

touchdowndance

EDUCATION PACK

VERSION 2



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Produced by

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COLLATED DURING 2 RESIDENTIALS IN
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Organisations and practitioners

This guide is produced for organisations and professionals who we have worked with to provide general information and workshop a 'memory aid' to support the continued practice of the content.

We have divided the material into sections and themes, in the context of a session or series of sessions. We have identified teaching points and questions to consider in determining where to go next or what techniques can be further explored or new ones introduced.

We include potential risks to consider when the content of the methods may involve a challenge or require caution.

This guide is a continued work in progress, as we will continue to add and develop the guides with new ideas. This means that this version can be further developed by individuals within their own context, or organizations seeking to develop a particular framework focus, or aspect, such as chair based work or mat based work etc.

INTRODUCTION

This guide introduces the workshop content that is delivered by Touchdown Dance in health, education and arts settings. It is a form of documentation of the key principles and methods that are intrinsic to the experience.

Touchdown Dance artists have worked together to formulate this guide, building on the foundational legacy of the founders, Steve Paxton and Anne Kilcoyne between 1986 and 1993. Since 1994 Katy Dymoke has developed the core work furthering the research and exploration in collaboration with Steve Paxton, Ray Chung, Lisa Nelson, Karen Nelson, Angus Balbernie, Julyen Hamilton, and many individuals who joined the company of dance artists, project managers and educational specialists; Janee Hall, Alan Foster, Patrick Beelaert, and Ed Higginson.

The current company includes six dancers with training in dance, theatre, somatic practice and martial arts. The visually impaired dancers collaborating on this project are; Holly Thomas, Jamus Wood, Indra Slavena, Stuart Jackson, and the sighted artists are, Robert Andersen and Katy Dymoke.

There is a strong somatic movement aspect to the work which enables an experiential, person centered and accessible methodology. The four key approaches that are integrated into the methods are Yoga, Aikido, gymnastics and Dance.

YOGA – the support of the breath and yoga postures to bring inner awareness and alignment of the body as a whole. The breath supports the underlying expanding and condensing movement of the whole body and fluid transition between one movement and another. Yoga based practices provide a focus for the other movement work, a base line for the maintenance of overall health, posture and balance.



AIKIDO – a martial art which establishes the sense of the whole body moving. Aikido establishes ease in three dimensional movement through space, including falling, lifting, rolling, engaging with others. Martial arts practice establishes a sense of self trust, of ease in moving on the floor and with others. It requires focus and discipline, bringing awareness to the centre of gravity and movement flow from and to the periphery. This is an essential aspect for all dancers to gain stability and ease in body-mind.



Aikido

GYMNASTICS – as a more western approach gymnastics expands on the ease of falling by introducing hand stands, elevation and suspension, jumping lifting and other aerial principles. Gymnastics expands on Yoga, further facilitating core strength, balance, inversion, and turning around a support.



Gymnastics

DANCE – integrating all the above within a frame of creativity and imagination. Principles come from contact improvisation, contemporary dance practices, and dance theatre. Dance practice develops and enhances spatial orientation, rhythm, flow, use of weight, awareness and co-ordination, and composition.



Dance

There is cross over between these approaches such as self awareness, personal and group practice, co-operation, confidence, team working, group mind, respect for difference, and essentially, equality of opportunity and accessibility. The breadth of these approaches, when combined within the principles and methods of teaching and developing dance work, creates a huge palette of possibility and ensures an accessible framework for all abilities. Touchdown Dance welcomes visually impaired and sighted people, deaf and disabled people and endeavors to operate in accessible spaces.

CORE PRINCIPLES – ACCESS AND INCLUSION

1) AGE APPROPRIATE NESS and MOVEMENT CAPACITY

It is the responsibility of the hosting organization and professional to make the appropriate assessments for participants and to ensure safety; some guidelines to consider;

Participants should be bare foot, no socks or outdoor shoes permitted.

Participants should wear gym clothes, without buttons, zips or studs etc.

Participants should remove jewelry and piercings, watches etc.

Equipment: Use yoga mats or gym mats for the floor work as required.

For physically disabled or participants with an injury -- Insure the participants are fit and able to assume the positions and that no-one is pushed beyond comfort or ability. Encourage participants to talk to each other, learning to say no and learning to trust and be receptive are key aspects of the work.

