



Inside Ed's Head

June 2013

The Diagonal Palm Shift (Easier Done than Said)

The Diagonal Palm Shift is a sleight that gets a card that is protruding from the front of the deck, into a left-hand palm as you are apparently pushing the card flush. It is not a terribly difficult move to do, but is not an easy move to learn, because a whole lot of stuff happens in very short time. I suspect that most people who first encountered the move in Erdnase's Expert at the Card Table, p137, gave up on it in short order. I did, many times, but curiosity kept drawing me back, and eventually I stumbled on a method of learning it that made all the difference. I'll try to impart that knowledge to you, because I think that imperceptibly stealing a card from the deck as you give it to a spectator to shuffle is an extremely valuable magician's tool.

My "secret" for learning the move was doing it with only **ONE** card, and then learning it with the full deck. Here's how I approached it:

First, you should make sure you don't have dry hands. If you have a tough time palming cards, dry hands are usually the culprit. I use a spray of Chamberlain's Golden Touch Lotion. It works wonders for me, but there are many products out there that magicians use, so try a few until you find one you like.

Start by holding a single card in mechanics grip in your left hand, and then move it backwards in your hand, so your left pinky is approximately at the middle of the right side of the card.



Photo 1

Place your right hand over the card, with your **right thumb** on the left side of the card, near the top.



Photo 2

You should now be able to hold the card with your right thumb and left pinky (although you won't actually need to do that when you use the whole deck, it's important that you get the feel of holding the card this way.



Photo 3. Right fingers curled for visibility purposes.

Notice that by moving your thumb clockwise and your pinky a little into your palm, you can position the card directly over your left palm.



Photo 4, 5. Right fingers curled for visibility purposes

Practice moving the card between your right thumb and left pinky until you're confident you can control the positioning of the card into a left-hand classic palm. Once you've done that, you have to learn how to get the card between those fingers from the starting position of a card out-

jogged in the center of the deck. **Don't leave this step out!** The key to understanding and performing this sleight successfully lies in your ability to effortlessly pivot the card around your right thumb in a clockwise direction, into your left palm.

I've spent the initial part of this discussion with the **last** part of the move, because it's important to get the feel of pivoting the card between your right thumb and left pinky; but now let's talk about the move from its outset.

The standard way of getting a card in position for the diagonal palm shift is either to have the spectator push the card into the center of the deck, which you are squeezing hard enough to keep the card from going in all the way. The other way is to simply take the card and insert it half-way yourself. I'm not fond of either of these methods. Asking the spectator to insert the card in the middle of the squared deck, and then not letting him do as you asked, smacks of deceit. It makes people suspicious of what you're about to do next, at precisely the point where you are going to execute a sleight. The same holds true about taking their selection from them.

I like to spread the cards, and ask that one of them be touched. I then out-jog this card, square the deck around it, and display it to the spectator and the audience, while I turn my head.



Photo 6

Now there is a three phase procedure that gets the card into the deck, out the back, and into your palm, all in about a second.

Your goal in the first step is to push the card into the deck in an angle-jogged position. We'll use a Jerry Andrus technique to get this done. Place your right thumb at the extreme left of the lower side of the deck, and your right fingers at about the center of the out-jogged card. As you do this, squeeze the deck with your **left middle** finger. Your left thumb lies along side (but **not pressing** on) the left side of the deck.

Now your right fingers push straight back on the card. The pressure exerted by the left middle finger will cause the card to angle to the left as the card is pushed. By the time your right fingers stop at the end of the deck, the top left corner of the card should be sticking out of the left side of the deck, hidden by and slightly below your left thumb, and the lower left side should be protruding from the bottom, just to the right of your right thumb. The lower right side of the card should be protruding from the right side, touching your left pinky. The right hand hides all of this. This ends the first phase.



Photo 7. Right hand removed.
View from top.

Photo 8. Left hand removed.
View from bottom.

Now you are going to move the card from its angle-jogged position, to a back-jogged position, so you can pivot it out of the deck into your palm. Controlling the deck with your right hand, thumb at the back and fingers at the front, slide your left hand rearward, controlling the upper left corner with your thumb, and the right side with your pinky, until the card is in this position.

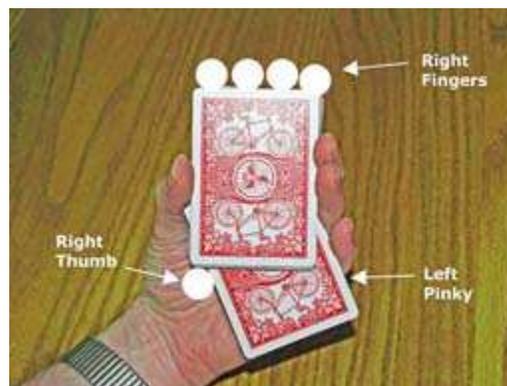


Photo 9 (Right hand removed for clarity)

Note: As the left thumb moves the card backwards, the left side of the deck moves away from the palm somewhat, to enable the thumb to maintain contact.

Now you are in the exact position you had when practicing with one card. (Compare photo 9 to photos 4 and 5.) If you've practiced with one card, you should realize that it is now a simple matter to pivot the card around your right thumb directly into your left palm. All you do is move the deck to your right, or clockwise, as your left pinky bends, to position the correctly.



Photo 10 card ready to be palmed

From here, you have two options: you can palm the card as you apparently square the deck and place in your left hand, hiding the palmed card, or you can palm it as you give the deck to the spectator, or place it on the table.

In the first method, you must realize the fundamental importance of keeping your left thumb in contact with the deck until the move is completed. Your spectator will see your thumb moving from the front of the deck, to the rear, and then to the front again, this looks like as a normal squaring action.

From photo 10, you'll move the deck in a counter-clockwise manner, so the upper left corner of the selection will disengage smoothly from the deck. **After** you've done this, you can bend the card into a natural left hand palm position as you raise the right side of the deck between the ball of your left thumb and fingertips, and finish the squaring action. (If you hear a "click" as you palm the card, it's because you bent the card into your left palm before disengaging it from the deck.

Your second option is much easier. From the position in photo 10, all you have to do is move the whole deck to the right to disengage the card from the deck, leaving the card palmed in your left hand. My favorite position for holding out a palmed card looks like this:



Photo 11 holding out a palmed card
in my left hand

If you want to add the card back to the deck, and you don't know how to do a bottom replacement, you can look at Roberto Giobbi's [Card College 3](#), p. 729, or wait until next month, when I teach it, and more.

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