

The Sterling Cups and Balls Routine

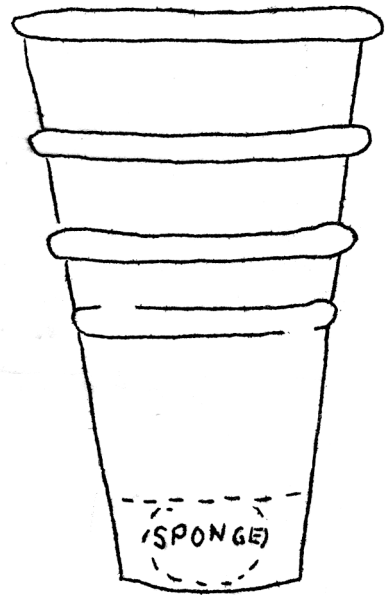
Harold Sterling

THE STERLING CUPS AND BALLS ROUTINE
(HAROLD STERLING)

Three cups, four sponge balls and six large balls, onions, potatoes or any object that you care to use for the finale. Use the largest size sponge ball that will fit between two cups when they are nested. The six balls can be large enough so that one only will just fit in a cup.

Have the balls stowed away in various pockets and the cups on the table, nested with one sponge ball in the bottom cup as shown.

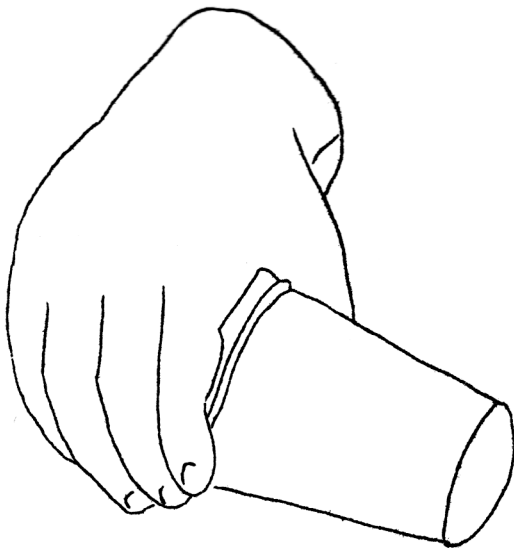
Pick up the three cups and point them mouth towards the audience. Turn them vertically and pull off the bottom cup with your right hand and put it mouth down on the table to your left. This is the cup with the ball inside. Of course in putting this cup down, make sure to turn it upside down by reversing it with the mouth away from the audience, otherwise they will see the ball in it. The centrifugal force will hold the ball in the cup while it is being turned over. Again point the two cups mouth toward the audience. Turn them vertically and pull off the bottom cup and put it on the table in the middle. Repeat the same move with the last cup. Apparently you have shown all three cups empty but there is a ball now under the left cup. Now take the three sponge balls out of your pocket one at a time and put them on the three cups. The idea of taking the balls out of your pocket one at a time is to accustom your audience to the move of reaching into your pocket so that later on when you reach into your pocket unnecessarily no suspicion will be aroused.



Return the three balls to your pocket one at a time. Pick up the middle and right cup and say, "a peculiar thing about these cups, is the fact that they are deeper on the inside than they are on the outside, therefore, it is possible to pass one cup right thru the other cup." Do this by holding one cup in your left hand, by the tips of your thumb and middle finger at the extreme top edge of the cup. The other cup is held in the right hand just above the cup in left hand. Drop the cup from the right hand into the other cup and the cup in the left hand will be knocked loose from the fingers and the cup that was dropped is retained in place of the cup that was knocked loose. At the same time the right hand moves quickly beneath the cups and catches the falling cup. Repeat this move about three times. Put the cups back on the table,

mouth down. Pick these same two cups up, nest them and put them to the right side of the table mouth up. I find that by doing this, the audience is not so confused as to what takes place. Reach in the pocket with the right hand and grab two sponge balls, compress them between the fingers so that they appear as one ball when displayed. Reach over with the left hand and pull one ball away with a twisting motion and show two balls. Put one back in the pocket, This may not register as anything special to the audience, but later on when this is repeated again, it will appear very funny.

Hold the ball in the right hand and pretend to throw it into the left hand; the left hand immediately closes as though holding the ball and makes a throwing motion at the cup which is on the table. The left hand is opened and shown empty and picks the cup up exposing the ball on the table. The left hand passes the cup to the right hand and the concealed ball in the right hand rolls down into the cup.



