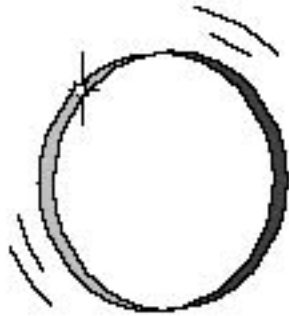


# *The Floating Ring*



**Routine and Illustrations by  
Stuart Hayner  
Directions Writen & Additional Material by  
Robert D. LaRue, Jr.**

Gracefully, slowly the gleaming bracelet stands upright in the enchant-er's hand. It clings to his fingertips, suspended above the other palm. Separating his hands, the ring glimmers in the light as it floats gently between the hands. The hands are rotated to demonstrate the inde-pendence of the ring and it is even flicked, causing it to seemingly spin in midair! The ring descends into the outstretched palm and it is immediately handed out for inspection.

# The Floating Ring

by Stuart Hayner

Directions by Robert D. LaRue, Jr.

I love floating magic. Most people that know me, know that about me. In fact, I collect levitations and animations. Given that background, I know that this effect is new and different. I invented it while trying to pass a ring around a real, full sized floating flute. As you will discover, the ring floats better than the flute!

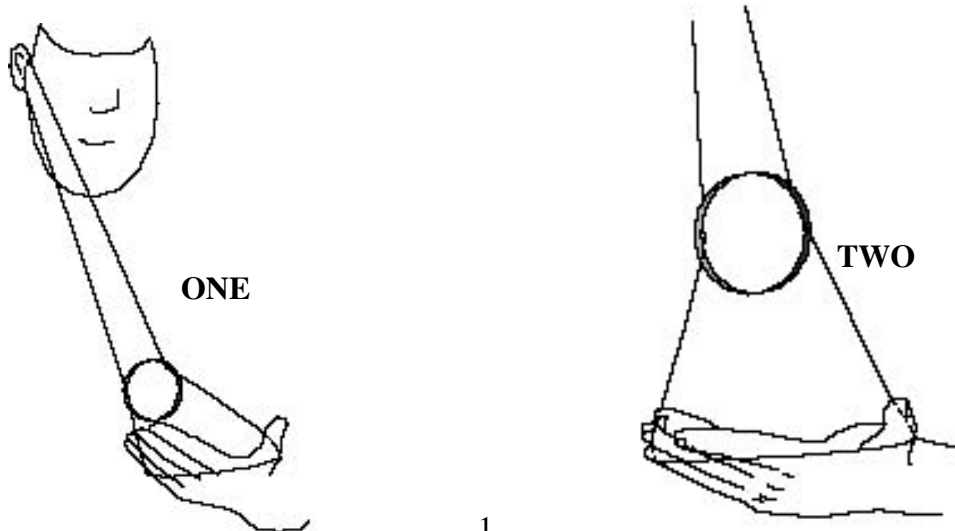
Thread work is an art unto itself. I feel that it is very Zen... right, the Dao of Thread! You must always go slowly, while applying the technique only in the right places and times.

In this effect I use silk thread, but I only perform it under "stage" lighting, to guarantee complete control of the environment. I also wear all black, so that I can perform close to the audience. The float can be performed with "invisible" thread, but you must have the tensions mastered... and you must not have a beard, as I do. If you would like to perform this routine "very close up," write to me and I'll send you some of the best thread, but work with the silk thread for now.

You may want to work backwards through this description first, to become familiar with the destination before undertaking the journey. Note that Figure Five shows the full floating position and the final set up. Figure Six shows how you readjust the setup without touching the ring. Note that in Figure Six the left hand is not shown, but the thread is also looped around it.

To begin, loop the thread over your right ear and allow the loop to fall back across your shoulder so that it hangs out of the way during the lead up to the floating routine. In my routine, I complete a coin sequence by producing a three inch coin. I change the jumbo coin into the ring. Use your favorite method to introduce the ring.

