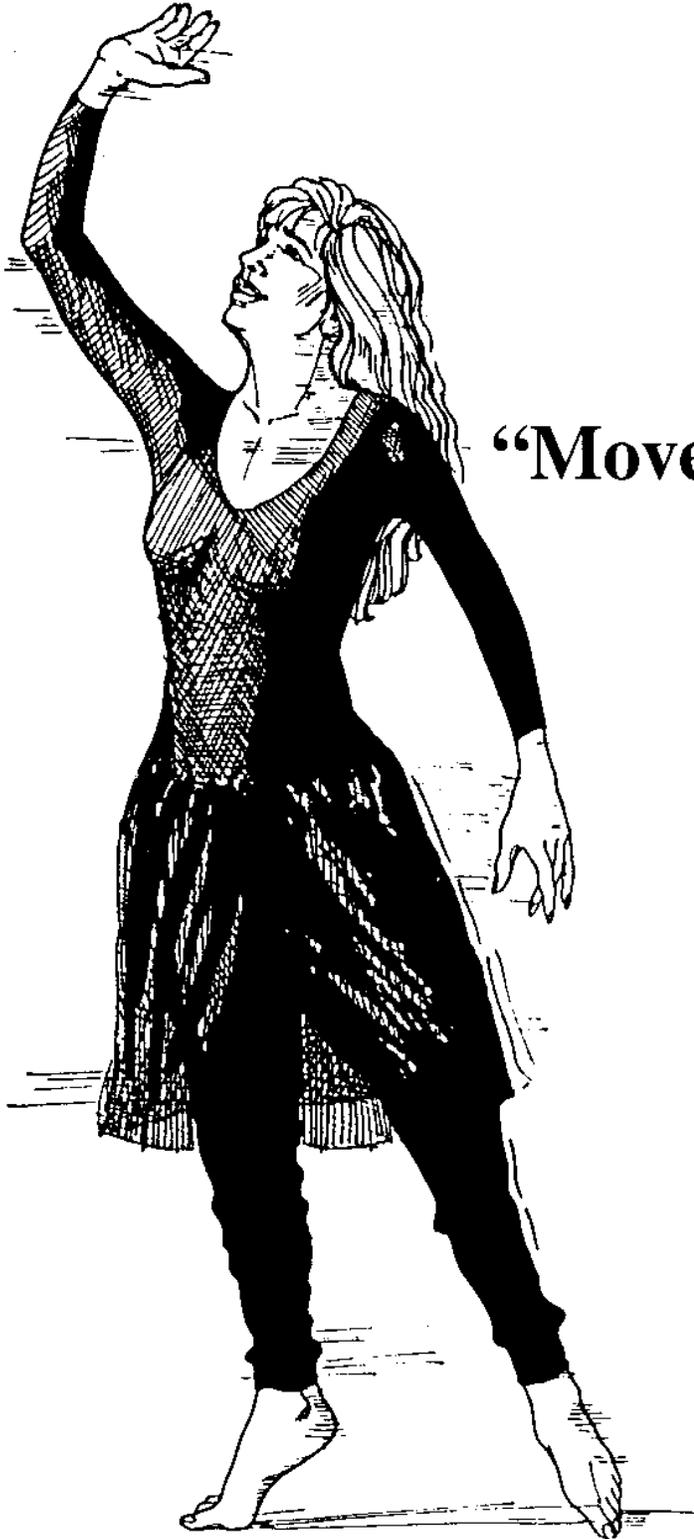


Theatre Video Series



“Movement For The Actor”

Teacher's Guide

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To the Teacher:

The actor's education encompasses the learning of certain performance skills, which involve the use of the actor's vocal, physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual self. Although this tape focuses on the physical aspects of actor training, you are about to embark on a process of study that I hope will aid you in the integration of all of these elements. Many of the exercises can also be utilized in the rehearsal process. Those helpful in rehearsal are indicated in this guide.

The tape is designed to be participatory. You can turn it off and try the exercise at your own rate of progress with your class. Some of the exercises take more time than others to gain agility. You will discover how much time you need as you move along.

This guide is to help you explore this technique. It contains an outline of the video, detailed notes on the exercises, and resource materials. Also included is a suggested rate of working on this process.

While learning this technique, I hope you will feel free to create additional variations of these exercises. Use this work as a springboard for your own creative exploration. Please feel free to contact me at any time for workshops or information on how to use this tape.

This particular process owes itself not only to research we have been doing at Northwestern University, but to teachers and directors such as Michael Chekhov, Tadashi Suzuki, Walter Cameron, and Leah Thys.

The students who participated in the filming of this tape hope that their demonstration of these techniques will be a model for you. They consider the actor an artist in space, and are all interested in creating exciting theatre.

Good Luck and enjoy the journey.

Dawn Mora
Assistant Professor
Northwestern University

“Movement For The Actor”

Teacher’s Guide

INTRODUCTION

- A. “Movement For The Actor” is broken up into the following sections:
- Creating A Safe Space
 - Stretching
 - The Basic Technique
 - Gesture
 - Directions of the Body In Space
 - Character and Text
- B. The Actor is a collaborative artist. In order to enhance the collective process, the actor needs a physical training that will allow him to create what he can dream. It might be the subtlest representation of character to the most stylized. “Movement For The Actor” is a basic course of movement training that teaches the physical skills to create character and images. It encourages the actor to be an artist in the space. Many of the exercises are also extremely helpful to directors in the creative process. The intense physical work of this technique helps to stir the actor’s inner life. Most of the exercises are broad in physical terms. As a director, I believe less is more, but I do not start there in training, and creative exploration. The warm-up should always accompany class or workshop. I recommend learning the process in the order it is given. You could work on it for a year or two, taking time with each section. If you have less time, you can tailor it to suit your needs. **Study each section of the tape carefully before continuing to the next section.** The last part of this guide is entitled, “Creative Freedom”. It is not on the video but can be utilized any time. It is especially helpful in the beginning of the course. A journal for the students to record their creative process and assignments is suggested.
- C. It is helpful to become familiar with the human body when approaching the study of movement. Study a skeleton. Become acquainted with the muscles, joints, and skeletal structure. Find out what the limitations and possibilities are in terms of movement.

