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LONDON AND TONBRIDGE

SIMPLE
INDIAN CLUB
EXERCISES

BY
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Staff, Aldershot.*

PRICE **9^{D.}** NET.

LONDON
EWART SEYMOUR & Co. Ltd.,
Thanet House, Temple Bar, W.C.2.

Simple Indian Club Exercises

By

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Simple Indian Club Exercises

THERE are many appliances in existence to-day that are more or less successfully utilised to assist in the physical development of the body. Each appliance usually has some special point of recommendation, as in most cases has frequently been demonstrated; but the intrinsic merits of club-swinging, and the particular advantages which this form of exercise has over many others, have never, so far as I am able to trace, been fully explained.

Hitherto, textbooks on the subject have confined themselves to the mere enumeration of a number of club exercises with perhaps a few notes upon the beneficial influences of physical exercise in general. No specific reasons have been urged as to why Indian clubs are in most cases preferable to other implements.

This omission is somewhat surprising when it is remembered that this form of exercise is one of the oldest in existence. One of the earliest known weapons of attack and defence took the form of a club, and there is not much doubt that, among

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the ancients, the expert use of this powerful article was the chief ambition of everyone. The fighting men were able to wield it for hours and even days on end, and this fact alone demonstrates the stamina-infusing properties of the club. And the clubs used in those days were a trifle heavier than the playthings of to-day. It is not to be wondered at that the men of the time, always having these things in their hands, had abnormally developed bodies and lithe, sinewy muscles. Short, fat, knotty muscles were a rarity.

Speed in chasing and dispatching animals was absolutely essential, and any form of exercise which tended to produce knotty muscles, thus hampering movement, would not be in keeping with their mode of life, and would not develop their bodies on the right lines.

Further evidence that the club does give the muscles a beautiful and supple mould may be found on examining the paintings and sculpture of former artists that may be seen in any art gallery. It is quite an exception to find a figure with squat and puffy muscles. Grace and symmetry of limb cannot for one moment be associated with them.

A picture of Samson standing erect and holding a club comes to my mind, and it is more than probable that the wielding of this article had a great deal to do with his wonderful physique. In the days when grace and skill were the chief attri-

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butes of mankind weight-lifting as a means to this end seems to have been entirely unknown. Indeed, I believe this form of exercise to be quite a modern institution.

If then clubs in various forms were in bygone times almost the sole aids in the production of the ideal form, why not adopt them more generally to-day?

The public, as a rule, will readily follow methods and appliances whose utility has been proved, as witness the thousands who have flown to the Sandow system of training in the fond hope of themselves becoming Sandows. Yet there is only one Sandow, whilst there are dozens of splendid statues in existence of the fine men of ancient Greece, etc., and all bearing the same magnificent physical characteristics. So I think I have said enough to show that club-swinging may be taken as the most suitable system of exercise to produce grace, good average strength, stamina, and agility in anybody.

If a modern example of the efficacy of scientific club-swinging is needed, take the case of Tom Burrows. He recently created a record by swinging them continuously for sixty-two hours; surely a telling example of skill and stamina, and one which should convince even the most sceptical of their value. Boxers, oarsmen, wrestlers, and followers of all branches of sport needing steady strength and agility in a more or less prolonged

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degree should use clubs. Many of the leading athletes in the recent Olympic Games have and do use them solely in and out of training. Can I put it down to their cheapness that they seem to be somewhat contemptuously passed by? It is a strange fact that many people imagine that unless they pay a good stiff price for a training appliance it will not prove of any benefit. I must admit that it has been a constant source of annoyance to me, when training young people of the better class, to be told that they must obtain this or that costly machine before any proper development can be expected. Yet I say that in many cases more valuable service can be got out of an eighteen-penny pair of Indian clubs properly applied than out of pounds' worth of more expensive apparatus. Appliances of this latter type are for more specific purposes than the mere perfecting of form and production of good health. They are intended for those who wish to specialise in a particular branch of physical culture, and in this direction they no doubt serve their purpose well.

But for such things as erect carriage, graceful movement, pliant muscles, and rapid bodily action you must turn to Indian clubs.

In their performance the body must at all times be erect. If the head is ever so little out of position or the shoulders not back sufficiently and intruding on the plane of the swing, painful consequences will ensue either by a club colliding with

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the chin on the one hand or the back of the head on the other. Hence, the constant repetition of these exercises will soon cause the body to habitually maintain a naturally erect pose.

A word as regards the legs. Indian club exercises affect them very slightly. One or two movements require steps to be taken, though the feet are practically at rest all the time.

Now it is obvious that the legs get quite sufficient training in carrying the body about all day, and when it is remembered that the weight of any human frame may vary from seven to seventeen stone the need of the legs would seem to be rest rather than exercise. Had the arms to perform daily even half the work of the legs they would soon become developed in a similar manner. The case of a cripple occurs to me who having lost the use of his legs has to move about chiefly by the aid of one arm, with the result that that arm has become abnormally strengthened.