2) COMMUNICATION - AUDIO DESCRIPTION METHODS

Over time we have worked hard as a company to find effective ways of communicating with workshop participants. This has been based on our own experiences in the studio and by taking feedback from participants over the many years of delivering the work. This guide uses names and descriptors that we have evolved over the many years of exploring to find appropriate terms. For example we use the word 'see' not to exclude visually impaired people, but to include the sense of 'seeing' that involves the other senses when we don't use the eyes. The underlying principle comes from human development in which the sense of self evolves through touch and movement, through 'proprioception' (self –perception) and our self movement evolves from the ability to orient to gravity. We may use the word 'face' to indicate the position of the

body in relationship to the space or others, rather than 'look'. However using the verb 'to look' does not exclude visually impaired or deaf blind people when 'look' refers to the perception of space, to the orientation of self to space and to the direction of awareness to the space whilst moving.

Audio description involves using words to describe the aspects of an experience that escape the perception of a blind person, to support their active participation in what is taking place. When it comes to movement, verbal descriptions are not sufficient as they are open to interpretation and cannot include the picture of the whole body.

We take time to demonstrate and describe as we do so, both verbally and through the careful use of touch and movement methods. This is based on the premise that touch and movement precede our verbal understanding when it comes to learning new ways of moving. Words support visual methods for those who can see, but touch and movement support everyone, regardless of sensory or physical differences, to become more engaged with their moving body. Touch and movement are considered inseparable as we are always in contact with a surface as we move, and this tactile feedback is instrumental in supporting us to shape, measure and register the moving body. When working with other people we learn to register our own body in relation to theirs, we can learn from sensing and feeling an informed body how to incorporate that information into our own.

3) HUMAN DEVELOPMENTAL MOVEMENT METHODS

Human developmental movement patterns provide a framework within which to introduce fundamental movement principles that will enable each person to engage more fully in their dance experience. Touchdown Dance integrates principles from experiential approaches to human development from Body-Mind Centering® (BMC®)¹ which implements the developmental time line of the human being, from lying to crawling, to walking. This time line is integral to the teaching to bring in the detail that enables each person to establish a self directive process of investigation and to discover, over time, more fully integrated movement. It is possible to move back and forth along this time line and to explore any gaps in co-ordination and awareness.

Movement is innate to each body and there is a 'natural' movement range arising from the developmental stages we move through to come to standing. We learn fine motor control of objects, and general actions necessary to survive in the environment in which we live – pulling, pushing, reaching, holding and letting go and so on. Touchdown dance's movement vocabulary arises from this natural movement context so that instructions are clear, supported by hands on tracing and demonstration. Other vocabulary comes from anatomy – the study of the human body, and kinesiology – the study of the mechanics of movement. From this wide palette of disciplines the work is accessible to a wide range of ability, from beginners to professionals, and is rich with methods and principles.

¹ Body-Mind Centering® (BMC®) is the service mark of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, used with permission.

THE WORKSHOP. BREAKING WITH CONVENTION – ESTABLISHING AN INTEGRATED LEARNING FRAMEWORK.

The work that we deliver and cover in this guide has evolved over the past decades and has been influenced by the contribution that workshop participants have provided in response to the ideas presented. There has always been an acknowledgement of the 'body' of work that has evolved as being the product of the learning experiences that all have shared, participant with participant, individual and group, with workshop leaders as facilitators witnesses of the discoveries made, and through the dialogues that ensue in the process. In workshops involving sighted and visually impaired participants there is often an assumption that the sighted participants will be supporting the visually impaired, in line with the conventional 'sighted guide' role. Another assumption is that the sighted participant will be busy helping the visually impaired partner to understand the instructions for the task at hand. In Touchdown Dance workshops we work in pairs and groups in which the visually impaired participant will also guide the sighted, so that the roles are interchangeable and both learn to trust the other's strengths and to acknowledge each other's limitations. The partnering work involves a step by step accumulative learning process and frequent role changes as well as changing partners.

As workshop leaders we remain vigilant and take a common sense attitude to the potential risk of injury to participants. This requires giving enough time for each exploration so that we don't rush the participants through an exercise in order to fill the day. It requires vigilance in pair work for example, when there are two people of very different sizes or when the combination of difficulties provides too much of a challenge in the learning stages, for each person. It also requires that sighted participants use their vision to support the safety of the room, just as a blind participant may support the room to orient more to the use of the feet on the ground, or to tactile stimuli. In all cases when working in this way with groups of people with different strengths, it is important to remember there are as many ways of doing one thing as there are people in the room, and that the methods are a framework for facilitation. The work for the facilitator is then to provide a starting point, and to build upon that in a general way which enables some to go slower than others but for all to feel they are progressing.

