**HEALING DANCE® I 2014.6**

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Further articles about Healing Dance are available for free download at www.healingdance.org and http://aquaticwritings.tripod.com. Several YouTube videos of Healing Dance can be most easily searched under “Georgeakopoulos”. Alexander may be contacted directly at healingdance@hotmail.com.
from chapter 15
Do you have the patience to wait
till your mud settles and the water is clear?
Can you remain unmoving
till the right action arises by itself?

from chapter 26
The heavy is the root of the light.
The unmoved is the source of all movement.

from chapter 28
Know the male,
yet keep to the female:
receive the world in your arms.
If you receive the world,
the Tao will never leave you
and you will be like a little child.

from chapter 43
The gentlest thing in the world
overcomes the hardest thing in the world.

from chapter 36
The soft overcomes the hard.
The slow overcomes the fast.

from chapter 40
Return is the movement of the Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao.

from chapter 63
Act without doing;
work without effort.

from chapter 71
Not-knowing is true knowledge.
Presuming to know is a disease.

from chapter 78
Nothing in the world
is as soft and yielding as water.
Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible,
nothing can surpass it.
A Short History and Overview of Healing Dance®

In 1990, while a resident at Harbin Hot Springs, Alexander studied Watsu from its founder, Harold Dull. Following the course he began experimenting and improvising in the Harbin warm pool, influenced by his background in dance, by his experience as a practitioner of Trager Work, and by the qualities of water itself. After studying WaterDance in 1993 from Arjana Brunschwiler, a new spaciousness and three-dimensionality appeared in his experimental moves. By then, Alexander had created a side branch of Watsu, something flowing and dancing. Healing Dance, as the technique he innovated is now called, has had to refine itself down from the sheer joy of movement to discover its full therapeutic potential. Since 1999 Inika Sati Spence has collaborated closely with him in defining and growing the work into a distinct modality. Mary Theri Thomas joined the roster of teachers of Healing Dance in 2003, having already made significant contributions to its development. Since 2007, Kathrin George’s perspective as a physical therapist has brought further refinements.

Healing Dance has many aspects, all based on the healing power of movement. The practitioner establishes an empathetic connection with the receiver and is trained to mirror any incipient kinetic impulses. Like an orchestra conductor, he establishes a rhythmic field at the beginning of the session through his breath, movement and state of mind. He looks for the rhythm of awareness in each moment that allows the receiver to feel the psychological reverberations of the movement in her being. Movement is understood as medicine and carefully dosed, intermixed with restful pauses to allow for integration of its effects. The practitioner ‘dances’ the receiver, who has an experience of grace and beauty, sometimes leading to deeper emotional releases. Healing Dance could be understood as silent music, consisting of rhythmic impulses of pressure, touch and movement played upon the body’s proprioceptors. The dance is between the subliminal message within each movement and the receiver’s subconscious mind. That which has slowed down or ceased to move within the psyche is inspired to awaken into playful participation. Thus, the healing comes from within.
Healing Dance’s wide variety of original techniques reflects how water and the body naturally move together. It sees the human body as hydrodynamic and at home in water. Blocked energies are opened up by more than thirty waves and spirals, as well as various spatial mandalas in the form of circles and figure 8’s that free and re-animate the body. Healing Dance takes advantage of the full three-dimensionality of the water with broad dynamic movements. A variety of advanced body mechanics techniques such as moving by example, creative imbalance and traveling through the pool help to create not only bigger movements, but also subtler and more sensitive ones. Though the essence of Healing Dance is flow, freedom and lightness, there is also much of stillness and nurture in the Healing Dance, an array of positional sanctuaries where one may expand into oneself while being safely held. As their vocabulary of movements expands, students become more confident to relate and mirror, supporting and affirming the unwinding and soul dance of their receivers.

About Alexander

Alexander George came to the holistic arts following a 25-year career as a ballet and modern dancer, teacher and choreographer. In 1980 he began the study of holistic massage at the International School of Professional Bodywork in San Diego, completing the 1000 Hour Massage Therapist Training in 1983 and Associate of Science degree in 2004. Alexander went on to become qualified as a Trager Practitioner in 1986, subsequently studying with Milton Trager himself. In 1990 he became a Watsu Practitioner at Harbin Hot Springs in northern California under the tutelage of Harold Dull, the originator of Watsu. In 1993 he studied WaterDance from one of its co-founders, Arjana Brunschwiler. Alexander developed the techniques of Healing Dance and Flowing Touch Massage. He is a certified instructor of the Worldwide Aquatic Bodywork Association, and for nine years taught at the School of Shiatsu and Massage at Harbin Hot Springs. Alexander has led over 300 week-long 50-hour intensives in Anatomy, Massage, Barefoot Shiatsu, Watsu, Healing Dance and WaterDance. Alexander presently leads trainings in Germany, Holland, Italy and the US, teaching in English, German or Portuguese as required. He has written over seventy-five articles on teaching and aquatic bodywork available for free download at http://aquaticwritings.tripod.com. The official web site for Healing Dance is www.healingdance.org. Alexander presently lives in Germany.
The Healing Dance® Trainings

Healing Dance Introductory Weekend
This 16 hour weekend course is designed for entry level students of aquatic bodywork. The history, principles and applications of Healing Dance are covered on land, as well as terminology, communication, and the anatomy related to support of the head and pelvis. In the water, you will be given a direct experience of Healing Dance through receiving a mini-session. There the fundamentals of aquatic technique are taught, including how to sense the weight and breath of the receiver, knowing where to support, how to traction, how to be grounded in the stances that we stand in and how to bring our partner into flow with weight shifts and traveling steps. A simple practice sequence is learned with a clear beginning and finish that is the perfect preparation for taking Healing Dance I. You will discover how natural it is to share aquatic bodywork and how it can open a new dimension in relating. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

Healing Dance I
Healing Dance I constitutes a paradigm shift for the student of aquatic bodywork. It sees the body as at home in the water and hydrodynamic in its form, healing in the flow of movement. It understands the psyche as needing not only nurture and closeness, but space, freedom and acceptance of self-expression, as well. More than anything else, Healing Dance I is the wave. In addition to seven full-body waves the sequence encompasses various circles, figure eights and releases, all balanced by the stillness of positional sanctuaries, and woven together with flowing transitions. The study of body mechanics extends beyond the familiar Horse and Warrior Stances to include different walking patterns that allow traveling across the pool. Healing Dance principles are discussed on land and practiced in the water. These include moving by example, creative imbalance, the rhythmic field and dosing movement. Finally, you are introduced to Relating and Mirroring, the goal of all technical study, the art of sensitively accompanying the movement impulses and unwinding of receivers. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

