

BODY WORK

EXERCISES & MOVEMENTS

by Sonia Moriceau

from instructions given during meditation teaching

2003-2012

DEDICATION

**I would like to thank my teachers who have in some way shaped,
influenced or enriched my work:**

**John Garrie Roshi, for whom the body work was a crucial and
integral part of the journey to freedom from suffering;**

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work for liberation;**

**Leander Kane, for introducing me to some gentle yet profound
movements for healing the body;**

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the material to deepen our understanding of the body.**

Body work

Exercises and movements

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For Makko-Ho exercises, the meridian stretches, we suggest Mind Your Body by A.Scott and S.Wale. The pamphlet is available from info@devonshiatsu.co.uk or 01803 762593

BODY WORK

Exercises and Movements

From instructions given during Sonia's meditation teaching

2003-2012

*You need to take it gently so we start with body work, so you lie on your back. I want you to notice does the impulse to move come from the body or from the mind? It is not a trick question, there is not one answer, it can be sometimes from the body sometimes from the mind, even within one movement. So you begin by lying down. Know that you have a body. As in sitting practice, you get in touch with the body by scanning the body; you do that by bringing the attention to the points where it is in contact with the ground.*¹

RELAXING AND LETTING GO

I want you to arrive, to be settled, to be here. So the first thing you do is to focus on your body, on the breathing. This is always what you come back to. Start with letting go, establishing calm, ease; if you don't have that, then the 'waking-up' exercises will make you more agitated. Select exercises as appropriate, and be thorough with a few rather than doing all every day. Be disciplined with time, not just in the mornings. Do the exercises until you feel a change. If you cannot reach a state of ease, go back to just one exercise that you know can bring you to ease; for me that is the leg and arm drops.

Establishing calm

Lying-down, breathe in through the soles of the feet, then exhale through the soles of the feet. Letting go - as you would do in "arm drops" - at the middle and the end of the out-breath, or at the end only if it is a very long out-breath. Not at the beginning of the out-breath.

Bringing deep relaxation into the body

Begin lying down, and evoking a situation, an event that makes you feel good. Feel the texture of happiness. Then drop the event and borrow the texture.

- Start with the left foot – breathing in through the bones, up to the hip and out down the left leg. Then the same with the right leg. Stay with each until you feel a sense of warmth, expansion, letting go, tingling – something happening. Then in through the left foot, up across the pelvis and out down the right leg.
- Then onto the arms – the left arm, breathing in through the bones of the hand up the arm to the shoulder, and out down to the hand. The same with the right arm, again the same thing,

¹ Sonia's general explanations will be in a handwriting script, different from practice instructions in standard script.

up and down. And the same, establish a feeling of wellness and breathing in the feeling of wellness. Then from the left hand up to the shoulder and out down the right arm.

- Then the spine – up from the base of the spine up to the base of the skull, you breathe in; and breathe out all the way down to the base of the back.
- After that the skull - breathing in from the base to the front, breathing out from the front to the base. And again stay as long as you wish with the sequence.
- End with the whole body, breathing in from the base of the feet through the bones of the whole body, up to skull/top of the head and out down through the feet again.

The spine and the skull can be the most powerful.

The towel exercise

Think of all the people who have been your back-up as you do the towel exercise, which was taught by my first teacher John Garrie Roshí. With each breath, breathe in metta, the warmth of loving-kindness, friendliness. The out-breath is releasing pain, tension, toxins. There will be a feeling of friendliness at a cellular level; not just at a mental level - thinking, wishing - that doesn't go anywhere. The tools of loving-kindness are to purify, to heal the body; especially if there are problems in one area. Feel loving-kindness at a cellular level: all the cells are little glittering stars, the body is full of light. Listen for blockages, spontaneous movements are the sign that the body is liberating itself from the unwholesome; shifting, releasing.

Instructions

You will be lying flat on your back, using three different thicknesses of rolled towels. The length of the roll is the same as the dimension from the elbow to the wrist on the person who is using the towel.

You are using the towels to open the back, the chest and to breathe strength into the back from the ancestors, leaning into your history.

- Start with the thinnest rolled towel placed length-wise under your upper back, between the shoulder blades. Lying on the towel, you are leaning on your back-up. To encourage this feeling, breathe in up the front of your body and breathe out down the back. As you breathe out, feel that you are receiving all that wealth of inspiration, leaning on it. Become aware of parts of the body that are not really giving to that support; just be aware, it will change.
- Then the same with the second thicker rolled towel, with cushions under the knees for support. The thicker second towel gives more opening of the back, the chest, and also the neck, armpit and groin. As you double the towel's thickness, witness how much you are really leaning on that support; if it feels too threatening, go back to the beginning. Your ground of being is where you are really coming from; if you lean on that, how can you feel inadequate or frightened?
- Then with the third thickest rolled towel. This third towel gives even more opening in the body. Have patience with the tensions; really letting go, you may feel threatened physically, emotionally.
- Then back down through the two thinner rolled towels. Spend time on each of them, then at the end, lying flat with no towel, resting, breathing.

