THE COMPLETE BEGINNER’S GUIDE TO HOLDING A HANDSTAND

BY LOGAN CHRISTOPHER

&

PROFESSOR E.M. ORLICK
DISCLAIMER

The exercises and advice contained within these pages may be too strenuous or dangerous for some people, and the reader should consult with a physician before engaging in them.

The author and publisher of this work are not responsible in any manner whatsoever for any injury, which may occur through the use or misuse of the information presented here.
INTRODUCTION

Thanks for downloading this Special Report on how to achieve your first free standing handstand. There are a couple places around on the internet that give a few details about how to hold a handstand, but nothing goes into full detail of every little piece you need to know. Now that has changed.

Within these pages you will find everything you need to know about how to kick up into a handstand, hold it, and come down when you want. All the steps to reach that goal and get there fast are laid out.

I am often asked if there really are secrets to hand balancing. Let me tell you right now. The answer is YES.

These secrets can save you from days and months of frustration. I know what that is like. When I first tried holding a handstand I did not get very far. I know that if I had this report I could have cut my learning curve by at least half.

I have used many of the words of Prof. E.M. Orlick from his book Hand Balancing Made Easy to help me write this report. He was a master of this craft and was able to distill his knowledge into clear writing. Mixed within his teachings are my own words to add more to the subject and help you further along. Just to ease the flow of writing there is no distinctions made between his words and mine.

Here is a short bio of the Professor. E.M. Orlick was one of the most highly qualified handbalancing authorities of all time. He was a member of the world-famous "Orlick Family" which was thrilling audiences with its spectacular gymnastic feats for four generations.

Members of this amazing family have been seen in action in nearly every country in the world, and have won hundreds of medals, trophies, certificates, and other awards for their outstanding performances.

Besides being an outstanding handbalancer himself, Prof. E.M. Orlick also possessed exceptionally high qualifications of training and experience. He attended 7 different Universities in 2 different countries and held 5 recognized University Degrees. He taught handbalancing, gymnastics, and other physical education activities in public schools, high schools, playgrounds, YMCA's, dance studios, recreation centers, colleges
and universities for many years.

Still being an amateur myself I know what the most difficult tasks down this road are. Getting to the point of holding a decent handstand whenever you want will take effort. I aim to help you as best as I can. Make no mistake about it. The secrets of professionals will be revealed to you here. I will not hold anything back.

I would also suggest that you read through this entire guide at least once before you even begin. As you continue to practice you should re-read the various chapters to let the ideas really sink in. Often times, when you review any instruction, you will find a passage that can help you dramatically which you passed by earlier without grasping the idea.

Handbalancing use to be something that almost everyone practiced to some degree. All weightlifters had various amounts of experience, though that is far from the case today. I aim to bring hand balancing back to everyone.
CHAPTER 1 - A FEW TIPS BEFORE WE BEGIN

No stunt is more beautiful, more symmetrical, more eye pleasing, more attention-attracting, or more universally admired than the handstand. No stunt is more indicative of highly developed neuro-muscular coordination, controlled strength and power, and skillful daring than the handstand. No stunt is more satisfying to do, more impressive to watch, or more widely performed, than the handstand.

The handstand is truly the "King Of All tricks" and probably the "grandfather" as well. For sheer psycho-somatic joy, nothing can equal that which comes from developing absolute control over your own body. There is no greater mental-physical pleasure than that which comes from being able to press into a perfect handstand and hold it without the slightest quiver. Nothing can give you a more satisfying feeling of self-confidence than that which comes from knowing that every muscle in your body, from the tip of your fingers to the tip of your toes, is eagerly waiting to obey your slightest command.

A lot of spade work is necessary to become proficient at handbalancing or any other sport. No one ever became a top-notch handbalancer without a lot of mental determination as well as physical effort. There is no royal road to handbalancing. In fact, nothing worthwhile has ever been accomplished in any field whatsoever without a lot of hard work.

You probably wouldn't be reading this unless you were interested in handbalancing. If you are a beginner, with ambitions of becoming an expert at this fascinating art, I would suggest that you let the above words really sink in. Make up your mind right now that you are not a wishy-washy individual, but one who sets his mind on a goal and keeps working and striving toward it until he reaches it. It requires more will-power than body-power to master a handstand so let's give the brain the right directions before we go to work on the body.