Discussion Ideas:

1. What are the possibilities for large movements versus small movements? What are the limitations of movement in regard to the muscular and skeletal structure?
2. How many directions in space can you move? Explore forward, backward, left, right, diagonals, high, and low.
3. What does alignment of spine mean?

SECTION ONE: CREATING A SAFE SPACE

Establishing a space for creative and disciplined work is vital. Do your best to create a quiet, focused atmosphere that acknowledges a respect for the space and time in which you are working. Here are some suggestions for creating a safe space:

1. Playing soft, serene music as students enter the space.
2. Establishing behavioral rules that help the student to focus on the work at hand. These might include the restriction of talking, eating, and drinking.

3. Centering Exercises:

- Sit in a circle with eyes closed, and concentrate on the rhythm of breathing.
- Sit in a circle and verbally acknowledge where you are emotionally at that moment. (I.e. anxious, stressed, etc.)
- Sit in a circle. Verbally throw away whatever you want to forget. This can be done in a few words. It should be something that troubling you at the moment. For example: I want to throw away fear of failure, tension, etc.

The centering exercises do not have to take much time. If you use them, do not rush. Let this part of the technique aid teacher, and student, in claming and centering the Self.

SECTION TWO: STRETCHING

Appropriate clothing for all of the exercises is:

- Footless tights / sweats or shorts
- Leotards / t-shirts / tank tops
- NO shoes or socks
- Kneepads – **(important!)**

Do at least 10 minutes of stretching and 5-10 minutes of the hammering, throwing, and reaching in broad movements before the warm-up. If you need to shorten warm-ups, do the hammering, throwing, and reaching for a couple of sessions, and then drop them from the routine. The larger gestures of hammering, throwing, and reaching are to acquaint the performer with broader, non-realistic movements. Stretching is important to avoid injury. You can also create your own stretching routine from modern and jazz dance techniques.

Stretching Routine (details from video):

Stand in a wide second position, stretch arms over head, reach right, left, right, left, shoulders down. Repeat. Roll down, starting with the head, bending knees slightly. Roll back up starting with base of spine, head comes up last. Repeat the entire sequence. After the second roll down, bend knees and sit, opening legs to “butterfly” position. Lower head towards the floor, curving the back. Pulse slightly towards the floor, letting the groin muscles stretch. Extend legs straight ahead. Take hold of ankles. Keeping back curved and head towards legs, pulse forward from lower back area if possible. Stay in this position for eight to sixteen counts to help stretch the leg muscles. Roll up from base of spine to a sitting position, and open the legs to a wide second. Open arms to second. With chest facing out, stretch to the right side, arms overhead, for eight counts. Turn chest towards knee and stretch for another eight counts with chest to knee. Holding ankles, stretch and lower head to knees. Come up to center, and repeat to the other side.

Come back center. Bring lets together straight ahead. Let arms slowly come to the side of the body. Roll down, starting with base of spine. You will be lying flat on the floor. Bring both knees to chest. Hug knees with arms bringing head to knees. Hold this position for sixteen counts, and roll back to floor. Bring right knee to chest. Pull knee towards chest for eight counts. Return leg to floor. Repeat with the left leg. Push up into a back bend. Hold for four counts. Slowly roll down. Do one more backbend. Roll up, starting with head, to a sitting position, then to a squat. With head down and spine curved, straighten legs, still bending forward and over. Slowly, roll up starting at base of spine, to a standing position. Do the hammering, throwing, and reaching movements in broad gestures in any sequence student desires.

Points of Focus: Take time for stretching. Lengthen any of the sequences for more stretch.

SECTION THREE: THE BASIC TECHNIQUE WARM-UP

Part A: Dynamics

This is the basic warm-up. It teaches the actor to move the body in a variety of ways with control, ease, and grace. The dynamics are extremely important to learn. You will refer to them many times in this technique. Here the performer learns to move the body with four basic dynamics of movement: floating, flying, pressing, and thrusting. Perform these exercises in the sequence that you see on the tape. Try them one at a time until students are

confident with the physical expression of each one. Do each dynamic for a minimum of 7-8 minutes. In a regular class period, we explore these four dynamics for at least 30 minutes. If your classes are only an hour long, do one dynamic a day with the stretching. These exercises are designed to teach body control and focus, to activate an inner life, and to stimulate creative impulses. The warm-up can also be used for rehearsal purposes very effectively. Often one of the “dynamics” is exactly the kind of movement quality you need for certain characters in a play. Suggestions for music are at the end of the guide.

Tips for Leading the Warm-up Below

Following is a teacher’s script for leading the warm-up section. Be sure to take time between each suggestion. Talk slowly like a guided meditation. Allow time for each of the movements to be thoroughly explored. Ask the students to lie face up, flat on the floor, eyes closed, and with plenty of space around them if possible. Make sure hands and legs comfortable. Do all of the movements suggested on the tape in that dynamic. When you finish each dynamic, do back to the dynamic of “floating”. Float down to your original position on the floor, and go back to the rhythm of the breath.

