



# TEACHING JUGGLING SKILLS

Scarf and Beanball Juggling  
A Step-by-Step Training Manual for Teachers

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## INTRODUCTION

I thought I was going to be a weatherman! With a college degree in geography consisting of many meteorology and climatology classes, I graduated from Western Illinois University in the spring of 1978.

That spring, my buddy and fellow hobbyist juggler, Paul Dierks, and I almost immediately set off to attend an International Jugglers' Festival in Eugene, Oregon. Little did I realize that my life's direction would dramatically change at that event. I meet Dave Finnigan (AKA *Professor Confidence*), a free-spirited self-taught juggler. Dave had (and still has) an enthusiastic entrepreneurial mindset with the capacity to actually follow through with his ideas. He had created *The Juggling Institute*, a company which teaches juggling and all it's positive aspects to young kids in schools and other places of learning. He was looking for other interested jugglers to do the same in other parts of the country. I attended his presentation, caught his vision, got excited, came back to Chicago and set about to start the *Illinois Juggling Institute, Inc.*

From that meeting in 1978, I have gone on to teach juggling skills to over 1 million students in over 1800 schools, park districts, summer camps, P.E. conferences, and "big kids" in corporations/organizations throughout the U.S. and Canada. Along the way, many P.E. teachers, classroom teachers, camp councilors, and others have caught the vision from Mr. Finnigan as well as from me.

I hope this *how-to* manual will help you to "catch the juggle bug" and to want to teach others this ancient - yet - modern hobby/sport/discipline /fun activity.

## WHY TEACH JUGGLING?

It's an activity that can be pursued into adulthood. Like riding a bike, once learned, it is never forgotten. Anyone, any age can thrill others with their juggling skills as well as impress themselves with learning a new trick. There are always new tricks to learn and new props to try tossing around. After all, who hasn't tried to toss some tennis balls or golf balls in the air. Just about everyone has tried to juggle sometime in their life.

The process of learning to juggle will help enhance eye-hand coordination, help expand one's peripheral vision, and maybe even keep someone off of drugs. Hey, it's a better alternative to throw things high rather than get high. Juggling teaches patience and persistence. It helps students realize that mistakes are stepping stones to success. Some folks say it can help with reading and handwriting abilities. Those kids who don't really participate in any activity or sport may gravitate to juggling. It could become "their thing," their way to express themselves.

Juggling is portable. It can be done in a gym, classroom, hallway, or outside. OK, scarves don't work well outside, but beanballs can. If you lose your gym to some other activity, why not let the kids juggle that day. It can be done anywhere. Classroom teachers can let the kids juggle right next to their desks.

One high school teacher told me that juggling is done during their archery unit. Those who are waiting to try their hand at archery . . . are practicing their juggling skills. Everyone is doing something. The high school teacher called this, "Good classroom management."

Student's creativity can be expressed in their juggling. From making up new tricks, to making up new routines, to seeing how long they can keep a certain pattern in the air . . . hours of fun can be invested in this exciting and challenging activity.

## DO I HAVE TO BE A GOOD JUGGLER TO TEACH IT?

Are you an expert at playing basketball, volleyball, running fast, and climbing ropes to the ceiling? Do you know all the agile techniques to controlling a soccer ball with your feet? How are your cartwheels and roundoffs? Physical educators teach many skills and fundamentals to games even though they are not necessarily “experts” at all of them.

Teaching juggling skills fits into this same category. So the answer is no, you don’t have to be an expert juggler. In time, with practice, you *will* be able to demonstrate to your students the different simple variations with scarves and beanballs.

Right now what is important is to be able to *tell* your students how to do it. Semantics (words) need to be learned by you to convey each step in the process. **This training manual will give you suggested specific words to use.** If you know what to say for each teaching step, you are 95% on your way to being a good teacher of juggling skills. The other 5% is just knowing how to move your hands to show the pattern and then eventually (with practice) to actually demonstrate the scarves and beanball juggling patterns.

This manual will give you all the words you need to know to teach a 5 session unit of juggling using scarves and beanballs. The *TEACHING JUGGLING SKILLS* video (coming soon) will *show* you the movements for each step in the 5 session unit for scarves and a 5 session unit using beanballs. For preschool through 3rd grade, I have outlined a 2 session unit for learning juggling skills. By using these two teaching tools, you will have everything you need to know to get started today teaching juggling skills. Enjoy the journey!

## EQUIPMENT SUPPLIES

Juggling scarves are *the* best way to start teaching juggling skills. I highly recommend that you start your students (young or older) with juggling scarves. I use scarves in my corporate seminars to teach adults. They are a confidence builder. Because the air permeates through the tiny holes in the scarf slowing it’s gravitational pull to the ground, the students have time to react to the next catch and throw. In smaller words . . . they simply float.

After scarves are learned, the next step would be to use a non-bounce beanball.

Some teachers have asked me if students get confused changing from scarf juggling to beanball juggling. Their concern is the way in which a student holds the items to juggle. Scarves are thrown with palms down while beanballs are throw with the palms facing upwards. After teaching over one million students juggling skills, I have never found this to be a problem. It is the right - left - right - left throws and catches that are learned in a slow motion pattern with scarves that is most helpful when starting with beanballs. They will quickly adapt to the positioning of their hands.

*JOE JUGGLER PRODUCTS* have very good supplies for teaching juggling. Go to our website at:

**www.JoeJuggler.com** for photos, quantity discounted prices, and how you can earn money for your PE department or organization by allowing your students to purchase juggling items from you. You will also see information regarding our instructional “hands-on” programs.

## MUSIC

Just as music has rhythm, there is also a rhythm to juggling. Good, upbeat music can really enhance the learning process when teaching juggling skills. Some students may even try to juggle to the “beat” of the music. Plus . . . it’s just more fun with music!