Healing Dance II
Healing Dance II asks the question, “How do we earn trust and gain access to the body at the beginning of a session?” The answer it provides lies in the trance-inducing Back Waves and in our quality of touch. In this training we continue the study of spatial mandalas beyond the waves of Healing Dance I into the spiral, the
eight and the spiral eight. *Healing Dance II* also focuses strongly on bodywork. It offers a toolbox replete with massage techniques and stretches integrated into the flow of movement. The course delivers the fullness of Healing Dance's surface repertoire with an entirely new set of mini-sequences including Seaweed II, The Starfish, Adonis Waves, Arm Waves, and Klimt. *Healing Dance II* carries further the emphasis on Relating and Mirroring by which students hone the all important art of responding to the kinetic and feeling states of their receivers. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

**Introduction to Healing Dance Underwater**

The *Introduction to Healing Dance Underwater (IHDU)* is designed as a first underwater course for students who have already taken surface courses, such as *Watsu I* or *Healing Dance I*. *IHDU* is a 3 day course that specifically prepares you to take *Shape and Space* and *Above and Below*, the two major underwater trainings of Healing Dance. The transition to submerging receivers rather than merely supporting them on the surface entails learning several skills before one can take a receiver safely underwater. These fundamentals covered in the course include how to a) read the breath precisely; b) signal appropriately; c) offer and remove the noseclip; d) unweight the head on submerging; e) give the head freedom underwater; f) gauge the amount of time spent underwater; g) maintain the absolute space; h) soften the hands in grips; i) use one's weight and breath to create deep movements; j) travel in the pool, and k) pre-support the head on surfacing. Participants learn a surface warm-up followed by a sequence of thirteen submergings arranged in an order that could be used in a session. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

**Healing Dance Above and Below**

This class is designed to bring the principles of Healing Dance into the underwater experience. Maintaining flow above and below the surface is integral; the material explores how to smooth out the moment of submerging and surfacing. When rhythm, movement shape and body position are pre-set at the surface, the receiver experiences a less radical change at the moment of submerging. The coursework begins taking Watsu’s Basic Moves underwater and extends this idea to the whole session, introducing a variety of takedown moves from the repertoire of the Healing Dance. From the feedback of practitioners working with *Above and Below* we know that it is indeed making going under possible for people previously unable to allow themselves to be submerged. Taking the moves below the surface becomes a fluid dance, bringing the receiver to a place where there is no need of breath and bringing the giver to a joy in movement and presence. This class offers a copious toolbox of moves that are simple, elegant and intriguing to enrich your
experience in the underwater. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

**Healing Dance Shape and Space**

*Shape and Space* is the fourth Healing Dance level to come into existence after the *Healing Dance I, II and Above and Below* trainings. It is made up mostly of material Alexander had developed as early as 1993 and first taught in the US and in Europe as an advanced level of WaterDance. *Shape and Space* consists of a beautiful and exciting repertoire of moves and an exploration of underwater improvisation. It is a collection of dives that embody a language with its own grammar and syntax. The key idea in *Shape and Space* is learning how to create pure, generous movement shapes that convey the receiver across the length and breadth of the pool, speaking their embedded messages to the receiver. The movements of *Shape and Space* are rooted in human developmental movement; in the animal movement of dolphins, seals, and snakes; in elemental movement patterns seen in flowing water, and in archetypal positions that reflect our biological genesis and relation to spirit. In addition, *Shape and Space* explores the art of adapting to and facilitating the interactive receiver. *Shape and Space* is for those practitioners who believe in the healing power of movement and want to learn how to dance with their receivers in the water. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

**Healing Dance 100**

*Healing Dance 100* was created by Alexander in 2009. It consists of two 50 hour modules, *Aquatic Basics* and *Healing Dance Essentials*, taught over two weeks and is intended for spa environments and clinics. It leads to certification as a Healing Dance Provider. *Aquatic Basics* addresses the needs of spa clienteles and special populations, enabling Providers to accommodate first-time water clients as well as those ready to receive Healing Dance in its fullness. The „noodle work“ it includes is for receivers who initially require more space and time to accustom themselves to the water, who are not quite ready to be held in the arms of the practitioner. The Training Sequence educates Providers in the basics of aquatic technique and is suitable for clients ready to be held and moved through simpler figures that require not so much flexibility and surrender. The Healing Dance material introduced in *Aquatic Basics* consists of hydrodynamic waves, flowing transitions, releases and nurturing holds. The second module, *Healing Dance Essentials*, consists entirely of Healing Dance, encompassing in an abbreviated sequence some essential movements from Healing Dance’s two longer surface trainings. These include a few of the favorites of receivers, such as the Matador, Vortex, and Pegasus, as well as further waves, figure eights, releases, holds and moves incorporating massage.
The land work for Healing Dance 100 covers such important topics as body mechanics, quality of touch, presence, breath, ethics and healing dance principles, so that Providers are thoroughly prepared to treat their clients. A written and photo manual are provided and a DVD of the sequence is made available.

**The Golden Oldies**

It is said that in the making of a movie, there will be blood on the editing room floor, meaning that good scenes have to be cut. And so it was with the Healing Dance trainings over the years. A lot of moves got cut from the sequences, not because they didn't have merit, but because the courses needed to be stream-lined. *The Golden Oldies* is a potpourri of techniques resurrected from the editing room floor that can have a place in your sessions. Many of the moves have three-dimensional shapes, traveling not only on the horizontal plane but deep and shallow, as well. This use of the depth of the water reflects the early influence of WaterDance. One of the sequences was designed for the ultra-buoyant receiver, while others require a fair degree of flexibility. And out of nostalgia we have included some fun stuff that isn't strictly professional, yes those crazy moves that were of dubious therapeutic value but carry the original flavor of Healing Dance before it was tamed. A written manual is provided.

**Relating & Mirroring**

*Relating & Mirroring* is a three day course focusing on perhaps the most important aspect of aquatic bodywork: that our receivers feel felt, and that as givers we are able to truly feel and mirror them in all dimensions—physical, emotional and spiritual. The recent discovery of mirror neurons in the brain has provided our generation with a scientific basis for empathy. In the training we will delve into this neurophysiological phenomena underlying our social interactions before focusing on how it translates into the water. On land we will experiment with dance mirroring exercises, authentic movement and exercises to fine-tune presence. In the water we will develop the skills and perceptual framework to follow and support receivers in their movement and stillness. The principles we will explore include using the water, joining, extending, supporting, taking over, keeping up, staying in flow, setting impulses and giving space.

