

The Illustrated Guide to Mace Training



By Rik Brown

www.LibertyStrengthTraining.com

“How can a sprinter tell a marathon runner or a hurdler, that he can’t run? Or, how can a high jumper tell a long jumper or a triple jumper that he isn’t really jumping? You lift barbells, and I lift the Mace, Clubs, and Kettlebells. Your strength can’t look down on my strength.”

–Rik Brown

Welcome to the Mace Training Manual. It is hoped that this will inform, educate and inspire you to your own greatness using the Mace. Enjoy!

History

The Mace is at least 1,000 years old and has been used as a war weapon by numerous cultures. In India, the Mace is called the Gada, and has been used as a war weapon, but is also used as a training tool by the Wrestling Gyms (Akhara).



Gama, Champion Wrestler

The Mace also appears prominently in paintings of Hindu Deities, usually held by the monkey faced god Hanuman.



Hanuman

In European countries, top heavy pole axes have been used for hundreds of years, and in Switzerland, the Halberd, when used by a skillful soldier was capable of pulling an armored knight off of his horse and penetrating the strongest armor.



Pole Axe



Halberd

In the world of sports, India has used the Mace (Gada) to develop strength for wrestling, the world's oldest sport, and has appreciated the Mace's enormous benefits so much that Mace swinging competitions are held in India still.

In much the same way that the use of the Kettlebell in America was popularized by one man (Pavel Tsatsouline), The Mace was brought to the attention of America's strength and conditioning community by Jake Shannon, (www.scientificwrestling.com),

who first discovered it during his interviews with Olympic and Professional Wrestler Karl Gotch.



Jake Shannon



Karl Gotch

Today the Mace is reaching a whole new audience of strength seekers. Women are no longer afraid to do brutal, hardcore training and are open to learning effective ways of achieving their fitness goals. In your quest for fitness, profit from the past, plan for the future, but live in the present. The Mace is a gift from the past, and presently, its future is being written by innovative designers who value this mid-level training tool.



On “Tradition”

For some reason, when it comes to the Mace, (but also with Kettlebells, Clubs, and other exercise tools recently discovered by the western world), there seems to be a group of staunch traditionalists who assert that the Mace is to be used only as it was originally designed, and that making any alterations is at best “against tradition”, and at worst, “heretical”. Many feel that there is only “one way” to use a Mace, Kettlebell, or Club, and that the usage, and even the design of these implements must conform to the standards set in a small corner of the world, which may or may not have had access to the best construction methods and materials, and was

designed with an even smaller group of people as users of these tools.

People who pick up a Mace today are almost never wrestlers (although, all wrestlers would benefit greatly from Mace Training) and certainly not warriors fighting with swords. People who come to the Mace today are looking to adding a new tool to their toolbox of strength and conditioning. People who want to master a challenging but result giving tool that will make them look better, feel better, and move better. The staunch traditionalists would do well to remind themselves that “traditionally” the Olympics were competed in the nude, and “traditionally” football was played with leather helmets, and basketball was played with peach baskets. It’s all well and good to honor tradition, but not to be shackled by it, or limited to it. Think about it almost all advancements made to your family car in both safety and performance came about from

technology formulated to make some race car go faster. The automotive engineer is the servant of the race driver and his obsession for speed.

Today people obsess over fitness and conditioning, and are searching for innovative ways to reach their goals of strength, development, and lower body fat. And now newer, better, adjustable Maces are made affording people a way to update this ancient training methodology to meet their needs. If you want to stick to “tradition” that’s fine, but drive your Model T to work, and don’t yell at me when I pass you in my Turbo Porsche!

With an open mind, the fitness enthusiast, the strength seekers, and the power athletes of today are using old tools in new ways. People are flipping tractors tires, dragging anchor chains, and whipping huge ropes in totally unconventional, non-traditional ways. The MACE started as a weapon to

defeat enemies, but today the enemy is weakness and obesity and it stands no chance against the skillful Mace user.

