

Indian Club Swinging – Newsletter 1, February 2010

Introduction

Welcome to the first Indian club swinging newsletter. We are pleased to be able to communicate with everyone interested in fitness and health via this web page (www.indianclubswinging.co.uk). We are interested in all forms of physical activities but particularly interested in long forgotten methods that are re-emerging such as Indian club swinging and other Indian physical training methods such as those used by wrestlers. We strongly encourage anyone interested in any unusual forms of training such as Indian club swinging to contact us, send photographs, video material, point our readers to web based sources such as YouTube videos or write an article we can publish on our web site. In this newsletter we will feature some club swinging photos, some contacts in the London area where club swinging is taking off and point you in the direction of Hawaii where Russell Ogata is teaching Indian club swinging in schools and has made a Gada.

We hope you like our first newsletter.

Mike and Elaine, February 2010.

Why Indian Club Swinging?

I have been Indian club swinging for 25 years and it has been great fun to do and a real challenge to learn. I have met many people and made contacts all around the world. I have given demonstrations and courses and now run my own classes here in Sheffield, UK.

However, we nearly lost this ancient art form altogether in the UK. After about 1950 it was really only British military forces that were practising club swinging and perhaps a few small groups and individuals that kept up a tradition of training with clubs such as the Marine and Sea Scouts or fitness instructors, perhaps with a military forces background.

Current interest in Indian club swinging has started to increase as personal trainers are beginning to look at ways of retaining the interest and motivation of their clients and seek alternative routes to fitness, mobility, strength, stamina and co-ordination rather than just weight training or kettle bell work etc. There is no doubt that cross training with a variety of apparatus and equipment retains the interest and motivates participants. Indian club swinging is by far the most interesting in my opinion because it has an endless selection of techniques, patterns and combinations and is a real challenge to learn as a skill. There is tangible evidence that the practitioner is developing the skills necessary and the strength to move to a heavier club. This is a great motivator for people where fitness is important but modern methods of training are not able to retain their interest for long.

The practitioner of Indian club swinging can develop in the art form in several ways such as by increased weight of clubs or by trying different styles of club swinging or develop combinations and routines of their own. Some people find great pleasure in hunting down old books and manuals to develop their skills and knowledge further. Indian club swinging can be incorporated into circuit training, gym work, complement weight training/lifting or used as the basis of any fitness programme. With proper care Indian club swinging can be done indoors or outdoors – although if practising outside please take care when small children are around.

Benefits of Indian Club Swinging

The real benefits of Indian club swinging are:

- Balanced development of the shoulders, arms and back.
- Increased flexibility, and strength in the wrists, elbows and shoulders.
- Improves the range of motion in these joints.
- Improves co-ordination, timing and skill with the hands.
- Can be used to counteract some natural imbalances in the posture as a result of being right or left-handed.
- Can complement other types of training to increase strength, endurance, stamina and aerobic fitness.
- Some physiotherapists use light clubs to treat some shoulder injuries.
- Some claim that Indian club swinging can be used to improve the general health and well being of the practitioners.

From my experience I think all of these benefits can be seen with regular practice and training. I integrate club swinging into a general fitness routine throughout the week that includes weight training, aerobic exercises (rowing, treadmill and exercise bike) and martial arts (Iaido and Tai Chi Chuan). Indeed a busy week but not busy every week as I have a job to hold down and training needs to fit in with that. Hence club swinging in the garden when I get a spare moment.

We have produced a range of wooden Indian clubs which have a good balance for Indian Club swinging and these are available from: <www.indianclubswinging.co.uk>

We hope to include all aspects of Indian physical culture including such implements as the Gada and the Nal.



The Gada (Mace)

This is a long stick with a stone ball on the end, which is swung by Indian wrestlers. It looks like a massive lollypop. The swinging motion is like a big pendulum being swung behind the back of the athlete. Russell Ogata in Hawaii has made his own 13.5kg (i.e. 30lb) Gada using the following guidelines:

1. Buy a cheap plastic ball of approximately the right size. You will need to calculate the volume and multiply by the density of concrete (2.3g/cm³ or 2400kg/cubic metre)
2. Cut out the valve of the ball and open the hole up to about 4 to 6 inches diameter (depending on the size of the ball) to accommodate filling with wet concrete.
3. Obtain a pole of strong hard wood or similar with a smooth finish of the right diameter (1inch to 1.5 inches etc depending on size of your hand) and right length (circa 5 feet more or less). Put some nails and screws in the end of the pole to be immersed in the concrete so that they are well secured but protruding somewhat. If you can attached a small metal plate to the end of the pole too that will help the concrete to 'grip' the pole too.
4. Make up a batch of sand and cement of enough volume to fill the ball. A bucket with a decent pouring spout will be helpful. Make sure you have enough sand left over to make a sand tray to support the ball.
5. Place the ball in a sand tray/tub and pour sand around the ball for support. This is so that the wet concrete does not simply distort or burst the plastic ball - which it would do if it were free standing - when poured into the ball.
6. Insert the Pole - end with nails etc into the ball and support vertically in some way so that when the cement is poured it covers the end of the pole with the nails completely.
7. Pour in the cement, making sure there are no air bubbles or voids created.
8. Wait until the cement sets - usually at least 24 hours and preferably longer to ensure the cement is strong enough, although cement increases its strength for several weeks afterwards even in a good mixture. Also it will take time to dry out.
9. Remove the completed gada (mace) from the sand tray, if you want to, remove the plastic ball too and you are ready to swing a gada. Please take care not to injure yourself or anyone else. Practice safely.

Here are some videos on YouTube showing Russell with his first go with the Gada and also some Indian club work:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6v3DHB5mNo>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Zf4n3r3deY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhmk4ClvXNA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aktzWV4NteA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzngQOmZv90>

We can supply Gada of almost any desired weight on demand. We can make them in wood or like traditional Gada in stone with a wooden handle. If you are interested give us a call.

Picture of a 6kg Wooden Gada



Approximately
5 feet high.

24cm diameter

Technique #1 Alternate Double Handed Side Swing Pendulum.



1. Starting Position – clubs at your side.



5. Let the clubs swing in the opposite direction.



2. Swing the clubs in opposite directions.



6. Let the clubs swing.



3. Turn body and look at the rear club.



7. Turn body and look at rear the club.



4. Top of pendulum swing.



8. Top of pendulum swing.

**This is a nice swing to do as a warm-up for the more difficult swings.
Have fun trying it out.
See you in the next newsletter.
Mike and Elaine.**