Not only will the course train us to better accompany our receivers, but it will also offer a setting in which we ourselves as receivers may allow our own unwinding and soul dance to unfold. Additionally, we will practice the verbal skills to create the invitation and safe framework for our receivers to flow into their own movement impulses.
Body Mechanics

Correct body mechanics serve both giver and receiver. With a good technical foundation, a practitioner supports sensitively and effectively, moves flowingly, and relaxes. Giving sessions is enjoyable. Under these conditions, a receiver is more likely to have an experience that is pleasurable, nurturing, effective as bodywork, and spacious for inner exploration.

If a client is particularly heavy in the water or cumbersome to work with, a knowledge of body mechanics reduces or prevents muscular soreness and injury. Tall men with long arms have an easier time with the aquatic techniques than short buoyant women. Yet, the judicious use of floats and weights enables even a petite women to practice aquatic bodywork successfully and offer her unique presence and quality of compassion.

Some physiques are more prone to injury than others, being more mutable and less substantial. Those of a sturdier build, born to the profession, with greater vitality and stamina will not need to pay as much attention to how they execute moves, to pacing, or to adjusting to heavy or large clients. Nevertheless, understanding how to economize on energy and honor the body will extend an active, injury-free career.

For the bodyworker, injuries are often part of the path by which honoring of self and refinement of approach are learned. Many of my colleagues have shared how physical troubles arising through massage became their teacher, directing them into gentler, more energy-oriented modalities. Bodyworkers are drawn into aquatic bodywork for the same reasons. It is kinder to the practitioner, but even so can be difficult, even injurious without practicing proper body mechanics, compensating for one’s limitations and adapting the work to the client.

The practitioner’s movement most resembles Tai Chi. His postures, slow and deliberate tempo, meditative mood, and awareness of the breath are much like the practice moves of this Chinese martial art. The first four principles of body mechanics have much in common with Tai Chi. Let’s have a look.

1) **standing up, sinking down**

The stance taken has the feet about two shoulder widths apart, toes pointing diagonally forward. The knees bend forward over them, the hips drop down and the spine ascends vertical to the pelvis. This is the Horse Stance of Tai Chi, only wider. The buoyancy of water makes this wider stance possible without the effort it would cost us on land. Giver and receiver share a common center of gravity that is quite high and often lying outside of either body. A top-heavy and unstable structure is the outcome. This *extra broad base* then, gives the added stability needed to move another at chest level. Stand like a mountain.
Buoyancy is the key factor affecting body mechanics in water. Reduced groundedness is the drawback to buoyancy; its blessing is the ease with which it allows us to support another. When bending the knees and immersing up to the chin, the body is lighter, gaining buoyancy. Standing up in the water, the body gains weight. Standing up or working in shallow water increases groundedness on the pool bottom and hence the leverage to move. Sinking low or working in deep water produces the opposite effect. A tall man in shallow water is much less disadvantaged than a short woman in deep water. He must take uncomfortably wide stances or kneel, even. Our short woman in deep water, however, can only put on ankle weights and keep it simple.

When to stand up or go shallow? In the Near Leg Variations, certainly. In order for partner to roll away, the near shoulder needs space to pop through under your armpit and you need to be able to lean out over the leg. In the Tango Sequence is another time when shallower water is called for—in your wide stance you won’t be able to keep the client’s mouth out of the water if it is too deep.

When to sink low or go deep? In the Seaweed Sequences, of course, where the stance is at its widest. In general, it is good practice to drop down, working low in the water. I refer to this as ‘crocodile style’, expending less energy in maintaining your own posture or in supporting out of the water body parts that don’t belong to you.

2) weight shifts

The weight shift is a push off from one leg to the other. Leverage is dependent upon the feet having traction on the pool bottom. The push begins isometrically, overcoming inertia. Once movement begins it acquires momentum. As the weight transfer finishes and stabilizes on the second leg, the knee bends to absorb force. The initial push is on a downward diagonal, producing a lateral displacement of the body in the opposite direction. The leg communicates its force to the pelvis. The trunk rides across above the pelvis. Muscles of the torso contract isometrically to keep it balanced over the pelvis against the displacing factor of water resistance. The stabilizing contraction of the torso also provides solid leverage for the arms to support and move partner.

3) hip rotations

Typically, a weight transfer combines with pelvic rotation. The pelvis rotates in toward the femur of the leg receiving the weight. Rather like a bullfighter turning with a cape, the movement may then continue around farther to create a longer arc. When we generate movement from the legs and hips in this way, the arms and back are not overburdened. The arms remain directly in front of the
shoulders. If they are not it means the spine is twisting, which is destabilizing to vertebral alignment and straining to the back muscles.

Gravity is fully operative in water. The buoyant force in water counters gravity. (It is an outcome of gravity, actually, a result of water pressure increasing with depth.) Holding objects or people up in water is easier than on land, but moving them laterally is more difficult--the mass of objects encounters the greater viscosity water has than that of air. The power to move partner sideways through the water comes from shifting the weight from leg to leg, rotating the pelvis, and stabilizing the back and arms. Twisting the back is faulty body mechanics as it burdens the deep paravertebral rotaters with the task of shifting partner’s entire body mass, a role for which they were never designed.

4) steps

A weight shift often broadens into a step, either to the front, side or back. By taking a large, deep step backwards followed by a swiveling weight shift, the rotating weight shift develops further. Now an even longer lasting, more extended movement can be given before turning back in the opposite direction. The step is taken softly, toe first, for a jarring heel on the pool bottom can be felt right up through the giver’s body by the receiver. The foot actually slides lightly in contact with the bottom. The challenge in taking steps in the water is to maintain back and hip placement while traveling. Destabilizing factors are 1) the giving up and refinding of support, and 2) the water resistance offered by the mass of partner’s body and our own.

Countering the forces that destabilize, we consciously create a chain of leverage beginning with the pool bottom and passing sequentially through the ankles, knees, hips, spine, shoulder joints, elbows and wrists to the hands. The elbows are often braced against the sides of the ribcage like dolphine flippers to more efficiently translate the power of the torso through to the hands. This chain, in its totality, allows as little extraneous movement as possible, investing more energy in stabilization rather than in manipulation through space; we just move along and take partner with us, in effect, moving by example.