## JUGGLING SPACE

Teaching scarf juggling skills is an indoor activity. Any outside breezes will blow the scarves everywhere.

*Caution:* Sometimes air conditioning blowers or ceiling fans can impede your student's advancements in learning juggling skills. Position your students in the room so they won't be troubled by air blowing the scarves around.

Obviously, beanball juggling can be practiced indoors or outdoors.

Ceiling height is not an important issue. Your students will only be throwing an object as high as they can reach with their arms outstretched above their head.

Juggling skills can be learned in the gym, classroom, hallway, stage, auditorium, or just about anywhere. All you need is a little space between each student. That is why I say juggling is "portable." You can take your students and teach juggling skills in many parts of your building or outside with beanballs.

## LET'S GET STARTED . . . TEACHING JUGGLING SKILLS

I have categorized by grade levels certain juggling skills abilities. That being said, I have been to schools where juggling is being taught and saw first graders juggling 3 scarves. I have seen third graders juggling 4 beanballs. I saw a fifth grade student juggling 5 rings. Are these the exceptions? Yes and No. It depends on how much time, motivation, and individual effort you want to invest in teaching these skills to your students.

For purposes of this manual, I am showing you "realistic" juggling skills which can be accomplished by the different grade levels based on a five session unit. I estimate each session between 20 and 45 minutes.

Since some students will advance faster than others, you will want to take those students to the next level at a quicker pace. The *JUGGLING CHALLENGE WALL CHARTS* and *PERSONAL JUGGLING CHALLENGE CARDS* for 3rd or 4th grade and older will help motivate each student to want to continue practicing to achieve the next level. The wall charts will be explained on page 8. Copies of these motivational tools can be found at the end of this training manual. Please feel free to make copies for your use when teaching.

## **PRE-JUGGLING SKILLS with ONE and TWO SCARVES**

### **(Preschool - 3rd Grade)**

**Objective:** These exercises are intended to help improve eye-hand coordination and help in using both hands for throwing and catching. These fun pre-juggling skills will help to stimulate both sides of the brain. It will also give your young students an aerobics workout.

Below, you will find the suggested words to say to your students as you are demonstrating the different exercises. This lesson with one and two scarves should be structured with you in front as the leader. Your students can then watch you and do what you are doing at the same time. The bold highlighted phrases signify the main part of each new exercise. Upbeat music definitely helps with the overall atmosphere of this lesson. The one and two scarf pre-juggling skills listed below can be accomplished in a 15 - 30 minute time frame per session.

### ***TWO SESSION UNIT OUTLINE***

**(15 - 30 minutes/session)**

- Session 1:*** Teach 1 and 2 scarf pre-juggling skills.  
Students make up their own juggling tricks with 2 scarves.
- Session 2:*** Teach partner juggling with 2 scarves per student  
Students make up their own ways of tossing 2 scarves to their partner.

## **SESSION 1: ONE and TWO SCARF PRE-JUGGLING SKILLS**

*Pass out 1 scarf to each student*

**“*Throw the scarf across and catch down* in the other hand. Then throw it back again. Play catch with yourself. Throw from hand-to-hand. Throw like you are waving to someone. Reach up and catch down. Claw it like a lion.”**

**“Now throw across, *clap your hands*, and catch down.”**

**“Throw across, *clap your hands two times* and catch down.”**

**“Who can throw across and *clap their hands three times*?”**

**“OK, now throw across, *hop up and down*, and catch.”**

**“*Hop on one leg*.”**

**“Hop on the *other leg*.”**

**“OK, stop hopping.”**

**“Now throw across, *touch your head*, and catch down.”**

**“Throw across, *touch your head, touch your shoulders*, and catch.”**

**“Throw across, *touch your head, your shoulders, then touch your knees*, and catch down.”**

**“Throw across, *touch your head, shoulders, knees, and toes*!”**

**“Throw across and *catch it on your other arm*. Then throw it back and catch it on your other arm.”**

**“Throw it *from your arm and catch it on your other arm*.”**

**“Throw across and say, “*wait, wait, wait, wait, wait*” and catch it just before it hits the ground. Snatch it up like your hand is an eagle’s claw.”**

**“Throw it up in the air, go down on the floor in a *crab walk position* and try to *catch the scarf on your bellybutton*.”**

(Let your students rest by sitting on the floor.)

## TWO SCARF JUGGLE

*Pass out another scarf to each student*

“Throw one scarf *straight up and catch straight down* with the same hand.”

“Throw the *other scarf straight up with the other hand* and catch straight down.”

“*Throw and catch and throw and catch.*”

“Now let’s speed it up by saying, *Throw and throw and catch and catch.*”

“Now try this . . . *Throw and throw, clap, catch, catch.*”

“Throw *under one leg* and catch in the same hand and then *throw under the other leg* and catch in the same hand.”

“Throw *two together straight up in the air* and catch two.”

“Throw two together and try to *catch them on your arms.*”

“Throw two together, *criss-cross your arms* and try to catch them.”

“Hold your hands up in the air and then throw them *Over-the-Rainbow.*”

“Now throw them *Under-the-Bridge.*”

“Let’s throw them first *Over-the-Rainbow* and then *Under-the-Bridge.*”

“Put *2 in one hand*, throw them high into the air and try to *catch 1 scarf in one hand and 1 scarf in the other hand.*”

(To finish up this session, let your students *make up their own juggling tricks* with the 2 scarves. Encourage their creativity and take notes. Your young students may come up with some great pre-juggling skills ideas you or I have not thought of yet. Add them to the above exercises. If you do find some great ideas, please e-mail me with them at [info@JoeJuggler.com](mailto:info@JoeJuggler.com). I too am always looking for new pre-juggling skills).



