

MOVEMENT FOR MISFITS METAPHYSICIANS & MERFOLK

A TWENTY-MINUTE
DOWNLOADABLE PRACTICE



Class 2: 20-Minute Practice

This cohesive and concise 20-minute movement practice offers a lighthearted and enjoyable way to integrate movement into your day. The second in a series of three, this sessions offer a non-traditional approach to vocabulary based in Qi Gong and peppered with elements from Tai Chi and Tribal Fusion dance. They can be done in a small space, even wearing work-clothes if that's how you like it.

Accompanied with a unique sound-score by **soundFORMovement** composer **Michael Wall**, and filmed in the scrappy tropics of Providence, Rhode Island, the idea here is ta the body is profound and movement practice is meant to be something interesting, delicious and part of an inspired life.

POSTURAL AND ANATOMICAL NOTES

Practicing in front of a mirror sometimes is highly recommended, (or video-taping yourself). It may, of course, add an element of 'self-consciousness', but you will receive crucial feedback about how your body is actually moving. When you step away from the mirror again, you will be able to focus your attention on areas you may not have considered previously. Let your judgements pass by. They're really not worth your time. Instead, be curious about the body you were given and how it has intelligently responded to your life circumstances. There is so much information: you can learn to read yourself - literally.

Points of Standing Posture

*Find a comfortable position with your feet parallel beneath your hip bones and your shoulders stacked over your hips.

*Lengthen your neck by pulling in your chin slightly and pressing the upper back of the head toward the heavens. It is as if you were listening for a soft sound behind and above you.

*Soften your knees. They should track directly over your toes if your feet are in parallel position *You may wish to experiment with rotating your feet slightly out or in depending upon your structure and the exercise in question. Always adjust in response to any resistance, torsion (a twisting feeling) or discomfort, particularly in the joints.

*Imagine dropping an anchor from your tailbone into the ground: shift your pelvis back and forth/side-to-side over your feet until you feel a sense of a plumb line. Organise your heart, shoulder girdle and head within this line

*Take a few deep breaths up under the sternum and collarbones, letting your arms fall heavily along your sides.

the Bubbling Spring

Lift your toes to connect with the ball of the big toe and pinky toe. Shift your weight forward and back a few times, feeling the solidity of your heel. These points form a triangle. The approximate centre of this triangle is your bubbling spring. Imagine breathing up through this area of your foot and on the exhale sending roots down, down, down into the core of the earth. Try shifting your weight around your foot until you are balanced over this point.

Feeling the Fascia

Fascia is the deeply-invested connective tissue that lies under your skin, surrounds your organs and permeates the muscle tissue. You might think of the white flesh of an orange beneath the peel or the thread-like white strands that you can see when preparing raw chicken meat. This tissue holds tension and some even speculate that it is where and how tension is stored in the body.

Hamni Stance

From a hip-width stance draw one foot (in parallel position) straight back a single foot-length (so the toes of that foot are on a parallel line with the heel of your front foot) and then another (so the toes of the back foot are now online with the invisible heel of your second foot). From here, rotate your back toes out 45 degrees. You may wish to make some fine adjustments to find a stance that is comfortable.

Moving from Hamni

(As demonstrated in Class 1)

As you gather and send, rotating through your torso, check to be sure your pelvis is stable and your back knee is not collapsing inward, but remains open and aligned with the knee, lower leg and toes. If you're struggling with this, try narrowing your stance or the external angle of that foot. Put attention and weight into the outer blade of this back foot and maintain connection with the ground, especially as you move forward. Feel the opening this facilitates in your hips. Don't use tension to force a larger movement; the joint will release more easily if you employ subtle adjustments of weight and alignment.

It is also crucial to maintain the alignment of your front leg. Imagine a softly curved shape along your inner leg, as if you were riding a horse or camel. You slides forward and back along a track parallel with your foot, not extending beyond your toes.

Wide Stance/Horse Stance

For me, this is approximately the length of my leg, from the heel to the top of the inner thigh. I stand with the outer blades of my feet approximately this wide for exercises calling for this foot/leg position.

Monkey Stance

Make an easy “V” with your feet. Draw one foot along the inseam of the other so the heel lines up with the toes of the one behind it. This is your foot-print for monkey stance.

Concerning Foot Position

I recommend experimenting with subtle variations of parallel, external rotation and internal rotation. Everyone's posture and leg structure is different. Pay specific attention to any stress or torsion (twisting) you feel in your joints and adjust accordingly.

A note about Breath...

Breathing, as with anything, can be studied to the level of an art. In this video, I suggest that you experiment with breathing into three different areas of your body:

1. your low belly (expanding it on your inhale and releasing on the exhale)
2. your solar plexus - the sensitive, vulnerable area below your sternum/breastbone
3. your chest/heart area, including upper back and side ribs and under the collarbones

*All that is required is for you to draw your attention to the sensations in which-ever area choosing to work with. You may choose to focus on an area that feels tight and claustrophobic. It may feel good to occasionally take a slow deep breath and retain it for a cycle or two of an exercise, (release it slowly).

*For the most part, I recommend simply noticing the quality of your breath throughout your practice and trusting that it will shift organically on its own, expanding to follow your attention.

Vocabulary

Anterior - to the front

Ball of the foot - Lift your toes. This is the padded portion of your foot between toes and the arch. When you stand 'on your toes', (unless you are a ballerina) this is likely what you are standing on.

Lumbar - the vertebrae of the low back approximately where it curves inward and down toward the sacrum

Central Channel - An aspect of energetic anatomy, this channel runs in front of the spine from its base at the perineum to the top of the head. It is approximately the width of a large pencil

Cervical Spine - the vertebrae at the top of the spine/your neck
Clavicles - the collarbones

Dantian/Hara/Center - (may be used interchangeably)

can be felt in the area of the low belly, in front of the spine and a few inches behind and below the navel. You might think of it as a ballast point - your centre of gravity. Aligning the body with this point can allow for an effortless feeling of balance, though it may take some practice to relax sufficiently to feel this.

Fascia - a band or sheet of connective tissue, made up mostly of collagen. It is found at various layers of the body: superficially = beneath the skin, or deep and also visceral or woven between and through the organs. It attaches, encloses, separates and stabilises muscles, joints and organs.

Occiput - the base of the skull where your neck meets your head

Perineum - the area between the anus and scrotum or anus and vagina. Considered to be the energetic 'base' of the body in some traditions.

Posterior - to the back

Sacrum - the large, triangular bone at the base of your spine

Shoulder Girdle - the shoulder girdle or pectoral girdle includes the clavicle and scapula

Scapula - shoulder blade

Sternum - breastbone

Please Note:

As with any movement practice, if you experience discomfort or pain, decrease depth and intensity or stop. Recognize your limits. When in doubt, ask a professional.