

MOVEMENTS OF SEPARATE BODY PARTS

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Although no two human bodies are exactly alike and no two move in exactly the same way, there are basic kinds of movement for separate body parts which can be experienced by all people, unless a person's natural movement is limited by handicap. These are the movements which we study in the following section.

SPINE



SPINE

Movements for the spine are the starting point in our program of exercises for separate body parts.

Many movements of other body parts depend on spine movement. For example, movement of the hips involves the lower spine and movement of the head depends on the neck which is an extension of the upper spine.

Feeling for spine movement is basic to all creative body movement.

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UNDULATING

See Spine Waves, pages 292 - 298.

RELAXING

See Sectional Relaxation, PART 2, page 67
Upper Body Relaxation, pages 81 - 85.

TALL AND SHORT BACK

1. Chair Sitting

Basic sitting position on chair or stool or step (see page 18)...

Sit up as tall as you can, lengthening entire spine, including neck... top of head is toward ceiling, face is straight ahead... shoulders hang loosely... do not hold breath...



Hold tall position for moment, then relax and let spine seem to shorten... you are now sitting back on lower spine with back somewhat rounded, chest "caved in", and chin up... this position gives feeling of short spine with no neck...



Slowly make back tall again, beginning with feeling of erectness in hips (lower spine) which travels upward through rib cage (upper spine) and neck, to head...

Relax, as before, letting spine shorten...

This is accordion-like movement, with feeling of opening and closing spaces between vertebrae.

Continue to repeat this opening and closing movement... close eyes to increase feeling in muscles... finish in tall position...

This is basic postural exercise, which develops feeling for erect carriage.

2. Floor Sitting

Same as preceding exercise except that you are sitting on floor.

A. Cross-Legged

See Basic Sitting Position on Floor,
page 18.



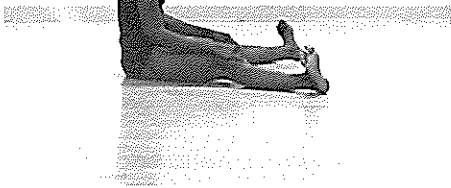
B. Legs Forward

As back straightens, legs also straighten
and feet bend back.



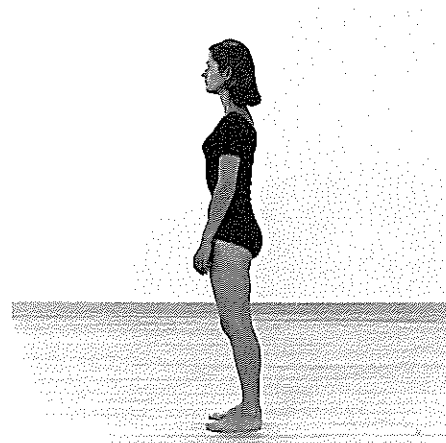
C. Legs Apart

Legs are wide apart and rolled out. As back straightens, legs also straighten and feet bend back.



3. Standing

Same as Exercise 1 (page 482), except that you are standing.



In short back position, let knees bend a little.



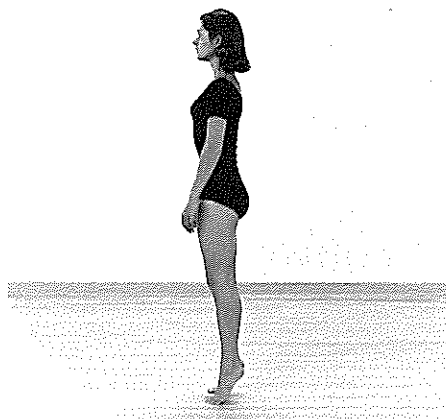
4. Rising to Toes

Same as preceding exercise with this development:

When spine has been opened to its fullest extent and body feels light on feet, continue upward movement, lifting weight off soles of feet and rising to toes...

Stand on toes a moment, then sink back to soles of feet and, relaxing, let spine shorten, bending knees, as before...

See Exercise 1, page 619.



CURVED AND STRAIGHT BACK

1. On Hands and Knees



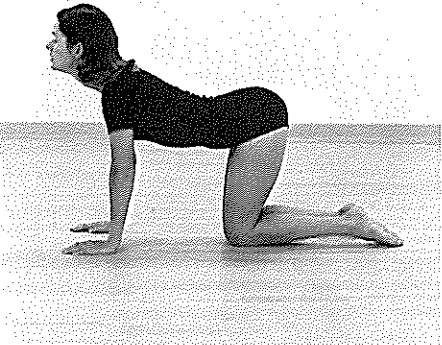
Basic hands and knees position (see page 19)...

Make back straight... straight line extends from tip of spine to top of head... face is toward floor...



Gradually curve spine up toward ceiling, making round back, letting head hang down, curling lower spine under and contracting abdominal muscles...

Do not shift weight forward or backward, keep it equally distributed between hands and knees.



Now gradually reverse curve and make hollow back, going down in middle and up at both ends... lower back sinks down, hips and head come up... head should come well up out of shoulders... keep eyes closed and lips open, so that face and neck are relaxed...

Gradually make back straight again...

Continue to execute these three movements (straight, round and hollow back) in succession, gradually changing from one to other, letting movement begin in lower back and travel along spine to head... end with straight back...

Give special attention to hip movement. This is primary exercise for development of movement awareness in hips.

