



Modern Manual



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Dance Masters of America, Inc.

The Art of Teaching Modern Dance Manual

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Modern Dance Manual

Introduction:

At the turn of 19th Century, a movement technique that reflected an individual's emotional needs began to emerge in rebellion to Classical Ballet. In contrast to the formalized technique of the ballet dancer that stressed lift and defiance of gravity, the modern dancer's energy originated in the solar plexus and stressed grounded movement. Where ballet adhered to conventional body positions modern dance was more receptive to emotional attitude that would create the shape of the body in space.

In 1915 Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn founded the first of the large modern dance companies. Through the Denishawn Company such greats as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman emerged to further develop the art in their own style. Today there are hundreds of modern companies performing established works and creating innovative choreography throughout the world.

In contrast to ballet movement being conceived with presentation to a large opera house type audience in mind, modern choreography has the tendency to invite intimacy. It is commonly performed in concert settings. Another contradiction between the two dance forms would be the subject matter. Ballets created before the 20th century were usually developed around a romantic theme. Modern dances tended to represent an expression of more realistic and humanistic emotion. Their purpose was not just for entertainment but also to instruct, uplift or disturb the senses.

Today Modern Dance and Ballet share many aspects as they mesh together more frequently in varying choreographic styles. At this time in the dance world there are as many styles of modern as there are opinions of life.

MODERN DANCE HISTORIC PROFILES

FORERUNNERS AND PIONEERS:

FRANCOISE DELSARTE:(France 1811-1871)

Musician and theorist; He developed basic principles of movement and expression through use of the body, dividing the body into three basic areas; the head, torso and the limbs. These three areas were divided again into three sections each for the purpose of defining expressive gesture.

NOTE: The following are the defining expressions for the appointed body sections.

Intellectual/Spiritual- (head, neck, hands, feet)

Emotional- (shoulders, chest, torso, lower arms)

Physical (strength or sexuality)- (hips, pelvis and thighs)

INFLUENCED: Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Rudolf von Laban

EMILE JACQUE-DALCROZE (Swiss, 1865-1950)

Musician & theorist; developed a system of expressing musical rhythm through bodily movements.

This system was called **Eurhythmics**, which greatly influenced early modern dance.

LOIE FULLER (1862-1927)

Born in Chicago, Illinois, she performed in burlesque and Vaudeville but had no formal dance training. Loie believed dance to be a **NATURAL REFLEX OF THE BODY TO OUTSIDE IDEAS**. Her movements often imitated things in nature such as butterflies, flowers or flames. She is most noted for her experimentation with costuming and lighting techniques.

ISADORA DUNCAN (1878-1927)

Born in San Francisco, CA, Duncan has been called the Mother of Modern Dance. She can be credited for evolving dance from an entertainment status to an art form. She was one of the first dancers to incorporate the philosophies of Emile Jacques Dalcroze and Francois Delsarte into her dance movement. Following Delsarte's study of human gestures, Duncan developed her own stylized form that became the basis of experimental or Modern dance, defined as grounded and torso based. She identified the Solar Plexus as the primary source of movement.

FOUNDERS OF MODERN DANCE

RUTH ST. DENIS (1879-1968)

Born in Somerville, New Jersey and was first introduced to the Delsarte system through her mother who was a doctor. What attracted St. Denis was the connection between body and mind that Delsart's study gestures emphasized. Like Fuller, St. Denis was in search for a deeper meaning in dance, something more than what she was experiencing as a dancer on the vaudeville stage. Her personalized dance form took on a spiritual essence. Though she, like Duncan, had studied ballet, she found the dance form to lack any real substance. She turned to traditional movement in cultures such as, Indian, Egyptian and Native American. She used them as guides to develop her own dance vocabulary. Her choreography was ritualistic and relied heavily on elaborate costumes and sinuous improvised movements that were to evoke a mystic feeling. With her husband, **Ted Shawn**, she established the **Denishawn Company** and school in 1915. She went on to open schools throughout the United States. They served as training grounds for a new generation of modern dancers including, **Edna Guy**, **Martha Graham**, **Charles Weidman** and **Doris Humphrey**.

TED SHAWN (1891-1972)

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, he attended the theology school at the University of Denver until he was paralyzed from a severe case of diphtheria during his junior year. He turned to dance to restore control and strength over his weakened muscles. Shawn first met Ruth St Denis, his future wife, in 1911. They became partners in a ballroom team exhibition. With St. Denis he developed a base curriculum for the Denishawn School. Where St. Denis' emphasis was on spirituality, Shawn's focus was on experimental theater and staging. Ted Shawn can be credited as establishing the first male dance company in the United States. In 1940 he founded **Jacob's Pillow** in Massachusetts that first served as a training ground for male concert dancers. The farm is now the established place for dance artists to come together and share their creative ideas. Jacob's Pillow holds an annual nine-week dance festival each summer.

MARY WIGMAN (1886-1973)

Along with Rudolph Laban, Mary Wigman led the Modern Dance canon in Europe. In addition to the students they attracted in Europe, many American dancers such as Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey traveled abroad to study with her. Mary Wigman developed **German Expressionist** dance or modern dance in her country. She used the techniques of **Jacques Dalcroze (Eurhythmics)** and **Rudolph**

von Laban (system of swings and dance notation). When Wigman opened her school in 1920 she became the most influential German exponent of expressive movement. In 1932 she and Kurt Joss collaborated their artistic talents and choreographed *The Green Table*, which became the greatest anti-war ballet of the century.

HISTORY OF MODERN DANCE TIMELINE

FIRST GENERATION (1930-1950):

MARTHA GRAHAM (1894-1991)

Graham was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but soon moved with her family to Santa Barbara, California, where she was raised. Her father was a psychiatrist who taught her early on that the “body never lies”. She would adopt his beliefs as part of her own dance philosophy. At the age of 21 Graham began to seriously study dance at the Denishawn School. After spending only three years studying the exotic styles of St. Denis, Graham decided to leave Denishawn and establish her own school and company. She wanted to explore a deeper meaning to dance, one that spoke to the American experience. She soon became the icon of Modern Dance in the 20th century. Her movement style was developed from the natural act of breathing, such as a sigh, a sob, gasp, or a laugh. Her concept of **contract and release** was thus defined. She based all her movements on this theory of tension and relaxation, one of Delsarte's laws of opposition. Like all modern dancers, Graham considered the torso to be the source of all true movement. Her dancers learned how to contract and release their trunks, as they spiraled and coiled to the floor or returned upward.

DORIS HUMPHREY (1895-1958)

Doris Humphrey was born and raised in Chicago Illinois. She was a student at the Denishawn School with Martha Graham in 1918. She became a member of the Denishawn touring company. While at the Denishawn, Humphrey strongly embraced Ruth St. Denis' dance philosophy. However, it was when she left the school in 1929 and teamed up with Charles Wiedman that she was able to develop her own style. Even though Humphrey's movements still considered the torso as the origin of all movement, her technique would have a different feel and look from Horton, Graham and Dunham, her contemporaries. Where the first two created angular and stark lines with their movements and Dunham focused on the manipulation of the **pelvic girdle** and percussive isolation, the Humphrey style was to be free flowing, creating **curves and circular**

motion that existed between the “arc between two deaths” better known as Fall and Recovery. Her technique was derived from the natural dynamic relationship between gravity and the human being, as she or he gave into and then rebounded from gravity. Relinquishing to gravity became the main force of Humphrey’s technique.

CHARLES WIEDMAN (1895-1958)

Charles Wiedman was born in Nebraska. He was a student with Humphrey and Graham at the Denishawn School in Los Angeles. When Humphrey and Wiedman left the school they developed the movement term, **Fall and Recovery**. The Humphrey-Wiedman Company (1928-45) was their collaboration. During their time together, Wiedman meshed his wit and humor with Humphrey’s idealistic humanism in a repertory that challenged the limits of the physical body.

HANYA HOLM (1893-1993)

Hanya Holm was a student of **Mary Wigman** in Germany. Unlike her American contemporaries, Holm voiced social commentary through humorous dances. She further extended Rudolph von Laban’s belief that there was such a thing as pure motion with or without the confines of a “technique” or other formalized structure that predetermined the steps and gestures. Holm was one of the first Europeans to bring Modern dance to the Broadway stage.

HELEN TAMIRIS YOUNG (1905 1966)

Tamiris discovered dancing on the lower East Side of New York. At the end of World War I she joined the ballet of the Metropolitan Opera House. Dissatisfied with the type of dancing she performed on Broadway and on the movie-Vaudeville circuit she turned to solo dancing. Through the language of her body she visualized the music of Debussy, Gershwin, and finally the **Negro Spiritual** for which she became most known. Tamiris was a champion of the underprivileged. Her choreography embodied the power of an expressive art as she concerned herself with the question of human dignity. Tamiris along with **Ted Shawn** became famous through their performance of Negro Spirituals.

KATHERINE DUNHAM (1906)

Dunham was born in Joliet, Illinois. She has remained the icon of 20th Century black dancers. Katherine Dunham’s background as an anthropologist and talented dancer placed her in the forefront with other Modern dance pioneers. Along with her extensive background training in Ballet she created the **Dunham Technique**, a fusion of Haitian Boudon sacred dancing, and Classical Ballet positions. The Dunham torso and

specifically, the pelvic area rely on the African aesthetic. Drum percussion was the underlying force of Dunham's movement cue that articulated the body, causing each section of the body to move independently in isolations. It is through her development of the isolation that Dunham technique emphasizes the African phenomenon of **polyrhythmic motion**. In 1942, Dunham founded her company and international touring troupe. Outside of her own school in East St Louis, Dunham technique is taught at dance schools throughout the country, including the Alvin Ailey School of Dance in New York.

LESTOR HORTON (1906-1953)

Horton was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was attracted to Native American culture during his childhood. The rituals, clothing, and traditional practices of the American Indian became the foundation for his staged performances and stylized technique. As he developed the **Horton Technique**, he incorporated pelvic movements from African origins. His use of angular and asymmetric lines and the parallel stance became the signature form of his style. In 1946 Horton established his own school and company and founded **the first American permanent repertory dance theater on the West Coast in Los Angeles**. The school became a training ground where he taught costume and stage designing, reading music as well as ballet and modern dance technique.

SECOND GENERATION (1950-1980):

JOSE LIMON (1908-1972)

Limon studied art at UCLA in Los Angeles for a year then moved to New York to further pursue his art studies. Instead, in 1928, he began studying dance at the Humphrey-Wiedman studio and became a serious student of Doris Humphrey. He was a dancer in the Humphrey-Wiedman Company and when Wiedman and Humphrey separated, he became Humphrey's lead male dancer. What Limon defined as his technique was a clear modification of Humphrey's style. **Fall and Recovery became Fall and Rebound**, which described how the body recovered; the elasticity that existed between the two oppositions is emphasized in Limon technique. Even though the end result of the recovery and the rebound are the same, **in Fall and Rebound the body naturally pulls back up or contracts like a spring that's energy is then thrust in a new direction**.