SPACE: The size of the space in which we work is very important, we usually estimate a good 3-4 square meters per person where possible, for the floor based work. This gives ample space to move, explore and engage in the work, as well as to sense others around us. The space should have a clean wooden floor, good daylight or non-fluorescent lighting where possible and heating to an ambient temperature – if it is too

cold this is a health hazard, and if too warm we can get dehydrated and too hot. Trip hazards and other hazards must be removed or taped over and the floor area needs to be kept clear of personal effects.

STARTING – arrival and beginning.

If people are arriving at a familiar space then orientation is less necessary. However we like to start the meeting with orientation to the space for those who are unfamiliar and for those who cannot see. This is a good way to start also if people are familiar as they may not get the opportunity to orient to the room through their senses in the way we recommend. The special senses (touch, taste, smell, hearing, sight) and the sense of movement (kinesthesia) are our gateways to the environment, bringing the environment to our attention and bring us into relationship with the surrounding world. In these explorations we become aware of how our state of inner being is determined by our sense of comfort, our sense of interaction and belonging in the world around us. This approach involves the senses, our perceptive sense of our moving body (also referred to as proprioception) and how movement, touch, seeing and hearing in particular, provide layers of information that we piece together, consider, understand and learn from.

TIME is 'of the essence' to the nature of the learning experience. We invest in 'body time' - the time it takes for the body to assimilate information and integrate it into a 'repertoire', which varies for each of us. We take time, a lot of time if necessary, particularly in the early stages of the work with a group, bearing 'in mind' that many participants may not have had the opportunity to participate so fully in a movement workshop, and that they need care, and attention to assimilate what they have achieved in their own time.

BREAKS - Regular breaks or natural pauses for water or discussion are recommended as time to integrate the information taken into the body and to establish a sense of collaboration and inclusion.

1. STARTING CIRCLE.

Arrival and gathering into a circle, a formation in which each person's place is equal to the others. Use mats to mark the circle or support each VI person into the space and circle formation, as they won't see the centre or be able to know which way to face. It can be a challenge to orient into a circle formation. This initial task reveals how comfortable the participants are with self directing in this way or of offering assistance to others who hesitate. The facilitators will accompany those who need support addressing each person by their name and describing what is happening –“Hello everyone, we are starting in a circle so gently find your way towards my voice and we will find each other”. There are other creative ways of introducing people who are meeting for the first time which depend on group size, age and proportion of sighted and visually impaired people.

Welcome everyone in a sitting circle - to present workshop leaders and schedule for day/weekend etc. Mention health and safety, fire procedure, housekeeping. If appropriate present the idea of sighted 'buddies' for VI participants to ask for assistance when required during class.

Introductions – going around the circle each person says their name and where they have come from. They may say if they have done a workshop with Touchdown before etc. This enables each person to know who and how many are in the group, how big the circle is, how many male and female there are, and to be able to identify the group members as they start to spend more time together.

Small 'get to know me' groups – people get into trios and exchange three facts about themselves with each other and present them the whole circle.

Ice Breaker examples: Form a circle standing, stand holding hands, find and take the hand of each neighbour. Options;

- pass the squeeze clockwise, then pause and do anticlockwise, then do 2 or more going around in same or opposite directions with the idea it comes back to the start;
- stretching the circle out, gathering in close; turning the circle clockwise or anticlockwise;
- join sides of the feet together with both neighbours;
- connect hands palm to palm, pushing against each other feeling resilience.

2. TEACHING FRAMES – the following are designed to enable interaction and shift perception in the group, or preconceived expectations, of who can or can't do what.

EXPLORING THE SPACE: In pairs, one leads the other around the space, starting from the studio entrance door. The purpose is to give a sense of size and nature of the environment for access and independence. Demonstration includes how to hold the arm at the elbow, how to indicate change in direction, the need to step up or down, to go through a door, to sit on a chair, etc.

Themes - Explore from the Periphery of the Space, locating exits, windows, features, chairs etc, using touch, placing the hand on a surface or object.

- Allow the led person to 'lead' their exploration – to decide how long to spend in a place.
- Try with no verbal interaction – then feedback before changing roles.
- Teach the sighted guide skills – include how a sighted person guides the VI person around the space, outside to facilities etc, to a chair to sit down upon, etc. This gives a formal sense of 'how to do' the guiding role.



