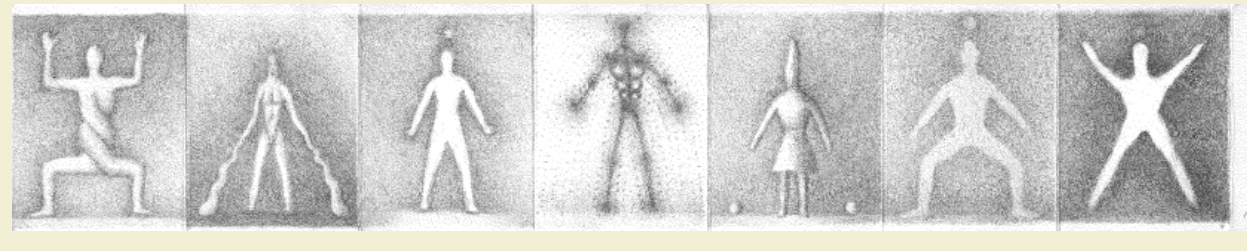










PEDRO PRADO



STRUCTURAL STRETCHES

SELF EXPLORATION AND CULTIVATING THE VERTICAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	1	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
	2	INTRODUCTION
	4	STRETCHES - SOME PHYSIOLOGY
	6	GENERAL GUIDELINES
	9	ONE
	14	TWO
	19	THREE
	23	FOUR
	27	FIVE
	31	SIX
	35	SEVEN
	39	INTEGRATION
	46	REFERENCES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the years, this manual was created and compiled with the help of so many friends, and in so many places in the world - so much so that much of this manual is truly a worldwide collaboration of many hearts and minds.

First of all I must acknowledge the profoundly important foundational work of Dr. Ida P. Rolf and some of the people that followed in her footsteps: Vivian Jaye, Jane Harrington, Emmett Hutchins, Peter Melchior, Jan Sultan and Jeffrey Maitland. Also I'm grateful for the deep and meaningful mentoring I received from Peter Levine and Jose Angelo Gaiarsa. They provided an intellectual and personal foundation which enabled my approach to develop into its present form. Thank you all.

Thanks also to all the students and clients who, by going through this experience with me, helped me to learn, build and rebuild the sequences, find the right words, correct the instructions, and, most of all, find out what was trying to emerge. Thanks to all of you for participating in this gradual process of maturation.

Many thanks go to Jose Augusto Menegatti, Aida Cordeiro, the people who posed for the pictures, Ana Figueiredo, Vera Sene, Paulo Marcelo Costa for the early encouragement to document these sequences photographically and to Jose Roberto Sadek for the actual "clicks" - thanks for the push.

A special thanks to Robert Schleip for the interview that helped shape the physiological reference to this work.

Liz Gaggini, Giovanni Feliccioni and Vivian Jaye helped edit the text. Thanks for your suggestions and words.

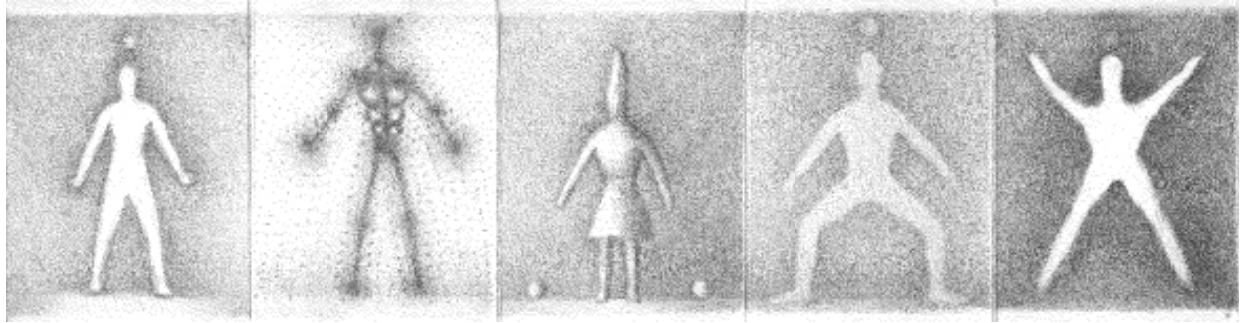
In a cooperative and open hearted way, Sybille Cavalcanti of the Brazilian Rolfing® Association and Klaus Nagel of the European Rolfing® Association E.v. repeatedly gave me the necessary office support in the many stages of this work that preceded this edition.

Thanks to Fernanda Sarmiento, Leticia Moura who created the graphic format in the different stages of this edition. And to Alex Cervený for his inspired illustrations.

My deepest gratitude goes to Paula Mattoli for her devoted hard work, for her loving participation and support, and especially for making me believe all of this was possible and necessary.

Yes,
Thank you all

PEDRO PRADO



STRUCTURAL STRETCHES

SELF EXPLORATION AND CULTIVATING THE VERTICAL

INTRODUCTION

Soon after I graduated in Clinical Psychology, 1973, I participated in a study group with Dr. Gaiarsa, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. There, for the first time, my eyes were opened to the importance of proprioception in one's felt sense, self-image and self-esteem, as well as in its use in dealing with transformation.¹

In 1981 I was certified in Rolfing® and became interested in the connection between the physical structure and emotions, between W. Reich and his followers and Ida P. Rolf.²

As a Rolfing student, I started stretching³ to look into my own body experience for some of the concepts that I was being taught. Many times the theoretical landmarks and definitions seemed too abstract to me. This was around 1984, during my advanced Rolfing training, in Boulder, Colorado, with Emmett Hutchins Peter Melchior and Jeffrey Maitland.

In New York city, I met Dorothy Hunter, a good friend, and we found out that we were both playing with stretches in a very similar way. We would meet in Central Park in the mornings and show each other our discoveries.

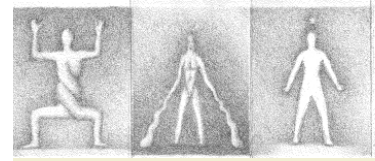
Back in Brazil, I went on with this research by myself, putting them together in such a way that they reproduced the effects of the sessions in the Rolfing protocol, or what Dr. Rolf called "the recipe." So, for each session I developed a series of stretches.

I soon realized that this series could be a powerful tool for clients to take home, and like me, explore their bodies, and their connections. Also, I saw that these stretches could help clients maintain the gains of a session. The client could actively be doing something for themselves.

But, more importantly, by challenging and exploring their restrictions through sensations, they could uncover in themselves the self-regulating, self-organizing power of their own body. When given the opportunity to be released from restrictions our bodies will naturally find their own way to a higher level of function and integration. To be more precise, when these stretches are preformed with awareness, they will access and activate our somas' inherent orthotropic nature,⁴ that is, the inate tendency of our bodies to correct themselves and seek uprightness. As a result, the integration we all desire is not imposed on us from the outside, but discovered within.

STRUCTURAL STRETCHES

PEDRO PRADO



At this point, 1986 I started to assist instructors in Rolfing classes. Then I used these exercises to bring a proprioceptive experience of the sessions to my students. So, for the following years, in the very many classes I assisted and thereafter the very many classes that I taught as an Instructor, I have used this system as a pedagogical tool.

I soon realized that this organized series could be used in a clinical way to either prepare for or to close a session. Doing them beforehand would create more resilience and openness in the client. Doing them afterwards could be a homework assignment which many clients ask for and, in fact, need. During the sessions the stretches could help achieve a more participatory style for the session, and help the practitioner perceive where the limitations in length and connection are in order to activate the orthotropic effect.

Actually, this work was already in a complete form many years ago. I had presented it at professional meetings - Boulder in 1990, Germany in 1992 and Brazil in 1998- but somehow it seemed that I could never find time or motivation to make it a book or a bigger statement.

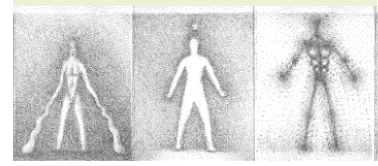
That's the way things were...

Rolfing was also evolving. The movement work was taking shape through the work of Vivian Jaye and Jane Harrington.⁵ With the appearance of the reflections on the definition,⁶ principles of intervention,⁷ and new ways to look at structures,^{8,9,10} these stretches gained another dimension. The internal experience includes, not only the sensorial experience, but also whatever layer of the human experience that is met as one is stretching through it. In Rolfing we developed a certain ordering of events so that practitioners could be more economical and safe in their approach. Using the principles of intervention and new forms of evaluating structure developed by Jeffrey Maitland and Jan Sultan brought these stretches to the present form. I also found important inspiration in the work of Peter Levine¹¹ on shock-trauma, and Dr. Gaiarsa's neo-reichian approach to psychological attitudes in the character armour. Maitland's elucidation of the orthotropic nature of the body also allowed me to conceptualize what my Structural Stretches had uncovered.

I was inspired to stretch globally by RPG, a deviation of the Meziere method that appeared in Brazil brought by Phillipe Soucard.¹² Their whole body postures were designed to stretch through the limitations of the client thereby producing changes in posture and effects in the whole myofascial net. When I started using those stretches in the context of Dr. Rolf's¹³ profound understanding of structure, they gained in power and effect.

STRUCTURAL STRETCHES

PEDRO PRADO



So, here we have a methodology which applies traditional and other practices (yoga, meditation, Rolfing, Meziere...) in a systematic way that can deal with structure, and achieve long lasting changes.

STRETCHES, SOME PHYSIOLOGY

FIRST LEVEL

Stimulation of the myofascial tissue will trigger the Golgi tendon organs that will send information to the spinal cord, which in turn will send information to the muscle fibers, lowering their tone.

This is a simple two synapses reflex arc.

Golgi organs exist throughout the connective tissue and fascial sheets. They are concentrated in tendons, but are also spread throughout. They are organized in series, chains and lines.

When first stimulated they signal to stop as a sign of danger, disruption or injury to the tissue. This is probably one of the reasons they exist.

But, if one moves slowly, very slowly, and endures the stretch for a longer period of time, one will stimulate the Golgi tendon organs which, in a chain will stimulate the subsequent receptors, therefore stimulating muscles to reduce their tonus and lengthen. If stretch is done too fast we lose that chained possibility of transmitting information and achieving muscular relaxation. If micro-movements are included, one can reach other organs and chains, broadening the possibilities of relaxation.

The Golgi reflex takes two seconds to happen. But greater changes in shape are brought by longer processes that can take up to 20 minutes of holding a stretch.

SECOND LEVEL

Golgi reflexes act locally by lengthening and relaxing segments of the connective tissue and muscles.

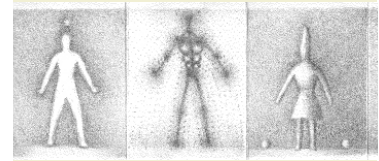
If a stretch is done very slowly and then associated with a sensation of pleasure (breathing into, releasing, etc....) the interpretation of the stimuli will not be of danger, but of pleasure, stimulating global relaxation. Then the autonomic nervous system is stimulated and switches from sympathetic to parasympathetic activity.

Therefore, while doing the proposed series, one will be invited into these two states of the nervous system, going from one to the other by holding, then inviting, first doing and then allowing. This way of stretching should avoid adaptation to the stimulus.

Inclusion of micro-movements and of stimulation of parasympathetic activities generates awareness,

STRUCTURAL STRETCHES

PEDRO PRADO



keeping the brain switching back and forth between systems and attitudes of arousal and release.

Neurologically we move from spinal cord to brain stem activities. The timing of brain stem activities is slower.

THIRD LEVEL

By repeating the experience and by not going through the series mechanically, rather activating perception of sensations, an effect on the body image of one's self. Where in the body is there recognition and perception and where not? New sensations are always perceived and registered.

This process of perceiving and recognizing will play a role in the interaction of the existing image with the new image one has of their psychobiological being. Our new body scheme, therefore serves an embodiment goal.

The "blind spots" and previously unperceived relationships are now recognized and integrated into our body scheme. That perception transforms the "map" we have of ourselves as a whole.

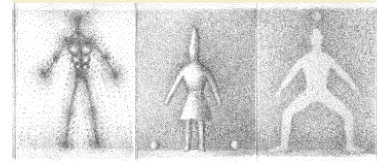
This level is also cortical, it deals with relations, connections, associations and directions within and beyond the structure, as well as connections and directions within the context we are embedded. This changes the internal landscape and the "comfort zone" in which we operate with our body image. If the experience is pleasurable, it allows a fuller body response, therefore being more effective for change.