The “Slosh” Effect

Something New In Mace Training

For the last 1,000 years or so, the Mace has usually been a two-piece implement consisting of a handle and a head, in short, a stick and a stone. In the earliest drawings and later, photographs, it is obvious that in the Wrestling Gyms (Akara’s) of India, the handle of the Mace was made of wood, and this was usually bamboo. With the industrial age, the Mace has been manufactured in steel shops and foundries. The wooden handle has been replaced by a steel pole that can be welded to the head of the Mace affording greater strength and safety (avoiding the possibility of a cement or stone head coming off the wood handle). This

development, while making Mace training far safer, also made it obvious that the old style wooded handle (especially bamboo) Maces had an oh so slight “sway” and flexibility that the welded, steel Maces with stiff, one piece construction no longer had. This trade-off of strength for safety left many “traditionalist’ feeling that something was missing. Kind of like the parallel bars made of steel on most schoolyard playgrounds compared to the wooden parallel bars used in collegiate and Olympic competition.

Now, for the first time in the history of Mace Training comes a Mace that combines the safety of one piece, welded steel construction with the feel of sway and flexibility of wooded handles. With a Mace that has a loadable head that also offers progressive resistance in one unit. There have been Maces with a loadable head for a few years already, and people used sand, dirt, steel bb’s, or lead shot but now,

www.evilmunkyent.com offers Maces with loadable heads that are capable of being filled withwater!

The advantage and possibilities are incredible.

Water is, first of all, a very available and inexpensive loading ingredient. Dirt and sand are almost as cheap and plentiful. But steel bb's and lead shot are rather costly. However, even in previous models of Maces loaded with sand or metal lacked the feeling of loading with water, it is a feeling like, trembling instability! There is nothing that will prepare even the most advanced and experienced Mace lifter for the "Slosh Effect". I know that sounds cliché, but picking up a water filled Mace is like grabbing a dragon by the tail. The real key to making the "Slosh Effect" happen is to only partially fill the Mace with water. $\frac{3}{4}$ seems to work best, of course, complete loading will increase resistance, but the load will be less "trembling", and less "sloshing". It is the overcoming of this sloshing instability that is so

challenging and beneficial, as you are forced to control a Mace that never really quits moving and the resistance and torque are continually shifting. Not all resistance is the same, and 10 pounds of solid iron is NOT the same as 10 pounds of moving, unstable liquid, and the qualities that are developed trying to control the liquid loaded Mace will serve the athlete, the housewife, the laborer, and anyone who wants overhead rotational strength.

The Psychology of the Mace

The Mindset and the Method

Almost anybody can learn to safely and effectively use a barbell. The barbell is designed to make it easier to lift a heavy weight, as it is balanced and equal loads (weight plates) are added to each side. The plates revolve as the bar is lifted (usually, in just a linear fashion, straight up and down). All of the effort is directed to lifting, not balancing, not controlling, not restricting, and re-directing the application of the force. Relatively low repetitions are performed (almost always under 20), and explosive strength is employed and developed.

With the Mace, everything changes. Control is most important, balance is crucial and force is directed

continually. Higher reps are generally used, sets can last for minutes. If powerlifting can be likened to an explosion, Mace swinging can be likened to a forest fire. When strength is controlled, when force is directed the result is functional, USABLE power that carries over to applications in a variety of sports.

You can casually pick up a barbell, but Mace swinging demands total focus. Many people join a gym for the social component, and the exercise is a by-product. The Mace, in contrast, is a tool that takes skill and coordination to master. There is no casual Mace swinging, you must want to work with this unwieldy, unbalanced load and prolong your set longer than a mere dozen reps or so to reap the benefits of grip mastery and back, shoulder, and core strength and development. The ultimate compliment to a Mace master is “You make it look so easy, so smooth!” Most people are looking for an

easy, quick solution, and the Mace is not easy, and there is no quick road to mastery.

The road to mastery will involve effort to learn a new skill, and patience to put up with occasionally hitting yourself in the calf with the mace, and endurance and perseverance as your number of repetitions goes higher and higher.

It's not always about adding more weight; it's about MASTERY with whatever weight you use. There is a certain mindset that drives an athlete to try to lift heavier and heavier for 1 all out repetition, and it's admirable, but it takes a whole new type of mindset to learn to make an awkward movement appear fluid and smooth, and to learn to shift and sway as this weight makes its revolution around you for hundreds of repetitions.

“In the jungle of strength and conditioning, sneak upon heavy weights slowly. If you chase after them, injuries will chase after you!” – Rik Brown

Safety Rules for Mace Training

- Always be aware of your surroundings, outdoors is best. Give yourself at least 8 feet of clearance all around you, and above you.
- Always warm-up and stretch your shoulders and triceps tendon before you start.
- Make sure that your hands are dry. (Chalk is recommended)
- Make sure that your clothing will not bind up during high repetition rotational movements.