Meet & Greet:

Themes: Standing, Meeting each other in movement activity such as ice breakers inviting awareness of physical, sensation. Invite short encounters (in dyads) and games or exercises involving informal interaction in movement:

- Body part to body part (e.g. "knee to elbow" and they have to find someone to join with or be found by someone). This reveals those who are confident to move in space and those more inhibited, facilitators support the more inhibited.
- Back to back rub, standing or sitting in a circle - turn to face the person on the right so now all face someone's back. Put hands on the back and give a shoulder rub, gentle slap, brush, or stroke. It can involve the whole back. This reveals a sense of body size and shape which visually impaired people cannot see. If time allows change sides. This can be done at other times and in other formations.
- Hand shaking in variations - squeeze the hand, how long do you hold the hand, take and slide the hand rather than grip).
- Brushing past -fleeting meetings moving in close proximity and in slow motion. This reveals individual ways of coping with proximity and sensitivity to proximity

needs to be respected. Those who are sensitive can move with a sighted guide for example or remain more peripheral. Sighted participants can be invited to close their eyes if there are enough on the outside to support the space.

- Clusters (interaction in small groups) moving in constant contact in and around each other, changing levels, awakening awareness of multiple contact points and sources of stimuli for movement response. This can be across the floor from one side of the room to the other or in the middle. The invitation is to be in continuous flow, with the permission for stillness.
- Walking in the space in twos, leave partner find another one; stop start together (sighted people are the eyes for all – keep safe distance etc).

3. MEETING THE FLOOR.

Themes: Awakening awareness of body as a whole through connecting to the 'earth' and gravity through touch and sensory feedback (proprioception).

- Body mapping, tactile stimulation, attuning to the skin as a sense receptor of temperature, texture, pressure, movement.
- Feeling body parts connect and move through sensing and feeling a position, movement shape, through physical contact with the floor.



Exercises:

Caution – be aware that there is enough space to lie comfortably. Mark the space by asking them stretch out in all directions to feel the space they have. This also normalises contact with another person, they can say hello and their names when they do. Be aware of any difficulty in getting down on the floor and coming up again, or any risk of falling.

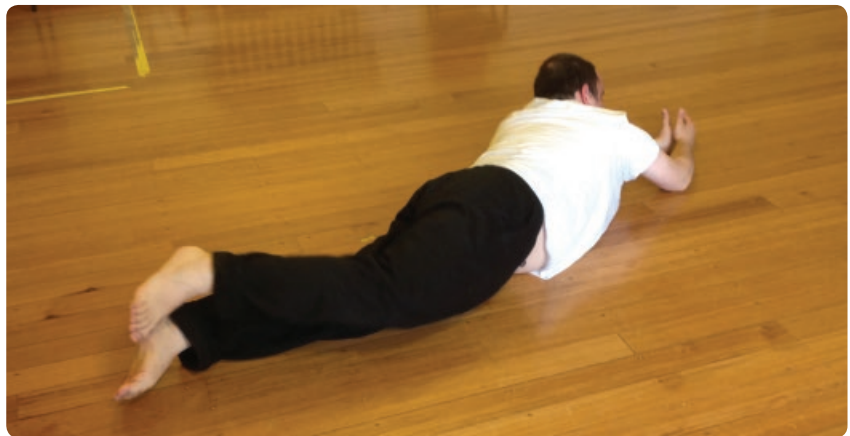
1. Introduce what is going to happen; “We are now going to find our way to the floor and lie down. To do this we will spread out first into the space and then find our way to lying on our backs.”
2. Start lying on the floor or sitting and bring focus to the breath. Generally, when lying, the breath slows down over time, as the body rests its weight on the floor. Invite participants to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth, to lengthen the out-breath (exhalation).

3. In side-lying introduce full body flexion on the out-breath and opening into extension with the in-breath.
4. Explore the idea of sensing the shape of the body on the floor which provides tactile feedback in each position: Turn onto the back opening into extension, continue over to the other side and note the position (tendency to go into flexion) and then to the front (tendency to open into extension).

Version 2. This version is effective for participants who struggle to relax on the floor. Use the image of lying in sand, so the body feels softer on the underside against the floor as it turns. This invites a sense of yielding to gravity or softening the body tone, with a sense of following the shifting weight.

Version 3. Use soft small inflatable balls to roll on.

ROLLING: This continues on from the previous exercise with the intention of turning around the axis of the body – the spine, and taking full bodied positions to explore different types of rolling.