Write down, at the end of each sequence of three towels, what happened in the body. You may feel a difference in the back after the towel exercise; your sense of standing and walking, in particular,

will be very different. It is not just about being supple, we are working with subtle energy. Really emptying, calm, letting go – then when a tension arises like a fish jumping out of water – you can really notice it. That is the point of the exercise.

Arm and leg drops

This exercise is a meditation, it is the best way of training the mind and calming the body; use the body to train the mind.

The body is stretched and breathes, finds its point of balance and its place to come from, and reviews itself going into any particular kind of situation. It observes what kind of being is rising in that moment to take part in that action, questions whether it is a selfish, self-conscious, insecure motive or whether it is at ease – finds its answer, and then proceeds with the action. That is the whole of Satipatthana, that is the whole of the Mindfulness practice which can be activated in any moment in every day of your life.

John Garrie Roshi The Way Is Without Flaw, Sati Press, 1998
Chapter 23 'The Light of Mindfulness, p.97

Arm drops

NB: all movements, i.e. lifting and dropping, should be done on an out-breath. This is very important

Place a towel-roll length-wise under your spine down the back, from just below the neck; this is to stretch the shoulders and open the spine. Start with a small towel making not too thick a roll; the length of the roll is the same as the dimension from the elbow to the wrist on the person who is using the towel.

- Lying on the towel, breathe deeply three or five times, the index and middle fingers on the *hara* point or *dantien* (which is three fingers' width below the navel) pressing and releasing at the end of the out-breath.

Starting with arm drops, You do one arm at a time then you do both arms together:

- Turning the hands so that palms are facing down and raising the lower arm till it stands vertically, making a right angle with the upper arm. Don't turn the hand too far, your hand and your fore-arm should be in line with the body, and the palm of the hand should be facing down (Fig.1)



Fig.1

- In that position breathe in and out a few times – making a connection between the jaw, shoulder and elbow, all giving to gravity. (The neck relates to the lower back, relates to the belly.) Feel for the point of balance by giving to gravity and focusing on shoulders and elbow if correction is needed, don't move it around; if the arm is in the wrong position,

breathe a few times and the position should correct itself.

You can do the hand drop at this stage: breathe out, raising the hand then relax and drop it. When you drop the hand it is just one movement, so you go up and you drop on the same out-breath.

Then drop the lower arm; if it is in the point of balance, you will need to make an intention to drop it; note and name the intention, and the body responds. After dropping, just breathe for a short while then repeat with the other arm.

Then both arms together.

Remember to do all the movements on the out-breath that is very important

- Now you raise the first arm again, first the lower arm to same position as above then continue raising the upper arm also, all on one out-breath if possible, or taking another breath before raising the upper arm (mindful that all movements are made on the out-breath). The arm ends in a vertical position in balance resting on the shoulder blade, elbows and wrists relaxed (Fig.2). Breathe a few times in that position, then drop the full arm first the upper, then the lower arm (reversing the sequence of the raising of the arm) . After dropping, just breathe for a short while then repeat with the other arm
- Then both arms together.

Then remove the towel and breathe for a while lying on the ground.



Fig.2



Fig.3

For the shoulder drop you can have the towel horizontally under the pelvis area; it is important that the position for the centre of the towel should be under the pubic bone, not too low not too high. You bring the whole arm in the position of balance, right up as above; you can soften for a moment then you breathe out again and imagine a string lifting your arm, your shoulder joint is perpendicular to the floor (Fig.3). And then you move the shoulder up and down a few times, you have to imagine the shoulder and arm being pushed up from underneath the shoulder blade; at the end of the out-breath you drop shoulder, upper arm followed by lower arm suddenly in one move

Remember: all this should be on one out-breath,
First you do it on one side, then the other, then both together.

Having completed the whole sequence you breathe lying flat on the ground, without the towel, and breathe so the work can spread around the body.

To recapitulate: you start with the hand drop, then the lower arm drop, then a full arm drop and finally a shoulder drop; first one arm then the other, then together.

Slow arm drop

This is a very slow version of the lower arm drop. To be in the body, really with all the sensations happening in the body at that moment - pressure, contact, weight, contraction, loosening. This exercise is so very, deliciously slow.

