



Compilation of Magic Tricks

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Table of Contents

Click on the Chapter Title to forward to a topic.

.....	1
Disclaimer.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Click on the Chapter Title to forward to a topic.....	3
Why Do You Want to Learn Magic Tricks?.....	4
What are the Easiest Tricks to Learn?.....	6
The Key to Magic – Sleight of Hand.....	8
What is an Illusion?.....	10
Easy Money Tricks Using Bills.....	12
Easy Money Tricks Using Coins.....	14
Easy Magic Tricks Using Scarves and Handkerchiefs.....	16
Fun and Simple Card Tricks.....	18
Fascinating Rope Tricks.....	20
Cups and Balls Routines.....	22
Simple Elastic Tricks.....	24
Fun Dice Tricks.....	26
Tips for Becoming a True Entertainer.....	28
How Much Practice Will it Take?.....	30
How Many Tricks Should You Perform?.....	32

Why Do You Want to Learn Magic Tricks?

Is it the mystery? Is it the glamour? Or is it the memories conjured up by that man in the black cape at your favorite party when he pulled a rabbit out of a hat? Perhaps you just want to be able to entertain the kids at your son's birthday. Whatever the reason, learning magic can be for you.

Magic has long been attractive to humans. To think that someone may have special or supernatural powers makes them extraordinary and perhaps this allure is what makes you want to learn magic tricks – to become that special person in the black cape amongst all the smoke and mystery.

Magic is an entertainment form that has been around for a very long time. It is an old form of theatre that dates back as far as ancient Egypt. Magicians baffle their audience using illusions, tricks and sleight of hand. Their techniques aren't magic, but well rehearsed actions put together in an exciting performance. There are many famous magicians, none more so than Harry Houdini.

Today, magicians are seen on stage, on the street, in restaurants and on television. Much is made of their secrets and their trickery. People are still entertained by their performances and pay good money to see a magic show. If you want to learn magic tricks for fun or for a career then there are a few things you should know.

1. Magic is all about secrecy – never reveal your tricks to anyone.
2. Practice makes perfect.
3. The basic principles of magic are misdirection, sleight of hand and illusion. Master these then you are well on the way to becoming a good magician.
4. All magicians are well prepared with their props and stage set-ups.
5. Remember you are a performer so your stage act should be as well rehearsed as your tricks.

Learning magic tricks to make money or just to entertain friends at a party is the simple part, as long as you are willing to practice. Keeping the mystery may not be as easy because your audiences will always be begging you to reveal your secrets.

So if you are serious about becoming a magician find out all about the craft by reading up on it, visiting magic stores and talking to other magicians. Do your tricks with confidence and hold your audience's attention throughout your act. Enjoy the reactions of your audiences as you surprise them with your magic!

What are the Easiest Tricks to Learn?

The easiest magic tricks are card tricks. They need limited props and can be accomplished with a minimum amount of fuss and a little bit of practice. Kids and adults alike are able to perform simple card tricks and they are easy to perform when asked for 'on the spot'.

Some simple card tricks to start with are:

1. Who's Lying? Have a pack of cards ready, knowing what card is on the bottom of the deck. Ask someone from the audience to select a card from the fanned-out pack. He now shows the audience the card, but not you.

While they are looking at the card, close the fan of cards and leave the pile face down on the table. Get the volunteer to cut the deck into equal piles and to place his card on the top of the pile you indicate. Now place the other pile ON TOP of the volunteer's card. The card that was at the bottom of the pack was the one YOU MEMORIZED earlier and will now be on top of the volunteer's chosen card. Now ask the volunteer to say "No" every time you turn over a card, even when her own card has been turned up.

You say that the cards will tell you when the volunteer is lying. You will know when the selected card is imminent because your memorized card will be the one before it. When you turn over the selected volunteer's card and your volunteer says "No", you yell out "Liar!"