Caution – Some people may get easily stimulated in rolling even just once, as the vestibular system can respond with dizziness if the person is sensitive or not used to rolling. Start in phases moving gently around the body from back, finding their way to turn onto one side, then onto the front, and onto the side etc.

Themes: Rolling around your own body.

Introduce the mover to the surfaces of their body, gently turning from back to one side, feel the side, from side to front, etc.

“The floor is your ‘partner’ in this exercise, as you will use it for tactile feedback.”

“This is the closest to the floor we can move, the lowest level for ‘falling’ – with the sensation of ‘falling’ onto a surface which ‘catches’ you and how the body accommodates this movement.”

Partnering Version - all the rolls have partnering versions to be demonstrated.

Caution; insure the instructions mention to avoid touching intimate places, pair up according to gender where possible.

1. One lies on their side ready to roll.
2. The partner sits close to them, and places hands on the side of their partner's body, one at the pelvis and the other on the lower ribs.
3. The partner rolls towards or away from this contact.
4. The sitting partner follows the turning body or provides a bit of resistance to the roll, inhibiting the direction of travel either using the hands or body surface, so the person rolling has a surface to move into.
5. The mover can roll away from the hands or the support and can also stop at any time, so the supporting partner follows the mover.

Exercises:

Barrel roll or tree trunk roll; bring them to lie on their side with arms and legs extended. Bring awareness to the whole body length, hands to feet. Clarify the idea is to roll around the whole body length trying not to initiate with the head or limbs. From side lying tilt to the front or back and use the momentum of the fall to continue into rolling around the curved edges of the body like rolling tree – take time to find the pathway, allow time to feel the body rolling into the floor on the underside and rising away from the floor on the upper side. Feel the sense of falling into the floor forwards onto the belly and backwards onto the back from side lying.

Crescent Roll.

Caution. This is a complex formation of the whole body taking a C shape. It takes much patience and time. The concern is not to force but to feel through the transitions from each of the sides to maintain the integrity of the shape.



Lie on one side and make a C curve with the spine head to tail and continue the line of the C into the arms and legs so the whole body is in a side lying 'banana' shape. Dwell in this shape and map it internally in your body alignment. Keeping this shape, roll in the direction of the C – so turning around the body to move in the direction that the hands and feet are pointing – this requires the spine changing to keep the C facing the direction of travel. So when turning onto the belly the spine takes a lateral curve into the whole body in the direction of travel, a backward extended C curve when on the side before turning onto the back, and lateral curve when coming onto the back, and a frontal curve coming up on the side facing forward in the direction of travel as at the start.

Banana roll.

Caution; people who are slim or with prominent pelvic bones will need a mat to prevent bruising on the edges of the front pelvis which takes the body weight when belly down –prone. For general comfort start with mats and once there is a sense of cushioning through the belly area it is easier to do on the floor.

Lie on the back with head tail and all limbs off the floor so the banana shape is in the whole body; roll around the waist line keeping head and tail and all the limbs off the floor in parallel alignment. This is like the crescent roll but on the vertical rather than horizontal plane.

Spiral Roll. Lie on the back, lift one leg and cross it over to the other side extended and reaching with the foot into the floor, follow the pull through to the body, spine, shoulder, arm and head so that you spiral over onto the belly. Continue in one direction and then back with the other leg. Try with an arm leading.

Group Version: Everyone lying side by side; initiate rolling together. The fun is to keep proximity and timing, and noting variation in the breadth of the bodies. It is possible to do all the rolls in this group formation.

CONCLUSION.

The rolling patterns prime the whole body to feel organised as a unit. They also bring a sense of connection of the centre to the periphery. These patterns translate to movements made at higher levels, around the support of another body rather than the floor, or underlying more sophisticated partnership work.



4. PATHWAYS IN AND OUT OF THE FLOOR:

Themes: finding a way to move into the floor from upright positions. Sliding: explore how to slide into the floor from the periphery and how to use body surfaces to slide along both into and out of the floor. Finding momentum to shift levels from rolling and turning; gathering around the centre or opening from the centre to support the transitions. Pushing from the periphery to lever the body's weight up from the floor and organised around a fulcrum or a base.

Caution; these exercises take time and require patience, clear slow demonstration and guided facilitation. It is counter intuitive for many people to slide along the surface of the body, rather than to lift oneself up directly or just push. The floor needs to be clean to avoid friction burns, and recommend wearing long sleeved clothing.