With every step, whether on land or in water, the nervous system is making adjustments without conscious involvement. However in water, these skills must first be learned and imprinted before they become automatic. Small backing up "Geisha" steps are another way to travel. Whether taking large or small steps backwards, avoid arching your back or laying partner on your chest; these are biomechanically unsound positions in which to support weight. Leaning back is safe, however, when done with a "neutral back", that is with the back straight and the pelvis tilted under.
Weaving backwards and stepping in circles distinguish the body mechanics of the Healing Dance from those of the Expanded Flow. The Healing Dance simply moves more in space. When traveling backwards, a beneficial low pressure area is generated immediately in front of the giver in which the receiver rides, a sort of “water pocket”, similar to the draft created by lead cars and bicyclists in races. The giver may visualize that she cuts a canyon through the water and pulls her partner between its walls. By traveling quickly, the giver generates “virtual currents” in which the receiver rides. These sustain her at the surface, (an example of the “surfboard effect”) while leaving much of her body free to wave. The turbulence of the water on the skin surface contributes toward inducing trance through sensory overload and quite possibly cleanses the aura, like standing in a shower. There is also a sense of going forward, of leaving the old behind. Waves and spirals performed while travelling backwards release blocked energy, channeling it out the feet. The legs become more like a fin or tail, bringing some people back to earlier developmental states.

On land it is more efficient walking forwards than backwards. In water the reverse is true; walking backwards is clearly an easier and faster mode to travel. Why is this? First of all, our weight is already falling backwards effortlessly. Secondly, the back is more hydrodynamic than the front of the torso, allowing water to slip around it more easily. When we walk to the front our thigh leads, but in walking backwards the heel is the first part of the body to cut through the water, and it offers considerably less resistance. In contrast to walking forward in water, the foot is in complete contact with the bottom for a longer time when walking backwards, resulting in more leverage and hence more push from the bottom to power the walk.

The step is a metaphor for transition and uncertainty. From a place of familiarity and support, a step reaches out into new territory, already reducing support by half. It then falls into the unknown, where it is necessary to re-establish balance and security. Steps present the greatest body mechanics challenge for students to master, just as transitions are the most difficult of life phases.

5) creative imbalance or dynamic equilibrium

Walking on land entails a fall forward onto the foot receiving the body’s weight. Moving in water also includes an off balance phase. Yet moving in water is not at all the same as on land. It is much slower due to the viscosity of water meeting the mass of the bodies of giver and receiver. In water a practitioner can lean and fall sideways or backwards and still have plenty of time to smoothly recover equilibrium. This enables a new logic of moving: conscious slow motion falling, or what I term creative imbalance. It is the most effortless way to generate movement. The practitioner’s own body weight transmits movement to partner.
The fall begins with the head at the top of the vertebral column. As it tilts in the desired direction, the vertebrae, one by one from the top down join in the movement, like a stack of blocks tumbling. Furthermore, a vestibular mediated reflex activates in which the leg tenses in the direction of a head tilt in preparation for receiving the body’s weight.

We don’t always need to be on balance. Life is lived less as a stability than as a constant process of course correction, of zig zagging; one movement arising out of the next. Equilibrium then is a process, not the static moments of weight centeredness. Natural movement is alternately losing and recovering balance. What shall we call it? Creative imbalance or dynamic equilibrium?

6) just do half

The water buoys up the receiver. Overcoming the fear of dunking partner and trusting the water to help is a stage in the development of technique. An experienced practitioner does not over-support, but allows the water to do half the work. Water and practitioner form a team. You may think of yourself as an extension of the water, becoming like water, even identifying with the water. Similarly, you need only do half the movement: when given an impulse, the body will follow through. Our role in offering movement includes allowing partner the time and space to continue moving freely, lightly, and weightlessly on her own. This entails observing and placing our mind in our partner’s body, even becoming our partner. In summary, let the water do half the work, let the body do half the movement; or in other words, be the water, be the receiver.

7) breath

Staying fluid is achieved by breathing into the belly and relaxing the entire body. It is especially important that the upper body not get rigid with tension. Tension in the upper body crystallizes the physical structure, making it top heavy, less grounded and more liable to topple off balance. Exhaling and sinking is a way to release stress and stay in touch with surrender, the quality most important for a practitioner to model.

Breath can not only relax and ground, it can be a source of movement. By entering an intuitive, non-thinking state, breathing synchronizes with movement and actually becomes a source of movement. Ueshiba Morihei, the founder of Aikido, taught that through the breath we can be in tune with other people and with our surroundings. This is “kokyu”, or the Breath of Life, the fundamental rhythm of life that energizes and fills the universe. It is equally attainable in aquatic bodywork as in Aikido.
8) **ideokinesis**

The Greek roots of this word stand for "idea" and "movement". Ideokinesis is the concept developed by Lulu Schweigaard describing the process whereby an idea held in the mind is executed in movement without the doer consciously knowing the means. One need only have a picture of a movement, and the nervous system recruits all the right muscles to perform it in the most economical fashion. Another way to state this principle would be, "Visualize movement shapes as you work."

9) **scanning**

Years ago, I learned a way to check and improve body mechanics from one of my ballet teachers. It consists of mentally roaming through the body and monitoring what is going on. The purpose of this continual head to foot "scanning" is to keep correct placement, timing, coordination, breathing, etc. It is a way of refreshing and restoring muscular responses, for instance, as they begin to fatigue. Over time, with enough reinforcement, all these responses become second nature, like walking, and require little maintenance.

Insofar as aquatic bodywork is movement with its own body mechanics, the same technique of scanning can be used, but with one improvement: we ask a question. It is the nature of the universe to respond immediately to a question; several New Age healing modalities work on this principle. In the Trager Approach, for example, we ask ourselves as we work, "What could be lighter? What could be freer?" With an inquiring, curious mind, our attitude to the receiver produces a receptivity and attunement to a response, thereby evoking one. The bodymind’s answer is non-verbal—it is biological, a letting go, a shift in physiology. This operates reflexively, too, when we ask ourselves such questions as, "Am I grounded in my breath?" "Is my body in comfort and flow?" "Am I effortlessly present?"

Having a wondering attitude produces results without any conscious action on our part. I offer scanning to you as a tool. If you decide to use it, imagine how you would like to work. Envision your approach, how you wish to relate to the receiver, how you wish your body to feel. Formulate questions to ask yourself if it is happening.

10) **get the power from as low down as possible.**

When moving in water, we counter the forces that destabilize by consciously creating a chain of leverage beginning with the pool bottom and passing sequentially through the ankles, knees, hips, spine, shoulder joints, elbows and wrists to the hands. The elbows are often braced against the sides of the ribcage like dolphin flippers to more efficiently translate the power of the torso through to
the hands. Each part of the body has a role to fulfill. If strength and control are not present low in the body, the higher segments must work extra hard to compensate. Dancers of ballet strengthen their feet and legs more so than in any other form of movement. This frees their torsos and especially their arms to relax and express. Ballet dancers thrust down into the ground to jump up, to move laterally or to maintain equilibrium. Practitioners of Tai Chi sink their weight downward. Depending on how yang or yin a given movement is, you will be somewhere between these two poles of thrusting and sinking. This chain, in its totality, allows as little extraneous movement as possible, investing more energy in stabilization rather than in manipulation through space; we just move along and take partner with us, in effect, moving by example

11) Dance!