General observation, too, shows that the majority of people always appear to have their lower limbs in a more vigorous state than the arms or chest. And here again a good reason for the adoption of club-swinging manifests itself. It is the upper parts of the body that need all the auxiliary exercise. The lower parts will look after themselves. Most of the vital organs of the body are above the waist. Indeed, the state of health of the upper part of the body may be taken as a criterion of

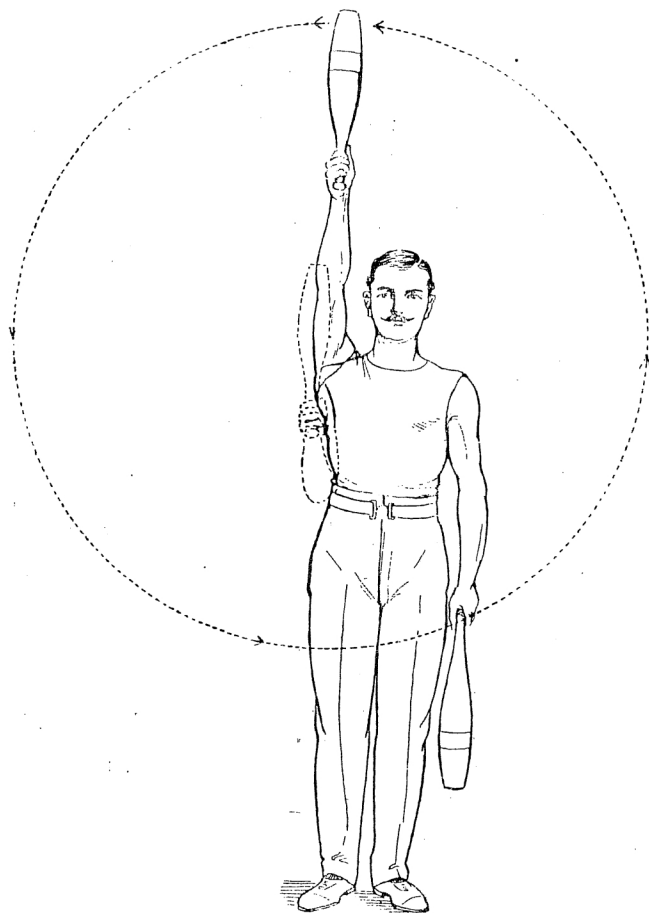
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the health of the whole. And it is for this reason more than any other that I would urge club-swinging as the most efficient means of keeping the body thoroughly fit on all counts.

A word as to weight. Each individual must of course gauge his own requirements to a great extent. As a guide in selection it may be mentioned that the club should swing naturally and easily. If any appreciable effort is required to wield it discard it for a lighter one. Of course as the student becomes more proficient there is no reason why he should not increase the weight if necessary. The centre of gravity of the club should to start with be as far away from the handle as possible. This may also be varied later on. The following is an approximate table of weights,

AGE.	MALES.	FEMALES.
12—15	$\frac{3}{4}$ lb. to 1 lb.	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.
15—20	1 lb. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	$\frac{3}{4}$ lb. to 1 lb.
20 upwards	2 lb and upwards	$1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to 3 lb.
	according to requirements.	

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EXERCISE I.

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INSTRUCTIONS.

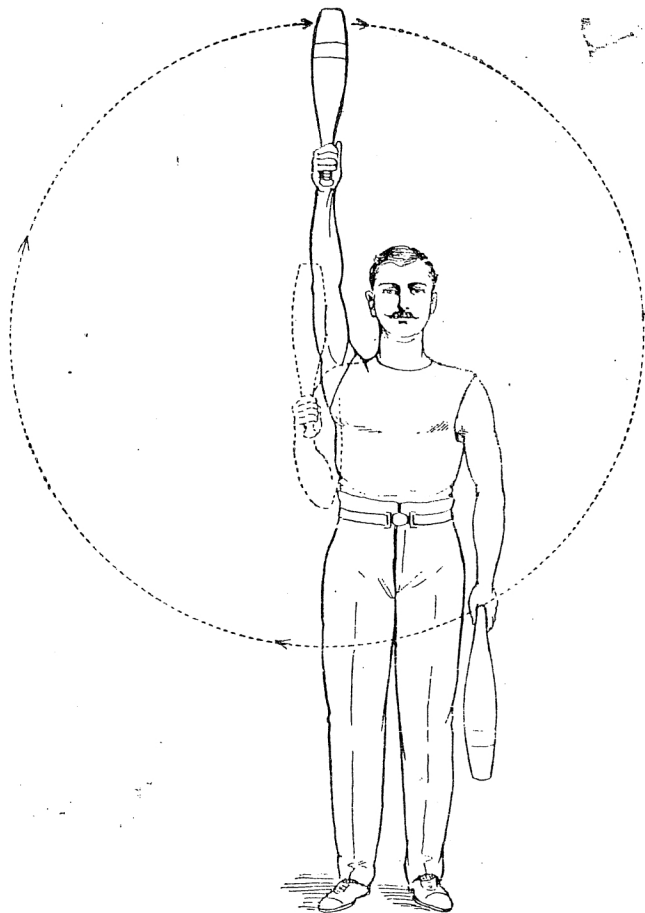
EXERCISE I.

