begin by placing your hand in the hand loop and tightening the safety loop. Experiment with your favorite moves from Volume 1. On this page you'll find star/arabesque in photos 2-4. In photos 5-7 you'll find a variation of splits down. In this case, only one hand is on the hoop, allowing the hips to rotate away from the hoop. When the hips are perpendicular to the bar (as in photo 7), this position is commonly referred to as a variation of flag in the aerial community on hoop and other aerial apparatuses.



## EXPLORING

While you certainly are limited by having one hand fixed in space, take heart! Occasionally placing limits on movement forces you to go knocking on doors you didn't even know were there. Take time to improvise and explore while you are in the hand loop. Depending on your level of strength, you can certainly explore with some demanding one arm movements. Pictured to the right is a shape that I found while exploring on the hand loop.



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## About the Authors/Models

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**Rebekah Jean Leach** has been dancing for over three decades now. Anywhere she is, is her stage, starting with the fireplace hearth when she was 3 years old. In college, she took her first official course in dance. On the wall of the studio there was a picture of dancers dancing in ropes. She felt the urge—the calling, if you will, to higher ground. At age 22, she attended a workshop by Fred Deb held at the Aerial Dance Festival in Boulder, CO. Before the festival, she attended a performance of Fred Deb’s with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra. That performance changed her life.

In 2008, Rebekah and Matthew Leach opened an aerial dance studio in Ojai, CA. Rebekah combined her background in education with teaching her love of aerial dance. However, when the recession hit, and Matthew was laid off from his job, hard times hit. Relying on her technical background, Rebekah joined the Navy, where she is currently a commissioned officer teaching nuclear physics at the Nuclear Power Training Command in Charleston, SC. When her active duty commitment is complete, her dream is to once again open an aerial dance studio. All of Rebekah’s profits from the sales of these manuals are going towards that end. Thank you for helping dreams come true.

*Rebekah currently resides in Charleston, SC with husband and daughter.*



**Julianna Gaillard Hane**, a native of South Carolina, traded life on a cotton farm to be a dancer and aerialist. Julianna’s first experience in aerial dance happened at Winthrop University (where she received a B.A. in Dance) when she performed in two rope & harness works by Mary Beth Young. She then continued her study of aerial work at New England Center for Circus Arts with Elsie Smith, Serenity Smith Forchion, and Aimee Hancock. She has also studied with Bay Area artists Joanna Haigood and Elena Panova.

Julianna holds a M.F.A. in Modern Dance from the University of Utah. During her graduate study Julianna founded Revolve Aerial Dance, a school and performing company specializing in aerial fabric, trapeze, and aerial hoop. Through the company she co-produced aerial concerts, performed in corporate events, and set an aerial dance work on the Snow College Dance Company in Ephraim, Utah. She wrote her master’s thesis on aerial dance choreography under the guidance of Donna White, Eric Handman, Abby Fiat and Tandy Beal. She also wrote an aerial dance curriculum for her studio and a teacher training course to mentor new aerial teachers. This manual has been an extension of that work.

*Julianna moved Revolve Aerial Dance to Charleston in 2010 to collaborate with local dancers, musicians, writers, and other artists in her home state.*



**Reminder: Access Video Content Through *AerialDancing.com***

Some of the moves in this book can be hard to follow through pictures and words alone. If seeing live action would help you understand the dynamics of the movement, consider a membership to *AerialDancing.com*. There, you will find all of the moves from this book (and others!) in video form. Ask questions, take part in a discussion, browse articles, find resources, and be a part of a supportive environment to encourage you along your aerial journey. See you there!