The final word on body mechanics points beyond what has been touched upon so far. In dance, technique is learned to be forgotten; in performance one gives oneself to the dance. “Just dance it,” says the coach to the dancer heading on-stage. He might add, “Don’t think, don’t worry, just do it.” We each have a very private mode of being which, from the outside, appears as movement and is called “dancing”. Perhaps it is a way of entering into the Greater Flow or the Universal Ecstasy. Whatever it is, this dance has a rightness and power to it. It expands us and attunes us to our environment. The imagery around dance is endless: “Dance with yourself, dance with your partner, dance with the water, dance in the Light, dance with the blocks, dance from the heart,” and so on. In short, dance your Healing Dance!!

(For a more detailed explanation of body mechanics in water see my article, The Water Sutras of Nadar Xeel, at http://aquaticwritings.tripod.com/tch_watersutrasintro.htm in the Teaching section.)
Terminology

Positions of the Receiver

First Position 1st
First Position derives from Watsu. It is the position in which we initially float our receiver in Healing Dance. We say, "First Position on the right side," meaning partner's head is supported in our right arm. In First Position, the near arm is always under our arm supporting the head and around behind our back. If the near arm were floating in front of the giver, it would not be First Position. We stand in the Horse stance to support partner in First Position.

Under Head Position UH
Under Head Position also comes from Watsu. The giver is under the head of the receiver; the receiver's head rests on either shoulder of the giver. It is necessarily a position low in the water for the giver, meaning he must spread his legs farther apart or stand in deeper water. When the legs are spread wide apart in a Horse stance, he must take care not to lean backwards or hyperextend his lower back.

Free Float Position FF
Free Float is another of Watsu's positions. It signifies that the near arm of the receiver lies in front of the giver. The giver may support the head in his hand or elbow with his head arm. At the beginning of the Healing Dance I sequence, in the Arm Wave, Hara Hug and Heart Wave Away, we define the position as Free Float because the near arm lies in front of the giver.

Stances

Horse Stance H
The Horse stance in water is adapted from Tai Chi. In this stance the feet are placed slightly wider than the shoulders and angled approximately 45° out to the sides, depending on the degree of outward rotation in the hip sockets. Through using the lumbrical muscles, the toes are flat on the floor and the metatarsal arch well supported. The balls of the feet and the heels form a stable quadrilateral base. If the feet were to be externally rotated too far, the balls of the feet and the heels would lie more on a line, making balance less secure. If
the feet are internally rotated too far, the degree of hip rotation in weight transfers is limited. The knees are bent and aligned over the toes. Visualizing length in the inner thigh helps maintain this alignment. The pelvis drops down, tilted slightly under (retroversion) so the lower back may lengthen. The entire spine ascends vertically up to the head, which balances between the shoulders, tilted slightly forward to mirror the tilt of the pelvis. The shoulders drop down as the arms float up. The chest lifts and expands into the arms.

**Warrior Stance**  
The Warrior stance is another Tai Chi pose transposed into water. It has a front and back leg. The front foot is directly forward of the hip, flat on the bottom, pointing to the front, the knee bent and aligned over it. The back leg is behind and slightly out to the side of its hip, contacting the bottom with the ball of the foot only. The back knee is bent beneath the pelvis so that the back thigh descends vertically, giving support to the back. The Warrior stance is a more dynamic pose than the Horse Stance. The back foot is halfway into a step, poised to rock forward or back. This stance is not suited for sideways rocking or rotations. Think of the warrior who either advances or retreats, but does not expose his flank to the enemy. The ball of the back foot placed out to the side creates a triangular base, conferring stability on the stance.

**Weight Transfers**

**Lateral Weight Transfer in Horse Stance**  
This is a push from one leg straight across to the other in the Horse stance. In this practice sequence we use it to do the Near Leg Flexion and Circles.

**Hip 8 in Horse Stance**  
The giver's hips describe a figure eight in this weight transfer from leg to leg. The weight crosses on a diagonal from back to front, giving the eight a direction. It is used in Carmen Miranda to provide the size and power to the quick, Trager-like rolling and rocking of the receiver.

**Rotation of 180° from Warrior to Horse to Warrior**  
This weight transfer involves pivoting and readjusting of the feet on the bottom. It is used in the Near Leg 8 movement. In the pivot from Warrior to Horse, the heel of the back foot lowers to the ground and the front foot pivots on the heel. As the rotation continues, the new front foot pivots on its heel as the heel of the
now back foot lifts off the bottom in a pivot on the ball of the foot. Easier done than said.

**Rotation of 90° from Horse to Warrior**  
This rotation is the footwork used in the transition movement into the Under Knees. The weight goes over the front foot of the Warrior and the back heel lifts off the bottom as that foot pivots on its ball.

**Rotation of 180° from Warrior to Warrior**  
This is the “express” rotation, without a stop in Horse in the middle. From a Warrior Stance, push straight back from the front leg until that knee is straight. Your weight will be over the back leg completely, which is bent at the knee and with the heel off the ground. Then continue to push from the front leg to assist a pivot on the ball of the back foot, all the way around to the other direction. Place the heel on the ground as you face in the new direction and shift the new back leg out to the side slightly, so that your Warrior is not over-crossed. To sum up: “Push straight back, pivot, heel down, adjust.”

**Steps**

**Geisha steps**  
Geisha steps are taken backwards in circles and figure eight's in Healing Dance. The giver sits down and falls off balance backwards, pulling his partner along with him. The ball of the foot contacts the pool bottom first, before the heel, so that there is a gliding, impactless quality to the steps. Thus the giver conceals his technique. Geisha steps walking forward also belong to Healing Dance technique. These Front Geishas are used in some of the underwater moves for added speed.

**Godzilla Steps**  
Like Geisha steps, Godzilla steps are taken backwards. Instead of traveling straight backwards, as is the case with Geisha steps, Godzilla steps have the giver weaving diagonally backwards, each step at a 45° angle to the back. Like Geisha steps, Godzilla steps are without impact; the giver remains at the same level in the water.
Crab Walks \( bC \ fC \)
Crab Walks travel sideways. They consist of one step to the side, opening the legs, and one step crossing behind or crossing in front, giving us Back Crab Walks and Front Crab Walks respectively. Back Crab Walks are used in the Healing Dance II particularly to create Spirals. The Front Crab we know from the Matador and Vortex.