A. Allow the left arm to fall at rest beside the body out of action. Raise the right club to a vertical position, so that the top is just above the head. Now straighten the arm, moving the club upwards to the highest point, then let it swing to the right in a complete circle at the full radius of the arm, and lower to the first position. The whole movement should be completed while counting four.

B. Perform a similar revolution with the left club, in both cases repeating the movement while counting, say, up to sixteen.

C. Combine these two exercises by performing them alternately, counting thirty-two in all.

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EXERCISE 2.

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EXERCISE 2.

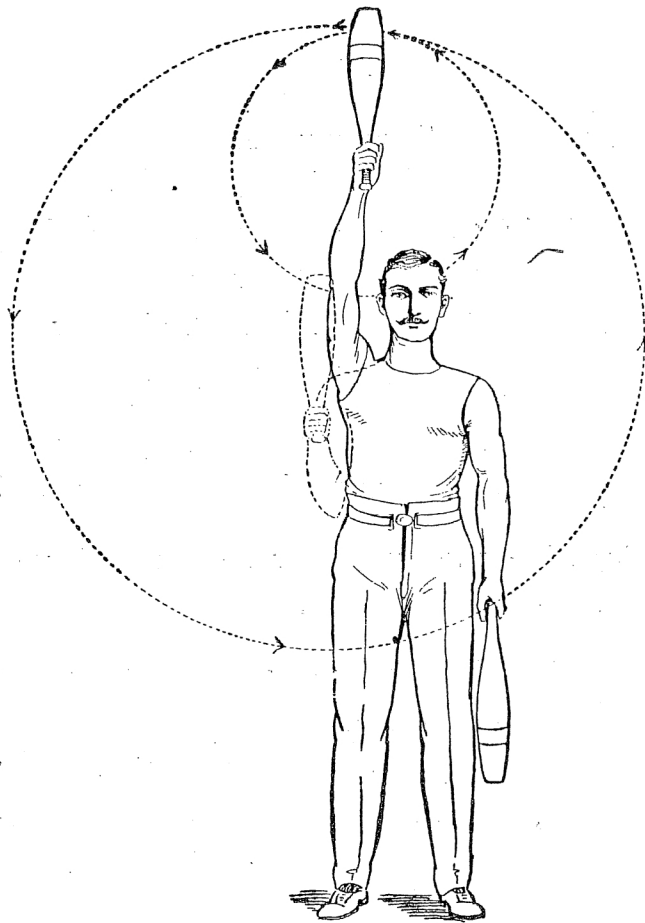
A. Similarly to the Exercise 1 A, swing the club in a complete circle, only in an opposite direction, *i.e.*, dropping the club to the left from its highest point instead of to the right.

B. Repeat the movement with left arm, this time, of course, letting the club swing to the right.

C. Combine the two exercises, not forgetting the counting.

Note.—Exercises 1 and 2 must be practised assiduously, as other and more intricate movements cannot be performed unless the student is able to swing the clubs accurately in the one plane.

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EXERCISE 3.

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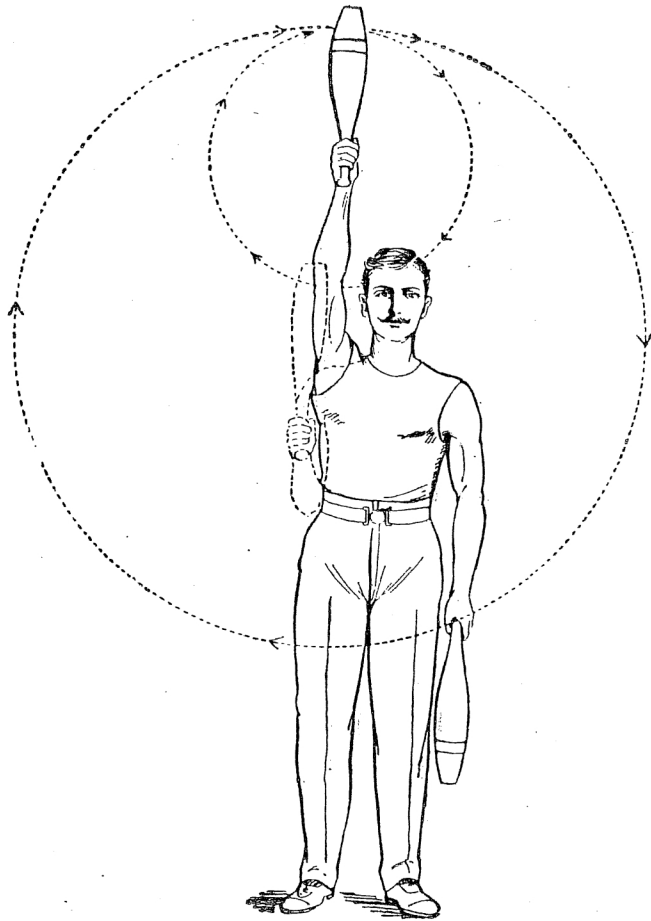
EXERCISE 3.