Verbal Script for the Warm-up

Teacher:

Close your eyes. Notice the ebb and flow of your breath. Take a deep breath. As you breathe out, imagine all of your tension melting into the ground. Take another deep breath, and again let out all of your tension.

(Teacher starts music softly in background).

Notice the ebb and flow of your breath

(Pause)

Picture an image in your mind’s eye of something **floating** in the air. Perhaps a cloud, or an astronaut floating in space.

(Pause)

When you are ready, allow your right arm to float up, as if lifted by the lightness of the air. The movement is **very slow**, weak, and light. Move your arm in different directions, and use as much of the space as you can.

(Pause)

Let the arm float up. Move both arms at the same time.

(Pause)

Now the torso joins the arms in movement

(Pause)

Let the left arm float up. Move both arms at the same time

(Pause)

And then the legs

(Pause)

Begin to roll on the floor. If you touch someone, just roll away. Do not break the concentration

(Pause)

Explore as many different positions of legs and torso as you can while rolling

(Pause)

Float upwards to a standing position, and then down to a squatting position

(Pause)

Float upwards again

(Pause)

Find a new gesture each time you reach the highest point of ascension ascending and descending five times

(Pause)

On the last ascension, start walking in any direction. First the chest takes the impulse to move, then the head, and the body follows.

(Pause)

When I clap my hands arrest, and go back to the dynamic of floating, float downwards to your original position of the floor. Notice the rhythm of your breath.

(Pause)

Find the image of **flying** in your mind's eye. Perhaps an eagle soaring through the air.

(Pause)

On the intake of the breath, let your right arm fly up into the space in a flying dynamic...then the left arm.

(Pause)

Use the space...Explore flying, moving upwards to a sitting position...try rolling from a sitting position, and from a lower position.

(Pause)

Fly farther up to a standing position, and begin to explore flying movements while standing...

(Pause)

Try turning or spinning with this dynamic...now running...try running and then explore "up" as high as you can go...combine turning, running, and a roll on the floor, repeating the sequence several times...

(Pause)

When I clap my hands, arrest in space and change the dynamic to floating. Float down to the floor. Lie down and go back to the rhythm of the breath. Notice the ebb and flow of the breath.

(Pause)

Find an image in your mind of you pressing against something. Perhaps a heavy wind, or large bolder you wish to move. Now think of the air around you as that same resistant force. You must press against the air in order to move. It is pressing down on you. Begin to move upwards against this force. Press against the air with your body as you move. Relax your face and throat muscles. Don't hold your breath. Try pushing against the student to see if you can move him/her. If you can move them easily, they are not pressing with enough force.) Press upwards to a standing position...

(Pause)

Begin pressing in a forward direction. When I clap my hands, you will break through the resistance momentarily and then keep pressing. (Do this several times) When I clap my hands, arrest in space. Change your energy to floating, and float downwards. Lie down. Go back to the rhythm of your breathing.

(Pause)

Find an image of a sharp, direct, and thrusting movement. Perhaps it's lightning hitting a tree, or a sword reaching its mark. When you are ready, make a thrusting movement in any direction...

(Pause)

Continue the thrusting movements low to the floor. Use the total body, and all of your energy...

(Pause)

Now thrust upwards to standing...

(Pause)

Thrust forward...Thrust to the right side...

(Pause)

To the left side

(Pause)

Up...Thrust diagonally right...

(Pause)

Diagonally left. Run and stop with a thrusting movement. Repeat in another direction. Keep the energy moving forward even though you have stopped the body. In the thrust, commit all of your energy. Use full body expression. (Teacher repeats thrusts in different directions.) When I clap my hands, arrest in the space. Do very small thrusting movements (Teacher claps hand or beats drums on each tiny thrust)...

(Pause)

When I clap my hands change the dynamic to floating, and float down to your original position. Go back to the rhythm of the breath.

Points of Focus: Use as much of the space as possible in these exercises, take risks with movements, and engage the entire body and energy in the process. Notice the change of breathing, and the different energy exerted while doing each dynamic. Work for balance, flexibility, and the ability to move the body in any way desired. Work for relaxation and expression, authority, and grace. Small, relaxed, and precise movements are ideal for small thrusts.

Part B: The Walks

Body Awareness

Students take part of one class or workshop to become aware of how their body feels when walking. How do they place the foot on the floor? What is the natural, or unusual, alignment of their spine? Where do they place their head in relation to the spine? What does it feel like to walk with a more pulled up alignment of the spine and head? With less swing of the hips or arms? Are they relaxed or holding tension in certain areas of the body? This information will aid them in creating character in Section Six.

The Walks

In the basic walks, the student learns to place the feet and spine in various positions to create stylized walks. These walks can be made more realistic, broader for comic characterizations, or used as a basis for further stylization. Do not add

characterization when doing the walks in warm-up. That will come later. Allow time to view and study the walks on the tape. Be aware that most of the walks are executed with bent knees. The following is a list of the nine walks, their foot placement, and where the weight is distributed on the foot. (The “swivel walk” on the tape is not reviewed as specifically as others on the film, but it is listed below) **Work without shoes or socks.**

1. **Feet turned in** Distribute the weight evenly on feet (bend knees).
2. **Feet turned out** Weight is also distributed evenly
3. **Side of foot walking** Distribute weight on sides of foot. Walk with knees slightly bent.
4. **Walk in relieve** Weight is on ball of foot. Heel is lifted off the ground.
5. **Wide walk** Weight is distributed evenly. The feet are about two feet apart and straight ahead (bend knees). It is a wide stance.
6. **Narrow walk** Move from heel to ball of foot as we walk. The feet are very close together (knees slightly bent). Try various tempos.
7. **Bounce walk** The ball of the foot carries the weight and the feet are straight ahead. Heels lifted off floor (knees bent). Push off the floor with ball of foot as you walk. Buttocks moves up and down as you walk. Upper body is bent forward.
8. **Floppy walk** The weight is on the ball of the foot. There is a slight drag on the ball of foot as you move forward. Upper body is floppy.
9. **Jitter walk** Here the weight is carried on ball of foot, knees bent, upper body slightly forward, tiny quick steps as you move the feet from a turned in first to wide second and back.
10. **Swivel walk** Done on ball of foot, heels off the floor. The hips swivel, as on tape, as you walk. It is sassy and fun.