Mobility – Stretches

Mace training involves moderate weight with an incredible amount of torque as the main resistance. Much more torque than standard linear training, Kettlebell, or even Club training. This torque is particularly stressful to the triceps, elbows, and the triceps tendon located just above the elbow joint.

In order to enable your joints and tendons to handle this stress, stretching of the triceps and shoulders is recommended.

Before and after training many have found it helpful to apply liniment (icy hot, ben gay, etc.) to their elbows.

Photos

10 TO 2:

BACK START METHOD: Start your swing with the mace hanging straight down your back, elbows bent over your head. Generate momentum by swaying your body, and pull the mace over your shoulder to the 10 o' clock position. Drop the mace back over that shoulder. Keeping it very close to your body, swing it to the opposite shoulder and pull it over that shoulder to the 2 o' clock position. Repeat.

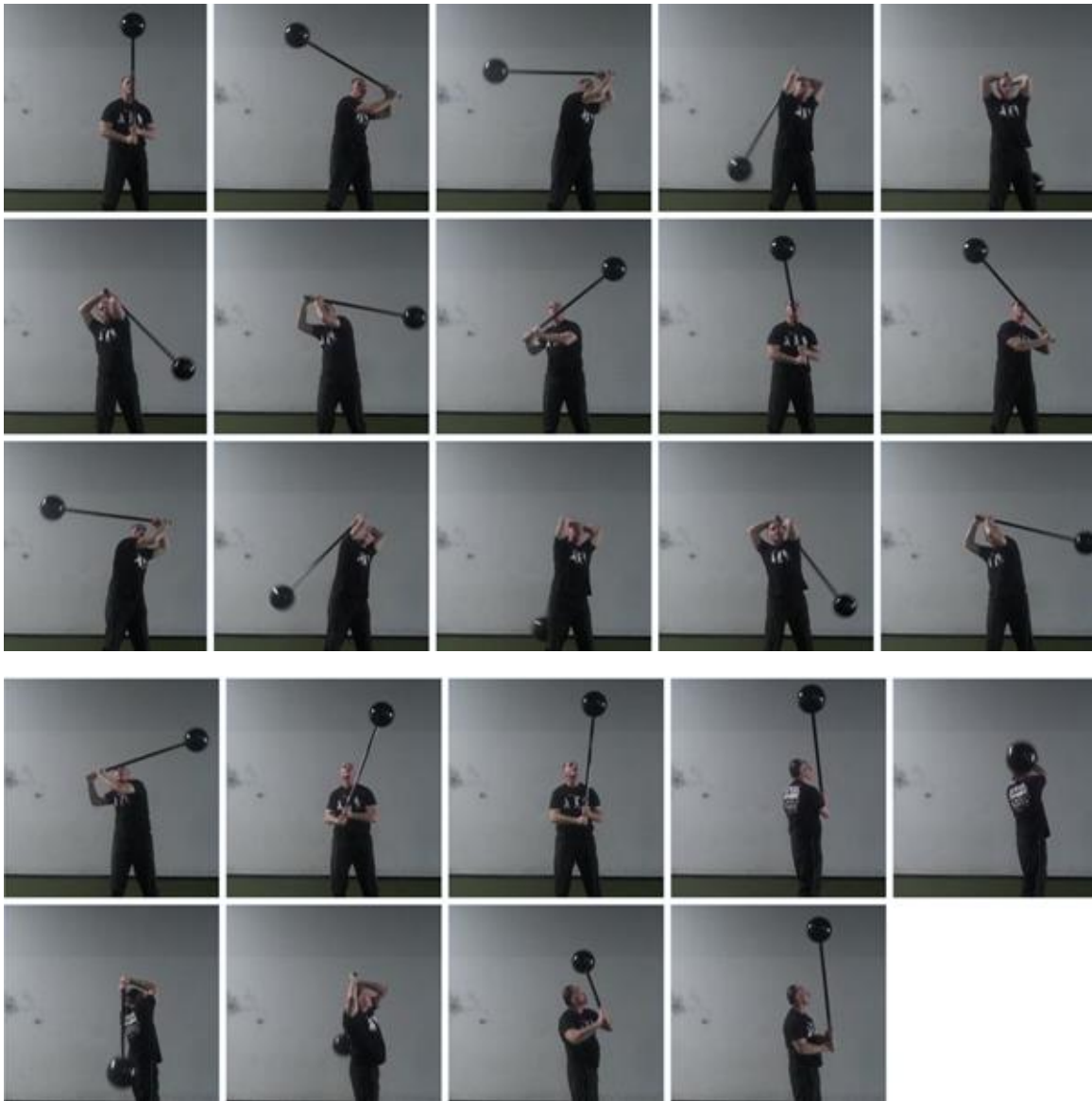
FRONT START METHOD: Start in the rack position. Drop the mace over one shoulder, swing it to the opposite shoulder, and pull it over that shoulder to the 10 o' clock position. Drop the mace back over that shoulder. Keeping it very close to your body, swing it to the opposite shoulder and pull it over that shoulder to the 2 o' clock position. Repeat.