Repeat Exercise 1 A, but at the completion of the circle instead of lowering the arm to the first position, continue the swing of the club in a smaller circle behind the shoulders, again counting four. At the end of this movement the club will be in position to repeat the exercise, which may be done *ad lib.*

B. Repeat the movement with the left arm.

C. Combine the two movements alternately, so that when one club is describing a small circle behind the shoulders the other is being swung round in a large circle in front.

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EXERCISE 4.

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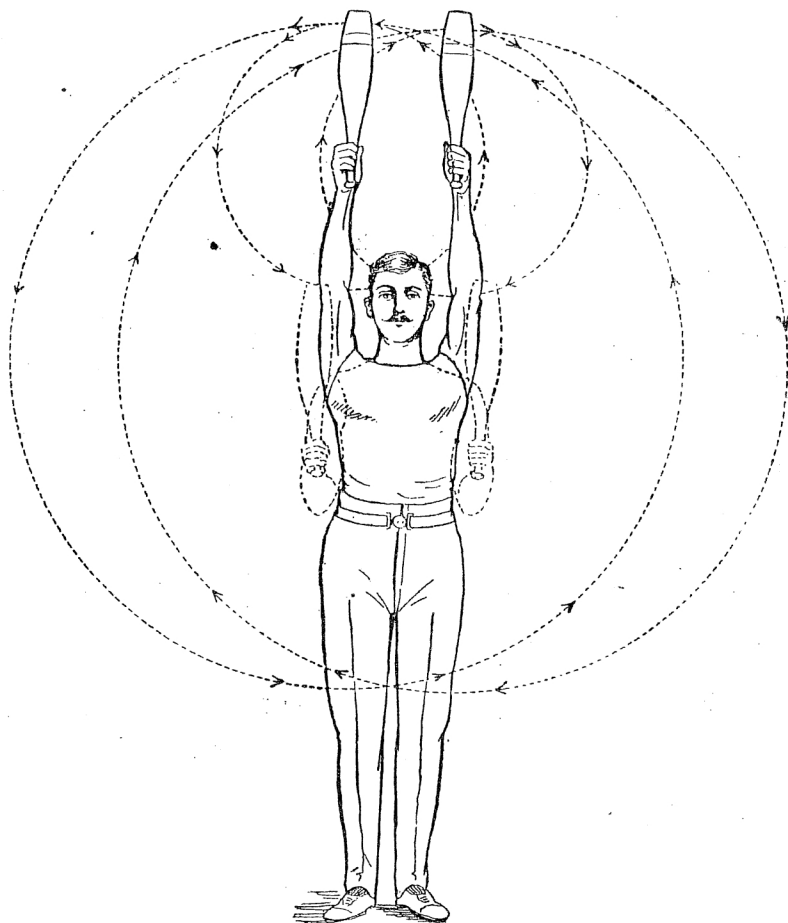
EXERCISE 4.

A. This is similar to Exercise 3 A, with the difference that the club travels in the opposite direction. In the earlier exercise the club in the small circle is rising behind the left shoulder. Here it is falling.

B. Repeat the movement with the left arm.

C. Combining these two movements will be found a trifle simpler than Exercise 3, but both must be perfected before proceeding farther.

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EXERCISE 5.

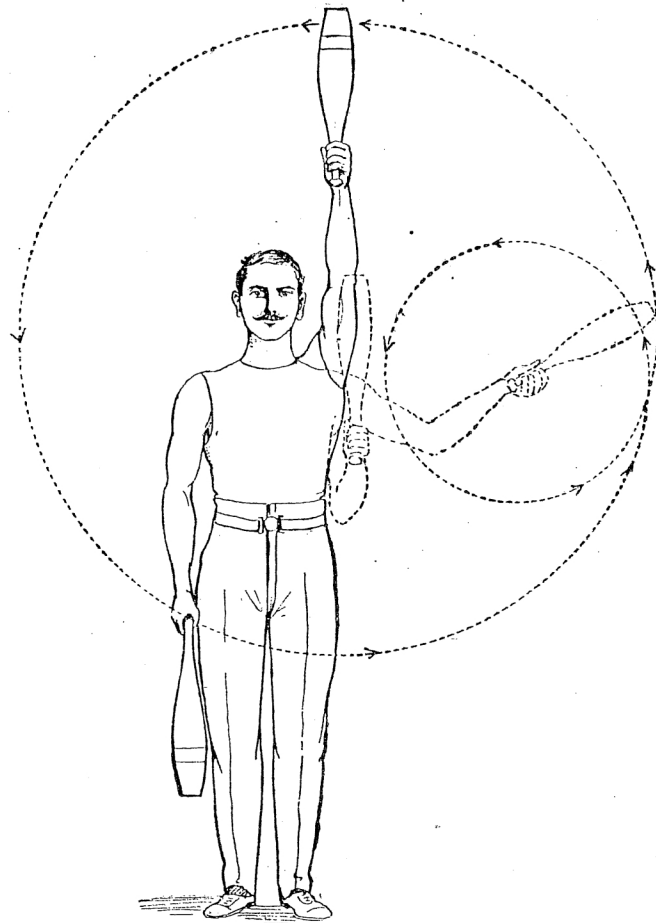
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EXERCISE 5.