2. Tens are Up. You will need an Assistant for this trick. Select ten cards from the pack, including one Number 10 card. Place the cards upright on a table, in the same array as the spots on the Number 10 card, (H-shape) You tell a volunteer to select a card while you aren't looking. Your assistant will now help you figure out which card

the volunteer chose. The assistant touches each card in turn saying “Is it this one?” Once your assistant has touched all ten cards you point to the one the volunteer chose. You will know which card it is by the SPOT on the Number 10 card your assistant touched. It will correspond with the volunteer’s choice as you have laid out your cards in the Number 10 array. This is one trick you can repeat over and over no one will be able to guess how you did it!

Some other easy tricks that don’t require sleight of hand or expensive props are: Mind Reading with numbers – there are plenty of these around that use number games to trick even the most astute audience member; or try the Disjointed Thumb where your thumb seems to come apart and rejoin at will; what about the Banana Buster, where you magically make a banana divide into pieces while it’s still inside its peel. These are easy tricks with simple props that take a minimum amount of practice and skill. See how you go!

The Key to Magic – Sleight of Hand

Sleight of hand (also known as legerdemain or prestidigitation) is impressive if you can master it. Magicians who perform sleight of hand tricks are well regarded in the magic world because perfecting these types of tricks takes many, many hours of practice. Not all magicians are diligent and patient enough to use sleight of hand in their magic show.

This branch of magic relies on the hand skill of the magician, not magic tricks bought from the magic store. The magician uses cards or coins and manipulates them in such a way that the audience believes ‘true magic’ has occurred. The swiftness of the hand tricks the observers in such a way that the eye is fooled.

Magicians using sleight of hand techniques are usually performing close-up magic where the audience is very close and can seemingly watch their every move. If the ‘sleight of hand’ is performed well, the magician makes the move look completely natural and the audience is bewildered by what has happened.

If you want to perfect this magical technique you will need to work on your hand dexterity and your ability to ‘misdirect’ your audience. Your movements will be choreographed in such a way that your spectators will look where you want them to – away from the ‘sleight’.

Sleight of hand tricks fall into the categories of false shuffles, switching, changing, false dealing, passes and double lifts. When you begin to practice your sleight of hand moves, be prepared to fail. Your hands won’t move as you want them to and your cards or coins won’t behave as in the instruction booklet. It takes plenty of patience and practice to become accomplished at this type of magic trick.

Set aside ten minutes every day when your hands aren't tired and your concentration is good. Follow the instructions exactly, making sure your hands or fingers are holding the cards in exactly the right place. Do the trick slowly, over and over, until it feels right. Once you can do it without looking at the instructions, you are making progress. Don't stop there. Keep practicing as your moves will become smoother and the 'trick' less obvious. You need your sleight to be automatic, without you watching your hands. Your confidence will build with each practice session and then you can show the trick to family and friends. See if you can fool them.

If you decide you want to use sleight of hand as part of your magic show you will be well regarded by other magicians and your audience. It is hard work, but well worth the effort when smooth moves fall into place.

What is an Illusion?

In truth, magic is really the art of illusion. It's all about making you believe something happened when perhaps it didn't. Magicians create illusions to make the audience believe they are seeing something impossible happen.

Believing you saw something happen is a sensory illusion. Magicians will use mirrors and hidden gadgets to create these illusions. Mirrors, in particular, fool the human eye into believing that space or an object is there when it's not. For example in the trick 'the disembodied head' the use of mirrors and reflected light makes a head appear to be floating by itself.

Another magical illusion is the 'the light and heavy box' trick that was originally invented by the father of modern magic Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdini. An observer easily lifts a large box but when the magician says his magic words, suddenly the box is too heavy to lift. This trick uses hidden magnet devices to pull the box to the floor when a switch is thrown. Although nowadays this isn't a sophisticated trick as people are aware of magnetic properties, it was a popular illusion when Robert Houdini first started using it in his magical shows.