ALVIN AILEY (1931-1989)

Ailey was one of the most influential dancers and choreographers of all time. His eclectic approach to Modern Dance was deeply rooted in his

birthplace, Rogers, Texas, and the urban life of Los Angeles, where he grew up. The first dance concert he attended was a performance by **Katherine Dunham's** company in Los Angeles. Under the guidance and teaching of **Lester Horton**, Ailey developed into a serious concert stage performer. He studied Horton technique with Lester and Bella Lewitsky. Beyond movement, Horton taught his racially integrated company about the importance of lighting, set design, music and costuming. As a lead dancer with the company, Ailey was immersed in a total theater life experience, learning how to manage a company as well as becoming a producer. When Horton died in 1953, Ailey was selected to run the company. In 1957 Ailey launched his own company to be based in New York City. Through such major works as *Blues Suite*, *Revelations* and *Cry*, Ailey shared with the entire world the African-American experience.

MERCE CUNNINGHAM (1919-)

Cunningham is considered the father of Avant-garde choreographers. He freed up dance by defying all definitions of what it should be. He was raised in Centralia, Washington, where he began his dance training as a young boy. After leaving Cornish College in 1937 he met **Martha Graham** during a summer program at Mills College in San Francisco. Between 1939 and 1945 Cunningham performed as a soloist for Graham and became one of the most important dancers of the Graham Company. Cunningham wanted to focus more on dance movement, void and independent of any outside influences, be it music, scenery, props or background themes. Cunningham stripped dance of all meaning. His **Dance by Chance** theory would have a great influence on the next generation of Modern dancers. Today Cunningham's company continues to be a leading Modern Dance company. His piece, *Biped*, uses the latest in computer technology which will transcend how dance is viewed in the 21st Century. His own student, **Twyla Tharp**, embellished his philosophy of dance through her own creative interpretation of eclectic dance.

ALWIN NIKOLAIS

Nikolaïs could also be considered part of today's contemporary group, the 3rd Generation or Post-Modern choreographers. His work is very visual using functional costumes and backdrops that echo the work of **Loie Fuller**. He has created dance works for television and Broadway productions.

THE THIRD GENERATION OR POST-MODERN ERA:

While the first two generations of dance pioneers were concerned with establishing Modern as a true art form by rebelling against the constraints and limitations of their times, Modern dancers to follow explored movement using both the codified structure of ballet and the liberating form of Modern. The **Fusion** of the two forms allowed choreography that exhibited more versatility. The new modern dancers found that dance labels and categories of any kind were, in themselves, a contradiction of pure movement. Over the past 25 years the canon of contemporary dancers has exploded. There are now more than 300 established professional Modern dance choreographers and companies in the world. This new generation has included non-dance movements, the spoken word, and multimedia devices to breakdown barriers between the dancers and their audiences. Experimentation with movement, props, and space became the main focus of the **Post-Modern Era**. American contemporary choreographers continue to create pioneer works. Some of these choreographers are:

MARK MORRIS

Strong sense of musicality creates comical and parody situations to make social statements. His keen sense of musical visualization continues to be consistent in over 100 choreographic works.

TWYLA THARP

Began her career during the 1960 avant-garde era. She uses the Fusion of Ballet, Tap, Modern and street dance to create dances that are entertaining, while appearing to be without a theme. Her movements are intense animations, which cause the stop and go action to be unpredictable. Tharp has choreographed for Broadway, films and several leading dance companies including the Martha Graham Company and Joffrey Ballet, The American Ballet Theater, The New York City Ballet and Paris Opera Ballet. Her most recent work, *Movin' Out*, is currently running on Broadway and is a collaboration with singer/musician Billy Joel.

PAUL TAYLOR

Mixes wit with reality as he explores the human experience through very athletic curved movements. His pieces are usually light-hearted and humorous.

BILL T. JONES AND ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY

These dancers represent all body types, moving very fluidly through space, appearing to float. Bill T. Jones uses mixed media and the spoken word text to create an intense atmosphere. His themes are usually social statements as in *Still Here*, which deals with the issue of Aids and the resulting loss. Bill T. Jones was a recipient of the prestigious McAuther Grant in 1994.

BEBE MILLER

Known for her **Agitprop Choreography**. Her work deals with social, political and emotional stresses. Her movements are quick and mysterious.

GARTH FAGAN

Is hailed as the developer of a new dance language- *Fagan Technique*. His vocabulary stems from the use of polyrhythmic movements tied to jazz and Afro-Caribbean music. His movements appear to spring from the dancers' bones, originating and emerging without any preparation. His dancers execute force and strength as they move through space and manipulate complex rhythms in a poetic and free flowing fashion. His most noted choreography is the Broadway production of *The Lion King*.

TRISHA BROWN

A member of the **Judson Church Dance Theater that is known for it's minimalist approach to dance**. They represented the essence of pure movement devoid of costumes, sets, themes even music. Some other well-known members of the Judson Company were **Lucinda Childs, Meredith Monk, Robert Dunn, Steve Paxton, and Yvonne Rainier**. Brown's signature was that she staged her dancers as pedestrians. The dancers sometimes walked on walls, up the sides of buildings suspended by harnesses. Her choreography uses the non-narrative genre to create off balance shapes.

PILOBOLUS

Was founded by a group of three male college students in 1971. Now a company of both genders, Pilobolus is known for its formation of geometric shapes and intertwining bodies. The group performs athletic movements that are playful and always challenging to the human body's potential.

TECHNIQUE ANALYSIS

There are many elements of dance that are part of the dancer's vocabulary. Dance movement is a language - the various elements, positions, movements, movement combinations, steps, and qualities will serve as a vocabulary to be used for communication. A larger vocabulary is essential to create more meaningful communication.

The principles of technique are for learning awareness and training an expressive instrument (the body) for mastery of movement. Even as modern dance evolved as an art form to break the rules of what dance is supposed to be,

the tradition and techniques of modern dance have borrowed from other dance forms (including ballet) and continue to evolve and diversify. Any rules or stipulations set forth in this section are meant to be informative to the formation of dance technique and not pose as a limit to creativity when exploring expressive movement or improvising. Any line, any shape or any form that the human body can create in space is valid in modern dance if it expresses what the dancer or choreographer wants to communicate.

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS I

Movement in a Stationary Position

TOOLS THAT A DANCER NEEDS

CENTERING / A SENSE OF HOME

- **Centering** - your ability to move, to hold and to organize yourself around your own physical body center. A feeling of consistency in the position and shape between the arms and legs, and both arms and legs should have a relationship to the center of the torso.
- **The Actual Body Center** - 1 or 2 inches below the navel, in the middle of the pelvis.
- **The Center of Physical Control** - The movements of all your limbs originate in the trunk. The impulse to move comes from there. The torso - spine, hips and shoulder that encloses your vital internal organs such as your heart, lungs, etc - is the center of movement feelings.

BASIC ALIGNMENT / POSTURE

- Sense a perpendicular line (vertical pull) going through the center of the torso. This line is the central axis of the body. Feel the back of the neck as an extension of the tailbone. Feel an oppositional pull by lengthening the spine from the waist up through the top of the head and from the middle back down through the tailbone.
- Shoulders and shoulder blades are carried wide and pressed down. Ribs are flat and held in with the upper abdominal muscles.
- Relax everything else not involved with the lengthening: arms, buttocks, and the face. Allow gravity to anchor you (grounding, rooted to the earth) by gently feeling a downward pressure equally on both shoulders and hips to balance the horizontal plane.

AVOID SPINAL DISTORTIONS OF LINE

- Slumping forward so shoulders are rounded or pelvis tucking under.
- Pelvis and shoulders released backward causing a swayback; abdominal muscles slack; hips tilting sideways or twisting.

Movement in a Stationary Position

LEG LENGTHENING / ROTATION

- Lengthen - Stretch legs as long as you can so that the thighs are pulled up and the pelvis is sitting high on the thigh bones.
- The legs can be turned out from the hip in varying degrees or held parallel keeping the proper alignment described above.

WEIGHT PLACEMENT ON FEET

- Lift up arches.
- Let weight fall on 3 points of the foot like a tripod between the big toe pad, the little toe pad and the heel.
- On rise or releve - the weight needs to be between the big toe and the 2nd toe (never towards the little toe).

KNEE PLACEMENT / SAFETY (Good Alignment)

- Center of knee needs to be in line with the middle toe for all plie positions in demi and grand plie, as well as standing with straight knees.
- Heels will release from floor in all grand plie positions other than 2nd position.

BALANCE

- Balance on two legs
- Balance on 1 leg

COUNTERBALANCE - (action / reaction)

- to be able to balance on one leg - you need to lengthen on a vertical line upward through the body. Do not sit in the supporting leg. Shift the weight toward the supporting hip upward on a slight diagonal - while keeping the pelvic bones straight across

THE INNER BALANCE

- a constant awareness of inner relationship between all the points of your body - whether moving or standing still

GRAVITY

- Be aware of the magnetic pull of gravity and its effect on your body (downward pull).
- Learn to combat its force; how you use your muscles and posture (resistance upward).

Movement in a Stationary Position

BREATHING

- **Physical function** - you must learn to breathe more deeply by expanding your ribs at the back of the body rather than at the front because pelvic stability must be maintained.
- **Expressive Tool** - Slow breathing suggests control while quick shallow breathing implies excitement or stress.
- **“To have a sense of breath”** - is a dancer who moves with freedom and harmony. Breathing must be coordinated with movement; most effectively, one breathes to initiate movement, inhaling for the effect of lightness, exhaling on descent. Breathing in harmony with your steps will give your steps a sense of calmness and flow.
- **A phrase of movement with “breath”** has a control and is considered an extension of time, with a clear beginning and end, no matter how fast or slow it is; a phrase “without breath” looks stiff or mechanical with no breathing space.

Movement in a Stationary Position

BODY LINES

- Three basic lines can be formed in dance with the dancer's entire body or parts of the body.
 1. **Vertical or Horizontal Lines** - the dancer stands upright, bends at a right angle or lies on the floor. Such lines can be achieved in many ways.
 2. **Oblique (Slanted)** - the dancer stands at an obtuse or an acute angle in relation to either a horizontal or a vertical. Oblique lines can be formed in many ways.
 3. **Curved** - Various positions. These lines can be combined with others, just as oblique lines may be combined with horizontals or verticals or both.

TERMINOLOGY

- Many modern dancers feel that putting names or terms to dance moves and positions would inhibit free expression and would prevent new forms of technique from developing. Terms can also vary from teacher to teacher.
- For purposes of analysis, definitions of basic positions are desirable.