2. Sitting

Same spine movement as in preceding exercise, sitting on chair, stool or step...

Start in basic sitting position.

Keep shoulders directly over hips throughout exercise. Do not bend forward or backward.

Straight Back is same as Tall Back in Exercise 1, page 482.





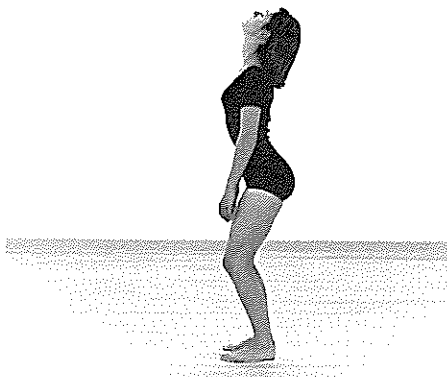
3. Standing

Same spine movement as in preceding exercise, in standing position...

Start in basic standing position (see page 20).

Maintain basic standing position throughout exercise, except for movement of spine.

This is our most important exercise for developing feeling of good standing position.



ROUND-HOLLOW CIRCLE

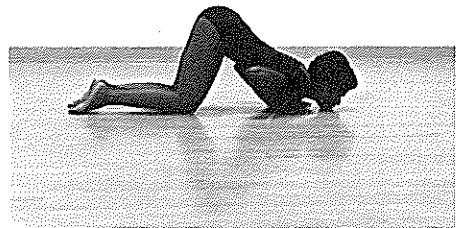
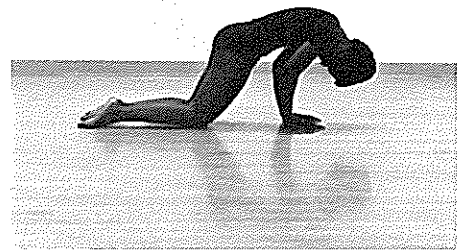
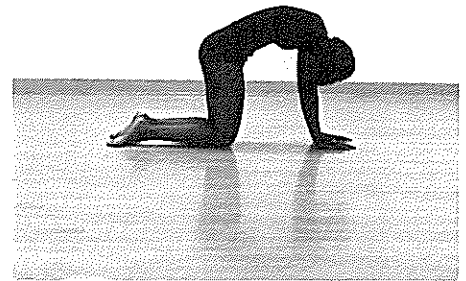
Basic hands and knees position...

Round and hollow back are described in Exercise 1, page 486.

Combine round and hollow back with forward and backward weight shift, as follows:

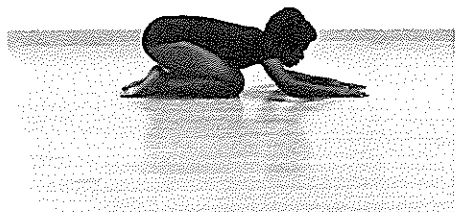
- step 1 make back round...
- step 2 maintaining round back, shift weight forward over hands...
- step 3 bending elbows, make back hollow...
- step 4 maintaining hollow back, with chin close to floor, shift weight back over knees...

Continue to move through these four positions slowly and smoothly with circular motion, sensing four directions: upward, forward, downward, backward...



Reverse direction of circle, as follows:

- step 1 make back round...
- step 2 maintaining round back, shift weight back over knees...
- step 3 bending elbows, make back hollow...
- step 4 maintaining hollow back, with chin close to floor, shift weight forward over hands...



HOLLOW-ROUND DOWN-UP



Basic standing position...

Hollow and round back are described in Exercise 3, page 488.

Combine hollow and round back with downward and upward movement of trunk, as follows:



step 1 make back hollow...

step 2 maintaining hollow back, bend trunk forward and continue downward as far as possible...

step 3 when you are low as possible, let trunk drop into relaxed hanging position with back rounded...

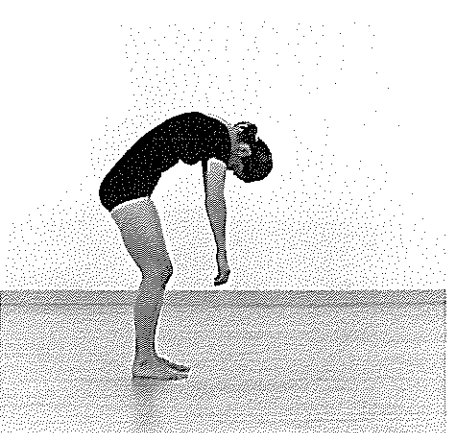
step 4 maintaining round back, raise trunk to erect standing position...



Continue this four-part movement slowly and smoothly, emphasizing undulation of spine...

Keep knees slightly bent, do not bend and stretch them. Arms hang relaxed entire time.

By increasing pace of movement, changing forward controlled bend into relaxed drop, and coming up only part way to erect standing position, you may develop this movement into Back Flop (see Exercise 5, page 85).



SIDE CURVE

Basic standing position...

Curve spine sideward, keeping shoulders
over hips...

Return to erect position...

Curve spine sideward to other side...

Return to erect position...

Continue to execute these movements in
slow succession, ending with straight back...