A. In this exercise, although the movement of each club individually is the same as in preceding exercises, the two work together quite differently. Instead of one club making a large circle while the other makes a small circle, as in Exercise 3 C, the two large circles are made simultaneously as are the two smaller also. Start with both clubs held vertically as high as possible, and allow them to swing outwards together. As they pass at the lowest point let the left club always be nearer the body. On regaining the high position continue into the small circles, still letting the left club pass nearer the body. There is no fear of the club hitting the head if the body is correctly poised.

B. Reverse the movement, letting the right arm have a slight start of the left, thus enabling the arms to cross in full swing without difficulty. In all these combined swings always let the club run from the small to the large circle or vice versa without a jerk.

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EXERCISE 6.

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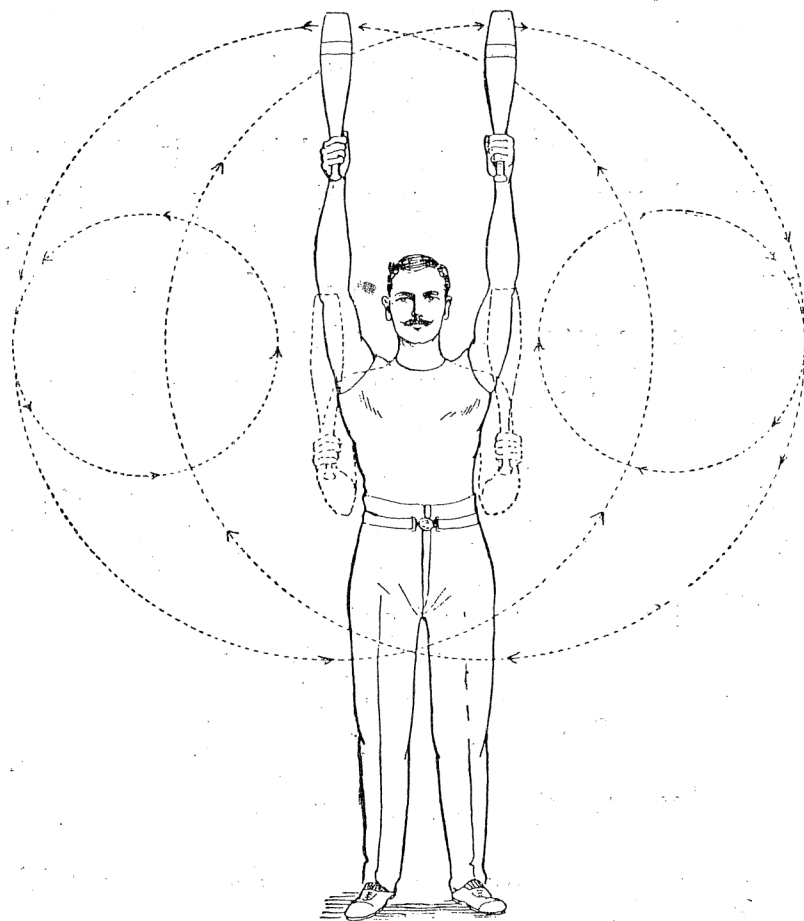
A. Starting with the left club at its highest point allow it to swing to the right till three-quarters of a circle has been described. The club will now be at arm's length to the left, where it must run on into a small circle towards the body, again passing to the large circle to continue the movement.

B. Perform a similar movement with the right arm, dropping the club away to the left.

C. With the left arm again describe a quarter-circle to the left from the high position, then running into a small circle similar to A, but with the club of course revolving in the opposite direction, continuing into the large circle once again.

D. The same movement to be repeated with the right arm.

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EXERCISE 7.