Lie on your back, arms at 45 degrees to the body, palms facing up. Contact the in-breath and the out-breath, and bring the attention to your right hand. On an out-breath slowly, very slowly, begin to turn the hand palm over; you can name 'turning, turning, turning' as you do it. Only do the movement while breathing out, pausing in the movement on the in-breath. Now bring your attention to the forearm; again on an outbreath, slowly begin to lift the forearm off the ground. Feel as though the movement is coming from the underside. You can name 'lifting, lifting, lifting' as you do it. Continue lifting the forearm, slowly and on the out-breath, until you come to the point of balance where the forearm is resting on the elbow, able to support its position with minimal effort. Explore this sensation. Now bring the attention to the elbow. Begin to slowly move the forearm in the direction of the floor. Bypass the point of balance and feel the sensation of letting go in the body as the arm drops naturally to the ground. Again, all movements on the out-breath! Repeat the whole sequence on the other side.

Leg drops

When you lie down you focus on the body, giving to gravity. Then you take one leg, bending the knee, and you focus on the under-side of the leg and raise it, bringing the foot with it; the point of balance is when the thigh is at right-angle with the floor and the ankle is very loose (Fig.4). Imagine when you are bringing it up that you are bringing it up from the under-side, this is very important. It is very important that you don't lift the foot too much, you drag it on the floor so it keeps coming when you are bringing the leg up. So it is important not to catch your foot in the towel, or the blanket.

Breathe a few moments in that position.

By-pass the point of balance with the intention to drop; you can name the intention 'now I will drop my leg'; you use the intention to by-pass the point of balance and then you drop the leg. You have to initiate this movement. When the foot touches the floor the leg opens, the knee goes outwards, and that helps the leg to drop all the way down, the foot sliding over the floor (Fig.5).



Fig.4



Fig.5

And you do it with the other leg, then try both legs together (Fig.6), the same idea, and now you bring the knees together when you reach the point of balance; the same idea, you drop your feet first then because of the pressure on the ground your legs open (Fig.7).

Remember, also with the legs, all movements should be done while breathing out



Fig.6



Fig.7

And at the end you do the **arm drops and leg drops** at the same time.

The main purpose of the arm and leg drops exercise is to breathe out more, to open the chest more. Then you can go into 'mixing the energy in the joints'(see below) which is very good for healing the joints, which are the location of attachment, aversion and confusion.

And normally after that you go into the 'frog, cradle, elephant'(see below). Together they form a whole sequence.

Q: *Why is it followed by 'frog, cradle, elephant'?*

A: Because you have relaxed the upper body and the lower body, and now you can practise more coming from the belly. After that you should go into walking practice.

Frog, cradle, elephant

- From a lying down position, while breathing out come to a sitting position, bend your knees and place your feet hip-width apart. Now leaning back slightly raise your feet a few inches off the ground, opening out the knees and placing the inner elbows around the outside edge of the knees. The distribution or balance of weight should be 50:50 between the arms and the legs. This is the cradle (Fig.8). Focus on the belly and hold the posture for a few breaths.

- Then while releasing the arms, cross the feet at the ankles: right hand taking hold of the left foot, left hand taking hold of the right foot, and tucking the feet vigorously towards your bottom. Focusing on the belly and on the outbreath roll forward like a ball, tucking the feet under as you go; you pivot over your ankles and feet, and you end up with your forehead on the ground. This is the frog(Fig.9).



Fig.8



Fig.9

It is very important that the movement is smooth, like one continuous movement all done on an out-breath.

Then you release the hands and let the shoulders drop forward, touching the ground if possible, and then you can move them one by one individually like in the shoulder drop.

You can stay in this position for a while, breathing, relaxing.

- Now, keeping the focus on the belly, begin to roll like a ball – up all the way back-wards, dropping onto the back, then the shoulders and the neck until you are upside down, and the legs are in the same position as in the ‘cradle’ but upside down; again it is very important all of this is like one continuous movement, done on the out-breath and staying in a ball like position, don’t stretch the back when rolling back-wards. That is the elephant (Fig.10).

Now you can make a shoulder drop in this position. Focus on the belly and hold the posture for a few breaths.



Fig.10

Then move back and forth through the three postures, sometimes by-passing the cradle position, simply moving through frog and elephant.

Mixing of energy in the joints

This is good for healing the joints, which are the location of confusion: ‘shall I cling?’, ‘shall I push away?’.

Lying flat, place a rolled towel length-wise under the upper back between the shoulder blades. Raise a lower arm and hold it; breathe into the wrist and hold the in-breath, feel the warmth in the wrist; on the out-breath relax the wrist up, and do a hand-drop. Then do the same in the elbow: don’t drop the arm yet, breathe in and hold then drop the arm.

NB: holding the in-breath is not done in the upper chest, but it should feel like you are pushing the in-breath down into the belly.

Then raise the full arm, breathe into and hold breath in the shoulder, then drop the arm.