Points of Focus: Concentrate on getting the placement of the feet and rhythm of the walks. *Check video for the variety of spinal placements for each walk.* Keep it simple. Many of the walks are performed with bent knees. Some can be done backwards after perfecting them forwards.

Part C: Focus on the Other

Falling exercises develop trust, ability to focus outside of Self, and encourage a willingness to be vulnerable, and give up control. They also encourage a willingness to be vulnerable, and give up control. They also increase physical skills. Many of these exercises can be used in the rehearsal process. They help to prepare the body for movements needed in the production.

Be sure to study the tape before attempting the exercise.

Fall and Support: Exercise #1

In pairs, one actor catches and supports the other as they fall from any position and in any direction. Take turns being the person who falls. If one partner is larger or heavier, do the exercise from a kneeling or lower position, as demonstrated on the tape.

Point of Focus: The person catching must focus on the partner who is falling, let go of your weight, and trust your partner to catch you. Work together. Mats are advisable.

Running and Falling: Exercise #2

Working in pairs, one actor runs towards the other and is caught as he/she falls into the arms of the catcher. The falling actor’s feet are always on the ground when they begin the fall. The falling partner takes a breath just before the fall. This controls the weight being hurled at the catcher. The catching partner lightly propels the other actor back into the space after the fall. Change partners. Each person should learn to fall, and to catch.

Variations: The running partner falls sideways as in a “dip,” falls facing away from the catching partner, falls over the arms of the partner like a rag doll. Explore the many ways to fall in slow tempos, and then with greater speed.

Points of Focus: Sense how your partner is going to fall. Bend your knees when catching the runner, and give into the force but stay grounded. Vary the speed of the run.

Send and Receive

At no time during the Send and Receive exercise do the partners touch one another. In pairs, students use dynamics from the warm-up to do the falling exercises. One partner starts with a movement. The other receives by responding physically

to what is sent. After responding, the receiving actor sends a movement back to their partner who repeats the sequence of receiving with a physical response. The sequence continues as each actor sends and receives. Actors stay physically focused after sending a gesture. Keep the gestures **broad** and expressive. The movements are free form.

Exercise #1

In pairs, the actors send and receive with the dynamic of thrusting. They never touch. One actor sends to the other, and he responds and sends a movement back. The sequence repeats as they continue.

Variation #1: In pairs, do the same exercise with the dynamic of floating. Then repeat with the dynamic of flying.

Exercise #2

In pairs, do the exercise above with two different dynamics. For example: flying and floating, or thrusting and flying. The actor alternates between two different dynamics. Example: The actors are using flying and floating. One actor sends with one of these movements. The actor receiving can respond in either dynamic. The two actors continue alternating between the two dynamics.

Exercise #3

In pairs, one partner starts the exercise by looking at the other actor, responding to something “off” the other actor. Example: The student starting the exercise looks at his partner and feels angry. The first gesture might have a thrusting or pressing quality (Remember, no touching). The actor receiving this gesture may respond in any dynamic that feels appropriate to the moment. Each actor “receives” and “sends” in any of the dynamics. The focus is to “be moved” by the impulse.

Exercise #4

In pairs, each person decides on a need. For instance, one actor might work “to dominate” his partner, and the other actor “to protect” Self. The movements need to reflect what the actors want to “do.” Use large gestures and as much of the body as possible for expression. Send and receive as in the original exercise.

Points of Focus: Stay completely focused after you have sent a movement. Don’t let your focus and energy die out. Never touch your partner. Remember to respond with a physical movement before you send. Don’t think about how you will move. The movements are broad and not realistic.

The Bridge: Exercise #5 (not on tape)

Divide the class into pairs. One partner bends over at the waist, and touches the floor with full palm of hands. Feet about 20 inches apart. Knees are slightly bent for support. The curved back serves as a bridge for the other partner to climb on, roll off of, or crawl under. Encourage the performers to explore. Then change partners. This exercise looks very acrobatic. Actors will come up with some incredible moves.

Variation #1: Do the same exercise as above. Each person takes a turn being the bridge without stopping or re-starting to change turns.

“Mirroring”: Exercise #6 (not on tape)

In pairs, one actor stands in back of the other touching the middle part of the body against the back of the front partner. The actor in front begins to move and is “mirrored” by the actor in back. Movements are large and non-realistic. Stay connected physically as much as possible. Use the dynamic of floating for this exercise.

Variation #1: In pairs, repeat exercise above. This time the actor in back moves in the opposite direction of the leader (still “mirroring” the movements of his partner). Example: If leading actor moves to the right, the following actor moves to the left, but “mirroring” the arms, head, legs, and torso in the opposite direction. Use the dynamic of floating.

Points of Focus: There is no obligation on the actor standing in back to “mirror” his/her partner exactly. As close as possible is fine. The “leading” actor is not obligated to do movements that will be “easy” or “comfortable” to follow. Just let go and move. This exercise takes about ten minutes. Each actor has from 3-5 minutes to lead.