Again, embodying these experiences gradually is important so that the person doesn't "shrink" afterwards. If the person feels contracted, it is because he/she went beyond their limits.

Therefore, resting between sequences is also very important. Consolidating new body images requires

STRUCTURAL STRETCHES

PEDRO PRADO



a period of time during which there are no new challenges. And one can explore the space between not trying and trying too much.

From the development of this perspective, one could investigate and correlate the effects that the neurological systems and their integrated functions have on self-image, self-esteem, and the development and evolution of the personality. But, this is enough for now.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The structural stretches are actually a combination of structure and function, form and movement.

For best results, maintain a present awareness while doing these forms. Make the suggested postures, until finding the limitation of stretching that will give a physical sensation of boundary.

By challenging the limits of form with micro-movements or with focused breathing, you may get in contact with the nature of the restriction. Allowing the stretch reflex to occur, the resulting changes accommodate themselves throughout the whole structure and then gradually move to the next limit, continuing the exploration.

The nature of holding patterns in our physical body have connections that go beyond the physical, often touching emotional, cognitive or spiritual dimensions. As a holographic system, these dimensions are all connected and resonating within each other.

Provoking these holding patterns and allowing restrictions to change can affect the whole structure/person. New levels of order and function can be reached.

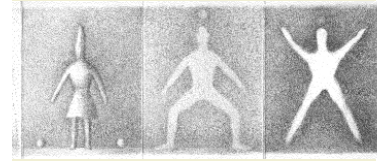
Therefore, they need to be thought of and practiced as whole body postures. Concerns with the rest of the structure/person and its integration are imperative. If one wants to stretch (increase the distance between two points at least) a segment of the body, there is a need to integrate with the whole.

Above all, the practice of Structural Stretches requires not treating yourself as an object to be stretched, but in learning how to live your form and open to the new form that wants to emerge as a result of exploring your limitations with awareness.

First, you must become active by going into the posture, holding it, and fully experiencing your limitations at a sensorial level. Then you can gradually enter into what wants to emerge by easing or intensifying your sensations. Breathe with awareness, allow and become the inner movements that begin to emerge, as old patterns uncouple. Allow space for autonomic discharges and changes in physiology so that you can accept the form you were, embrace the form you are, and become the form that wants to emerge.

STRUCTURAL STRETCHES

PEDRO PRADO



Contacting your limitations with an allowing awareness by means of these stretches will allow you to gracefully find higher levels of integration and function. Structural Stretches is not a matter of imposing any preconceived form on yourself or willfully stretching through your limitations, rather a personal investigation into how to activate the inherent orthotropic nature of your body.

It takes the combining of doing and relaxing, keeping elongation while motility and inner movement are elicited, combining holding the posture with micro-movements. This is the key to the entire practice

Postures need to be symmetrical, so shorter segments always dictate the form of the posture. These are the spaces that first call for letting go. Once they're dealt with one can move on, reaching deeper layers.

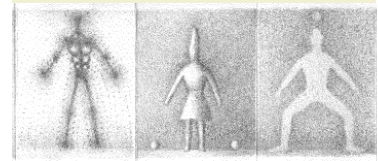
The principles of Roling intervention have to be respected:

- | Adaptability, as preparation is a condition of deeper exploration. Always take care with initial positioning, and revisit areas previously worked before bridging into deeper stretching is recommended.
- | Support for the positions and staying always connected with support for integrating the areas explored, will help hold the changes.
- | Continuity is also a condition of order. Make sure to find the flow that include the whole body, therefore, connecting parts, systems, layers, sensorially, energetically.
- | Palintonicity (this concept comes from the greek word "Palintonos" which means "stretched back and forth," or more generally "unity of oppositions") is always addressed as that spatial and 3-dimensional reality, reflecting the results of letting go of any pattern. Therefore being concerned with breathing, and with the dimensionality of the structures that were addressed is necessary.
- | Closure. All practices include integration and closure within the structure itself. Attention to the completion of the work, not forcing yourself beyond it, overdoing it. Make sure to gradually contact the environment and world as you come out of these practices.

The goals of each session are mainly described in structural terminology but all sessions aim to

STRUCTURAL STRETCHES

PEDRO PRADO



explore sensations connected to these structural goals.

It is therefore an experiential "guided tour" through the Rolfing process. One may use parts or a specific sequence for exploration, but, be aware of the context of the whole person - you are never just working with parts. Take responsibility for this.

If one suffers from back, knee or neck pains, or has a history of structural disorders that produce painful episodes, then twisting positions may take one out of balance temporarily. Also, if these positions are not carefully and properly executed, they may disorganize the structure. I do not recommend the practice of these stretches in those cases.

The pictures are indicators. The description can supply images and angles that are not in the pictures. They also bring the movement component that still photographs cannot show.

A few abbreviations are used:

LDH- lumbo dorsal hinge

AOJ- atlanto occipital joint

ANS- autonomic nervous system

EOF- eye of the foot

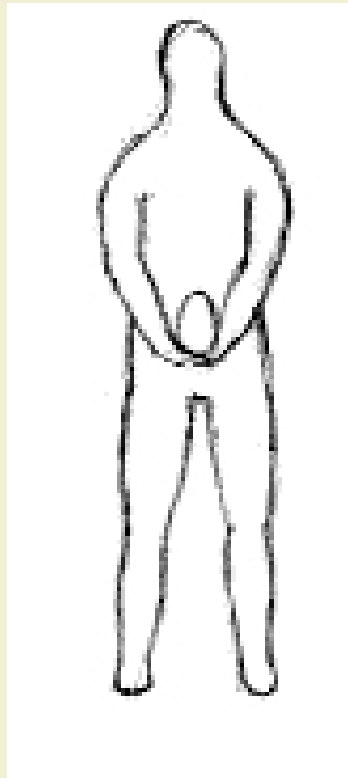
I also use the terms "sleeve" and "core" in the way Rolfers use those terms to represent the more superficial fascial wrappings (sleeve) and the deeper tissues, related to the visceral space (core).

TWO CONCERNS ARE ALWAYS VERY IMPORTANT: CARE AND TIME.

Please, don't overstretch, or jump into a stretch abruptly. It is always better to go slowly, progressing gradually step by step, rather than going too fast and running the risk of injury. Consider the whole body, prepare yourself for the posture, find support, then do it. Allow time for the autonomic nervous system to discharge. Allow time for the orthotropic effect to take over. And, please again, take your time to integrate the changes...

This is about a lived experience.

ONE



beginning, potential, revelation, active principle, the man,
standing, active, present, the point



This session is about opening the sleeve envelope, generating more space for breathing and decompressing the pelvis from above (thorax to hips) and from below (hips to legs).

GETTING READY

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. The head, back and shoulders are resting. Your arms are parallel to the body; the hands with palms down and aligned with the forearm. Allow the whole body to be supported by the floor. Become aware of your breathing.



SEQUENCE 1

THROUGH THE ARMS

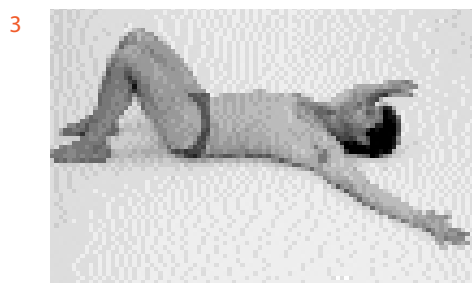
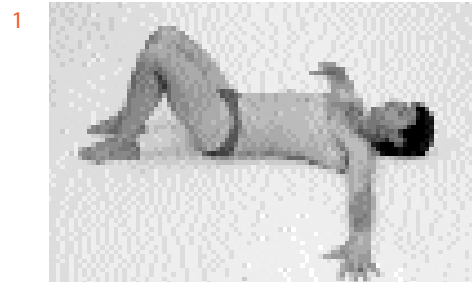
1- Gently elongate the arms away from shoulders and neck. The arm movement initiates from the central mid line of the body and travels all the way to fingers and beyond. Then move the arms away from the sides of the body until they are even with the shoulders. When finding resistance explore that restriction with breathing and micro-movements until it lets go.

2- As your arms approach the shoulder level (90° perpendicular to the body) allow your arms to rotate towards palms up.

3- Continue the movement always respecting and exploring restrictions, until the arms reach a diagonal above the shoulders. Be sure the back and front of your neck are soft, long and relaxed. When you are ready allow your arms to slowly return to the Getting Ready position.

ATTENTION

If ANS responses occur: wait for the cycle to complete itself; maintain the stretch (release it a little if necessary); be open to the experience, and focus on the sensations, emotions or thoughts that may arise until the breathing comes back to normal.





SEQUENCE 2

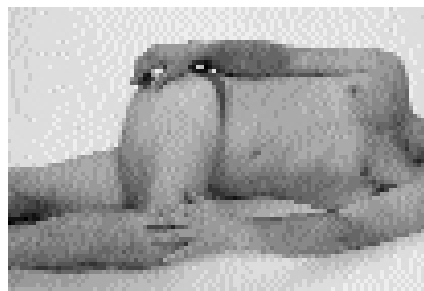
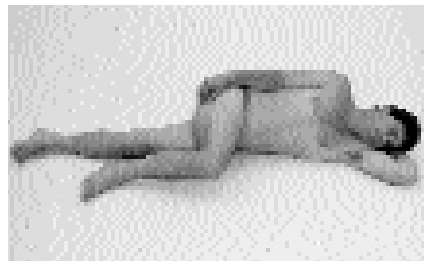
THROUGH THE LEGS

Lie on your side with hips parallel to each other and perpendicular to the floor.

Allow the knee of the upper leg to hang from the hip without touching the floor. (If necessary bring the upper iliac crest back. This will help the knee to hang loosely from the hip).

Allow the weight of the thigh to slowly open the hip-joint space. One can bring the knee closer or further from the trunk exploring different attachments of the leg to the hip.

A gentle touch on the knee may elicit a deeper letting go.



HEAD AND NECK

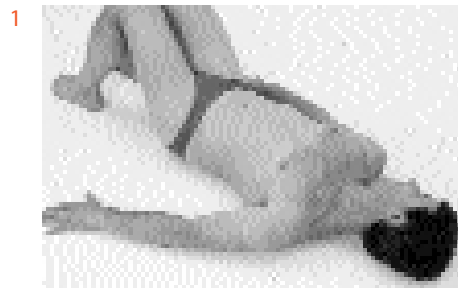
Lie on your back with your knees bent.

Place your arms at a 45° angle away from body.

Allow the feet and lower back to rest comfortably in contact with the floor. Lengthen through the arm from the middle of the body. Allow the shoulders to move away from neck toward the hands and beyond. Maintain awareness of your breath and allow the trunk to be spa-

ROTATION OF THE HEAD

1-2 Keeping the elbows unlocked, lengthen from ear to fingers while rotating head on its axis. The back and front of the neck should remain comfortably long. Turning head to the side, without hyperextension, will allow an exploration of the relationships of the neck,



ELONGATION OF THE LATERAL SIDE OF THE NECK

3- Bring the ear towards the shoulder. On the opposite side sense the elongation all the way from fingers to ear. Make sure the elbows, shoulders and head are always free and not locked.

COMBINATION

These two positions can be combined to explore the relationship of the myofascial layers of the head trunk and neck.



PELVIC ROLL

Have the pelvis neutral position and lumbar relaxed and supported by the floor.

Make sure your feet are under and in support of your knees.

Become aware of your breathing allowing your thorax to soften and respond to the movement of your breath.

Begin to explore the transmission of weight and connection through the pelvis, legs and into the soles of your feet.

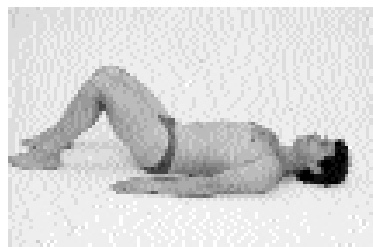
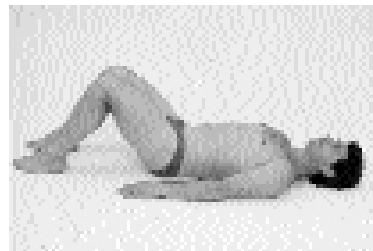
Look for the easiest transmission through the legs and knees (the whole foot should remain in contact with the floor).