Then place a rolled towel horizontally under the sacrum and do shoulder drops.

Then repeat the same sequence with the other arm.

Then (no towel) do leg drops: breathe into the hip at the point of balance, really, holding the breath you research the point of balance, warming the hip. Just the hip initially, then spread it to the knee and ankle – or the warmth can spread by itself.

BREATHING

Focusing on the breathing, that is where you can always settle: breathing in, 'I am breathing in'; breathing out, 'I am breathing out'. And now focus on the point of contact you have with the floor; contact each point of contact, just put your attention on each point for a breath and then move on, you want to settle in your body. I want you to try to, every time you breathe in, mentally say to yourself 'I know I am breathing in'; and every time you breathe out, mentally say 'I know I am breathing out'. Being more present with breathing in and breathing out.

You can do this standing, sitting and lying down.

The nine breathings

We do this practice at the beginning of each sitting meditation, or before each block of practice if you are on retreat. It is to clear and balance the fine energy lines which lead from the nostrils, up into the brain at the top of the head, round the side of the skull and down the spine, gathering at the hara point below the navel.

Sitting in meditation posture, start with breathing in through both nostrils, then:

- For women: with the middle finger of the left hand, block the right nostril and breathe out forcefully through the left nostril;
- Then with thumb block the left nostril and breathe in through the right nostril, long and slow and gently.
- Repeat the sequence twice more
- For men: do it all the other way round, using the right hand, blocking left nostril, etc.
- Then, same for men and women, hands on knees, breathe in through both nostrils and out sharply, bending forwards at the pelvis while keeping the spine straight, to expel all air.

Repeat the sequence two more times.

Wave breathing

For strengthening the belly/hara

Sitting on your knees with the toes pointing slightly inwards, hands in the prayer position. Send the in-breath up to sixteen fingers width above the head, and the out-breath down deep into the pelvis.

Lying down on your back, with the index fingers and the thumbs of both hands forming a triangle with the thumbs touching at the navel; feel the sunshine entering the navel, warmth.

Breathe in from the *hara* up the chest to above the head; on the in-breath imagine the big toes lengthening (the liver meridian), feel the breath go up the front of the body, through the head and down the spine to the heel, descending into the earth. Observe from the belly, with the mind getting out of the way, how the body begins to undulate, especially the pelvis. This provides warmth, opening and gathering of energy in the belly. Breathe out down the back to the sacrum, imagining your heels sinking into the sand, round the perineum and up the front again. This creates a rocking effect in the pelvis.

Repeat the same in the standing posture with feet apart, in walking and sitting.

In standing, the feet are pointing outwards, knees above big toe, pelvis tucked in, head and neck are long. Hands on the *hara* with fingers of the right hand pointing at the earth. Left hand is holding the right wrist. The intention is to earth the *hara* point. Imagine the *hara* is a cup and all the aches, thoughts, sensations, flow back into the belly and are absorbed.

Lying down, arms crossed over the chest with the hands touching the shoulders. Knees up and leaning inwards, they could be touching; feet stay flat on the ground. On the in-breath, imagine lengthening the energy through the big toes, as the breath goes above your head. On out-breath, imagine the heels sinking very deep into the ground, like sand as the sea waves go out, the sacrum sunk deep. The wave goes up the front and down the back; then up the front again, and on - a circular motion. It starts gently but as you get into it, it can become quite physical.

Vase breathing

The purpose of the Vase breathing is to bring the mind to rest in a state of luminous clarity, in its own true nature.

These are grounding exercises for putting fire in the belly, to warm the belly, giving energy and bliss to the practice and for chemical and hormonal changes and lessening the extreme emotional cycles.

The first thing to do is to expel the stale air from the nose. Sitting in meditation posture, place the hands on your knees, then with your right index finger on your right nostril to block that nostril, you breathe out through your left nostril three times; gently at first, second time quite forcefully, and the third time even more forcefully. While doing this you think that you have let go of attachment.

Then you do the same with your left hand on the left nostril, exhaling through the right nostril, and you bring up and while doing this you think of letting go of your aversion.

The third time you breathe in through both nostrils: you place your hands on the knees and you breathe out through both nostrils, at first gently, then more forcefully, and even more forcefully (staying in upright position). While doing this, you imagine you are letting go of confusion, apathy, dullness.

This is another version of the nine breathings.

Now you are ready to begin the Vase Breathing, and it is very gentle, not forceful. You breathe in, through both nostrils, all the way normally from the belly up. You take a full breath in, you hold it, and then you push the breath down into the lower abdomen holding it there briefly and then you breathe out.

It is holding the breath basically, but for a very short time; and it has to be very comfortable, if it starts to be uncomfortable you breathe out gently through the mouth.