Exercises:

Teddy bear roll or 'baby roll'.

1. Sit with the spine as straight as possible, on the base of the pelvis, with arms and legs out in front and open to the sides.
2. Tilt the head towards the right and feel the weight shifting into the pelvis on that side and lifts out of the left.
3. Keeping tilting till the finger of the right hand touches the floor and the weight is now on the right pelvis and hip.
4. Continue tilting and feel the weight pouring into the floor along the length of the arm, slide along the underside of the arm to support the fluid descent of the spine and body to come to lie on the floor on the whole right side.
5. Roll across the back, lifting up the left (upper) arm and leg to initiate the turn over the back, letting the right arm and leg follow over the top, till the left side meets the floor and the right lowers and lies on the left.
6. Come up to sitting by reaching into the floor with the right arm and leg, the right sitz bone and tail reaching into the floor. Slide up along the left arm, and stack the spine up in sequence from the tail, lumbar, thoracic, with the shoulders, neck and head coming up last to sit upright.

Caution: Avoid pushing up from the under-side. Support the initiation of the reaching from the tail, to replace the centre of the pelvis into the floor, and stacking up the spine so the head comes up last.

To return to the floor, resume from the start sliding down the full length of the arms and side of the body into the floor. Continue as above and notice each roll maps 180 degree turn so you start facing one side of the room and end facing the other and it takes two rolls to make a 360 degree turn.

Spiral roll.

This roll is another way to move from sitting to lying and back up, as well as another full bodied roll.

1. Sit up as in the teddy bear roll. Turn the upper body to the right, keeping the pelvis in its place. Bring both arms together on the right side, thumbs up and palms facing, tilt till the little fingers touch the floor and slide along the underside of both arms, sequentially let the spiral turn through the pelvis and lower limbs to lie on the belly.
2. Return back up to sitting: Rewind from the left leg, lift it up and cross it over the right and pull to bring the left pelvis over and place it on the floor, sequentially following through by sliding along the arms and the head is the last to come back to the vertical. The leg leads and the body is pulled around so the pelvis comes into the floor and the body spirals to follow it. Return from sitting by turning the head to the left, taking the arms with you to support you to meet the floor as you continue around the left side and lie belly down. Return by initiating with the right leg.

5. PARTNERING IN SITTING.

Themes: feeling confident to say 'yes' or 'no' to taking weight, initiation and following, taking responsibility, listening, tuning to another's physical strength, differentiating ability.

The partnering work involves relating to others through movement and feeling the potential of a duet form. The facilitator needs to introduce the concept of the under dancer and the over dancer; the under dancer will be taking the weight and supporting the over dancer who learns to give weight efficiently.

Exercises:

Back to Back sitting.

Caution; be aware of different body sizes and tightness at the back of the legs (ham strings) which will mean that some people will want to flex the knees. Invite them to go as far as they can without bending the knees to feel the gentle lengthening of the back

of the legs – no forcing into discomfort is allowed. The idea is that the weight of the partner's body on the back supports the gradual lengthening of back of the legs.



Postural alignment – sitting upright, weight balanced on both sitz bones, so the spine is as vertical as possible, check the legs are flexed to support the sitting position if the muscles at the back of the legs are too tight to stay extended without causing the spine to curve and prevent an upright posture.

Supportive comments for the facilitator. Invite both to sit and notice the support of their partners' back, to notice the shape and form of the partners' and their own.

Demonstrate - one bends forward slowly and the other follows, back on back. The under dancer waits for the over dancer to go with them, and supports their head where possible. The under dancer can use their hands on the floor to support either side of the spine with the weight if needed. The over dancer can extend their spine backwards with



support of the under-dancer. The under dancer starts to come up and the over dancer follows this initiation back to the vertical, then change roles.

Side to side: Start in the same position, take arms up to each side, palms facing forward, thumbs up. Don't hold hands, at the most rest the arms, then tip to the same side, and follow along the underside of the arms into the floor on to that side, keeping the backs together. To return, initiate from the upper sitz bone and leg reaching into the floor and slide back up to sitting with the head coming up last.

Spiral 1. This is the less strenuous on the back of all the back to back sitting exercises, and is about co-operation. Starting back to back with the arms out again, turn to one side looking at the hand that goes behind. Then return to the midline and turn to the other side.



Repeat and facing over the shoulder in the direction of the twist, place the extended arm alongside the outside of the leg of the partner and slide down along the underside of the arm to lie side by side with the partner with backs together. Return leading with the upper arm along the back of the partner to sitting.