STANDARD DANCE POSITIONS: Body, Legs, Feet, Arms

- **Leg Rotations: Turned out, Parallel, Turned-In**

All rotations are functional and should occur at the hip. The lower leg and foot remain aligned with the knee and femur.

1. **Turnout** occurs in the hip sockets. The toes point to the outside of the body.
2. **Parallel** – the toes point forward, the legs are neither turned out or in. The knees are in line with the arches of the feet. In parallel, the ankles can touch or be slightly separated with varying widths. Most generally they are placed directly under the hip joint.
3. **Turned-In** or diagonal in

FIRST - FIFTH (As in Ballet) - Many teachers of modern dance now use the five standardized ballet positions. The stipulations for these standard positions are for learning awareness and relationships, not for exploring new forms of expressive movement or for improvisation.

Movement in a Stationary Position

ARM POSITIONS in relation to the Feet Positions

- Feel that the arms are attached from the center of the back. When using the arms and hands, feel as though the energy is progressing from the center of the body out through the middle finger. Feel that the wrists and hands are flexible extensions of the arms. When the arms are curved, be aware of the relationship of the little finger and the palm of the hand in completing the curve. The fingers should not cross the center line when the arms are in front of the body, moving between positions or overhead. When raising the arms overhead, hold the shoulders down.
- 1. **First Position** - Stand tall with the legs turned out from the hip joints and the heels touching each other. Arms can hang at the side, curved long in front of the torso (fingers do not touch), or curved arms raised in front of the body anywhere between the navel and just below the shoulder level.

2. **Second Position** - Stand with the legs turned out, with the heels placed under the hip joint. The arms can be at shoulder level or slope down from the shoulder in a long curve, palms facing forward or down and elbows carried to the back.
3. **Third Position** - The legs are turned out from the hips with one foot in front of the other. The crossing is at the anklebone with equal turn out maintained in both legs. One arm is raised to the side as in 2nd position, the other arm is curved to the front either low or middle.
4. **Fourth Position** - Stand with the legs turned out, with one foot about one foot in front of the other. The feet can be in a more crossed position: front heel ahead of the big toe joint of the back foot (closed) or in a more open position with the heels level with one another (open). The arms are in front of the body at varying levels from low to center of the chest to high.
5. **Fifth Position** - As in Third Position for the feet, but the crossover is greater. The front heel is placed at the big toe joint of the back foot or for advanced students the front heel can be in line with the end of the toes of the back foot. The arms can be raised in a long curve overhead or they can be carried in front in a long downward curve.
6. **Additional Ballet related Positions**
 - Diagonally Closed Position (crossed or croise) - Feet 3rd, 5th or pointed to front.
 - Diagonally Open Position (open or ouverte) - Feet in 2nd, 3rd or 5th.

Movement in a Stationary Position

STANDARD DANCE POSITIONS: Body, Legs, Feet, Arms (cont'd)

- **Crossed Back** - Straight or bent leg crossed at back.
- **Open Back** - Feet in 4th or pointed to back in open position.
- **Passe** - Stand on one leg with other leg lifted parallel or turned out to side, with lifted toe touching just under or to side of the knee.
- **Arabesque** - Stand on one leg with the other leg lifted behind you. Both knees are straight. Many variation of arms can go with this position, but the most typical is one arm forward, the other to the side or sloping downward to compliment the level of the back leg. The torso is held upright.

- **Attitude / Back or Front** - Stand on one leg with the supporting knee straight. The other leg is lifted either front or behind with the knee bent and well turned out so that the foot crosses the torso. Generally the arms on the side of the lifted leg, is raised overhead as in 3rd or 4th Position arms. The other arm may also be raised or both as in 5th arms high.

NON - LOCOMOTOR OR AXIAL MOVEMENT

- Basic axial movement can be done with or without locomotion. There are three principal categories: **Flexion (Bending)**, **Extension (Stretching)** and **Rotation (Turning on one's own axis)**. These movements are done in relation to joint areas in the torso and in the extremities. Different joints are capable of different actions. All dancers need to develop an awareness of how each joint moves in isolation and in relation to other parts. Explore the range and type of each joint's movement. Despite limitations and restrictions of basic movement in a stationary position, there are many variations.

1. Bend – FLEXION

2. Stretch - EXTENSION

3. Turn on one's own Axis - ROTATION

- Shift
- Circumduction – curved movement

Movement in a Stationary Position

DYNAMICS

• The Six (6) BASIC DANCE MOVEMENT QUALITIES

The use of energy in dance has been classified as qualities of movement. These qualities result from the mechanical application and release of energy to the various moving parts of the body. Movement takes place only as energy is applied and withdrawn, only when there is an inter-play between tensions and releases of tension. These movement qualities have been categorized as primary and secondary qualities. Within these categories there are infinite variations of dimension, proportion, dynamics, shapes, and combinations. Studying the use of energy through qualities of movement can help a dancer become aware of “the flow of movement” from one body part to another (sequential action) and also in the way that movements are connected (transitions), from one type of action to another. Dynamics and movement qualities do contain overtones of meaning, feeling, and sensation that are considered in shaping ideas for dance composition. By learning movement sequences

dynamically, you can avoid that the movement looks like a series of disconnected steps and postures without the inherent motivating and unifying spirit.

- **Three (3) Primary Qualities**

1. **Swinging** - Most frequently used, this movement has a beginning accent or impetus, a giving way to gravity and a free follow through of energy flow along the path of an arc and a slight pause before repetition. Pendulum - like. The swing can be carried through into a circular action or a figure eight. Swinging movements can evoke a feeling of freedom, of broad scope and openness, of naturalness and ease.
2. **Sustained** - A smooth, continuous, unaccented flow of energy; the beginning movement and subsequent movement have the same amount of energy making it smooth and demanding maximum control. Sustained movement can be associated with feelings of calmness and tranquility, of self-control, of restraint, or sometimes of suspense.
3. **Percussive** - This is a very sharp, aggressive movement which begins and stops abruptly. Staccato quality. This vigorous, explosive movement can be used dramatically to show directness or aggressiveness. It suggests hitting or kicking.

Movement in a Stationary Position

- **Three (3) Secondary Qualities**

1. **Suspended** - This is a type of sustained movement where there is a delay of action causing a hanging in the air feeling. There is a strong beginning impulse, a defiance of the pull of gravity for a brief moment (hang moment), and then a giving into gravity. Suspended movement can give the momentary feeling of breathlessness, of weightlessness, of soaring - such as excitement and ecstasy.
2. **Vibratory** - A type of percussive movement where the start and stop of percussion is so fast that there is a quality of trembling, shaking or vibration. Can denote fear or rage or describe the tremulous motions of the aged or sick.
3. **Collapse** - A release of tension in any body part causing it to collapse; give in to gravity. A sinking or falling downward movement. The collapse can be slow and controlled as in a slow fall or it can be sudden as in fainting.

SPACE

- **Spatial Relationships and Design**

Space is the 3-dimensional territory surrounding the body used by the dancer to produce patterns and designs (traveled by the feet, rolling, crawling.....)

1. Direction / Whole Body or Body Parts
 - Up - down
 - Forward - backward
 - Sideways away from or across the body
 - Diagonally
2. Level - Descending or Rising Movement
 - Whole Body
 - Body Parts
3. Dimension / Gestures
 - Far and Near; advancing - retreating
 - Widening – narrowing
 - Rising – sinking
4. Curved & Straight Paths / Whole Body or Body Parts
5. Body & Spatial Design
 - Symmetrical
 - Asymmetrical
 - Counter Balance
6. Floor Patterns
 - Curves
 - Straight
 - Combination

1. **Aspects or determinates of Spatial Design:**

1. Symmetry – Equal balance of position or movement.
2. Asymmetry – Unequal balance of position or movement.
3. Accent / Emphasis – stress on a particular note or movement.
4. Climax- The high point of a combination or dance.
5. Unity – dancers or movements working together to express a whole idea, or action of the torso in conjunction with the limbs.
6. Contrast – movements working against each other for the sake of visual pattern and/or emotional effect.
7. Sequence or Arrangement – the position of movement phrases within a dance.

8. Transition – the connection between the end of one phrase and the beginning of another.
9. Repetition – repeated phrases of movement
10. Variety- changes of phrases of movement
11. Balance – to achieve stability whether in motion or a stationary pose.
12. Off Balance - the act of falling
13. Counterbalance – dancers using each other's bodies to achieve stability.
14. Harmony - blending varying movements.
15. Focus – either the physical points a dancer sees while moving or the attention upon a concept of the choreography.
16. Floor Pattern – choreography patterns that the dancers will move through.

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS II

WAYS TO MOVE

- The seven (7) ways to move:
 1. **Stretch** – ETENDRE
 2. **Bend** – PLIER
 3. **Rise** – ELEVER
 4. **Jump** – SAUTER
 5. **Glide** – GLISSER
 6. **Dart** – ELANCER
 7. **Turn** – TOURNER

LOCOMOTOR MOVEMENTS

- **Rhythmic Basic Steps (3)** are *even* rhythmically (with variations):
 1. Walk
 2. Run
 3. Jump

- **Jumps**

Jumps can be analyzed in terms of whether the jump starts from two feet or one foot and how it lands.

1. from two feet to one foot (sissonne)
2. one foot to two feet (assemble)
3. one foot to the same foot (hop)
4. one foot to the other foot (leap)
5. two feet to two feet (jump)

The visual effect of the walk, run and jump is directly influenced by the effort of how one uses the legs (stressed or unstressed), how much energy is used to propel the body upward and/or outward through space and the direction in which the movement / body are being propelled.

- **Basic Steps – Five Variations that are *uneven* rhythmically.**

1. **Skip** - A step and hop, alternating feet or hop and step.
2. **Slide** - Slide the front foot forward, transfer the weight to the front foot, then slide the back foot toward the front foot and place the weight onto the back foot with a cutting action. The body moves across space with little lift off the ground. Can be done sideways and backwards. (glissade).
3. **Gallop** - Similar to slide, but there is a jump in the air as the weight is transferred from one leg to another as in a galloping horse.
4. **Prance** - Stepping alternately on each foot, lifting the free leg with a bent knee, like a trotting horse.
5. **Triplet** - A triplet is made of three steps with alternating feet. The first step is with a bent knee and the next two steps are with straight knees causing a *down, up, up* movement in 3/4 time musically or on 3 beats of music.