## Acknowledgments

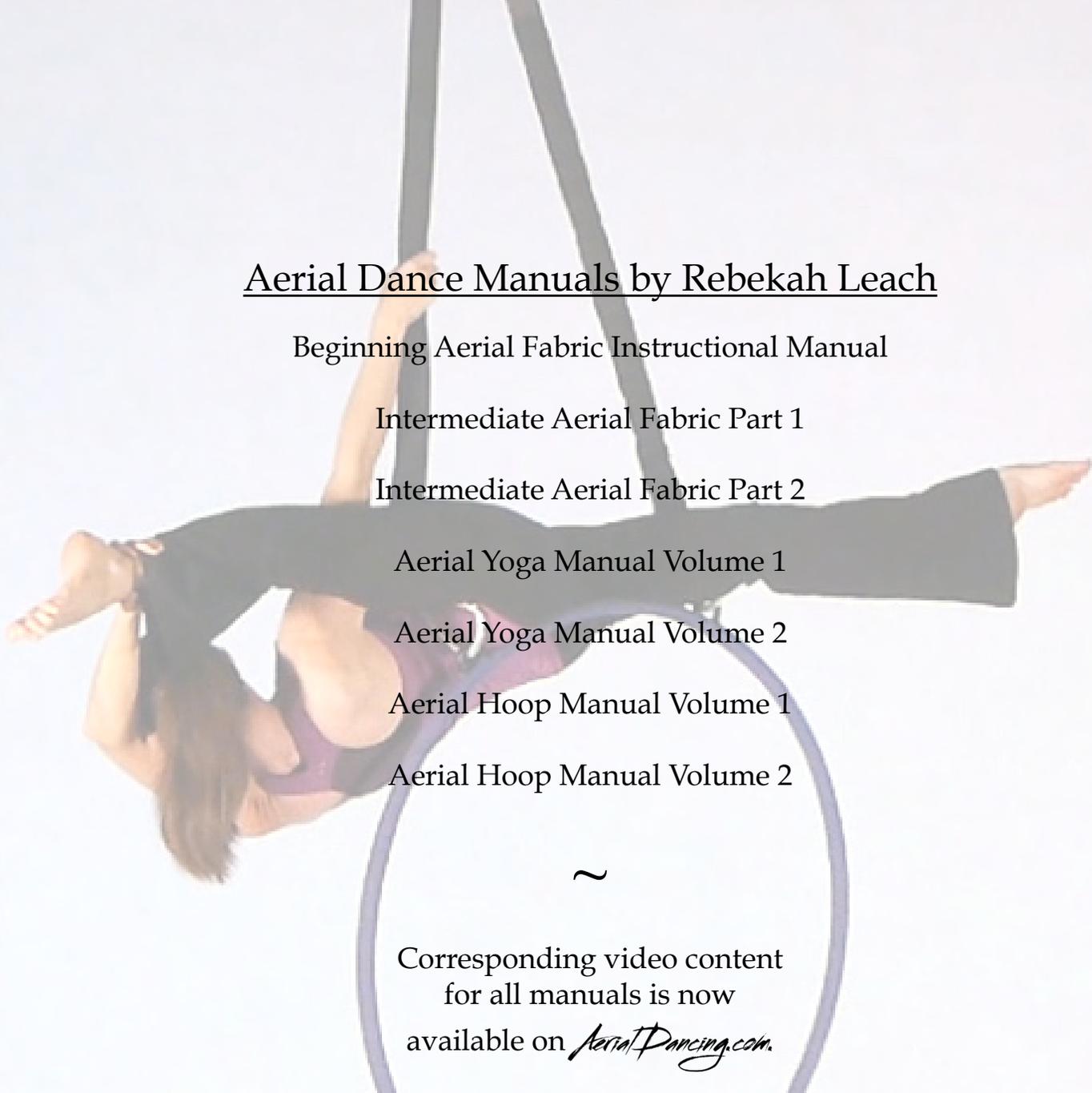
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The picture above was taken from my mac as I was taking a break from editing one day. I have to wear sunglasses when I look at computer screens because my eyes are very light-sensitive and I can feel my retinas burning. I'm thankful to my glasses for keeping my eyes in good shape for many hours of editing.

A very extra special thanks goes to Jordan Anderson and Clayton Woodson. Much of the video and photography for the moves in this book were taken at their studio, Circus Building. Clayton Woodson appeared as a spotter in this manual, and I am very grateful for his willingness to jump into the book. Other video and photography were also captured at RED Creatives, so many thanks to them as well!

As for editing this manual, I am blessed with lots of people to thank! Among those who helped thoroughly edit this book are: Anne Miller, Krista Bocko, Jordan Anderson, Clayton Woodson, Lorraine Bruce-Allen, Michelle Hutchinson, and Jerusha "Juice" Horlick. Another colleague who reviewed chapters was Kate Edwards of Spin City Fitness. Kate has been wonderfully generous in sharing her hoop curriculum materials and giving excellent feedback during the making of this manual. This book is that much better because of her.

And of course, last but not least, my amazing, talented, supportive, loving, dedicated husband, Matthew Leach. He works daily on shipping out books and has helped this book arrive in your hands in one way or another. :)

A photograph of a woman in a purple leotard performing aerial arts. She is suspended by two vertical grey fabric straps, holding them with her hands. Her legs are extended horizontally to the right. Below her, a large blue hula hoop is visible, partially obscuring the lower part of her body. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

## Aerial Dance Manuals by Rebekah Leach

Beginning Aerial Fabric Instructional Manual

Intermediate Aerial Fabric Part 1

Intermediate Aerial Fabric Part 2

Aerial Yoga Manual Volume 1

Aerial Yoga Manual Volume 2

Aerial Hoop Manual Volume 1

Aerial Hoop Manual Volume 2

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Corresponding video content  
for all manuals is now  
available on *AerialDancing.com*.



