

# YOUNGEST SWORD SWALLOWER

## Sword tricks

# SWORD SWALLOWING

You may think that sword swallowing is a modern invention but it has, in fact, been around for thousands of years.

**2000 BC**

It is generally accepted that sword swallowing originated in India. Holy men used the practice to show their power.

**1st century AD**

Sword swallowing was taken up in Ancient Greece and Rome.

**8th century AD**

In Japan, sword swallowing became part of a form of acrobatic theatre called Sangaku.

**The Middle Ages**

Medieval street performers made sword swallowing more popular in Europe.

**19th century AD**

Sword swallowing as entertainment began to die out.

**1893**

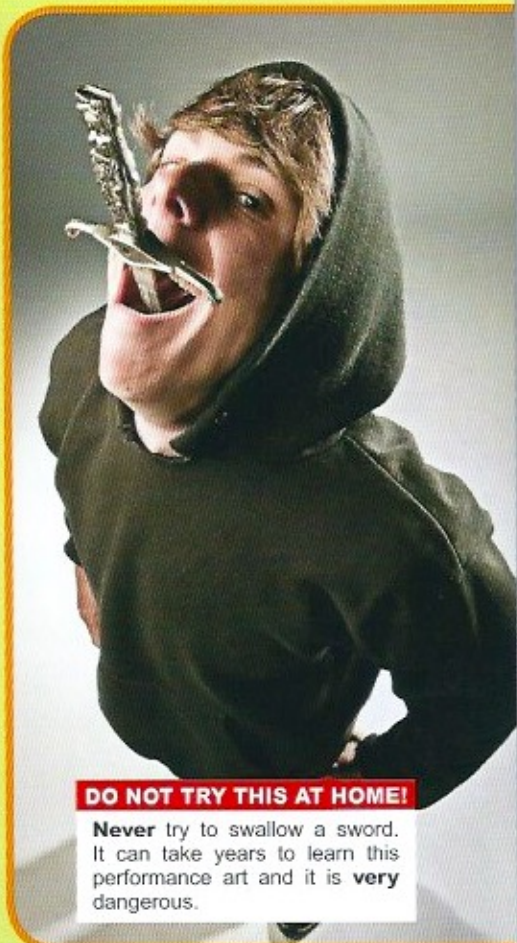
In Scandinavia, the practice of sword swallowing was outlawed. However, in the same year, it was featured at the Chicago World Fair and sword swallowing became popular in the USA.

**2002**

The Sword Swallowers Association International (SSAI) was launched. It was set up to preserve the art of sword swallowing for both amateurs and professionals around the world.

**2006**

The last Saturday of each February was proclaimed annual 'World Sword Swallower's Day' by the SSAI to promote worldwide appreciation for this unique and extremely dangerous art.


**DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME!**

**Never** try to swallow a sword. It can take years to learn this performance art and it is **very** dangerous.

The youngest recorded sword swallower in the world is Erik Kloeker, who swallowed a solid steel sword, up to the hilt, at the age of 16 years, 267 days, on 21 July 2006.

**ON YOUR MARKS**

- In which country did sword swallowing begin?
- What does 'outlawed' mean?
- Why does the author describe sword swallowing as 'extremely dangerous'?

**GET SET**

- What is Sangaku?
- Why do you think sword swallowing was outlawed in Scandinavia?
- What is the difference between amateur and professional sword swallowers?

**GO FOR GOLD!**

- When did sword swallowing become more popular in Europe?
- Do you think sword swallowing is difficult? Why?
- How do you think forming an association would preserve the practice of sword swallowing?

**BEYOND THE RECORD**

Design a persuasive poster to advertise a sword-swallowing event at a festival. Use four powerful adjectives to encourage people to attend.