- **Variations on Locomotor Movements/Traditional Folk Steps**

1. **Step Hop – Chug**
2. **Schottische – 3 steps and a hop**
3. **Waltz – step, open, together**
4. **Two – Step – step, together, open**
5. **Polka – like a two step with a hop**
6. **Mazurka – step, hop, brush or step, hop, brush, hop**
7. **Pas de Basque / Turned out like a balance – Turned in like a Pony**

Music for the Dance

A basic understanding of common musical forms will be helpful to you when teaching or choreographing. Whether you use music in composition or not, dance is done in time as well as in space, and understanding the difference of doing the same movement quickly or slowly will be beneficial. It is helpful to develop a musical sense so that you can move to the music or against it when you wish. Every dancer should be able to keep time (beats) with the music. Courses in basic musical theory will help you develop your musical appreciation and knowledge.

TIME

- **Rhythm** a grouping of beats that defines and regulates the divisions and subdivisions of a musical phrase.
- **Meter** basic scheme of accents and note value of a composition.
- **Measure** a unit of time in music.
- **Note Value** symbols for musical tones, they differ in shape to signify the duration of time they are held.
- **Time Signature** the meter and the basic note value for measuring tone length.
- **Tempo** speed by which the notes are played.
- **Phrase** a sentence, a paragraph or complete idea in music.
- **Accent** the heavy beat usually indicating the beginning of a measure.
- **Syncopation** accenting off the beat.
- **Rest** musical sign for silence, different signs denote time values comparable to note values.
- **Upbeat** the time before the beat and Downbeat is on the beat.
- **Dotted Notes** holding a note longer than the note value by 1/2 the value.
- **Counting Rhythm Patterns** counting musical beats and accents to communicate rhythm precisely and consistently.
- **Counting by Measure** counting the first beat of each measure.
- **Counting by Meter** counting each beat of the measure by time signature.
- **Counting by Syllables** counting each syllable of words or lyrics.

- **Double Time** playing or dancing at twice the original time.
- **Half Time** playing or dancing at 1/2 the original time.

COMPOSITIONAL FORMS

When composing dance pieces, many people have wonderful ideas but are unable to share these ideas because they have not developed the craft of organizing these ideas into a structure that will communicate their idea to the audience.

The most elemental of all forms is *the theme*. The theme makes a basic statement whether movement-oriented, abstract, or literal and is usually a central movement idea which you can build upon.

- **Binary** one part (movement theme) followed by the other: A B
- **Ternary – A. B. A.** statement of a basic theme (A), introduce a second theme (B.), and repeat the original theme (A) or **A. B. C.** introduces three themes.
- **Theme & Variations** the basic movement theme is shown once, then repeated with some kind of change or variation.
- **Fugue** requires more than one dancer. Developing a single theme by one or more dancers, the interest being cumulative then the main idea of the fugue is that of the one dancer(s) contrasting with others
- **Sonata** the sonata form is made up of two themes, primary and secondary, plus a recapitulation or joining of the two themes.
- **Round** the round is a common form exemplified by the song "Three Blind Mice." The same theme is repeated several times with new dancers joining in at some point. The beginning dancer finishes first, the other dancers stop as they finish the same movement phrase.
- **Canon** similar to the round, the canon is a repetition of a movement or movement phrase that has already been performed. Different coloring maybe given to the movements depending on whether it is a soloist or the group who is the leader.

- **Counterpoint** two independent themes or phrases are danced against each other.
- **Rondo** a movement phrase or series of movement phrases at stated intervals during the development of the dance. ABACADA returning to a principal theme after the introduction of another theme, so as to give a symmetrical or rounded form to the whole.
- **Free Form Composition by Chance** (i.e. Cunningham) usually implies lack of a preconceived theme, but still needs selection of movement and shape.
- **Use of Words/Phrases** descriptive movement
- **Improvisation** Spontaneous movement or composition without structure or preplanned use of form. Can be partially organized; fulfilling tasks.

SUMMARY

Movement as a Unified Whole / The Language of Dance

- All movement combines some aspect of each of the ELEMENTS of energy, time, space and axial movements and all can be combined with locomotion. An awareness of pulse, underlying beat or rhythm and phrasing is essential for a feeling of dance movement. There must also be a perception of the differences in feeling in movement qualities - differences that give shading and nuance to dance as communication. There must be effortless ease in the use of basic locomotor and axial movements. All movement exists between two poles of action and inaction, of tension and release, of contraction and relaxation, of fall and recovery, of inhalation and exhalation.
- One dances about something or to express something, even when the dance is without a plot. Being familiar with a few techniques on choreographic structure and developing your “artistic eye” for line, shape and theatrical drama will be most helpful to reflect your intentions. There are many different ways to choreograph, structured or unstructured. It is most useful for the novice choreographer to define a theme; establish a beginning, consider the logical development of the theme (middle section) and flow naturally into the end with coherence to the whole.
- Improvisation can be useful to discover unique and individual movement styles. Experimenting with various movement exercises and tasks can help develop movement phrases, which can serve as themes and structures for choreographies.

THE MODERN DANCE CLASS

Depending on the teacher, the Modern class will vary in its approach and emphasis. Where one teacher might demand warm-up exercises including ballet form, another may perform exercises that are semi-improvisational. In most Modern classes the **torso, including the spine and pelvic region**, is the primary focus of the movement. Therefore, during the class exercises it is important that the teacher pays careful attention to warming up the entire trunk. Since the knees are often flexed to add to feeling of being earthbound and grounded, it is also important that the supporting **muscles around the patella (knee joint) are strengthened and carefully stretched**.

CLASS CONTENT

The class can begin on the floor, at the barre or standing in the center, as long as there is a logical and beneficial progression and warm-up of the body.

- Breathing - get oxygen to the muscles / release tension.
- Stretches - for hamstring, lower spine and upper spine.
- Contraction & Release - (back rolls) strength and flexibility of spine and abdomen.
- Plies - for Achilles tendon and leg muscles
- Relevés - ankles and legs.
- Use of the six (6) Basic Qualities - for control of movement and expression.
- Brushes - Battements - stretch of legs and feet.
- Small Jumps - ankles, legs and suppleness of feet.
- Adagio and Extensions -for line, strength, control and expression.
- Use of the Basic Locomotors - skill and coordination.
- Turns - spotting and coordination.
- Big Traveling Combinations incorporating Floor work, Falls, etc. - skill and coordination.
- Cool down - stretch and relaxation.

FIVE TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS OF MODERN DANCE TECHNIQUES

Today there are **five (5) traditional schools of Modern dance** that have a **distinctive style**, using a set of defined vocabulary terms. It is from those specific schools that the contemporary Modern dance artists have borrowed to develop their own style of movement and class format. The following 5 class descriptions offer a few examples of the exercises performed in the traditional Modern dance class.

- Dunham Technique
- Graham Technique
- Horton Technique
- Humphrey / Limon Technique
- Cunningham

DUNHAM TECHNIQUE CLASS DEFINED

The Dunham technique warm-up **begins at the barre** with a series of exercises to warm up the large muscle groups of the legs and the spine. The exercises away from the barre are variations, which demand intense balance control and stamina. The progressions across the floor include phrases of traditional movements from various **Caribbean secular and sacred rituals**, specifically from **Haiti**.

The Barre:

- Pelvic press into the barre into flatback bend (being careful to stay over the balls of the feet and not fall back into the hips).
- Successional roll down and up.
- Forced arch stretch.
- Achilles / calf stretch, with pelvic arc.
- Flatback contraction (initiated from the hip) and released arch series.
- Deep side lunge stretch lifting to extended leg balance.
- Folding and unfolding of the torso with leg extension .
- Hip rotation isolation.
- Pelvic roll through into “yonvolu” undulation.
- (back to the barre) Legs swings in attitude.
- (seated under the barre) Hip propulsion raise to torso arc position.

THE GRAHAM TECHNIQUE CLASS DEFINED

The Graham Technique is based on the **concept of breathing - “Contraction and Release.”** The term is best executed through the trunk, where the anterior part of the torso is **concave**, as are the hands that cup (like water holding) and **open** when accented. Her **vocabulary is based on angular lines, a system of leverages, balance and dynamics, with seemingly abrupt falls** that hug the earth and **then recover through a released gesture**. In each execution the spine usually remains straight as **the sternum focus is up, always projecting upward** in a spiral gesture. In the Graham class the dancer **begins on the floor**. The object is **to become grounded and really “feel the earth.”** The standing exercises are a test of angular balances controlled through the movements as prances, walks with triplets, spiraling “T’s”, and chasse leaps performed to different accented tempos.

The Seated Floor Work

- Leg successions including feet, adding the port de bras isolation.
- Torso arc in prone position.
- Roll up from chest, roll down through spine.
- Contraction Series in seated crossed legs position, heels lifted.
- Coccyx sit study with spiral, and hip lift.
- Seated spirals in folded, parallel and 4th leg positions.
- Backward falls with spiral (from a knee hinge position).

The Standing Exercises

- Feet isolation
- Attitude Contraction Series

Progressions (using varying tempos and directional paths)

- Triplet Walks
- Spiraling “T’s”
- Prances

THE HORTON TECHNIQUE CLASS DEFINED

The Horton Technique is very **angular and linear**. The class is based on a systemized series of corrective exercises that are performed to align the spine and show its relationship to the rest of the body. Throughout each movement the trunk remains erect, in both parallel and natural second position stance. Any movement of the torso is caused by a hip flexion or a back extension from a pelvic press. The class begins with a series of codified exercises to stretch and elongate the muscles of the abdomen, legs and lumbar spine region. Following the warm-up exercises there are **17 fortifications** that are designed for the more intermediate and advanced dancer. Each fortification study is a compositional phrase incorporating the warm-up exercises with different challenging balances, such as the Coccyx sit pose, deep hinge, Lateral “T”, the Strike, Stag, and Table. The floor progressions include balance studies, leg swings, turns, falls, and elevations.

The Standing Warm - Up

- Flat back stretch
- Primitive Squats / Descents and Ascents
- Lateral Stretch into Flatback
- Leg Swings
- Lunge Stretch with Flatback
- Egyptian Walk

The Seated Floor Work

- Coccyx Study - with leg extension, hip lift and pieta pose position.
- Lateral Stretch in Open End Position.
- Spiral in Triangle Pose (seated in 4th position).
- Figure 4 Push Ups.

HUMPHREY TECHNIQUE CLASS DEFINED

The Humphrey/Limon Technique appears to be very **rounded and fluid**. Since Limon technique is a direct derivative of Humphrey, the form and focus of the two can be described similarly. **Where Humphrey's "Fall and Recovery" creates a successive feel of curves and swinging circular shapes, so does Limon's "Fall and Rebound."** In the case of Limon, the rebound allows the muscles to move like rubber bands, creating a **bouncy motion**. However, in both cases, Humphrey and Limon work through **a non-ending flow of energy** through the spine that sequentially involves all parts of the body, the arms, head and legs. Because Humphrey believed that the only way to execute a movement is through dance, she devised a set of exercises that are choreographically arranged. Instead of patterned positions repetitiously performed, whole sequences of movement are thematically developed such as in a dance composition. The following exercises are thus performed as part of a **dance phrase**.