Notice the natural movement of the pelvis and allow the head to respond.

Explore transmitting more weight and connection into

ATTENTION

To explore the contact with the floor try different positions of the knee feet relationships: opening and closing them slightly to see which position of the knees-feet relationship brings a fuller and firmer contact of feet to ground.





STANDING UP

1- Allow both knees to drop to one side and roll the trunk so that it comes on top of the thighs and you are sitting on your ankles. Fold forward letting the head drop toward the knees and then the floor. Allow the spine to be heavy and long. Once the head is down allow cervicals to release as forehead comes closer to knees. Allow the arms to hang along the sides of the body, allow the shoulders to fall away from the head and neck. Encourage breath to occupy the inner space and explore restrictions while allowing the back to lengthen.

2-3 To come to standing bring one foot, under you, to the floor at a time.

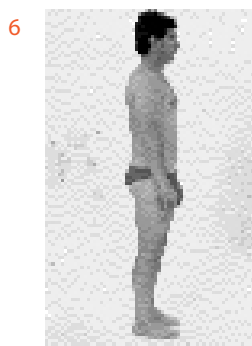
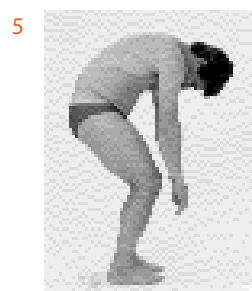
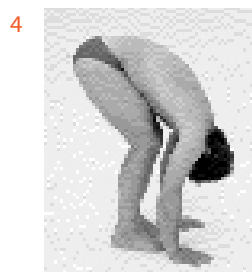
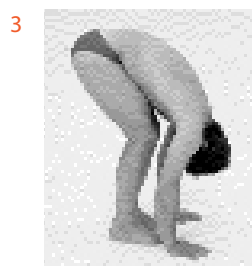
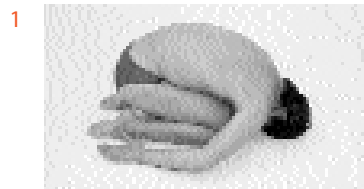
Take your time to do this and explore the position of the pelvis in relation to whole foot as it makes contact with the ground under you.

4- Flex the knee back and forth and play with bringing the pelvis up and down. Keep the spine and head hanging until there is a lengthening along the back of legs. Have the sitting bones lead the movement.

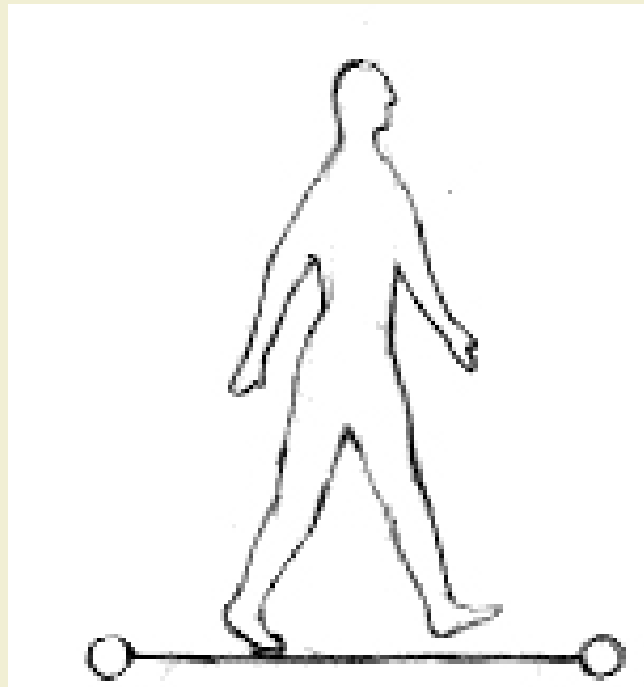
5- Flex the knee back and forth and play with bringing the pelvis up and down. Keep the spine and head hanging until there is a lengthening along the back of legs. Have the sitting bones lead the movement.

6- Explore options for the most appropriate relationship of all the parts from head to feet while relaxing and accommodating the shoulder girdle above the trunk.

With eyes opened, pay attention to your breathing. Adjust the parts of your body in relation to each other and be aware of the changes; savour them. Pay attention to the environment around you and walk experiencing yourself in motion.



TWO



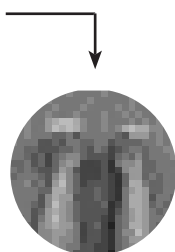
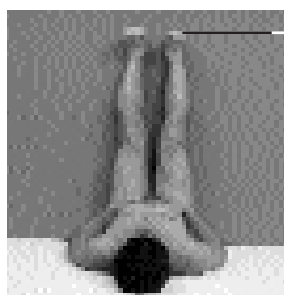
balance, equilibrium, multiplication, evolution or
involution, chaos or order, oppositions,
movement, progress



This session is about: Releasing the superficial wrapping of the lower leg, ankles and feet, preparing the spine for order; releasing the superficial wrapping of the back of the trunk; and continuing to open the head-to-neck connection, for better head adaptation to movement.

GETTING READY

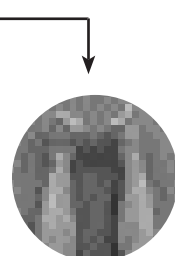
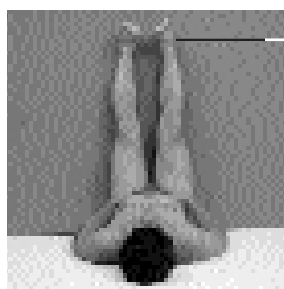
Lying on the floor stretch the legs up the wall. Keep the sitting bones as close to the wall as possible without discomfort. Arms and shoulders rest away from the neck and head. See that the cervicals and that the back of the neck are long (but not hyper-extended). Make contact with the felt-sense of the inner movements and to your breathing. Explore ways of relaxing the spine into the floor. Release and lengthen muscles of the legs and feet.



SEQUENCE

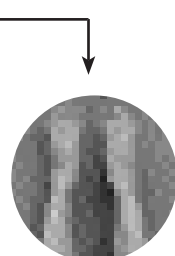
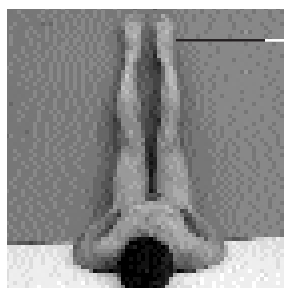
Explore the ankle hinge by flexing, extending, pronating, supinating the foot.

Look for a softening of the ankle joint. Find where the joint is short and stretch the short segments.



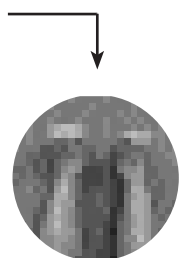
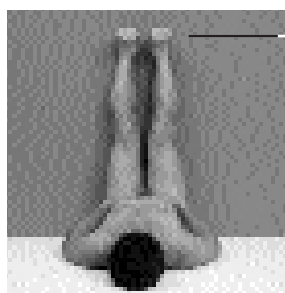
Take time to allow the knees and the muscles of the thigh to relax, then extend through the legs and flex the feet and toes.

Be careful not to lock the knees.



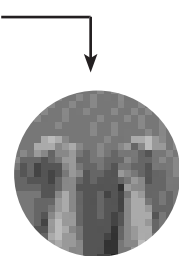
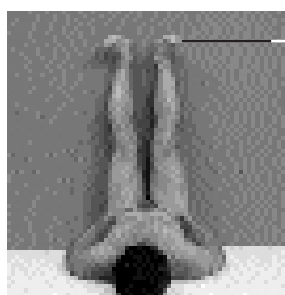
See that the joints work in a horizontal plane as much as possible. Explore the arches of the feet.

Toe flexion engages the transverse arch, whereas ankle flexion engages medial and lateral arches.



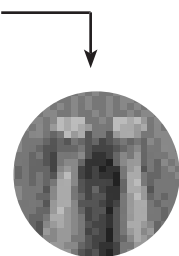
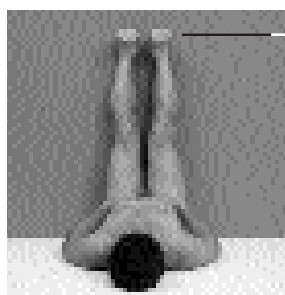
Challenge the shortest arch to bring them towards balance.

Flexing your feet, extend your heels towards the ceiling while your sitting bones settle to the floor.



Every now and then check whether the neck is lengthening without hyper-extending.

Before leaving the position stretch for a moment by flexing the feet and toes and bringing chin towards the chest lengthening along the spine and the back of the head.



Complete the stretch by releasing all these joints.

Slowly allow the knees to bend, allowing the feet to come flat on the wall.

Stretch one leg at a time, then both together.



HEAD AND NECK

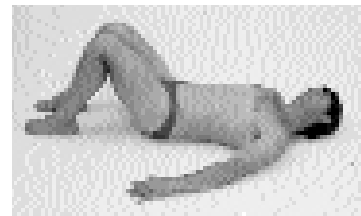
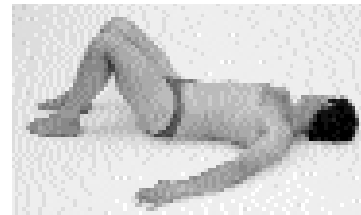
For the work to transmit across the head you need the AOJ to be adaptable. Rest arms 45° away from body with feet and lower back resting comfortably in contact with the floor.

Lengthen through the arms. The shoulders move away from the neck toward the hands and beyond. Maintain awareness of your breath and allow the trunk to be spacious.

Keeping the elbows unlocked stretch from ear to fingers. The front and back of the neck both remain comfortably long, without hyper-extension.

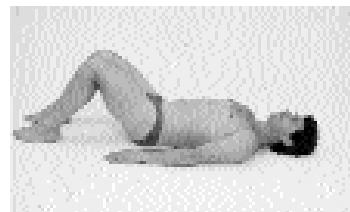
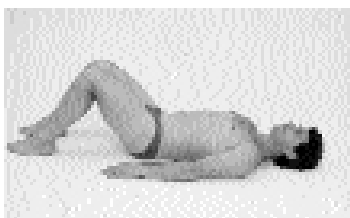
For further exploration of the relationship of head, neck and arms, allow the head to rotate on its axis, move it side to side, front to back, make little circles with the tip of your nose in both directions.

After stretching, bring the head back to the midline and rest comfortably.



ATTENTION

ANS discharges often happen in these stretches. For this reason keep the form of the stretch through the whole body, and wait for the discharge cycles to complete.

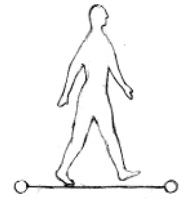


PELVIC ROLL

Lie on your back with your knees up and your feet flat on the floor and lightly transmit weight into your feet. The lumbar will soften towards the floor and the pelvis will begin to roll.

Repeat this movement of weight transmission into the feet with your feet slightly inverted or everted, and bring your knees slightly medial or lateral. Find which combination allows you the most competent transmission of movement between feet and pelvis.

Once again pay attention to the connection of the feet to the lumbar and the transmission of movement along the spine and its resonance through the neck and head.



STANDING UP

1- Sitting on your heels, allow spine to hang, from sacrum. Breath into the back bringing the forehead toward the knees.

2- When coming up to standing look for full contact of the feet with the ground.

3- Explore the relationships of the knees to the feet as you find connections of pelvis and sitting bones through the knees to the feet and heels.

4- While still bending rock back and forth over the feet, until you find your weight distributed fully through both feet.