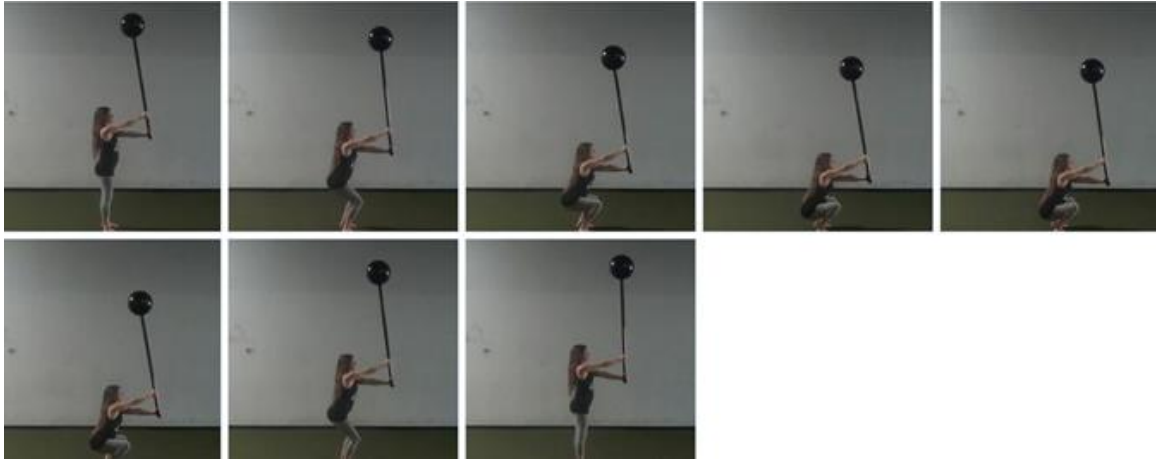
Mace 360:

BACK START METHOD: Start your swing with the mace hanging straight down your back, elbows bent over your head. Generate momentum by swaying your body, and pull the mace over your shoulder and to your rack position. Bring the mace back over the opposite shoulder and continue the circle. The mace should pass very close to your body every time, and should be swung from shoulder to shoulder (as opposed to turning it around behind your head). The mace should come to the rack position with every swing.

FRONT START METHOD: Start in the rack position. Drop the mace over one shoulder, swing it to the opposite shoulder, and pull it over that shoulder back to rack position. All technique tips apply as in back start method.

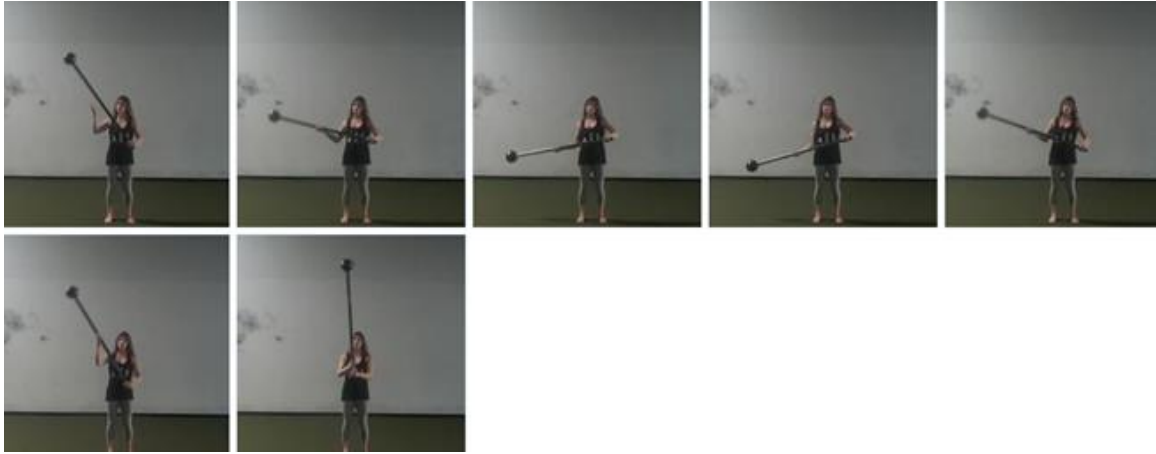


BARBARIAN SQUAT: Extend your mace straight out in front of you, your hands as low on the handle of the mace as you can manage without losing control of it. Keeping your heels on the ground and your spine straight (there should be no rounding of the spine or tucking of the tailbone), lower yourself into a squat without letting the mace tip. Return to standing.