You do this Vase Breathing - retaining some breath down in the lower abdomen - until you feel your abdomen warmer, and the mind is more settled.

HARA WORK

Rocking

Lying down on your back, the first and second fingers meet on the *hara* (three fingers width below the navel). Flood the body with blue, press fingers into *hara* on out-breath. Then, when calm is established, imagine a rod down the spine of the body and rock from side to side along the rod, from the point in the *hara*. The rocking finds its own momentum and in time the whole body may join in.

Breathing blue

Lying on your back, with knees up and big toes slightly pointing inwards, hands meeting in a triangle around the *hara* (three fingers width below the navel) – the thumbs meet at the navel, index fingers touching to form the triangle. Breathe in *lapis lazuli* blue; breathing out, imagine the thumbs and fingers go deep into the body, touching the spine.

or

Place the hands in a triangle on the *hara*, thumbs and fore-fingers touching, thumbs meeting at the navel. Visualise deep blue in the belly and the hands sinking in; send the blue light down into the pelvic area, the sacrum, legs, then up the spine into the arms and head. Vibrant, radiant blue with flecks of gold, like stars in deep space.

Belly - Hara – breathing

The Hara breathing exercises are like the Towel Exercise (above), for opening up, but they are going deeper. The Hara Line is very stable, it is a point of reference.

Lying on your back, breathe in the belly, expanding in three directions – to the sides and the back - filling the belly. Then gathering *chi* two inches below the belly button, in the *hara*. Don't let go all the breath on the out-breath, feel it gathering. With the hands over the belly, feeling it rise and fall. Then the breath rising again to two inches above the navel, the solar plexus.

1. Lie on your stomach, hands flat on the floor, palms down, with index fingers and thumbs of the hands creating a triangle on which you rest your fore-head; the feet are at right-angles to the ground resting on bent toes with the big toes slightly inward, so it is an active position Fig. 11 and 12).



Fig.11



Fig.12

Bring attention in the lower belly, breathe in and out in the three directions (the back and the sides) and out at the back; visualise the breathing going deep into the lower belly, even one meter deep.

Then, staying in same position, fold the hands into fists (Fig.13), place them on the “band of anxiety” which is located below the throat the width of the hand with thumb outstretched, just above the nipples. (Fig.14). In that position, breathe deeply into the belly ending with a forceful *tchi* on the out-breath through the nose while pushing belly downwards. Do this five or seven times.



Fig.13



Fig.14

2. Bring the elbows down a little to the side, open the hands to form again a triangle with the thumb and index with your forehead resting on the hands. Coming from the belly, on an out-breath flip up onto your knees which are coming all the way up towards the elbows, the knees wide apart (like a frog position). Having your toes flat, the back still parallel to the floor; and the elbows touching the knees is very important (Fig.15). Take the breath everywhere, especially under the arms. Then repeat the five or seven breaths with the *tchi* sound.



Fig.15



Fig.16



Fig.17

3. On an out-breath, raise the head and the chest and ease out into a kneeling position, come up fully onto your knees, sitting on your heels, the feet are at right-angles to the ground resting on bent toes with the big toes slightly inward, so it is an active position; bring the belly through. Move the hands onto the upper legs, so the hands are above the knees half way up the thighs, with the thumbs on the outside of the legs. The back is straight and leaning a bit forward; it is very alert, the eyes focusing forward (Fig.16 and 17). There should be some alertness in the hands, drawing the muscles out towards the thumbs. The breath drops deep into your belly, then breathe in the same way as before with the *tchi* on the out-breath.

4. Then move quickly with an out-breath into a standing posture, keeping your hands on your thighs. Hands are still above the knees, knees above the toes; knees are bent like in a chi gong stance with the belly coming through (fig.18). Holding that position jump up five times, the pelvis down loose, out and relaxed, bouncing low, After jumping three times:



Fig.18



Fig.19

5. Come to standing position, arms out. relaxing the hands which come level with your chest, palms facing down, finger-tips facing each other but not touching. The knees remain bent and wide open and over the feet as above (Fig.19). Looking forward with the eyes you breathe and sound as before.

Repeat the whole sequence 3 times; always check every part of the posture. Release, let go of tension, bring the chest and belly through. Wait until you want to take another in-breath then release a *tchi* from deep below in the belly.

Hara Line

Start with standing, legs bent and quite wide apart, feet pointing outwards so the knees are over the big toe (Fig.20), hands on the hips with thumbs on the back, and go through the different positions as described below.

In each position, increasingly feel contact between the *hara-point* and the earth, reaching down into the earth in a line which also reaches up above the crown of the head while the feet draw energy up from the earth. Feel heat in the belly, in the *hara* point triangle and the heat's connection with heat in the earth.



