

AN APPROACH TO THE FRENCH BATON

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INTRODUCTION

After more than 28 years of practice, personal research and teaching, I thought it useful to transmit in writing notions that we are working on at the ASCA Paris (France) and which are the foundations of my approach to the French Baton. This marvelous discipline in fact leaves plenty of room for discovery and research, thanks to its ease of approach that is both fun and technical.

I think that before tackling in detail the technical codification, it is necessary to think about the notions of appropriation of the weapon, that is to say its simple manipulation. This phase of discovering the weight of the weapon, the influences of the positions of the hands, feet, hip, the search for the best balance, makes it possible to consider a movement in a slightly more sensory way than a simple mechanical execution. It is a fairly natural way of approaching the learning of a combat sport: starting from your own feelings to appropriate a technical gesture. In other words, by integrating the characteristics of the weapon in relation to its own body and by following the rules and codes related to the discipline.

If, in addition, these manipulations are part of an exchange with a partner, pledge of the pleasure of practice, then, the necessary work of learning will pass more easily. This approach is certainly longer than an academic method, but it is certain that the quality of practice will be optimized.

Although the coding of the French baton is relatively simple and the number of associated movements is low (there are only 9 fundamental moves), the French baton requires a certain requirement and undeniable technical honesty to progress.

Whether through exchanges, codified assaults, opposition games, a practice focused on manipulation or even for the simple search for feelings, the baton allows us to express the relationship that we can have with others. During an exchange, we adapt to the other, to its intention, we improvise with the knowledge of our weapon, the rules which govern its “codified” use and the way in which our body reacts in space. It is in this, I believe, that his practice remains contemporary. Because it can allow everyone to find their own expression.

I therefore suggest that you discover, in the first part of this work, the broad outlines of what I call “an approach to the French baton”, that is to say, the general framework of my approach around the discovery of the weapon, then, in the second part, all the elements involved in the appropriation of the baton. These two complementary parts will allow you to tackle the last parts devoted to exchanges and the search for mastery of the different technical skills, and the parades.

I did not wish to approach the descriptions of the basic strikes before having approached all the context related to my approach of the French baton, because I really believe that it is imperative to understand the context of practice (even if some explanations are a little redundant).

Finally, I want to clarify that I will not discuss, in this book, everything related to self defense baton, leaving that to professionals in the field. I will simply speak about everything that can allow you to progress, in my opinion, towards a better understanding of the assembly of the

body-baton-space. I advise you of course to complete this approach with regular practice, in a sport club, with other batonists, under the demanding eye of attentive teachers.

You will not find lots of descriptive photos in this document in particular because it would take an enormous amount of time to illustrate each concept or each gesture in its precision (maybe on a next version then!).

Here you will find the fourth version of this approach to the French baton, the first version of which dates from the early 2000s.

I hope that the translation of this book will not contain too many errors and I ask you to be kind to me!

Hoping too that you will welcome these pages with kindness and that your practice will bring you as much pleasure as it can me bring daily!

PARTIE 1 - AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FRENCH BATON

1. What kinds of baton to use ?

A baton as we consider it is a piece of wood, smooth, chestnut¹, which has a size of 1.4 m and has the distinction of being frustoconical. The heel measures approximately 2.5 cm in diameter, while the toe measures 1.5 cm. Its weight varies between 200 and 400 grams.

Note: this size of 1.4 m actually represents the height necessary to pass a certain type of movement without having to lift your shoulders too much (see Part 1 section 4 "Exchange, assault or combat" and Part 3 section 3 "General comments on"). In fact, if you absolutely must have a conical baton, its size can vary slightly, depending on the morphology of the person who will handle the weapon. For a person between 1.70 m and 1.80 m tall, the 1.4 m baton will be perfect.² This baton, placed perpendicular to the ground, will reach approximately under armpits.

Let us return for a few moments to the characteristic of a tapered baton. The interest lies in the weight distribution of the weapon and in the fact that the center of gravity will not necessarily be located in the middle of the baton. This is of paramount importance in terms of handling and positioning of the hands, because it will be necessary to constantly readjust the position of the hands to optimize the grip of the baton, with a fairly simple goal: not to get tired! Or rather, so as not to spend your time compensating for the physical forces at play during a baton movement. A tapered baton is more difficult to handle than a baton type "broom stick", whose weight is distributed evenly.

So, what is a baton, in our eyes? It is a wooden weapon, which makes it possible to practice extremely aesthetic physical and sporting exercises, alone or with a partner. If these exercises are codified and shared by a group of practitioners, we will speak of opposition sport, combat sport, an opposition game, as can be the case with the French baton, codified from the stick fighting (the bases of which are asked by Maurice Sarry in the 1970s).

2. French Baton is a fighting sport

This sport can be presented as an exchange with its baton partner, trying to touch it without being touched and using codified and regulated strikes, parries ("parade" in french), sidesteps, a lot of manipulation of the weapon... all in a circular combat area (9 m in diameter). During an arbitrated exchange, I created a special rules with judges who can assess 3 criteria: the collaborative aspect, the technical aspect and the aesthetic aspect (touches are not counted).

In French batons, there is no assault strictly speaking, but rather "exchanges" (indeed, even with protective gear, this sport remains relatively dangerous, mainly because of the weight of the weapon) and the wanting to judge two batonists only on the basis of the points they could score is not the best way to see things!

¹ You can of course use any other kind of wood.

² It is possible to shorten the baton slightly (by removing 1 or 2 cm from the tip), but this "shortening" should not be abused as it would lose the properties of a "long" baton, including imbalances due to the fact that it is truncated.

It is true that from this point of view, the beauty of the gesture and the realism of the strikes allow to have an atypical approach to baton handling.

- **The strikes**

The baton borrows 6 strikes from the fighting baton by adding two types of "coulissés" and a dive, for a total of 9 strikes. Other strikes are possible of course, but come out a bit from the strict sports code.

In French batons, there are no oblique trajectories, dangerous trajectories that are difficult to parry: our approach is more focused on the precision and beauty of the gesture. The principle of respect for the trajectories associated with the placement of the body (arrival of strikes with shoulders parallel to those of the partner for example), makes it possible to secure the practice within the framework of an exchange between two batonists.

- **Clothing**

Majority of the batonists practice in traditional sports clothing and indoor shoes adapted to various movements (jumps, sidesteps, twist). In case of assaults, we can use protective masks, shin guards, gloves, but in general, I prefer to ask the batonist to "shoot" without protection (both to control the strikes from the side "attacker" but also to ensure great vigilance on the "defender" side). Be careful however, because there is no question here of doing anything with practitioners' safety!

- **The main fundamental technical parameters**

- The baton is held in two hands (the two hands are positioned in pronation, thumbs towards each other, at the end of the baton - towards the heel or the tip in some cases)
- The distance: the strikes are made from a distance (we use the full size of the baton to touch the strike zone with the end of the baton)
- The armé (armed): each strike is prepared before being developed (the hand which is furthest back, for example the one holding the heel, must pass behind the axis of the shoulders to the armed). For certain strikes, we add to this weapon feet movements, particular positions of the baton...
- The complete development of the strikes and respect for the trajectory (vertical or horizontal... no obliques)
- Respect for the principle of parade or esquive (dodge) / counterattack (that is to say, I must parry or dodge a strike given by my partner before responding)

3. A certain approach to the French baton- the ASCA school

- **Different practices of baton fighting, in France**

Several practices have claimed the name "French baton ": The one inherited from Charlemont *L'art de la Boxe Française et de la canne, nouveau traité théorique et pratique 1879*, in which the author talks a bit about the baton, specifying that the techniques are the same as those of cane, but with two hands (few things in fact).

Then, we certainly find the most used method at the beginning of the 20th century, "The Joinville³ school" (we sometimes speak of "Joinville's baton"). At that time, the teaching of the baton was institutionalized and was one of the teaching elements of French gymnastics associated with the military. There are other methods, closer to self defense that have arisen from this Joinville school, but this remains anecdotal.

Today, after some intermediate approaches to these two main movements, we speak of a French baton "federal method" concerning the set of techniques validated by the French federation of savate and associated disciplines (of which the National Committee of Cane de Combat is part), a method essentially linked to the codification of the fighting stick (and the baton) by Maurice Sarry, at the end of the 1970s and focused on opposition with a partner (what we also call "exchange").

- **The choice of a particular approach**

I developed, within the ASCA (Sports Association of Canne d'Arme, Paris 11th), a particular style of the French baton at the same time demanding technically, aesthetically and sportingly and resulting mainly of Maurice Sarry's initial approach. This "ASCA's method" or "ASCA school" is recognized in France and through international Martial Art festivals. However, a lot of work remains to be done in terms of the development of this discipline which has undeniable heritage, cultural and sporting assets. There are very few specialists in this major weapon in France, and consequently, very few sports clubs offer teaching baton. Hope this will change quickly! Fortunately, our English friends are equally passionate !

The search for the optimization of the gestures, the work of the weight "body + baton", of the distance, are essential elements of my approach.

The French baton approach can be developed via three axes:

- Manipulation
- The search for feelings (work on the weight of the baton, space for example)
- The exchange (with a partner)

A harmonious work of these three axes allows the batonist to develop his practice, according to his own abilities and his personality. Here, we seek flexibility, aesthetics and precision of gestures, while remaining focused on a fun practice of opposition, especially through exchanges with a partner or during assaults. Our goal is not to leave much room for improvisation, but rather to try to control your body and your weapon.

³Joinville is a town near Paris

The French baton is a very rich sport and of course suitable for a very large audience of practitioners, whether for its sporting, playful or artistic qualities, but especially for the possibility of working on the technical aspect linked to the weapon and to mastery of the "body + weapon" set.

To my point of view, the baton is above all a game instrument, whether used in an exchange with a partner, in the form of opposition sport, or alone, in manipulation. It's a bit like a musical instrument that you can play with. You can do classical, jazz, rock ... In short, have fun, whether you are an experienced amateur or even "professional".

- **A game and a sport**

In a perspective of confrontation with a partner, it is clear that a codification or at least a clarification of the rules, is essential, however, far from confining the practitioner in a strictly codified discipline leaving no part of personalization, I think it is absolutely necessary to let the practitioner express himself. Everyone will have their approach, their sensitivity, their strengths and their shortcomings... the whole thing being to know how to detect them to better develop the rest, in order to obtain a balance that is pleasant for the batonist (this is valid from the point of view of the teacher but also from the practitioner).

The practice of sports, whether it is for maintenance or physical exercise, will be associated with repetition, through training sessions in which the physical intensity will be variable (like any sport for that matter). The practice will be adapted to everyone's expectations. It is certain, in order to progress better, that we must constrain ourselves to regularity and to certain requirements (physical, technical, quantitative and qualitative). For the record, we have been offering, for many years now, no less than 7 hours of French baton practice, per week, in our club, the ASCA⁴.

- **Aesthetics**

We can say that the search for beautiful movement is a bit like the icing on the cake and that it is not absolutely necessary ... but frankly, it is still a personal requirement quite interesting to develop . For practitioners who are interested, however, I advise to keep in mind that the search for an aesthetic practice, clean trajectory, fluidity ... can only be achieved with requirement, honesty, perseverance and ... pleasure.

⁴

In 2018

- **The pleasure of practicing**

In regular practice, whether in progress, with a teacher or alone, you should always ask yourself if you take pleasure in practicing! Some stages of learning are sometimes a bit tedious, one has the impression of not progressing, of always staying on the same course, without advancing ... yet, as in all sports, it is necessary to find new resources to overcome steps.

The batonist is fortunate to have several possible approaches in his practice: pure manipulation, the search for feelings, but also and above all without doubt, working with a partner during an exchange. It is necessary to be able to pass from one to the other of these approaches, by synthesizing them to arrive at a homogeneous practice and in which one always seeks pleasure. If this is not the case, despite the alternation of the different possible working angles (I will come back to this point), then, perhaps it is necessary to detach a little from the baton for some time ...

- **Knowing your weapon, your baton**

Of course, only curiosity about the baton can help to better handle it. The baton needs hands to bring it to life. Everything is linked, knowledge of the baton instrument requires knowledge of one's own body. The movements of the baton remain linked to the movements of the body in space. It is the discovery of this assembly of body-baton-space that can allow progress.

When you take a baton, you have to ask yourself what you can do with it and explore all possible fields. Never restrict yourself to a movement, never impose barriers on yourself... You have to develop curiosity about the weapon. Once this concept has been integrated, it is clear that using a particular codification will not create any real difficulty, even if learning a certain number of sequences and gestures can sometimes prove to be a bit long ... But frankly, the principal is not there.

During an exchange with a partner, the objective is above all to share something and to play, with common rules, with respect and without violence. If the practitioner can do what he wants with his baton overall, the pleasure comes. Mastery is probably a concept related to the ego and it is sometimes better to seek the pleasure of practicing alone or with a partner, with honesty and humility.

4. Exchange, assault or combat?

- **The exchange**

The exchange is rather based on the collaboration of the two practitioners, without necessarily going towards a goal of "touch at all costs". The idea is to create something for two.

We talk about adaptation, technique and aesthetics.

- **The assault**

The assault is more focused on the will to hit (score points). Here, we are quite close to what is done in refereed and judged fighting batons.

- **The fight**

During a fight, we work on the intensity, the precision and the concentration, because, with a weapon weighing almost 500 grams, the lack of precision is paid in cash, as much for the attacker (muscularly speaking), as for the defender: arm the strikes quickly, chain, keep clean (difficult at high and very high speed), or even, by positioning the hands quickly and correctly, outside the touch zones, hold without blocking the baton, remove one hand without losing your weapon...

Many interesting things when working at 50% but essential at 100%!

This type of commitment is part of a mandatory framework of security, respect for integrity (wearing of protections, masks, etc.), even if the expertise of the practitioners present must guarantee a certain level of control.

The teacher's work during combat sessions must focus on two main points:

- security
- respect for the overall technique (trajectories, armed)

The speed and pressure of the opponent play the role of true psychological constraint which completely distorts the habits of a practitioner turned towards a more collaborative practice.

We work a lot on the technique, that's clear. The “fighting” form of baton can only be approached with strict supervision from teachers and only if it is part of a progression framework (there can be no question of launching a beginner in a 100% fight without risking serious accidents). Going head-on into combat with heavy and dangerous weapons without asking the necessary questions of the practitioners' preparation, their level of maturity (discipline) can lead to bitter and dangerous disappointments.

5. Memorandum from the batonist during an exchange

For many years, I have developed a system for scoring baton exchanges. I think it useful to present it here because it allows us to understand the elements on which the batonist can improve his practice (during an exchange).

- **Artistic criterion**

The batonist can bring a certain artistic touch through:

- The variety of manipulations
- The way to move in space
- By seeking to homogenize his performance,
- By adding aesthetic movements
- Possibly, working in music

or all at least look for some creativity.

- **Technical criterion**

In the exchange, the batonist has in his technical baggage:

- The fundamental strikes (brisé, croisé tête (head), croisé bas (leg), latéral extérieur, latéral croisé, horizontal and vertical coulissés)
- Changes of guards
- Good positions of the feet
- Strikes in legs
- Have good supports
- Parades (high, low), twists, dodges
- Changes of rhythm

He must also wonder about the quality of the strikes carried out on the level of :

- Trajectories (perpendicular - parallels)
- Precision of the touches (to the centimeter)
- Intensity (force or softness?)
- Control of the security
- The way in which these strikes are executed (variety, sequences...)

- **Collaborative criterion**

Here, the principle is to verify the adaptation of each of the batonists to the other. This is quite visible between two batonists of different levels. The two must manage to both adapt and enhance the partner. We are talking about a partner here and not an adversary.