## **SESSION 2: PARTNER JUGGLING**

*Have students find a partner and then sit down facing their partner. Then ask one of the students to stand up to be your partner to demonstrate what everyone will be doing.*

*Tell them and demonstrate with your partner. . .*

“In a moment, but not yet, you will stand up facing your partner. Hold your arms out in front of you with your fingers pointing at your partner. Touch your fingertips to your partner’s fingertips and then drop your hands. This is how far apart you will be from your partner. You will each start with the scarf in your right hand and throw it across to your partner’s right hand. At the same time, your partner will throw their scarf across to your right hand. Catch your partner’s scarf. *(Demonstrate this move with your partner)*. Next, throw the scarf in your left hand across to your partner’s left hand. Again, they will also throw at the same time from their left hand. *(Demonstrate)*. So it’s right hand to right hand and then left hand to left hand. When you throw the scarf across to your partner, try to throw it over their head. It will not happen because the scarf is too light. However, it will help you to get a good throw to your partner. One last thing. Decide with your partner who will be the *READY - THROW* person. One of you will always start by saying, *READY - THROW*. Then you both throw 1 scarf across to your partner. OK, try it.

### **Other Ideas:**

- \* Have students throw straight across to their partner . . . Right-hand to Left-hand throws.
- \* Let them make up their own way to toss their scarves across to their partner.
- \* Have your students switch partners.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

Students love to be challenged. Having goals to aim for keeps them on task and makes the whole learning process more fun. Here is an achievement system based on the medals of the Olympics.

### **Bronze / Silver / Gold / Double Gold**

The recognition system is simple. It works like this . . .

**BRONZE** - Accomplish 10 throws and catches with any of the juggling patterns.

**SILVER** - Accomplish 25 throws and catches.

**GOLD** - 50 throws and catches.

**DOUBLE GOLD** - 100 throws and catches.

This system is also a great way to encourage your students to practice at home to work toward achieving the next level.

Here are two different ways to record their accomplishments.

#### **1. JUGGLING CHALLENGE WALL CHARTS**

At the end of this manual, you will find pages which can be duplicated and put up on your wall. There is a place for your students to write their name on each chart as they accomplish each level. There is a chart for each juggling variation with scarves and beanballs.

#### **2. PERSONAL JUGGLING CHALLENGE CARDS**

This is a ½ sheet form in which students can keep and record their successes as they reach new levels in their juggling practice. These cards can be kept by the student or with the teacher. You can call it their “report card” for juggling.

You can use either the wall chart or the challenge card as a way to record student’s progress.

*Suggestion:* Have some kind of incentive for reaching the different levels. Here are some ideas for recognizing your students for the levels they have achieved. You can also create your own “Olympics” awards.

**BRONZE LEVEL:** Student’s name gets listed on the *JUGGLING CHALLENGE WALL CHART* for each variation (event) achieved.

**SILVER LEVEL:** Name recognition on the *WALL CHART* and a Certificate of Achievement for each variation.

**GOLD LEVEL:** Name recognition on the *WALL CHART* and a “Gold” medal with ribbon to proudly wear around their neck.

**DOUBLE GOLD:** Name recognition on the *WALL CHART*, recognition during the morning daily announcements, a special Certificate of Achievement, and have the principal personally congratulate the student. This achievement takes much practice, patience, and persistence.

I would highly recommend that each student who achieves this level, receive many kudos. They worked hard to reach this goal.

# TEACHING a SCARF JUGGLING UNIT

(3rd or 4th Grade and Older)

## 5 SESSION UNIT OUTLINE

- Session 1:*
- Teach 2 *Scarves-in-One-Hand* (right and left).
  - Let students practice all the different variations and ways to start with 2-in-1 hand.
- Session 2:*
- Teach 1 and 2 scarf *CRISS-CROSS* pattern.
- Session 3:*
- Warm-up by practicing right/left, left/right with the 2 scarf *CRISS-CROSS* pattern.
  - Start teaching *THE JUGGLE* pattern with 3 scarves.
- Session 4:*
- Continue teaching *THE JUGGLE* pattern.
  - Encourage practicing towards earning Bronze (10)/Silver (25)/Gold (50) scarf juggler status.
- Session 5:*
- Teach *COLUMNS* pattern.
  - Teach *DOUBLE DUTCH* (reverse juggle) pattern.
  - Teach *THE ULTIMATE SCARF JUGGLE CHALLENGE* (3 in one hand).
  - Give students practice time for all patterns.

## **Session 1: 2 in 1 HAND SCARF JUGGLE**

**Objective:** To teach the students how to throw and catch a scarf in a palms-down position. To let them practice throws and catches first with one hand and then with their less-dominant hand. Learning to juggle 2-in-1 hand will give them a more immediate feeling of success since this is an easier pattern than learning to juggle 3 scarves.

*(Pass out 2 scarves to everyone. Have them put 1 scarf in their pocket or waistband of their pants).*

“Pinch the middle of the scarf. With your hand palms-down, throw the scarf straight up in the air like you are waving to someone. Then catch it palms-down straight to your side. When you throw it, let the scarf float a little before you catch it straight down. Do that 10 times in one hand.”

*(Students practice)*

“OK, now switch hands and do the same thing in your other hand. Remember to throw like you are waving to someone, let it float, and then catch it palms down.”

*(Students practice)*

“Next, we are going to juggle 2 scarves only using one hand. Pinch the scarf in one hand and then put your other hand behind your back. You are not going to use that hand. Start with your hand down at your side. You will throw it straight up in the air and immediately reach down, grab the other scarf out of your pocket or waistband, and throw that one up in the air. Then catch the first one coming down and throw it up again. Then catch the second one down and throw it back up. Continue doing this and you will be juggling 2 scarves in one hand.”