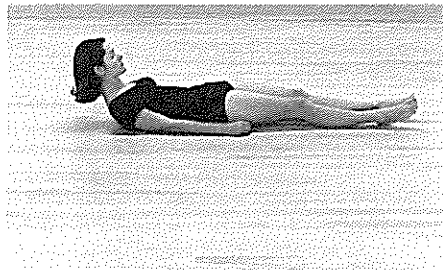
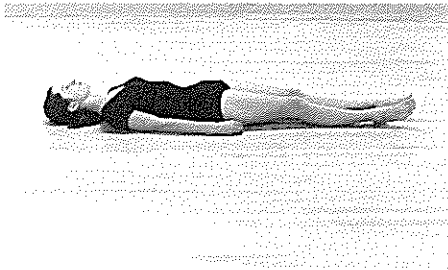
CURLING AND UNCURLING

1. Lying

Lie on back, relaxed, arms beside body...

Lift head off floor... lay it down again...

Now, starting with head, gradually curl up to sitting position with head leading... keep shoulders and arms relaxed...



Beginners may use arms for support at first.

This is movement which persons with certain type of structure cannot do unless someone else holds feet down.

You are now in relaxed sitting position with back rounded, head and body hanging forward, shoulders and arms relaxed...

Now reverse movement, slowly lying down, letting back uncurl on floor, laying head down last of all...

Relax in lying position...

As you curl and uncurl, have feeling that you are lifting or lowering one vertebra at a time. Use abdominal muscles, tucking hips under (see Hips, Exercise 2-C, page 559).

2. With Back Straightening

Same as preceding exercise, with this addition:

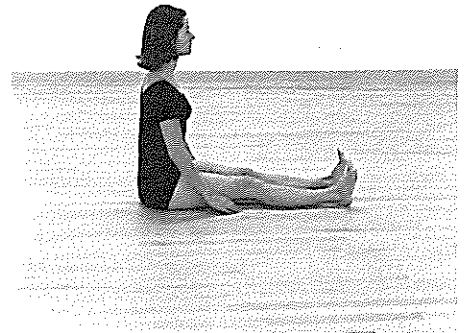
After curling up to sitting position with back rounded, slowly straighten back, coming to erect sitting position with straight legs and feet bent back...

Now, relax back, letting head and body hang forward again, then uncurl on floor as before...

Complete movement has four parts:

1. Curl up to sitting position, back rounded.
2. Straighten back.
3. Round back, letting it hang forward again.
4. Uncurl to floor.

This exercise is used as preparation for relaxed backward fall (Exercise 2, page 304).

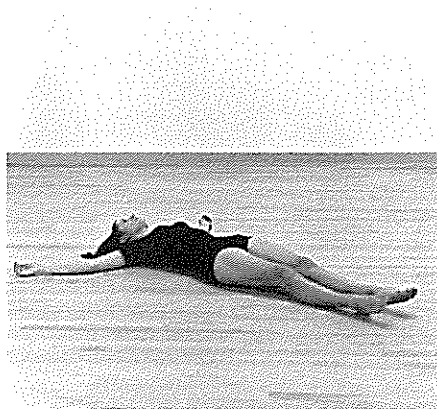


3. With Arm Swing

Same as preceding exercise, with these developments: pace is faster and there is arm swing.

Lie on back, relaxed, arms out to sides, palms up...

Curl up with rounded back then straighten back in one continuous motion, at same time swinging arms forward and upward to position over head...



Now round back then uncurl on floor in one continuous motion, at same time swinging arms downward and backward then out to side on floor...

4. Standing

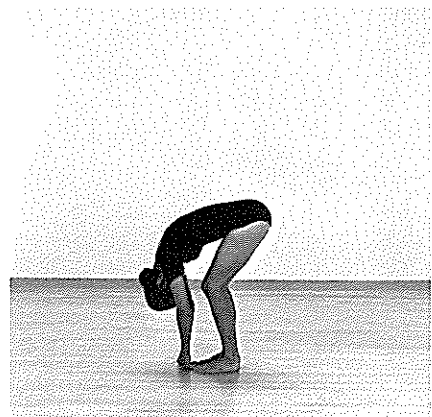
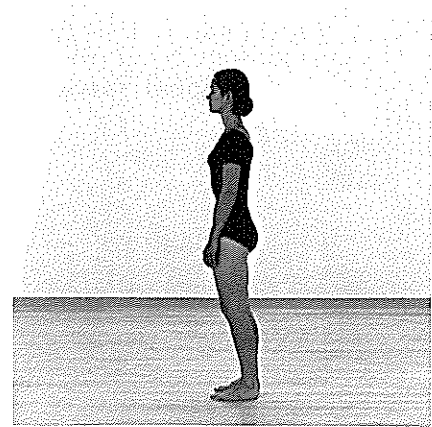
Basic standing position...

Relax head and let it drop heavily forward onto chest... feel weight of relaxed head hanging on spine... gradually let head pull spine downward one vertebra at a time, until entire body hangs all the way down from waist...

After remaining in relaxed forward hanging position a moment, reverse movement, gradually uncurling and returning to starting position... let shoulders fall into place and head come up into position last of all...

Knees are loose throughout exercise.

This exercise may be used as study in relaxation, or posture.