Fig.20



Fig.21



Fig.22

1. Bring the finger tips of both hands together, knuckles bent, and rest finger tips on the *hara-point* (Fig.21)

2. Place the thumbs and index fingers of both hands onto the belly, forming a triangle around the *hara-point* – with the thumbs on the navel, and fingers pointing downwards (Fig.22).

3. Have the right hand's fingers touching *hara* as in 1. and below that at the centre of the belly the left hand stretched out with the fingers pointing directly down towards the earth (Fig.23).

4. Then keeping the left hand on the *hara* point, pointing to earth as in 3., move the right hand to the ‘point of deep aspiration’, of purpose in life – which is four fingers’ width, or a little more, below the lowest point of the throat hole. That is higher than the heart *chakra* dip point, than the heart mind centre; the position is where the chest expands for breath to go down the arms, like a balloon.

The position of the fingers of the right hand are as in 1. Feel the fine line inner connection, deep inside the body, down the spine, down into the earth (Fig. 24)



Fig.23



Fig.24

If you cannot feel the connection, work with a partner putting a hand gently behind the back as a back-up support to lean back and sink downwards.

5. Then leave left hand where it is and move the right onto the crown of the head at the point directly above in line – in the middle of the head on the line connecting the ears. The fingers of right hand are pointing upwards towards heaven (Fig.25). Focus attention on the space sixteen fingers’ width above the crown (you cannot actually reach there).

6. Then bring the right hand down again to the aspiration point with fingers still pointing upwards to the heavens, opposite to the left hand on the *hara-point* which is pointing down to earth, both hands facing inwards (Fig.26).



Fig.25



Fig.26

You can do all 6 positions in lying down, in sitting (kneeling down) and / or standing. Standing are the most powerful ones.

MOVEMENTS

For settling down we are going to do some body work. All movements are done slowly with the intention of maintaining continuity, of the movement and of intention. Lie down flat at the beginning of all movements. Be aware of the movement, mindful of all instructions and how it affects the body. Remain mindful also during the integration stage. These exercises are in Feldenkrais method, so integration is important. You choose when to integrate lying flat, then sitting, standing and walking (outside if possible). You can do just one movement then integrate.

Q: What is integration?

A: It is the time after the movements are done when the body processes all the information given through the movements. During integration you don't need to do anything, just witness whatever happens in your body and mind.

Integrate after each stage, lying down.

Q: What happens in integration?

A: Integration lying down can last a lot longer than the movement, like digesting the movement. The movement is setting it up, stirring it up – but in integration, then is when you meet the body as it is. The body is going through layers, making adjustments for example by twitching, shaking, hot/cold temperature changes, spontaneous movement. Images can come up, colours, smells, a bubble of stories (don't go into them); unlocking stored emotional memories. Recognise it and let it go.

Q: When is integration completed?

A: There can be a change in the breath or an impulse, or the mind becomes distracted again, the start of thinking. The mind is getting restless wanting to move onto something else. Or when there is a feeling of softness, lightness, having settled, resolution. Learn to know when integration is finished, explore it.

At the end of the session integrate lying down, in sitting, standing and in walking. You may experience some spontaneous movement, don't react to them, just witness them.

Once you are experienced you can do integration in sitting, standing and walking after each lying down integration - then progressing to the next movement.

Q: What is the difference between an exercise and a movement?

A: Exercises follow an instruction. From a book. They have a sense of achievement, a beginning and an end. Movement has more flow, it goes further. *Doing a movement that my body has never done before – it's like a lovely dance and I'm enjoying it a lot.* The word 'exercise' is static, use the word 'movement' rather than exercise. With the movement, aim for continuity of awareness and explore what happens at different points – which one gives you more information? There is no right or wrong – it is your body, your exploration.

Turning, rolling, stretching, twisting

Lie on your back. Now bend your knees and rest your feet on the floor, feet about hip width apart. Start turning your head to one side very slowly, and back to the centre and to the other side. It is turning the head not lifting the head, just rolling the head from one side to the other. Just slowly, turning; and mentally say 'I know I am turning my head to the right side', and 'I know I am turning my head to the left side'. You want to be really in the movement, in the body. And notice the effects on your body, know what happens in the rest of the body.

Now put the left leg down, stretch the left leg. And keeping the right knee pointing to the ceiling, now raise slowly the right hip; and say 'I know I am moving my right hip'. Then you go up and down very slowly, so you can be with the movement; and keeping the left hip on the floor. And as part of this practice, at some point you lengthen your right leg and then you integrate. When you decide to integrate you lengthen both legs and feel the changes; leave time for the changes to settle and for yourself to be present, to notice. You decide when to integrate, within the movement period.