The Cross \( + \)
The Cross appears at the beginning of the Basic Sequence in the Trance Waves. It consists of a step to the side with a turn of 90° into Warrior Stance. A step backwards on the back leg to the center follows. The front foot just slides in under you, ready to repeat the same step. This pattern repeats itself to describe a cross. It gives the means to impart a traveling, symmetrical lateral wave to the body in a small space.

Arm Techniques

Neutral Support
Neutral support signifies that the body is being maintained at the surface, but not given traction.

Traction \( \rightarrow \)
The term traction signifies an active lengthening on the part of the giver. The head may be tractioned to resolve cervical hyperextension or simply to prevent it from occurring. The pelvis may be tractioned to keep the lower back lengthened. A leg may be tractioned at the hip socket for the stretch to the periarticular muscles there.

Countertraction \( \leftrightarrow \)
Countertraction occurs when two tractions take place at the same time in opposite directions. The two tractions then synergize, becoming more effective than they could have been alone.

Hand Mirror
This move is der Handspiegel, developed by our German water cousins. It is a transition technique, that combined with turning on oneself, maintains the legs
afloat, so that the hip hand can change grips. The Hand Mirror is so named because the palm of the head hand lifts out of the water, turned toward the giver, as if he were looking in a mirror. This drops the elbow and catches the head in the crook of the elbow. The arm is then open 90° to the side, sweeping the receiver past and rolling her body in toward the giver, in effect bringing both knees within easy grasping range.

Hummus Dip
This is the name that Ayal Shifron christened the transitional move that catches under both knees to come into the Accordion. Implied is that one dips one's shoulder deep into the water and scoops deep under the legs with the foot arm. One dips deeper into the hummus than the tchina, no?

Assist Position
The assist position is a hand placement possible to do with either head hand or foot hand. The hand is placed directly on the spine between the shoulder blades. In the Heart Waves it complements the hand on the heart to create a 'sandwich' and give the leverage to wave the body. In the Wave in a Circle it levers the body around powerfully, giving an arch to the back.

Undergrip UG
When we hold a body part from beneath, it is called an undergrip. Most grips in surface techniques are undergrips, holding the body at the surface, preventing it from sinking. The John the Baptist or Platter grip, for instance is an undergrip.

Overgrip OG
Overgrips originated with WaterDance. A wrist, leg, head or hip may be held from above in an overgrip. Submerging the receiver is thereby facilitated as well as placing the shins across the giver's belly. Also, when holding the body with overgrips, the giver may stand up higher out of the water to generate speed in Whirlpools, Parachutes and Figure Eight's.

Head Holds

Cradle
The Cradle hold uses both hands. They form a bowl or cradle beneath the back of the head, supporting the head from underneath in a face up position. The
practitioner stands above the head and does backward traveling Head Waves or a Whirlpool 8 with this grip.

“Horns of the Bull”
This hand position is done with one hand. The palm is face down. The thumb is separate from the rest of the fingers; the occiput lies between them. The thumb tractions the near side of the occiput, the fingers traction the far side of the bone. The Horns of the Bull hold is used in El Matador and in the Vortex.

"Yo!"
This is a refinement of the Horns of the Bull, what we do in the position. It is like the rapper gesture of flexing the wrist forward, hence the name. By flexing the wrist slightly, so that the fingers come into alignment with the forearm you can extend the neck even in arched positions. Be careful not to dig your fingertips into the delicate suboccipital flesh.

John the Baptist
This irreverent reference to the Preacher in the Wilderness signifies the hold in which the side or back of the head is supported in a single, palm up hand, as if on a platter. In this training we use John the Baptist in Swing In.

Monkey Frisbee
The Monkey Frisbee hold is done with one hand. Like the Horns of the Bull grip, the thumb is on the opposite side of the occiput from the fingers. The thumb is on the far side and the hand palms the occiput with the elbow out of the water, as in the Head Hug or the Monkey Frisbee 8. The name refers to the overall arm position which suggests a monkey torn between scratching its armpit and tossing a Frisbee.

**Body parts:**

Head foot
The foot of the giver nearest the receiver's head in any given position.

Foot foot
The foot of the giver nearest the receiver's foot in any given position.

Near leg/side/arm
The leg/side/arm nearest the giver in any given position.
Far Leg/Arm, side
The leg/side/arm farthest from the giver in any given position.

Standing side
When standing on one leg after a weight transfer, it is the side of the torso over that leg. For example, if the weight is entirely on the right leg, the right half of the trunk is the standing side. Awareness of the connection between the standing side and the standing leg assists in balance.

Directions:

Headwards
A movement in the direction of the receiver's head.

Footwards
A movement in the direction of the receiver's feet.

 Rolled Toward
A movement in which the front of the receiver faces in toward the giver. In some cases, as in the Hip Waves and the Round and Arch movements, the body is rolled a full 90° in toward the receiver. In the Heart Wave Toward the receiver's chest is maintained open by keeping her slightly face up, not fully on her side.

 Rolled Away
A movement in which the front of the receiver faces out away from the giver. In the Hara Hug the receiver is completely on her side, rolled away. In the Heart Wave Away she is a few degrees face up from being on her side, so that the shoulder does not drop forward and the chest remains open.
Finessing the Head

Introduction

Over 12% of Americans suffer from neck and head pain and dysfunction. Aquatic bodywork has the potential to alleviate these conditions, or to aggravate them when practiced without awareness. The greater a joint’s range of motion, the greater its susceptibility to injury. The shoulder and knee are the most flexible joints and, logically, the most often injured joints. The cervicals, from the atlanto-occipital joint down to the C6-C7 intervertebral joint, form the most mobile segment of the spine. The upper segment of the neck is anatomically and functionally distinct. It consists of the atlanto-occipital and the atlanto-axial joints. Their combined range of motion in flexion-extension and rotation equal that of the sum of the remaining neck joints. This is to say that the neck, already quite mobile, is even more so in its upper, suboccipital segment. It requires special attention in the form of certain support, stabilization and traction.

In aquatic bodywork, the neck is more vulnerable to misapplied technique than any other area of the body. It is not designed to lie passively, face up in water. The neck is designed for action, primarily in the vertical, bipedal stance. The muscles crossing its suboccipital segment (suboccipitals, longus cervicis, rectus capitis anterior and rectus capitis lateralis) have the strength to stabilize and move the head in a balanced vertical alignment. They are not equipped for sustained periods suspended backwards without head support, as in the water. In this case, your support takes over for the muscles.