6. The search for precision

- **The feet**

To avoid parasitic movements which can lead to repositioning of the hands, imbalances in the event of acceleration, errors of placement... the batonist must take care to position his feet correctly.

The front foot is directional and the rear foot slightly recessed at an angle of 45 degrees. When moving, there is no crossing of feet unless these movements are willed and not undergone. At the ASCA we sometimes work on movements of the "drunk man" with movements based on crosses of feet and mini falls, trying to use these imbalances to launch the baton with high inertia. The difficulty, then, will be to correct the trajectories so that the strike is valid and not violent on impact... This technique takes a lot of energy and needs to be careful not to hurt the partner, nor to injure oneself !

- **The touch and the way of touching**

Precision in baton can also be approached from the angle of the work of the touch, from a distance. At the ASCA, I teach to work mainly with the end of the baton, on touch to the last centimeter, that is to say using the entire length of the weapon! At this level, the slightest movement of the body may or may not influence the result! To correct a distance, we play relatively little on the arms (by bending the arm holding the heel for example), but rather on the movement of the feet and the body so that the whole of the upper body is well positioned and remains at a distance . Some batonists bend their arms to adjust their touch, we hardly ever do so, because I find this approach not very technical. In this cases, I find that we completely lose sight of the interest of having a long weapon!

- **The search for movement**

Learning the French baton goes far beyond the framework of technical codification, because it relies above all on the search for the best movements to carry out so that the assembly body-baton is better integrated into the space. You must constantly listen to the weight of the baton.

This notion is particularly difficult to grasp, because there, it does not matter the associated movement. It is about feeling the weight of the baton and using its body to always feel the points of balance and play with it, on the spot or on the move. Many elements are taken into account in the search for optimum movement: the characteristics of the baton, its size, its shape, its material, the fact that it is held with two hands exerting a more or less strong pressure with the fingers on the weapon, the type of movement executed ...

- **A reasoned practice**

The batonist must be one with his weapon and this requires a prior discovery of all that can be done with, in space, without constraint . The codification will then structure the practice, coordinate it. We must also bear in mind that if you want to practice for a long time, you have to know how to save energy, be careful with your positions, do not force on the joints for example, pay attention to the leverage effects which are important when when you hold the

stick at arm's length ... We must stay awake, present, mobilized even in relaxation, stay vigilant, because the weapon remains dangerous.

7. The search for feelings

For me, it is essential to seek a maximum of feelings in practice. I repeat this : it's about feeling the weight of the baton, the distribution of heavy and light areas according to the position of the hands and fingers, using your body to always feel the balance points and play with it!

- **Characteristics of the baton**

The physical characteristics of the baton (length 1.4 m, chestnut, 2.5 cm at the heel, for 1 to 1.5 cm at the tip) are particularly interesting, especially when looking for the center of gravity of the baton. This baton can be rough, smooth, it can have an uneven weight distribution.

All these are very important points to take into account, at the level of his hand touch, fingers on the baton.

- **Quality of touch**

It is essential to be able to feel the points of contact that the hand can have with the baton, at the level of any rough edges for example. For that, it is necessary to know how to dose the tightening which one will be able to have on the weapon. You must decide whether or not to squeeze the weapon, but you must not suffer this (remember to ask yourself regularly: "right now, am I squeezing the weapon or not"?).

- **Seek to optimize the placement of the assembly BODY-BATON**

In general, in order to try to "feel" with the baton, you must first feel your body. I invite you to always ask yourself if you are standing straight (but not tense), if your shoulders are aligned, parallel to the ground, if you have no difficulty standing straight, without being bent, outwards , inside, right or left. To help you, think of a wire that would be attached to the top of the skull and that would pull you up, like a string puppet.

The feet⁵ should simply be in contact with the ground, not too far apart (in general, shoulder width is enough), the arms relaxed, the head straight ...

Of course, this all goes hand in hand with breathing calm and serene (abdominal breathing or not ... Finally, it is up to you to know what suits you best).

Note: during all the exercises, it is important to ask yourself a few small questions: Do I feel good there? Is my body well positioned? Is my movement clean?

8. Warming up, preparation for any practice

Before any work session, alone or with a partner, it is imperative to prepare the body for baton work. We will practice the baton in sports clothing (shorts, or jogging, teeshirt and especially

⁵ Little reminder: The baton is not practiced barefoot, but in shoes.

gym shoes - we do not practice barefoot), in which we will feel good. Even slight, the warm-up must be systematic.

In any work session, whether it is during warm-up, during an exchange with a partner, or in exercise alone or not, it is imperative to practice according to yourself, without feeling “out of breath” , without pushing the machine to its maximum. It is necessary to do everything according to its morphology, its sporting habits, its physical aptitudes and its desires, while trying to have in mind the rules of protection of its own physical integrity and that of its partner.

There is therefore no point in going fast, making quantity, especially if it has to be done in defiance of quality! The warm-up remains a moment of preparation of the body and the spirit, whatever the objective that one sets for oneself.

9. The working session

There, everything will depend on what you want to do, the ideal being to do a little of everything (manipulation, feeling, exchange).

The session should not be too long and will be adapted to your physical capacities. Some small precautions will remain to be taken in physical terms, because a baton weighs quite heavy and in the long run, this can cause joint trauma. Any extension work during exercises or exchanges in which one reaches a certain speed of rotation with his baton, must be mastered, because the forces exerted by a baton of almost 500 grams are very important on the body. Finally, in any session, be careful to follow a certain technical and physical progression in line with the biomechanics of the body.

10. Calm down and stretching

A return to calm will be necessary in the event of a particularly physical session. In this case, think about taking a few moments to "depressurize the machine" by lying down quietly for example, and performing a little mental relaxation. Stretching must be practiced by all practitioners and all practitioners, beginners and confirmed, at any age of course, because they guarantee a healthy and lasting sport practice.

PARTIE 2 - DISCOVER YOUR WEAPON WITH EXIGENCY

Principles

The only advice that a practitioner wanting to tackle the baton should remember, from my point of view, is to spend hours, days and years handling his weapon in every way possible.

The batonist must be one with his weapon and this requires a prior discovery of everything that can be done with it, in space, without constraint. The codification will then structure the practice, coordinate it. You must also bear in mind that, if you want to practice for a long time, you have to know how to economize your body, be careful with your feet placements, do not force on the joints, pay attention to the leverage effects that are important when you hold the baton at arm's length ... You have to stay awake, present, mobilized even in relaxation, remain vigilant, because the weapon remains dangerous.

Of course, respect for physical integrity in our sport is a priority and therefore, all movements must seek a kind of bodily harmony. Fluidity and relaxation are the axes to focus on in order to gain bodily efficiency.

I favor the discovery of the weapon by its manipulation, with one hand, with two hands, but also all the other ways of juggling with (without the hands, by placing the stick above the wrists for example!). Everything is good, everything must be accepted. It is at this price that one can acquire a real freedom.

First, let your imagination run wild. Then, it is necessary to manage to classify the types of manipulations, in order to be able to retain them and integrate them into the movements specific to the French baton.

Depending on its own way of holding the baton, you can find different types of manipulations, by making it follow geometric shapes in space, by rotating it around the hand, shoulders, the nape of the neck, above of the head, by dragging it, falling, unbalancing ...

There are thousands of ways to handle a baton and I suggest you approach a few concepts to allow you to find and invent your own manipulations through free manipulations and personal research carried out for a few years with the baton.

I. Natural Movement - forced movement

- **Natural movement**

Take the example of a simple movement: slide the baton in one hand.

Starting position: the baton is held in one hand, at its center, and is positioned perpendicular to the ground.

Objective: slide the baton in this hand, down, at least 50 cm, without letting go (it's very easy of course!)

The natural movement, as we could define it, will be to let the baton slide towards the ground, attracted by gravity. No force should be used, we will just loosen the hand a little then we will brake by tightening the hand, as soon as we want to stop the fall of the baton. Everything will have to be done quietly.

We will see that the descent path of the baton will be almost perfect, if we do not move of course, perpendicular to the ground.

- **Forced movement**

Let's take the baton in the same way and start the exercise again.

Starting position: the baton is held in one hand at its center and is positioned perpendicular to the ground.

Objective: slide the baton into this hand, at least 50 cm, without letting go. This time, instead of letting the baton go down, I'm going to bring it up.

The forced movement will consist of giving a small move with the hand, upwards, while slightly releasing the pressure exerted on the baton. In this case, we will necessarily use more energy than in natural movement. You have seen that by adding energy, we also add parasitic movements which modify the trajectory in comparison with the first natural movement.

- **Comparison**

It is essential to understand the fundamental differences between these two movements. One (natural movement) uses natural gravity, the self-weight of the baton and the practitioner's adaptation to the physical and mechanical constraints of a moving baton. We typically have to adapt to the baton.

The other (forced movement) is presented as imposing a movement on the baton, using its force and muscles. Here, the practitioner "imposes" a movement with the baton.

You should always be able to go from one method to another. You must both be able to fully direct a movement of the baton, but it is also necessary to be able to sometimes be guided by the baton ... without losing your relative control. In no case, for example, should you jeopardize the safety of people around you, on the pretext that you let the baton "live its life" with natural movements!

These notions of "natural movement" and "forced movement" must be addressed in order to better develop mastery of the baton in your hands.

2. Position of the body in manipulation

Overall, if we keep the principle of natural movement, it is logical to think that the body should always be placed in a position allowing the baton to have an equally natural movement. I advise, on this point, to start thinking about finding the equilibrium points of the baton in motion. I say "in motion", because the forces exerted during rotations (I think for example of centrifugal force) can completely modify the perception of the point of balance of the baton.

A little exercise, very simple, allows you to understand what forces can act on your baton, during manipulation: put one of your hands palm facing upwards, arm slightly bent, facing you. Put the baton on its point of balance in your hand. Rotate your body 90 ° without moving your arm. What is going on ? The baton turned with you and when you stopped, the baton continued to turn, in your hand. This physical phenomenon is extremely important to assimilate. The rotation of the body created enough force to move the baton held in balance, even after the movement. There was a kind of inertia after your movement.

It is very clear that this type of force can, depending on the movement (s) you have made, completely change your perception of the baton and its point of equilibrium.

Another thing to remember: try to visualize the contact points on which the baton will be placed and try to feel what is happening on these contact points (I sometimes use a transparent (plastic) baton to show my students the pressure points inside the hand).

I believe that the French baton, with its characteristics (weight and shape), is also a really interesting juggling instrument. Do not miss this aspect of things!

Likewise, I encourage you not to always use the same baton, because I fear that your body, especially your hands, will quickly get used to specific balance points. Look for adaptation!

We must try to understand, to feel, what happens in a manipulation, at all levels: baton, body, space (baton in space, but also body in space).

3. Watch out for joint locks !

Of course, blocking can be linked to the speed of a movement, because the physical forces involved are all the more important as the speed of execution will be. In the case of a wrist lock due to too much hand pressure on the baton, for example, it must be realized that the lever arm will increase (baton + hand + forearm) ... Thus , locking the wrist joint will have repercussions on the next joint (the elbow), which, if it is not locked, risks serious physical stress, leading, in the more or less long term, to significant (and recurrent) trauma. In the same way, if one blocks the wrist, then the elbow ... it is the following joint which will undergo the consequences ...

This point is a point of vigilance to have: **blocking of a joint = potential danger**

A baton driven by a great movement of the body, held by one or two hands, should only be blocked by ensuring an optimized positioning of the body, respecting the natural placement of the limbs and joints. This requires progressive training and listening to your body, especially in terms of positioning. Seeking speed at all costs can result in joint and muscle problems that can be directly linked to joint locks performed at bad times.

4. Examples of French baton manipulations

This book is not intended to draw up the state of the art of manipulations, but rather to give you leads to innovate and seek your own movements. Manipulation could be defined, in terms of physical forces, as the element allowing to create inertia while liberating the practice via the search for feelings linked to the weapon and the body in space.

- **Rolling the baton**

This exercise allows the baton to roll on the arm, towards the hand, without losing the balance point of the baton. One can execute in one direction, then in the other.

Starting position: the baton is held in the middle by the right hand for example (palm down). The left arm is extended forward, palm down.

Goal : let the baton slide on the arm. The baton rolls on the arm, towards the hand. You can raise or lower your arm, as long as the baton remains in balance. The interest is both to feel the baton on the arm (work in contact), but especially to control the speed of the descent (or ascent if you do the exercise in reverse), without leaving the point baton balance.

A simpler version is to perform this exercise with the baton balanced on both arms, at the wrists. Then just raise both arms to lower the weapon towards the shoulders ...

- **Handle without holding the baton (on the back of the hand)**

This type of manipulation is particularly interesting to feel the weight of the baton and for the flexibility of the wrists.

Starting position: the baton is held in one hand at its point of equilibrium and then placed above the wrist joint of the opposite arm.

Objective: not to drop the baton, whatever movement you make with your arm.

Notes: for up-downs of the arm, I advise to make rather movements in the form of waves, than dry movements.

- **The 8**

I call this movement the 8, but it should rather be called the ∞ (sign of infinity in arithmetic).

This movement apart from its extremely aesthetic aspect can allow to keep its partner at a distance, or can be used to make a change of guard. This movement is carried out with one hand.

For example, you are in the guard position, baton to the right, with the right foot back, the left slightly in front, the right hand at the heel and the left about 30 centimeters, you let go of the right hand and let the baton fall point to the ground.

Then, you carry out pendulum movements with the left arm, from left to right and right to left, by making 8 with the baton. The wrist must remain very flexible on this movement which must be performed slowly. The principle is to create a movement to and fro of the arm holding the weapon by making him do ∞

We can do this by changing 8 guard: just the same time as you advance the left foot for example, retrieve the baton when it returns to your right with your right hand and continue the "helical" rotations. So you changed guard and kept the movement.

I advise you not to over tighten the weapon, to avoid over-stressing the wrist and elbow joints. This implies that you place your hand precisely which will serve as a lever to the baton which, sometimes will descend - there we will use natural gravity as in the previous exercise - sometimes, will go up thanks to the speed obtained on the first phase of descent. The hand will only be a kind of guide for the baton.

You will also have to make sure to place your feet and your body correctly in order to feel the range of motion and the forces exerted here.

The 8 is, I think, the simplest and the most complicated of the baton manipulations ... It develops work in space, fluidity, aesthetics and the pleasure of being one with your weapon.

We can use the manipulations to chain them with strikes.

For example, use an 8 to throw a brisé:

Throw an 8 with the left hand, then when the arm returns to the right, put the right hand at the heel of the baton and take advantage of the movement of the baton which tends to fall to the ground... to chain the rotation of the brisé ... While taking care not to force on my hands and not to tighten the baton too much... to stop the gesture when the arms are almost extended and the shoulders facing the partner...

- **Other manipulations**

Be curious, because almost anything is possible: rotations of the baton around the hand ("Position of the hands in butterfly wings"), passages around the neck, shoulders, arms, changes of hands ... Take inspiration from what jugglers, baton twirling practitioners, are doing and try to find movements in which you will play with the balances and imbalances of the baton, in space.

5. Taking the baton in pronation-pronation

The hand is of capital importance in baton! It can perform different movements of flexion, abduction, extension, adduction, as well as rotations (pronation and supination). Pronation is the act of turning the hand and having the palm facing down. Supination makes it possible to have the palm of the hand turned upwards. In fact, these movements are not made at the wrist, but between the two bones of the forearm, the radius and the ulna. Muscles allow this rotation, pronators and supinators.