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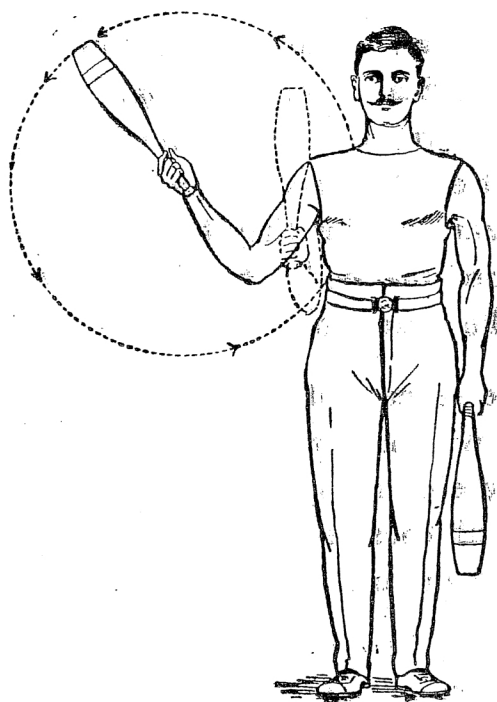
EXERCISE 7.

A. This is more difficult than any of its predecessors, and is the blending of Exercises 6 C and 6 D. Start from the high position and let both clubs drop outwards, simultaneously passing at the bottom as described in Exercise 5 A. Then at the quarter-point they both make small circles away from the body, but the tops must on no account be near enough behind the back to touch.

B. The reverse of A, combining Exercises 6 A and 6 B will not present much trouble now, and it may here be mentioned to save needless repetition that all these exercises can be performed to a count of four, or, better still, to a march on the piano.

Note.—The student is not advised to attempt to combine the movements of Exercise 6 alternately instead of simultaneously, as it is altogether a too difficult feat.

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EXERCISE 8.

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EXERCISE 8.

A. Turn the body slightly to the right, then swing the right club continuously away from the body, but in a small circle, *i.e.*, with the elbow bent all the time.

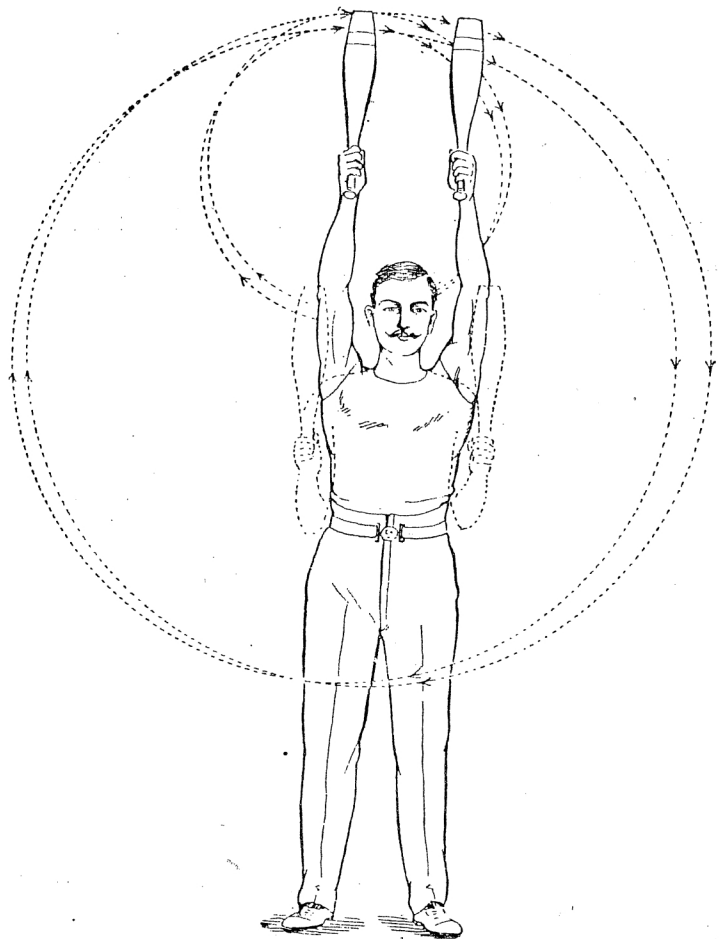
B. In the same position revolve the left club continuously, but in large circles instead of small.

C. Perform A and B together, taking care not to increase the pace of the clubs above that adopted in other exercises.

D. Perform A B and C again, only facing the left instead of the right, and resting on the left foot and right toe.

Note.- This exercise requires great accuracy in the swinging, or the symmetry of the movement will be spoilt.

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EXERCISE 9.