Runs and Jumps: Exercise #7 (not on tape)

This is similar to “Running and Falling.” This time the runner “jumps” onto the body of the supporting partner. In pairs, work out how the supporting actor will catch the runner, if the running partner jumps up onto his body in different ways. Work it out in slow motion before doing it with full physical force. Each partner should learn to catch as well as to run and jump.

Points of Focus: Explore different ways to jump into the arms or onto the body of the supporting partner. The supporting partner needs to work out his stance for “catching.” He should be sure to let the knees bend on catching so as to ground the body. Do these several times to learn balance and agility.

SECTION FOUR: GESTURE

Improvisation is used as a base for exploration of four categories of gesture in the following exercises. The goal is to exercise the creative imagination, and allow access to the emotional responses that occur through exploration of tempo and size. First we do the gesture very simply and realistically. Then change the tempo doing it faster or slower. Continue to improvise toward a more abstract expression of the gesture. The following is a list of the types of gestures to explore. See the tape for a demonstration of how to improvise the various types of gesture.

The four types of gestures are:

1. **Social** Handshake, kiss, bow, hug, or praying. Social gatherings such as funerals, weddings, football games, coordination, or everyday activities like sunbathing.
2. **Functional Gesture** Activities such as dressing, putting on make-up, washing clothes, and shaving. Professions such as, waiters, a bartender, chimney sweep, maid, or construction worker.
3. **Emotional Gesture** Emotions such as grief, joy, hatred, or fear. Don’t try to feel. Put the body in a position that represents a particular emotion. Sculptures can be very helpful as a starting point, but not necessary (start with love, joy, anger, grief, empathy, and fear).
4. **Motivational Gestures** A desire or need “physicalized” in an archetypal pose. For example: To get love, to gain acceptance, to dominate, to take revenge. After you are comfortable with exercise, add in opposition. The opposition needs to be expressed “physically.” See tape.

Exercise #1

Teacher decides on a social gesture. The group improvises the gesture, either in pairs or alone in a group depending on the gesture. Improvise the gesture, using fast and slow tempos. Then continue improvising more and more away from the literal gesture.

Variation #1: In a group, working individually, students or teacher decide on a functional gesture. They may all do the same gesture, or explore different functional gestures. Do the exercise as explained on tape and above. Use the space.

Exercise #2

Students choose an emotion to improvise. In a group, working individually, students put the body in a position that is typical of the emotion. Example: “Grief” might be kneeling and bent over as if crying. Explore this emotion like the other gestures.

Exercise #3

Each actor decides on a strong need or objective. In a group the students put the body in an archetypal pose that best represents the need. Example: If the student is working with the need “to revenge” a wrong, the body might assume a kind of threatening position. If the position does not activate some strong feelings, then the student needs to keep working on it. Look for the unusual. Take risks. Vary tempo and size as in the exercises below.

Variation #1: Each actor finds an opposition of obstacle to achieving the chosen need. Example: If the need is to take revenge, and you love the person you are revenging, that is the opposition. Find the place in the body where the opposition can be expressed. “Physicalize” the opposition simultaneously with the objective. See tape under Section Four: “Motivational Gesture.”

Exercise #4

In pairs, threes, or more, explore functional gestures. Give the other actor’s space, and work without talking. Example: One actor uses the functional gesture of tending bar, another cleaning windows, another sweeping the floor. It is not

necessary to interact directly with a partner. You may if you wish, but not verbally. Be aware of them, however, and adjust to their space.

Variation #1: In groups, explore any type of gesture as in Exercise #4.

Points of Focus: Start with a simple physical expression of the gesture. Change the tempo or dynamic, letting the gestures become less literal. The above exercises can be done in pairs or alone, or in groups of four, five, or more. Play. When you can, let the actors share their improvisations with the class.

SECTION FIVE: DIRECTIONS IN SPACE

If you put your body in different positions in space, you will feel corresponding emotions. These emotions can be remembered easily by the body even when the actor does not do the direction with the body. They can also be projected by simply moving the body with the quality of a particular emotion. Example: If a person stands up on their toes, and reaches upwards as high as possible, they are in the direction of “high.” The activated emotions will be things like joy, happiness, longing, or others. If the actor wills it, that emotion can be felt even if he/she releases the position, and does more everyday movement. The actor can also project the joyous emotion by just moving the body in a joyous way. These are the ideas we focus on in this section.

Actors need to imagine the directions when “physicalizing” them in the exercises; therefore, it is useful to do some visualization of the directions before exploring the directions in space. Do an imagination exercise for each of the directions. Do the imagination exercises before the physical work on the video. The imagination exercises for this section are done without moving.

Below is an example of visualization for the direction of “high.”

Exercise #1

Lie on the floor, or sit in a comfortable position, and take a few deep breaths. Imagine you are walking into a field, and you see a basket with a huge balloon attached. It looks ready to take off, so you begin to walk towards the balloon. Then you start to run, worried that it might leave without you. As you reach the balloon, it begins to lift off of the ground. There is a large rope attached to the basket. You catch the rope just as the basket lifts off the ground. Slowly, you are carried off the ground. The balloon climbs higher and higher leaving the meadow far behind you. You are carried into the clouds...you look up and see endless sky beyond you...far and away...

Following are some images you might use for working on other directions. They need extending, but might be a starting point.

Low: Jump off a high cliff into water, and sink deep down into the depths of the water.

Wide: Imagine your arms extending out over the great plains of the West.

Narrow: Imagine narrowing your body, while standing, to fit through some specific narrow space.

Backwards: Imagine you are standing in a flat meadow. Behind you, far in the distance is a tall mountain. You begin to walk backward in the direction of the mountain.

Forwards: Imagine ahead of you a lane that leads far into the distance. You begin to walk down the lane.

