

Coin Class Syllabus and Handouts

Class 1: The Building Blocks (Sleight Mechanics)

This session focuses entirely on muscle memory, mechanics, and the psychology of deception. Students learn three foundational sleights (maybe more if time permits).

- **The Classic Palm:** The bedrock of coin magic. Students learn to hold a coin in the palm muscle without looking tense.
- **The Finger Palm & Thumb Palm:** Both natural, relaxed utility holds. Perfect for transitions and beginners.
- **The French Drop:** A classic vanish. Focuses on eye contact, timing, and motivation for the hand movement.
- **Session Goal:** Master the mechanics of each sleight. Understand the concept of "misdirection" and naturalness.

Class 2: The Routines (Constructing Magic)

Students combine the sleights from Class 1 into three distinct, high-impact routines. Each routine teaches a different performance concept.

- **Routine 1: The Simple Vanish & Reproduction:** Uses the French Drop. A coin vanishes and reappears from a student's elbow. Teaches basic framing.
- **Routine 2: Copper/Silver Transposition:** Uses the Finger Palm and two different colored coins. The coins swap places in the spectator's hands. Teaches audience management.
- **Routine 3: Coins Across:** Uses what we've learned up to this point. Coins travel invisibly from one hand to the other. Teaches rhythm and blocking.
- **Session Goal:** Link mechanics into seamless sequences. Script the accompanying story or "patter" for each effect.

Class 3: The Dry Run (Performance Polish)

This class shifts focus from *how* the trick works to *how* the trick feels to an audience. Students build their 5-minute set.

- **The Setlist:** Students can perform one or string together routines to create a cohesive 5-minute act.

- **The Scripting:** Refining the spoken words to eliminate dead air and awkward explanations.
- **Angles and Blocking:** Practicing for a close-up/parlor setting. Students learn how to shield flashes from the sides and front.
- **The Mock Show:** Every student performs their full 5-minute routine in front of the class for peer feedback.
- **Session Goal:** Eliminate hesitation. Build confidence in handling mistakes and managing audience sightlines.

Class 4: The Showcase (The Recital)

The final class is a formal close-up/parlor show where students perform for an invited audience of friends and family (if this is what we decide on).

- **The Venue Setup:** A formal close-up table with a performance mat, or a small parlor stage area.
 - **The Showcase:** Each student delivers their polished 5-minute routine back-to-back.
 - **The Evaluation:** Feedback focused on stage presence, audience connection, and successful execution of the magic.
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Handout 1: Technical Guide (The Mechanics)

1. The Finger Palm

- **The Position:** Rest the half-dollar on the inside pads of the second (middle) and third (ring) fingers.
- **The Grip:** Curl your fingers slightly. The coin is held lightly against the base of the fingers.
- **The Secret:** Your hand must look completely relaxed, as if empty. Avoid curling your fingers into a tight fist. Let your thumb rest naturally away from your hand.

2. The Classic Palm

- **The Position:** Place the coin directly against the muscle at the base of the thumb (thenar eminence) and the opposite muscle below the pinky finger (hypothenar eminence).
- **The Grip:** Squeeze the coin by slightly contracting these two palm muscles together.
- **The Secret:** Do not look at your hand. Practice holding the coin while gripping a pen, holding a drink, or gesturing naturally. The back of your hand must remain flat.

3. The French Drop

- **The Starting Setup:** Hold the coin by its edges between your left thumb and fingertips, face flat toward the audience.
 - **The Action:** Bring your right hand over the coin. Your right thumb goes under the coin, and your right fingers cover it.
 - **The Secret Move:** As your right hand pretends to take the coin, let the coin drop secretly into your left fingertips (Finger Palm position).
 - **The Illusion:** Close your right hand into a fist as if it holds the coin. Look at your right hand. Your left hand drops naturally to your side.
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Handout 2: Student Practice Schedule

To master these moves for the final show, commit to **20 minutes of daily practice**. Split your time into these three steps:

Week 1: Muscle Memory (After Class 1)

- **Sleight Drills (10 mins):** Spend 5 minutes practicing the Classic Palm in both hands. Spend 5 minutes practicing the French Drop in front of a mirror to ensure no "flashing" (showing the hidden coin).
- **Passive Hold (10 mins):** Keep a half-dollar in your Finger Palm or Classic Palm while doing daily tasks like watching TV, reading, or using your computer.

