

# CIRCUS SKILLS STUDY GUIDE

## History of Circus

“Circus” is a Latin word that means round. The first real “Circus” began in Rome in the year 61 B.C. This Circus had 500 lions, chariot races, camel races, elephant races, and lion and tiger fights. Today’s circuses are quite different.

In America we call it a “Circus” because in the early Circus’ the animals would go around in round patterned circles. The tents that are called “Big Tops” were also round in their shape. Large rings were put on the floor of the tents for the performers to do their acts. Today’s modern Circus has three rings, which is why it is called a “Three Ring Circus”. In order for it to be a Circus, it must have a clown, a juggler, and a performer riding an animal.

## Circus Skills

**Juggling:** It is easier to start with scarves when beginning to learn juggling. Scarves make it easier because they fall more slowly and allow you time to catch them. Hence giving you more time to focus on the correct technique of juggling. Juggling develops hand-eye coordination, and can also be done with a partner.

**Stilts:** Stilts are fun to play with and they also help to improve your balance. It is important to keep your hands low and in front of the stilts with the thumbs pointed down. This will make it easier to lift the stilt and move your foot. When your foot moves the stilt also moves. When you get off the stilts or fall off, hold on the stilts; do not let go because they will hurt you or someone else.

**Diabolo:** This skill helps develop your hand-eye coordination. A Diabolo is two sticks with a string attached to both sticks. You place the Diabolo, which resembles an hourglass, on the string and try to keep it spinning on the string. Once you have developed the ability to keep it on the string you can incorporate tricks into your skill level.

**Rhythm Sticks:** This is another skill that will help develop your hand-eye coordination. For this skill you will have two sticks of equal size and a third stick slightly larger than the other two. You start by placing the two sticks on the ground with the third stick on top of the two. Pick up the two sticks, one in each hand, and then try to keep the third stick airborne by hitting it between the two other sticks.

**Pedalo:** This is a two-wheel or four-wheel device that was created in Germany. This skill will help develop your balance. You simply stand on the two pieces of wood and try to pedal the device.

**Plate Spinning:** This skill involves spinning a plastic plate on top of a wooden stick. This skill is difficult because it takes time to develop the feel for the center of gravity.

**Unicycle:** This last skill is the most difficult to learn and master. This is a one-wheeled bike that you try to ride. For those who do learn how to ride a unicycle it will greatly improve your balance. Once on the unicycle you use the pedals to move yourself forward and backward. There are no brakes on a unicycle, to stop you apply pressure on the pedals in a different direction than you are going or you simply jump off the unicycle. Riders must **ALWAYS** wear a helmet and can have a spotter with them.

## Safety

1. A helmet must **always** be worn when using the unicycle.
2. Always beware of others around you when using the equipment.
3. Give yourself ample space to practice your skill without interfering with others.
4. Unsafe use of any equipment will result in a person **NO** longer being able to use the equipment.
5. Spotters should always stand to the side of the person attempting the skill, not in front of back of the person. The spotter should not hold on the person attempting the skill.
6. Since there is not enough equipment for everyone to use at the same time be respectful of others and share. Do not spend the entire class using the same equipment if someone is waiting for that equipment.

## Participation Grade

**100%** = performing the requirements on 6 out of 6 events, plus unicycle

**95%** = performing the requirements on 6 out of 6 events

**90%** = performing the requirements on 5 out of 6 events

**85%** = performing the requirements on 4 out of 6 events

**80%** = performing the requirements on 3 out of 6 events

**70%** = performing the requirements on 2 out of 6 events

**65%** = performing the requirements on 1 out of 6 events

**60%** = performing the requirements on 0 out of 6 events

## Requirements for the events

1. **Juggling:** Complete three cycles with the 3 juggling balls, nine throws.
2. **Stilts:** You must walk to 20ft. to the cone without falling on any size stilt you choose.
3. **Diabolo:** You must be able to keep the Diabolo spinning then toss it into the air, catch it, and maintain control, and repeat one more time.
4. **Rhythm Sticks:** Keep the third stick airborne for fifteen seconds.
5. **Pedalo:** Ride the Pedalo for width of two handball courts.
6. **Plate Spinning:** Must be able to get the plate spinning with one hand, shift plate to middle of the plate while spinning and maintain control again.
7. **Unicycle:** You must ride a distance of ten feet or balance for 5 seconds.