So important is this matter of right mental attitude that I would strongly suggest that you take a minute right now, before you start the next chapter, to take care of this. The whole secret lies in what is called 'positive thinking'. You say to yourself: 'I have made up my mind to become an expert handbalancer and nothing is going to prevent me
from becoming one. I have a great deal of determination and a strong will-power and will not be discouraged by reverses or set-backs. I am positive that I will be successful because I have set my mind on success and will continue to work hard until I achieve it."

Always think in terms of the improvements you have made and are making. Banish from your mind all negative thoughts such as "can't", "maybe", "perhaps", "failure" and so forth. Think of the handstand in terms of some prize which stands at the top of a hill but which is within the reach of anyone who is willing to devote sufficient time, energy and thought.

One final word before you start. Set in the habit of fighting to hold every handstand you do. This is especially important when you first start handbalancing.

Most beginners get the habit of giving in. They kick into a handstand with the idea of falling out of balance. They are convinced that they can't hold the handstand even before they start. Their minds are instructing their bodies to fall out of balance. They are deliberately failing, but don't know it.

To learn to hold a handstand quickly, easily and confidently you must kick into each handstand with the idea of staying there. You must think positively and act positively. You must fight each balance with all you've got. You must think yourself into a perfect handstand position and see yourself holding it without a quiver. Then you must fight with all your force to hold it. You must refuse to give in.

This is the most important secret of handbalancing. I have seen many persons take ten times as long to learn a handstand as they should because they got in the habit of giving in. Often I have seen a beginner on the verge of giving in and have shouted "fight it", "don't come down", "stay there", or some such encouraging remark, and he has stayed. Perhaps he tried ten times before, falling out of balance every time, but the one time that he really fought he stayed up.
CHAPTER 2 - HOW TO GET OUT OF A HANDSTAND

We need a word or two about safety. As a beginner it is important that you practice in a wide open area. I shouldn’t have to mention that being upside-down, when you are not use to the sensation, can lead to falling down. If there are potentially painful objects nearby your chances of getting hurt increase. The best places to practice are outside or on a mat. When beginning, you most likely will fall down. Luckily, it is not a long fall and with the following methods you can easily minimize your chances of injury.

When you kick up your first inclination is to not do it with enough force. When this is the case you will come part way up then land back on your feet. Not much of a problem. However, there are many times when you do the opposite, kicking too hard. Do not try to land in a bridge. That is a advanced move that can be attempted much later.

Instead there are two ways to go. First is to roll out of the handstand. You are up and start falling toward your backside. Simply bend your arms, tuck into a ball and roll like you are doing a somersault. If you want to get a good feel for this simply kick up past a handstand and go straight into the roll.

If you cannot do a decent somersault I suggest practicing your basic tumbling skills. Learn how to roll around on the ground. Besides the handstand, this is a basic necessary skill for all people to have. Too make it even easier and learn the feeling, try rolling out of a headstand, which is described in the next section.

In Fig. 2 you can see a roll out of a handstand frame by frame. It involves you bending your arms and bringing your chin toward your chest at the same time. Next you bend at the hips and knees and begin the roll on your back. Curl you body, really round...
your back, and you should come to your feet.

The other, and in my opinion better way to get out of a handstand, is to simply turn out of it. This way takes much less effort and you come back to your feet almost immediately. If you are falling over take a step forward and to the side with one hand, turn your body, and come down on your feet. If you did it quickly it would look like a really bad cartwheel.

I know that these are not the best photos ever made, but the best I could do in a small room with the camera I had. They should give you enough of an idea of how to do the moves especially when combined with the text.
The following lead-up stunts constitute stepping stones to perfection. They serve a multiple purpose and are of inestimable value. Taken alone each is a stunt in itself and worth learning even if you had no interest in handbalancing. All of them have something in common to the handstand and thus pave the way for good handbalancing. Each accustoms you to the upside-down position of the handstand, each helps to develop the strength, balance and muscular coordination necessary to handbalancing. Even if you can hold a fairly good handstand now you should practice these stunts, for no matter how good you may be there is always room for improvement.

