

Beginning Aerial Fabric Instructional Manual

PREVIEW

A few random pages for previewing from
this step-by-step aerial fabric manual

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Basic Stand



Prerequisite: **en dedans**



Step 1: Wrap your right leg *en dedans* around the fabric.

(Hint: Think of making half of a hugging motion with your leg from the outside in.)



Step 2: After you have wrapped once, flex your foot to create a secure platform for your left foot to stand on.



Step 3: Holding your weight in your hands, pick up your left leg and step on top of the right foot. Keep your right foot (the base foot) flexed and square, and turn the top foot in, slightly sickled.

Step 4: Press your feet together tightly and stand.



Variations



Try “holding” on with one or two elbow(s), with your weight in your feet. This is a nice rest for the hands.

What’s Holding You

You can squeeze tightly enough to have all your weight in the legs. However, for balance reasons, you cannot let go with your hands. If you don’t have the strength in your legs built up enough yet, then some of your weight will remain in your hands.

Strengthening Tip

This initial movement will quickly put your grip strength to the test. When you are first beginning to work on fabric, your hands need to grow accustomed to holding on with a vertical grip. Unfortunately, working on fabric is the best thing for strengthening the vertical grip.

However, you can improve your overall grip strength by doing pull-ups. Pull-ups are strongly recommended as a conditioning exercise no matter what level you are at on fabric.

Teachers & Spotters

If a student cannot perform a basic stand, that is an indicator that they are not ready for aerial fabric at this level, and they need to spend time conditioning before attempting any other move in this manual. This may take a month or two in a conditioning class and/or working in the knot; then have them re-try this basic move as a test of readiness.

Basic Climb



Prerequisite: **basic stand**



Step 1: Start in a *basic stand*.

Step 2: Straighten your arms above your head, and hold on. Bend your knees and re-wrap your feet in the basic stand position getting

your feet as high as you can in order to gain new height.



Alternative step 2: You can let the fabric slide between your feet as you tuck your feet underneath you and then reclose your feet as you pull them up higher to another basic stand position. This works well with bent or straight arms.



Step 3: Use your leg power equally with your arms to re-stand and repeat. (While using arms and legs equally is suggested, you can modify to any degree to favor use of the arms/legs.)

Exit Strategy

The Descent: Gently release tension with your feet and walk your hands down the fabric, being careful with your pacing to avoid getting burned by sliding too fast on the fabric.

Variations

Add a pull-up in between the climbs to get more height through fewer climbs.

Strengthening Tip

The basic climb requires that you hold your body weight with your hands. A pull-up is not necessarily required but it is extremely helpful for building grip strength.

When those hands start feeling really sore, a good idea is to *ice your hands* after your workout. For tips on proper icing techniques, see the appendix at the back of this book.

Teachers & Spotters

Use progressive training methods for this movement and all movements in this manual. Have students get just a couple feet off the ground on their first try so that they can be comfortable with the climb and descent before taking it higher. Also, watch for shoulders that crunch up to the ears and put a stop to it before a bad habit develops! Shoulders should be pulled down away from the ears. Use correct shoulder positioning techniques throughout all moves.

If you slide too fast on the fabric, you will get burned. Either avoid sliding altogether or when sliding, go slow to avoid a burn.

Relaxed Descent



Prerequisite: **basic stand**

No matter how you gained height on the fabric, this is an energy-saving way to descend.



Step 1: Start in the basic stand position.

Step 2: Separate the ribbons. Put one arm in between the ribbons and then bring the rest of your torso through.



Step 3: If you can squeeze your feet together tightly enough to hold your weight, then fold over, bending at the crease of your body. Take a nice deep breath and exhale, letting the top of the body relax.



Step 4: After your recovery breaths in the forward fold position, replace a hand on one of the fabrics as you gradually release tension between your feet to slide down.

What's Holding You

The tension of the fabric between your feet is holding you as you descend. The hand on the fabric above you is acting as a safety in case you lose grip with your feet. Be ready to grab at any moment with that hand.

Teachers & Spotters

Always tell your students to keep a reserve of energy to use for the exit or descent. Never use up your strength to the point where you want to drop off the fabric. Remind students to breathe throughout every movement to give the muscles and brain plenty of oxygen to stay in peak working condition.

Leg Roll in the Splits



Prerequisite: **double footlocks, splits**

This movement can be likened to doing the basic leg roll up with double footlocks.



Step 1: From the double footlocks, turn towards your split. Grab on to the front ribbon.

Step 2: Rotate your front leg over your back leg by rotating to the back wall behind you.

Note: You should feel the ribbon rotating around your back ankle, getting tighter as you rotate. This is a check that you are rotating in the correct direction. Rotating the wrong way will cause you to fall out of the footlock.



Step 3: Rotate into the splits.



Step 4: Repeat this rotation process one more time to loop the fabric over the thigh of the back leg. Square your hips as much as possible.



Exit Strategy

Reverse your direction to exit the move. Hold on to the slack as your front foot rotates around. (Too much slack may cause the footlock to come loose around your foot.)

Teachers & Spotters

Sometimes students have trouble figuring out which direction to turn into the rotation. One phrase that helps is: “lean the pelvis forward and close the legs behind you.” As the student rotates both in and out of the pose, watch to make sure they are keeping the ribbon taut between their front foot and hand. Also, make sure that the fabric is wrapping over the ankle. Sometimes students will push the back ribbon towards their ankle (relating it to the basic leg roll), but they push too far and will push the fabric over their ankle, creating a mess to get out of. Try to prevent that by explaining how to lean out with the body so that the ribbon automatically wraps at the ankle with no need for any extra push.