Spiral 2. *Caution;* if there is an imbalance in the mobility of the two movers ensure the one with more works to the level of the one with less as they will still benefit and the one with less will not get injured.

Start as in spiral 1 and one follows through to lie belly down and the other holds back to lie across the back, face up. To return the one underneath initiates lifting up to spiral back up to sitting and the over dancer follows without resistance.



Spiral 3. Into 'surfing'.

Caution; be aware of a balance in size and body weight in the pairs and also not to go into the surfing with people who have back problems and if the over dancer is not able to monitor how to extend their weight over the body's partner.

1. In the lying position with the over dancer lying across the back, check the position of the over dancer, that they are ready to extend their body over the under-dancer.
2. The under dancer starts a spiral roll in the direction of their partner's head. The over dancer extends their arms over their head palms up so they can take a ride in the direction of the roll, surfing over the rolling body, sliding on their extended arms and holding their head up off the floor.
3. The under dancer stops at the point they feel the over dancer's centre pass over theirs and then they reverse the roll to take the over dancer back over and to sit up when their pelvis comes over.
4. The under dancer continues to roll up to sitting back to back again.

6. LOW BRIDGES.

The low bridge is formed by assuming a position on all fours, with the hands flat on the floor, fingers extended, placed directly under the shoulder joint. The knees are at a rectangle, directly under the hips and the feet are extended on the floor soles upwards and the toes NOT turned under. This last detail is cautioned in case the over dancer happens to move over the feet and strain the toes. The over dancer explores passing over the bridge and taking different positions and balancing on it and eventually without touching the floor. The stability of the bridge is important to maintain an effective support for the over-dancer, as well as ease in shifting with the weight to transition from the bridge to either going down to the floor or continuing from the bridge to further low level interactions.



Themes: measuring the stability of the table as you assume the position, to offer the best support and to be mobile, alignment principles, using bones (stacking the bones). Moving in and out of the floor using the support of your partners' body.

Bridge 1.

Caution: Working in pairs of equal size/stature as far as possible and take time to assume the correct table position for taking a partner's weight and moving effectively down with the weight if needed.

One person assumes the table position, the partner takes the same position alongside, touching at the shoulder edge and side of the hip. The over dancer lifts themselves up turns to place their shoulder and hip on the bridge and turns to roll over the bridge, in alignment so they are back on back with the spines aligned. They roll over and off the other side reaching to the floor with the arm and leg closest to the side of the bridge.

Bridge 2. The bridge holds their position, the over dancer places a hand on the bridge partner, one on top of the head and one on the sacrum. The bridge moves forward from the head and back from the sacrum into the supporting hands.

This establishes a sense of the spine and its alignment between the head and tail.

Keeping their hands one between their partner's shoulders, the other on the sacrum, the over-dancer places their centre (below their navel) onto their partner, so that they pivot, head and arms on one side, hips and legs on the other.

Caution; watch that the over dancer doesn't push themselves onto the bridge from the side but places their centre on their partners'.

The over-dancer lifts up all four limbs to balance in full extension over the bridge. There are different ways to come off the bridge. Once on the bridge the over dancer can explore gymnastic positions, such as a supported handstand, by placing both hands down to the floor and reaching up with the feet. To come down lower the legs gently going back onto the feet, so the head and arms come up, and come off on the feet side. More advanced options come as the under/over dancers start to change roles.

Bridge 3. Starting as in bridge 2, across the back and at the base of the spine, the over dancer has hands and feet on the floor and does a crescent roll up the bridge towards the head. The bridge partner lifts their head up for the over dancer to know when to stop. This is about the over dancer modulating the weight given to the bridge using their hands and feet.

The Wave – Three people side by side in a bridge position, make a wide bridge to support a person lying across them, floating them by making a wave like movement with their backs. The triple bridge transitions slowly lowering back onto their heels, into child's pose, so that the over dancer can roll off onto the floor.

7. HIGH BRIDGES.

Themes: weight bearing, trust, support and transition, centre of gravity, balance and self awareness.

Exercises: *High bridge*

Caution: as in the lower bridge ensure the stature and weight of the dancers are similar or that they have the self discipline to manage lifting someone off the floor.