**The Headstand:** This is one of the simplest lead up stunts. To perform it you kneel on the floor, place your hands on the floor in front of your knees and then place your head on the floor about ten inches in front of your hands. The head and the two hands should form a triangle like the three legs of a tri-pod. Only the front part of the head, just above the hair-line should touch the floor and the fingers should be pointing forwards. Now bring your knees in towards your chest and the feet in closer to the hands and kick the legs up and overhead. Bringing the legs up into the air should be done slowly in order to develop control. When the legs are overhead, point your toes, stiffen the legs and arch the back slightly. The weight of the body should be evenly distributed between the head and the hands.
You are now holding the ordinary headstand and the position of your body is almost the same as it will be when you are holding the more difficult handstand. If you find yourself falling out of balance fight hard to stay up. Never give in because if you do you will be learning bad balancing habits. Should you fall to your backside, simply tuck and roll out of it.

This stunt is effective for teaching you the proper body position while you are upside-down. You will want to keep your body tight while holding the headstand. Now is the time to get a feel for having your body hanging in the air, so to speak. Push with your hands each direction to learn how you can alter your position.

**Knees On Elbows Stand (aka Frog Stand):** Here is an excellent stunt for learning the proper position of the hands and arms for the handstand. In addition it is of value in developing finger, wrist, forearm and arm strength. To do this trick perform an ordinary squat keeping the knees fairly close together. Place the hands in front of the feet with the fingers pointing forward and spread apart. Bend the elbows slightly and lean forward until the knees are touching the elbows. Keep on leaning until the knees are resting on the elbows and the toes come up off of the floor. When you get into balance hold it. You try dozens of these until, you can go up into one with ease any time you so desire.

Since your knees are actually resting on your elbows, the move does not require much strength to hold. If they were not resting on the knees then your chest, shoulders, and triceps would have to support your entire weight by the strength of your muscles. The strength of your bones in your forearms support your bodyweight. Therefore, you can

---

**Fig. 5 - The Frogstand shown from two different views**
practice this exercise without tiring your arms out too much.

The objective here is to get a feeling for balancing by the action of the hands. The low center of gravity, due to being in a squat position, makes this over ten times easier to balance then in a handstand where your body is stretched out.

Take some time to get acquainted with the feeling of shifting your weight by your hands. Even purposely throw yourself out of balance. Once in position press your fingertips real hard into the ground. Your body will fall back and you will land on your feet.

Get back in position. Now attempt to raise your fingers by digging in with the heels of you palm. You will fall forward. However, you may notice that you do not fall with the speed and force then when you pressed with your fingers. Why is this? With your fingers pressing your wrists have leverage in the movement. With the heel of your hand, being about even with your wrist, you have no leverage.

Because of this fact, the heel of the hand cannot exert nearly as much pressure as can the fingertips. It is better to hold your weight more toward the front of your hands when hand balancing. In this manner you have more control. It is easier to stop from overbalancing rather than under balancing.

Get back into the frog stand and keep your balance. Attempt to keep your body unmoving, only your hands shifting control back and forth to keep you in the air. There are other ways to shift your balance in the handstand but this is the primary one. It is a necessity to master this skill. You can see that when your body is kept tight this small manipulation by the wrists and fingers is all that is necessary to keep you aloft.

These two exercises will do wonders in helping you learn the proper techniques and positioning for a handstand. I suggest you practice these moves until you can hold each for a full minute without much strain.
CHAPTER 4 - THE HANDSTAND WITH THE WALL

In learning the actual handstand itself the first and most important thing is to become thoroughly familiar with the correct handstand position.

There are two fundamental methods of learning this position and both are pictured here. The first is shown in Fig. 6 and should be easy to follow. You stand as though at attention but bring the feet together at the toes as well as the heels. Then stretch your hands overhead and raise up on your toes. As you stretch up, turn your head up end look at the ceiling. Try to touch the ceiling and reach up with the hands as though you were going to place them flat on the ceiling. Hold this position steadily with all your muscles taut and try to develop a muscle memory of it.

The next step is to lie flat on the floor, face down, with the arms outstretched and the hands placed against a wall. The position is almost the same as the one above except that this time you are lying face down on the floor. (See Fig. 7)

Your hands should be placed about shoulder width apart on the wall, your head should be bent upwards and the back slightly arched. The arms and legs should be kept straight and the toes should be pointed.