Week 2: Sequence & Flow (After Class 2)

- **Routine Mechanics (10 mins):** Pick your favorite routine. Practice the physical transitions between the steps until you no longer freeze or hesitate.
- **Pacing (10 mins):** Slow down your movements. Count to two silently in your head during every vanish to let the illusion sink in for the audience.

Week 3: Performance & Scripting (After Class 3)

- **Talking & Moving (10 mins):** Practice your routine while speaking your script out loud. If you stumble over a word, keep your hands moving naturally.
 - **Eye Contact Drills (10 mins):** Perform your routine looking up at a fixed point on the wall (representing your audience's eyes). Do not stare at your hands.
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Handout 3: Showcase Evaluation Rubric

This rubric evaluates how well you connect with your audience and deliver a convincing illusion. You will be scored out of **20 total points**.

Evaluation Criteria	Excellent (4-5 pts)	Satisfactory (2-3 pts)	Needs Work (0-1 pt)
Technical Execution	Sleights are completely invisible. No flashing or clumsy handling.	Sleights are successful but look slightly tense or rushed.	The coin is visible when it shouldn't be; method is obvious.
Natural Deportment	Hands look empty and relaxed. Gestures match everyday movement.	Hands look stiff, but the secret position is maintained.	Hands look like claws; posture clearly screams "I am hiding something."
Patter & Scripting	Storyteller style. Zero dead air. Timing matches the magic perfectly.	Script is clear but feels memorized or robotic.	Long awkward silences; student forgets what to say.
Audience Engagement	Excellent eye contact. Confident stage presence. Handles volunteers well.	Makes occasional eye contact but looks down at hands too often.	Stares entirely at hands; ignores the audience completely.

Troubleshooting Handout: The "Oops" Guide

Dropping a coin or missing a sleight happens to every professional magician. The secret is not preventing mistakes, but handling them with grace, humor, and control.

Keep these three golden rules in mind:

1. **Never apologize.** The audience does not know what was *supposed* to happen.
 2. **Never look panicked.** Your reaction dictates the audience's reaction.
 3. **Keep moving.** A mistake is just a transition to a different ending.
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Scenario A: You drop a coin on the floor

- **The Problem:** A half-dollar falls and makes a loud ringing sound on the floor.
- **The Verbal Save (The "Out"):**
 - *Humor:* "And that is a perfect example of gravity magic. It works every time."
 - *The Pivot:* "The coin is clearly eager to get closer to the audience."
- **The Action:** Pick it up calmly. Do not rush or dive for it. Rub it on your sleeve as if checking it for damage, use that moment to reset your grip, and continue.

Scenario B: You "flash" (the audience sees the hidden coin)

- **The Problem:** You are holding a coin in a Classic Palm, and someone gasps or points out that they see it.
- **The Verbal Save (The "Out"):**
 - *The Pivot:* "Ah, you caught me practicing! I was just making sure it was still there. But watch what happens when I actually use the magic..."
- **The Action:** Immediately relax your hand and openly bring the coin into play. Turn it into a feature, not a bug. Change your ending slightly—toss that coin away and use a backup coin from your pocket to finish the routine.

Scenario C: Your hands freeze or sweat makes the coin slip

- **The Problem:** Nerves kick in, your hands get sweaty, and you cannot grip the half-dollar securely in a Classic Palm.
- **The Verbal Save (The "Out"):**

- *The Delay*: "Before we go any further, it is important to understand the weight of a piece of silver like this..."
- **The Action**: Use your spoken script (patter) to buy yourself 10 seconds. Openly hand the coin to a spectator to inspect. While they look at it, discreetly wipe your hands on your pants or a handkerchief. When you take the coin back, switch to the easier **Finger Palm** instead of the Classic Palm.

Scenario D: You forget what comes next in your script

- **The Problem**: Your mind goes blank mid-routine and you forget your next line or next move.
- **The Verbal Save (The "Out")**:
 - *The Standard Anchor*: "Let's take a look at exactly where we are so far."
- **The Action**: Stop moving. Show your hands clearly (without revealing secrets). Recalibrate by summarizing what just happened to the audience ("We started with one coin, it traveled to my elbow..."). This summary anchors the audience, gives your brain a moment to catch up, and naturally guides you into your final phase.