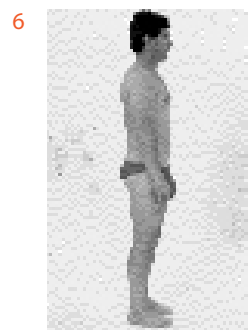
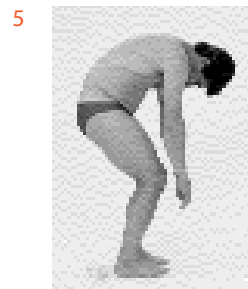
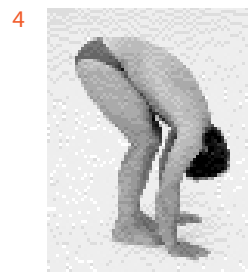
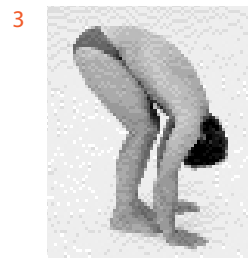
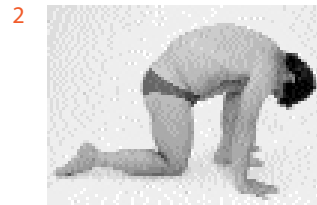
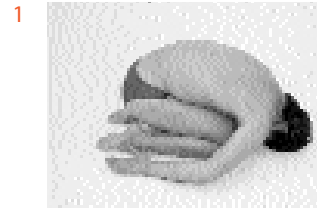
5- Find the connection of pelvis to feet and allow the spine to unroll with the breath.

6- Once standing upright explore having your feet as support for the whole body.

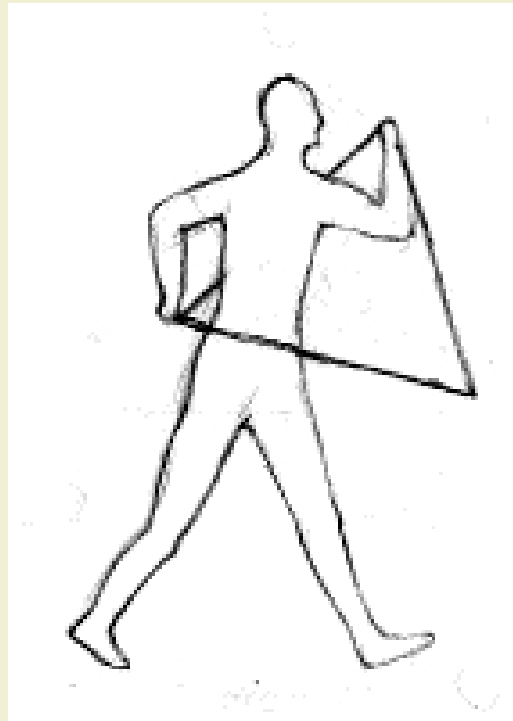
As you walk, pay attention to the leg hinges and to your contact with the floor.

Allow your weight to drop through the legs and into the center of the feet (the EOF or "Eye Of the Foot").

Let your walk resonate up through the pelvis and spine and allow the head to respond.



THREE



perfection, conjunction, 1+2, totality, conclusion,
balance point, result of relationship,
revelation



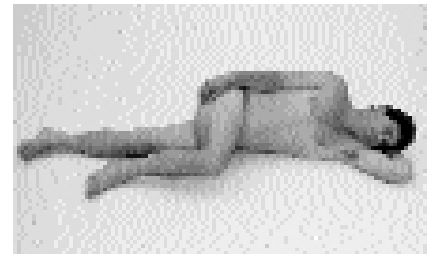
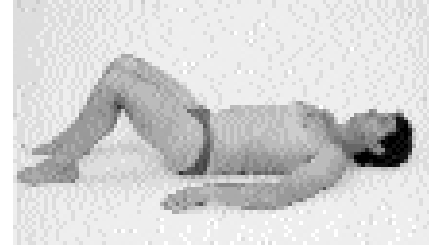
This session is about exploring the sides of the body, the relationship between the front and the back of the body and the relationship of the shoulder girdle to the pelvic girdle.

GETTING READY

Lie on your back with your knees up and your feet on the floor. Connect with your body by relaxing, breathing and paying attention to your sensations.

Allow both knees to fall to one side and lie on your side with the leg closest to the floor extended and relaxed, the leg on top bent. Keep the ilia parallel and perpendicular to the floor, the upper thigh is hanging and the head rests on the arm. (If the upper knee touches the floor bring the upper hip back until the knee comes off the floor). Allow the upper thigh to be heavy.

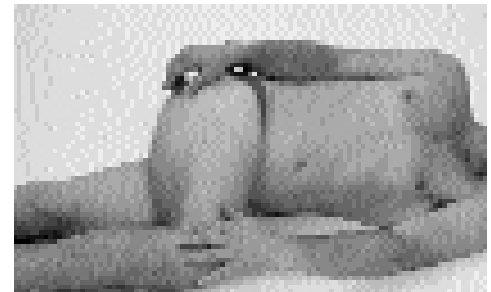
Sense your breath moving through your inner space as your spine relax and elongate.



SEQUENCE

PELVIC GIRDLE

1- Allowing the weight of the upper thigh to drop from the hip, as if leg would separate from it, explore the different angles of the thigh to hip relationship by bringing the knee closer and further from the trunk. A light touch of your hands can increase the stretch between the knee and the hip.

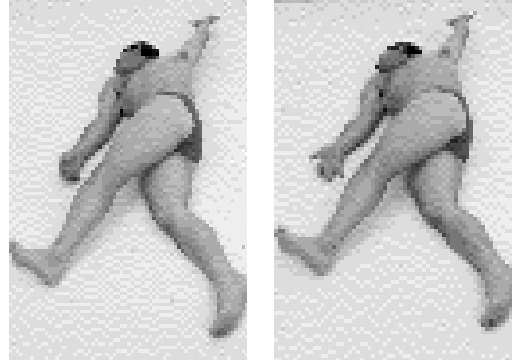




SHOULDER GIRDLE

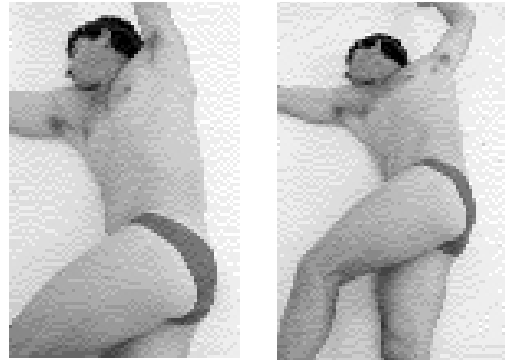
2-3 Making sure that the lumbar are long slowly bring the upper arm and leg diagonally away from the trunk. Sense a stretch from feet to hands, elongating the upper side giving attention to the breath, and exploring any restricted areas with micro-movements.

2-3



4-5 If the stretch is easy, with no restriction in the legs, arms or hips, try to bring upper knee and elbow to the floor and then twist the hip and shoulder in opposite directions.

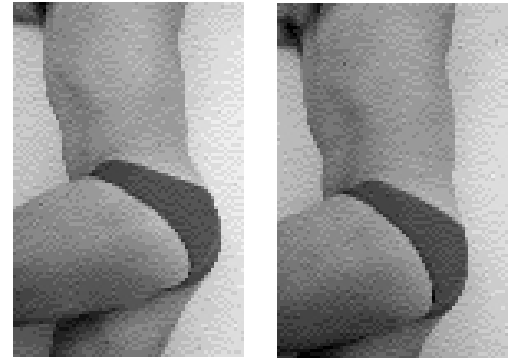
4-5



MIDDLE SECTION

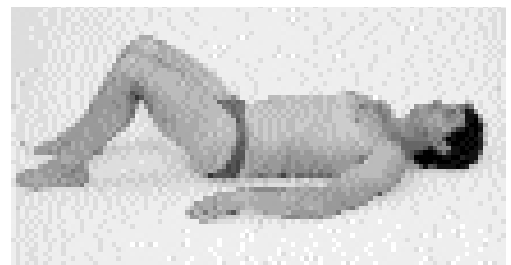
6-7 With arms and legs long make gentle pelvic rolls to elongate the lumbar and the space between the ASIS and the 12th rib. Breath while elongating. Feel this space and the pressure of the breath against the ribs and allow space in the thoracic cavity.

6-7



ATTENTION

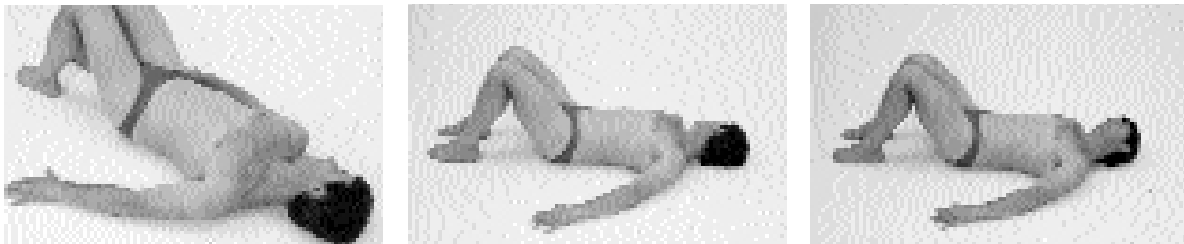
Before going to other side, come back to the middle and lie on your back with your knees up. A pelvic roll may help you balance the differences on both sides.





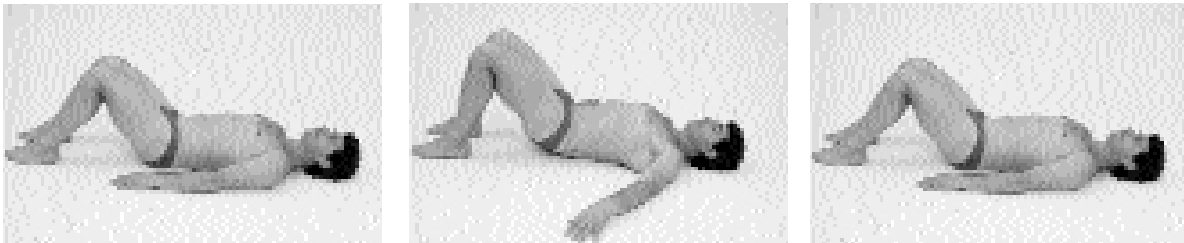
NECK WORK

It is important to complete the shoulder girdle exploration by repeating the head-neck-arm-trunk releases.



PELVIC ROLL

A few pelvic rolls allow for an exploration of the lumbar area up to the back of the diaphragm and 12th rib. Become aware of your breathing allowing your thorax to soften and respond to the movement of your breath.



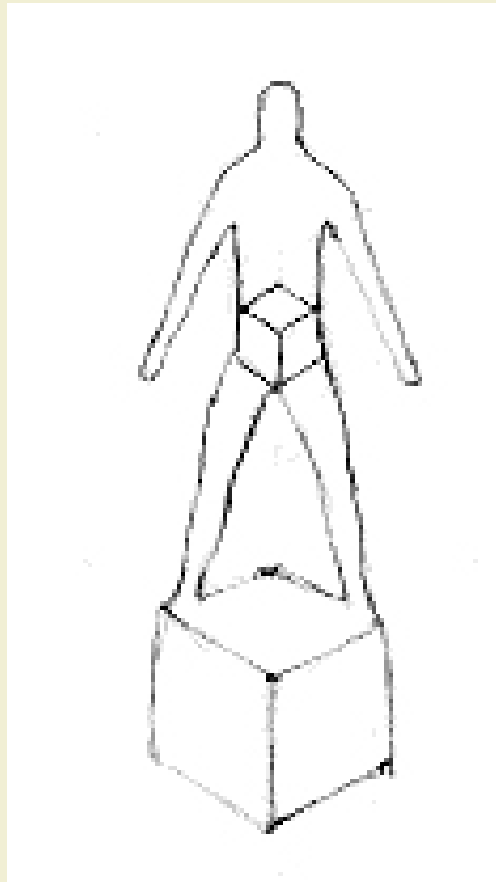
STANDING UP

When you are ready to stand up bring your attention to the breath and support from the feet, legs and pelvis.

Once upright allow the weight of your shoulder girdle to rest on the rib cage with support from the pelvis. Bend your knees gently moving up and down as you notice the tri dimensional quality of your breath and support from below.



