Hard magic tricks for kids: the Wizard tricks that take days

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The seven Wizard tricks in Peabody's Magic Shop, each with its honest number of days, the one secret move it asks for, and how a child gets there a little each evening.

The hard tricks in the Peabody Magic Shop are the seven Wizard tricks, and each one says honestly how long it takes: two to four days for the quickest, three to six for the longest. Every one of them has a real secret move that has to be done without looking, and every one is learned the same way, a few minutes every evening in front of a mirror.

The Magic Shop has three levels, and a level is a promise about time. Apprentice tricks work the first try. Conjurer tricks need setting up or ten to twenty minutes of practice. Wizard tricks are measured in days, and the shop's own code refuses a Wizard trick that doesn't say how many. Of the eighty tricks in the Magic Shop, forty-four are Apprentice, twenty-nine are Conjurer and seven are Wizard. Those seven are on the hard tricks page, and in the table below.

The seven

- Trick: The Coin From Behind Your Ear · Level: Wizard · Ages: 8 to 13 · Practise for: 2 to 4 days · Shelf: Coins · The move it asks for: Holding a coin in curled fingers
- Trick: The Torn and Restored Napkin · Level: Wizard · Ages: 8 to 13 · Practise for: 2 to 4 days · Shelf: Paper and string · The move it asks for: A swap while you blow
- Trick: The Cut and Restored String · Level: Wizard · Ages: 8 to 13 · Practise for: 2 to 4 days · Shelf: Paper and string · The move it asks for: A swap inside your fist
- Trick: Easy Cups and Balls · Level: Wizard · Ages: 7 to 12 · Practise for: 3 to 5 days · Shelf: Everyday · The move it asks for: Loading a hidden ball
- Trick: The Vanishing Coin · Level: Wizard · Ages: 8 to 13 · Practise for: 3 to 5 days · Shelf: Coins · The move it asks for: A coin that never changes hands
- Trick: The Two-Coin Jump · Level: Wizard · Ages: 10 to 13 · Practise for: 3 to 5 days · Shelf: Coins · The move it asks for: A throw under a turning hand
- Trick: The Card That Keeps Coming Back · Level: Wizard · Ages: 10 to 13 · Practise for: 3 to 6 days · Shelf: Cards · The move it asks for: Two cards turned as one

The ages come from the grades each trick is written for: the youngest grade plus five, to the oldest grade plus six. Three come from the Coin Counter, two from the Paper and String Drawer, one from the Everyday Shelf and one from the Card Cabinet. All seven carry the shop's "practise in a mirror" note, and all seven point to the same Magic School lesson: practise like a pro.

The coin moves

The Coin From Behind Your Ear is the shortest of the seven, two to four days. Both hands look empty, you reach behind somebody's head, and a coin appears. The page's advice for practising it is lovely: walk round the house with a coin curled in your fingers until you forget it is there. It also says never to touch anybody's ear, which is good manners as well as good magic. Giving the coin away at the end is what makes it the best trick in the shop for a younger brother or sister.

The Vanishing Coin is the first real sleight most magicians learn, and the page names it. A coin goes into your left hand, the hand opens, and it has gone. Three to five days, and the page says a mirror is not optional: twenty minutes a day for a week beats three hours in one go.

The Two-Coin Jump starts at ten. One coin on each palm, both hands slap down, and both coins turn out to be under the left. The page suggests big coins and something soft to practise on, so a missed throw doesn't roll away.

The restorations

The Torn and Restored Napkin tears a napkin to pieces and opens it out whole. Its own page calls it the shop's hardest trick, and says it is worth all of them. The thing to practise is the swap on its own, without tearing anything, until your hands do it while you talk about something else.

The Cut and Restored String cuts a string in half and pulls it back into one piece. It is the only Wizard trick with a grown-up step, because scissors are involved: a grown-up holds the scissors with the child for the cut. Learn the move before you ever pick the scissors up.

The routines

Easy Cups and Balls is the oldest trick there is, and the only Wizard trick that starts at seven. Balls travel through the bottoms of cups and something turns up at the end that was never there. "Easy" is in its name because it is the simplest version of the routine, not because it is quick: the page says to learn one phase a day over three or four days rather than all of it in one sitting. Its balls are pom-poms or little balls of paper, so it carries the choking note for little ones under four.

The Card That Keeps Coming Back is the longest, three to six days, and starts at ten. A chosen card is pushed into the middle of the deck and keeps turning up on top. The page says to do it three times at most, because a trick that keeps happening gets easier to catch.

How a child gets there

The shop's ladder is in the guide From Apprentice to Wizard: perform three Apprentice tricks for somebody before trying a Conjurer one, and three Conjurer tricks before a Wizard one. Performing, not just learning. The shop's badges only count tricks shown to a real person.

The practice order is in Magic School: a mirror first, then a pet or a stuffed animal, then one person who loves you, then everybody. And a Wizard trick is ready, the shop says, when you can do it ten times in a row without looking at your hands. That is a clear finish line a child can count out loud.

If your child would rather be handed one, Pick me a trick asks four questions, and one of its answers to "How long have you got to learn it?" is "A few days". That answer is the way to a Wizard trick.

Questions grown-ups ask

Is my seven-year-old too young for these?

One of the seven, Easy Cups and Balls, is written for ages 7 to 12. Four start at eight and two at ten. That is why the seven-year-olds page shows exactly one Wizard trick. The others still show in the shop for a younger child, listed after the tricks that fit, and nothing stops a keen seven-year-old trying the Coin From Behind Your Ear with you.

What if my child gives up after a day?

That is what the day ranges are for. A child who knows it takes three to five days isn't failing on day one; they are on day one. If it still won't come, every trick has an out, a line to say when it goes wrong, and most of these pages suggest an easier trick to finish on instead.

Do they need anything special?

No. Between them the seven use coins, a deck of cards, cups, pom-poms or paper balls, napkins, string and kid scissors. Four of them carry the choking note for brothers and sisters under four: the three coin tricks and the cups and balls.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, and the Magic Shop needs no sign-up. What a child learns stays on their own device; the only thing sent is an anonymous count when a trick is marked as shown to somebody. For the evenings between practice, the library has stories to read aloud.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/hard-magic-tricks-for-kids