In total, there are about twenty muscles which ensure the movements of the hand! So beware, because lesions are possible! I therefore recommend that you take care to stretch these muscles after a work session.

In French baton, the grip of the hands on the weapon is made thumb towards each other (that is to say hands in pronation, as on a bicycle handlebar). There are however and of course, other ways of holding the baton with the hands, for example in pronation-supination or in supination-supination and this, let us specify it, independently of the position of the feet ...

- **Why this choice pronation-pronation?**

Let us dwell for awhile on the opposition between taking hands in pronation-pronation and supination-pronation.

Historically therefore, if we take the reference of modern codification (Maurice Sarry), the grip of the baton in Pronation-Pronation dates from the 1980s approximately. This choice really stands out from the way of holding old weapons, if we look at what was done in European weapons rooms (the grip of pronation-supination hands being often the standard in this matter).

We could stick to that ... but ... but, we can notice that the pronation-pronation allows clear armed strikes in relation to the sports codification (there is indeed a hand that passes behind the 'vertebral axis'), which is much more difficult (at first sight) in the case of hands in pronation-supination.

In addition, if you want to do a brisé or an enlevé by rotating the baton between your hands ... the pronation-pronation position is preferable, not to mention the fact that it allows to control the perpendicular trajectory for the brisé for example (in pronation-supination the army is difficult and the trajectory is conical).

This question of the position of the hands was asked repeatedly in the late 1990s and there have even been very passionate debates on this subject on various discussion forums around the baton on internet at the beginning of the 2000s! Today, when this question is addressed, I tend to answer that the pronation-pronation position is a necessary step towards understanding the discipline and its inner workings.

Because it is true that this grip, so particular to our discipline, remains difficult to master (it should be noted that some practitioners of martial arts are often taken aback by this grip) ... but, who can do the most can the least! If a batonist controls his hands, he will certainly master his feet positions and therefore, his body in space. In addition, for practitioners who want to try other disciplines, around the baton, the passage from pronation-pronation to pronation-supination will not pose as much concern!

As soon as the pronation-pronation stage is really acquired and the batonist is fully aware of his gestures, I think that this pronation-pronation or supination-pronation problem will no longer arise at all and we will be able to approach work at a hand (holding the baton in one hand).

I believe that it is from the moment you forget your hands that you acquire a certain freedom in relation to your weapon.

6. Precision of the gesture and placement

The precision of the gesture is closely related to the precision of intention. The more we can mentally determine what we want to do, the more the conditions for performing a just gesture will be met.

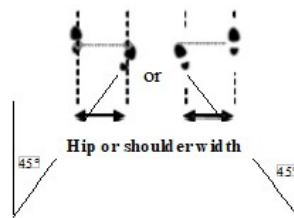
To allow you to improve your gestures and gain precision, it is necessary:

- To watch the trajectories (either parallel or perpendicular to the ground)
- To ensure the continuity of the movement (that is to say do not do suddenly)
- Try to touch with the tip of the baton (the last 5 centimeters for example - but the more you progress in learning, the closer you get to the last centimeter)
- To aim at a very precise target at the touch zones, for example, head, flank, leg. You can practice hitting other types of targets by adding difficulty ...

- **The accuracy of placement feet**

To avoid parasitic movements that can lead to repositioning of the hands, unbalance when accelerating, misplacement errors ... the batonist must be sure to position his feet correctly.

The front foot is directional and the rear foot slightly set back at 45 degrees (I will come back to this subject in Part 3 § 4 of this book)⁶.



When movement, I strongly advise you not to cross your feet ... unless these movements are willed (that is to say, you really decide to do them). Crossing your feet can prevent you from properly arming a strike and can create harmful imbalances... unless they are mastered, of course!

We sometimes work on movements of the "drunk man" with movements based on crosses of feet and little falling down. The objective is to use these imbalances to launch the baton with high inertia. The difficulty, then, is to correct the trajectories so that the strike is valid ... This technique consumes a lot of energy and attention in order to maintain the body, not to hurt the partner, nor to injure oneself! I hope to have time in a future version to develop this particular theme (if it's of interest to a few passionate readers of course).

7. Accuracy of the touch

Precision in baton can also be approached from the angle of the work of the touch, from a distance. The codification commonly shared by the batonists specifies that the touch can be done with the upper quarter of the baton ... As a teacher, I want my students work mainly with the end of the baton, on the last centimeter touches! At this level, the slightest movement of the body may or may not influence the result! (see below Part 3 § 3 "General Comments on").

8. What about chance?

Basically, the more you work the less chance there is ...

Let's talk for a few moments about the notion of chance, during an exchange (of an assault or a fight), in French baton. To define this term "chance", I will go through what I think is the opposite in this particular area: technical mastery, the search for beautiful gesture (in the sense of perfect gesture), structured approach, rules. .. in short everything that must be wanted, planned.

⁶Part 3 § 4 "General strikes"

If we start from the principle that chance represents the opposite, the unexpected, we can say that it is important, for a student in baton not to rely too much on chance, but to try, at maximum, to be voluntary, to choose the deliberate doing. So of course, in real life, chance is always a small place and that is part of the beauty of things ... but, when you seek excellence, a good job, you should try to plan things out.

The same goes for baton, of course. The slightest parasitic gesture can have consequences on the trajectory of your weapon, balance, or even speed. Intention can be an interesting line of work, to avoid chance. When we want to take a pair of keys placed on a table, we do not ask ourselves a hundred questions... Our hand will look for them without us asking questions about the distance to be covered, the placement of the fingers... The intention has been clear, simple and the movement also.

You have to think about being present and “opportunistic”.

In learning, the teacher's job is to help the practitioner to learn the technical gestures, to dissect things, so that in the end ... everything is simply linked without thinking too much.

I believe that it is through a framework of intentions and attention, respect for rules, values, that one can acquire a certain freedom of practice. This is why it is important for the teacher to know himself where he wants to go to help practitioners, whom he has under his responsibility, to develop, with confidence.

There is not much room for chance. Even if each case is particular, even if each person feels things differently, it is by attentive listening to his own feelings, by meticulous learning of the gesture, by listening to the other, the curiosity that we acquire a certain freedom in practice. This is what allows me to say, "Here, I did what I wanted". Of course, it is long, ungrateful at times, but really rewarding!

Relying on chance is dangerous in more ways than one: it gives the illusion of knowing how to do something, but it is dangerous, especially with a heavy weapon. We must remain very vigilant because chance can hide everywhere during an exchange, especially if it is provoked. I remember this beginner batonist who wanted to accelerate to touch me during an exchange, and who almost fell on me because of poor support!

So yes, of course what the batonist has to do with (chance), but without looking for it, relying on learning the basics, repeating gestures, in condition, a curious search for technical progress ... to be able to adapt to an unforeseen event.

PARTIE 3 - CODIFIED EXCHANGES

When we talk about exchange, we consider the “opposition sport” aspect, but given that the weapon we use is relatively heavy and dangerous, it is imperative to keep in mind that it is above all of a game. We try to touch the other, without being touched by adopting common rules and without the slightest violence, always in a spirit of respect and vigilance. It is a collaborative sports work between two batonists, not a rough and hazardous confrontation.

Be careful however, during exchanges, physical investment can be very important, in terms of move for example, but also speed of execution. It depends on everyone's abilities. You have to adapt, try to find a common language. As in a discussion, no burst of voice, but from time to time possible puns, humor⁷ can be or at least, a subject shared with the other. It's the same thing with french baton.

During the exchanges, it is imperative to set the rules of the game. We will discuss these rules in the following paragraph.

1. Reminds and parti pris

- **Body position and baton hold**

The baton is held with hands in pronation (palms facing the ground). When the baton is in front either, the hands are positioned as on a bicycle handlebar, right thumb next to the left thumb, the little fingers towards the outside.

In general, but this can change during an exchange or during manipulations, the baton is held by its big end, the heel. The hands are placed therefore towards the thicker side of the baton. You should be aware that the baton remains a relatively heavy weapon (400 - 500 grams) and that it is preferable to have the point of the baton towards the partner, especially for obvious security reasons (when you give a strike it is better that the heaviest part does not reach the partner's touch zone). It is important to note here that the baton having a high inertia, if it is held by its thinnest part (therefore the lightest), the batonist will have more difficulty in mastering the possible impact than if he holds his weapon by the heel.

The guard position is quite simple. The feet must be spread apart, respecting the shoulder width. If the baton is held with the right hand at the heel of the baton, the left hand will be placed a few tens of centimeters from the right hand (a little more towards the tip of the baton), the thumbs of the two hands facing each other.

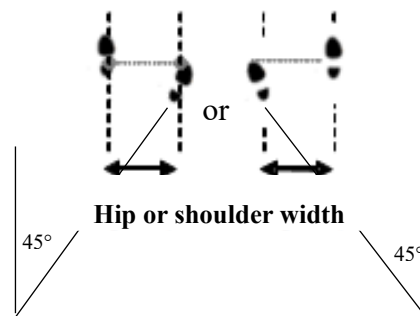
In this case, the right foot will be slightly behind the left foot. The baton will be held with both hands, point slightly upwards and the right hand almost in contact with the right hip, the left hand about ten centimeters from the right ribs. The arms will be slightly bent.

If two batonists are facing each other, the direction of the tip of the batons will preferably be towards the shoulder of the partner placed in front of you.

⁷that's the reason why I decided to translate!

This position of guard, with the baton placed on the right side for example, will be especially a position of defense and attention, there is a great stability of the body. If you associate a certain relaxation (while still being present anyway!), This position can be kept for long moments! Remember to be relatively relaxed, cool, keeping your shoulders relatively low, your head straight and realizing that there is no tension in the whole body.

We can also add that in the case of a different positioning of one of the two feet, the "defensive" position will quickly become "offensive", because this change of foot can cause a certain imbalance compensated most of the time by a displacement, front, rear or side (the batonist thus places himself in false guard).



To be noted :

- Tiptoe forward towards his partner
- Front foot perpendicular to the shoulder line
- 45 ° rear leg
- Feet with a gap equivalent to the width of the shoulders (or hip)
- **Hand position**

It is quite simple to remember, the hands tend to follow the position of the feet, the thumbs always remaining towards each other. If my front foot is the right foot, my hand which will be the most towards the tip of the baton will be the right ...

If we study the height of the hands, there are several things to say:

The hand located towards the heel (large end of the baton) is lower than the other. The hand on the heel can be considered to be leaning slightly on the baton, while the other exerts a certain pressure to prevent the baton from falling. It is a question of nuance and it is absolutely necessary to find a certain flexibility in terms of holding the baton. You should always be able to feel the weight of the baton (also at the level of the fingers):

- The two hands are not necessarily very far apart from each other, the whole being not to tighten the baton too much, to let it possibly slide inside the palms of the hands (the grip must remain firm, without tighten the baton too much). We can add that the closer the hands, the more the baton will exert a strong lever arm and the more it will be difficult to control. This can however have a big advantage in the search for the imbalance of the weapon
- Be careful not to create an angle at the wrist, in a resting situation, it must be kept in alignment with the forearm (as far as possible)

For a light weapon, one hand may be enough to carry it (like a cane, but this could also be valid for a lightsaber for that matter!). But for a baton of 300 to 500 grams, the 2 hands are necessary to carry it.



So... two hands ... and how many support points? 2, 4 or more? Here again, I think that in order to arrive at a certain understanding of things, the batonist must know how many minimum points of support he needs to hold his weapon, without using too much energy. Let's say that you need at least 1 high support point and 1 low support point (the baton is then held).

Depending on the distance you have in your hands, the forces exerted on the support points change and can become very large. Thus, the fact of making an *latéral extérieur* by bringing the two hands together and leaving them close together will necessarily create a compensation to be made with the rest of the body (in general all the high joints will take a hit!). As long as you add inertia (speed, weapon far from the body and twist ...), there you are certain to generate mediocre trajectories and a passable mastery of the impact ... therefore of safety (yours and that of the person opposite)!

Having close hands increases the lever arm of the weapon and requires the addition of compensating forces. They (your hands) must therefore be separated from one another (with a gap between the two little fingers equivalent to the width of the hip) in order to optimize the holding of the weapon.

The separation of the hands is therefore a point that should not be overlooked in learning, but also in the search for a certain fluency.

So, ask yourself what happens when you develop a strike:

- One hand can hold the baton and direct it, while the other hand accompanies the movement, possibly reestablishing a direction and ultimately serves as a guide (there is naturally a division between a “directing” hand and another “guide”)
- The two hands, homogeneously, can sometimes be directing, sometimes guides. In achieving a complete movement, such and such a hand will work in turn. It is undoubtedly this approach which must be privileged, as soon as one comes to become aware of the individual work of the hands.

Notes: in some work sessions, we sometimes find that beginners have some difficulties in understanding the grip of both hands overhand. We see for example one or two fingers which pass sometimes above, sometimes below the baton ... randomly in fact. Remember to put your hands on the baton as when holding a pool cue, or as it should be placed on a bicycle handlebars! Of course, the goal is to control what the fingers are doing (or at least think about it). It is still important to maintain a uniform position at the level of the hands, because the codification is such that in the opposite case, the batonist must, before giving a new strike, rectify his position ... which is both a waste of time, but also energy and a concentration leak. I call it parasitic gestures (or parasitic movements).

- **The trajectories, the “armés” (armed)**

The trajectories (in space) must be parallel and perpendicular to the ground: no obliques! It is important to visualize the angles you give to your weapon.

Each strike must be prepared and armed: this point is also one of the characteristics of our discipline, as a codified combat sport.

The strikes are given with two hands (overhand) in 99% of cases. There is no point in working the baton with one hand if this concept is not integrated and mastered ...

2. The salut (greeting) : an intention of practice

Whatever the type of exchange, every batonist must greet his partner, at the beginning and at the end of the exchange. This mark of respect and courtesy is also part of the definition of the French baton.

The intention, that is to say the state of mind of the practitioner appears from the salut. The way you do it can say a lot. Everything that happens after the salut is usually just a logical follow-up. Without wanting to dig too deep into this subject, we must certainly remember the fact that a greeting must be a form of courtesy, respect for the partner, but also the start of a moment of sharing, while maintaining a playful spirit with more or less of personal commitment!

We can consider that the person who salutes gives a little of himself, offers the "opening", the start of an exchange. This is not easy in the end, because here again, the technique of realization is only a means of showing an intention.

So intention towards the other, but also towards oneself.

There are several types of making a salut (simple or complex). As part of my approach to the French baton, I created a special greeting that includes fairly technical movements and linked to my own conception of the practice.

Description: the starting position. Imagine a square on the ground (with ABCD as corners). The first batonist is positioned on the A, and the other batonist on C. The baton is taken in overhand with one hand (for example the right), baton heel to the ground (right side). "En place pour le salut, "Prêts pour le salut, saluez". Raise the right arm by letting the baton slide forward (it's a natural slide - launched by the movement of the arm which only goes up a quarter of a circle, that is 90 ° - the arm arrives parallel to the ground - baton in the extension of the arm. We brake the baton when the point arrives in the hand (be careful not to drop the baton). Then we drop the heel (accompanying the trajectory with your fingers, on the LEFT side), and we recover it left hand (remained at the level of the left hip from the start). Here again taken in pronation. The right hand returned on its side (towards right hip) after having released the baton.