FOUR



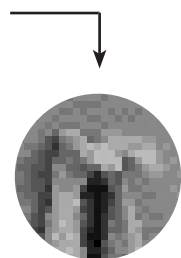
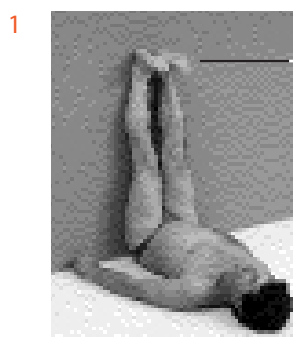
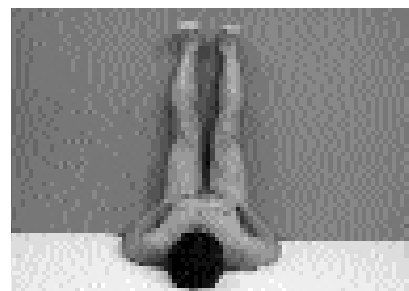
the square, the base, stability, the cross, tangible,
the sensorial, space references: North, South, East, West,
feminine, earth



This session is about core opening: creating the inner line of the legs for core support, differentiation of leg segments, connection of the feet through to LDH and movement transmission from the LDH, through pelvis, to the center of the feet (the EOF).

GETTING READY

Lie on your back with your sitting bones next to the wall. (Be comfortable, this should only be a light challenge). Legs are resting on the wall. Shoulders rest on the floor and drop away from the neck and head. Allow your breath to be open and relaxed, the back of the head heavy, and with the front and back of the neck long and comfortable.

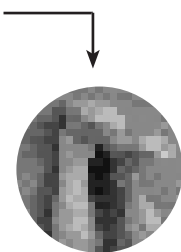
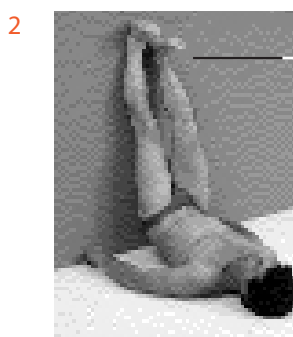


SEQUENCE 1

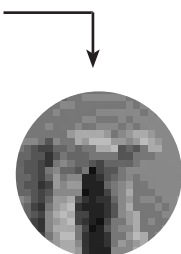
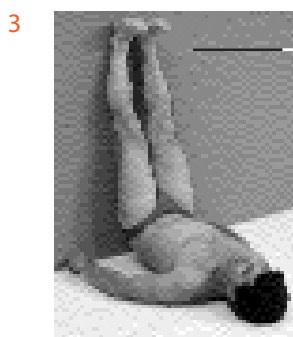
MIDLINE OF THE LEG STRETCH

Lengthen from the sitting bones and pelvic floor towards the feet.

1- Flex the toes and feet. Lengthen the midline of the leg intending the center of the foot (EOF) towards the ceiling. Sense your breath in the pelvic bowl as you relax the pelvic floor from inside.



2- Gradually move one heel at a time up the wall. This may lift the pelvis slightly off the floor.



3- Then stop, with feet parallel. As the weight of the pelvis begin to bring the sitting bones back to the floor, lengthen and sense stretch of the midline of the legs in both directions simultaneously; to the EOF and to the pelvic floor.

Before moving into the next sequence, let your legs rest on the wall, shoulders on the floor, allow your breath to be open and relaxed. Allow micro-movements and ANS responses to complete. Give yourself some time.



SEQUENCE 2

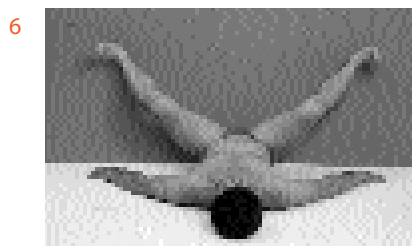
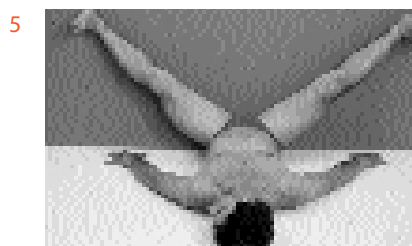
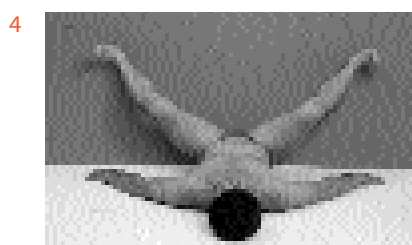
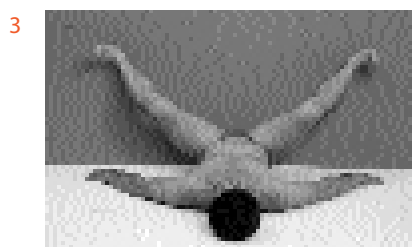
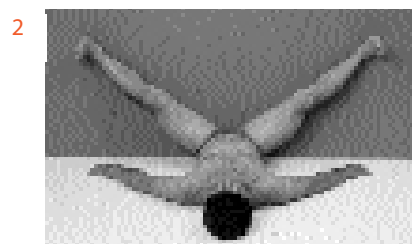
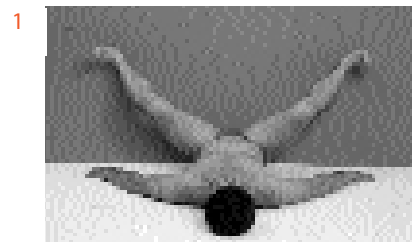
1- The feet and toes are flexed, the heels lengthening and the sitting bones and sacrum stable on the floor move the legs laterally away from each other. The femurs do not rotate out and the sacrum remains on the floor.

Stop at any perceived resistance point. This stretch should be symmetric (both sides having same opening) and therefore the shorter side will dictate how far the legs will move away from each other.

2- The feet and toes are flexed and the knees a little bent. Adjust the rotations of the segments of the legs by rotating the thigh (femur) and lower leg (tibia) in opposite directions. Keep the medial and lateral arches of each foot equal in length. The above movements do not need to be strong. (Mostly intention will do the job). Connect to the felt-sense of your breathing and allow it to flow as freely as possible. Focus inside the pelvis with your breath. Allow spontaneous movement to happen.

3-4 Lengthening through the knees, with the feet still flexed encourage extension from the core space in front of the spine. Let this sensation move through the hips, pelvic floor and the inside of the legs to the center of foot. (Look for comfort and a gradual expansion into the possibility of this position.)

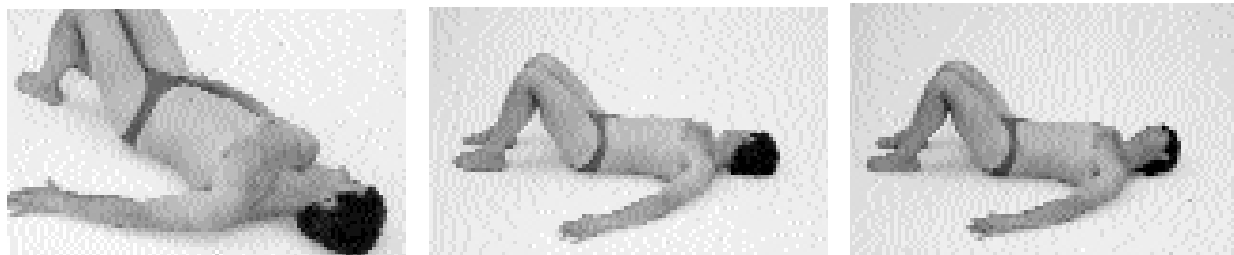
5-6 Release the flexion of the toes and feet, and end it by relaxing everything while still in the position. Make sure that the head and neck are relaxed and flexible. Slowly return the legs towards the midline and their original starting position. Wait until your breathing is back to normal then flex your knees and put your feet on the wall. Adjust the position of the knees in relation to the feet so that the whole foot touches the wall. Then push into the wall. Use the inside of the legs to transmit this movement and go all the way up to the EOF. You will be pushing the body away from the wall.





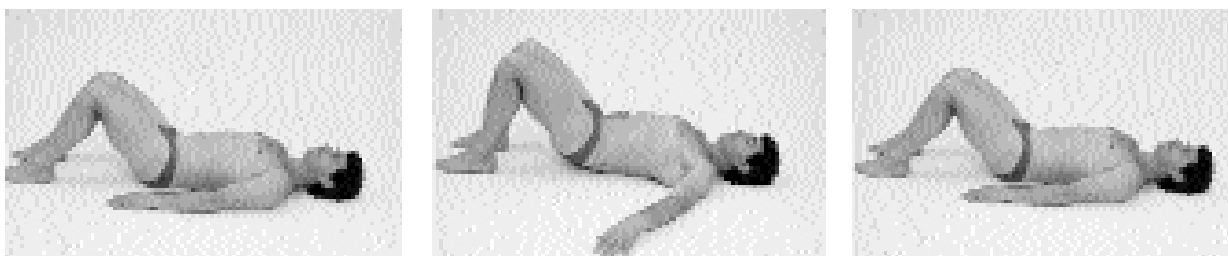
NECK ADJUSTMENTS

Lie on the floor with your knees up. Let your feet, hips, back and head be supported by floor. Take time to allow the head, neck, atlanto-occipital joint and jaw to respond to the changes evoked by the previous sequence. This may include nodding, exhaling through the mouth with jaw and lips relaxed.



PELVIC ROLL

Lie on the floor with knees up supported by your feet. With this pelvic roll explore the connections of the inner trunk, through the pelvis, to center of the feet. Allow for an easy deep transmission. With the thighs and abdomen relaxed find the flow of movement and sensation through the pelvis and legs and into the now opened foot structures. Keep the pelvic floor relaxed while working on these pelvic rolls. Transmit the weight through the legs to the feet resulting in rolling up the coccyx, sacrum and lumbar vertebrae. Allow the rest of the spine and head to respond to this movement. While still transmitting weight into the feet allow the pelvis to be heavy as you return to neutral position.



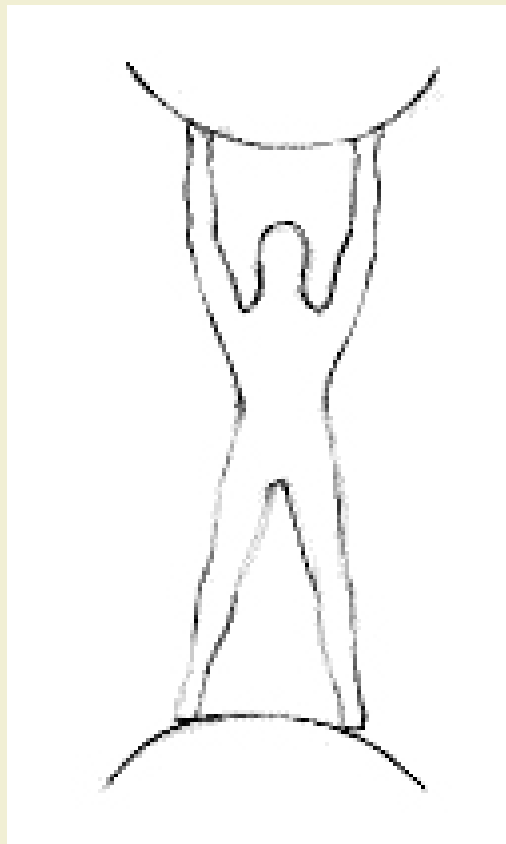
STANDING UP

As you come to standing up explore the spaciousness and volume of the inside of the pelvis and its relationship to the legs and feet. Find the front-to-back space of the pelvis and the relationship of that space to the front and the back of the feet. Look for the center of both feet and feel the transmission of movement through this newly discovered inner line of the legs. Once standing upright, explore the same inner transmission, down the inner line of the legs, with small knee bends. Allow movement to flow up and into the upper body, the neck and through the



top of the head. Go for a walk.

FIVE



man, individual, center of creation,
union of terrestrial 2 and celestial 3, quintessence,
where all directions meet, a cross with a center,
center of harmony and balance, center of 9 first numbers



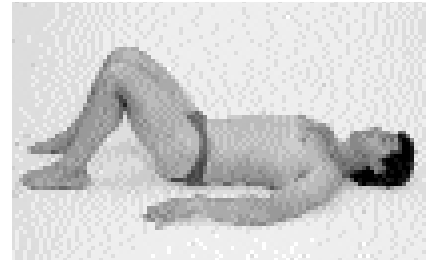
This session is about exploring and bringing order to the inner space of the thorax and deals with the relationships between these key elements: the pelvic floor, the 12th rib, the ilio-psoas, and the diaphragm.