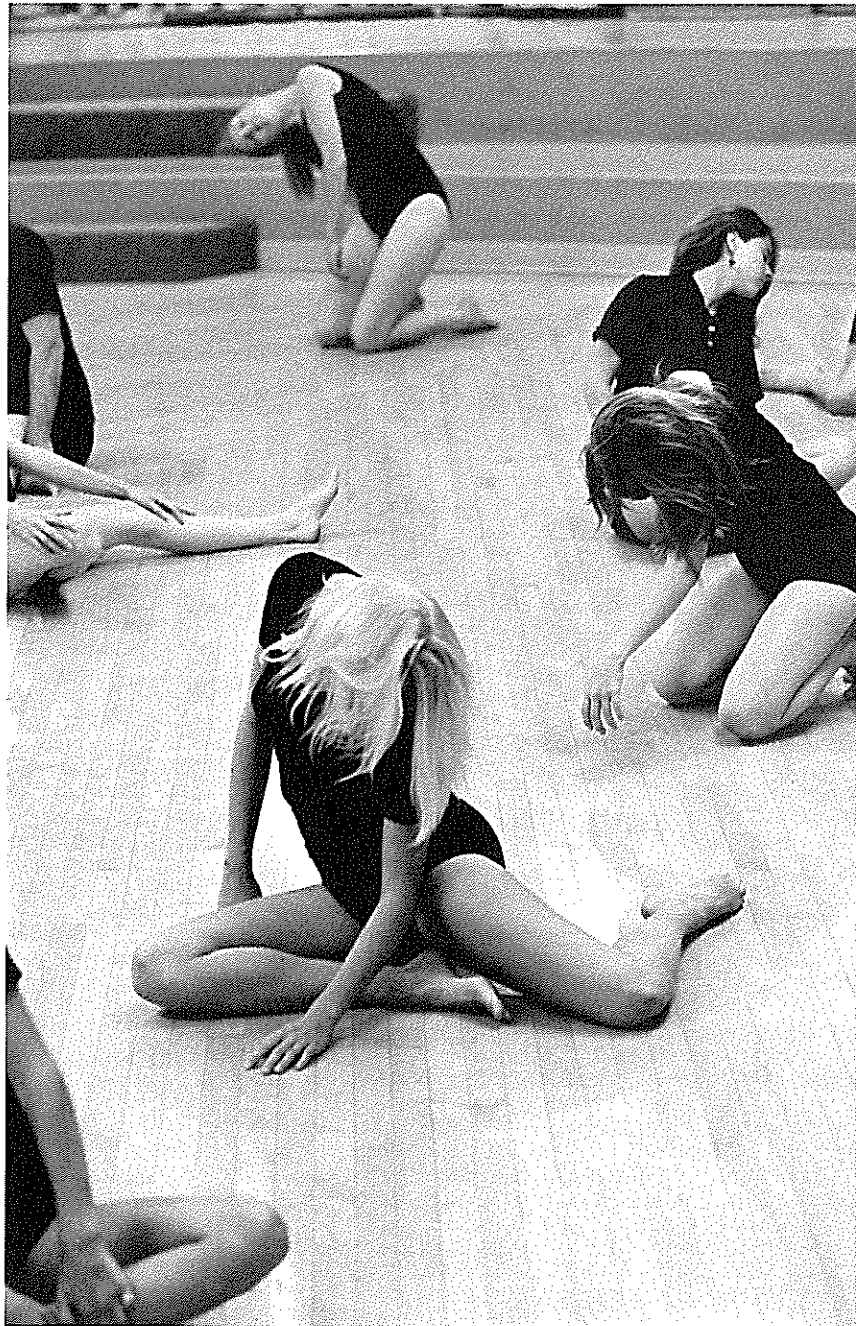
UNDULATING

See Spine Waves, pages 292 - 298.

RELAXING

See Sectional Relaxation, PART 2, page 67
Upper Body Relaxation, pages 81 - 85.

HEAD



HEAD

Free movement of the head is essential to the creatively moving body.

The following exercises can help develop feeling for free head movement.

OUTLINE OF HEAD EXERCISES

RELAXATION

See Relaxing, pages 72 - 77.

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TURNING 503

DOWN AND UP 503

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2. Forward-Backward 505

SIDE TO SIDE 506

HORIZONTAL CIRCLE 506

RELAXATION

See Relaxing, pages 72 - 77.

PUSH AND PULL

Basic sitting or standing position...

Keeping chin level, thrust head forward then pull it back, using muscles at back of neck...



Keep back erect and spine tall, do not lean forward or backward. As you pull head back, stretch neck up and keep chin high, do not make "double chin".

If you put hand on bump at back of neck, you will notice that it increases as you push head forward and decreases as you pull head back. Let hand exert counterforce as head is pulled back, and try to flatten bump as much as possible. Teacher's hand on back of student's neck can be helpful.

This exercise has value in developing feeling for erect carriage of head.

TURNING

Basic sitting or standing position...

Without twisting trunk or moving shoulders, turn head alternately to right and to left...



DOWN AND UP

Basic sitting or standing position...

Turning face up to ceiling, stretch neck upward...



Turning face down to floor, arch neck over in long curve...



Continue these two movements in slow alternation...

VERTICAL CIRCLES



1. Sideward

Combine Turning (preceding page) with Down and Up (preceding page), as follows:

step 1 turn head left...



step 2 turn face upward, stretching neck long...



step 3 turn head right...



step 4 turn face downward arching, neck in long curve...