Exploring the Directions of the Body in Space

Now that the students can visualize directions in space, it is time to put the body in the various directions. When doing these exercises, ask the students to visualize each direction, as you have done in the imagination exercises.

Take time to explore the different emotions that arise in each direction. *The exercises below are done individually at first.* Later you might have two or three students working at the same time. Some exercises can be given as homework, and later presented to the class.

The six basic directions are:

1. **High:** Students reach as high as possible from a standing position, visualizing infinite space above at the same time. The corresponding emotions, activated from this position are elevated emotions such as joy, longing, and excitement.
2. **Wide:** Stand as wide as possible, arms and legs outstretched. Imagine your arms stretching far into the distance. Emotions activated: centered, strong, powerful, feelings like a warrior.
3. **Low:** Crouched on knees at floor level, all limbs pulled in and head lowered to ground. Imagine you are low into the earth. Emotions activated: anger, loneliness, emptiness, suffering.
4. **Narrow:** While standing, make the body as narrow as possible. See yourself as narrow as possible. Emotions activated: insecure, invisible, and shy.
5. **Forward:** Walk forward. Emotions activated: assertive, grounded, and straightforward. Imagine walking down a lane that never ends.
6. **Backward:** Walk backwards. Imagine moving towards a hill, along a dirt path. Emotions activated: fear, risk, and uncertainty.

Exercise #1

In a group, working individually, students put their body in each position to see what corresponding emotions arise. Take your time to fully experience each direction (about 2 minutes for each direction). Ask the students to express Verbally what they are feeling. After they have discovered the general emotions in *all* of the directions, go back to the Direction of “high.” Do the direction again with your body to activate one of the emotions you experienced while in this direction. Then try moving in the space in a more realistic manner—walk, sit down, and get up—holding onto the emotion as you move. Choose one emotion from each direction to work out in this way.

Adding Blocking

Blocking is the pattern on the floor that the actor follows. Before moving on, take a minute to review “blocking” on the video. Then do the following exercises. In these exercises the students use a pattern of blocking. The blocking should be simple and consist of about four to six crosses. Example: The student is exploring the emotion of joy from the direction of “high.” Student’s blocking might be a cross, down center, then down stage right, and then a circular cross towards center, and upstage ending down center. Let the student work out his/her own blocking pattern.

Exercise #2

Take one emotion from the direction of high, and explore it in large, abstract movement. The idea is not to show what you are thinking, but to move the body with the quality of that feeling. Example: When working on the direction of high, if the emotion is joy, do not show you are joyous by pretending to see something that makes you happy, and then jump up and down to express it. Instead, let the movement itself reflect the emotion. Keep the gestures broad (See tape). Decide on the floor pattern, or blocking, and fit the movements to the blocking pattern. Share with the class.

Variation #1: Take the same emotion from the exercise above, and move in more realistic movements. Again, do not indicate what you are thinking. Use the body in a way that expresses that particular emotion. After you have explored at least one emotion from each of the directions, in large, abstract movements, as well as realistic movements, move on to the next exercises (See tape).

Variation #2: Find different emotions from each of the directions and work them out in the manner of the first two exercises.

Exercise #3

Take three emotions from the direction of “high” and express them one after the other in large, expressive gestures (the sequence might be...love, curiosity, or longing). Set a pattern of blocking.

Variation #1: Repeat the above exercise in more realistic movement. Use the same blocking if it feels right. Otherwise, change it.

Exercise #4

Combine three emotions from three different directions. Work out the physical expression of each emotion in broad unrealistic movement. Put the movements from each emotion into a sequence. Find a pattern of blocking. Example: The student chooses the emotions of longing, scared, and anger. When “physicalizing” longing the actor might cross downstage towards the audience; when physicalizing scared, he might be backing away in another direction, or circle. For anger, the actor might choose a diagonal cross down stage. Make the transactions between the different emotions clear. Find a motivation each time you change emotions.

Variation #1: Repeat the above exercise with more realistic movements.

Exercise #5

Put six emotions together in one piece as in Exercise #4, page 16. Perform this exercise in large, expressive gestures with blocking and motivation for each phrase. Use a pattern of blocking.

Variation #1: Do the same emotions in more realistic movements with blocking and motivation for each phrase.

Points of Focus: Take risks, and use large gestures when called for in the exercises. Let your body reflect the chosen emotion. Don’t try to “show” an emotion. Hold on to the emotion when shifting to more realistic movements.

SECTION SIX: CHARACTER AND TEXT

Part A: Character

Self Awareness

Have each student get up and walk alone in front of the class. Let the class observe and give feedback to each actor as to what message their particular walk, and way of moving, sends to the audience. Comment on alignment of spine. Is it curved, straight, hyper-extended? Is the head-jutting forward, lowered, etc.? Where do lead from? How is the weight taken on the floor? Do they bounce when walking? What kind of persona do they project? Confident? Grounded? Nervous? Shy? This is a way for the actor to begin to be more self-aware. Explain that for some characters, they may have to alter their own physical image. They need to know self in order to understand what they might change. Refer to tape for more comments on this.

Character “Physicality”

Creating the “physicality” of a character can be approached in many ways. The final results must be relaxed, not pushed, and come from in depth knowledge of the play and character. Doing exercises on creating character “physicality” does not mean you do this immediately when working on a play. Let the character emerge through the study of the play, and then begin to apply various exercises. There are excellent ways to create character “physicality” in many books on acting. For the purpose of this technique, start with Exercise #4, pages 18-19, to help the class become familiar with the ideas covered under character.