The left hand carries out a 90 ° movement on the side (to the left) then it lets the baton turn (which changes direction in the hand). This movement is difficult but you will see that the inertia generated by the baton allows you to do this turn easily enough in the hand. we changed direction in the left hand (which will now be in front of you), accompany it towards the right hand (leaving it perpendicular to the ground). Then, on your right, the right hand is positioned below the left and both hands naturally let the baton slide on the ground (exactly 1 centimeter from the ground) - there, we use gravity, quite simply (no force to exert, only released hands). Finally, two simultaneous movements: we bring back, keeping both hands in pronation on the baton, the heel of the baton towards his partner by making a step towards him - on the [CD] side of the square, then, we do a half slide to recover heel in the hands, trying to touch the baton of his partner ... then, "en garde" (guard).

After the "salut", the batonist stands on guard. to the right or to the left side (be careful to modify the positions of the feet according to the side where the baton is).

Here are the positions of the feet on guard: body stability and central balancing (arrow).



or

Guard – Baton on the Right Side

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

In French baton, the guard is not necessarily an obligatory passage before striking a strike. This position is rather a neutral defensive position which can place the batonist in a configuration of vigilance and rapid mobilization (to parry or attack). Even if it is a simple position in which we only "hold" the baton, it is essential to realize that apart from a movement (dodging), only the baton can protect the batonist from 'a touch (parade). From this guard, everything will be possible if the body is ready, that is to say if there is not too much tension in the holding of the weapon, if the muscles are "relatively relaxed" and if the mind is awake. The guard says a lot about the practitioner's state (his level of nervousness, his intentions sometimes, his body control ...)

3. Touches

Preliminary reminder: there are several possible touch zones, the head, the flanks (abdominal belt) and the legs (above the ankle joint and below the knee joint). Except in the leg area, no touch in the back and behind the head is allowed in my approach⁸.

It is imperative to be able to touch exactly the desired area with the part of the baton that you choose (Cf. supra § 7 "The precision of the gesture and placement"). This precision work requires constant effort. However, in my conception, the touch is not necessarily an end in itself. Of course, in a context of opposition with a partner, the touch is a means of creating an issue. I touch without being hit! The touch yes, but not at any cost.

The touch is useless if it is not clean and properly brought in. In any case, it really depends on the rules of the game that you will set with your partner! In a serious pedagogic framework, the rules are not improvised and must be turned towards the integrity of the practitioners and the will to progress.

The touch is not strong and is done while making sure to use the maximum size of his baton (I do not offer, in this book, hooking techniques and other self defense keys ... so no need to be too close to his partner) . The baton is relatively long (1 meter 40 cm), so you might as well use its size to touch from a distance! French baton is a distant-constraint sport. We must accept it and not go beyond this definition, even out of laziness.

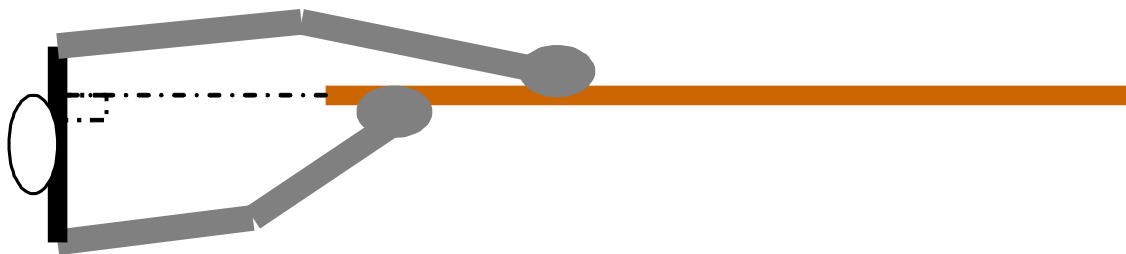
⁸ My approach differs, at this level, from many teachers who allow strikes on the back. From my point of view, this is very dangerous and I forbid it to my students. However, it can happen and in this case, I ask for great vigilance regarding the power of the stroke and the precision of the touch.

As a general rule, you should keep a good distance from your partner (without him being able, to touch you with his feet or his arms, without making any prior movement). This recommendation is quite important because it adds a little realism to the practice of the baton. To touch from a distance, using the entire length of the baton, you must both guarantee a sufficient grip to master a distant strike, but also position yourself correctly so as not to hurt your partner or injure yourself. The concept of security is linked to the touch.

Likewise, we don't do strikes like making a sword cut. That is to say that at the time of the touch, you must try to arrive at the end of the movement, with your shoulders, in front of your partner. The image of the saber is interesting as a reminder that the baton stops at the touch zone, without trying to cross to cut, like a saber would. In addition, to clarify this subject a little further, it should be added that the concept of "sabré" is linked to the angle formed when the baton reaches its touch zone. I insist that the baton be well in the relative extension of the arm, and therefore, in an axis perpendicular to the shoulders. On this point I think you have to be very precise on the angles in order to better control your body.

If you want to particularly take care of the aesthetics at once, you can still add a little precision. In most configurations, at the time of impact, the arms can be almost in the same alignment as the baton, which will be perpendicular to the line of the shoulders of the baton player who just kicked. Thus, it will certainly be necessary to move to guarantee this condition.

Here is a very simplistic diagram of the position to adopt. Note that the arms should not be fully extended, to avoid joint blockage at the elbow. In fact, the arms retain a certain physical "roundness". In this drawing, consider a touch, after a lateral extérieur to the head for example.



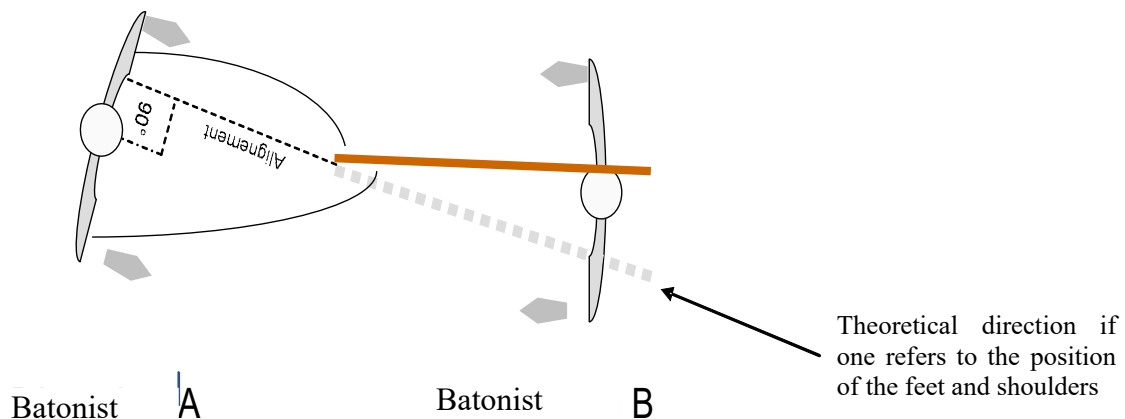
In the context of an exchange, the batonist is (in the majority of cases) in front of his partner at impact (feet in his direction and shoulders parallel to his shoulders). Why this constraint? To control the arrival of the baton and not to strike like saber.

Imagine two batonists A and B. In the first case, the strikes will be mastered if we keep the position presented above. After a rotation, the baton will be stopped and will not exceed the point of impact and will be at an angle of 90 ° with its own shoulders.

However, if the batonist A positions himself differently, the trajectory of the baton will be interrupted by the presence of the impact zone (here the head) and we will not only have a cut (that is likely to cut the head with a saber), but above all a strike in the middle of the inertia

phase, therefore, potentially violent (which is excluded in our approach). In the example below, touch in the head -

I have simplified the position of the feet as shown in the following diagram.



4. General comments on

There are 9 strikes codified in French baton. These strikes are movements made from an armed position, then developed with rotation of the baton which will touch on specific touch surfaces – zone (head, flank, leg). The names of the strikes have been deliberately simplified during the codification of this sport and make it possible to describe the gestures performed – in French: *croisé tête*, *croisé jambe*, *latéral extérieur*, *latéral croisé*, horizontal or vertical *coulissé*, *piqué* and finally *enlevé* and *brisé*!

These strikes are often executed on the basis of “moulinets” or circles made while respecting vertical or horizontal trajectories.

We must absolutely learn to touch with the last few centimeters of the baton (the more you will be demanding, the better). So, you must make sure to use the length of the weapon as much as possible (we are in a combat sport where distance control plays a very important role, I remind you). There is no question of working arms folded at impact. It is up to the body to move so that the baton is used for its entire length. This point is very important because forgetting it or being complacent at this level would completely modify the interest of having a long weapon!

The strikes are relatively quick to learn for a beginner ... but their mastery takes years, as in many other disciplines. There are several ways to execute the same movement using a French baton, but you must above all question the way you choose to carry them out: do you control the movement? How is the inertia of the movement created? Do you use your strength or do you take advantage of the slightest moments of inertia?

In the first case, often unfortunately widespread in my opinion, the practitioner does not ask himself the question of knowing if the baton can help him to execute a movement better and uses his force to achieve a result. You can launch a strike using only your wrists, elbows, shoulders ... In the second case, the batonist seeks to optimize the positions in relation to the imbalances generated by the characteristic of the weapon, its weight and its shape.

The hands, elbows, shoulders... and the whole body will be able to “accompany” the baton by putting themselves in the best possible configuration to frame the movement of the weapon in relation to trajectories parallel or perpendicular to the ground. Positioning yourself correctly (feet, hip, shoulders) will allow you to better structure the gestures made with the baton. It is a collaboration between the practitioner and his weapon that is sought.

This reflection is necessary, I think, if you really want to progress.

We find these concepts both in the development of strikes, in the context of an exchange or an assault with another partner, but also at the level of parades or dodges performed by the batonist.

My goal is to give you the strikes that will allow you to go beyond a mechanical execution of movements, this is the reason why I deliberately chose not to put photos in this version of my book. You will find videos without any problem on the internet and I advise you to go beyond the images, by asking yourself about the cogs that lead to movements.

Seek to see the areas of balance, imbalance, small details ... In short, be positively critical! Then, integrate what you see (or feel) to improve your gestures. Of course, the presence of an external eye at your side, a teacher, a professor, remains, I think, mandatory to advise you and allow you to progress.

One of my teaching friends told me a funny anecdote about a young man who came to find him in his martial arts class. After asking him where he had previously learned this martial art, the young man replied "on YouTube! "

a) The “brisé”

Touch zone: top of head

- **Simplified definition**

At the time of the armé, the hand holding the heel moves behind the line of the hip (on the same side), while the baton performs a perpendicular and circular rotation (vertical reel starting down). The touch is made above the partner's head, arms stretched with a slight curvature so as not to block the elbow. When you arm, the hip pivots slightly to avoid torsion of the spine (the hip remains on the same plane, making a front-rear and rear-front movement, with a front foot whose heel lifts slightly to avoid twisting the spine) and allowing slight weight transfer to the rear leg. This slight weight transfer is associated with a piston movement of the arm holding the heel of the baton, backwards for the armé, then forwards, once the point passed in the back, allowing the baton to rotate better in the hand.

Having said that, I would like to take a more in-depth look at this movement, which I think is one of the most beautiful and perhaps the most difficult in our discipline.

- **Feel the movement**

To achieve a brisé, by integrating it into his body, you must realize that this baton has a certain weight and that naturally it will tend to fall. The idea is to find the right mix between weight transfer, gravity and trajectories ...

Practical exercise in 2 steps:

1) Taking the baton with both hands - baton on the right for example

Left foot in front, right foot behind. Both hands are on the right side. Remove the right hand and let the point fall to the ground, the hand will pivot to accompany the descent of the weapon which will start a reel. We use gravity to make a start of rotation to the baton, while making a slight transfer of weight backwards (by pivoting the hip backwards). The hand only served to accompany. The left arm therefore crosses in front of you (left hand holding the baton on the right):

If we raise the arm a little, before letting the baton fall, it will make the "pendulum". If you do nothing more, the baton will swing a bit and will stop, perpendicular to the ground. To make it continue its rotation, just return to your initial supports (transfer weight from front to back, at the same time as you drop the baton... and the baton continues its rotation... at the same time return to your initial supports, by pivoting the hip forward). The difficulty lies in the left hand, because you must remain flexible at the wrist so that the trajectory of the baton is perpendicular to the ground (it is not easy with one hand).

The principle is however quite simple: the body allows the baton to finish the rotation. Initially, it was gravity, then the energy given by the body which carried out a weight transfer.

In other words, here the hip remains on the same plane, making a front-rear and rear-front movement, with, as a reminder, a left foot whose heel lifts slightly to avoid twisting of the spine. Keep the wrist flexible to allow the baton to rotate while the energy added with the hip allows the baton to rise. Think, gradually, to control the trajectory of the baton which must make a circle, a disc. To complete the full turn, simply advance the arm forward. Well... it's not obvious, but the idea is to feel that gravity must be used first.

2) Second step: working with two hands

The principle must be the same with two hands. Return the baton to the normal guard position (baton on the right side for this example). Both hands at the heel (big toe), overhand. The baton is held in both hands, arms slightly bent. Same exercise, leaving the right hand (but who must really let the left work). You must first let the baton fall. The left hand holds and the other accompanies as lightly as possible. This right hand should only be a support, or a guide of the movement. As you can see, this movement is quite difficult, since it involves moving the hands and changing the position of both hands. The right

hand must open so that the tip of the baton falls to the ground, while the left will have to pass a little to the outside ... otherwise it gets stuck. The idea is really to let the left hand do the previous exercise again.

You absolutely must focus your thinking on the left hand, on the feeling that it's the one in complete control of the movement. The other hand is only there to accompany ... in this exercise. Previously, as soon as the baton arrived on the ground, it was necessary to accompany, with the body, the movement created by the fall of the stick.. Here, we do the same. I remind you that you must be in support on the right leg, left heel slightly raised and the part "hip + shoulder" slightly turned to the side, in fact it is the hip which helps you to carry out this passage... this avoids the back twist. There, you must realize that the right hand, which was initially there to accompany, tends to tighten and perform part of the movement, because the physical force applied to the left hand is important now. The baton has already made 180 ° and as much in the first and second phase, it was the left hand that really held the baton, as much, in the following phases, it is essentially the right hand. The result is a reel. To finish the strike on a brisé, it is then necessary, with both hands this time, to accompany the baton on a trajectory which will touch at the head, with an arrival with outstretched arms (with slight curvature - cf. § 3 "The Touches") . Your feet remain in their mark on the ground, there should be no movement (because the brisé is given at a distance), even if, to let the baton turn and make a reel on the right, you have to lift the heel of the foot left and slightly pivot the "hip-shoulder" axis, to allow room for the baton to pass.

Once the rotation is completed, the body returns to its original position.

I have presented here two exercises performed with a guiding left hand. Take them back by doing the same step with the right hand! Indeed, I think it is important to note that on this movement, each hand can drive the weapon (and can sometimes control or not the movement).

This work is based on difficult movements: the brisé is a basic movement particularly demanding to be well done (you have to place your feet, your body, your arms correctly, do not force too much, think about the trajectory). In short, a whole lots of elements that should no longer be a problem if we want the practitioner to listen to the specific work on feelings.

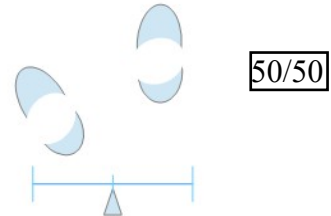
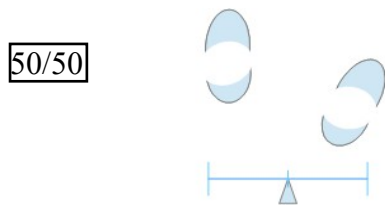
By doing the brisé this way, more "internal", and thinking of using the weight of the baton and feeling at the same time, which hand will work, you will gain concentration and you will create an assembly body-baton.