Display the ring flat on the palm of the left hand. Make a magic pass over it with the right hand while you gaze intently at the ring. Nothing happens. Repeat the pass, but this time withdraw the right hand straight back to the right side of your face, while maintaining a sort of "spell casting" finger position. Keep your gaze riveted on the unmoving ring as you extend your right thumb so that it touches the lobe of your ear. Lower the hand slightly as you press the thumb lightly against your neck. You will find that you have subtly inserted your thumb into the loop of thread. Draw the right hand straight forward, allowing the thread to be pulled forward, off of your back. Do not try to pull the top strand of thread forward, as the tension will either break it, or cause the thread to cut into the stem of your ear! Rather, allow the top strand to ride along on top of your thumb as the bottom strand



is pulled forward. Also, try to catch the thread in the crook of your slightly bent thumb, rather than allow it to slide all the way back into the crotch of the thumb. Extend your right hand to the full extent of the loop. Pick up the ring with the right fingertips by grasping the far edge and levering it up, keeping the near edge against the left palm. Allow the ring to drop. Magic pass, again. Pick up the ring again, this time inserting the right thumb clear through the ring. The left index finger enters the loop of thread then reextends, pulling the thread along beneath it. This is the start of the hookup. Keep holding onto the ring with the right fingers, as though you were trying to balance it on the left palm. Start to allow it to drop again, catching it this time with the fingers of both hands. As the left thumb approaches the ring, slip it into the loop on the far side of the ring. At the same time the rest of the right fingers can be slipped into the loop. Whew! And this is just the initial hook up!

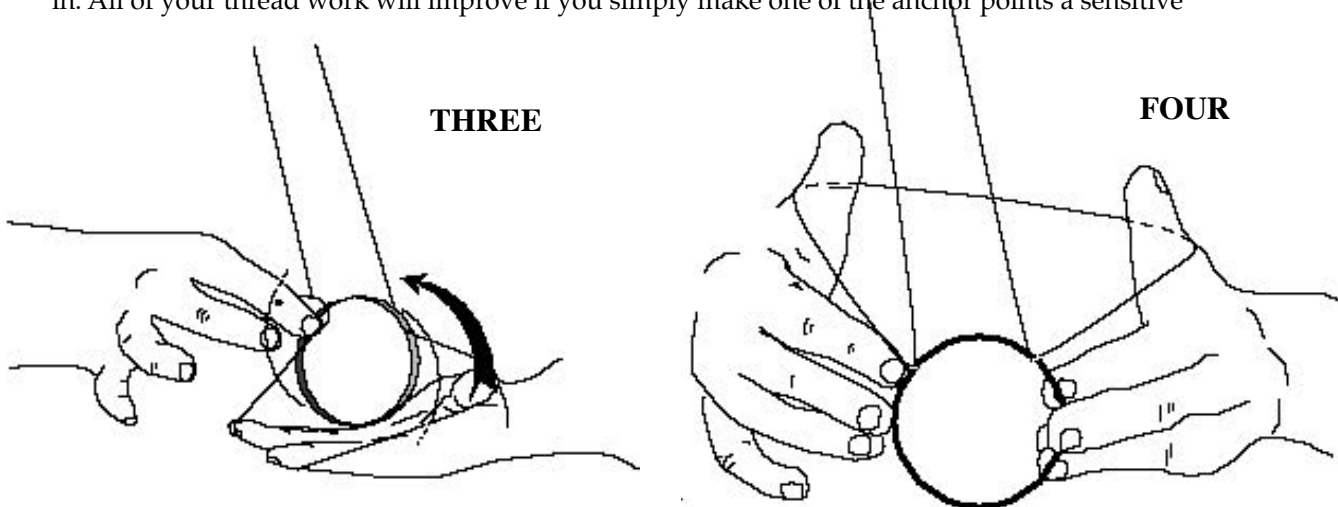
If all of that is too much, start with the loop threaded through the ring. Slip the ring into the outer left breast pocket, with the loop running through the ring, but hanging outside of the pocket. Use your left fingers to hold open the pocket at the right fingers enter to remove the ring. During the removal, slip your left fingers into the loop so that the upper strand goes around your thumb, and the lower strand around the third finger. The ring should then be placed in the palm up, open left hand.

A third option is simply to pat the pocket with the right fingers as the left fingers engage the thread. Pull forward with the left hand to cause the ring to rise out of the pocket and "float" down into the left hand. By spreading your thumb and fingers you create tension on the thread to control the speed of the ring's descent. Don't make a show out of this yet, just let it slide eerily into the left hand.