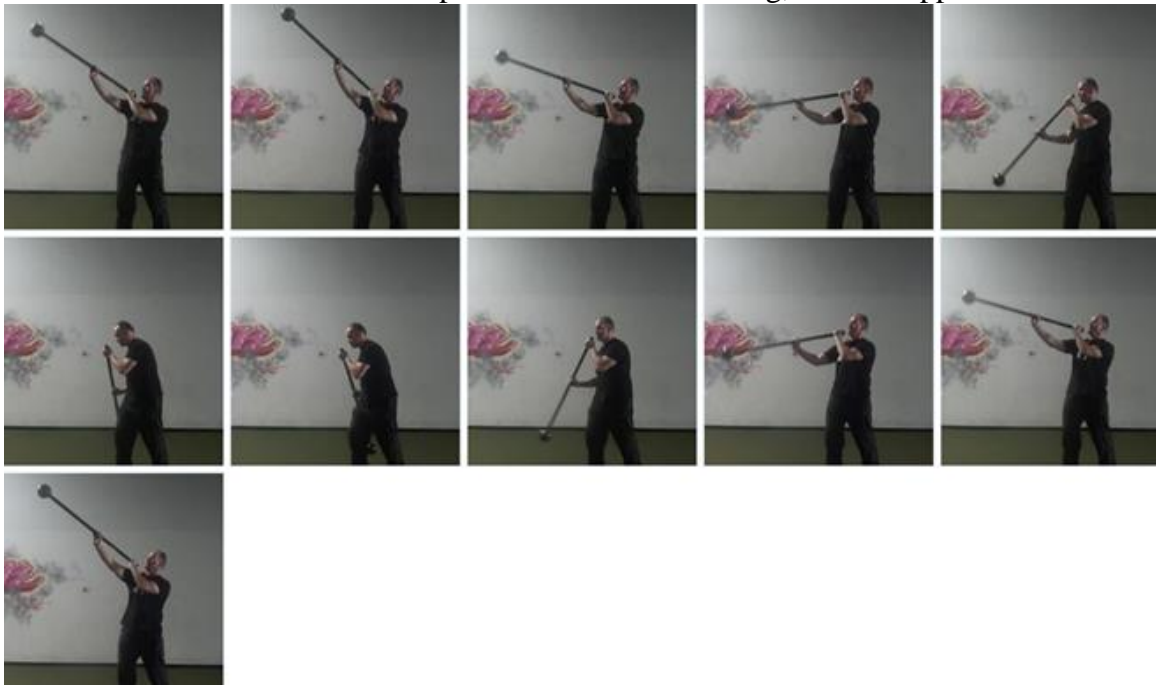


BEGINNER HAND-TO-HAND TOSS: Hold the mace in rack position. Remove your top hand and drop that hand out to the side, ideally with the elbow at 90 degrees, but higher if you are just starting out or if the mace is particularly heavy for you. Catch the mace in that hand as it tips in that direction. Toss it back up to rack and switch hands.





PUNCH THE GIANT: The heavy side of the mace points down. One hand will be at the end of the mace handle, and the other hand will be a little less than an arm's length down the shaft of the mace. Bring the mace down and back towards the same side of your body as the lower arm. Use the lower arm to raise the mace upwards towards the ceiling, as in an uppercut.