Precision in hand placement

Hand positioning is very important at this level, because, either you work hard and you particularly stress the joints, either you succeed, by optimizing your hand placements to make movements more fluid and homogeneous. I have just approached this work through the brisé, but it is also an objective to be reached for any strike or manipulation with a baton.

- **Weight transfer memo**

For each strike presented below, I suggest that you reflect on your weight transfers. Let us assume the guard position as a reference: stability of the body and balancing at the central level (the arrow indicates the point of equilibrium). Below, the guard position.

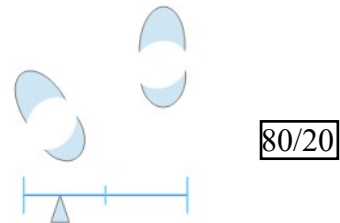
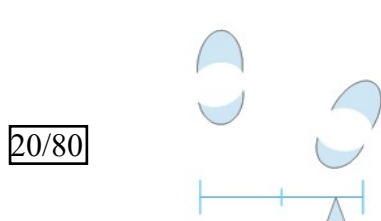


or

Guard – Baton on the Right Side

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

When you arm (you do an “armé” in french), you must transfer weight to the side where you hold the heel of the weapon:

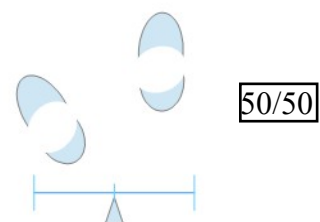
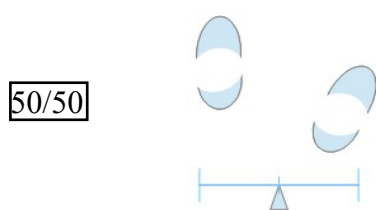


or

Guard – Baton on the Right Side

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

Then, you must accompany the development of the strike by a movement of the hip that gradually returns to its initial position.



or

Guard – Baton on the Right Side

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

- **Keep the distance**

Be careful , the brisé and the enlevé are strikes which must be given from a distance (without moving forward or backward). In other words: you absolutely must learn to make a brisé or an enlevé without having to move and that you must be able to do it from a distance. Unfortunately, I have noticed that a lot of batonists learned these two movements by systematically making steps to be at a distance.

This is a mistake because it gives a bad habit and creates an automatic movement reflex ... while in many cases, all you have to do is stand there and touch! Once this is really acquired and during an exchange, yes, in some cases, we can move ... But I advise you to compensate for the lack of technique by inadvertent and unnecessary movements.

b) The “enlevé”

Touch zone: leg

- **Simplified definition**

We often say that the enlevé is the symmetrical strike to the brisé because the principles are the same at the level of weight transfers with for difference the direction of rotation of the weapon and consequently, the touch zone.

During the armé, the hand which holds the heel of the weapon comes to be placed behind the line of the hip (on the same side as the baton therefore), while the baton carries out a perpendicular and circular rotation (vertical reel but in the opposite direction of the brisé).

The touch is made at the level of the leg (under the kneecap and above the malleolus), arms stretched (but without blocking its joints).

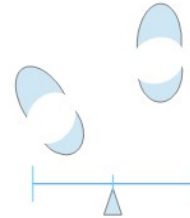
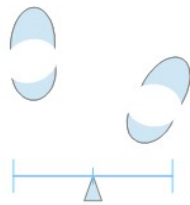
We must think, on this movement, to carry out the weight transfers (to the army) and during the development of the strike to touch (which is not obvious in leg). You will find a note on weight transfers.

As of now, I teach two ways to finalize the movement of the enlevé:

- With a strictly perpendicular trajectory (that is to say when the tip of the baton has exceeded the position of the feet, the baton goes up in the same direction to go to touch while avoiding the thrust, however - if it should happen announce "Piqué" before the touch)
- With a trajectory which becomes again parallel when the point of the baton passes in the back (suddenly, the enlevé has 2 trajectories in its development: a perpendicular to the start of the strike then a parallel). This method is a little more "classic".

- **Keep the distance (see previous chapter)**
- **Weight transfer memo**

We find, in the enlevé, the same characteristics of weight transfers as those of the brisé one.

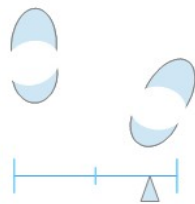


Guard – Baton on the Right Side

or

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

When arming, you must transfer weight to the side where you hold the heel of the weapon:



Guard – Baton on the Right Side

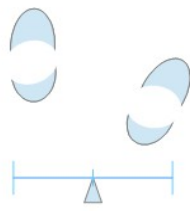
or

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

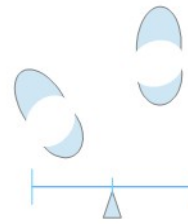
Then, you must accompany the development of the strike by a movement of the hip which gradually returns to its initial position.

Be careful , this is quite difficult, because the abduction is a strike which arrives in the leg and sometimes, we tend to forget the weight transfer on the strikes in the leg, because it is accompanied by a descent of the body, to touch the target area.

So you have to think about not going down too early.



Touch – Baton on the Right Side



or

Touch – Baton on the Left Side

c) The “latéral extérieur”

Touch zone: head, flank, leg

- **Simplified definition**

When you arm, the hand holding the heel of the baton is placed behind the head on the same side (horizontal baton - point forward). For the development of the strike, the baton follows a circular trajectory (reel / horizontal rotation).

The hip pivots (the fact of pivoting the hip prevents twisting of the spine, the shoulders and the hip being integral), the weight is transferred slightly towards the rear leg.

When you arm the strike, the feet remain in their position, heel of the foot (can be slightly raised to avoid twisting of the spine) but the hip swivels slightly towards the grip of the baton and there is therefore a slight transfer weight.

Position of feet, shoulders and relative weight transfer (symbolized by an arrow in the diagram below). During the rotation, the baton has a trajectory parallel to the ground for the first part of the rotation, then the trajectory changes, depending on the touch zone (on the last quarter of the rotation).

The hip must resume its place at the time of impact and not before. This movement must remain homogeneous. This is important because the movement of the baton must remain inseparable from that of the hip, at least on arrival of the strike. This makes it possible in particular to consider retaining the body-baton link over large displacements.

- **Accuracy of hand placement**

Be careful to keep a hand gap to support the baton in its entirety (the tip tends to fall). Bringing your hands together on the rotation creates inertia, but as a result, a certain lack of control ...

We must therefore think about moving our hands back a little at the time of impact. Then, if you chain another strike, remember to put your hands apart shoulder-width apart. This is valid

for all strikes, but it is quite obvious with sequences of lateral ones. We often tend to keep hands closer than necessary (this strongly influences the holding of the weapon).

Just like with the brisé one, there is not strictly speaking of single “directing hand”, because in turn one or the other of the hands can direct the weapon.

It is by looking for a precise grip work, at the level of the fingers and the points of support that you will be able to decide how to optimize the holding of your weapon.

On this movement, it is difficult to position his hands above the head, When you arm, and be sure to keep your shoulders relaxed. The hands above the head allow to better guarantee the horizontal trajectory.

- **Keep the distance**

Be careful , like the brisé, the enlevé, the latéral extérieur is a strike which must be given by keeping the distance with your partner (without displacement).

- **Weight transfer memo**

Suppose the guard position as a reference: body stability and balancing at the central level (arrow). Below, the guard position.



Guard – Baton on the Right Side

or

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

When you arm, you must transfer weight to the side where you hold the heel of the weapon:

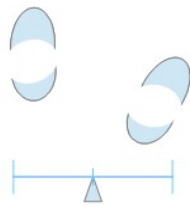


Arming – Baton on the Right Side

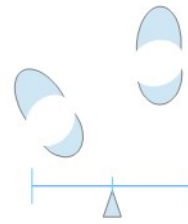
or

Arming – Baton on the Left Side

Then, you must accompany the development of the strike by a movement of the hip which gradually returns to its initial position.



Touch – Baton on the Right Side



or Touch – Baton on the Left Side

d) The “latéral croisé”

Touch zone: head, flank, leg

- **Simplified definition**

During the armé, the hand which holds the heel of the baton passes in front of the face and comes to be placed behind the head (horizontal baton - point forward) on the side opposite to the latéral extérieur, while one of the two feet moves in temporary change of guard (allowing both great stability and also preservation of the spine). There is, in my opinion, no other way to arm this strike. It is important to take care to keep a hand gap of ten centimeters, when the baton is placed above the head. Another point to remember concerns the forearm closest to the point: you must ensure that it is parallel to the baton (this will allow for a very clean trajectory).

The development of the strike is done with a circular trajectory (reel / horizontal rotation), and as horizontal as possible depending on the touch zone, while one of the two feet moves to allow the hip to accompany the movement of tear. On croisé strikes (this is valid for the “croisé tête” et “croisé bas” also), it is therefore necessary to link the movement of the hip (and foot) to the armé and then to the development of the strike. This allows to better respect the physical integrity of the practitioner and to participate in the dynamics of the strike (in a search for full mobilization of the body).

The arm of the crossed side is a particularly beautiful gesture especially if you take care to position your arms so that the baton is parallel to the ground.

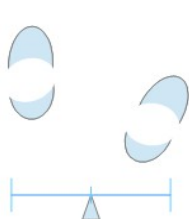
- **Difference between the latéral extérieur and the latéral croisé**

We will therefore notice an important difference between the latéral extérieur (which is given at a distance) since there is no movement of the feet (apart from the weight transfers) and the latéral croisé for which, in the armé, there has a temporary change of guard (which is then compensated, during the development of the move, by another movement allowing to return to its initial guard). I insist on the need to work in this direction, because it allows you to learn to control the distance from your partner.

Again, in this movement, it is difficult to position his hands above the head, When you arm. Be sure to keep your shoulders relaxed. The height of the hands allows to better guarantee the horizontal trajectory.

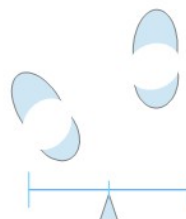
- **Weight transfer memo**

Suppose the guard position as a reference: body stability and balancing at the central level (arrow). Below, the guard position.



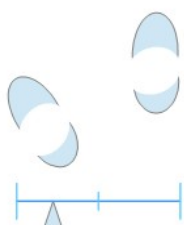
Guard – Baton on the Right Side

or



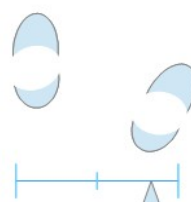
Guard – Baton on the Left Side

When you arm, you must make a temporary change of guard (by advancing or retreating one of the feet) associated with a weight transfer.



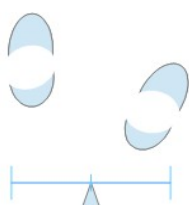
Armed – baton goes from the right
to the left side

or



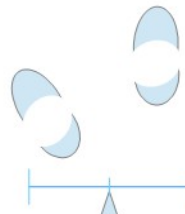
Armed – baton goes from the left
to the right side

Then, you must accompany the development of the strike by a return to the initial guard (by advancing or retreating one of the feet).



Touch – Baton on the Right Side

or



Touch – Baton on the Left Side

e) The “croisé tête” (head) or “croisé haut” (high)

Touch zone: top of head

- **Simplified definition**

When you arm, the hand which holds the heel of the weapon goes on the opposite side, the point of the weapon being almost at the level of the foot, baton perpendicular to the ground (a little as if one paddled) while that one of the two feet moves in temporary change of guard (allowing both great stability and also the preservation of the spine). Point of vigilance to have at the level of the spaces between the hands: one should not slide too much on the armed (without which your movement could resemble a sort of “coulissé” > see further on).

The development of the strike is done with a trajectory of the circular baton from the bottom to the top (reel / vertical rotation), while one of the two feet moves to allow the hip to accompany the movement of the weapon towards the strike .

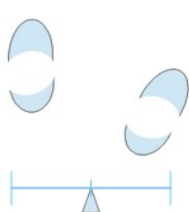
The difficulty of making this move lies in particular in respecting the perpendicular trajectory and in supporting the arms in this trajectory.

On crossed strikes (this is valid for the latéral croisé as well) it is therefore necessary to link the movement of the hip to the armed then to the development of the strike.

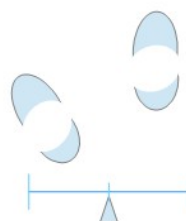
This allows to better respect the physical integrity of the practitioner and to participate in the dynamics of the strike (in a search for full mobilization of the body).

- **Weight transfer memo**

Suppose the guard position as a reference: body stability and balancing at the central level (arrow). Below, the guard position.

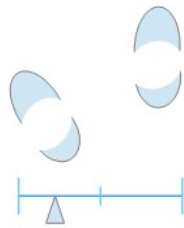


Guard – Baton on the Right Side

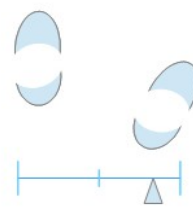


or Guard – Baton on the Left Side

When you arm, you must make a temporary change of guard (by advancing or retreating one of the feet) associated with a weight transfer.

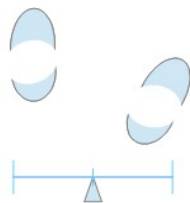


Armed – baton goes from the right
to the left side

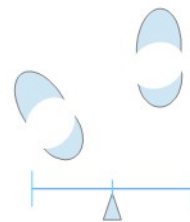


Armed – baton goes from the left
to the right side

Then, you must accompany the development of the strike by a return to the initial guard (by advancing or retreating one of the feet).



Touch – Baton on the Right Side



Touch – Baton on the Left Side

f) The “croisé jambe” (leg) or “croisé bas” (down)

Touch zone: top of head

- **Simplified definition**

This move is quite difficult to grasp and I always advise to start by working the croisé tête, because once made, you just have to take the opposite path to understand what is the low cross!

When you arm, the hand which holds the heel of the weapon goes on the opposite side, the point of the weapon rising facing you, furthest upwards, baton perpendicular to the ground, while one of the two feet moves in temporary change of guard (allowing both great stability and also preservation of the spine). Be careful not to slide the hand that is towards the tip too early (it must accompany the rise of the baton but without holding the baton as you would on a coulissé).

The development of the strike is done with a trajectory of the circular baton, the point passing from top to bottom (reel / vertical rotation), while one of the two feet moves to allow the hip to accompany the movement of the weapon towards the strike.

The difficulty of making this move also lies in respecting the perpendicular trajectory and in supporting the arms in this trajectory. Often the batonists mix this strike with a vertical coulissé which would be given in leg (to avoid of course).

- **Weight transfer memo**

The weight transfers are identical to the croisé tête (or even a little more marked). Suppose the guard position as a reference: body stability and balancing at the central level (arrow).

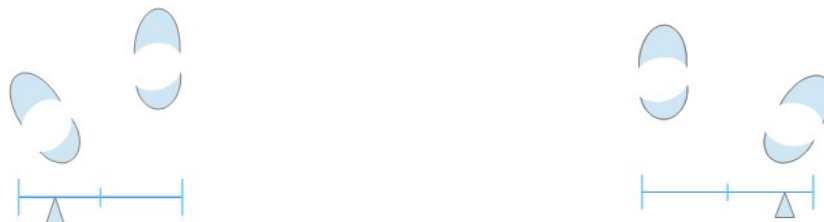


Guard – Baton on the Right Side

or

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

When you arm, you must make a temporary change of guard (by advancing or retreating one of the feet) associated with a weight transfer.