Exercise #1

Create an imaginary character body in the mind, and then get up and move like the character would move. Decide on things such as tempo, foot and spinal placement, where the body leads from, and head alignment of the imaginary character body. Do not push the physical qualities, or exaggerate as you would in comedy. Some things might be almost imperceptible. Do not rush results. Share the work. Don’t create “types.” Find what is *individual* about a type.

Exercise #2

Create the “physicality” of a character using one of the dynamics, or energies, from the first part of The Basic Technique (floating, flying, pressing, or thrusting). When doing this exercise you may only slightly alter your own “physicality.” The dynamic may be expressed mainly in your energy and quality of moving. It is up to the actor to discover how the dynamic will be expressed, and to what degree he will change his own “physicality.” Lie down on the floor, close your eyes, and take a minute to imagine how you would move if playing a character physically motivated by one of these energies. See tape for example. Share your work with the class.

Exercise #3

“Physicalize” the super objective of the character in an archetypal pose. Let it move into broader gestures, and back to a realistic expression of how the character moves. By doing this, you are in touch with the driving energy or force or the character. You can then explore how the character might move in space. It is similar to motivational gesture, but in this exercise the aim is to discover specific choices for the “physicality” of a character. After exploration decide what to keep for a more realistic image of the character (See tape - Section Six under “Character.”). Take time to work on these characters adding characteristics discussed in *Points of Focus* below.

Exercise #4

Spend time watching people in daily life. Re-create their “physicality” and behavior for the class. Discuss what you see. What does each character project? Look at tempo, position of spine and walk and other characteristics of behavior. Improvise the behavior of character in the locale where you studied them. Add as many details as possible. You can also add voice after doing the physical exploration.

Exercise #5

Create a character from the basic walks (Section One – Part B of the “Basic Technique”). Combine one of the stylized walks from the tape with a spine placement of your choice. Soften the walk to a more realistic representation. Don’t exaggerate the physical characteristics. Find out who the character is and then add elements such as personal characteristics discussed in *Points of Focus* below.

Exercise #6

Half of the class, or in groups of four to six, agree on a locale for a silent improvisation. Actors dress the characters; decide on an activity, such as smoking, eating lunch, etc., and discover a reason for being in that particular setting. Locales might be, a train station, park, town hall, bus station, etc. Actors enter the locale and improvise their activity without talking. Focus on the physical work first. Later they can add the voice of the character if desired. Note: Many acting books have excellent exercises that you can use in conjunction with these exercises.

Points of Focus: Don’t exaggerate the physical work on character in these exercises. In certain instances, physical exaggeration might be desired, but avoid it in the basic work. Students might also, add characteristics after finding the body of a character. Example: If they are working on a nervous character, who slouches slightly and walks rather narrowly, they could add “fiddling with their glasses” to reveal the inner nervousness. There might be other characteristics they can also include. Take time to build characters. Improvise and share them with the class. Always look for what is unique about the type you have chosen. **Character “physicality” should not be forced or rushed into when working on a play. Let it grow out of the actor’s knowledge of the character.**

Part B: Text

“Physicalizing” the needs and emotions in a scene enable the actor to connect to the text on an emotional level. The body and emotions become integrated. In working out these exercises, you will also discover exciting images that can be used in production.

Scoring the text

We have seen emotions, needs, various activities, and gestures can all be “physicalized.” Taking a scene or monologue and deciding on the needs and emotions is called *scoring the text*. Working out needs and emotions in physical movement makes up a kind of dance of the scene or monologue. That is what the next section asks of the student. Before attempting to work out a monologue in movements, it is important to study the video. Read Hamlet and discuss the play. Analyze Hamlet’s speech, Act III scene i (To Be or Not to Be). Watch the video after becoming familiar with the ideas and images in the monologue. Take time for discussion.

Monologues: Exercise #1

Find a monologue. Score the text for the needs and emotions of the character. Work on the needs first, and the emotions will be discovered. “Physicalize” these needs and emotions in large movements. Find a pattern of blocking. Work on this monologue for several sessions, or as homework. Change the movements as you discover new levels of the text that you wish to express.

Points of Focus: Analyze the text finding the needs and emotions. Don’t settle for the obvious expression of a need or emotion. “Physicalize” the needs and the emotions will follow. Then “physicalize” the emotions and images. Choose the movements you think are artistic. Keep movements broad and expressive. Play with tempo, change and refine movements. Do a series of at least three monologues before moving on to scene work.

Scenes

Scenes can be worked out in physical movements in the same manner as a monologue. Before studying the scenes on the tape, read the following plays: Medea, The Miracle Worker, and Hamlet. Study Act III scene i, in Hamlet (Ophelia and Hamlet), Act 1, first confrontation between Medea and Jason in Medea, and the overall conflict between Annie Sullivan and Helen Keller in The Miracle Worker.

Exercise #2

Find a scene to work on with another actor. Read the play. Analyze the play and the scene fully, and score the text for the character's needs. Start to "physicalize" the needs with your partner. Respond physically to what your partner sends you from the point of view of your own needs in the scene. As you improvise the scene, "physicalize" the emotions that arise. Choose the movements that best express the needs and feelings of your characters in the scene, and put them into a pattern of blocking. Don't rush the results. First do all the preliminary exercises for a few months.

Points of Focus: Find the needs of your character and "physicalize" them. The emotions will follow. Then "physicalize" emotions or images that you want to include. Find the drama, conflict, the instinctive responses, and play. You can also start with an overall need of the character in the play as your first physical pose, and improvise from there. Explore and play. Exercises on character and text can be done over several weeks or months. Some of them will be very moving, and you will want to keep refining them. Others you may see as possibilities to use in production.