Levitation is an illusion used by many magicians – but just how do they get the body to appear to rise? One simple levitation trick, the Balducci method, involves using angles. The audience has to be on a 45-degree angle and your trousers have to be long! You pretend to levitate a couple of inches off the ground by standing on your tiptoes of one foot, with your other foot slightly off the floor. You will appear to rise slowly, your trousers will cover the toes still on the ground and the angle will fool the audience.

Levitating objects is also a simple illusion. Invisible threads can be attached to small objects and the magician can make them appear to rise unexpectedly. The movements required and the positioning of the thread need to be practiced, but the effect will have your audience amazed.

Your magic show can have lots of illusions. You may even like to start off with some optical illusions drawn on paper. Simple tricks using drawn arrows are easy and fun to do. Try this optical illusion trick:

Draw an arrow on a piece of paper that has been folded in half. Have the arrow pointing left or right. Stand the folded paper on a table. Place an empty tumbler in front of the arrow. Ask a member of the audience to turn the arrow around without touching the tumbler or the paper. They can't do it – but you can! Fill the tumbler with water and Abracadabra! - the arrow turns the opposite way. This simple illusion will amaze your audience.

Easy Money Tricks Using Bills

Using sleight of hand, misdirection and illusion skills you can perform simple magic tricks with dollar bills. Some tricks require gimmicks from the magic store, others just require a bit of practice. Try these dollar bill tricks:

1. The Disappearing Dollar. The magician holds three bills of the same value in his hand for the audience to see. One will magically disappear. Prepare a bill before the trick by folding it over two thirds across. With a second bill, place it over the fold, hiding the crease, but making it look like there are three bills in your hands. In front of the audience, say that you are going to make money disappear and show the two bills (which look like three) to the audience. Hold the top of the dollar bills between your thumb and forefinger and shake them so as the folded bill unfolds. The illusion of three bills becoming two is complete!

2. Magic Money – this works on pure trickery! Get an audience member to lend you \$20 to put in a matchbox. Show the audience that you will also put \$20 in the matchbox. Now tell the volunteer that you will sell them the matchbox for \$30 – a bargain! Pay \$30 to get \$40 – they are winning! Or are they? You get \$30 for a \$20 outlay and the volunteer has actually paid \$50 (first \$20 plus the \$30 for the box) for the \$40 in the box. Time for you to leave!

3. The Jumping Paper Clip. This trick is where paper clips are attached to a dollar bill that link together and jump from the bill. You will need a bill and two paper clips. Curve the bill into an 'S' shape. Place the paper clips over the top of the 'S' to close it. You place one paper clip over the top loop of the 'S' and the other closing the bottom loop of the 'S'. Now slowly pull the ends of the bill. This will make the clips slide towards the center of the bill, when they meet they will link up and jump off the bill!

Other easy money tricks you can investigate further are ones like the Pen through the Dollar Trick and the Folding Paper Bill Trick. Imagine how surprised your audience will be when you ask for a \$20 or \$50 bill and place a pen directly through the centre of the bill? And they will be even more surprised when you remove the pen and guess what? There is no hole or mark of any kind left on the bill.

The self-folding dollar bill is another popular trick used by magicians. Take a dollar bill from your pocket and lay it across your palm. Suddenly it begins to move and then fold over! The bill creases over all by itself. The levitating dollar will get the same results. Imagine your audiences' reaction when they see a bill mysteriously lift off your palm.

These bill tricks are special ones bought from the magic store. Many are available. Choose the ones that appeal to you most.

Easy Money Tricks Using Coins

There are plenty of easy coin tricks to try. After you have mastered some of these you might even feel like inventing your own. Remember illusions, sleight of hand and misdirection play a large role in these tricks.

Practice this coin ‘sleight of hand trick’ to get you started:

Place a coin between your index and middle finger. The coin shouldn't be visible if your hand is open with your palm up. Now you want to appear to pull the coin out of thin air. You do this by turning your fingers in towards your palm and maneuvering the coin out with your thumb. Practice this in front of a mirror until you can do it quickly and smoothly.