Standing back to back and resting in the support of the partner, flex and extend the legs in unison to feel into the back surface connection. As in the sitting back to back exercise, one bends forward and the other goes back onto the support, the under dancer can place hands on their thighs/knees to brace their back. To return the under-dancer lifts their head and spine watching that the over dancer reaches their feet towards the floor, then the under-dancer can stand up. Swap roles. One bends the knees to be lower and to assume the high bridge, and the over dancer extends up and back placing their centre onto the lower back (lumbar spine) of the under dancer. The position of the centre over the support is important to find stability in the lift.



Variations.

Side lifts; start with a partner of similar size or stature, standing side by side, the under dancer will lift their partner so puts the inside arm around their partner's waist. The over dancer extends their body upwards as the under dancer bends to lower their centre, keeping full body contact on the inside. The under dancer takes a step out to the other side and up, taking the over dancer into a side lift – the over dancer opens the outer arm and leg out to the side into space, in a star shape. On coming back down the over dancer becomes the under-dancer lowering their centre and taking a step out to the other side taking the over-dancer up.



8. AKIDO ARMS:

(Taking out the slack)

Teaching Themes:

Arms are connected to the sacrum not just the shoulder; Connect the sense of energy flow drawing on a partner's body – they stand with their arms out to the side and thumbs up, palms facing forward. Stand behind and draw on their back from the tail or base of the spine and sacrum, up in a widening V shape, on either side of the spine to the underarms, continuing out along the underside of the arm past the elbow and wrist to the little fingers. Explore moving the arms with this sense of growth from the sacrum and connection deep into the back.

Make an arc with each arm by gently rounding at the elbows and creating an inner curve on the thumb side and an outer curve on the little finger outer side. The underside of the arm from the little finger to the underarm forms a sense of an 'outer wheel' when the hand rotates and the palm faces down with the thumb on the inside. The inside edge of the arm from the thumb to the shoulder forms the 'inner' wheel. This curved edge provides a surface of support to move around on, with a sense of resistance and resilience, with some rebound potential. This 'aikido' arm form enables a dynamic arm frame and extension of the body for effective flow of energy and surface to move on.

With the arms outstretched explore the length across the back from one hand to the other, compare with your height – is it similar or the same? This length provides a great length to use in the dance – for orientation and surface for connection and movement initiation.

Explore by turning the thumb up and down rotating at the wrist how this movement creates the concept of the shoulder wheel – as the shoulder rotates forwards with the thumb internally rotated and down, and rotates down and back with the thumb up and externally rotating.



INTO DANCING – CONTACT IMPROVISATION.

The dance ensues through the continuation of the movement through the levels, and in space, sustaining and breaking contact with your partner whilst negotiating who is leading and who is following and at times both are moving together. The idea is to be in the moment, to respond reflexively to each other and to navigate in space. Improvisation is about allowing movement to happen, to go with what happens next, but you have the option to change, to shift, to stop, to communicate with your partner – that is the idea – to move in partnership with others.



Leading and following: standing side by side, one bends their arm at the elbow, creating a horizontal ledge, the other puts their arm flexed at the elbow on top. Both connect through this ledge to their partners centre. The person whose arm is under initiates movement of the arm from the shoulder, keeping the ledge and the partner follows actively engaging with the lead. The arm is like a 'rudder' moving right and left, up and down, forwards and back, then the lead moves forward into space, walking together, ensuring the pace is appropriate to keep the partner in time. This requires physical listening, attuning to the partner and not taking off regardless. The rudder becomes a level which can rise and fall, stop and start, take the movers in different directions and on an exploratory journey through different levels, rhythms or speeds.

Forehead to forehead; create a triangle with index fingers together and thumbs together, palms facing away. Find a partner of similar height and place the palms together to join triangles. Both place foreheads in the triangle space so they touch, then take the hands away. Stand with the weight balanced on both feet. Feel small initiations of movement at the forehead, and start to follow these initiations, so both partners are rolling across the forehead and starting to turn out to the sides, eventually they turn around and roll around the side of the head, the back of the head back to facing front, walking the feet around under them.



Orientation and disorientation, learning to go backwards, to take the feet off the ground, to feel supported by others and balancing body awareness, a sense of the body scheme by unifying the body sense working back to back, front to back, to side or front; side to side, or front or back, and spiraling.



We hope this education pack is useful and inspiring. It is not a substitute for a workshop and must not be used as such. We believe in the quality of the work and in our skilled approach to touch based demonstration and learning techniques.

Ease and flow are important aspects of the experience which this guide cannot substitute, and these are dependent on the facilitators working in a person centred way at the pace of the individuals and the group.

With best wishes from all of us at Touchdown Dance.

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