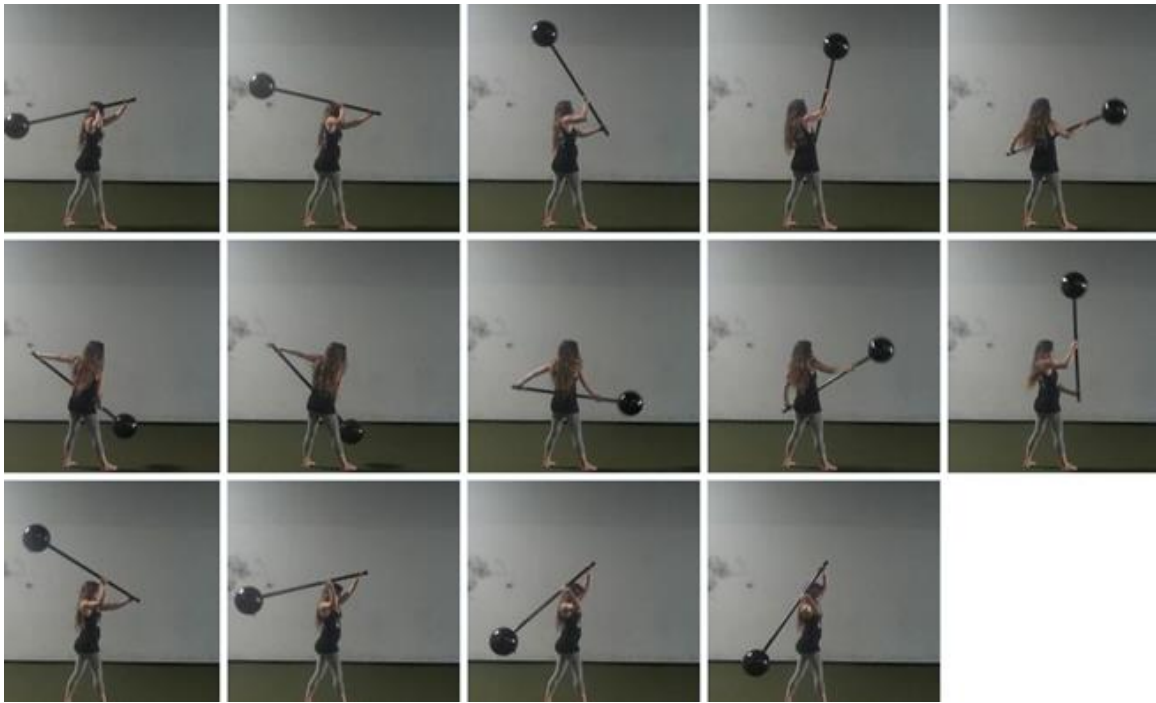


GRAVEDIGGERS:

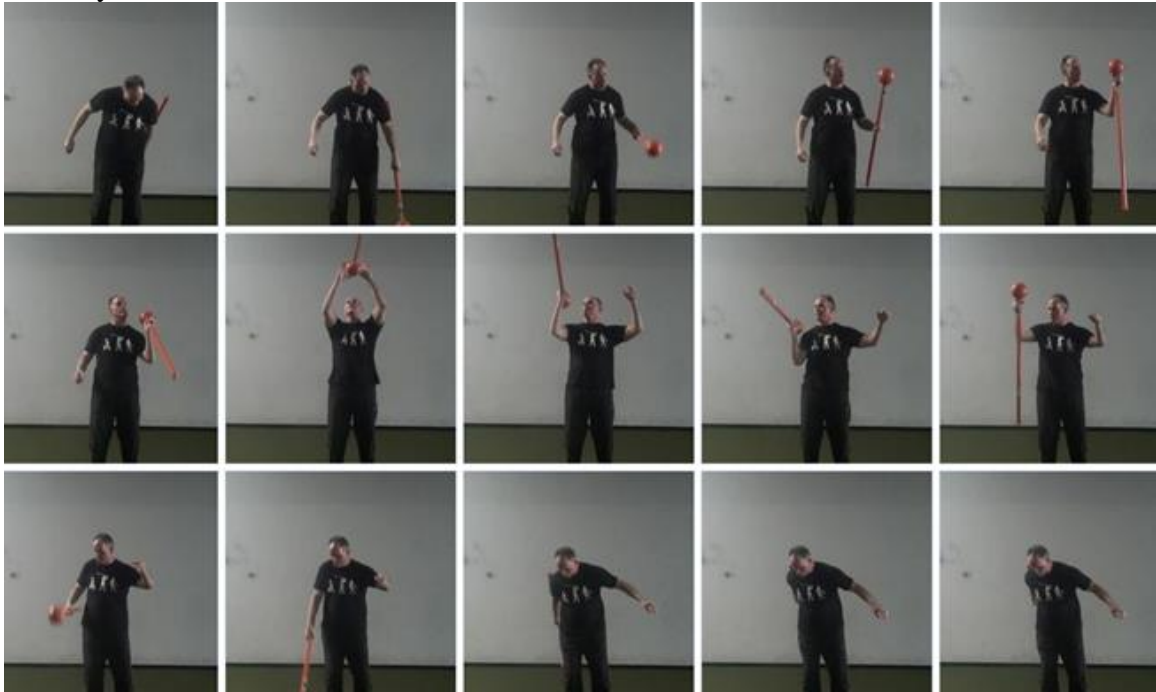
SHORT ROM METHOD: The heavy side of the mace points down. One hand will be at the end of the mace handle, and the other hand will be a little less than an arm's length down the shaft of the mace. Bring the mace down and back towards the opposite side of your body as the lower arm. Push down on the back arm and pull up on the front arm to raise the mace above your head as if you are shoveling snow.