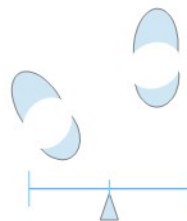
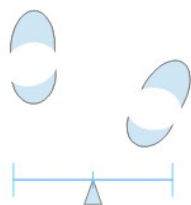


Armed – baton goes from the right
to the left side

or

Armed – baton goes from the left
to the right side

Then, you must accompany the development of the strike by a return to the initial guard (by advancing or retreating one of the feet).



Touch – Baton on the Right Side or

Touch – Baton on the Left Side

As for the enlevé, we now teach two ways to finalize the movement of the croisé bas or croisé jambe:

- With a strictly perpendicular trajectory (that is to say when the point of the baton has exceeded the position of the feet, the baton goes up in the same direction to go to touch while avoiding the thrust strike however - if that were to happen announce "Piqué" before the touch).
- With a trajectory which becomes again parallel when the point of the baton passes in the back (of the strike, the croisé jambe has 2 trajectories in its development: a perpendicular at the start of the strike then a parallel).

g) The “coulissé” (horizontal and vertical)

Touch zone: head, flank, leg

Coulissé, (lateral, horizontal or vertical) are extremely pleasant strikes to perform, in terms of feelings experienced in the hands. The baton slides several times in its entirety in the hands which are there to guide it, to hold it, but without however crushing it. The pressures exerted must be progressive at the level of tightening and loosening. Please try to take pleasure in feeling what is happening at the level of the hands, so as not to execute these strikes like simple baton swipes! They are better than that!

• Simplified definition of horizontal

Be careful, there is no weight transfer when you arm a coulissé: the hand holding the heel of the weapon goes backwards, thus pulling the heel backwards (perpendicular to the shoulders - no pivot) while the second hand approaches the hip a little (especially do not move this hand towards the tip of the weapon) while letting the baton slide. The baton must be parallel to the ground, in contact with the body (flank).

The development of the coulissé is done by sliding the baton a second time, but this time by making it execute a semi-circular trajectory (it will be the heel that will touch), parallel to the

ground. During development you must accompany the movement of the weapon by a movement of one of the two feet (that is to say that there is a change of guard during the development of the strike).

- **Simplified definition vertical coulissé**

There again, there is no transfer of weight. When you arm, the hand which holds the heel of the weapon goes backwards, thus pulling the heel backwards (perpendicular to the shoulders) while the second hand approaches a little the hip (especially not move this hand towards the tip of the weapon) while letting the baton slide. The baton must be parallel to the ground, in contact with the body (flank).

The development of the coulissé is done by sliding the baton a second time, but this time by making it execute a semi-circular trajectory (it will be the heel that will touch) perpendicular to the ground. During development you must accompany the movement of the weapon by a displacement of one foot (that is to say that there is a change of guard during the development of the strike).

- **The concept of distance with the coulissé**

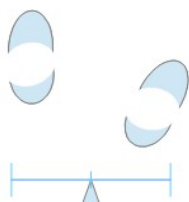
The coulissés need great technical requirement in terms of movement. You must readjust your distance during the last quarter of the circle of rotation of the weapon by moving to arrive almost outstretched arms (see diagram of the position of the arms in the chapter on the strikes). In addition, the baton must make an angle of 90 ° at impact (on a horizontal coulissé). This constraint implies that great mobility in the last quarter of the rotation of the weapon.

There is no question, in my opinion, of accepting that a batonist bends his arms to regulate the distance with his partner, because this is a mistake compared to the use of the entire length of the weapon length to go to the strike (not to mention the fact that you enter the area of your partner) and that tends to indicate a certain willingness to take the easy way out... which I strongly advise you to banish.

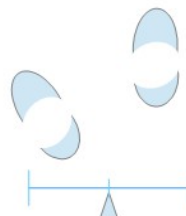
Coulissés are therefore strikes which arm on the spot but which lead to development with movement. These strikes are very interesting because they really complement the range of strikes that are given at a distance (brisé, enlevé, latéral extérieur) and the strikes that are given with temporary change of guard.

- **Weight transfer memo**

Suppose the guard position as a reference: body stability and balancing at the central level (arrow).
Below, the guard position.



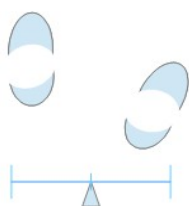
Guard – Baton on the Right Side



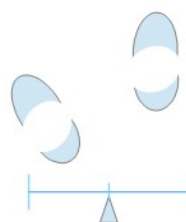
Guard – Baton on the Left Side

or

When you arm, there is no weight transfer.



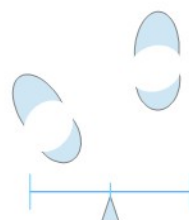
Arming – Baton on the Right Side



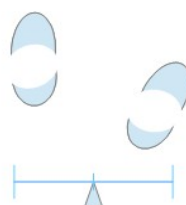
Arming – Baton on the Left Side

or

It is during the development of the strike that you must accompany the movement of the baton by a displacement of one of the two feet (which therefore makes you move forward or backward) to have changed guard when the touch arrives.



Touch – arrival on the left side
(if you begin with a baton on the right side)



or

Touch – arrival on the right side
(if you begin with a baton on the left side)

h) The “piqué”

Touch zone : belly, flank, face

This move can be dangerous and it should not be developed until it has been announced, as it is the only thrust in French baton. I do not teach it to the beginner, even if it is necessary to speak about it with all the precautions related to the respect of physical integrity. In addition, I believe that this move, when taught too early, can create bad reflexes in an inexperienced batonist because it gives the illusion of ease of execution.

This movement is a bit apart because it is not performed with a rotation, unlike other movements. I advise against approaching it without the other strikes being really acquired, not that it is difficult to execute, but because it is inherently dangerous.

- **Simplified definition**

The army is identical to the coulissé and therefore there is no transfer of weight when you arm. The hand holding the heel goes backwards, pulling the heel backwards (perpendicular to the shoulders) while the second hand comes a little closer to the hip (especially do not move this hand towards the tip of the weapon) while letting the baton slide. The baton must be parallel to the ground, in contact with the body (flank) and the hand.

Before dive development, you must say, “Piqué”, then slide the baton forward (thrust).

As on a coulissé, during development you must accompany the movement of the weapon by a movement of one of the two feet (that is to say that there is a change of guard during the development of the strike).

- **Weight transfer memo**

Suppose the guard position as a reference: body stability and balancing at the central level (arrow). Below, the guard position.



Guard – Baton on the Right Side

or

Guard – Baton on the Left Side

When you arm, there is no weight transfer.



Arming – Baton on the Right Side

or Arming – Baton on the Left Side

It is during the development of the strike that you must accompany the movement of the baton by a movement of one of the two feet (which therefore makes you move forward or backward) to have changed guard when the touch arrives.

As it is a thrust, you understand that this movement becomes dangerous if you do not pay much attention to its distance from the partner.



Touch – arrival on the left side
(if you begin with a baton on the right side)

or
Touch – arrival on the right side
(if you begin with a baton on the left side)

i) Other strikes

Yes, there are other possible strikes but I preferred to limit this work to "traditional" strikes (that is to say strikes inherited from the coding of the stick fighting - brisé, enlevé, croisé tête, croisé bas, latéral extérieur, latéral croisé - as well as the coulissés et piqués), basis of the practice of the French baton.

The search for mastery of the fundamentals (while remaining curious in its approach) is, in my opinion, a bottomless subject.

5. Trajectories and touch zone

- **Possible touch zones for strikes with parallel⁹ to the ground trajectories**

Touch on the side of the head (ear) but remaining facing the partner (mid-ear with the very last centimeters of the baton) or touch on the head (face – if you wear a helmet of course): the strikes used to touch are the lateral ones or the coulissés. Here, the batonist remains standing to touch.

"Flank" touch, that is to say at the level of the abdominal belt: the strikes used to touch are the lateral ones ("latéraux") or the coulissés. Here, the batonist remains standing to touch.

Touch in the leg, i.e. above the malleolus and below the patella. It is the only touch zone that can be used from the front, on the sides or at the back: the strikes used to touch are the lateral ones or the coulissés. The batonist must perform a flexion¹⁰, a lunge (or a half-lunge) to touch.

- **Possible touch zones for strikes with perpendicular trajectories¹¹**

Hit above the head (on the top) but staying in front of the partner: the strikes used to hit are the croisé tête, brisé, vertical coulissé. The batonist remains standing to touch.

Touch in the leg, i.e. above the malleolus and below the patella. It is the only touch zone that can be touched from the front, on the sides or at the back: the strikes used to touch are the enlevé, croisé jambe and horizontal coulissé. The batonist must make a flexion, a lunge (or a half-lunge) to touch.

- **Possible touch zones for strikes with perpendicular and parallel trajectories**

To be completely exhaustive, we need to talk about the trajectories of the enlevé and croisé bas (leg), which ultimately have two possible trajectories (see the description of these strikes). We start with perpendicular trajectories, then almost parallel.

- **Choice of the touch zone**

There can be no change of trajectory beyond the last quarter rotation of the baton. This keeps the notions of security and visually, it avoids the strikes in "cuillère".

⁹ Certain trajectories are not always strictly parallel, but it is necessary to aim for possible parallel trajectories.

¹⁰ The flexion allows to control the seat of the batonist who has just carried out large movements of inertia and who finishes in touch "leg".

¹¹ That is to say that the trajectories are as perpendicular as possible.

6. Protection of touch zones

Even if some exchanges can be done without protection (taking care of course to respect the integrity of his partner), I therefore advise to provide helmet, gloves, shin guards, shells (for men) and breastplates (for women) . It is very important to guarantee the safety and physical integrity of the practitioner, regardless of their technical level.

We can provide other protections to go further in securing practitioners of course.

However, we must be very careful in this area, because the batonist must be able to control his weapon whatever the situation. This is valid for an “attacking” or “defending” profile. The strikes are never dealt with violence and the batonist must know how to withdraw his weapon in dangerous situation (by sliding the baton towards you, as if you armed a coulissé).

The practice of the French baton remains framed by strict rules and technical codification and above all a state of mind imbued with respect and kindness. It is a combat sport, a game of opposition and the use of protections of the touch zones cannot condone violent acts!

PARTIE 4 – THE PARADES

In the very first version of this book, the chapter on parades (parries) was not developed and I wanted to fill this gap, because if the principles may seem simple, it is clear that these defense movements participate fully to a reasoned approach to the discipline.

I really believe that it is important not to undergo the movements but to master them. This is what I propose to you in this part in which I will try to dissect the cogs of these movements in which, again, the baton becomes inseparable from the body in space.

1. Basic principles

In terms of parades, it should be remembered that a display consists of using your weapon well to prevent your partner's baton from touching an authorized surface (head, flank, leg).

I advise to execute parades:

- Perpendicular or parallel to the ground (the baton must be perpendicular or strictly parallel)
- Without holding the weapon too firmly (except on impact), which guarantees a significant speed of movement
- Relatively close to the body (be careful to secure your hands)
- Without wanting to look for the strike with the baton that arrives on the area (your baton must stay close to you)
- Thinking of a possible stricke back (reposte)
- Without wanting to push back the baton of his partner (I will come back to this precise point)

Of course, within the framework of an exchange, it is necessary to respect priority rules (with armed movement...).

2. Hands

I have already mentioned, in Part 2 (Taking the baton in pronation-pronation) and in Part 3 (Reminds and parti pris), the essential work of the hands, at the level of the grip of the weapon. Again, during parades, it is important to keep in mind that you have to mobilize as few muscles as possible in the grip of the baton. Often, the parade is carried out quickly (because it is suffered - unlike an attack movement) and allows you to protect yourself with a predictable strike.

The batonist naturally has the reflex of tightening his weapon a little more. Any blockage of the hand, wrist, elbow, shoulder ... will slow the movement. It is preferable, to my point of view, to only tighten your weapon when the other weapon (that of the attacker) hits. Thus, the movement of the weapon towards the parry area will remain flexible and therefore fast.

The hands are the starting point of the parade.

Think carefully about the different points of support between your hands and the baton: how do I hold my weapon? How much pressure is exerted by my fingers? What muscles are working? Am I flexible?

It can happen that the position of the hands is changed, just at the moment of impact, either to avoid a strike on the fingers, or to ensure a little more grip of the weapon. When it comes to protecting your fingers, you can, at the time of impact, open your hand and use the impact as a fulcrum. In this case, remember to open your hand (palm against the weapon) so that your fingers are always preserved, then close the hand (or move it before closing it).



Be careful : even if you only exert a light pressure with your hand, on the baton, during a parade (which avoids joint blockages in particular), make sure that your thumb is positioned above the index finger to prevent the baton to go out (or to be thrown in case of picking of your weapon).

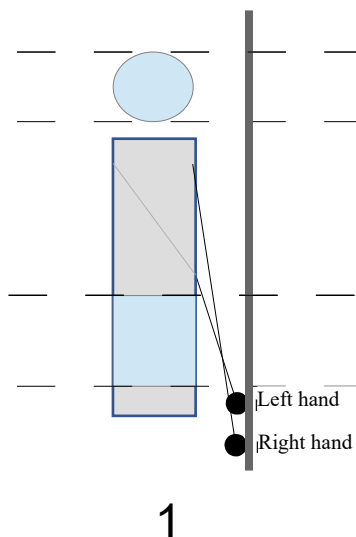


3. *Parades on lateral strike (on head or flank)*

These protections are used during attacks with horizontal or lateral coulissés.

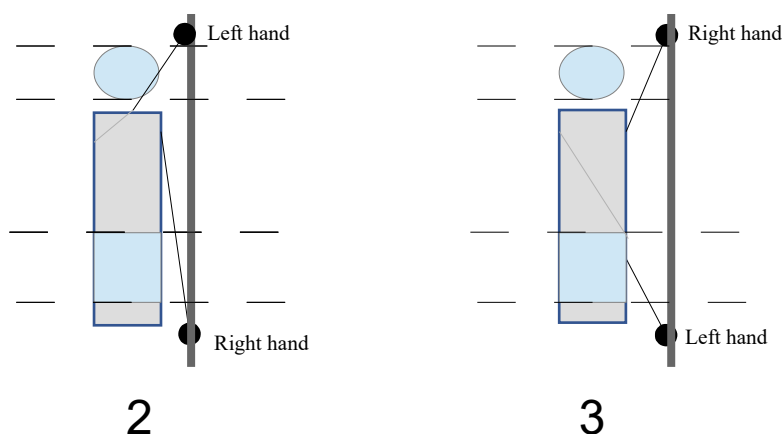
Take the example of the baton on the right. The batonist turns his back on us in the following diagrams. The arrows with round ends symbolize the arms with the positions of the hands. In blue, the high key areas (head and sides).

- Case 1 :



This display is both simple to understand and at the same time very difficult to perform:

- Simple: the hands are already in place (if we start from the guard position)
- Complicated: because it is absolutely necessary to lower both hands under the touch zone which puts the batonist in a rather position unpleasant. It is imperative not to shake hands too much, otherwise the baton will no longer be perpendicular. In addition, this position results in a significant lever arm in the event of a head hit.
- Cases 2 et 3 :



On these two diagrams it is important to take a good look at what is happening in terms of the choices that the batonist will make.

On position 2: we can see that the left hand has moved a lot (sliding) compared to a guard position, while the right hand has hardly moved.

On position 3: both hands have moved, but in addition, the right shoulder performs a crawled movement (a rotation) which changes the direction of the baton. In this position the left arm is crossed at the belly.