*(Let the students practice and encourage them to count how many times they can do it. Tell them their first goal is to try for 10 throws in one hand and then 10 throws in the other hand.*

*Introduce them to the JUGGLER'S CHALLENGE CHARTS. Show them how they can earn Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Double Gold by juggling 2 scarves in 1 hand).*

### **TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS:**

- *Make sure they are throwing and catching palms-down.*
- *By standing in front of the student, you can help them slow the whole process down. Catch each of the scarves they throw when it reaches its peak. Release the first scarf after they throw the second scarf. Then catch the second scarf they throw and repeat the process. In this way, they can see the pattern in “slow motion.” It will give them time to react to the next throw and catch.*

## OTHER IDEAS WITH 2 SCARVES IN 1 HAND

*There are other ways to start the 2-in-1 hand juggle.*

- 1. KICK-UP . . . Have your students put 1 scarf on top of their shoe. They kick it up and when it reaches the top, they throw the second one from their hand and continue juggling.*
- 2. QUICK DRAW . . . Put 1 scarf in one front pocket and the other scarf in the other front pocket. One hand goes behind their back. The other hand is poised and ready (like a cowboy in a face-to-face gunfight). You say, "DRAW!" All your students grab one scarf and throw it up. They immediately reach down, grab the other scarf from that pocket and throw it up.*
- 3. Have your students come up with their own creative ways to start the 2-in-1 hand juggling pattern.*

## 3 WAYS TO JUGGLE 2-in-1 HAND

- 1. Circle movements to the outside.*
- 2. Circle movements to the inside.*
- 3. "Elevator Throws" - straight up and down like two elevators going up and down, side-by-side.*

## 2-in-1 HAND CHALLENGES

- 1. THE SPLITS . . . Have your students juggle in the straight up and down, "Elevator-style" pattern. Then they start moving the columns farther and farther apart. They can see how far apart they can "split" them.*
- 2. Kneel, Sit Down, and Stand Back Up . . . As they juggle 2-in-1 hand (any pattern), your students try to kneel, then sit, and then stand back up again.*
- 3. Change Hands . . . Students start juggling 2-in-1 hand (any pattern) and then they change hands without interrupting the juggling flow.*

## ***SESSION 2: ONE and TWO SCARF CRISS-CROSS***

***Objective:*** Teach your students to throw from hand to hand, crossing the midline of their body. You will also be teaching your students the 2 scarf criss-cross pattern.

“Today we are going to start throwing the scarves from one hand to the other. To do this, you need to be in *The Zone*. It’s actually called *The Accurate Toss Zone*. It’s an imaginary window in front of you and extends only as high as you can reach. (Outline in the air with your two finger, your *Accurate Toss Zone*. Then have your students outline in the air their *Accurate Toss Zone*.”

*(Pass out 1 scarf to everyone)*

“You start with your hands down at the bottom two corners of your *Zone*. Take your hand with 1 scarf and bring it up to the opposite top corner of your *Accurate Toss Zone*. When it gets there, flip it up like you are waving to someone. Immediately, bring the hand back down to the bottom corner of the *Toss Zone*. Then reach up with your other hand and catch down the side of your *Zone* to the bottom corner again. Now take that hand and once again aim for the opposite corner and flip it up in the air. Bring that hand down and then reach up with your other hand and catch down the other side of your *Zone* to the other bottom corner. Stay within *The Zone*. Throw across and catch down. I would like you to do that 10 times. Remember, reach your hand up to the opposite top corners of your *Zone* and then flip it like you are waving to someone. Catch palms down.”

*(Students practice 10 times. Stop them and pass out a second scarf)*

“Everyone start with your arms at the bottom corners of your *Accurate Toss Zone*. Everyone do as I do. Take one of your scarves and bring it up to the opposite corner of your *Zone*. Bring it back down. Take your other arm and reach across to the opposite top corner of your *Zone*. Now bring it back down. OK, first arm goes across. Bring it down. Now second arm. Bring it down. First arm. Second arm. *(Have students do this several times to get the idea of the criss-cross arm movement)*.

Everyone take your scarves, bend down, put them on the floor, stand back up, and watch me.”

*(You demonstrate the 2 Scarf Criss-Cross)*

“Start with one hand. Throw one scarf across to the opposite corner of your *Toss Zone*. When it gets to the top, bring your hand down to the bottom corner, then throw the second scarf across. Catch the first one. Then catch the second one. The two scarves should switch sides. Remember, the first one you throw is the first one you catch in the opposite hand. The rhythm sounds like this, *Throw one, throw two, catch., then catch.* OK, pick up your scarves and practice.”

*(Put on some bright, upbeat music, and go around the room to help them individually).*

## TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS:

*Problem:* Student may throw the first one across and hand the second one over, instead of throwing it across.

*Solution:* Stand in front of them, take their hands, and move them in the correct motion.

If that doesn't work, then . . .

Have the student throw across the first scarf and you catch it at the peak. Now have them throw across (out of their other hand) the second scarf. You also catch that one. Then put the scarves back in their hands and have them do it again slowly throwing the first to your hand and then the second one. In slowing the process down, they may realize that they need to throw with both hands. Usually this will solve the problem of handing the second ball across.

*Problem:* Student throws the scarves across, but then reaches across and catches the same scarf in the same hand that just threw it.

*Solution:* As soon as they throw the first scarf across, have them immediately bring that hand down to their side.

They then throw the second one across. With their "first" hand at their side, they will most likely not want to reach up again and grab the scarf they just threw. The "second" hand will naturally want to catch the scarf the "first" hand threw.