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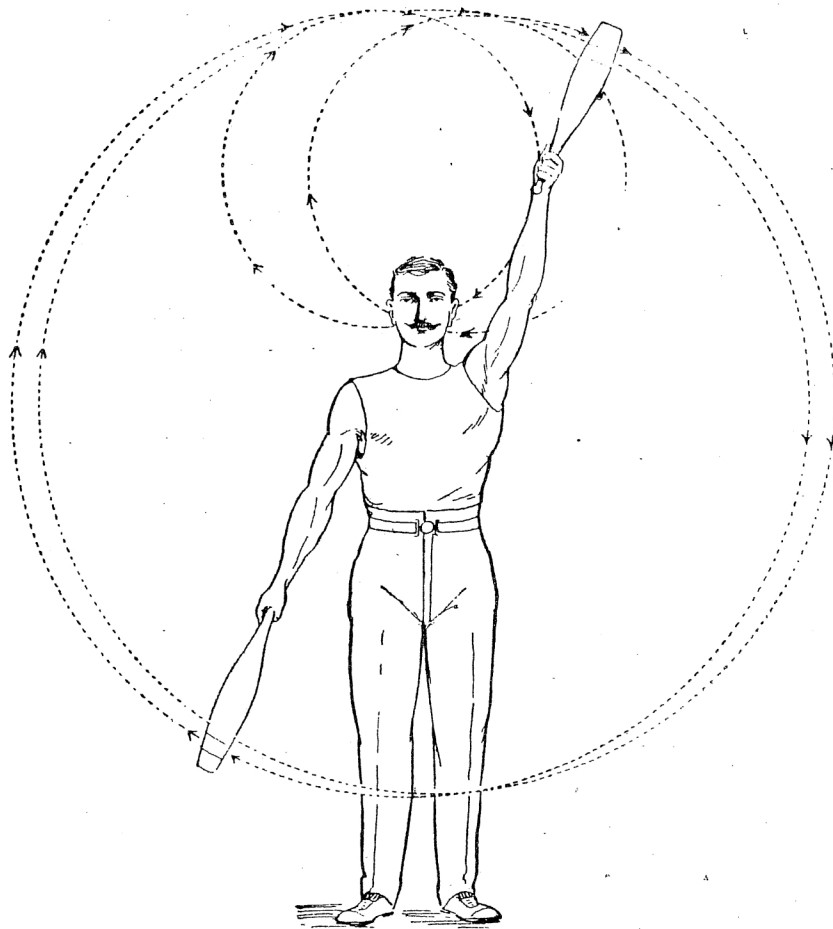
EXERCISE 9.

A. Start with the clubs held vertically in the highest position. Allow both clubs to drop round to the left together, describing large circles and taking care that the clubs do not collide. At the completion of the circles drop the clubs down behind the shoulders and make small circles in the same direction, running again into the former and repeating.

B. Perform the same movement again, only to the right instead of the left.

Note.—When a movement is reversed like this it is a good plan to run into the second part without stopping the count; say, up to sixteen with the first part and on to thirty-two with the second.

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EXERCISE 10.

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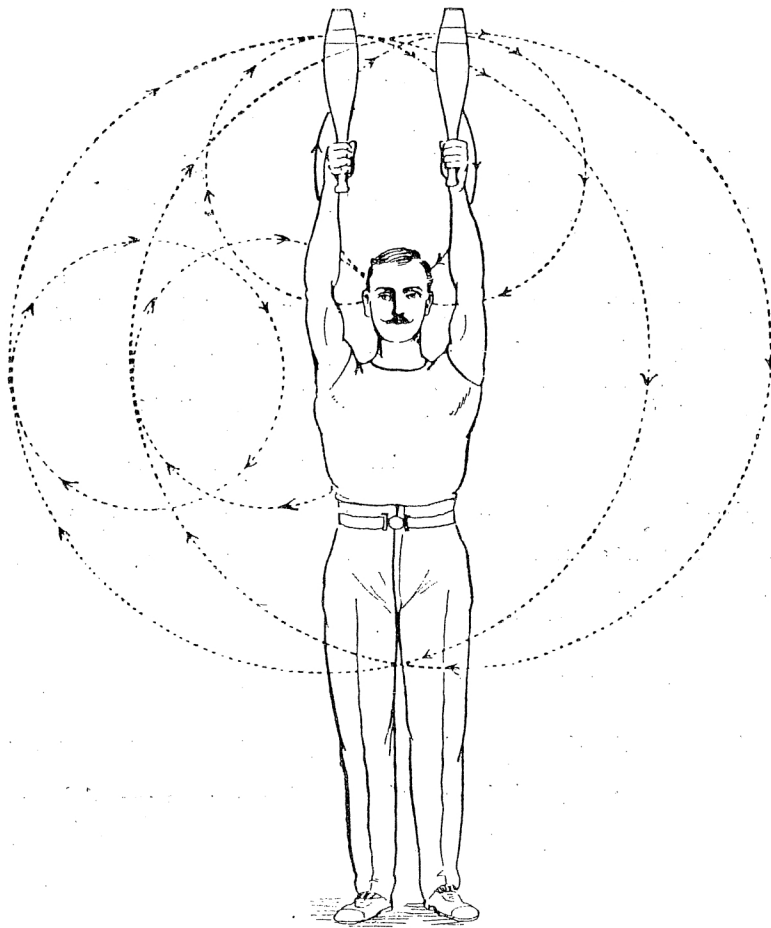
A. This exercise is somewhat similar to the previous one, but the following preliminary movement should be mastered before proceeding with B. Swing each club in turn round in a few continuous circles for a bit, and then add the back swing, still using only one club at a time.

