

A Big Welcome
To
The Gym Dandies Circus Arts Program

The largest continuously operating children's circus
in the United States

Our mission:

We insure success.

Practice makes everything possible.

Parents,

Please take a moment to go over the enclosures in this packet:

- Letter from Mr. C - Things you can do as a parent to help your child experience success in Gym Dandies.
- Unicycle discount and juggling ball construction.
- Beginner juggling skills practice sheet.
- Circus arts skills practice sheet.
- Check out: www.gymdandies.org, click on [learn more](#) for How to ride a unicycle, other information, and links to other sites. (Click on Wild Cat Juggling link for video tutorial of dozens of skills.)
- Google: [Juggling Supplies](#) for circus arts shopping.

Please place the practice sheets in this packet in a place where your child will see them every day, a reminder to practice.

Dear Gym Dandy Parent,

Circus arts skills are unique and challenging. It takes a considerable amount practice to master these skills. There is pay back. Your child will be learning object manipulation skills that incorporate both sides of the body, as well as very difficult balancing skills associated with unicycle, slack rope, balance board, and stilt walking. These skills have carry over value in all movement/sport activities.

Once skills are mastered, your child will have opportunities to demonstrate their skills to others in performances. We perform throughout Maine and neighboring states; The Gym Dandies are in demand. The confidence and self-esteem developed in the Gym Dandies circus arts program will be with your child for a lifetime. Year after year former Gym Dandies, some have their own families now, drop by to relate that their experience in Gym Dandies was life changing.

This is what you can do to insure your child's success:

1. Practice makes everything possible: Encourage your child to practice at home for 15 to 30 minutes each day. Let your child teach you what they have learned. Parents should give it a try. Working on skills only at practice sessions at school will not do the trick.

2. Take time to make juggling balls (see directions in this packet), or drag three shopping bags out of the closet and work on scarf juggling.

3. Once you determine that your child is committed to practice, purchase a unicycle and protective gear (helmet, knee, wrist and elbow pads). Log onto www.gymdandies.org, click on "How to" for detailed directions on basic unicycle for beginners.

4. If you can squeeze it in, come to your child's practice session and be a Gym Dandy for a while. We need adult volunteers.

Please become active in the Gym Dandies Boosters Organization. Contact Irina Malayev (Malayev_family@yahoo.com) for more information.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Again, welcome to the Gym Dandies family.

Best,

Jon Cahill

Director

jonecahill@aol.com

To: Gym Dandies Parents

From: Mr. Cahill

If you are interested in purchasing a unicycle for your child, check with the following local dealers and ask about Gym Dandy discount on unicycles:

- Gorham Bike and Blade, Congress St, Portland, ME
- Back Bay Bicycle Shop, Forest Ave, Portland, ME

Log onto the Gym Dandies website, www.gymdandies.org, click on **learn more** for links to unicycle organizations, unicycle online sales, juggling supply sales and International Juggling Association.

Do not buy a unicycle with a wheel larger than 20", unless you are an inexperienced unicyclist. It is harder to learn to ride a unicycle on a 24" or larger wheel.

If your child is very small he/she may require a 16" wheel. Check with your child's instructor at the end of practice for the correct size for your child.

Log on: www.gymdandies.org and click on **learn more** for **how to ride a unicycle**.

Make your own juggling balls and save money.

Items needed:

- 3 used or new tennis balls or hollow ball of the same size or smaller
- small amount of sand or rice
- 6 (12" balloons deflated)
- small amount of duct tape
- small funnel

Construction:

- Puncture small slit in ball, just large enough to accommodate funnel.
- Insert funnel into slit.
- Pour sand or rice into ball through funnel. Fill ball ½ full with sand or rice.
- Cover slit with duct tape.
- For color: Cut the neck off of a 12" balloon and wrap the filled ball with the modified balloon. Wrap the ball with two balloons.

This ball is practically indestructible. When your dog or python eats one, simply make another.

Scarves: Three lightweight synthetic/plastic shopping bags work as well as expensive scarves. Crumple bags, shake out wrinkles and start juggling. These bags actually work better than expensive juggling scarves.