When you feel that you are in the correct position then tense all the muscles in your body and hold the position for about ten seconds. Relax and repeat the tensing again. Think of the wall as being the floor and picture yourself actually doing a perfect handstand.
Concentrate on each part of your body and the position as a whole and again try to develop an unconscious muscle memory. Always remember that mind as well as body is important to handbalancing.

Having reached this point you are now ready to commence with the actual handstand itself.

Stand up facing a wall. Place both hands on the floor about twelve inches from the wall. The hands should be placed shoulder-width apart. If they are placed too close or too far apart they make the balancing much more difficult. The index or pointing fingers should be parallel to each other and pointing straight at the wall. All the fingers on both hands should be spread widely apart to give the largest possible base. The fingers should also be bent slightly so that you can exert the greatest amount of pressure on the floor.

Go back and read the last paragraph again. The above instructions are very important so be sure to read them carefully and remember them every time you place your hands on the floor to do a handstand.

Next place one foot about twelve inches behind the hands. The other foot is placed still further back. Your starting position is shown in Fig. 8 and it looks very much the same as the start in a sprint.

After you get into the correct starting position raise your head and look at the line where the wall and the floor join. Lean your body forward, stiffen the arms at the elbows stretch out at
the shoulders and kick up with the back foot. The stretching out of the arms with the consequent straightening of the elbows and shoulders is known as 'locking out' or plain 'locking' among professional coaches. We shall use this term again so memorize it.

As soon as your back leg starts on its upward journey you push hard off of the front leg and kick this up and overhead. When both legs are up, bring them together smartly and stretch up as though you were trying to touch the ceiling with your pointed toes. This will bring you to the final position which is shown in Fig. 9.

If your legs come up too hard and you over-balance, your heels will hit the wall and this will hold you in the handstand position. Try the kicking-up movement again and again until you can do it easily and with good control. Do about ten kick-ups against a wall in succession, then rest and do another series of ten. Get the kick-up down perfect before you worry about trying to hold the handstand.

Once you have mastered the kick-up to the wall you are ready for the next step. This consists of fighting to hold your balance. If you have followed all the instructions faithfully up to this point it should not take you very long to perform the handstand itself.

Proceed with the kick-up as described. Then, when your heels touch the wall stretch up and up with the toes. As you do this raise your head very slowly and press down on your fingertips. This will bring your heels away from the wall and put you in the free-handstand position. Work slowly and steadily and try to hold the free handstand as long as possible.

Whatever you do, do not bend the arms. Most persons do this when learning the handstand and many coaches will even tell you to do it. Nearly all persons with above-average strength will also do it. They rely upon strength instead of balance and take much
longer to develop into top-notch handbalancers as a result.

Lock your elbows and lock your shoulders and do all of the balancing with your finger-tips. Your whole body, from the very toes to your wrists, should be like one solid piece. If you learn this correct position then practically no strength at all is needed to hold your body in balance.

Do not walk on the hands, not one single step either backwards or forwards. Get into the perfect handstand position, fight to maintain it, and if you get out of balance bring your feet back to the floor again. If you start walking while you are learning you will let yourself into a bad habit which is very hard to break. Many people can stay on their hands for quite a while by shifting the hands backwards and forwards but they cannot hold a stationary handstand. Once you master the perfect stationary handstand you can walk all you want for then you will be able to step forward, sideways, backwards and even turn around, without losing your balance. Furthermore, you will be able to start and stop as you see fit. What you want first is absolute control.

Do not let your legs bend at the knees, do not arch your back too much, do not spread your legs or kick your feet or anything else of this nature. Remember that your body should be like one solid piece controlled entirely by the fingertips.

After you master the perfect stationary handstand you will be able to wiggle your toes, bend your knees, spread the legs, double the knees up, kick your feet, arch your back, or do almost anything you wish without falling out of balance. It is for this reason that it is so important that you obtain absolute control of the perfect stationary handstand before you try anything else.
CHAPTER 5 - THE FREE HANDSTAND

After conquering the wall-handstand and the free-handstand from the wall you are ready to advance to open territory. Stand in the middle of a room or gym, or out on your lawn in the open. For the first few times it would be wise to have a pal stand alongside. Place your hands on the ground or floor as already directed. Get your pal to stand just beyond your hands and then kick your legs up into the handstand position.