*Next, have your students practice the 2 Scarf Criss-Cross by throwing Right/Left - pause - Left/right motion. Then repeat. If they are using 2 different color scarves, they will always "lead" with the same color scarf.*

## **SESSION 3: THREE SCARF JUGGLE**

*As a warm-up, pass out 2 scarves and let your students practice the 2 Scarf Criss-Cross with the Right/Left - pause - Left/Right motion.*

*Next, tell your students . . .*

“Everyone take one of your scarves and find the center of it. Now with the hand you use for writing, take that hand, and make a fist around that scarf. With that same hand, stick out your first finger and your thumb. See how you can pinch those two fingers together? Take the second scarf and pinch the middle of it with those two fingers. You now have 2 in one hand but they are separated. One is in a fist and the other being held by your thumb and first finger.

Whenever you start juggling, always begin by first positioning two scarves in that hand. The last scarf, which you will receive in a moment, will be pinched by your thumb and first finger in your other hand.

Ok, everyone drop your scarves on the floor and watch me.

When you receive the last scarf, you will position them in your hands like I showed you. Once again, make a fist, pinch one, and then pinch the other one in your other hand.

If you start with 2 in your right hand, you will always be throwing right/left/right/left. If you start with 2 in your left hand, you will be throwing left/right/left/right. It is like walking . . . You alternate your legs to walk . . . and you do the same with your hands when juggling. First throw with one hand and then the other.

Starting with the one in your fingertips of the hand that has two, you will throw that one to the opposite top corner of your *Accurate Toss Zone*. That first throw will be called a “free throw.” After you throw it across, bring your hand back down. Starting with the second throw out of your other hand, you will start counting in a rhythm. You will start saying to yourself, “throw and catch and throw and catch.” Say that over and over again and do what you say. The whole rhythm will be - starting with the first throw - “Free throw - throw and catch, and throw and catch, and throw and catch, and throw and catch . . .”

Every time one gets to the top, throw the next one across. Always keep aiming for the opposite top corner of your *Toss Zone*.”

*(Pass out the 3rd scarf and help them practice. Don't forget the music)*

### **TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS**

**Problem:** The scarves are thrown too fast. The rhythm should be, “Free throw, throw and catch and throw and catch.” However, sometimes they rush and the rhythm becomes, “Free throw, throw, throw..” All the scarves are in the air and now they are all falling at the same time.

**Solution:** Stand in front of the student and tell them they will do the throws and you will be the catcher. Hold your hands just above the top two corners of their Toss Zone. Tell them to throw the 1st one. You catch it. Tell them to put that arm down and then throw the 2nd one across. You catch it. With their second hand still in the air, tell them to reach over and grab the 1st scarf you are holding and catch it straight down. Next, tell them to throw the 3rd scarf across. You catch it. With that hand, they can now reach across and catch the 2nd scarf. Have them continue throwing and you catching until they start to see and “feel” the pattern.

Encourage them once again to count their throws. Have them strive toward accomplishing 10 throws (Bronze), 25 throws (Silver), and 50 throws (Gold). Keep challenging your students and encouraging them.



## **SESSION 4: CONTINUED PRACTICE**

*Pass out 3 scarves to everyone and let them practice the 3 scarf juggle pattern. Give them time to "Go for the Gold." The students can record their progress on the wall charts. This will also give you time to individually help those who might still be struggling with the pattern. Music, music, music. Did I say, don't forget the music?*

## **SESSION 5: COLUMNS, REVERSE , ULTIMATE CHALLENGE**

*Pass out 3 scarves*

"I am going to teach you the Columns pattern. Each scarf will be thrown straight up and you will catch straight down. Hold the scarves the same way as you would for *THE JUGGLE* pattern.. Take the one in your fingertips of the hand that has two and throw it straight up in the air. Next, take the other two and throw them both up together, one on each side of the first one. You throw 1 in the middle, then 2 on the sides. Throw 1 scarf, then 2, then 1, then 2. You can catch the middle scarf with either hand. Count your throws and work toward achieving 10 or more throws."

*(Students practice)*

"The next variation I will show you is the *DOUBLE DUTCH* or *REVERSE JUGGLE* pattern.

The arm movement is similar to what the rope twirlers do when they are turning the two ropes in Double Dutch jump roping."

*(Have all your students imitate the arm movement without throwing the scarves).*

"Your hands are moving in circles from the inside to the outside and toward the inside again. The scarves are floating down the centerline of your body."

*(Students practice)*

" I have saved the hardest, most challenging for the last variation with scarves. Are you ready for *THE ULTIMATE SCARF JUGGLE CHALLENGE*?

Set up the scarves in your hands like you normally would do to start juggling. This time, you will take all the scarves and throw them all together straight up in the air. The idea is to try to get them to split apart just a bit. After throwing them all in the air, you immediately put one hand behind your back. With your other hand you will catch down whichever scarf is coming down first. Throw that one back up and then catch the next lowest scarf. Throw it back up and then catch the 3rd scarf and get it back up as quick as you can. You are attempting to juggle all 3 scarves in just one hand. It's fast so you have to be quick."

*(Students practice)*

*(After they tire of THE ULTIMATE SCARF JUGGLE CHALLENGE, let your students practice any or all of the new variations. Let them record the number of throws for each variation on the JUGGLING CHALLENGE WALL CHART).*

## GROUP GAMES WITH SCARVES

### Scarves in a Circle

Make a circle with the students facing inward. Each student can have 1 or 2 scarves (your choice). If using 2 scarves, then 1 scarf will be in each hand. Have all the students on your count throw their 1 or 2 scarves straight up and then catch them. Practice several times until they are in unison. Now have them throw the scarves again straight up, then move to their right and catch the scarves of the person standing next to them. The scarves keep going straight up and down, but the students keep rotating to the right with each group toss.