GETTING READY

Lie comfortably supine on the floor with the knees bent and the feet flat on the floor.

Allow a connection to develop between the feet, and the front of the spine. With your breath help the pelvic floor to relax and both front and back of the neck to be long, the head and jaw heavy and resting towards the floor.

The shoulders, arms and hands are resting on the floor and gently elongate towards the hips with the elbows slightly out.



SEQUENCE 1

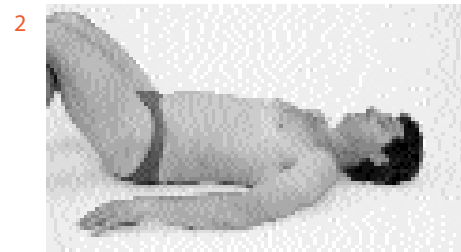
INNER SPACE OF THORAX

All sleeve components from both the pelvic and shoulder girdles can be explored before going into deeper structures. To open up the inner spaces of the body, diaphragm mobilization and release can be used.

1- Breathe half way in and hold the breath, then bring the diaphragm up as if sucking air into the chest without exhaling.

2- Then push the diaphragm down towards the pelvis without actually exhaling.

3- Repeat this up and down exploration several times. As you do that, allow outside structures to release and create more up and down, side to side, front to back space for diaphragmatic movement.





SEQUENCE 2

ILIO-PSOAS STRETCH

With one leg long (and both feet flexed at the ankles) bend the other leg and hold it with both hands around the knee.

This should allow the pelvis (lumbar and sitting bones) to rest on the floor. A gentle holding will be enough. The upper chest, neck, jaw and head are soft and relaxed.

Sense the elongation of the leg that is extended from its origin, the lumbar dorsal hinge (LDH), all the way to EOF through the pelvis and knee.

This stretch will first challenge the more superficial structures of the groin, then as the abdomen relaxes the stretch will reach deeper structures, specially the iliacus and psoas.

As usual be aware of the changes in the movement of your breath and allow ANS responses to complete.

ATTENTION

If it is hard to sense the inside of the belly (the ilio-psoas) keep the stretch in the comfort zone and from there gradually deepen it.

SEQUENCE 3

This is a more complex and advanced position.

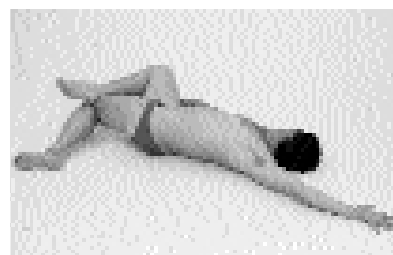
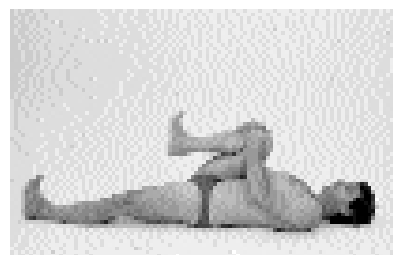
Cross one leg over the other and allow the weight of the upper leg to bring the lower leg to the side as far as it can comfortably go.

The arm from the same side as the leg on the floor diagonally reaches away from the chest.

The neck and head are rotated in opposite direction.

You can focus your breathing on different parts of the trunk as you meet areas of resistance.

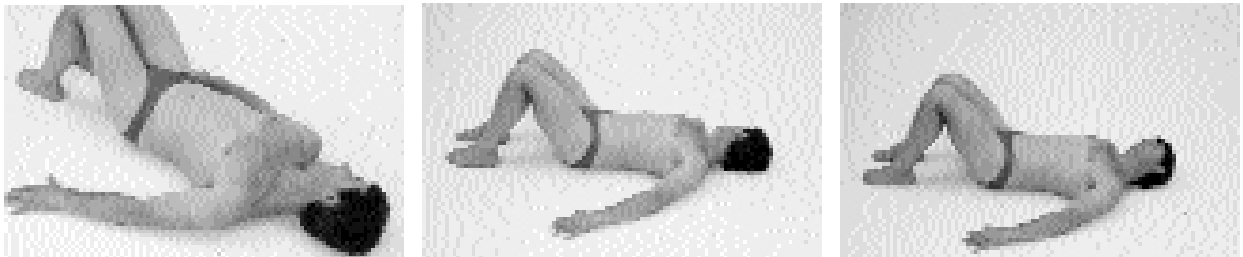
A deep contact with the psoas and front to back balance may be evoked by gentle pelvic rolls in this position.





HEAD AND NECK

Complete this stretch with head and neck explorations. Encourage small internal neck and shoulder girdle adjustments as necessary in order to help the breath and core motility to flow through your whole body.



PELVIC ROLL

This time, pelvic roll will explore how the psoas is functioning and how movement is transmitted from the LDH to center of the feet. Encourage the thigh to be relaxed, the femur to extend away from pelvis and the abdominals to relax towards the front of the spine. Make sure you give time for cycles of breathing and discharge to complete themselves before moving to standing. ANS releases can come up as spontaneous deep breathing, or yawning, especially when you stimulate the back of the diaphragm with the sleeve structures relaxed.



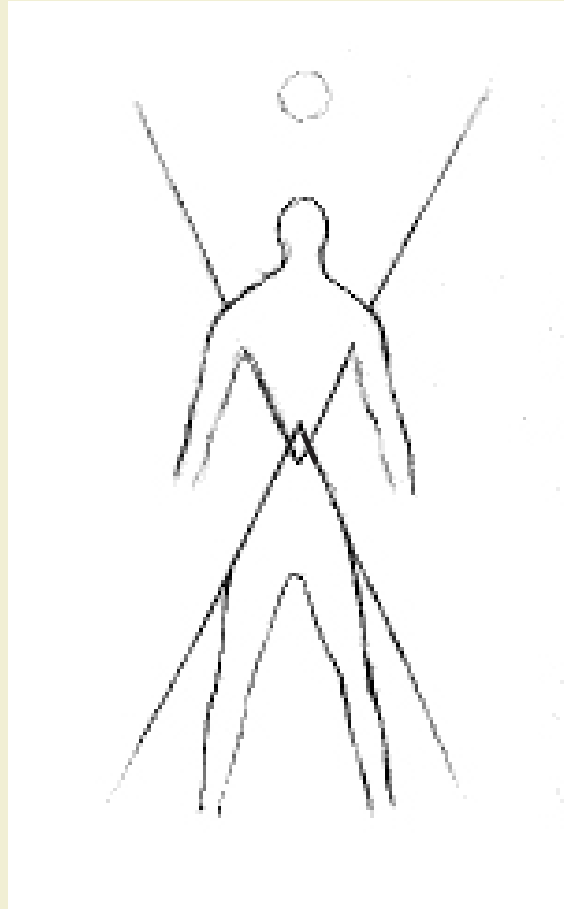
STANDING UP

Bring the sensations you discovered during the stretches to standing.

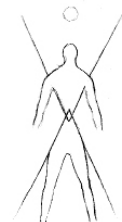
Do a couple of knee bends and sense how your legs connect inside your thorax, through your pelvis to the center of your feet. Begin to walk and notice how



SIX



virtual balance, union or rebellion,
six directions in space (zenith, nadir), 3+3, 3x2,
towards good or towards bad,
two opposites inverted, challenge, success or failure



This session improves core stability by completing the connection of the back of the legs to the spine.

GETTING READY

In preparation for doing these sequences, all the stretches related to legs, head, neck and those that release the superficial structures can be repeated.

SEQUENCE 1

1- Release the superficial structures of the pelvis and the back. Sit on ankles and allow spine to hang from the sacrum all the way to the occiput. To stretch some more, bring your forehead closer to the knees, elongate cervicals and, intend the arms away from the body diagonally.

Be careful not to jam the neck and the head, breathe into the front of the spine allowing it to move towards the ceiling. The sitting bones remain as close to heels as possible.

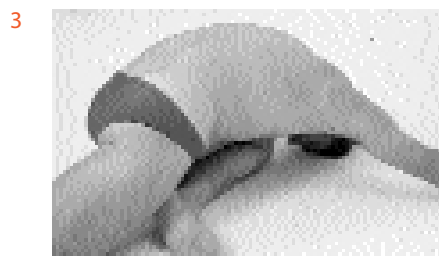
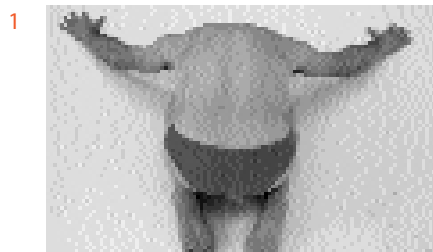
2- Extend one leg. The other leg folds under and the trunk rests on it.

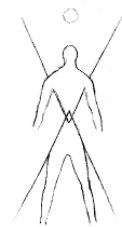
3- The folded leg stays as close as possible to the midline of the body. The stretch will go from this knee to opposite iliac crest. The core space in front of the spine remains opened and soft, and the hips are parallel.

Be careful not to shorten on one side. The other leg stays long with the knee facing the floor (the leg is not rotated). Do one leg and then the other.

ATTENTION

If it's too difficult this can be done using a table, with the long leg hanging off of it.





SEQUENCE 2

SITTING ROTATORS STRETCH

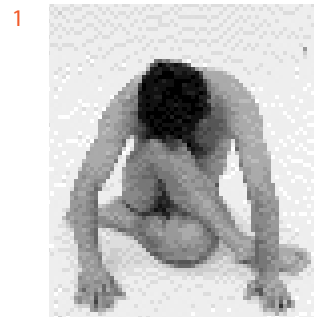
1-2 With both sitting bones on the floor, cross your legs bringing both knees close to the midline of the thorax as possible. The knees will be on top of one other.

Bring hands and head forward allowing both the front and the back of the spine to remain long.

Pelvic structures will stretch gradually, reaching deeper layers, from gluteals to deep rotators.

Arms are elongating away from the body diagonally.

If necessary use a cushion under your sitting bones to prevent strain.

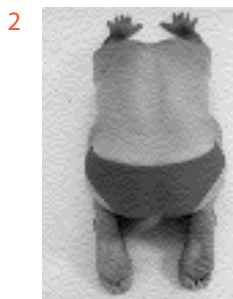


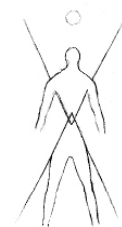
CORE STRETCH

1- Sitting on ankles, bending over thighs, extend arms and hands in front of your body as far as possible. Avoid lifting the pelvis.

2- Let spine be heavy and drop towards the floor. Breathe into your back pushing from inside out, filling the entire thoracic cavity, from pelvis to neck.

3- Relax.





ATTENTION

This standing up sequence was designed to flow directly from the back stretches. However if you wish, you may include lying on your back, pelvic rolls, head and neck adjustments.

STANDING UP

COMING TO STANDING

1- Bring arms back to the sides of the body remaining in touch with the front of the spine.

2- With one foot on the floor allow breath to bring your trunk upright.

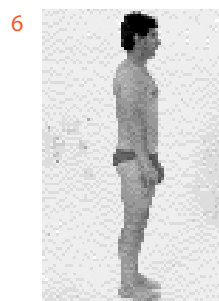
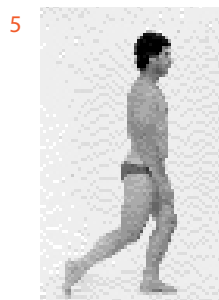
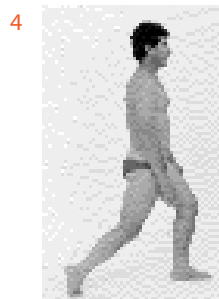
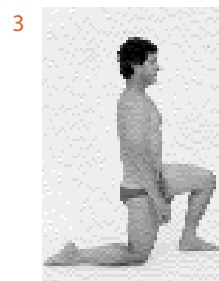
3- Sensing the breathing space of the trunk, gently lean forward looking for presence of the feet on the floor and transmission from core through legs into center of the foot.

4- Pushing into the ground, stand up. Allowing the breath to respond, feel the spine as part of the back.