Humphrey Center Work

- Successional Rolls –
Vertical and Lateral
Broken Descent
Drop and Gravitational Pull
- Weight Changes
- Swings with Drops - Using torso, and full body
- Figure 8 arm exercise

The Seated Floor Work

- Successional Breath Movement Roll through the Spine with soles of feet together
- Knee Stretch Oppositional Stretch
- Floor Stretches – Thigh, Abdomen, Torso
- Body Roll with Torso Twist

Nine Count Rebound Falls

- Back
- Side
- Front
- Circular Fall

THE LIMON TECHNIQUE CLASS DEFINED

The Limon Technique focuses and aspires to a **feeling of freedom that is manifested through swings, off-center turns and suspensions**. The Limon vocabulary is based on this concept. The exercises below are a variation on the above Humphrey exercises. During the progression exercises across the floor Limon technique stresses body isolation, weight changes, and release swings that are executed through varying walk combinations, jumps and turns. The texture of each movement is caused by a gravitational pull, which curves the torso downward, vertical or lateral.

Seated Floor Work

- Successional Spine Roll with Arm Lift
Vertical from head to lumbar spine
Lateral Side from Head to Waist
- Bounces Vertical and with Spinal Twist in 1st & open 2nd legs (in natural turnout)
- Body Isolations in Prone Position
Hip Joint Rotation
Chest
Shoulder
Ribs
- Successional Arms in Seated Position

Standing Exercises

- Vertical and Lateral successional plie
bounces In Parallel 1st & 2nd - with sequential use of torso, arms head
- Fall and Rebound in the Legs with plie, with arm sequence swings
- Tendu Series with Fall and Rebound of Torso and Arms
- Tendu Series with 4th position fall and rebound with off balance pose
- Plie series in 1st and 2nd - with spinal roll down and up
- Swings in 2nd Position - Head, Arms & Whole Torso release
- Passe Series with Rebound
- Foot Isolation
- Lunge Series with Fall
- Developpe Series with rounded spine

CUNNINGHAM TECHNIQUE CLASS DEFINED

Class starts standing

Torso

- Upper Body Curves with Plie in Parallel, Open 2nd & Front Diagonal.
- Stretch Back with Curve into the Flat Back and Rise in Parallel, 2nd Position Open & Open 2nd Position on Forward Diagonals with Port de Bras.
- Foot Isolations with the Stretch and Point in Parallel and 1st Positions.
- Twist of waist side to side with the plie and adding the curve of the back.
- Tilt and Curve of the Torso with Upper Chest Lift incorporating the use of arms.
- Flat Back into curve and Upright Curve of the Spine.

Articulation of the Legs

- Full or Deep Plie
- Tendus or Stretches of the Legs
- Variations of Tendus, adding the curve of the upper torso
- The stretch, flex and circling of the leg in preparation for turns & spins
- Circling the leg with plie and flex of the foot
- Beats of the Legs
- Stretching of the Legs in all Directions
- Extensions of the Legs in all Directions incorporating the curve of the spine
- Circling of Extending Legs
- Rapid Beat of the Foot against supporting leg
- High Leg Stretches with the lunge in parallel, 1st front, side & back
- Releve incorporating Plies
- Plie Releve with the side tilt of the Body
- Balance Shifting from one position to the other, flat foot and then in releve

Dancer in Space

- Parallel exercise with directional changes of gesture leg on the floor and then off the floor
- First Position Leg Work with 7 directional changes and then incorporating the ports de bras
- Grand Plie with Flat back and Releve

- Grand Plie with Releve into Flat back with the Passe Curve into Attitude and Open Attitude
- Lunges Forward, Side and Back with High Arch of Chest and transitional step with side tilt
- Prances with Lunge and Three High Leg Lifts
- Fast Prances
- Triplets with Change of Direction
- Side Travelling Triplet
- Forward Triplets
- Step Draws with Plies and Port de Bras
- Simple walk with Triplet and Directional Changes
- Side Leg Extensions with Plie and Ports de Bras
- Jumps in 1st and 2nd
- Jumps with Triplets
- Split Leaps
- Skips One Sided
- Triplet with back Leg Switch Kick Jumps

Fall

- Preparation for the Fall with Recovery
- Formal Movements to End Class

IMPROVISATION

In Modern Dance training, improvisation should be part of daily class curriculum. Improvisation frees a dancer's movement from restrictions placed on them by codified technique also stimulating creative energies. The primary source of improvisation is within the dancer and is an effective method to begin the development of style. If dancers, involve themselves in the spirit of improvisation, they will eventually find the way of moving that feels right for their body based on life experience.

There are various ways to conduct improvisation. Some teachers incorporate it within technique class while others include it in separate composition classes. Students may feel shy in the beginning of improvisational work but there are various exercises that can help the dancer gain the spirit of improvisation. In teaching improvisation, the teacher may wish to give structure in the form of spatial design or a theme they wish the students to follow. The instructor must impress upon the class that the movements should not be planned or imitate any movement sequence. The focus should be from within. Each individual needs to concentrate on the feeling of the movement rather than the appearance. Movements should be organic and spontaneous and never forced. There are simple exercises a teacher may use to prepare the students for improvisation.

EXERCISE 1.

Start lying on the floor. Take time to sense the body, feel where the tensions are. Open arms and legs in an "X" position. Squeeze all the muscles very tightly, tense from head to toe as you breathe in. Exhale and relax the body completely comparing the feeling to melting into the floor. Repeat this exercise 2 more times.

EXERCISE 2.

Lying on your back, be aware of the parts of the body that are connected to the floor. Have the class concentrate on those grounding areas and breathe into those areas feeling a connection with the floor underneath them. Vary the breathing patterns by having the students breathe into various areas and close off others. Vary the breathing patterns again by having the students use the exhalation of the breath to move various parts of the body.

EXERCISE 3.

In a standing position have the students close their eyes and concentrate on their breathing while standing perfectly still. Have them take note where they feel the breath is moving in the body. Ask them to lengthen their bodies while inhaling and collapsing during exhalation. Have them rise onto releve during inhale and fall onto one foot in any direction during the exhalation. Emphasize to them that they need to concentrate on the movement of the breath and where it is taking them.

EXERCISE 4.

This exercise is to help the student get a sense of the space around them. Have them quietly visualize the space around them to be molding clay, ask them to gather the space from any direction and sculpt it. Tell them to be very aware of the weight, size, and shape and to try to actually feel their sculpture.

EXERCISE 5.

This exercise may help to develop a movement phrase. Select one word from each of the lists below and write an eight-word phrase sequentially on paper. Without preplanning have the students move through the whole eight-word sequence. Have them repeat it until it feels natural.

TIME	SHAPE	DIRECTION	PATTERN
Slow	spread out	over	dodge
Very slow	closed in	under	zigzag
Fast	large	through	jagged
Very fast	small	across	drift
Sustained	curved	away	spiral
Sudden	angular	rise	wave-like
Leisurely	thin	sink	straight

IMAGE ACTION

Melting crouch

Floating

Throw

Jerky

Catch

Bumpy

Crawl

Pulsating

Swing

Bubbling

Drop

Percussive turn ACTION

Start from pull center, press front center, strike behind center, slash left center, flick back, dab right front, shake down right

As teachers it is our goal for the student to feel comfortable enough in their bodies to be able to create with them. The above exercises should help with the improvisational process.

MODERN DANCE VOCABULARY

Elements of Dance Composition

Absolute Dance	Dance with no meaning or underlying subject. It is the concept of dance for dance sake, where the movements exist without any reference to theme.
Asymmetric Balance	An off centered balance as in tilt, hinge or Horton Table.
Axial Movement	A movement around one or more axes in the body whereas locomotive movement is performed from place to place.
Balance	A constant redistribution of the parts of the body so that the body remains in equipoise. A conscious execution of synthesis.
Breath Rhythm	Is the inhalation, suspension and exhalation of the natural act of breathing. It can be transferred to other parts of the body.
Central Movement	A movement that draws a completed circle.
Concave and Convex	Are two views of the same motion. The intention is to induce a sensation of a front over curve as the principal attribute of that particular bodily position and design in space.
Concert Dance	The type of dance that uses movement to convey emotions. It was a term used by the early modern dancers to distinguish them from classical ballet that uses a story line with plot and characters.
Contraction and Release	As defined by Martha Graham, is based on the act of breathing. The torso movement involves the tightening or contraction of the stomach muscles while pushing the pelvis forward and then returning the body back to normal in the release. The movement can attain whiplash intensity as it radiates out to the arms, legs, and head in a jerking or percussive motion. The movement is used to convey inner feelings.
Controlled Movement	Movement held at a conscious degree of tension without disintegrating.
Curved Movement	A flow or current of curving movements without rhythmic breaks, allowing for smooth and unbroken lines.

Deep	Any movement that takes place close to the floor in relationship to the torso.
Delsarte Theory	The key concept on which early Modern dance was created. Based on the French Philosopher Francois Delsarte's <i>Nine Laws of Motion</i> , every gesture has a meaning. He codified human gestures in order to divide the body into separate zones, by giving them spiritual labels: the head, heart and lower limbs corresponded to the mind, soul, and life.
Design	An ordering, composing, or creation of patterns and figures. Humphrey defined the terms as every movement made including abstract forms, circles, figure eights, angles and concave and convex curves.
Direction	the focus of a locomotive movement. There are nine: 1) in place, 2) forward, 3) backward, 4) side right, 5) side left, 6) diagonally, 7) side left forward, 8) diagonally left backward and 9) diagonally right backward.
Dynamism	Describes the level of texture in a movement. Where the execution of the movement presents a variety of contrast, such as sharp/smooth, fast/slow, tension/relaxation. The two opposing states stimulate each other. What the audience sees is excitement.
Fall	the state of giving into gravity, such as in drops. A fall in any part of the body releasing a vast amount of kinetic energy. This energy can be harnessed by catching it in either a recovery or a rebound.
Folding and Unfolding	Tension and relaxation, folding is sinking or relaxing the body, unfolding involves the opening of the body as in renewed muscular energy.
Functional Movement	Movement used as a means of expression carrying overtones of meaning.
Eurhythmics	The term is based on Emile Jaques Dalcroze's method. It explains how musical rhythm is derived from the natural movements of the body as in the phrasing, nuances, and the duration of the music.