### Line Scarf Challenge

Arrange 5 to 8 students in a straight line almost shoulder-to-shoulder facing the same way. Each student has 1 or 2 scarves (your choice). On your count, they throw their scarves straight up in the air. Everyone then moves to their right to catch the next person's scarf(s). The person on the far right will have to run all the way behind the line of people and catch the scarves from the person on the far left side. If accomplished, you can add more people to the line. To accommodate everyone, start several lines of 5 to 8 students. Have all the lines start on your count.

### Throw and Go with Scarves

Students stand on a line on the gym floor with 1 scarf. On your count, they throw their scarf in the air, run forward and touch with their hand a predetermined spot or line on the floor a short distance in front of them. Then they quickly run back to try and catch the scarf before it hits the floor. On your count again, they throw the scarf up and then try to touch a more distant line, and still try to make it back in time to catch the scarf. You can determine where the lines they try to touch will be. This is a fun challenge for the students.

## FINAL NOTES ON TEACHING SCARF JUGGLING:

Here is a question you will inevitably get from one or more of your students sometime during the 5 sessions. "When are we going to juggle balls?" Mark my word, this question will be asked. Your answer is simple. Just tell them the qualifications to moving on to learning 3 beanball juggling is to first accomplish the Silver level (25 throws) in *THE JUGGLE* pattern with scarves.

Encourage you students throughout the sessions to work toward achieving the different levels on the *JUGGLING CHALLENGE WALL CHART*. Have some kind of incentive for reaching the different levels.

# TEACHING a BALL JUGGLING UNIT

(3rd or 4th Grade and Older)

**Suggestion::** Students should accomplish at least 25 throws with scarves (Silver Scarf Juggler) before moving on to learning ball juggling skills.

## 5 SESSION UNIT

- Session 1:**
- Teach the *JUGGLERS' SHUFFLE*.
  - Teach 1 and 2 beanball *CRISS-CROSS* pattern.
- Session**
- Warm-up by practicing right/left, left/right throws with the 2 beanball *CRISS-CROSS* pattern.
  - Start teaching *THE JUGGLE* pattern with 3 beanballs.
- Session 3:**
- Continued practice time with *THE JUGGLE* pattern.
  - Demonstrate or show the DVD of other 3 ball juggling variations to those who can juggle 10 or more throws. The DVD, **BALL JUGGLING**, can be found at [www.JoeJuggler.com](http://www.JoeJuggler.com).
- Session 4:**
- Teach partner juggling to everyone.
  - Students continue practicing *THE JUGGLE* pattern.
  - “Advanced” jugglers continue practicing different variations.
- Session 5:**
- Teach *2 in 1 HAND JUGGLING*.
  - Continued practice for everyone.

## **SESSION 1: JUGGLERS' SHUFFLE / 1 & 2 BALL CRISS-CROSS**

*Pass out 3 beanballs to your students and have them sit on the floor facing you.. You will be sitting on the floor with 3 beanballs facing your students. Explain to your students what mirror-imagining means. Have them mirror-image you by raising and lowering one hand and then the other hand.*

“Before we start learning to juggle these beanballs in the air, we will learn how to juggle on the floor. This is called, **THE JUGGLERS' SHUFFLE**. There are two targets on the floor, one in front of each knee. Put one beanball on each target. Keep the other beanball in your right hand. (*You put your beanball in your left hand*). Now watch me and do as I do. We will go slow. Mirror-image what I do.”

*(You reach straight down with your right hand and pick up that beanball. Next, put the ball from your left hand down in front of your right knee to replace the one you just picked up. Do not let go of the ball in your left hand. As it sits on the floor, keep your hand on it for a few seconds. Look around to make sure your students are pausing too. Then slowly slide your empty hand over to the ball in front of your left knee and pick it straight up. Next, put the ball from your right hand down on the empty target in front of your left knee. Hold it for several seconds, then let go and slide your hand across to pick up the beanball on your right side. Continue this process slowly watching to see that your students are following you. This whole process can be done in silence as the students try to imitate what you are doing. Tell them as they start to understand the pattern, they can go faster).*

*Suggestions:*

1. Have students try it with their eyes closed.
2. Have them try to do **THE JUGGLERS' SHUFFLE** as fast as they can.
3. Try it with a partner. They face each other sitting on the floor. Using 3 beanballs, one uses their right hand and one uses their left. Working together, they can accomplish the pattern.

*Next, collect 2 beanballs from everyone. Have students stand up with 1 beanball.*

“With your hands palms up, hold your hands at the bottom corners of your *Accurate Toss Zone*. Your goal is to throw the ball so it hits the opposite top corner of your *Toss Zone* and then falls into your other hand which waits at the bottom corner of the *Toss Zone*. You will do this by making a small scooping motion with your hand towards the center of your body. Then repeat the throw by scooping the ball out of your other hand. Every time, try to stay in your *Accurate Toss Zone*. Just keep aiming for the opposite top corner. If you “hit” the corner with the beanball, it will fall right into your other hand. Try not to roll it off your fingers as you throw it. If you do, it will spin away from you. Instead, try to scoop it toward the center of your body and then “pop it” from the center of your hand. If done right, the beanball will have very little spin to it. OK, practice this exercise about 20 times.”

*Students practice. When finished, have students put the beanball on the floor.*

“Next, we are going to practice good throws with both hands. When you get your 2nd beanball, here is what you will do. With one in each hand, you will first throw one straight up in the air along the side of your *Accurate Toss Zone*. Throw only to the top corner of the *Zone*. Then see if the ball will fall right back into your hand. Now do the same thing with your other hand. There are two goals to this exercise. One is to try to “hit” the top corner of your *Zone*. The other is to see if the beanball falls right back to your hand. The rhythm is *throw and catch and throw and catch*. Try it 10 times.”