Practice Sheet for Beginning Juggler

(Progression for cascade pattern using Balls/Cubes and scarves/shopping bags)

Do not go to the next level until you have mastered the required number of tosses at the level at which you are working. Even after you have advanced to a higher level, warm up by quickly performing all preceding levels before working at the new skill level.

Record best score each day you practice. Enter you best score for that day.

Balls/Cubes

Level 1 40 scoop tosses **in a row** without dropping using **one ball/cube**.

Daily score: _____

Level 2 40 scoop tosses **in a row** without dropping, using scoop-scoop/ketch-ketch count. Count 1-2 / ketch-ketch, 3-4 /ketch-ketch, and so on until you reach 39-40/ketch-ketch. Then you are ready to attempt 3 balls/cubes.

Level 3 20 tosses in a row, juggling 3 balls/cubes cascade pattern without dropping. Once you have mastered this skill, continue to work to reach 100 tosses in a row, recording your best score each day.

Scarves Remember to use partner juggling technique.

Level 1 40 pull/snatches in a row. _____

Level 2 40 pull-pull/snatch-snatch (same count as for balls above). _____

Level 3 20 pulls in a row, juggling three scarves without dropping. Continue to work to 100 pulls.

Gym Dandies Practice Sheet (Beginner) - Cross through level when mastered.

Gym Dandy Name: _____

SCARF JUGGLE

LEVEL 1: (2 scarves) partner juggle, 20 pull snatches. Pull-pull, snatch-snatch 20 repetitions alone.

LEVEL 2: (3 scarves) 20 pulls.

LEVEL 3: (3 scarves) 50 pulls, columns right and left hand, 20 pulls each hand.

LEVEL 4: (3 scarves) triad, reverse cascade, 1up-2up, (4 scarves parallel columns).

LEVEL 5: (4 scarves) circular columns and a routine using 3 scarves.

CUBE JUGGLE

LEVEL 1: (1 cube) 20 scoop throws without dropping.

LEVEL 2: (2 cubes) throw – throw, catch – catch, 10 tosses.

LEVEL 3: (3 cubes) cascade pattern 10 tosses.

LEVEL 4: (3 cubes) cascade pattern 20 tosses. (3 cubes) Steal and share with a partner.

DEVIL STICKS

LEVEL 1: Twenty toss-catches, one end of the stick on the floor.

LEVEL 2: Twenty toss-catches off of the floor (double tap).

LEVEL 3: 20 toss-catches off of the floor (single tap).

LEVEL 4: Single flip toss to right side and then to left side and helicopter.

DIABLO

LEVEL 1: Pull Diablo across the floor and complete five pulls.

LEVEL 2: 20 pulls and recover when Diablo falls forward.

LEVEL 3: Toss and catch Diablo (one toss).

LEVEL 4: Toss and catch Diablo 3 or more consecutive tosses.

TUBE

LEVEL 1: Balance tube on one hand – 20 seconds.

LEVEL 2: Balance tube on right hand and left hand (20 seconds).

LEVEL 3: Balance tube on forehead or chin for 10 seconds.

LEVEL 4: Balance three connected tubes on forehead or chin.

PLATE SPINNING

LEVEL 1: Spin one plate using one hand.

LEVEL 2: Balance spinning plate on hand. While holding stick, toss and catch plate on tick.

LEVEL 3: (other hand – non-dominant) Balance spinning plate on hand, Toss and catch plate on tick.

LEVEL 4: Balance spinning plate on chin or forehead.

UNICYCLE

LEVEL 1: Use and store protective gear correctly. Show proper mounting and dismounting technique.

Ride 10 feet with spotter.

LEVEL 2: Ride 30 feet with spotter.

LEVEL 3: Ride 30 feet unassisted from the wall.

LEVEL 4: Mount and ride unicycle unassisted in a complete circle.

LEVEL 5: Eight figure 8's and 20 stationary.

BALANCE/BOLO BOARD

Level 1: Balance 30 seconds with spotter

Level 2: Balance 30 seconds without a spotter

Level 3: Balance 30 seconds on board while balancing a tube on one hand.

Level 4: Balance 30 seconds on board while scarf juggling.