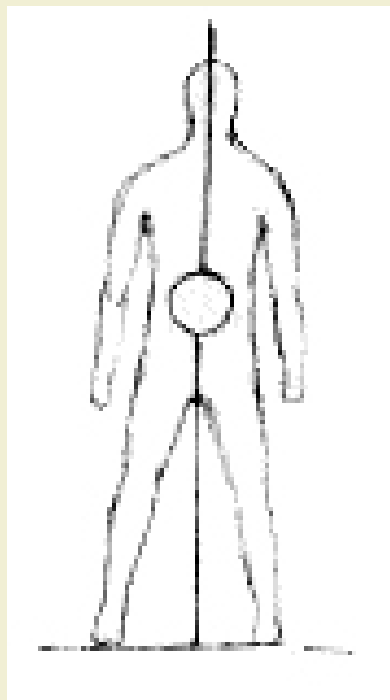
5- Bring other leg forward under the trunk. Allow sacrum and the tail bone to relax towards the floor.

6- Adjust standing position with a couple of knee bends, relating head to spine, trunk, pelvis and feet.

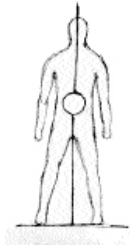
Walk with a sense of front to back spaciousness in the trunk, with the spine as part of the back, and legs dropping from inside of the body.



SEVEN



totality (of space and time), perfection, 4+3,
feminine+masculine, earth + heaven,
six directions with a center, universe in movement,
completion, closes cycle of creation



This session is about discriminating the shoulder girdle from the trunk, neck and head, exploring the inside and outside of the head, bringing the upper core into the head, and giving head to spine connection.

GETTING READY

Lie on the floor with feet connecting through pelvis into the front of the spine. Have the head relaxed and the neck long.

Allow the front of the spine to let go into the floor. Explore the available breath. Begin by contacting, exploring and opening the breathing space.

Elicit a gentle pelvic roll and simultaneously allow head and neck to respond. Encourage feeling of the whole spine.

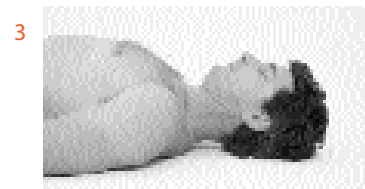
ATTENTION

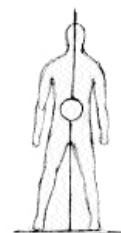
This can be a very powerful sequence. Because it deals with the inner space of the trunk, the visceral space, there are often discharges of the Autonomic nervous system. If this happens, keep the position, connect to feet, wait until the cycles are gone and breathing reaches a normal rhythm, and then slowly relax the stretch and the position.

SEQUENCE

1- Lying on back with knees up, allow shoulders and arms to be heavy and relaxed towards the floor and the hips, away from the neck and the upper chest.

2-3 Back of the neck is long, comfortable as well as shoulders, with arms elongating towards the hands, palms down.





4-5 Rotate the head on top of the spine to the side while allowing the arms and hands to elongate, with elbows unlocked.

Pay special attention to the atlanto-occipital junction, opening this space as the sleeve of the arms, neck and head relax. Allow autonomic responses to occur, especially breathing. With the spine long, and the front of the neck relaxed, explore inside of the mouth with the tongue.

6-7 Bring tongue out and keep the breath flowing. Exhale through the mouth as the head rotates to one side. Maintain length in the spine.

Look for the sensation of opening through back of the mouth, and the inside of the head, continue to inhale and exhale through the nose and mouth.

With the tongue as long as possible, explore also a few head rotations.

8- One can include the eyes by allowing them to move with the head rotation. When back to center, allow the eyeballs to relax into their sockets, comfortably placed on the back of the head.

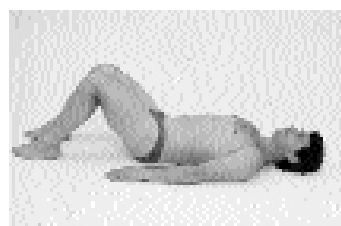
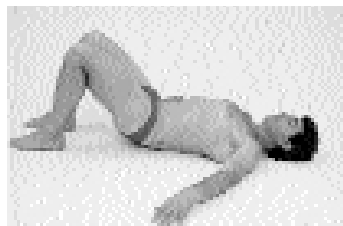
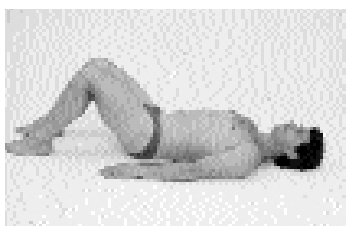


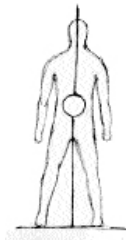
PELVIC ROLL

With your head back to center allow some time for sensations and inner movements and integration of your whole body.

With your knees up and feet on the ground, allow the abdominals, upper chest and throat to relax towards the front of the spine.

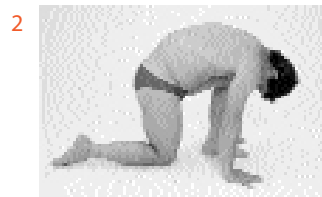
Explore transmission of movement from feet to head, pushing into the feet and perceiving the wave of movement of the rest of the body and head.





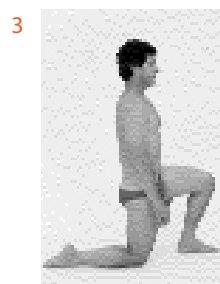
STANDING UP

1- Kneel on the ankles, with the spine stretching long, bringing forehead towards the knees at the same time as the coccyx goes towards the floor. Breath into the front of the spine.

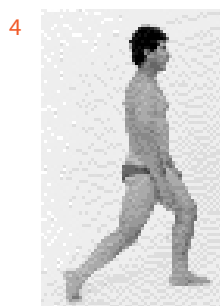


COMING TO STANDING

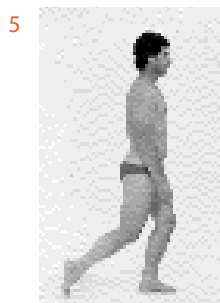
2- One foot on the floor, look for stable support and good movement transmission from core through leg into opened foot. Then do the same procedure with the other leg and foot.



3- Slowly lean forward until you feel your weight into your whole foot.



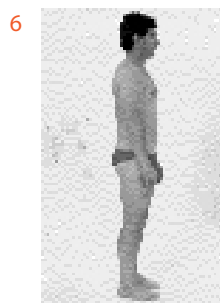
4-5 By pushing into the floor, stand up, allowing movement through the inside of the body towards the top of the head.



6- Stand up with a couple of knee bends, explore the Roling line, connecting the top of the head to the center of the feet.

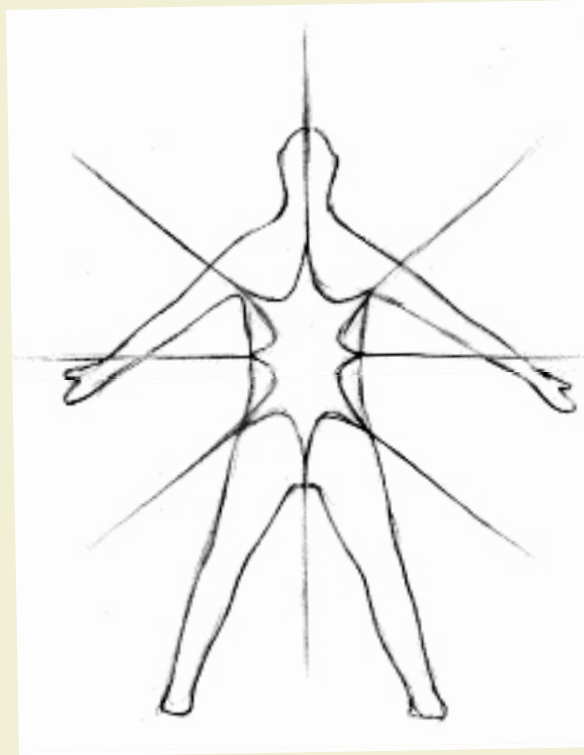
Intend projection of this movement beyond your feet into the ground and above the head into the sky.

Look for a 3-dimensional sensation, breathing and relaxing the shoulder and pelvic girdles, making necessary adjustments.

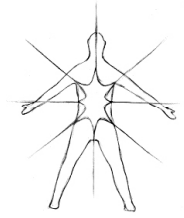


When walking allow the weight of your body down into your feet and explore gentle undulating movements up through the whole body.

INTEGRATION



cosmic balance, conclusion, death, birth,
return to unity, source and root of eternal nature



These sequences are focused on the organization of the joints of the articular system, of the pelvic and shoulder girdles and their connection to the spine. They also explore movement transmission through the limbs, from the LDH to the legs, feet, arms and hands.

GETTING READY

In order to prepare it is useful to revisit sequences explored in prior sessions.

Lie on the floor, with knees up and the feet on the floor. Adjust your arms and head.

PELVIC GIRDLE

SEQUENCE

Begin with feet on the wall, slightly above knee level, thighs resting at a 90° angle in relation to the pelvis. The core is relaxed towards the spine, and the spine relaxed towards the floor. Pelvis and head are comfortably connected.

Work with the breath to open the core space. Inhale half way, hold the breath and move the diaphragm up and down, without breathing out, feel the pelvic floor and upper chest responses. Exhale and relax. Give yourself some time to feel the breath go back to normal, then repeat the sequence a couple times. Connect from the core space through a relaxed pelvis to the eye of the foot against the wall.

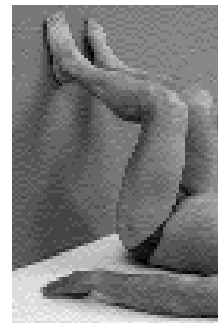
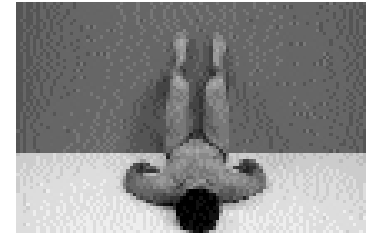
Adjust feet in inversion or eversion as you allow thighs, legs and knees to rotate in and out. The feet are in contact with the wall, the weight of the thighs relax into the hip sockets.

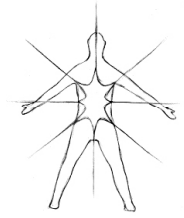
Go for the subtle positions that challenge the shorter sides of the leg segments and while stretching, look for movement connections from the EOF to LDH.

Push into the wall, lifting coccyx off of the floor. Then lift one vertebra at a time until reaching LDH.

Allow breathing to happen with whole body response (be aware of possible holdings in thorax, throat, neck and head).

Exhale through the mouth and allow one vertebra at a time to drop back to the floor.





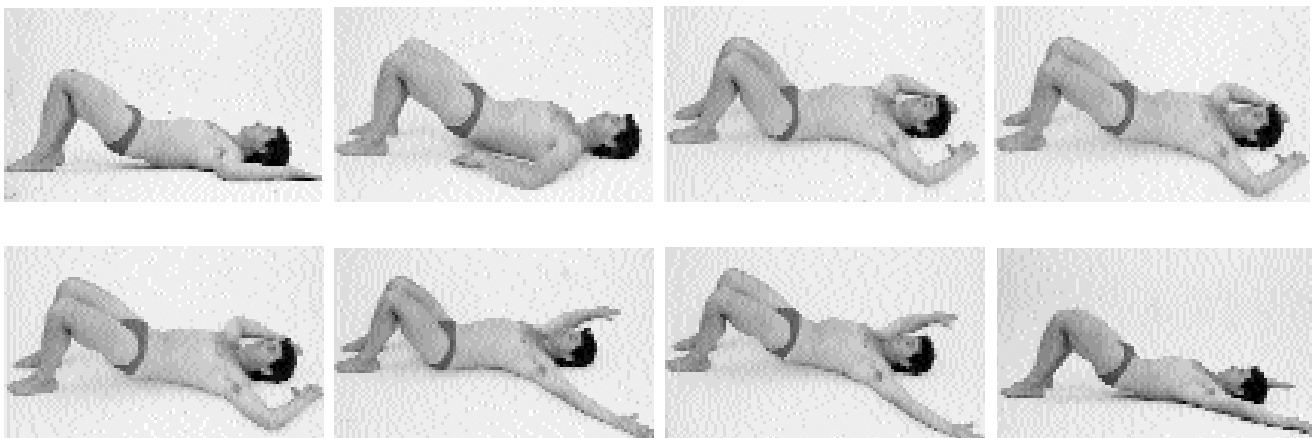
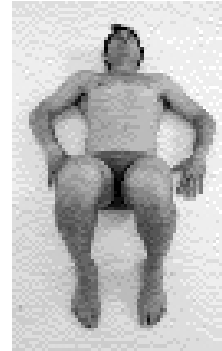
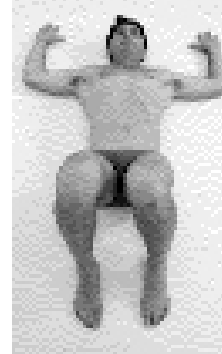
SHOULDER GIRDLE

Lie on your back, feet on the floor, connect movement from the LDH through the legs into the feet. Keep segments in the best congruent arrangement available.