How about the Disappearing Coin trick? One way to make a coin disappear (there are many variations on this trick) is to put your left elbow on the table, with your hand grabbing the back of your neck. With your right hand rub a coin against your arm. Keep the coin covered so the audience can't see it. Keep rubbing then ‘accidentally’ drop it. Now pick it up with your left hand and pretend to put it in your right hand. Now go back to the starting position, all the while pushing the coin from your left hand into the back of your neck so it sticks there. Show both hands to your audience and the coin has magically disappeared!

Using misdirection you can easily fool your audience with the Palm Vanish trick. Hold a coin in the centre of your left palm. Now pretend to toss the coin into the right hand but all the while it really remains in the original hand. Close your right hand as if you caught the coin. Misdirect your audience while you get rid of the coin from the left hand. Show your palms to the audience – no coin!

Now using your sleight of hand and misdirection techniques, you can try the Coin Bite Trick. Have a prepared coin with one side filed down to look like someone has taken a bite out of it (or buy the prop from the magic store). Have the prepared coin hidden between your thumb and forefinger as in the first example. Ask someone in the audience if you can borrow a quarter or dime (the same as the coin you have prepared). Take the offered coin and secretly switch it with your thumb and forefinger by sliding the volunteer's coin to the back of your finger. Now bite the prepared coin and show the audience how you have taken a chomp out of their coin!

These are just a few simple coin tricks to get you going. Check out your local magic store or the internet for more easy coin tricks.

Easy Magic Tricks Using Scarves and Handkerchiefs

Scarves and handkerchiefs are great for magic tricks as they are colorful and full of surprises. Everyone has seen the silk scarves changing color while being pulled out of a sleeve and what magician hasn't made something disappear under a handkerchief? Try these easy tricks with your scarves and handkerchiefs and amaze your audience:

1. The Hypnotized Handkerchief. You will need a drinking straw and a handkerchief that has a stitched hem big enough to fit the straw into it. Flatten the straw and now sew it into one of the hems of the handkerchief. Now for the trick – grasp the corner above the sewn-in straw and tie a knot in that corner, allowing the handkerchief to hang down from the knot. Tell the audience you are going to hypnotize the handkerchief. Grab the corner at the base of the straw with your other hand and release the knot end, letting it fall. Using your performance skills pretend to hypnotize the handkerchief with your free hand. Your thumb on the hand holding the handkerchief can now move the straw, causing it to slowly lift up and appear to be balanced on your fingers! Practice this trick and see what type of 'hypnotic' movements you can get the handkerchief to make.

2. The Self-Tying Handkerchief – using sleight of hand and misdirection will make this a simple but effective trick. You will need one cloth handkerchief. Have a knot already tied in the corner and keep the handkerchief hidden in your pocket. Announce to your audience that using only one hand you can tie a knot in the handkerchief. Now pull the handkerchief out of your pocket but make sure your hand has grasped the end with the knot, keeping it hidden from the audience. Pick up the other end of the handkerchief so both corners are in your hand, snap the handkerchief and release the knotless end. Pick up this corner and repeat the snapping action. Again no knot will be there. On the third go, release the end with the knot, making it look like you have made a knot without even trying!

3. Signed Cork – a magic trick that is a ruse! You will need a silk scarf and an empty wine bottle with cork. At the beginning of the magic show get someone in the audience to sign the cork. Now push the cork completely into the bottle so it is rattling around inside. Pass the bottle around the audience during the rest of your show to see if anyone can remove it – no one will be able to. When you are ready to remove the cork explain to the audience that you must have some privacy and disappear off stage (invent some humorous story at this point). Now using your silk scarf, hold on to two diagonally opposite corners and push the centre of the scarf into the bottle. Manipulate the scarf in the bottle so as the cork sits in it and now pull firmly and the scarf and cork will come out of the bottle. You can now return to your audience, showing them the signed cork safely retrieved.