These positions are interesting to study because we must both look at what happened before the parade and what it can imply after!

In the 2nd case (but be careful this is only an example): we can very well imagine a neutral starting position (a guard), then a strike which is carried by its partner, on the head ... it is simple to imagine a parry then, considering the position of the weapon, in response, a brisé one or even an latéral extérieur one. The main thing is to look for the movement that will be the least expensive (in energy).

In addition, you have to contextualize everything, that is to say you have to think about the necessary movements that move from the guard to the parade then to the coup. These three times can create a kind of inertia which will be very useful to have a certain efficiency in the movement.

I would like to point out that these two parades are very "solid" and allow us to protect ourselves effectively against strikes which could be supported ... or even violent (even if that is not at all the objective!), Because the fact of holding the baton at its two ends guarantees a good distribution of forces in the event of impact.

4. Moving the body or not ?

I am not in favor of moving the body (ie moving so that the body is placed behind the baton) during side parades, for several reasons:

- This positions the body in "hit blocking"
- It becomes difficult to chain without having to move again
- This is easy to learn for a beginner who will miss a richer movement. On this point, I invite the teachers not to show this gesture until the batonist does not master his practice a little
- It is not necessarily very beautiful to see
- It consumes more energy than the fact of moving only the arm

Of course, in the event of a violent strike, this movement can be really useful to protect oneself ... but that is not what I am looking for in a practice controlled and respectful of integrity.

5. *La “parade chassée”*

The parade chassée consists in pushing back the baton of its partner at the time of impact (i.e. to deflect incoming attacks)... or even slightly before.

I do not recommend learning this type of movement at all until all the fundamentals are acquired (so after a lot of practice time). I have seen many practitioners perform parades chassées without knowing how to do a simple one!

Certainly the parade chassée, when carried out in good timing, allows both to create a significant inertia at the level of the baton of his partner (sometimes resulting in an inability to master the weapon). But above all it creates a moment of counter-attack coupled with uncertainty at the level of your partner.

However, it should be understood that from the moment the batonist starts a parade chassée movement... it will be difficult for him to stop in his movement. This is mainly due to the mobilization of a necessary energy (explosiveness) to carry out the parade chassée. Of course, it can work (that's the goal) ... but it really requires excellent timing which must remain "improvised", without which, your partner will be able to take advantage of it: he will just have to slow down a bit for your “parade” sided falls into the void!

The parade chassée, in my opinion, should not be taught systematically. It's a difficult move and one that can too often backfire!

It may seem frustrating to wait before tackling advanced movements, but, I think it will be more effective in terms of full and honest learning.

6. *Parade on down lateral strike (on leg)*

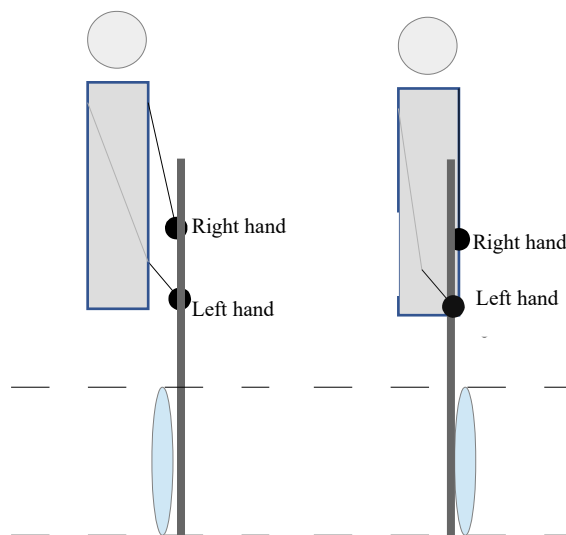
In the leg, I consider that there are many possible parades because, in the leg, you can touch everything around the calf. The parade movement must, as a priority, prevent the hit, don't forget! (there is no point in thinking too much about the result, if you get hit before).

The idea is to create all the conditions necessary to create a suite (sticke back, body movement...). Again, it will be necessary to ask the question of what happened before and what must happen after (in terms of response or movement for example).

Take the example of the baton on the right. The batonist turns his back on us in the following diagrams. The arrows with round ends symbolize the arms with the positions of the hands. In blue, the leg touch area.

- Case 1 - drop the tip of the baton down :

We obtain two possible parades (if the strike comes to touch the right leg outside, or inside) - this is also valid on the left leg (diagram not presented here not to weigh down the subject).



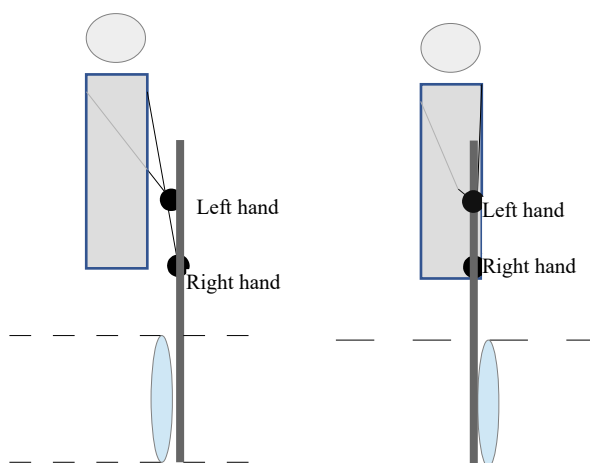
These parades involve a small rotation of the left shoulder (in our example) and a crossing of the left arm which passes from a high position to a low position (comfort is not optimum).

We will also note that the right hand (wrist) performs a twist which can be compensated naturally by a movement of the elbow ... but Be careful, because you can see that this creates significant tensions, therefore, do not exert too much pressure on the baton.

It should be added that we can shift the baton backwards, if your partner has made a movement (eg twist to touch you while being behind you or on the side).

Note: in advanced level, you can execute this parade by starting a brisé (thus by opening the right hand). This then allows for a very nice response. This gesture is difficult to do and requires a certain relaxation.

- Case 2 - slide the baton down the heel down:



This time the tension is mainly on the left hand (wrist).

This parade is really interesting because it requires quite little energy. The direct consequence is to end up with a baton held by the point, which is not a problem, in itself. You can continue your movements with the point in your hands, but paying attention to the distribution of the weight of the weapon (the big end being this time at a meter forty from you, which could have consequences for your movements and control of impacts).

7. The special case of the parade on « piqué »

As I described earlier, "piqué" is a movement not to be used inconsiderately and I invite beginners to leave it aside during the first years of learning. That said, it may happen that it is necessary to parry a strike that ends in a "piqué" (enlevé or croisé jambe for example). In this case, a classic parry risks being random, because unlike the other "non-piqué" movements where the opposing baton is supposed to have arrived at the end of rotation, here, the baton arrives in an thrust estoc. This has the consequence of having only a small impact surface.

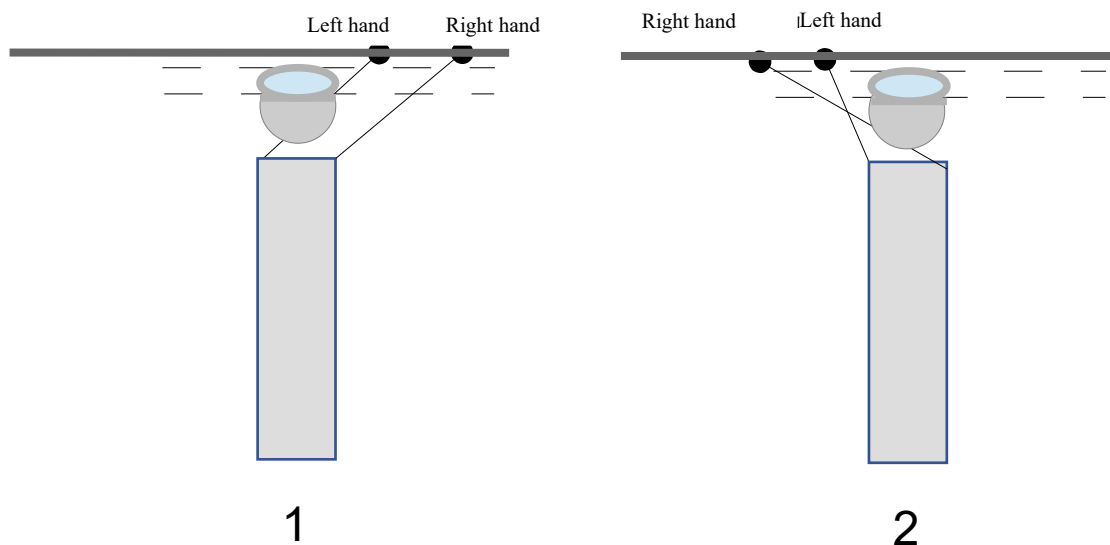
It is common in this case, to carry out a parade chassée whose objective is to reject the opposing baton. I tell you that this gesture, in this case, can be dangerous, for you, but also for your partner.

8. Parade with strike coming over the head

Several possibilities on this protective movement.

Take the example of the baton on the right. The batonist turns his back on us in the following diagrams. The arrows with round ends symbolize the arms with the positions of the hands. In blue, the head touch area.

Cases 1 and 2: here the hands hardly move



In position 1, the left wrist undergoes a slight twist, while in the second position, it is the two wrists!

The second position is beautiful (aesthetically), and looks a bit like the armed movement of a *latéral croisé*, keeping the baton parallel to the shoulders, that is to say without putting the tip forward. Quite complex to achieve if you want to keep the baton parallel to the ground. You will immediately notice that by moving one of the two feet, you will gain in comfort. In addition, this will prevent twisting of the spine. In general, while position 1 is relatively static, this second position is more active.



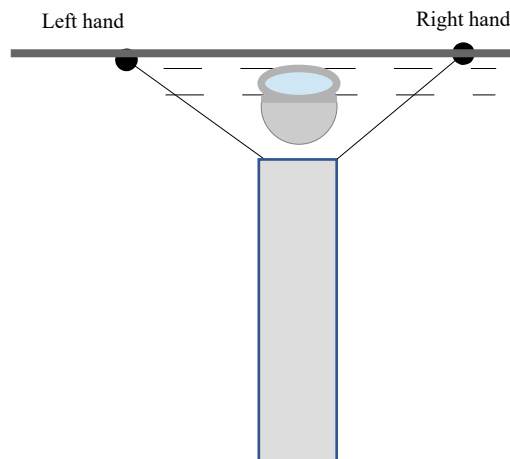
This second position can be criticized for giving an indication of the likely outcome of the level of the riposte (armed correctly then crossed sideways). However, nothing prevents you from using this movement to achieve something else!

Watch your fingers!

In these two positions, watch your fingers which can quickly find themselves on the touch zone. There, it will be a work of precision to have, both at the level of the partner who will have to touch on the head area, but also at your level, while protecting you.

These two positions have the advantage of preserving the initial positions of the hands. I invite you to work on them well, with great demands on the positions of the baton which must absolutely remain parallel to the ground.

Case 3 : hands spread



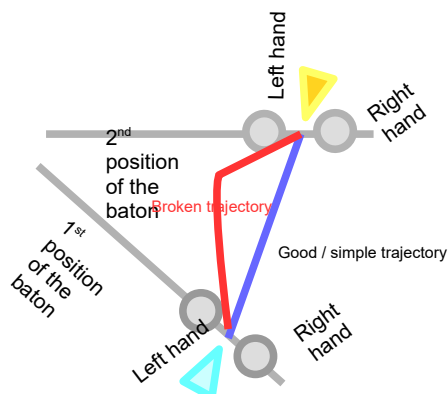
Several important points:

- The distance of the weapon must be approximately ten centimeters from your forehead, a little in front of you (because the opposing strike arrives from top to bottom, facing you)
- Your arms are not stretched (this is important to note)
- Your hands are clenched (slightly) on your weapon (make sure the thumblock position)
- On impact, tighten your fingers a little more to keep the baton parallel to the ground.

The left hand will have made a big move while the right, in my example, will hardly have moved.

9. *Advanced notion: the point in the hands*

With the help of this very refined diagram, I would like to approach a concept that I consider important: the search for the fairest distance.



The idea is to mentally visualize a point between your two hands, at first.

Try to visualize all the time, this imaginary point (blue or yellow triangle), between your hands and think of moving your baton by imagining that you draw lines in the space from a starting point "blue triangle" to a point of arrival "yellow triangle".

Try to have clear and simple trajectories: straight lines, curves (and not stalls). You will gain in fluidity and you will practice in full awareness of what you are achieving in space!

In the second step, try to imagine another point which is between your center of gravity and the point between the two hands. Imagine that it is a small sphere. This sphere will be your body-baton balance point during the movements to be performed. It's a bit weird I agree, but it's a great way to focus on your practice!

CONCLUSION – THE ASSEMBLY OF BODY-BATON-SPACE

As we approach the conclusion of this book, I deeply hope that you will have enjoyed browsing it and that you will find enough material to enrich your practice. Because the French baton is of great technical, aesthetic, playful and relational richness. It belongs to everyone and I appear before you, reminding that I have only proposed a particular approach here and therefore, not exhaustive!

Whether it is for two, during exchanges between batonists or solo, the French baton allows curious practitioners to meet their expectations: whether they are turned towards a playful practice, simple to learn or towards a level of technical requirement extremely high. The baton is both simple and complex.

To make the baton appear, beyond the batonist, you have to literally become one with your weapon, listen to it, smell it. Manipulation is mandatory to exceed technical contingencies. But these are necessary to provide a framework for codified practice.

If the body becomes sufficiently free in space, that the body- baton manipulation takes place harmoniously, then, the baton appears, alone, in space and everything is possible!

The baton is a simple weapon and is shared by many martial arts and combat sports around the world. The French baton has its own characteristics, stemming from a long historical maturation, linked to the French and European heritage.

Its recent codification makes it a truly contemporary sport, allowing everyone to find what will allow them to progress and share a fun, aesthetic and yet spectacular and technical practice. It is a dance with a weapon. A practice that becomes a path over time.

I hope I have managed to share this passion with you, with rigor and high standards.

Frédéric Morin

DEFINITIONS

Let's go back to some of the terms used in this book

- Assault: more frank opposition than "exchange" with the desire to score points while remaining in a perspective sporting. The assault can be arbitrated and judged to define which of the two batonists will be the winner.
- Combat (fight): more intense form and requiring acceptance of rules of practice common between the two batonists. Physical commitment and concentration are essential. Everything is improvised (in a very broad technical framework) and the slightest error can be expensive. The two batonists embarking on a "combat" (fight) can do it without protection which adds an additional constraint to this exchange of high flight! It is quite rare to be able to make a fight, because that requires a total acceptance of the risks while respecting the values of our discipline and in particular the preservation of physical integrity.
- Exchange: collaborative work between two batonists with the desire not to put the other in difficulty. Here we are absolutely not trying to dominate the other, but to enhance the work of the couple of batonists. Benevolence is the watchword.
- Honesty: the batonist must remain honest with himself and with others.
- Sharing: we give a lot when we make an exchange, an assault or a fight with a partner. We get a lot in return. It may take time to realize this.
- Pleasure: practice with pleasure and curiosity. Without that, it's sad.
- Objection sport / opposition game / fighting sport: terms used to classify the practice of French baton.
- "Tirer": make an exchange, an assault, a fight.
- 50/50: this expression is used to recall the distribution of support. This means that the body is in balance at the feet level. It is a fairly neutral position
- 20/80 or 80/20: in the same way, it is necessary to understand here that the body and rather in support on one of the two feet (at 80%)

These two notions are important because they allow to imagine easily, from the vertebral axis, from the center of gravity, that the body can make weight transfers from the right to the left or vice versa. These misalignments create temporary imbalances which are used during the different phases of the development of a movement. During the arming of the strikes, during certain rotations, different forces are exerted around the vertebral axis. Becoming aware of the positions of the feet and the weight transfers from one side to the other makes it possible to work effectively on the body-baton assembly and to optimize one's own movements. Over time, the batonist will get closer to 45/55 or 49/51 which represents, in my eyes, the moment when the body remains practically in balance with a minimum of imbalance necessary to arm, develop and touch.