Continue these movements in smooth succession, creating vertical circle...

Describe circle in opposite direction, as follows:

- step 1 turn head right...
- step 2 turn face upward
- step 3 turn head left...
- step 4 turn face downward...

2. Forward-Backward

Combine Push and Pull (page 502) with Down and Up (page 503), as follows:

- step 1 keeping chin level, thrust head forward...
- step 2 turning face down to floor, arch neck over in long curve...
- step 3 pull head backward, keeping face forward and using muscles at back of neck...
- step 4 turning face up to ceiling, stretch neck upward...

Continue these movements in smooth succession, creating vertical circle...

Describe circle in opposite direction, as follows:

- step 1 pull head backward...
- step 2 turn face downward...
- step 3 push head forward...
- step 4 turn face upward...

SIDE TO SIDE

Basic sitting or standing position...

Without tilting or turning head or bending neck, shift head from side to side...



Although this movement is frequently seen in Oriental dancing, it is unfamiliar to Occidentals and may take considerable practice.

HORIZONTAL CIRCLE

Combine Push and Pull (page 502) with Side to Side (preceding exercise), as follows:

- step 1 push head forward...
- step 2 shift head sideward right...
- step 3 pull head back...
- step 4 shift head sideward left...

Continue these movements in smooth succession, creating horizontal circle...

Describe circle in opposite direction...

SHOULDERS



SHOULDERS

Feeling for shoulder movement in relation to the spine and to the arms is important in the use of the body as expressive instrument.

This feeling can be developed through free exploration of shoulder movement supplemented by the exercises in this chapter.

OUTLINE OF SHOULDER EXERCISES

RELAXATION

See Relaxing, page 78.

ARM CIRCLE SWING

See Arm Swings, Exercise 4, pages 126 - 127.

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RELAXATION

See Relaxing, page 78.

ARM CIRCLE SWING

See Arm Swings, Exercise 4, pages 126 - 127.

UP-DOWN

Basic sitting or standing position...

Lift both shoulders up as high as possible, then lower them...



Continue to do these two movements in alternation, keeping back erect...

FORWARD-BACKWARD

Basic sitting or standing position...

Move both shoulders forward, then move them backward...



Continue to do these two movements in alternation...

Keep back and head erect, do not let rest of body be drawn into shoulder movement.

CIRCLE

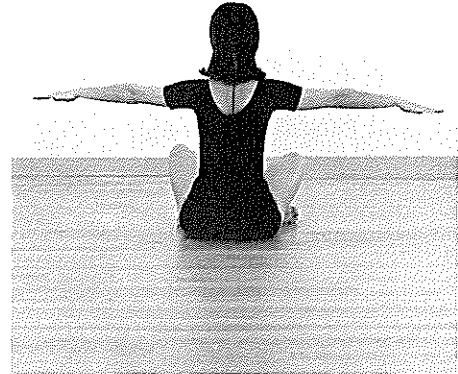
Combine two preceding exercises, moving shoulders first forward, then upward, then backward, then downward in continuous circle...

Repeat circle several times, then reverse direction so that shoulders move first backward, then upward, then forward, then downward...

OPEN-CLOSE

Basic sitting or standing position, with arms raised sideward at shoulder height, palms down...

Keeping arms straight (do not bend elbows), alternately open and close shoulder blades, moving them apart and together in a sideward motion (do not move them forward and backward)...



Opening and closing of shoulder blades causes arms to lengthen and shorten in telescope-like movement. As you close shoulder blades, lower them so that pull is both inward and downward.

It is helpful to picture shoulder blades as flat and plate-like, and to feel them as sliding in toward spine and out away from it.

Do preceding movement with one shoulder at a time...



It is easier to do this movement with one shoulder than two, but starting with two shoulders moving in opposition furthers understanding of movement.

ARMS



ARMS

Arms need exercises to extend the range of movement feeling. In this chapter we offer exercises covering many different kinds of arm movement.

The experience of improvising freely with arms should precede the practice of arm exercises.

OUTLINE OF ARM EXERCISES

RELAXATION

See Relaxing, pages 78 - 80.

SWINGS

See Arm Swings, pages 121 - 144.

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ANGLES

These exercises have a strong visual design emphasis and may be done in front of mirror if one is available.

1. Semi-Circle

A. Palms Forward

Basic standing or sitting position, with arms raised sideward at shoulder height, elbows straight, palms forward, fingers together...

Line from finger tips of one hand to finger tips of other is straight and horizontal.

Keeping elbows at shoulder height, bend elbows so that lower arms describe semi-circle, ending with finger tips pointing toward each other in front of chest, line from elbow to elbow straight and horizontal...