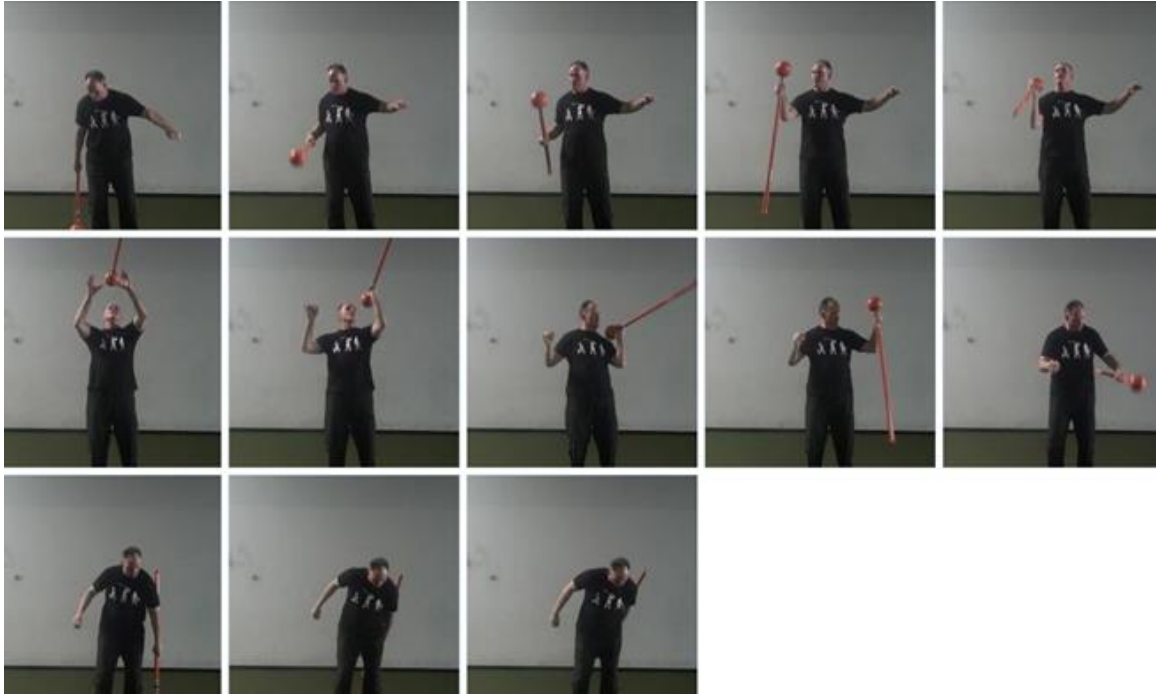
FULL ROM METHOD: The heavy side of the mace points down. One hand will be at the end of the mace handle, and the other hand will be about an arm's length down the shaft of the mace. Bring the mace down and back towards the opposite side of your body as the arm at the end of the mace. Push down on the end-mace arm and pull up on the middle-mace arm to raise the mace over the opposite shoulder. As you do so, slide your middle-mace hand towards your end-mace hand and bend both arms at the top of the motion until the mace is very close to the back of your body. As you return to the start position, slide your middle-mace arm back to the middle of the mace.





ADVANCED HAND-TO-HAND TOSS: Hold the mace in the middle at your side. Bring the mace to your shoulder. As you do so, slide your hand towards the head of the mace. Toss the mace over your head to the other arm, and reverse the above movements.