Gesture	A movement of any kind (waving of the hand, leg extensions, tilt of the head...)
Heavy Point	Where the center of gravity is seated in the body; it is usually considered to be the pelvic region.
Intensity	Determines the level of energy to be executed. Shows the degree of stress in a movement - from weak to strong.
Isolation	Intense concentration upon isolated parts of the body. The counter-movement of one part of the body against the other as executed in Dunham and Limon Techniques.
Kinetic Energy	Potential energy in motion. It is the energy stored in the body and when released becomes kinetic energy. The simplest example is the fall.
Melodic Line	Movement that flows smoothly without staccato interruption as in a curved movement.
Music Visualization	A dance interpretation of a musical instrument. A translation of the musical notes being danced.
Off Balance	A term describing the act of falling
Opposition	Using the entire body to create the feeling of length and stretch in a movement without tensing or gripping the muscles. There are five points of opposition in the standing body: 1) the head, 2) the left hand, 3) the right hand, 4) the left foot, 4) the right foot.
Passive Action	Energy drive that is not apparent but vague.
Pattern	A movement phrase or design. The most basic is the ABA Compositional Form: introduction of a main movement theme or idea, followed by a different theme and ending with the original or its variation.
Pendular Swings	A type of swing wherein the movement is effortless as in the pendulum of a clock – used in the Horton release swings and the Limon swing series.
Percussive Movement	Indicates a staccato movement

Phrasing	The grouping of movements in a sequence which emphasizes movement flow in terms of rhythm, design and quality.
Planes	Defines the spatial use of vertical, horizontal and backward forward space (as in the body's Median, Sagittal, Frontal and Transverse Planes).
Polyrhythmic Movement	The simultaneous juxtaposition of two or more contrasting rhythms in music. The term applies to Dunham Technique where one part of the body follows one rhythm while another part distinctly follows another at the same time. This rhythm is mostly used to create body isolations.
Rebound	The spring back action of a fall. It is re-gathered energy in the body and can be released. When it is released, it becomes kinetic energy.
Recurring Theme	Has an identifiable recurrence of the dance phrase.
Repetitious Form	The use of a single movement phrase and its variations for an entire dance or for a section of a dance sustained, each movement growing from the other.
Sequential Movement	Describes the evolution of a movement from one shape into the next. Each movement grows from the other. It can also be called Continuous Movement.
Succession Flow	One of the principles of Doris Humphrey's theories of natural movement; may be cited to describe the imagined route of breath flow. Used to describe the roll down or roll up through the spine, both in the anterior and lateral C-curve position.
Suspension	A prolonged high point. It is created at the peak of the movement by continuing the movement and delaying the takeover of gravity.
Suspension Breath	The oppositional pull between head, hands and feet elongating, or extending as the body fills up with air.
Sustained Movement	Similar to Suspension, in the sustained state, time pace is purposely lengthened either during its progress or at its peak. The constant movement is faint but still present.
Style	The creative language or vocabulary that the choreographer or Modern Dance teacher employs, such as Limon or Humphrey, Graham, Dunham, or Horton Style.

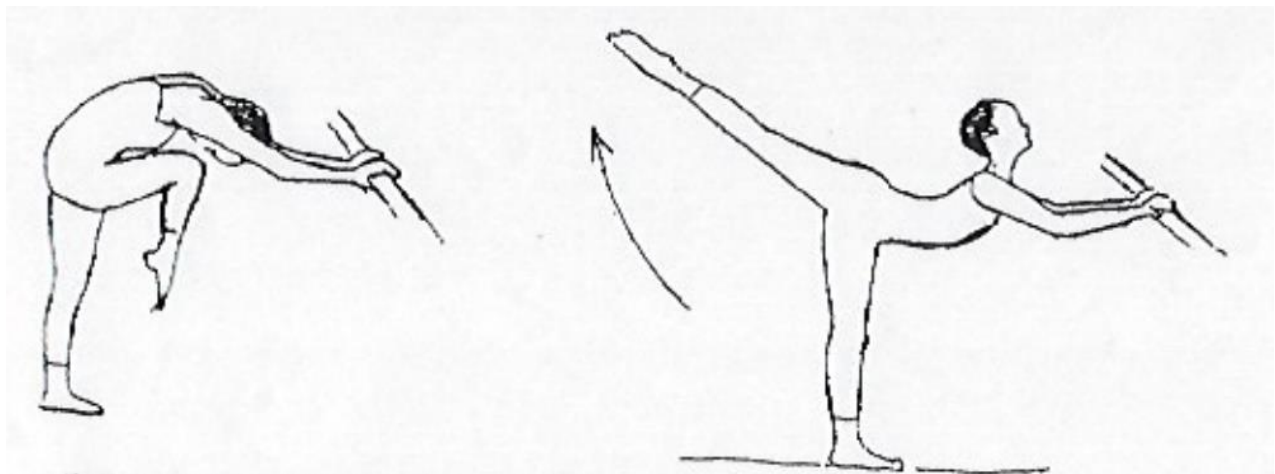
RESOURCES

Daley, Ann	<i>Done In Dance: Isadora Duncan in America</i>
Kendall, Elizabeth	<i>Where She Danced</i>
Ramsay, Burt	<i>Alien Bodies-Representations of Modernity, "Race" and Nations in Early Modern Dance</i>
Gardner, Howard	<i>Creating Minds-an Anatomy of Creativity</i>
Stodelle, Ernestine	<i>The Dance Technique of Doris Humphrey and its Creative Potential</i>
Lewis, Daniel	<i>The Art of Limon</i>
Nash, Joe	<i>The Black Tradition in American Dance</i>
Aschenbreneur, Joyce	<i>Katherine Dunham-Reflections on the Social and Political Contexts of Afro-American Dance</i>
Warren, Larry	<i>Lester Horton, Modern Dance Pioneer</i>
Fischer, Jana Frances	<i>The Life and Work of Lester Horton</i>
Dunnings, Jennifer	<i>Alvin Ailey - A Life in Dance</i>
Kostellantetz, Richard	<i>Merce Cunningham, Dancing in Space and Time</i>

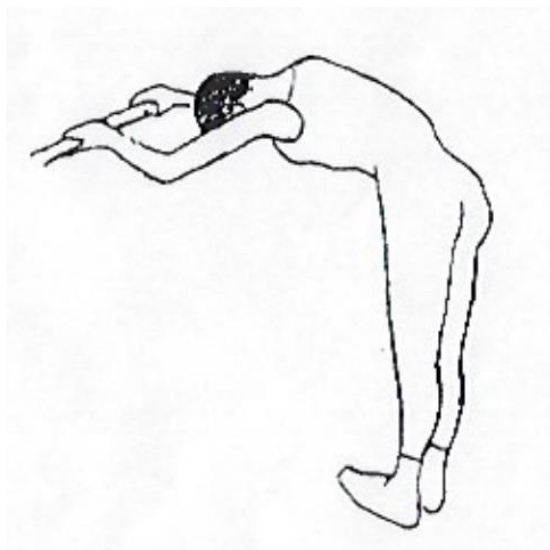
Appendix

Basic Modern Dance Movements

All drawings by Saeko Naruse



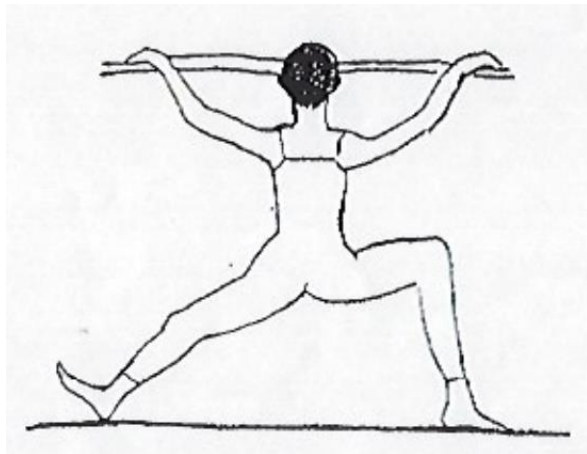
Folding and Unfolding Torso with leg release extension



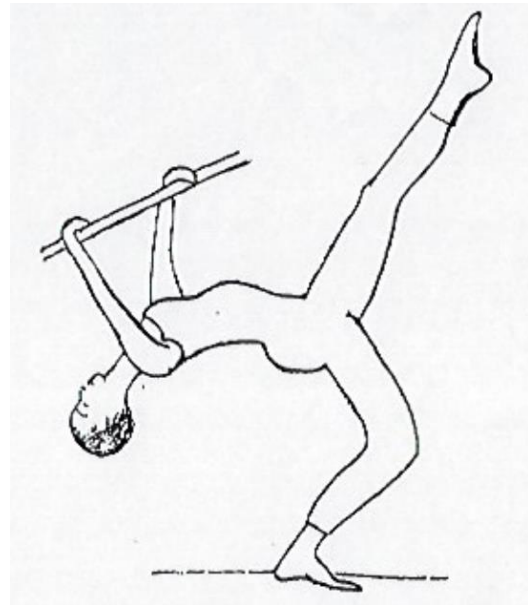
Dunham Flatback-contraction



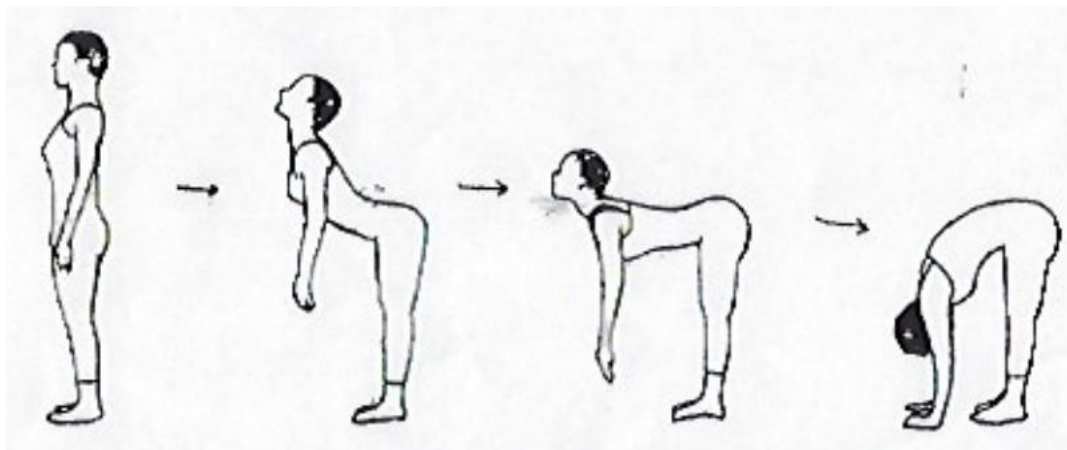
Dunham Contraction (initiated from the hips)
(Example of a pelvic & full contraction)



Dunham Side Lunge
(ends in extended leg lift)