Turn the ring over onto the thread by grasping the far edge of the ring with the right fingers and flopping the ring over. Relax the tension just enough to allow the ring to lay flat on the left palm. By simply turning your head slightly you can make the ring stand up. There should be NO hand movement! Pick up the ring and look puzzled. You will be surprised at how much you can move the ring without losing the hook up on the left hand. This little move fools magicians into thinking that you have broken the thread, or at least disengaged it... and lay audiences don't know what to think. During this pause is a good time to slowly spread the left fingers into the widest possible stance.

First suspension: Just set the ring in the air above the left hand! You will have to work on this to get the feel of it. Like most great thread work, there is a delicate balance between breaking the thread, tension, and defying the law of gravity. This position is the best one to start with for learning the feel of that balance. If you are going to use "invisible" thread, as soon as you have a feel for the balance with the silk thread, switch to the thin stuff and start practicing at this point of the routine.

Here is the real secret of working successfully with thread: Performers break their thread because they use hook ups that do not sufficiently transmit information about the state of tension the thread is in. All of your thread work will improve if you simply make one of the anchor points a sensitive



part of your body. Hey! Pull up your zipper and listen up smart boy! Your ear is the best anchor point around! The sensitivity is so great that you can actually hear the thread as it tenses under stress! Go ahead and stretch or weight the thread to the breaking point and listen to the sound. Remember that sound, and back off when you hear/feel it coming! I anchor "invisible" thread inside my ear with a little pellet of BlueTak, or some similar putty product. I work animations so often that my friend Joe Given always checks my ears for traces of blue before I perform! This idea came from Jon LeClair. His LeClair Animator is my favorite close up set up. His Haunted Deck will blow your mind!

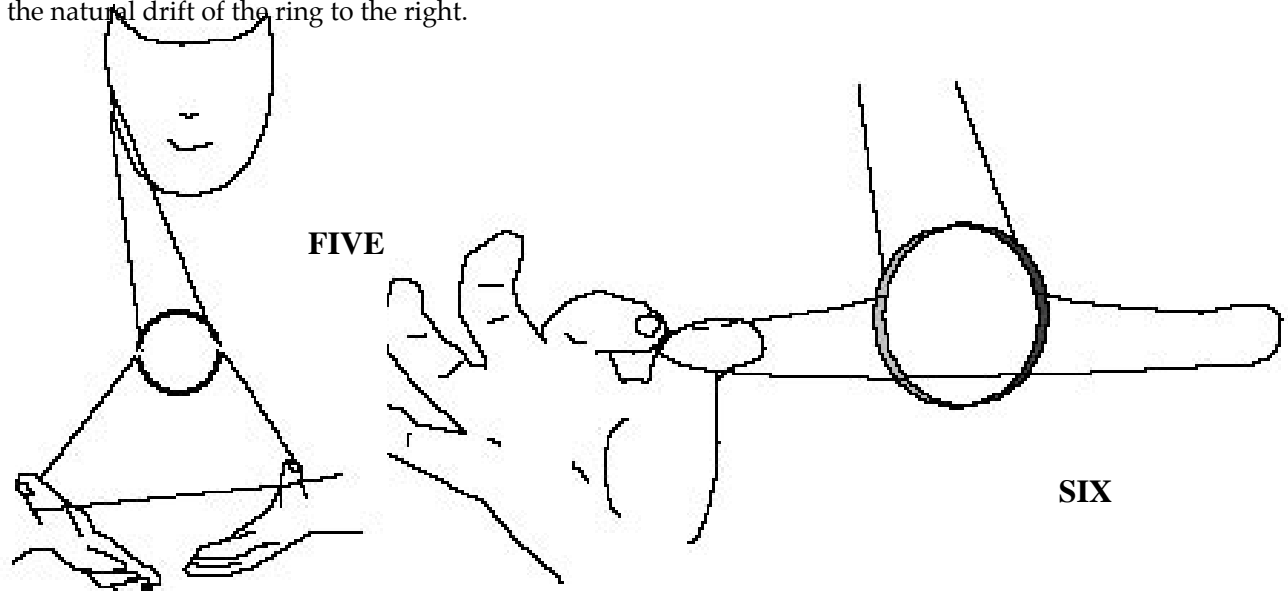
If you flick the ring with your right hand just right, you can make it look as though it is spinning in the air. All I can tell you is to try it a few times, then show it to someone. If you have the touch just right it will make their jaw drop. Like most optical illusions, if you know what is really happening (the ring is just bouncing back and forth against the threads), you will not see the illusion. The eye and the brain, however, want to believe. Since the eye can not see the thread, the ring must be spinning around. A slow "revolution" works best. If my flick is off a little, I do not repeat it, but just continue.

