



# Hula HOOPS

## Whirling Back Around Again

by Judi Burton

Maybe you saw a thin, graceful girl “hula hoop dancing” to the beat of a band at a music festival and said to yourself, “I can do that!” Her rhythmic body movement showed off her sleek arms and rigid core as she thrust the hoop against her body in a strong yet feminine motion. You were reminded of those flimsy hula hoops your dad bought you as a kid and reminisced on how long you could keep it whirling around your waist.

“I used to do that, I was good at that, I can still do that,” you might have thought. It’s true, you can! The hoops may have evolved and your dancing style may be hopelessly out of fashion, but the joy you feel while hooping has stayed the same.

Using the hula hoop to music, or “hooping,” is the art of combining child-like laughter with intense physical motion, while staying on beat. The revolving force around your pelvis, arms and chest can inspire smiles and at the same time build super-defined muscles. Take it from Kristan “Cuban” Telado of Garden City, SC, who has been hooping avidly for more than a year. I met with her on a breezy summer morning to find out more about the exercise fad. Her obsession with finding her rhythm left several bruises on her waist and glee in her heart until she finally got the hang of it. “It’s fulfilling,” says Cuban. “A feeling of pride and success wells up in you. You feel beautiful, graceful and sensual.”

I asked her what kind of physical differences one will feel after hooping for a while. Cuban became wide-eyed and started spouting off a long list of muscles that hooping helps work and tone, including the abdominals, core muscles, legs, buttocks, triceps, biceps, back, shoulders, chest, neck and, surprisingly, facial muscles. She attributed the former to the massive amounts of laughing you do while hooping.

Cuban also spent some time speaking about the “sacral chakra,” which, to non-Reiki readers, refers to the chakra governing the reproductive organs. She pointed out that chakras are our “inner orbs,” similar to the mechanics of a clock. If one cog is out of place, the clock doesn’t run. Creating spirals around your sacral chakra creates a sphere of pleasure around your pleasure sphere. Many

women feel shy about moving their body in this, as some would say, provocative manner, so hooping gives you permission to feel sensual in public without dancing on table tops in the local bar.

Hooping for men is not as uncommon as some may think. Techniques such as “isolations” and “the touch” have made for very theatrical and mesmerizing shows. The men who have mastered the art of hooping use their arms more, displaying sculpted upper bodies. In fact, several Native American tribes boast the best male hoopers in the world.

For Cuban and thousands of others around the world, hooping is not just an exercise, but an art form. It is a way to let go and reconnect with your inner child. It’s therapeutic mentally and physically, and costs a lot less than a Bowflex machine or gym membership. Your waist will shrink and your confidence will expand as onlookers watch you dance and sway gracefully to the beat. Your mate will swell with pride at his whirling goddess, and your kids will get a new game they can play with mommy.

### Getting the Rhythm Down

If you’re right handed, put your right foot in front and face forward. For those who practice yoga, imagine a slack warrior pose. Place the hoop high on your hips, and with a semi-forceful swing, whip it around you to the left, but don’t move your hips side to side. Instead, swing them gently but quickly front to back, letting the hoop bounce off the sides of your hips and allowing centrifugal force to pull the hoop around. Don’t expect to get it right away, or maybe even after many tries. “Once you get a good rhythm down, close your eyes and stop thinking; just feel the hoop,” advises Cuban. “There are hundreds of free tutorials online to help you along, but just a warning, don’t get discouraged when you realize you don’t hoop like the girl in the video. Everyone has a unique flow.”

### Making Your Own Custom Hoop

Using irrigation pipe and a connector from the hardware store, you can make your own custom hoop for very little

cost. To make a hoop, measure yourself from floor to hip. That dimension will be the diameter of the hoop. Cut the necessary length of 1 inch irrigation pipe with irrigation pipe cutters. The ends will be jagged, but don't worry about that yet. Using a blow dryer or a large pot of almost boiling water, heat each end and wedge the pipe connector into the ends of the pipe, taking care not to burn yourself. Let it cool, and then wrap duct tape or other colorful plastic tape around the connector to seal it.

Some may put water or sand in their pipe before connecting, but Cuban does not recommend it for beginners. "It will throw your balance off if you aren't expert yet," she says. For a cool "swish-swish" sound effect, put rice in the tube instead.

Select your tape and start winding it around the pipe diagonally. Any special tape, like neon or holographic tape should be applied first. Once you've gotten all the way around, you can apply the other tapes. If your custom hoop gets scratched or messy from sweat and hard use, simply split the tape with a knife, unwrap and tape again fresh. Keep it away from pets that like to chew.



#### Adult Hoop

1" irrigation piping at 100 yards costs \$35 and makes 6 or 7 hoops. 1" connectors are 50 cents each. You need one for each hoop. An irrigation pipe cutter costs \$8.

#### Kids Hoop

For kids, use 1/2" irrigation piping. For \$20 you can get 100 yards and make 9 to 10 hoops. 1/2" connectors are 50 cents each. You need one for each hoop. Tape, 5 rolls for \$25. Gaffer's tape is Cuban's choice, with cool colors and better grip. Duct tape is less expensive, but will need more repairs, and electrical tape is inexpensive but slippery. Try Tapebrothers.com for tapes with glitter, holographics and tie-dye patterns.

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