*Students practice*

“OK, let’s change the rhythm. This time the rhythm will be *Throw and Throw -then-Catch and Catch*. The throws will still be straight up and down. Try it 10 times.”

*Students practice*

“Let’s make it more challenging by adding something. The rhythm will now be, *Throw and Throw-Clap your Hands-Catch and Catch..* Try it.”

*Students practice. When finished, have them put the beanballs on the floor.*

“Next, we will actually throw the beanballs in a Criss-Cross, “X” pattern. You will be aiming for the opposite corner of your *Accurate Toss Zone*. The rhythm is the same - *Throw and Throw and Catch and Catch*. Wait until the first ball reaches the top corner, then throw the second one across. There is a pause between the throws. OK, pick up your beanballs and practice the 2 Ball Criss-Cross.”

*Students practice*

*Note: 98% of learning to juggle 3 beanballs is in perfecting the 2 Ball Criss-Cross pattern. Spend time on this step. It is important the students have enough time to master this step.*

## **TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS:**

**Challenge:** The first beanball is thrown across, but the 2nd one is handed over, instead of thrown.

**Solutions:** Here are several ideas you can use to solve this challenge.

1. Inform the student of what they are doing and then demonstrate the correct way.

Sometimes they don’t even realize they are handing the second ball across.

2. Put your hand under their hands and imitate the motion of each hand throwing across.
3. Hold your hands in a cupping position at the two top corners of their *Accurate Toss Zone*. Have them try to first throw one beanball up to your hand and then the second ball to your other hand. Go slow until they get the idea.
4. Have the student throw to the top corners of their *Toss Zone* but let the floor catch them. In this way, they can get the “feel” of throwing from both hands. All they are doing is practicing the throws.

**Challenge:** They are not throwing the beanballs high enough. Sometimes the second ball is not thrown as high as the first.

**Solution:** Make them aware of what they are doing. Tell them to throw the 2nd beanball as high as the first one.

Remind them to really try to aim for the corners of their *Accurate Toss Zone*. Point to the tops corners of their *Toss Zone* so they can visualize the targets.

**Suggestion::** Have students practice the 2 Ball Criss-Cross in a Right/Left - then - Left/Right tossing pattern.

## **SESSION 2: THREE BALL JUGGLE PATTERN**

*Pass out 2 beanballs to everyone*

*Start by having students warm up by practicing the Right/Left, Left/Right movement with the 2 Ball Criss-Cross.*

*Next, demonstrate THE JUGGLE pattern with 3 beanballs.*

“You will put 2 beanballs in the hand you use for writing. The other ball goes in your other hand. Starting with the one in your fingertips of the hand that has two, you throw that one across. When it reaches the top corner, you throw the next one from your other hand across. When that one peaks, throw the last one across to the opposite top corner of your *Accurate Toss Zone*. You will end up with 2 beanballs in your opposite hand. Transfer one back and start again. The rhythm is *throw and throw and throw and stop* or *1 and 2 and 3 and stop*. The “ands” in the count are like rests between notes in music. They are the *pauses* between the throws. Really wait until each ball gets to the top corner before you throw the next one. Keep aiming for the opposite top corners of your *Toss Zone*. If you get 3 throws, try 4 throws. The count will be *1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and stop*. You will finish with the beanballs in the same position as your started. If you can do 4 throws, try 6 or 8 or 10 throws. Every time one gets to the top corner, throw the next one.”

*Pass out the 3rd beanball and let the students practice.*

### **TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS:**

**Challenge:** Student does not have time to throw the 3rd beanball.

**Solution:** Tell student to throw the 2nd ball even higher to really give them more time to throw the 3rd beanballs.

**Challenge:** Student starts walking forward chasing the balls.

Note: This is the most common mistake you will see in teaching 3 ball juggling. There are two main reasons why this happens.

1. Each consecutive throw is getting lower and lower. Soon, the student is frantically spinning the next ball off their fingers, sending it soaring out away from the pattern. This is done in an attempt to have time to catch the previous ball that was thrown too low.
2. Sometimes the 2nd beanball is not thrown diagonally across to the top corner of the *Toss Zone* but rather straight up in the air. As it starts to descend, the student overcompensates by heaving the 3rd ball under the previous bad throw. That throw makes the student to start walking sideways or forward to try to catch each ball. The rule of thumb is - if they find themselves walking to their right, then their right hand needs to angle the throws across more. If they find themselves walking to their left, then the left hand has to work to throw the balls across to the opposite top corner of the *Toss Zone*.

**Solution:** Make sure the students are *bitting* the top corners of their *Accurate Toss Zone*.

**Suggestion:** Keep telling your students to look up at the top corners of their *Accurate Toss Zone* and aim for those corners every time.

### **SESSION 3: CONTINUE PRACTICE**

Pass out 3 beanballs to everyone. Put on some music and let your students continue practicing *THE JUGGLE* pattern. Challenge them to continue counting their throws. Those students who can already juggle 3 beanballs for at least 10 throws can start practicing the *REVERSE JUGGLE* pattern. Demonstrate this pattern (if you know how) or have them watch the *TEACHING JUGGLING SKILLS* DVD segment which demonstrates the *REVERSE JUGGLE* pattern.

***Suggestion::*** Have those who can juggle 10 or more throws try to juggle other items you have in your gym storage room. Example: softballs, basketballs, other items that can be thrown and caught.