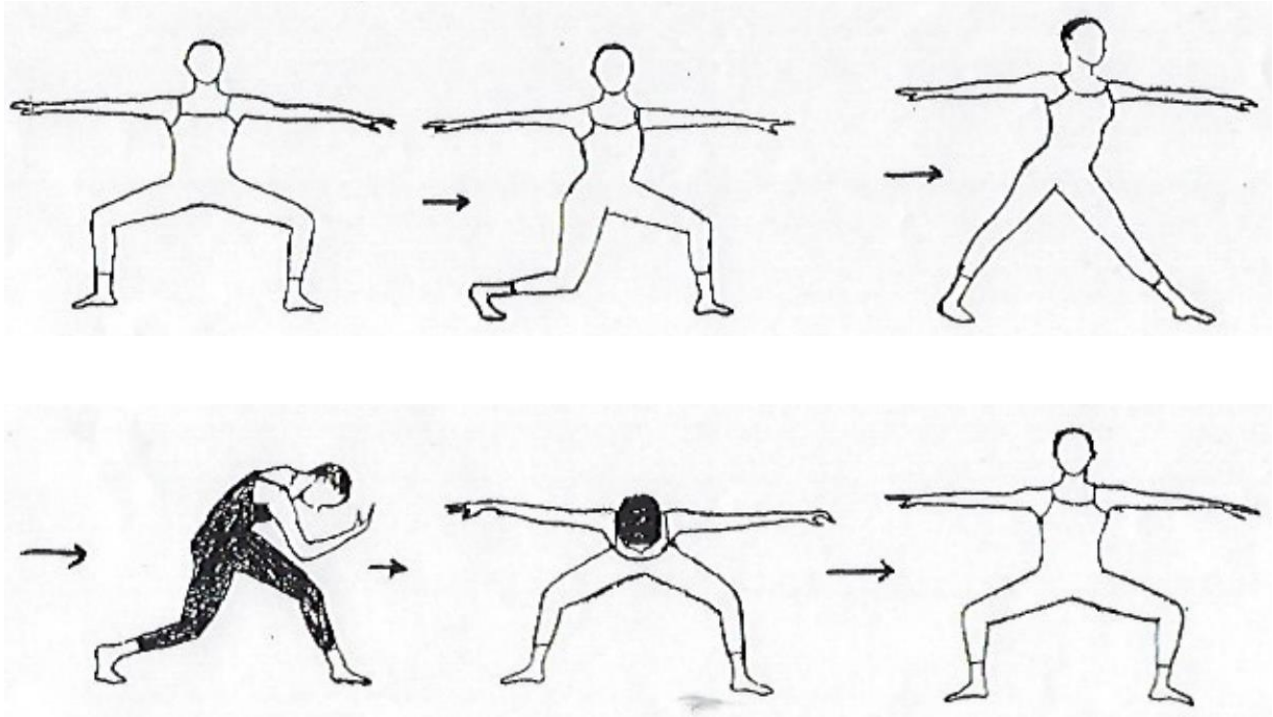


Dunham Pelvic-Hip Propulsion
rise to torso arc



Undulation Chest Roll Through

Hip Isolation Sequence

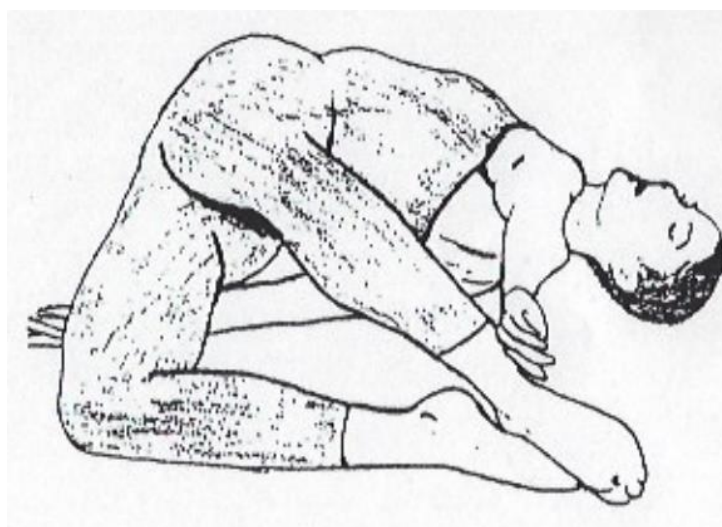




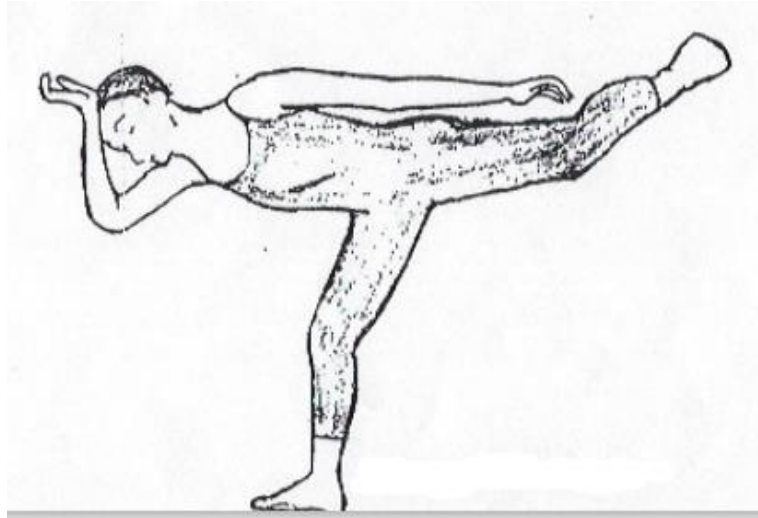
Kneeling Hinge



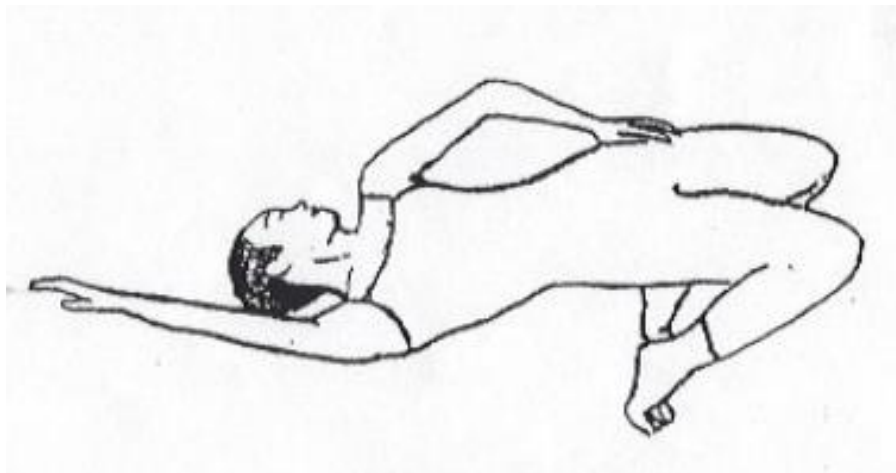
Basic Graham Spiral (torso twist)
Siting spiral



Graham back fall with pelvic press
(a floor fall)



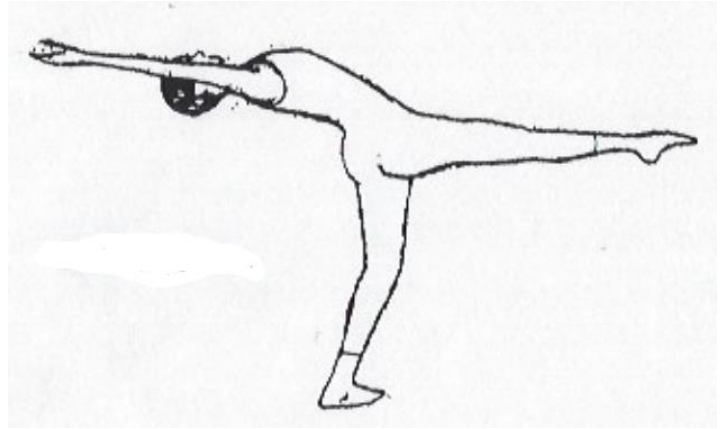
Gestured Attitude Pose



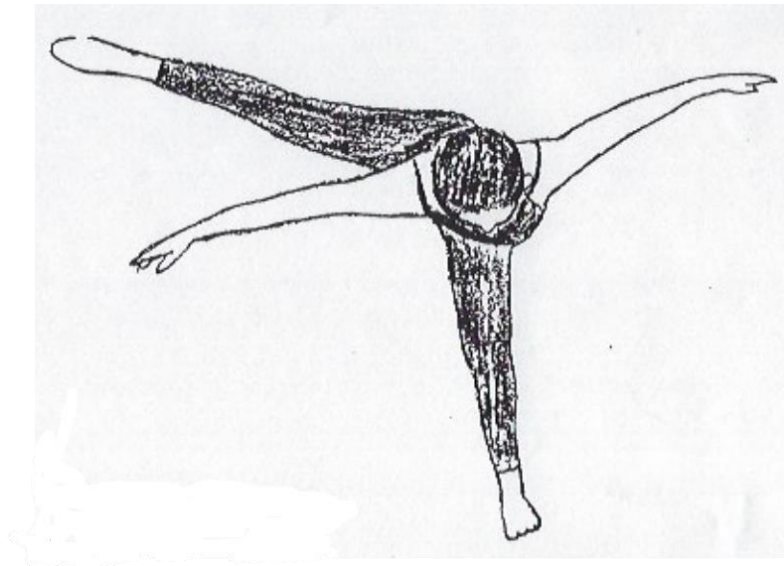
Graham Backwards Fall
(A floor fall)