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

Creative Freedom

The following exercises are designed to encourage the use of the creative imagination, and to free the students of the idea of right and wrong. They will indeed help you "uninhibit" the students. Do some of these exercises before those on the video. Some may be helpful for rehearsal exploration. I encourage you to find many more of your own variations on these exercises.

Music and Imagery Exercise

Lie on the floor, close your eyes, and breathe normally. Notice the rhythm of your breathing. Imagine the air moving from the top of your head through the body and out the soles of your feet, releasing all your tension. Begin to listen to the selected piece of music. Let all the images that arise pass through your mind's eye. Just enjoy the show! There are many excellent books on meditation to aid the teacher in these kinds of exercises. See "Music" at the end of guide. At the end of the selected music you can share your experience with the class.

Variation #1: Do the same preparation as above. This time let whatever movement you feel like doing emerge.

Point of Focus: Use large expressive gestures. Follow your impulse.

Variation #2: Lie on the floor, or in some comfortable position. Listen to a piece of music. Allow the music to suggest images. Write down the ideas, and develop them into a short movement piece.

Suggested Image Exercises

Start with the quiet breathing as in Exercise #1 above. Suggest an image for students to work on in broad movements. Save discussion for after their presentation of the image. Suggested ideas for image work: Jungian concepts of masculine, feminine, hero, warrior, trickster, etc; objects—rose, knife, gun, etc; concepts of heaven, hell, infinity, etc. (See Blom and Chapin book on dance improvisation for many excellent ideas).

Zen Writing Exercises

Pick a subject that the students can write about, such as anger, love, play, connecting, spirituality, etc. Keep it broad in scope. The student writes for five minutes without stopping or lifting the pen off the paper. Class breaks into pairs. Students share their writing with their partner. They mutually agree on the images or ideas they want to work with, and create a short movement piece together. Let the students play. See what comes up. Let them discover. Encourage the students to use broad, expressive movements.

After doing the exercise above, ask the students to incorporate some of the movements such as rolling, crawling, twisting, running, and falling into the piece they are working out. Don't rush them. They need time to gain confidence in their creative ability.

Music and Poetry Exercise

The performer uses a poem as inspiration for a movement piece. These images can then be worked out in broad movements. Allow the students to find their own music or accompaniment.

Point of Focus: The point of concentration for the exercises in "Creative Freedom," is not to inhibit you as to what is right or wrong. Just let the music or subject matter move you, and do not think about it too much. Focus is on physical expression of the emotion and not the literal. Ask the students to stretch their imaginations and use of the body.

The following composers might be of help. Some could be pieced together for sections of the warm-up. They could also serve you and the students as accompaniment for exercise. *Do not let the music dictate or overpower the movement.*

Emotion	Composer	Piece
Happy/Joyful	Gershwin	<u>An American in Paris</u>
	Handel	<u>Messiah</u>
	Mendelssohn	<u>A Midsummer's Night</u>
	Mozart	<u>German Dances</u>
	Sousa	<u>Washington Post March</u>
	Tschaikowsky	<u>Waltz of the Flowers</u>
Anger	Chopin	<u>Polonaise: Ab Major, Etude in GB Major</u>
	Dukas	<u>The Sorcerer's Apprentice</u>
	Rachmanioff	<u>Concerto no. 1</u>
	Wagner	<u>Die Walkur</u>
Fear	Hoist	<u>The Planets: Mars, Bringer of War</u>
	Moussorgsky	<u>Night on Bald Mountain</u>
	Tibetan Chant	<u>Lament for the Dead</u>
Sadness	Brahms	<u>Piano Concerto No. 2 (2nd Movement)</u>
	Debussy	<u>Beau Soir Three Nocturnes</u>
	Ravel	<u>Le Tombeau de Cauperin</u>
	Wagner	<u>Tristan and Isolde: Liebestad</u>
Excitement	Berlioz	<u>Symphonic</u>
<u>Phantastique</u>	DeFalla	<u>Ritual Fire Dance</u>
	Stravinsky	<u>Firebird Suite</u>

Movement for the Actor Quiz

1. When “creating a safe space.” The actors
 - a. prepare themselves mentally.
 - b. find a good room to work in.
 - c. spread out during the exercises.
 - d. focus on their individual security.

2. Various movements of the body will affect an actor’s emotions.

True False

3. When using the dynamic of _____, the actor’s emotions reflect a feeling of calm, serenity and peacefulness.
 - a. thrusting
 - b. flying
 - c. floating
 - d. pressing

4. The warm-up exercise of the Basic Technique
 - a. involves all of the dynamics
 - b. is generally used with music
 - c. is instinctive and not meant for performance
 - d. all of the above

5. The exercise “fall and support” helps an actor to
 - a. gain upper-body support.
 - b. react to another actor in a truthful, believable manner.
 - c. perform the proper emotional gesture.
 - d. distribute his weight properly.

6. Gatherings like weddings, funerals and football games are examples of a “functional gesture.”

True False

7. The body position of _____ helps an actor to
 - a. low
 - b. backward
 - c. flat
 - d. narrow

8. An “imaginary character body” is a vision created in your mind’s eye.

True False

9. To “physicalize” an objective is to
 - a. take the “super objective” and translate it with movement.
 - b. block out a scene.
 - c. exaggerate the emotions of the character.
 - d. pantomime the scene without dialogue.

10. Realistic and believable movement is always important in all movement exercises.

True False

QUIZ KEY: (1) a (2) T (3) c (4) d (5) b (6) F (7) d (8) T (9) a (10) F

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Music

Warm-up tapes suggested:

Motion Picture Scores (these can be very good because they are full of contrasts in tempo and mood)

Dances With Wolves (this one is great because you can do all the dynamics with this one tape)

Mountains of the Moon (not quite as good as the above but it works)

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