Fun and Simple Card Tricks

As a budding magician, you should always carry a pack of cards around with you. They are small props and can easily be produced to perform simple tricks for any willing audience. Try these fun card tricks:

1. An easy trick to start with is one using a technique called 'Card Forcing'. This is where you 'force' your volunteer to select the card you want him to select. Have a pack of cards ready, having memorized the top card. Tell your audience you are going to select six cards from the pack at random. Take the top card (the one you have memorized) and five others from the pack. Now place the six cards in two rows of three face down, having your memorized card in the top row on the right hand (or wherever you want to place it, but remember its position!). Now here's where the force begins – ask a volunteer to select a row. If he chooses the top row, remove the bottom three cards, if he selects the bottom row, say something like “we'll remove this row, then”, making sure you keep the row with the forced card. Get the volunteer to now select two cards from the three remaining. Again using your patter make sure that you remove the two cards which aren't the forced one. Now you can announce that the card left is “The Ace of Spades” or whatever it is. Turn it over and reveal that you are correct!

2. Making cards disappear in to thin air or 'back palming' is a great trick – if you can master it. Hold a card in your hand between your thumb and fingers, with the face of the card shown to the audience. Pretend to toss the card in to the air (you've practiced this, right?), but you don't actually throw the card. Instead you make a fist and slip your fingers behind the card with your thumb pressing against your knuckles. You are in the process of making the card pass to the back of your hand so now you squeeze the long edges of the card between your knuckles and lift up your thumb. Begin to stretch your fingers outright as the card disappears to the back of your hand, still being held between your fingers. Do this trick slowly at first, in front of a mirror.

Keep repeating until your movements are fluid and you can't see the card 'disappearing' behind your hand. Once you have mastered this trick you may want to try and make cards 'appear' out of thin air!

Psychic predictions, making cards move, fancy shuffles, sticking cards to the ceiling, are all easy card tricks but as with all magic tricks, you will need to practice them until you get them right.

Fascinating Rope Tricks

Probably one of the most famous rope tricks is the Indian Rope Trick. This trick has been around for a very long time and originates in India. The trick goes something like this: The performer (usually an Indian Fakir) would take a length of rope from a basket and toss it in the air. Amazingly the rope would stay suspended straight up in the air. A child then climbs the rope and disappears up into the sky, seemingly vanishing. The performer would call the child down but the child refuses. The Fakir would produce a large knife, climb up after the boy and too disappear. Above them, the audience would hear screams and parts of the boy's body would be thrown to the ground. The performer then climbs back down the rope, throws a cloth over the dismembered body says some magic words and magically the child would reappear all in one piece. This trick was usually performed in the gathering dark enabling the magician to use props to hold the rope up so it was strong enough to be climbed up. Bits of shaved monkey would be used as the body parts and misdirection used to get the boy to reappear under the cloth.

Now for a simpler rope trick, without the use of body parts! The Ring Wrap involves the magician using a ring and some string. The magician wraps the string around the ring (not through it). A spectator is asked to pull on the end of the string, in doing so he expects the string to unravel and the ring to fall on the floor. However the string has magically threaded itself through the ring. The magician secretly threading the string through the ring right at the beginning achieves this trick. Misdirection and sleight of hand are used to perform this trickery at speed.

A great rope trick for beginners is the Professor's Nightmare. The magician shows the audience the three lengths of rope (long, medium and short). Once the audience has inspected the ropes, the magician will place each length of rope in his hands and pulls hard on the ropes. Amazingly the ropes become three ropes of equal length. Some magicians may then turn the ropes back into their three original sizes. An easy rope

trick to perform but the beginner magician will need to purchase the 'special' ropes from a magic store.

Rope tricks, on their own or with rings, can be a great part of your performance. They are visually appealing and many are quite simple to learn.