A certain amount of cervical lordosis is natural. It promotes a level bite, the equilibrium of the head anterior to the fulcrum point of the occipital condyles, and the normal, level gaze of the eyes. Reid’s base line, from the inferior margin of orbit through the center of the auditory canal and the center of occipital bone, will be horizontal when the neck has a slight, posterior concavity.

Some receiver’s are extremely sensitive to the slightest degree of neck hyperextension in the water. Others are quite comfortable with a bit of extension through the neck, even arching into the position. (Embarrassing for a teacher demonstrating to a class how to keep the neck correctly aligned. Been there.) When cervical lordosis becomes accentuated through misapplied support in the middle of the neck, rather than tractioning at the juncture of the neck and skull, discomfort is immediate. In almost all cases of hyperextension, your responsibility is to resolve it with traction and by repositioning your arm, if necessary.
1. **Keep the ears in the water.**

   Unless one or both ears are submerged, the head is over-supported. Over-support of the head occurs as an expression of caring by beginners until they clarify their technique. When the head becomes “weighted”, the neck tends not to release completely, for as James McMillan, the founder of the Halliwick Method formulated, tone is a function of weight. This means that so long as the proprioceptors sense weight, muscle tone is maintained. Therefore, when the head is held out of the water, tone in the neck muscles is generated. So let it ride low, with the water line covering the ears, but not too close to the corners of the eyes. Sense the weight of the head and the degree to which the water can support this weight. (Because the body’s specific gravity averages less than that of water, (0.974), nearly 100% of body weight is supported by the water.) Think of being in **teamship** with the water; then, trusting its buoyancy and letting it do most of the work. To sum up, “Wet ears are happy ears.”

2. **Soften your hands and arms.**

   When holding the head in your hand, relax your palm and fingers. The flats of the fingers rather than the fingertips receive the weight. Pressure from the fingertips is too “pointy”. Let your hands disappear. Some givers’ arms will be inherently more comfortable than others. Arms range from thin and bony, to full and muscular/fatty. They vary in comfort as much as a straight backed wooden chair does from a well-upholstered sofa. Givers with bony arms or whose arm muscles are hard-toned may need to experiment in order to find the most comfortable head support for their receivers. Practitioners with ample, comfortable arms will not find it so imperative to refine their technique of support.

3. **Keep your hands and arms off the neck!**

   Holding the neck in your hand allows and even encourages the hypermobile upper segment of the neck to over extend. Instead, support over the atlanto-occipital joint, stabilizing it, or completely up on the occiput. When palming the head in Free Float Position, for example, support exactly under the middle of the occiput.

4. **Avoid abrupt movements.**

   Imagine that partner holds and you wish not to awaken her. Go slowly in transitions and place the head carefully, rather than dropping, tossing or slinging it. Sudden loss of support to the head can trigger protective infantile reflexes (Moro’s reflex and the startle reflex), create discomfort and instill distrust. So, don't fumble the melon!
5. **Head support has three functions.**

The first function of head support is to keep the face above the water line. The second is to traction the neck. The third is to roll the head from side to side. Depending on the move, at least one and sometimes two or three of these ends are served. Neck support is one of the last areas of technique to be understood. It comes only with experience, much experience with many different body types. When a practitioner realizes that each moment matters, that at no time may he fall asleep, that the neck requires more attentiveness than he ever imagined, then he has arrived at the finishing stage. The necks and heads that require the most constant attention throughout a session are precisely those that are most surrendered.

6. **Avoid unsupported head movements.**

When the head is unsupported, it sinks lower with the risk that the nose will go under. The receiver must often participate with protective contraction, which can cause neck strain. On the positive side, such movements give a feeling of freedom. Moving the body laterally, supporting under the back and tractioning the arms out of the water all help sustain the head on the surface. A few seconds in a transition or a short interlude without support are generally okay. Differences between clients are considerable, though. A receiver with a long neck having weak muscles and loose ligaments (a swan neck) needs constant support and traction. The greater thickness of such a neck’s intervertebral discs compounds its hypermobility. A receiver with a short, thickly muscled neck (a bull neck) and limited movement may be quite comfortable for extended periods without support.

7. **Changing the head position.**

Receiving too many repetitions of the same movement leads to discomfort. Conversely, too long a time in the same position is also stressful. Over-stabilization of the neck, not allowing it any small, refreshing movements, also creates discomfort. Let us realize that no position is perfect; slight stresses increase over the course of minutes or seconds even. It is for this reason that people shift positions while sleeping. For the same reason then, change the position of support periodically while sharing aquatic bodywork. If you do so too frequently, though, the result for the receiver is fatigue and strain.

Rolling the head is one way to change the head position. To roll the head away in 1st position, stand up and let it roll from the crook of the elbow onto the forearm. To roll the head towards you, sink down, raise your forearm, and let it roll onto your upper arm. If you push the shoulder down to roll the torso away, you will want to immediately shift your forearm out under the cheek to be there when the head rolls away.
8. **Traction the head on the horizontal in 1st position.**

   For the neck to remain at ease in this move, the ears must stay in the water. Over-supporting the head (lifting it slightly, so the ears are out of the water) is uncomfortable. Also, try to minimize lateral flexion when tractioning the head horizontally. People with long, flexible necks require traction throughout a session. Some necks require almost constant attention.

9. **Traction the head vertically in 1st position.**

   Lift your elbow to make the traction symmetrical as you suspend the body from the head. When you feel some of the body’s weight, you’ll know that a traction is taking place. Don’t compress the neck between your upper arm and forearm; rather catch beneath the occipital ridge. Be careful to lay the head back in the water gently and without submerging the mouth or chin.

   Have a good reason to lift the head out of the water. A vertical traction near the beginning of a session breaks the mood and the automatic cessation of muscle tone. Consider which moves in your personal repertoire lift the head out of the water and what effect they really have.

10. **Cup the ears.**

    When tractioning the head with both hands from the front or back, support under the ears with the heels of the hands, arching the palms around the ears. Doing this prevents an irritating pull on the lobes and elastic cartilages of the ears.

11. **Steering Wheel**

    In the same way as you would hold a car’s steering wheel from opposite sides, hold the head from opposite sides for maximum control and leverage when doing head rolls. The body follows this principle as well, in how the contralaterally placed SCM and splenius capitis muscles pull on opposite mastoid processes to rotate the head. Holding the torso from opposite sides, as in the Hip Wave and in heart sandwich follows the same principle.