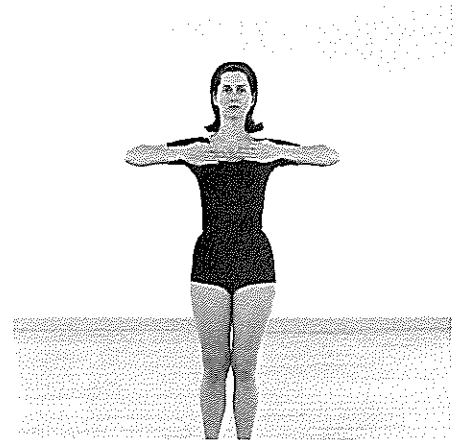
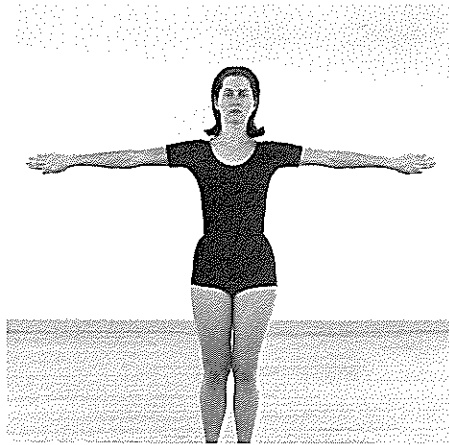


Now unbend elbows, reversing direction of semi-circular movement and ending in starting position...

Continue to do these two movements in alternation, making sure that arms and hands form straight horizontal line in both positions...

B. Palms Backward

Same as preceding exercise except that palms are backward...



2. Right Angle

A. Palms Forward

Basic standing or sitting position, with arms raised sideward at shoulder height, elbows straight, palms forward, fingers together...

Bend elbows so that lower arms form right angle with upper arms, finger tips pointing upward...



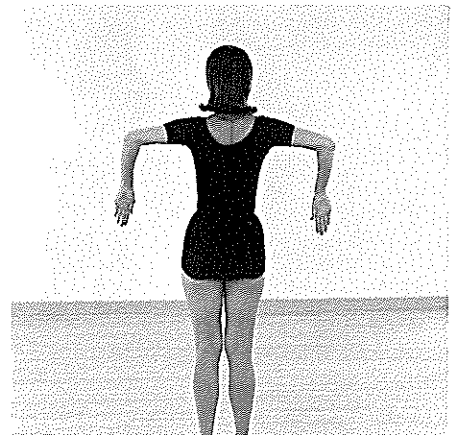
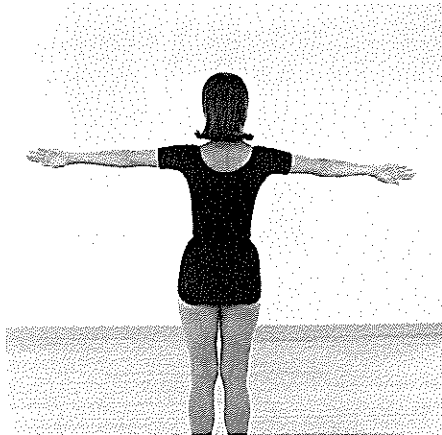
Return to starting position...

Continue to do these two movements in alternation, keeping elbows at shoulder height and making sure of right angle position...

B. Palms Backward

Same as preceding exercise, with palms backward...

Right angle now causes finger tips to point downward.



3. Variations

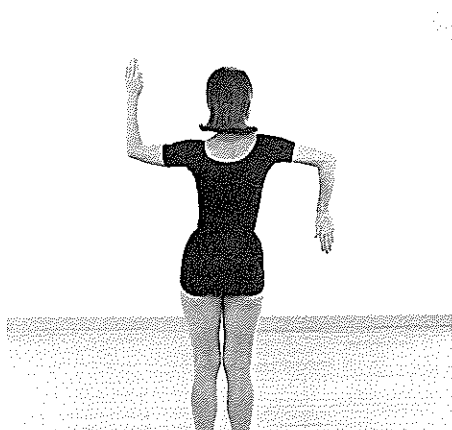
Above exercises can be varied in many ways, as follows:

Create obtuse or acute (instead of right) angles...



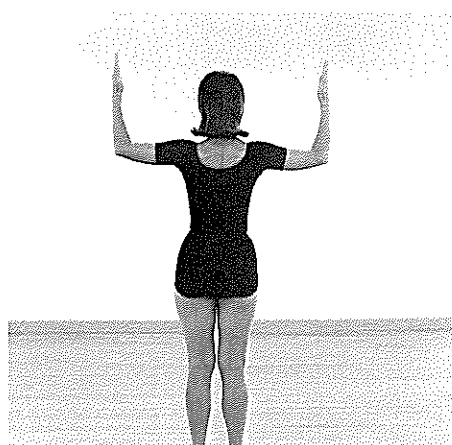
Move lower arms in opposite directions: one arm with palm forward, other with palm backward...

Examples:



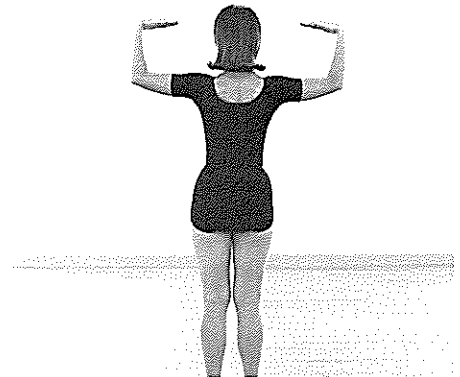
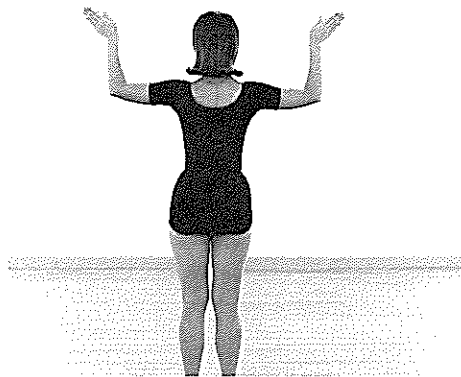
Make angles with palms up or down, instead of forward or backward...