Cups and Balls Routines

Perhaps the oldest type of magic trick, cups and balls routines have been around for centuries. If you are going to use the cups and balls routine in your magic show, you will need to be adept at sleight of hand and misdirection techniques. You will also need to purchase special ‘magic’ cups and balls from the magic store. These can vary in price – start at the cheaper end until you have perfected your routine.

Here is one Cups and Balls routine:

You will need three small balls and three cups that can be stacked up on each other. Place two cups on top of each other, upside down. Now place a ball on the top. Finish by stacking the third cup on top of the ball, over the whole stack. Now lift up the stack and voila! The ball has magically moved through two cups and is sitting on the table. Now you will again stack two of the cups and put them over this magical ball. Put another ball on top of the stack and again place the third cup over the lot. Again when you lift up the stack, the ball will have passed through the two cups and be sitting next to the first ball on the table. Repeat the process again with the third ball and again you will find this ball moves through the cups to be sitting with the first two balls – magic! The trick is made possible by an extra ball being hidden in one of the cups, enabling it to fall on the table when required.

This routine has been performed in many different ways, with balls turning up in amazing places or moving from other locations to appear under the cups. Some magicians have used larger objects (such as potatoes, fruit and even animals) to do the same trick.

Palming is also used in variations of this trick, where a ball is seemingly transferred from one hand to the other but it is actually retained in the original hand. When a cup is lifted to show there is nothing under it, the palmed ball is secretly released under the cup so when the ball appears to have vanished from the hand, it magically turns up

under the cup. This magic trick is an adaptation of the ancient three shell game. In this trick the magician will actually have six cups, not three, but the audience only sees three. Three cups will be empty and three will have balls in them. Using misdirection and classic sleight of hand moves, the magician is able to switch cups at will, making the balls disappear by swapping the cups with empty ones. When he wants to make the ball reappear, the cups will be swapped again. If you have practiced this you can make the moves swiftly, without any detection. This is one trick you can repeat over and over again, making the balls disappear and reappear at will.

Simple Elastic Tricks

Performing tricks with elastic or rubber bands is another popular form of magic. The easiest of rubber band tricks is the Jumping Rubber Band, which uses the simple prop of one rubber band. In this trick the magician places a rubber band over two fingers. He clicks his fingers on the other hand and the audience sees the rubber band magically jump from the first two fingers to the next two! Perform this trick by placing the rubber band over the first and second fingers of your left hand. Prove to the audience that the band is only around two fingers by stretching it up. Now close your fingers over towards you and secretly stretch the rubber band over all four fingers. This part you will need to practice until you can do it quickly and with a minimum amount of finger movement. You will be able to see the rubber band stretched over four fingers but the audience won't. When it's time to open your hands, the band makes the switch easily to just the last two fingers.

Another trick, slightly harder, but still easy enough to perform by the beginner, is the Handkerchief and Coin trick. The secret to making this trick work is the hidden rubber band. What the audience sees is the magician putting a coin into a handkerchief, shaking the handkerchief out and the coin having vanished. What you have done before you carry out this trick is to secretly have a rubber band around your thumb and forefinger of the hand that the handkerchief will be placed over. Now when you drop the coin into the handkerchief you let the rubber band slide off your fingers so it surrounds the coin and a small part of the handkerchief, but it remains hidden under the handkerchief. Now you slide your rubber band hand up to the corner of the handkerchief and shake it (not too wildly!). No coin falls out as it is held fast by the rubber band in the handkerchief. Magic! The coin has seemingly disappeared.

Rubber bands and colored elastics are used in many performances. If they are to be a large part of your show, you will probably need to purchase demonstration videos and practice to perfect your manual dexterity. Rubber bands designed for magic tricks can

be bought at most magic stores. Every day office rubber bands will suffice for a number of tricks.