B. Now work the two clubs together, both swinging to the right but not together, half a revolution being between, and each club following the other.

C. Perform the same movement to the left.

Note.—This exercise is not to be confused with Exercise 3 C. There the clubs are travelling in opposite directions, here they revolve in the same direction.

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EXERCISE II.

SIMPLE INDIAN CLUB EXERCISES

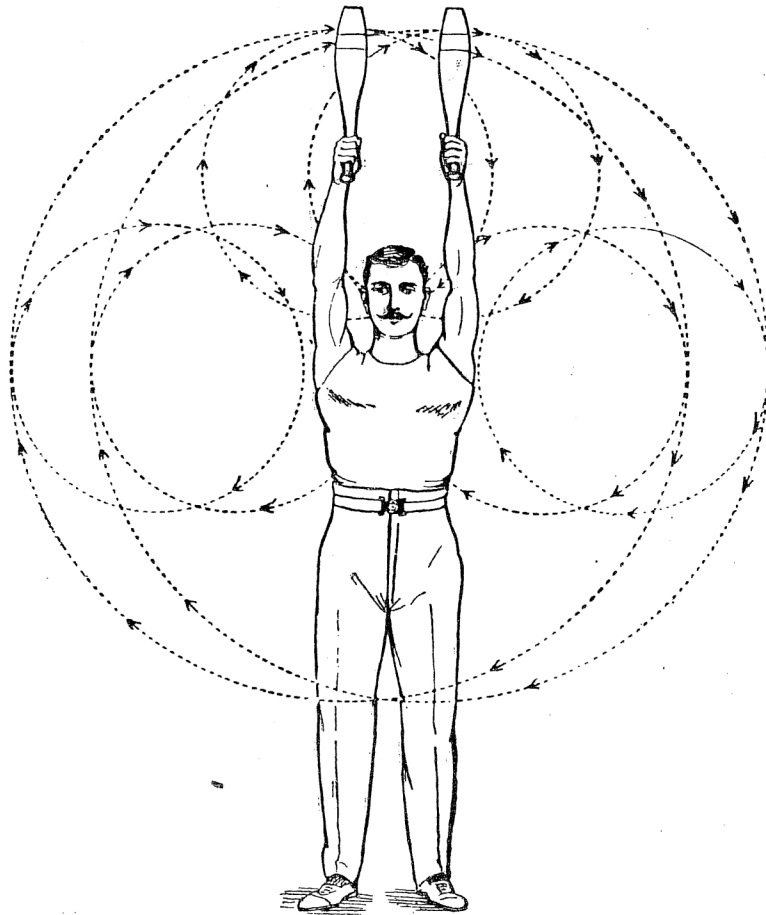
EXERCISE II.

A. This is the same as Exercise 9 with an addition. After the clubs have completed the small circles behind the shoulders they must continue on until they reach a horizontal position on the left of the body. Here again two small circles must be made simultaneously towards the body, this of course running on again to the circles behind the shoulders. This exercise may be done while counting six.

B. This will be the reverse of A. The clubs will drop down to the right, describing small circles away from the body when the arms are horizontal, then three-quarters of a circle down past the feet up to the high position, finally dropping behind the shoulders to the right.

Note.—Do not forget that the whole of each of the above movements is a continuous swing.

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EXERCISE 12.

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EXERCISE 12.

A. The clubs travel in an opposite direction to Exercise 11 A. Starting from the high position drop the clubs to the right, but unlike Exercise 11 B do not describe the small circles until the clubs are out again to the left. These small circles will then be towards the body, and the clubs will immediately after fall behind the shoulders.

B. Reverse the preceding movement, starting by swinging the clubs down to the left.

C. The student having mastered all the preceding exercises should, as a fitting conclusion, endeavour to run from one to another to the accompaniment of music. He will soon, by this method, be able to give quite a presentable little display, and it will be no great strain to go through the whole of these twelve exercises in succession, counting sixteen to each.

A Few Points for Health Seekers.

THE searcher after perfect health must not entertain any exaggerated notions with regard to physical culture. Full inflation of the lungs with pure air is the very chief essential to successful body-building.

Another point is to beware of exerting the body too much immediately after meals.

Another thing to remember is never to over-exert the body without real necessity. Directly exercises are making the breath come fast it is time to stop, as rapid breathing denotes that the body is creating a superfluity of carbonic acid gas which the lungs are finding difficulty in removing.

Many people complain of being unable to sleep or of falling into fitful slumber, and becoming heavy towards morning. The best recommendation under this head is regular and methodical habit.

To summarise, the main points to be remembered in conjunction with physical exercises are :—

1. The proper inflation of the lungs at all times.
2. The correct care of the stomach.
3. Requisite rest for the whole of the body.

These three things carefully looked after will not leave the health-seeker much else to worry about.