Example:



Vary position of hands by bending wrists (forward, backward or sideward; in same or opposite direction; see Hands, page 547)...

Examples:



CIRCLES WITH ROTATION

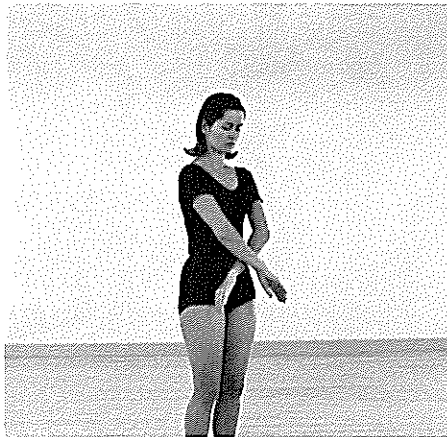
1. Sideward Vertical Plane

Basic standing position...

Cross arms in front of you and raise them up over head, then lower them sideward-downward to starting position, describing circle in sideward vertical plane... repeat circle several times slowly and smoothly...

Arms are loose throughout exercise.

Rotate arms inward as you raise them and outward as you lower them...



Rotate arms outward as you raise them and inward as you lower them...



This is exercise to free upper arm in shoulder socket. Keep shoulder blades closed throughout (see Shoulders Open-Close, page 514).

Reverse direction of circle as follows:

Raise arms sideward-upward over head then, crossing them in front of you, lower them to starting position... repeat circle several times, slowly and smoothly...

Rotate arms inward as you raise them and outward as you lower them...

Rotate arms outward as you raise them and inward as you lower them...

Movements of this exercise may be done with one arm at a time as well as with both arms together.

2. Forward-Backward Vertical Plane

Basic standing position...

Raise arms forward-upward over head, then lower them backward-downward to starting position, describing circle in forward-backward vertical plane... repeat circle several times slowly and smoothly...

Arms are loose as in preceding exercise.

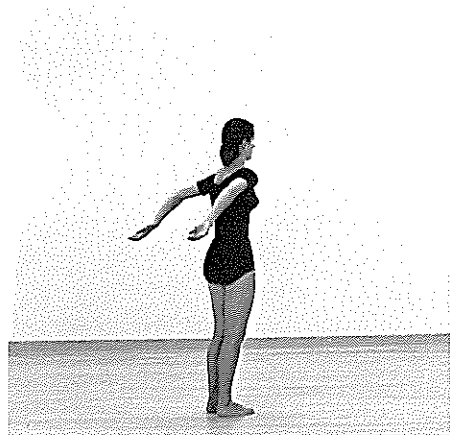
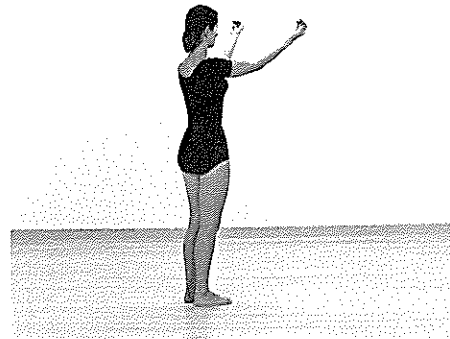
Rotate arms inward as you raise them and outward as you lower them...

As in preceding exercise, shoulder blades remain closed.

Arms cannot, of course, go as far backward as forward, but there can be feeling of plane.



Rotate arms outward as you raise them
and inward as you lower them...



Reverse direction of circle as follows: raise arms backward-upward over head, then
lower them forward-downward to starting position...

Rotate arms outward as you raise them and inward as you lower them...

Rotate arms inward as you raise them and outward as you lower them...

Movements of this exercise may be
done with one arm at a time as well
as with both arms together.

HANDS



HANDS

No part of the body is more mobile or more capable of a wide variety of movement than the hands.

Free exploration of hand movement can provide an almost unlimited number of movement forms and feelings.

The exercises in this chapter are a supplementary aid to the development of imagination and skill in the use of hands as expressive instruments.

OUTLINE OF HAND EXERCISES

RELAXATION

See Relaxing, page 78.

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RELAXATION

See Relaxing, page 78.

OPEN-CLOSE

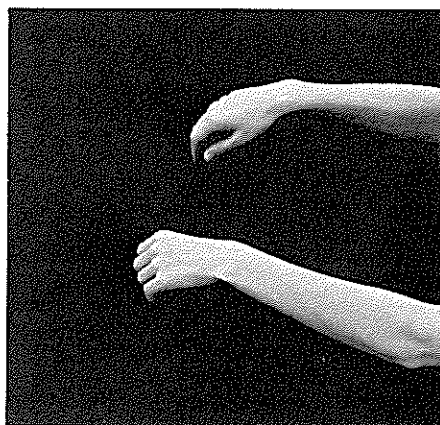
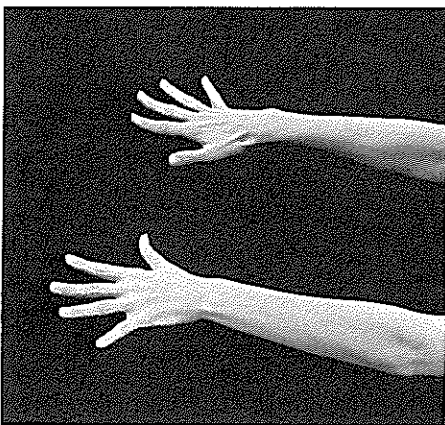
Any position in which hands and arms can move freely, with arms raised loosely in front of you...