Fun Dice Tricks

Performing dice tricks is fun and easy. Keeping in mind the simple premise that the numbers on the dice are predictable (opposite sides on the dice add up to seven), you can get a lot of mileage out of these little cubes! Try these tricks out:

The Bartender's Psychic Dice Trick:

You will need three dice, a tumbler full of water and a volunteer for this trick. Get the volunteer to drop the dice into the tumbler and ask them to hold up the tumbler and add up the numbers on the bottom of the dice. Now ask him to place the tumbler back down on the table. Reach in and grab the dice and rub them on your forehead. Now reveal the total of the dice to the volunteer. You will know the number because you saw the dice's upward faces. You have added them up in your head and subtracted that number from 21 – the answer you get is the total of the bottom faces of the dice. Remembering that the opposite faces of a dice always add up to seven, you have three dice so three times seven is 21. If the bottom numbers were two, three and five, their total is ten. The top numbers will be five, four and two – a total of eleven. Eleven plus ten equals 21. A simple but effect dice trick!

Another version of this trick is the Dinky Dice trick. Using three dice and get a volunteer to roll them and then stack them one on top of the other while your back is turned. While you can't see, tell them to add up all five faces of the dice, which are hidden (that will be the two faces on the bottom and middle dice, plus the bottom face of the third die). Now we already know that six faces in alignment will add up to 21. When you turn and see the top dice is the number three, you can quickly tell the audience that the volunteer's added number is eighteen and you'll be correct!

Another trick that your audience will be amazed by, before they work out the simplicity of it, is the Clock Face and Magic Die trick. You will need one die and a watch or clock. Tell your volunteer to select a number from the clock but don't reveal

it. Now tell them to find the opposite number on the clock (for example, three is opposite nine) and subtract the smaller number from the larger one. To this number they must add one and remember the final number. The magician (that's you!) rolls the die and say that the number that appears on the die, plus the one on the opposite side will add up to the number they have in their head! The two faces on the die will always add up to seven (we know that already), and the math formula from the clock face will always add up to seven – tricky, but very effective!

There are plenty more dice tricks like these ones – have fun with them!

Tips for Becoming a True Entertainer

A number of components make up a good performance. Follow these tips and you will become a true magical entertainer:

1. Practice. And practice. You must have practiced your routine over and over until you can do it without a hitch. Master all your tricks, and then do them in front of the mirror to ensure that your sleights and palmings can't be detected. Once you have everything perfect – practice some more!
2. Read lots of books on magic and watch plenty of videos. Find out what sorts of tricks are appealing to you. Join a magician's club and learn from the experts. Absorb as much information as you can before you give a performance.
3. Good entertainers in the magic world create a character for themselves and have a 'patter' going throughout their act. Your patter is very important. Use it to tell a story, distract the audience, keep them laughing – whatever. Do what works for you. Many famous magicians don't use patter, their acts are completely silent but when starting out patter is an important part of the act. It can help with the nerves and it can help you out when a trick goes wrong. Know your on-stage character well before you start. Putting on your magician's outfit should help you get into character and prepare you for your show.
4. Be confident. If you are confident your tricks will come off much better. How do you become confident? See Tip 1.
5. Some of your tricks may rely on illusion so you will need to ensure that the audience sits where you want them. Remember your angles and how important they are to some of your tricks. You don't want a trick spoiled if a spectator glimpses a palming effect or a sleight of hand. Have the seating arrangement in order before you start and keep the audience seated throughout your act.

6. When you select the tricks for your show, use all your best ones. Have a list of all the tricks you are going to perform. Start with ones that are visual such as using scarves or handkerchiefs. Keep your favorites, the ones you are best at, for the end. You want the show to end on a high note!

7. Are you going to have an assistant? A magician's assistant can add glamour or humor to an act.

8. Keep your act simple, especially when you are starting out. Where possible, borrow your props from the audience (pens, coins, bills etc). It will make your act seem more 'real' if you don't always use stage props.