Close your left fingers just a little to allow the ring to slide down toward the hand. Do not let it touch the hand. Open the hand out, flatter and wider, to cause the ring to rise again. This action is a good test for your tension awareness and for how clean the ring is. Any roughness inside the ring will either prevent it from rising, or will snap the thread. The one hand float is more difficult than the two hand version.

Pause, as though this were the end of the routine. In fact, my music ends for just a few seconds. If you are close to the audience, and sure that they can not see the thread, disengage the ring and hand it out for inspection. While it is being inspected, catch the thread under the nail of the palm up left middle finger. Retrieve the ring and hand it over the left middle finger for a moment. Gesture with the right hand, then regrasp the ring. Raise your hands for a moment, allowing time and the misdirection of the large arm movements while the left thumb reengages the thread before the right fingers slip the ring off the left middle finger.

If you choose not to hand out the ring, simply pick up the ring with the right thumb and forefinger, thumb on top, as your left hand relaxes. The thread almost automatically lays over the right thumb. As you turn to display the ring, the left hand turns in, slipping the fingers out of the loop.

You should now be in the position shown in Figure Four. If you are lost, start in that position and try to work backwards. Press against the ring with your fingertips to hold it. Bring down the thumbs and pinch the ring. Briefly raise the thumbs, then drop them again to repinch the ring. This focuses attention on the ring and makes it look as though the next move is especially difficult. Move VERY slowly during this move, to build suspense. You also need to move slowly to control and counteract the natural drift of the ring to the right.



Your thumbs act as pullies as you slowly begin to separate the hands. To counter the tendency of the ring to drift to the right, press the right forefinger against the thread just where it crosses the thumb. A little pressure here will prevent the thread from running, allowing you to keep the ring centered. The ring will slowly rise.

Once the ring is centered, rotate your hands around the thumbs, "fanning" the fingers toward the ring. This will make it appear that the fanning is causing the ring to rise. At the same time you can move your thumbs closer together or farther apart to cause the ring to rise and fall. Try to make this look as though the air from the fingers is blowing the ring around. Note Figure Five. If you have a hard time getting that look, get a feather or a small balloon and bounce it up and down in your hands to get the feel for the movement.

Before we go on, let's say a few words about pacing. I do not do this effect very often because the necessary slow pacing does not fit well into my fast paced act. All of the actions up to this point should be done slowly and elegantly. This last section picks up the tempo just a little. Do the two handed, fanning float a few times, picking up the speed of the rise and fall just a little. This change in pace acts as a transition for the final move. I even have my music pick up just a little speed.

In the two handed set up, remember that the ring is floating *above* your hands, and away from your body. Allow your body position to emphasize those points as you let the ring float down between your hands, then back up and away from the fingers. Figure Five shows the maximum height you should strive for. To stress the fact that the ring is not hanging from your nose, you can turn slightly to your left, to provide just a little profile. Turn just far enough to face the person seated on the far end of the front row. Do not turn farther, as you risk backlighting the thread.

To pass your hands over and under the ring is the final phase. This is an exercise in balance and illusion. To begin with, the ring *will* move and bounce during the waving actions, which is why you need to pick up the pace a little here. Pivot your hands on the thumbs, but this time move the hands in the opposite directions. Turn your fingers parallel to the floor and begin to rotate the hands above and below the ring. Move the hands until the ring starts to twist. Flatten your hands out and stretch the fingers out a little so that the fingertips end up just past center. Reverse the action so that the palm up hand rotates palm down "over" the ring while the other hand moves below it. This "proves" that there can be no threads or wires attached to the ring!

This move is so convincing that when I first showed it to the only other person I had discussed the routine with, he was convinced that I had abandoned the idea of looping the thread around my ear and was using a new method of suspension!

To conclude the routine, and to elicit the greatest applause, make the ring rise one more time, as high as you can. Then "catch" the ring, disengage it, and hand it out for examination. Another option is to slip it onto the wrist of your assistant and let people examine it after the show.

