

# HAND BALANCING

*By Siegmund Klein*

*Poses by the Author*

*Sept. 1937*

stand up and walk around. They are just trying to cover up their own failings.

As I have said, everyone should be able to handle the weight of his own body in all circumstances, even when he is upside down, which of course brings us back to handstands and hand balancing. One should be able to lift himself by his arms and do it easily, and he should be able to push up the weight of his own body with his arms.

The fact is that I know a lot of fellows who are as much at home upside down as they are on their feet. Many of them can do all of the advanced hand-balancing work shown in these photographs. When you can do them, you will have the great satisfaction of knowing that you are a first class human being. No human weakling can say that.

The moving pictures in recent years have done a lot to give our young people this idea of the all-around man who is as good as any animal of the jungle. We should thank the author and the producers for the series of "Tarzan" pictures, which show what a man can do.

So long as people do a little walking and a lot of riding, they get along fairly well in the modern world of great cities, but how would they get along if they had to live in the trees? Put them in the jungle, and they might as well be helpless babies. They forget that they should have a good upper body as well as legs to stand on. The civilized weakling will always kid himself by saying that he would rather have a powerful brain than a strong back, but that is just nonsense.

What he ought to know, even if he doesn't—and if he had a better brain he would know it—is that physical activity and good coordination always helps to build a better brain. Don't fool yourself. The men who come to my gymnasium are not dumb-bells, even if they use dumb-bells. They have better brains and clearer heads because they have good, clean blood and unusual vitality. It's always so.

If you think there is not a lot of coordination needed in these hand-balancing exercises, all you need to do is to try them and find out. What is more, all the fellows who do this sort of thing have steady nerves and quiet tempers, and that means better brain work. I can tell you that it takes concentration and that you cannot think of anything else while doing these stunts.

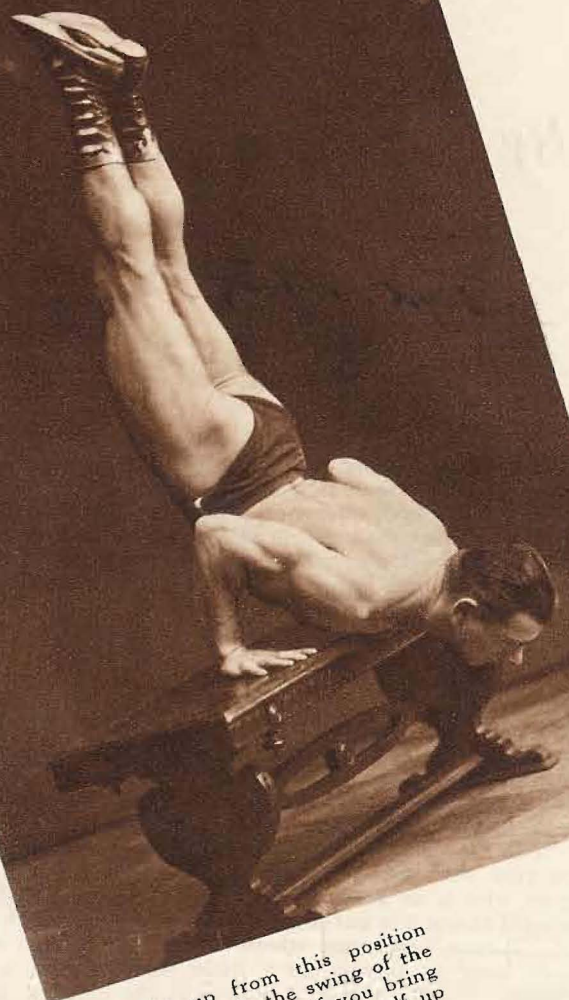
Take, for instance, the "tiger bend," shown in the first photograph. I can assure you that while you are

These photographs of Mr. Klein were taken near his thirty-fifth birthday, showing him continuously improved, and in the best shape of his life





This bench push-up is much more effective than one from the floor, because in touching the chest the head goes far below the hands, as you see



In pushing up from this position note the change in the swing of the legs. It will help you if you bring them back as you push yourself up

doing it you will not be thinking about where you are going Saturday night, and that you will forget both your business problems and how your uncle is getting along with his lumbago. Believe you me, you will have your head quite full of what you are doing.

To start the tiger bend you first do a straight-arm handstand. When you are nice and steady, bend the arms at the elbows and lower the body until the elbows rest on the floor, and your weight is supported on the forearms and hands, as in the picture.

Remember, you can lower the body by keeping the elbows up (as in the *bench dip* and push-up shown in a later photo), but that is something else again, for in this case the elbows go down to the floor. Don't drop too quickly, because you must be steady and keep "everything under control."

There is a fairly good chance that you will succeed in getting down, but now all you have to do is to push yourself up again. That's all. And I might as well warn you here that you had better get acquainted with old man Technique, for you will likely never accomplish this trick without him. Don't be sure you'll do it with brute strength. You'll find getting those elbows off the floor quite baffling. All right, I'll tell you how to do it.

You will probably not be able to analyze your difficulty, but if you could you would find that your weight is too far back and very much on your elbows. That is why you can't get them up, for there is too much leverage.

The first thing for you to do is to bring your feet

over, so that they are not above your elbows, but above your hands. In fact, you must shift your weight forward generally. I would suggest that you do not even try to do it on a board floor, but find a thick-matted rug with a high pile that you can dig your fingers into and get a grip on.

If you are using such a rug, try to grip it with your hands as tightly as you can so that you can pull yourself forward, and in that way try to get your elbows up off the floor. If you have a big gymnasium mat or wrestler's mat, practise this tiger bend on the edge of the mat so that you can hook your fingers over the edge and thus get a grip to pull yourself forward.

As you pull yourself forward you will find that your elbows will immediately begin to leave the floor, or they will seem to try to. When you feel that your elbows are just about lifting from the floor, that will be your first indication or feeling that you are close to accomplishing it.

Years ago I thought I'd never get this, but in the "Y" at Cleveland there was a three-inch platform used by short men to reach the punching bag. I used the edge of this, for it gave me something to pull on, and there was the thrill of a lifetime when I felt my elbows coming up.

You may not learn these stunts just in the sequence given here, and it may be that the tiger bend will be