9. Only do each trick once. Resist the temptation to repeat a particularly good trick.

10. Never tell your audience how the trick was done. Remember the magician's code – keep it a mystery.

How Much Practice Will it Take?

Plenty! To become an accomplished magician, like with any skill or job, you will need to practice your craft until you are proficient. The more you practice, the more comfortable you will be with performing the tricks and this will help with your stage performance. You want to make your tricks look simple and easy to perform and this can only be accomplished by plenty of preparation.

As a magician, you will perform a number of different types of tricks, but there are really only three techniques you need to perfect that will enable you to carry out any trick you want. All of these must be practiced to convince your audience that 'magic' has occurred.

Sleight of hand and/or palming enable you to quickly maneuver objects so that they seem to have appeared or disappeared. The techniques to perfect sleight are probably the ones you will need to practice the most. You should aim to improve finger and hand dexterity and this can be tiring at first. When learning a new skill in this area, give yourself only ten to fifteen minutes a day to improve on the skill. More than this and your hands will become fatigued. Once you have learnt the maneuvers for your digits, then you can spend longer times rehearsing the entire trick. Patience, as well as practice, when learning sleights, is paramount.

Misdirection is the next technique you will need to master. Misdirection involves getting the audience to look away, while you are doing something outside their vision. You may use visual or audible props to achieve this - such as a loud bang or another object. Some magicians use an assistant. Assistants look like they are there to help with the magic trick, but in essence they are a misdirection technique. They entice the audience to watch them, rather than the magician. As with sleights of hand, misdirection must be practiced. It must also be well planned. Remember your whole performance is a well-choreographed act that needs to be worked out right down to the finest detail. And that brings us to the final technique a magician needs to perfect.

Patter – your stage talk. Remember you are playing a role. Your lines will be as well rehearsed as your actions. Are you going to be a funny or a serious magician? Are you telling a story throughout each trick? Whatever you decide, your stage presence is part of the magician's mystic as it helps to keep the audience focused on what you want them to see – not on what your other hand is doing.

Practice every day and remember the old adage – practice really does make perfect.

How Many Tricks Should You Perform?

It really depends on how long you want your magic show to go for, but in truth, you should only perform the tricks you are really proficient at. All of your tricks should be so well rehearsed that you are confident with each of them.

There are a few tips to keep in mind when planning your magic show and working out how many tricks you should have.

1. Don't repeat a trick – no matter how many times the audience might ask to see it again. You want to keep the mystery and not reveal your secret. Performing a trick more than once will give the audience time to try and work out the 'trick'.
2. Performing one trick well is far better than trying to pull off one hundred tricks poorly. At first you may only have one trick 'up your sleeve' (so to speak). Carry this trick around and perform it to willing spectators. This spontaneous type of magic will help you gain confidence and give you more opportunities to practice your magic, until you are ready to put together a full magic show.
3. Keep your show simple, especially in the beginning. You will improve with each performance.
4. Consider your audience – are you performing for adults or children? Kids will cry out for more and probably want lots of quick simple tricks. Holding their attention is going to be your biggest challenge. With adults, you will be able to perform more complicated, sophisticated tricks. Just make sure you have practiced these until they are perfect. Adults will be much harsher critics than kids!
5. When you are choreographing your show, start with simple flashy tricks and build up to the trick you perform the best. End your show on a high. You want your magic show to be remembered for all the right reasons.

6. Have each trick leading in to the next. You can manage this by the 'stage patter' you give. Are you spinning a story throughout your act? Do all the tricks relate because of the type of trick they are? Think about this and have it as well planned and rehearsed as your tricks are.

7. Always finish your act with your audience crying for more. If you can perform eight tricks really well, then do seven in your show. Don't give them your last trick unless they ask for it.

Planning the show and the tricks you want to perform will be a challenge. You will need a few performances to feel how many tricks are right for you. Start small and increase as you go. But always remember, a good magic show is a well-rehearsed one!