1. With Relaxed Drop

Open hands as wide as possible, spreading fingers wide apart...

Relax hands, letting them hang limp at wrists...

Close hands, making tight fists...



Relax hands again, letting them hang limp...

Repeat this sequence of movements several times...

2. Continuous Alternation

A. Hands Only

Open hands wide, spreading fingers...

Close hands, making tight fists...

Repeat these two movements in alternation several times...

Although relaxation is not practiced here as separate movement, it is still present in transition from one movement to next and should be consciously cultivated. Going from any one movement to another always involves some relaxation.

B. Whole Body

Whole body may be gradually drawn into opening and closing movement in this way:

- step 1 hands only (as in preceding exercise)...
- step 2 hands and arms: arms reach out and draw in as hands open and close...
- step 3 entire body is drawn into opening and closing movement, each student discovering for himself various ways of doing it...

Accompaniment is teacher's voice, or students' voices in unison, saying "open - close" or "out - in".

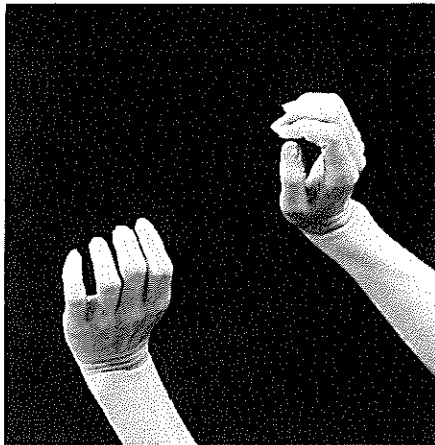
This exercise offers experience in the polarity of two basic types of tension: out-going and in-going. It can be an important creative experience.

WRISTS

Any position in which hands and arms can move freely, with arms raised lightly in front of you, back of wrists up...

1. Hands Relaxed

Letting hands remain relaxed, bend wrists alternately up and down...



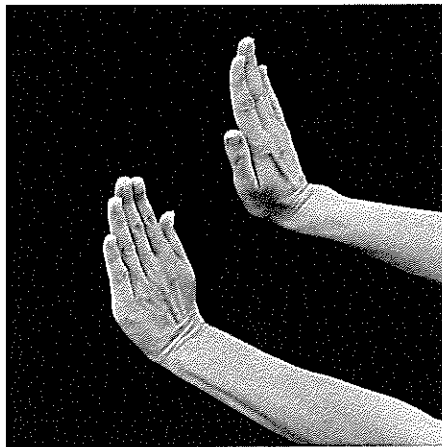
Move wrists from side to side...

Move wrists in circle: up - side - down - side...

Keep back of wrist up, do not turn hand over or twist arm.

2. Hands Flat

Keeping hands flat and fingers together, bend wrists alternately up and down...



Move wrists from side to side...



Move wrists in circle: up - side - down - side...

FINGERS

Any position in which hands and arms can move freely, with arms raised lightly in front of you...

With hands open and straight fingers spread wide apart, describe circle several times:

with thumbs...

with index fingers...

with middle fingers...

with fourth fingers...

with little fingers...

Now describe circle in opposite direction with one finger at time...

While one finger is circling,
others should not move.

WAVE

Any position in which hands and arms can move freely, arms raised lightly in front of you, hands hanging relaxed, back of wrists up...

Lower wrists, letting hands follow in wave-like motion... now raise wrists letting hands follow...

Continue this up and down undulation slowly and smoothly...

Let movement impulse which begins in wrists be transmitted from one finger joint to another all the way out to finger tips.

Keep fingers together creating ribbon-like motion which can intensify feeling of wave.

CURL-IN

Any position in which hands and arms can move freely...

Open hands wide, spreading fingers apart...

Slowly curl finger tips in toward center of hands until hands are closed in fist...

Relax hands...

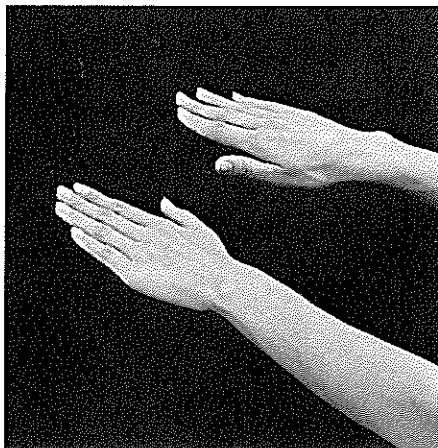
Repeat movement several times, relaxing between repetitions...



DRAW-IN

Any body position in which hands and arms can move freely... arms raised forward, hands resting lightly on air, palms down...

Contract hands by drawing in from center of palms, letting fingers follow...



Relax, returning to starting position...

Repeat movement several times...