Bring your arms to a 90° angle above the head with palms up (pic1) and/or beside the body at a 45° angle with palms down (pic 2). Hands are aligned with forearms. (One of these positions will be more challenging for you).

Begin by pressing the arm segments towards the floor. Find a pressure that is not excessive in the joints, rather just sense your limits. The stretch will be from the LDH to the elbow and from the elbow into the center of the hand.

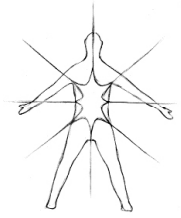
Stabilize that connection by transferring weight into your feet allowing the lumbar and dorsal spine to rest on the floor.



When this stretch is completed, lengthen through your arms slowly, allowing movement through the joints of the whole arm, reaching all the way to the hands.

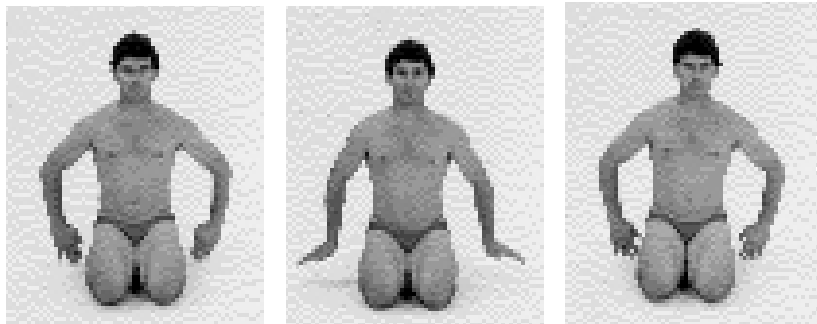
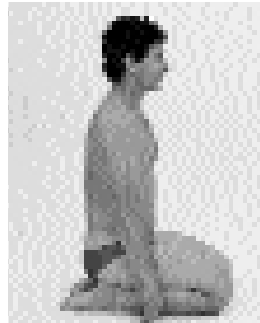
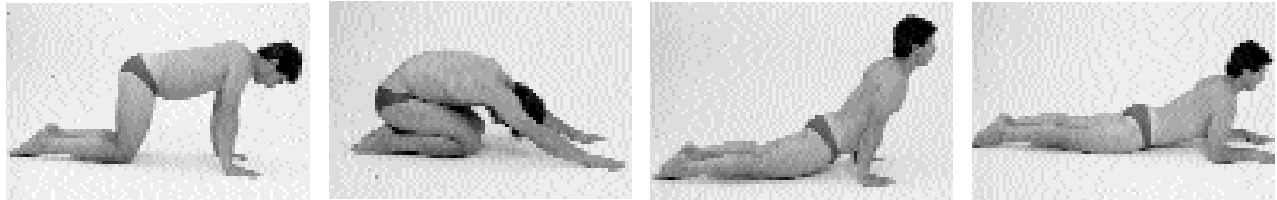
Combine stretches for upper and lower body.

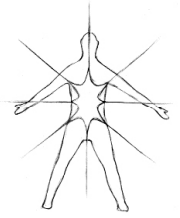
One area can be exploring connection while the other explores elongation.



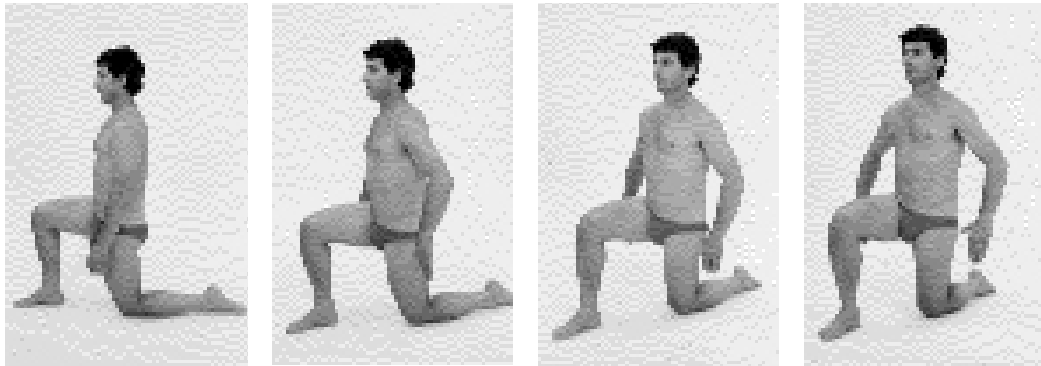
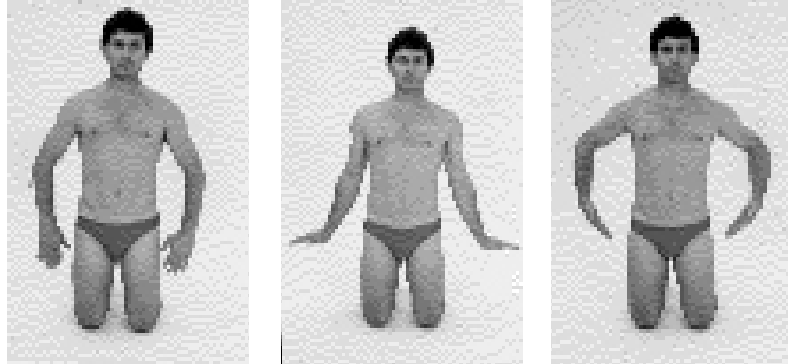
POSITIONAL TRANSITIONS TO SITTING

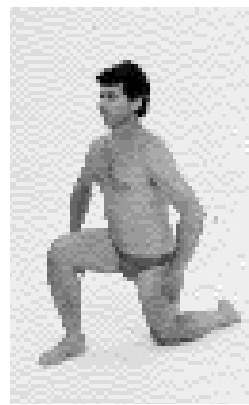
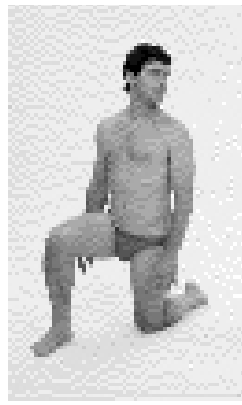
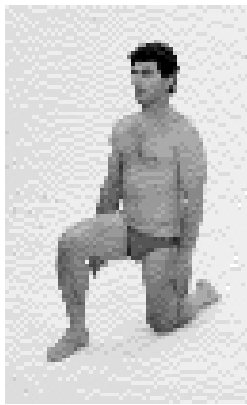
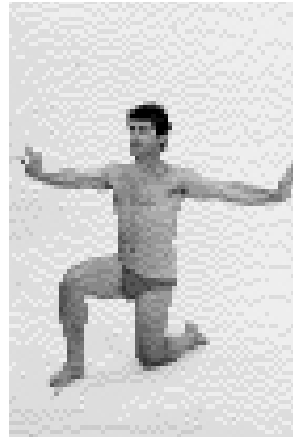
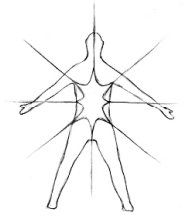
Use other sequences to explore the same connections and elongation in different stances. In these, we deal with the organization of structure using congruent segmental alignments and allowing expression to carry through the limbs.



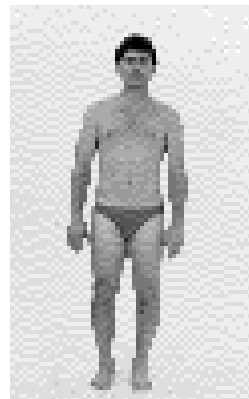
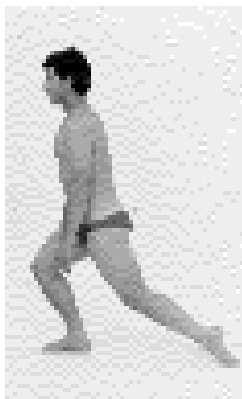
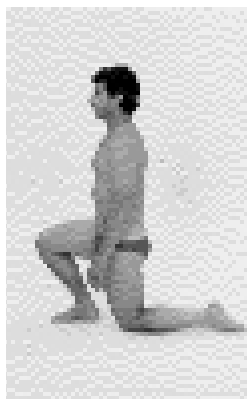


POSITIONAL TRANSITIONS TO STANDING

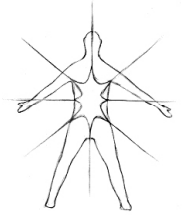




Integrate the head into the sequence.



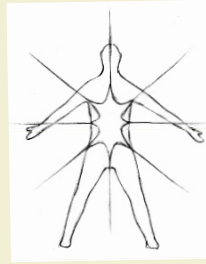
Integrated way of coming to standing.



Once standing, feel yourself in the vertical, allow time to perceive your sensations and the intentions of inner movements. Contact the environment. Perceive inner and outer reality and the way they meet in yourself. With this presence, move. Enjoy your being.

REFERENCES

- 1- Gaiarsa JA.Reich 1980.Sao Paulo,Brazil:Agora;1982.
- 2- Prado P.Contribuições sobre o pensamento e obra de Ida P. Rolf para o trabalho com postura em psicologia. Master dissertation presented at Instituto de Psicologia da Universidade de SaoPaulo,Brazil;1982.
- 3- Lederman E. Fundamentals of Manual Therapy - Physiology, Neurology an Psychology. New York:Churchill Livingstone;1997.
- 4- Maitland J. Lecture notes and private conversations.Sao Paulo,Brazil;2000.
- 5- Harrington J, Jaye V.Lecture notes and private conversations.Sao Paulo,Brazil and Boulder,CO; from 1994 to 2000.
- 6- Maitland J, Sultan J."Definition and Principles of Rolfing".Rolf Lines.1992;20(2)16-18.Rolf Institute.205, Canyon Blvd,Boulder,CO.80302.
- 7- Cottingham JT, Maitland J."Integrating manual and movement therapy with philosophical counseling for treatment of a patient with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis: a case study that explores the principles of holistic intervention".Alternative Therapies.March 2000;vol6(2)119-127.
- 8- Sultan J."Towards a structural logic".Notes on Structural Integration.1986;(1)1216. HansFlury,Badenerstr, Flury,Badenerstr,21CH-8004,Zurich,Switzerland.
- 9- Schleip R."Primary reflexes and structural typology".Rolf Lines.1993;21(4)37-47.Rolf Institute.205 Canyon Blvd,Boulder,CO.80302.
- 10- Flury H.Notes on Structural Integration.1986 to present.Hans Flury,Badenerstr,Flury,Badenerstr,21 CH-8004,Zurich,Switzerland.
- 11- Levine PA.Waking the Tiger-Healing Trauma.Berckley,CA:North Atlantic Books;1997.
- 12- Souchard P.Auto-postures.St Mont,France:Universite de Therapie Manuelle;1988.
- 13- Rolf IP.Rolfing:The Integration of Human Structures.Santa Monica,CA:Dennis Landman Publications;1977.
- 14- Roth HD.Original Tao:inward training (nei-yeh) and the foundations of Taoist mysticism.New York:Columbia, University Press;1999.



When your body is not aligned,
The inner power will not come.
When you are not tranquil within,
Your mind will not be well ordered.
Align you body, assist the inner power,
Then it will gradually come on its
own.¹⁴

Nei-yeh
Taoist ancient poet-
ry