When you feel ready, you do the same with the left side, i.e. left knee up, right leg stretched. You move slowly and, to help you stay with the process, mentally say 'I know I am moving my left hip'. You can also turn the head to the opposite side of the hip you are moving; and you can explore turning the head to the same side as the hip you are moving. So you can explore the opposite side or the same side. And you also say 'I know I am turning my head' – you have to decide where you put the emphasis. From time to time you do an integration, you have to do that in your own time. Now finish your movement. If you find you are in a process of thinking, try not to follow the thought; just come back to the body – to the point of contact with the floor or to the breathing.

Is the breath important, to synchronise it with the movement?

No, let the breath take care of itself, no need to match it with the movement. At the beginning you decide what you want to do, at some point the body decides what it wants to do; so you say to your body 'you decide what to do'.

Turning

Arms stretch

Lying on your back, both knees up, feet on the ground hip width apart arms stretched vertical up in the air, elbows straight; palms of hands together, the two middle fingers touching each other. The head not moving, move the arms slowly to one side as far as they can comfortably go, without bending the elbows. It means the movement is happening from the shoulders. Focus on the big vertebrae at the top of the spine and notice what is happening elsewhere, for example in the hips. Then repeat but turning the head in the same direction as the arms. Then turning it in the opposite direction of the arms.

Then do whole sequence with the arms turning in opposite direction.

Integrate.

Elbow Swing

Lying on your back, knees up, feet hip width apart on the ground. Hold your right elbow with your left hand and your left elbow with your right hand. And make a right angle to the floor with your arms. Now you move your arms very slowly to the right then to the left, keeping your head in the centre. And mentally saying 'I know I am moving my arms to the right', or 'I know I am moving my arms to the left'. And from time to time you integrate by lowering, putting your arms to your sides; and you start again after the integration.

There are variations, you can also move the head in the same direction as the arms, or in the other direction. Take enough time to do each direction, not changing every time.

As part of the integration, slowly you can get up, spend five minutes outside. Try to go slower than usual, slower than your normal pace.

Sliding the foot

Lying flat on your back, legs hip width apart; raise the left knee, foot on the ground.. Drop the leg slowly sideways, as far as is comfortable with your body, and slowly up again, keeping the knees apart. Then repeat with the right knee. And of course you stay involved with the movement, very present, not trying to speed up at the end, maintaining continuity of movement. Being right there with the movement.

A variation: with the left knee up , slowly lower the knee to the left towards the ground, then slowly slide the lower leg down along the ground, leading with the foot, until fully extended. Then back again slowly in reverse.

Rest and integrate. Then the other leg; repeating at will.

Hip Raising

1. First lying down flat on your back, resting in full contact with the floor, being in the body, scanning the body – how does it feel? Checking down the body; experience the body's contact with the floor, reading the body, listening to the body. Have awareness of the breathing, not controlling it.
2. Raise the left knee to upright, the foot on the ground parallel to the right leg but not too close to it – in line with the left shoulder. Make left hip move up towards the right, you raise it as if it were going towards the right hip, as far as is comfortable for it to go, a slight pause at the moment of stopping; the left knee stays pointing straight upwards. And lower the hip again. Focus on movement of the hip, noticing what happens elsewhere in the body. Continuity of attention and of movement, of presence.
3. Repeat the same with the other side. Be aware of any activity elsewhere in the body, maybe another part compensating for the hip's reluctance to move. With mindfulness, noticing that is what is happening, then it may shift. The movement becomes endless, contacting the energetic body, not just stopping with the foot. Let the breathing be as it wants to be.
4. A variation: the head rolls part of the way towards the left when raising the left knee, towards the right when raising the right knee; or in the opposite direction if it wants. Another a variation, rather than return the leg, slide it straight, pause, then return the leg to bent, reversing the movement.
5. Then integration, this is important - lying flat, sitting, standing, walking; and any other movements that might want to happen. Then that is the end of the movement.

Rolling

Pelvis Roll

Lie on your back, both knees up, feet on the ground hip width apart, arms by the side; thumbs touching at the navel, index fingers touching on the belly to make a triangle. Imagine embers in the belly in the triangle, fan them with the out-breath, re-kindling heat. This is done with the mind (imagination), breathing (out-breath) and location (belly). Then rolling and tilting the pelvis: rock the pelvis, the sacrum, forward - towards your head - and backwards, towards the feet. The back is flat on the ground in one direction (backwards) and arched in the other. Then side to side, to the right and to the left; this can involve raising the hip while keeping the knees straight. Return periodically to fanning the embers in the belly – or keep it going at the same time if that happens naturally.