Take it easy at first even if you do not get your legs all the way up. Try to go into the balance position and not beyond it. If you do kick too hard and over-balance your pal puts out his hands and grabs your legs and thus prevents you from going right over. After a few tries with his support you ask him to step aside and away you go. If you over-balance turn your body quickly and bring your legs down. You might take two or three spills before you learn how to 'save' yourself hence it is advisable to 'solo' on a mat or on soft grass or sand.

Once you get into balance fight with all you have got to stay there. Even if you only stay up for a second or two you are already on your way to becoming a handbalancer.

So far we have been kicking up from a sprinter’s stance. However, since you do not want to always have to get set on the ground before each hand balance you will need to learn another way. This way you can drop from a normal standing position into a handstand with ease and grace.

If you have very tight hamstrings this may be more difficult. If you can not touch your toes you will have to working on you flexibility. Just stretch regularly by standing or sitting on the ground and reaching for your toes.

From standing straight with both legs together, you will simultaneously lower your torso while raising you leg. Again these directions are for those kicking up with the
left leg. If you use your right then reverse the directions. I would advise that you spend at least some time kicking up with your opposite leg. This will help you find your balance in a different manner then you are use to and it is good to mix it up.

You are not lunging forward to place your hands on the ground. Simply, let them hang loosely. When your hands touch the ground they should be perpendicular to it. If you dive forward into position your degree of power in your kick-up will change every time you do a handstand, depending on how far you launch forward. By letting the arms come straight down you can figure out and use the same amount of power each time. I want you to pay attention to the fact that you need to learn how to kick up with the same amount of force each time.

Fig. 13 - The Kick-Up to a Handstand in an Open Area
You can see from the pictures that the left leg is in line (or close to it) with the torso. As soon as your hands touch the ground your right leg will kick off and you can come into the handstand. Your legs come together and all the previous lessons on body tightness come into play.

Since you are keeping your body rigid it forms a large lever arm against the small base of your hands. If your feet are too far forward or back of your body, your hand pressure will be too little to bring it back into balance.

To learn this new method of kicking up you may want to go back to the wall for a few tries until it feels right.

Even after you are practiced at holding a handstand for a decent amount of time, the difficulty may be in kicking-up consistently. Mastering you kick-up to the point where it is duplicated each and every time is the surest way to reach this consistency. Keep practicing as this is the secret to kicking up successfully each and every time.

As you get better you can also learn to ‘save’ handstands that would normally be beyond you, by bending your arms, weaving your shoulders, and more. However, you must get into the correct habits first. Those include a good kick-up, proper hand position, locked-out arms, tight body, tight legs, and more.
CHAPTER 6 - PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The most important advice anyone can give you at this point in your handbalancing career is to practice, practice, and practice. There are two ways to go about learning this stunt and it would be wise to follow both.

The first one involves trying the handstand every opportunity you get. You can try them in your bedroom when you get up in the morning, try them during your lunch hour if you can find the space, try them when you get home from work, try them before you retire for the night.

If you work at a computer all day this is the best thing you can do for your health. Get up and do a couple handstands. It will reverse your blood flow and clear your head before you return to work.

If you really want to master the handstand then go after it. Try it fifty or a hundred times each day if necessary. It will not take much time and, if you have followed the course up to now, even a hundred tries spread out through the day should not take much energy.

The second way involves setting a period of time apart in which you will practice for 10, 20, even 30 minutes or longer. One warning is that you will need to work up to the longer periods of time.

During this period you can go through all the exercises in a fashion. This way helps because it will give you endurance as well as allow you to focus on learning. Be warned that your form will likely deteriorate as you get tired. You should stop before that begins to happen as you will begin to teach yourself bad habits.

In addition, you should be practicing the lead-up stunts. It is a lot easier to work up to a respectable time with these feats in a short period of time. In fact, your first few days could be spent with just these exercises. Work up to a minute in each hold.

Another piece that needs emphasis is to get your kick-up correct until you can replicate the same exact move each time. By mastering your kick-up to this degree you are half way to achieving the handstand.

Until you know the proper position to hold while you are in a handstand, you should be practicing the two drills at the beginning of Chapter 4 as much as possible. If
you can maintain the correct position then holding a handstand becomes a snap. It would be wise to do each of these moves before doing any handstand work.