APPENDICES – French baton sessions

Exemples of learning sessions

Session number 1

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

1. Warm-up 20 minutes

2. Learning: Latéral extérieur, right and left (duration 5 minutes)

On site, weight transfers (duration 5 minutes)

For two: ping pong (in turn, each player does the strike and the 'other barrier). Let the parades improvise (change role, duration 5 minutes)

After the exercise: explain the parades.

Regarding the latéral extérieur, specify the gesture and talk about the impact and position of the body.

3. Learning: the brisé (10 minutes to 15 minutes)

Here, we start from an approach based on pendulums.

Alone, show the pendulum and explain how the baton rises brisé.

Work on the right then on the left.

For two: ping pong (duration 5 minutes)

On the first sessions, we privilege the feelings through the discovery of strikes. So do not stop too much during the movement (except in exceptional cases, or possible danger).

4. Chaining (duration 5- 10 minutes)

For two: Made the brisé, B parries then launches a latéral extérieur, Has made its parade then launches its brisé again ... continue, then alternate every 5 strikes.

Space: “how to integrate these two strikes in space? »(Duration 5 minutes)

Take a maximum distance and try to advance towards the partner by carrying out these strikes (initiation to work in space).

5. Exchanges: with two strikes only (duration 10-15 minutes)

The objective here is to work with the partner in order to achieve a homogeneous exchange of strikes. Difficulties in understanding strikes, placement in space.

6. Stretching.

Session number 2

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

1. Warm-up time 20 minutes. Finish the movements with the baton. We can explain here the changes of hands (change of guard)

2. Revisions: latéral croisé and brisé (duration 10 minutes)

Here we start again the work of the first session by varying the explanations (this time, we will talk about the position of the hands , reels carried out, forces present ...)

3. Learning: latéral croisé (duration 5 minutes)

On site, weight transfers - think of shifting the feet to stabilize the body while armed then rebalancing at the end of development of the strike (duration 5 minutes)

For two: ping pong (in turn each makes the strike and the other counter).

Reminder: specify the gesture and talk about the impact and the position of the body. Perform all movements to the right and left.

4. Exchange for two.

Slowly. Only based on latéraux extérieurs but alternate (once to the right, once to the left, with a change of guard therefore). Pay attention to the space. The batonist B makes his parades, then takes the hand when he wants. Duration: 5 - 10 minutes

Exchange for two. More rhythmic (slightly increase the intensity - especially in terms of movement). Here we ask to make an latéral extérieur, any manipulation, then a change of guard, then again an latéral extérieur. The batonist B makes his parades, then takes the hand when he wants. Duration: 5 - 10 minutes

Exchange for two. Alternate latéral extérieur and latéral croisé on different touch zones (ensure the placement of the feet), at least twice in a row. The batonist B makes his parades, then takes the hand when he wants. Duration: 5 - 10 minutes

Important reminder: detail the latéral extérieur and latéral croisé (and correct the trajectories, the arrivals on the touch zone, the distance from his partner, the understanding of what is happening, at the level of the hands, body and baton).

5. Work again, alone: start with baton the latéral extérieur and latéral croisé (try to visualize all that needs to be done). Resume this time without a baton. Duration: 10 - 15 minutes

6. End the session with manipulation.

7. Stretching.

Session number 3

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

1. Warm-up duration 20 minutes

2. Manipulations: explain the different changes of hands and changes of guard (simple, with rotation of the baton, passage over the shoulders, start talking about coulissés). Duration 10 minutes.

3. Revisions: latéral extérieur, latéral croisé and brisé - right and left (duration 10 minutes)
Alone. Be sure to talk about body positions and baton rotations. Duration: 2 minutes

Exercise alone: work on the latéral extérieur and brisé sequence on the right and on the left.
Duration: 2 minutes

For two: while A does the sequence, B fights. Reverse roles regularly.

Duration: 4 minutes.

Exercise alone: work on the latéral croisé and brisé sequence on the right and on the left.

Duration: 4 minutes

For two: while A does the sequence, B fights. Reverse roles regularly.

Duration: 4 minutes.

4. Learning: croisé tête and croisé bas (duration 5-10 minutes).

Here we must clearly specify the position of the crossing arm, the offset of the feet to stabilize the body armed then the rebalancing at the end of development of the strike. The trajectories are very important here because the baton will pass very close to the body.

Particularly emphasize the difference between a brisé and a croisé tête. The reel in the hand for the brisé and the difference with the croisé tête.

5. Exercise alone: work on the croisé tête- brisé - change of hands- croisé tête- brisé sequence. Start once from the right then once from the left. Duration: 3 minutes

6. For two: ping pong (each in turn does this sequence and the other plays). Exercise alone: work on the latéral croisé and brisé sequence on the right and on the left. Duration: 5 minutes

7. Precision: precision work on impact.

Two by two. A holds his baton parallel to the ground while B tries to touch the ends by making sides (it is important to correctly position the body at the arrival of the strikes - baton at 90 °). The baton touches with the first centimeters from the tip. Change roles. Duration: 5 minutes

Another exercise, this time, with the baton placed perpendicular to the ground, facing the batonist. A who will keep him relatively far from his face. The batonist B will make croisé têtes on the end of the baton. Duration: 5 minutes

8. Stretching.

Session number 4

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

1. Warm-up time 20 minutes. Finish the movements with the baton (favor the upper body).

2. Revisions Manipulations: the different changes of hands and changes of guard (simple, with rotation of the baton, passage over the shoulders, continue to talk about the coulissés ...).
Duration 5 minutes.

3. Precision and revisions: croisé tête, croisé bas and brisé

A two: while A connects the three strikes, B par. Reverse roles regularly. Duration: 5 minutes (correct positions)

4. Learning: coulissé (duration 5 minutes).

Present the coulissés, taking care of the change of guard, the accompaniment of the feet with the armor and the strike, the position of the shoulders and the body at the arrival and the extension of the arm holding the heel.

Alone, on a hanging rope (very good exercise indeed !!) or on a baton held by his partner. Chain the horizontal coulissés, ensuring the correct position of the body and the precision of the touch. The paths must be clean (perpendicular and horizontal). Duration 5-10 minutes.

5. Learning: “volte” (twist) and coulissés (presentation, duration 2 minutes)

Same exercise alone or in pairs. There, we will take care of the distance at the end of the twist (not to hurt your partner in particular) and the supports. Duration 5-10 minutes.

9. Exchange for two.

Slowly. Long distance. Far from at least 5 meters, the two batonists, in turn will get closer by doing manipulations and twists, to give the strikes they know from a distance, one or two strikes, then will leave by fluttering and manipulating, while the other will follow. Duration 5 minutes.

Slowly. At medium distance. Two or three meters away, sequences of known strikes on B who will parry, then chain at his convenience. Duration 5 minutes.

On this last exchange, we will vary long and medium distance, on the same bases.
Duration 5 minutes.

Try, over a long distance, to favor classic strikes (excluding coulissés).

Free exchanges (without deposit). For pleasure.

10. Stretching.

Session number 5

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

1. Warm-up time 20 minutes.

2. Manipulations: I hide my baton. Two by two, face to face, the two batonists try to hide the baton from the eyes of the other. Pretext for manipulation. Duration 5 minutes.

3. Position of the body.

Explanation: we can use the baton as a plumb line to position his body, his shoulders, parallel to the baton.

Exercise: in turn, I put my baton in a position and B will have to position his body, parallel to the baton (his spine, his shoulders ... his arms ...). Then, we can continue the exercise by imposing movements on B, moving the baton and asking B to follow. Change roles. Total duration 10 minutes.

Important notions of the body in space with this exercise.

4. Revisions: croisé tête, coulissés and brisé (duration 5 minutes)

6. Learning: simple parades (duration 3 minutes)

7. Overall visual revisions

The whole group is positioned in a circle. Each in turn names a strike and executes it. All the others make the move by going at the same speed of execution of the move as A.

Same exercise, this time, A names the move and each one does it at his convenience (without following the rhythm imposed by A)

We can add also manipulations and parades.

Duration 10-15 minutes.

8. Exchange for two.

A gives one or two strikes imposed by the teacher, B parers and does the same. Duration 2 minutes

A gives any strike, B only parries (change role at half-time). Duration 3 minutes

A and B make an exchange by giving the strikes they want, by trying to work together. No key target. Duration 3 minutes

9. Stretching.

Session number 6

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

1. Warm-up time 20 minutes.

2. Revisions: croisé tête, croisé jambe and brisé (duration 10 minutes)

Take advantage of this revision to fix all the bases again.

3. Exercises "I use the parades but I can also use those of my partner ..."

"I use my parades" to protect myself and chain a strike. For example, A gives a brisé, B parries and connects on an latéral extérieur ... and so on. I use my parade to arm a new strike. Present and let work to find possible combinations. Duration 5 minutes

We can also show: A gives an outside leg lat, B fights and chains a brisé one...

Duration 2 minutes

"I use my partner's parade". A gives a choice of head strike, B parers. A hooks B's baton to use it at the same time to push it aside, and give it a strike...

BE CAREFUL here, because you must then respect your partner and not hurt him. The picking movement of the baton is given with a certain intensity.

Also be careful to respect the trajectories (because we tend to make obliques in this sequence). Duration 5 minutes

"I use my parades, because it goes fast"

Here, we work with double cannists (compulsory protections on this exercise). The double cannist continues the strikes and B parries with his baton. Theoretically, it is quite possible that no strike passes (big job of protective coulissés !). Duration 3 minutes.

It is also necessary to take care to make its parades close to the body. An external eye is important on this exercise to master the "confrontation".

4. "ZEN" manipulation

Working with feelings alone: feeling the weight of the baton, through simple manipulations. Make sure to work without tension, calmly while breathing quietly, the baton must slide well in the hands.

In pairs, we perform an exchange making sure to hold the baton only to the minimum, while relaxing. Very slow rhythm (special exercise to my friend Jon)

5. Stretching.

Session number 7

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

1. Warm-up time 20 minutes.

2. Revisions: all strikes (duration 10-15 minutes)

Carefully check positions and trajectories.

3. Revisions: What moves after such a parade.

A performs a high display. What strikes could B make? Here it is a question of presenting the different possibilities.

A then performs a side parade, leg ... and we review everything that is possible.

Total duration 10-15 minutes

4. Exercises for two

A performs its parade, B gives the corresponding move. Change roles regularly. Duration 5 minutes.

Start over with another partner. A performs its parade, B gives the corresponding move. Change roles regularly. Duration 5 minutes.

5. Strings of strikes (two)

Ping pong of two strikes, your choice. Duration 2-3 minutes

Ping pong of three strikes, your choice. Duration 2-3 minutes

Ping pong (three strikes, then manipulation). Duration 2-3 minutes

6. strikes (three) - pay attention to the practice space

sequences Always: A on B, A on C, C parries then connects on A then on B, which parries, then connects on C and A (repeat the series)

Ping pong with two strikes, of your choice. Duration 2-3 minutes

Ping pong of three strikes, your choice. Duration 2-3 minutes

Ping pong (three strikes, then manipulation). Duration 2-3 minutes

7. Stretching.

Session number 8

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

Objectives of the session: "integrate strikes into movement"

1. Warm-up duration 20 minutes.

2. Revisions: all stricks (duration 15 minutes)

Carefully check positions and trajectories.

3. Simple movements with baton in the hands (only)

Move to the guard position (alternating right and left), in a specific space. By moving forward then backward. Respect the movements without crossing your legs. Duration 4 minutes.

4. Movements with baton handling (only)

Move within a specific space. By moving forward then backward. Respect the movements without crossing your legs. Duration 5 minutes.

5. Work with partners parades and strikes

Put all the batonists in a circle. A will have protections (including mask) and will be positioned in the middle of the circle. People are widely spaced from each other.

A moves towards B which launches an attack, A parades and moves towards C which, in turn, launches an attack, B moves towards D....

A moves towards B and kicks (B parries), then moves towards C and continues to attack ...

In all moves, strikes and parades, make sure to change guard regularly.

Duration: at least 20 minutes (all depends on the number of batonists).

6. Long distance movements with manipulation (two by two)

Here, position yourself five or six meters from each other. A moves towards B by manipulating the baton to arrive and give a strike to B who is parrying. Leaving again by handling. B, in turn will do the same exercise. Duration 10 minutes.

7. Free exchanges (in pairs)

Duration of each exchange, 2 minutes.

8. Stretching.

Session number 9

Duration 1 hour 15 minutes

Provide chairs.

1. Warm-up time 15 minutes.

Note: this session is quite special and requires concentration and calm. So there will be no time imperative. We will let everyone work at their own pace.

2. Sitting alone. Objective: awareness of the body, ask the question "if my legs and hip cannot move, how to work?" »

Manipulation: manipulation with two hands to start (also take care during the whole session, not to lift the shoulders and to relax them well).

We can start by holding the baton close to you, by making it do, always staying in contact with the body, rotations around the belly. Then we can do coulissé, keeping the baton in contact, to the armed position.

Then, an interesting exercise consists in working with the baton placed on the back of the hand (the idea is not to hold it normally of course). There, we can try, simply to raise and lower the arms, then, we slide the baton towards the bend of the elbow (we can find a lot of exercises from this base, for example, slide the baton to the right of hand towards the elbow, while the other side of the baton will do the opposite path).

It is important to let the baton slide in contact with the arms and forearms, on a regular basis.

Sitting work is very tiring for the shoulders, so remember to relax during the whole session.

We can then work on the classic manipulation, passing the baton over the shoulders, around the nape of the neck...

Feelings: we can work at the start with the eyes open, then, after a long time, closing the eyes. Another series of exercises around the feelings experienced (weight of the baton, length of the baton, feeling of sliding, when doing coulissés) is important, in the sitting position.

Perform pendulums with the baton caught in an imbalance and try to make it "dance" by passing the arm that holds it, on one side and the other, up and down...

3. Perform the same exercises standing up.

The transition from sitting to standing is quite confusing, because we tend to no longer move ... be careful to reuse all the space.

4. Zen exchanges for two

We must resume the state of mind of calm and relaxation of the session, to try to work in pairs, in exchanges integrating manipulation and aesthetics.

5. Stretching.

Session number 10

Duration 1 hour 30 minutes

1. Warm-up duration 20 minutes. Finish the movements with the baton with revisions of hand changes.

2. Revisions of coulissés

Priority to the work of trajectories and the intention of the strike (precision over the entire movement and precision of touch). Duration 5 minutes.

Drunk man exercise (it's not only for french batonnists!)

Two by two. Take the protections (mainly mask). Behave as if you were drunk. Vary the distances and allow the crossing of feet, to unbalance.

The goal is to work mainly behind the scenes (short and long). The permanent imbalance of the body allows the baton to be fully mobilized. However, there is a real danger during the execution of this exercise, especially in terms of practitioner safety, because the inertia created must be controlled and the greater the imbalance, the greater the risk of falling and press very heavily support the movement of the baton ... therefore the impact. It is of course excluded to work with the least violence!

Two sets of 3 minutes.

Coulissés then coulissés with twirl.

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