LOADING PALMED BALL INTO CUP
(AUDIENCE VIEW)

While this takes place, the left hand picks up the ball on the table and puts it back in the pocket. The cup is put on the table mouth down. The right hand reaches into the pocket and pulls out two balls held as one. The balls are pulled apart; one is put into the pocket and the other is put on top of the cup on the table. One of the two nested cups are now picked up and placed over the cup on the table. The two cups are now lifted exposing the ball on the table. Apparently the ball has penetrated the cup. The ball on the table is put in the pocket. Turn the two cups that you are holding, mouth toward the audience; return them to a vertical position mouth up. Pull off the bottom cup and put it on the table mouth

down. Put the other cup to the right in the other cup which is there. Pull two balls from the pocket, held as one. Pull them apart and put one in the pocket and the other on top of the cup. Pick up the two nested cups, show the to be empty, nest them and put them on top of the cup on the table. You remark that this makes it twice as difficult when two cups are put on the ball. Lift all three cups and expose the ball on the table. This ball remains on the table and the three nested cups are turned mouth toward the audience, brought to a vertical position, and the bottom cup pulled off and put on the table to the right.

The cups are again turned towards the audience, brought to a vertical position, the bottom cup pulled off and put over the ball on the table, mouth down. This makes two balls under the cup. The third cup is put to the left on the table. The right and left cups are now picked up and nested and put over to the right out of the way.

Reach into the pocket and remove two balls as one, pull them apart, put one back, and pretend to throw the other ball into the left hand. The left hand makes a throwing motion as though throwing the ball at the cup. The left hand picks up the cup exposing the two balls on the table, the left hand passes the cup to the right hand and the ball in the right hand rolls into the cup. The two balls on the table are picked up in the left hand and put into the cup which is held in the right hand. If you are using good size sponges you will have to jam them in. The cup is then put mouth down on the table in the middle. The two nested cups are picked up. One is put to the right and one to the left; mouths down. The 1st sponge ball is taken from the pocket with the right hand. Pretend to throw it into the left hand which then makes a throwing motion towards the middle cup. The right hand picks up the middle cup, the left hand is shown empty as you start pulling the three balls out of the cup. The left hand puts a sponge on top of each cup.

The right hand picks up one of the sponges and puts it into the left hand, at the same time putting the ball which is palmed in the right hand into the left hand. The left hand is quickly closed over the two balls. Another ball is picked up and pushed into the left hand. The third ball is picked off the last cup and put into the pocket; in reality it is retained in the hand. At the same time the left hand puts the three balls back on top of the three cups. Repeat this routine three times, the last time the ball is really left in the pocket.

The three sponges are then put under the three cups. Reach in your pocket with the right hand and palm one of the big balls or whatever you are going to use for the finale. Lift up the right cup with the left hand and transfer it to the right hand. Insert the palmed ball into the cup, pick up the sponge with the left hand. Put the cup back on the table, mouth down. Transfer the sponge from the left to the right hand. Put the sponge into your pocket and palm another big ball. Repeat this move with the other two cups. From the audience point of view the three cups are now empty, although each one contains a big ball. You have been reaching into your pocket so many times that now the audience will pay no attention as you continue reaching in. Palm another big ball in the right hand. Pick up the right cup with left hand, exposing the ball on the table, transfer the cup to the right hand loading the ball that is palmed in that hand. Put the cup back on the table mouth down

and at the same time pick up the ball from the table with the left hand and put it on top of the cup. Repeat these moves with the other two cups. If you are able to juggle, pick up the three balls that are on top of the cups and juggle them for a few seconds. This takes the minds of the audience off the cups and makes the climax more of a surprise. Put the three balls back on top the cups. Lift the cups up and display the three balls on the table. Put the balls into the cups and set them to one side.

I have had very good success with this routine. It is easy to do and is not too complicated. The audience is able to follow it without seeing how it is done. Don't be under the impression that this is only for adults. I have worked it for groups of children around five and six years of age and although they may not have realized just what was supposed to take place they never the less got a lot of enjoyment in watching the balls.

I have given no patter with this as I don't know what you could say other than the thoughts that will come to you naturally as you work the trick.

By all means go thru this routine slowly and with a rhythm. If you have to do your sleights like lightening the audience will be so confused they will not appreciate the trick.

The sponge balls are made out of an automobile sponge that can be purchased at any 5 and 10 cent store or auto equipment store. With a pair of scissors cut out squares of the sponge, then trim off the edges until they are spherical.