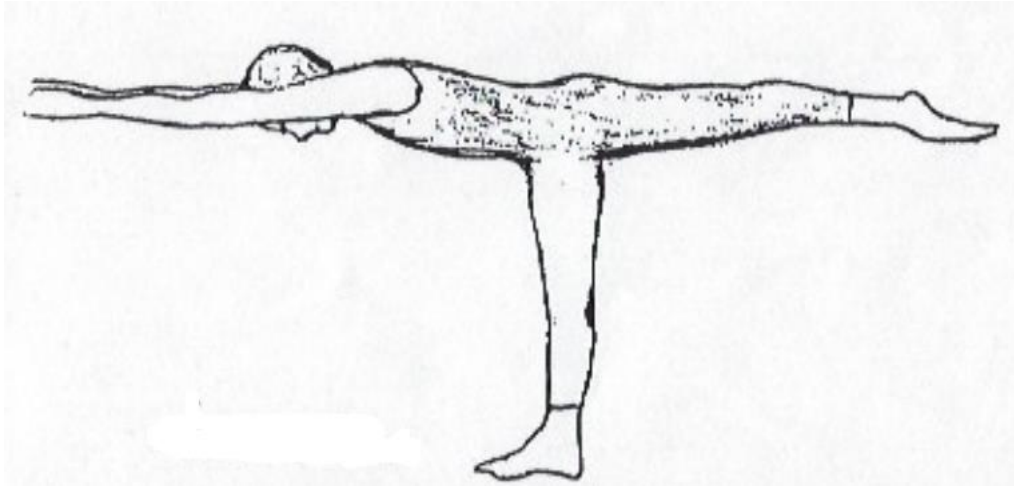
Horton Table



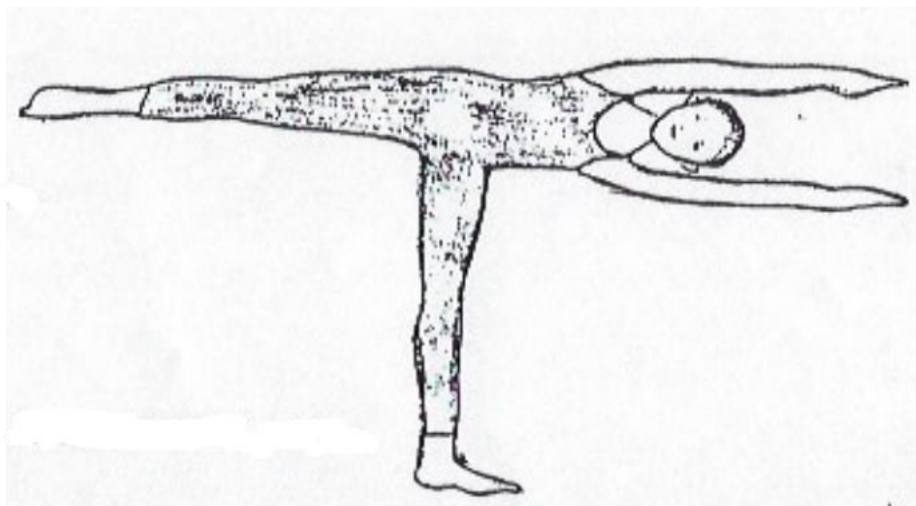
Back T Position



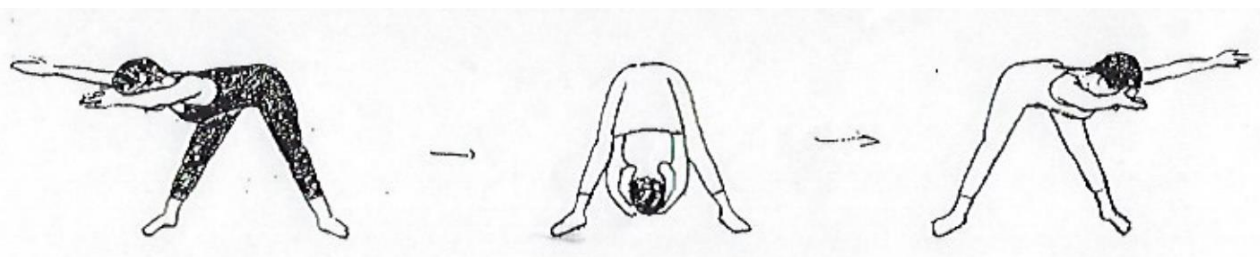
Side T Position



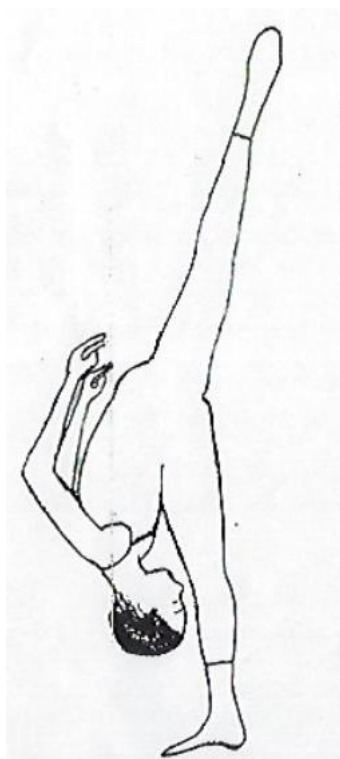
Front T Position



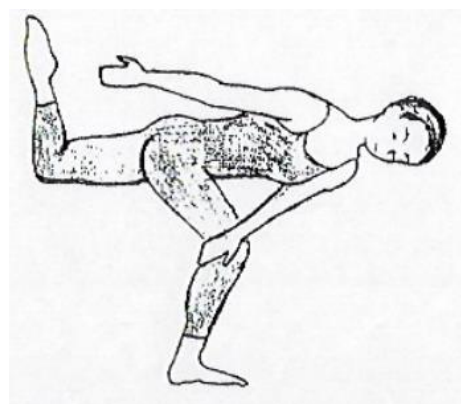
Lateral Side T Position



Horton Flatback Release Swing



Pitch

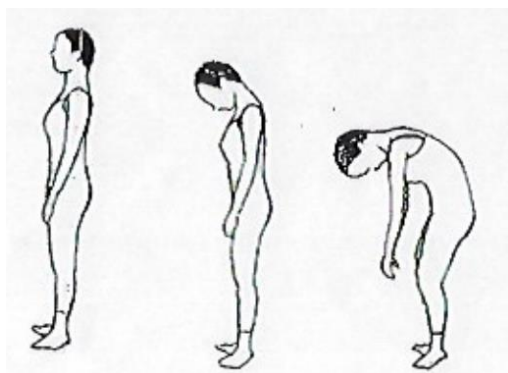


Horton Stag

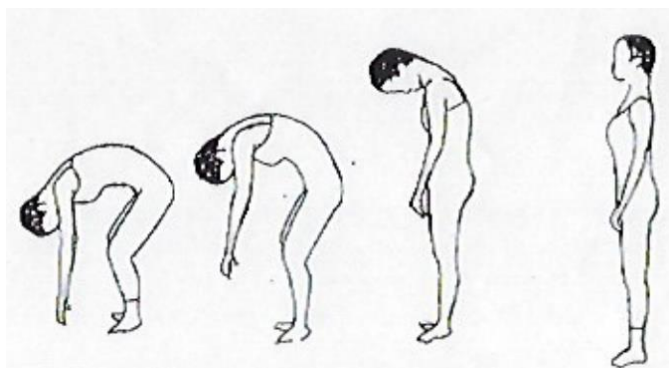
(parallel attitude with torso twist)



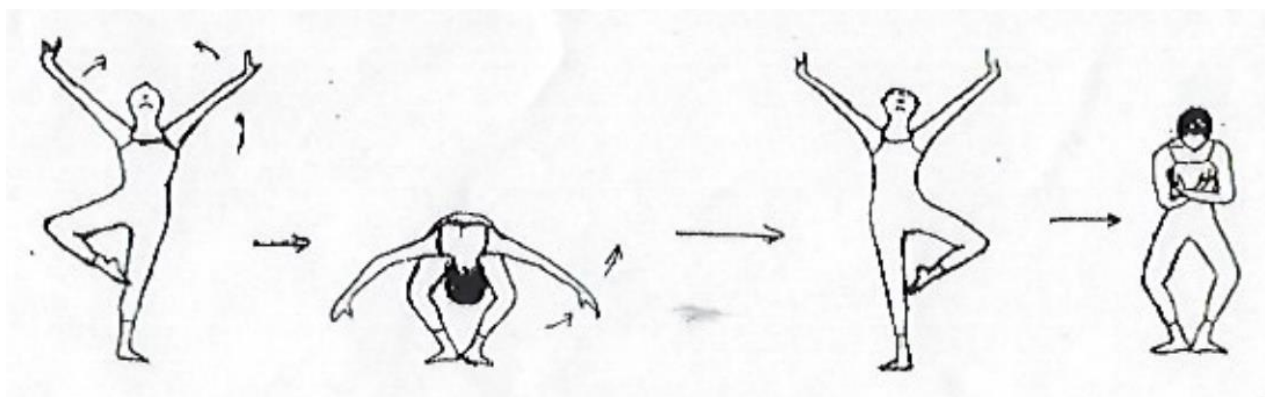
Standing Hinge
Position



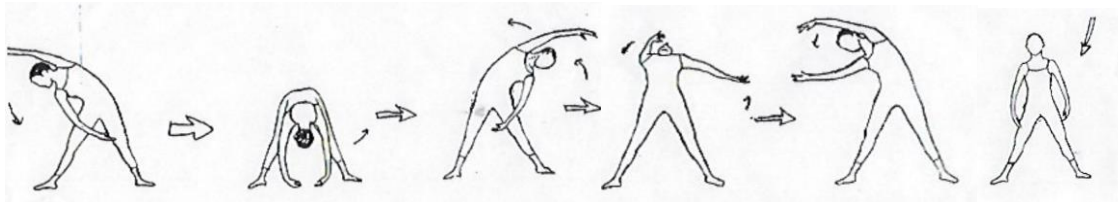
Successional Spine
Roll Down with Plie'



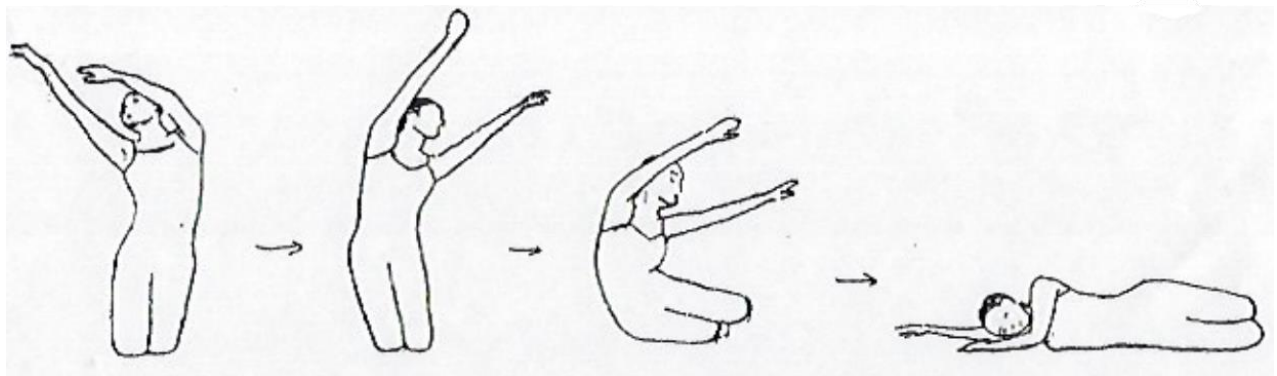
Successional Spine Roll Up
from Plie'



Passe with Fall and Rebound



Limon Swings with Sequential Head and Torso and Arms Series



Lateral C-curve Fall