Finally rotate the pelvis in a circle, pivoting on the sacrum in one direction, then in reverse - clockwise / anti-clockwise - only one of the four points leaving the ground at any one time, don't

over-do it. Be friendly with your body, kind and patient; don't push, force – then notice what happens. These are four different movements, integrate by lying flat on the floor in between. Finally integrate lying down, sitting, standing and walking outside.

Stretching

Full body stretch

Lie on your back, hands together palms touching over chest, fingers pointing towards head. And the soles of the feet together: knees bent, big toes and heels touching. Stretch the body lengthways, pressing middle fingers of the hands and big toes of the feet together; hands upwards above your head and feet downwards. *This works on earth energy.*

Reverse – the movement going back to the starting point, then relax the body lying flat, integrating - then into sitting, standing, walking. What are mind states now, mind content? All information comes from what is happening in the body.

Finger Tracing

Sit up on the floor without a cushion, the legs in a cradle – legs open, knees bending to the side, feet flat on the floor or tipped slightly sideways. Bend forwards, arms in front, finger tips on the floor. Move the hands forward as far as is comfortable, then back to the centre, finger tips tracing on the floor. Stretching forwards and backwards, backwards and forwards, and diagonally; when tracing the fingers backwards the body rocks back on the pelvis. Then you can move the fingers (and the back, the pelvis) more freely, the fingers tracing a circle; then let them go around wherever they want to go, maintaining the fingers though in contact with the ground.

What if there are areas of resistance, blocks?

Stay in the body, not having ideas or opinions. The body will find a way of moving through the blocks, eg by stretching. The finger tracing movement prepares for the next one, to be done before the next movement which is:

Extending the leg

Legs open, knees bent. Grasp one ankle (at the level of Spleen 6) with both hands, one hand on top the other hand at the back of the ankle, and let the foot lead the movement while bending, extending the leg. Then with the other side.

This movement links shoulder and hip.

Twisting

Mouth sliding on arm

Lie flat on the belly, hands crossed together under the mouth; lips brushing the hands from side to side; then the cheeks, brushing towards the elbow – the head ends flat on its side, looking into the elbow. And back to the centre then to the other side, back and forth. It is twisting the upper back. To integrate, lie on the back.

Variation: having a knee moved up towards the elbow helps the twisting, experiment with how high you place the knee.

Twisting the spine

Connect with the wave-like movement as the spine opens and stretches, integrating left and right sides of the body.

Lie on your back, knees up, feet hip width apart. Quite slowly lift the right leg and place it over the bent left knee, so the underside of the right knee is resting (as much as it can) on top of the left knee. Stretch your arms above your head, hands resting on the ground, join them with the palms facing up. Bring the attention to the spine, from the base of the skull to the base-tip of the spine. Keeping this connection with the spine, on an out-breath slowly allow the knees to gently move to the left and naturally down towards the ground, maintaining continuity. As the legs drop, allow your head to turn in the direction of the hands until the eyes are looking up at the hands, to infinity, a connection with the toes stretching downwards and beyond. Release legs gently, let go and then move them back to centre, following the movement in reverse – turning the head, feeling the chest open as the arms move, and bringing the legs back through to the starting position (if this is difficult, lengthen the legs first).

Integrate the movement lying flat and then repeat on the other side. At all stages take care to watch where the body may need support, soften and let go.

Double leg twisting

Lying flat, arms beside the body, both knees up. Slowly move the left knee outwards towards the ground as far as it will comfortably go while moving the head slowly half way in the opposite direction. Then the right knee down slowly towards the left knee, as far as it will go, while moving the head all the way. Both feet retain contact with the ground (but not flat, notice what they do). The right hip and maybe the sacrum are likely to leave the ground, so you get a twist. Reverse the movement bringing the head back half way, at the same time bringing the right knee back to the starting position. Continue moving the head back to centre whilst bringing the left knee back to the starting position. Do the same on the opposite side.

Finally integrate lying flat, sitting, standing and walking.

Twisting the torso

1. Sitting up, legs hip width apart, knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Place the left hand behind you for support; place the right hand horizontal in front of you. Now you swivel the upper body and the right arm to the left as far as you can, keeping the legs in position. Allow the head and eyes to move as far as they want behind you. The torso leads the movement. Return to centre and do the same with the other side. This first stage is the preparation.
2. Now we do the complete movement. You have the same starting position with the right hand out and the left hand behind you for support. Keeping the head and the hand still, just move the torso and the legs. Allowing the legs to fall to the floor as the torso twists around, keeping the eyes looking at the hand. Then reverse the movement. Then repeat on the other side.
3. Then do the same movement keeping only the arm fixed, and repeat on the other side. Then another variation. From the same starting position (as previously) but this time move the legs to the same side as the arm that is parallel to the floor; the head stays forward looking at the hand.

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We hope it will be of benefit to many practitioners.