

My version of snake arms allows for multiple sizes and speeds (as most do, I am sure).

It is of the shoulder/elbow/wrist/fingertips variety, but actively requires both the shoulder roll and muscle tension. Here is how I break it down:

1. Always remember that the base movement is an alternating shoulder roll, which is a muscularly controlled circle on each side perpendicular to the floor. I usually operate on the clockwise position as seen from dancer looking at her right shoulder, which places the dancer's left shoulder (from her point of view) as counter-clockwise. I also reverse this as an exercise, but rarely, if ever, when performed.
2. From this roll, as the shoulder rotates forward and up, this engages the arm which has tension held through to the fingertips. The elbow is rotated back and up to create the upward curve in the arm, but extension from the body is maintained at all times. The arms do not collapse into the body at any point. Palms are face down, slightly trailing from the wrist motion.
3. At this point, the arm follows the shoulder roll upwards through the highest point of the shoulder roll. (During this upward movement, the arm is changing angle and position slightly to maintain an even curvature)
4. If the snake arm is to be extended above shoulder height, then at shoulder height the elbow rotates from back and up to out from the body to maintain the same degree of curve on the top portion of the snake arm as the bottom portion.
5. At the top most position of the snake arm movement, the palm is now facing outward, having traveled with the arm to the top. At this point, before beginning the downward motion, I flip the palm inward.
6. As the shoulder roll begins the downward portion of its arc, the arm begins the journey back down, elbow still pointing outward (which becomes down as arm moves).
7. At approximately shoulder level, the curvature is switched by rotating the elbow back and up, during this transition palm also turns downward based on rotation of elbow. At moment of rotation/palm turn, the hand follows the ripple of the movement with an undulatory motion.
8. As shoulder roll reaches bottom point, arm is back in original position to start movement again.
9. When both arms are in motion, I emphasize control and symmetry. If at any moment the movement is stopped, I want a flipped symmetrical curve. (Ex: Same level of curve in up and down arm mirrored – smooth S shape.)

10. As the movement gets faster, it must get smaller. The smaller it is, the more crucial the emphasis on the shoulder roll and muscle sequencing because there is less time to engage and correct.