Use the wall as long as you feel it is necessary. Even after you begin doing free handstands it is wise to go back to the wall to check your form and to build endurance. Try holding a handstand for a minute or longer.

Let’s look over this again. We have the headstand and the two positioning drills to help you with gain the needed correct form to hold a handstand. Practicing the kick-up until you can do it with the same force each time gets you right into the position. The frog stand teaches you the proper hand positioning and how to use your wrists and fingers to manipulate your balance.

This is the complete package. Get all of these stunts right and you will surely be on to your way to a masterful hand balance. It is a great trick and wonderful exercise and any amount of effort is worth learning it.

As you read these pages you may have noticed that many things were repeated over and over. This is because these are very important ideas that bear repeating. You must internalize these lessons so that they are automatic when you are hand balancing.

But I realize some of you will want an exact plan laid out to follow. If so read the next chapter.
CHAPTER 7 - A PROGRAM FOR PROGRESS

You are going to have to pick the manner in which you practice. Be it throughout the day or all during one session. For best results it would be wise to mix it up and on some days follow both methods.

If you really want to learn the handstand you will need to practice daily so get after it. Make the habit and you will be balancing in no time.

Your goal is to hold a 30 second hand balance in just six weeks. Following this plan it is almost a surety. I would advise you write this goal down and focus on it.

Visualizing your goal (and this can be done for the goals of each week) will help. I know it did for me. Take some time to get quiet and relaxed and picture yourself succeeding and feeling good about it. There are many different techniques and ways to go about this. Personally, I recommend the book Psycho-Cybernetics by Dr. Maxwell Maltz and his Theater of the Mind exercise. You can find this book on Amazon.com at http://tinyurl.com/ypkmx2.

Here is the Action Plan:

Week 1: Focus on the two positioning drills and the two lead-up stunts. Do not even go into a handstand at this point. On the frog stand and headstand try to get up to a 15 second hold.

Week 2: Work on kick-ups against the wall. Once you are comfortable there, hold the position. Remember to stay in the correct form (use the drills to help). Shoot for a 15 second hold. On the frog stand and headstand try to get up to a 30 second hold.

Week 3: Now is the time to start coming off of the wall. Kick-up against the wall and remove your feet from it. Balance with your fingers and go for a 5 second balance. Keep working on the hold against the wall shooting for 30 seconds. Increase your frog stand and headstand holds to 45 seconds.

Week 4: Begin kicking up in a free area away from the wall. You can use a partner to help at first. Kick-up properly and balance with everything you got. I shouldn’t need to remind you to stay in tight form. Shoot for a 10 second hold. On the hold against the wall go for 45 seconds. You should continue your headstand and frog stand until you
can do a minute.

**Week 5:** Keep working at your balancing skills. If there is anything that is lagging behind practice it more to bring it up. You should get a free hand balance of 20 seconds by the end of the week. Break the minute mark on a handstand hold against the wall as well.

**Week 6:** You have come this far. Will you make the challenge and do a 30 second hand balance?
CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION

Be proud of yourself for reaching your goal. A 30-second handstand is quite an achievement that very few people can do. If you did not quite make it in six weeks do not worry. Undoubtedly, if you followed the program you are much further along than when you began. Just keep at it and you will get there.

Holding a decent handstand is the first step in becoming an excellent hand balancer. When you reach that point it is time to go after tricks that can be much more fun and even more challenging.

Professor Orlick is one of the greatest teacher’s this ‘Lost Art’ ever had. Throughout this report many of his teaching were shown but there is a lot more where that came from.

If you want a step-by-step program on virtually every hand balancing trick from walking to holding a one-hand handstand then you need to check out the Hand Balancing Mastery Course at www.LostArtOfHandBalancing.com/hbmastery.html.

The headstand and frog stand are just two of 25 different lead-up stunts that can help you reach your handstand. After you master the handstand learn hundreds of variations before advancing to the more difficult moves.

And that only makes up part of the course. There are interviews with some leading experts in this field that tell you in detail about how to train and the insider tips for mastering any move.

Be sure to take a look at www.LostArtOfHandBalancing.com/hbmastery.html for all the details.

Of course there are many other resources to be found on the site. Read the articles, visit the blog, and order other products all at www.LostArtOfHandBalancing.com.

Until next time Good Luck and Good Hand Balancing,

Logan Christopher