### **SESSION 4: PARTNER JUGGLING**

*In this session, have the students find a partner and sit down with their partner. Demonstrate (with a student or another teacher) PARTNER JUGGLING.*

*Explain:*

“In a moment, each team will receive 3 beanballs. You will then stand side-by-side with your *inside* foot against your partners *inside* foot. Put 2 beanballs down and one person hold the other ball with their *outside* hand. The other person will only use their *outside* hand. The *inside* hands will not be used at all. Scoop and throw the ball across to your partner’s *outside* hand. Still imagine the *Accurate Toss Zone* as being somewhat wider and above the head of the person who is tallest on your team. You will still try to hit the corners of your *Team Toss Zone*. When you receive the 3 beanballs, I want you to put 2 on the floor and practice juggling the 1 ball back and forth for 20 throws.”

*Pass out 3 beanballs to each team and let them practice 10 throws with one beanball.*

“Everyone stop juggling, put the beanball on the floor, and watch as I demonstrate (with your partner). You will have to decide who will throw first. That person will always throw first. When their beanball reaches the top, the second person then throws their beanball across to the opposite top corner of the *Team Accurate Toss Zone*. It’s the 2 beanball Criss-Cross pattern. Ok, each of you pick up a beanball, determine who throws first, and practice this pattern at least 10 times or more.”

*Students practice*

“Everyone stop juggling, put the 2 beanballs on the floor and please watch me. Let’s move on to 3. Whoever is throwing first should now start with 2 beanballs in their hand. You will now attempt *THE JUGGLE* pattern between you and your partner. To start, try to do 4 throws. In that way, the person who started with 2 beanballs, will end up with 2. Once you and your partner can do 4 throws, then try to keep going for more throws. Go for 10 throws (Bronze). Can you get to Silver or Gold with your partner? You are a team now, so work together. Pick up the 3 beanballs and begin.”

*Turn on some music, and let them practice. Go around the room to help them, encourage them, and give them your “You can do it, keep practicing” speech.*

*If there is still time left, you may want to pass out 3 beanballs to everyone and let them practice *THE JUGGLE* pattern on their own.*

## **SESSION 5: TWO in ONE HAND JUGGLING**

### *Explain:*

“During the first part of this class, we will practice juggling 2 beanballs with one hand. To do this, you will need to throw each ball slightly higher than your *Accurate Toss Zone*. Not up to the ceiling, just a little higher. You will try to throw each ball so they go straight up and down in a side-by-side pattern. The 2 beanballs form distinct columns and your hand moves back and forth to catch each one and then toss it again straight up. Start by attempting to juggle two or three throws first. As you start to achieve good tosses, then try more throws.”

*Pass out 2 beanballs to everyone and let them practice*

*For second half of the session, have the students sit on the floor and tell them . . .*

“This is our last class session on juggling. We have the *JUGGLING CHALLENGE CHARTS* on the wall. They will stay up there for a few more weeks. You can still practice at home or at recess to try to reach the next levels. Just let me know when you have advanced. You can show me. The rest of the period will be spent practicing any one of the patterns I have taught you. You can practice *THE JUGGLERS’ SHUFFLE*, *THE JUGGLE*, *2 IN 1 HAND*, and *PARTNER JUGGLING*. Some of you may want to try the *COLUMNS PATTERN*, and the *REVERSE JUGGLE*. Ok, let’s juggle!”

*Turn on some music and encourage each student to reach the next level in whatever pattern they are practicing.*

### IDEA:

#### **Eye-Hand Coordination Exercises with 1 Beanball**

The idea is to always throw from one hand, catch in the other, and then throw back again. How the beanball gets to the other hand can be done in many ways. Here are just a few ideas . . .

- \* Throw, clap hands, then catch.
- \* Throw clap hands two times, then catch.
- \* Throw clap hands three times, then catch.
- \* Throw under leg and catch in opposite hand. Throw again under the other leg and catch.
- \* Place on head, let it roll off, and catch in the other hand. The catching hand is held palms-up at the bottom corners of their *ACCURATE TOSS ZONE*. Repeat the other way.
- \* Put ball under chin with one hand, raise head, and have beanball drop into other hand. Repeat the other way.
- \* Drop ball and bounce off knee to other hand. Repeat the other way.
- \* Throw ball in the air and with two hands, grab the bottom of their T-shirt, then bounce (like a trampoline) the beanball off the shirt into the air. Then catch with the other hand.

You can also make the above suggestions into a routine. Start with the throws and clapping and end with the shirt bounce. It will be a total of 12 throws and catches. Your students will love this challenge.



**Other Juggling Props**

You decide how far you want to take your students with juggling. They have just scratched the surface of their potential juggling abilities. They can learn to juggle 4, 5, 6, or 7 balls, rings, clubs, basketballs, floor bouncing with rubber balls, or even juggling 3 different items at once. There is also the aspect of learning more partner juggling with beanballs, rings, and clubs. Other types of manipulative skills (juggling) are with Lunastix and Spinabolos.

This manual was intended to teach a basic 5 session unit with scarves and beanballs. For more information on advanced juggling with balls, scarves and other juggling props, please view one of the fine videos on our website, **[www.JoeJuggler.com](http://www.JoeJuggler.com)**.

Please contact me at **[info@JoeJuggler.com](mailto:info@JoeJuggler.com)** if you have questions, comments, or other great ideas for teaching juggling. I look forward to hearing from you.

Good Luck and Keep Looking Up!

## SCARF JUGGLING CHALLENGE

**\* THE JUGGLE PATTERN \***

[illegible]

## SCARF JUGGLING CHALLENGE

***\* 2 in 1 Hand (right) \****

[illegible]

## SCARF JUGGLING CHALLENGE

**\* 2 in 1 Hand (left) \***

[illegible]

## SCARF JUGGLING CHALLENGE

**\* Columns Pattern \***

[illegible]

## SCARF JUGGLING CHALLENGE

### *\* The Reverse Juggle Pattern \**

[illegible]

## SCARF JUGGLING CHALLENGE

## \* The Ultimate Juggling Challenge \*

[illegible]