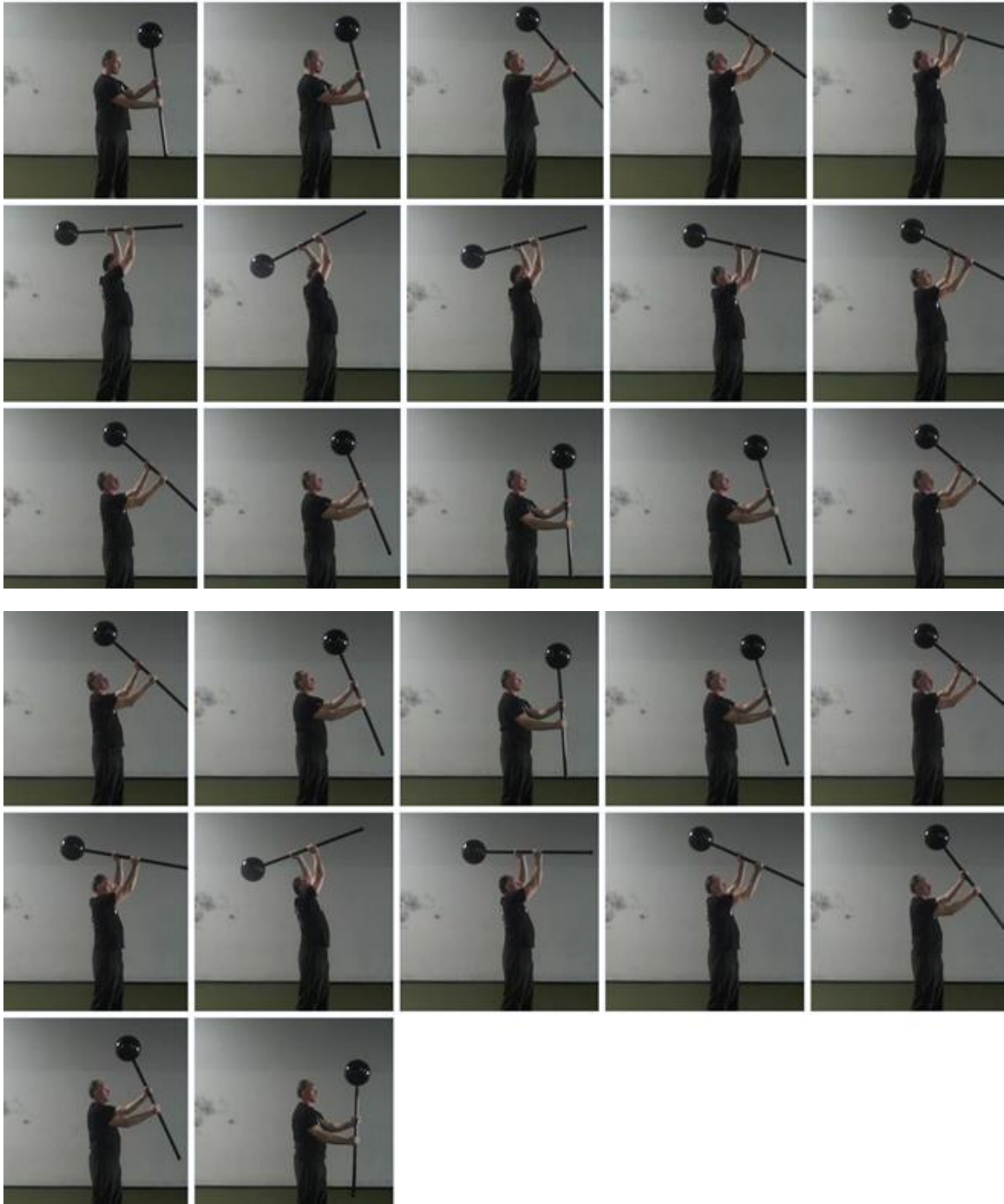




STANDING PULLOVERS:

SHORT ROM METHOD: Hold the mace directly in front of you. Keeping your arms and body straight, raise the mace above your head. Lower it back to starting position.

FULL ROM METHOD (not pictured): As above, but once your arms are directly above your ears, begin to bend your elbows backwards until the mace is very close to your back. Then straighten your arms back out again and lower to starting position.



Mace Trainers Around the World











For further study:

www.libertystrengthtraining.com

www.evilmunkyent.com

www.indianclubs.com.au/

www.heroicevolution.com

For all things pertaining to unconventional training:

www.mymadmethods.com

For special article with video, go to:

<http://www.mymadmethods.com/articles/strength-power/item/macebell-basics-build-medieval-muscle>