12. **Support the head on its side.**

    In the Healing Dance, the head is often supported on its side. This is an acquired skill. Watch the water level. (You can feel the water level on your arm.) When the neck arches in these positions it is not as problematic as when the head is face up. Still, avoid compressing the neck vertebrae by having a sense of traction to your support. And make sure the arm support is across the cheek and not across the neck. Don’t “drape” the neck on the arm, leaving the head to “fall off” over the edge.
13. **Tips for Under Head Position**

Catch and traction the occiput on the superior border of your trapezius muscle. This will be easier if you have broad shoulders and a prominent muscle ridge. Be low in the water so that the head is free to participate in waves coming from lower in the body. Shift your eyes sideways to check neck alignment. Avoid hyperextension and prolonged lateral flexion. Slide the head down onto the chest when both knees are drawn to the chest and the back is rounded.
Suggestions for Beginning a Session

1. **Collect yourself.** Be with your breath, feelings and thoughts. Be fully present in the moment. Ask for a connection with your Higher Self.

2. Enter into relation with the **universal energies.** Feel your gratitude and receptivity to the living earth, to Heaven, and to the embracing water.

3. Enter into relation with your **partner,** expanding your awareness to include her, to become her.

4. **Wait** for movement to begin of itself. True movement is channeled, an expression of a system including yourself, your partner and spirit. Technique and repertoire exist to allow you to respond with greater fluidity to the guidance of spirit.

5. Maintain a **flow,** mirroring the profundity of the nature of life: One Breath, One Life, One Heart, One Movement.

6. Establish a **rhythmic field.** The Healing Dance is silent music experienced as movement in space via the proprioceptors.

How to reduce duality in a session

1. Be in agreement with yourself, get all your parts talking.
2. Communicate before the session with your partner
3. Connect with the living elements of water, earth, air
4. Connect with the Light
5. Breathe with your partner.
6. Establish a “life echo” with partner
7. Move with partner, not upon partner
8. Maintain a flow with smooth transitions
9. Remain present after the finish

Aquatic bodywork is relation.
Movement as Medicine

Living systems heal themselves. The body and psyche can be helped or hindered by external influences, but healing can only come from within. The relationship between therapist and client is a setting of trust and intention for this inner healing to happen. The movements of a session are as affirmations, open doors through which a client chooses to move forward. The healing dance then, is the interaction between therapist and client, between compassion and fear, between movement and entropy. The movements could be understood as revelations to the body, showing what freedom and ease are possible, resonating in the body-mind the lost „pattern of perfection“ it carries. The dance then is between the subliminal message within the movements and the deeper levels of awareness of the receiver.

Belief in the healing power of movement is the basis of this technique. If movement is medicine, then it must be dosed carefully. This entails allowing the right movement to arise at the right moment, in the right rhythm, for the right duration. Intervals of stillness naturally form a part of this dosing concept. In our development and in daily living, parts of us become energetically isolated or distorted. The Shiatsu terms of kyo and jitsu, denoting conditions of depletion and stagnation could apply to the total person as well. Movement, or dance, has the power to re-energize, to break through blockages, to reconnect and balance, to restore a sense of wholeness. The power of dance can shift many conditions.

The therapist is on the lookout for reactions indicating key movements. Sighs, moans, smiles, laughter and tears are all moving in the same direction, back to wholeness. Whatever movements evoke them are significant, shedding light on the mystery of self-distortion. A key movement may also arise from the receiver. In this case our responsibility is to take note and to honor it. By giving it time to play out and even encouraging it, the motivation behind the movement may surface into awareness.

In Healing Dance sessions, the reaction of pleasure has often to do with the experience of beauty. It is beautiful to partake of grace, power, gentleness, freedom, weightlessness and sensitivity in what could be termed passive “received” dance. The receiver experiences herself as Beauty, and Beauty is a manifestation of the Divine. In the presence of Beauty we are exhilarated, quickened, uplifted. Receivers not uncommonly ascend to higher states of consciousness, re-opening a seldom used channel to a state of bliss. In the Indian spiritual tradition, bliss is understood as the natural state of consciousness. “Satchitanand” means “truth is the consciousness of bliss”. Remembering bliss as our true state of being is a powerful lesson; we need not only learn through suffering and pain. The experience of even a moment of
bliss can trigger a reaction to its loss in our lives. A person needs a certain degree of security, however, before painful feelings can surface. The experience of a bliss state can be enough to allow their spontaneous appearance.
Flow, Movement, Position and Transition

Introduction
Flow, movement, position and transition are aspects of life on earth. In the context of aquatic bodywork, how we flow, move, take positions, and make transitions reflects our grasp of the life skills for which these actions are metaphors. Just as the iris, the palm, the pulse, the face, the ear, and the sole of the foot speak the identity of the body eloquently and truthfully; just as our handwriting, voice and posture reveal our psychological reality, so is our movement an accurate portrait of the inner person.

Flow
Flow is that natural state in which one event follows another seamlessly. Flow is the gracefulness of life. It is the continuity of experience, the perfect synchronicity and coordination, that divine quality of rightness in the unfolding. In the natural world, flow is the unbroken continuum by which day blends into night, and physical bodies grow imperceptibly. It is river and wind; it is bone, tendon, and muscle interpenetrating each other; it is blood and lymph circulating in unending cycles; it is one breath following another.

Flow is present in thinking, feeling, being and doing. It is the foundation of dance in which each movement arises out of the previous one. Flow is in the stroke of the painter’s brush, in the melody of a song, and in the spontaneity of speech and writing in which one thought leads effortlessly to the next.

Flow is a quality innate to movement. Movement is symbolic of change, but flow is the principle of collective progress, of a universal interconnectedness. In aquatic bodywork, flow encompasses movement, position and transition. Even when the movement flow would seem to stop in moments of stillness, a subtler inner flow of realization takes over; the flow goes to finer levels. A receiver becomes pregnant with input and must do some integration, some “filing” and sorting out.

Like palm fronds moving to an invisible wind, the body in water shifts and sways to the currents generated by the giver. When the body participates in a movement flow, it releases. In the water, out of the full effect of the gravitational field in which contraction is a given, the body relaxes and assumes positions of innocence, open and undefended. It takes on a beautiful appearance not seen on land. It becomes more like water: simple, responsive, surrendered, and humble.
When the body is in a movement flow, its feeling flow is enhanced. Blockages and resistance tend to dissolve. Feelings begin to flow into and out of each other. One feeling energy overlies another and awakens another as awareness leads to awareness, as sequences of feeling unlock and express. Flowingness within the giver’s being facilitates the receiver entering a flowing state of consciousness. The giver’s capacity to be present with herself, to feel, and to accept the feelings of the other creates a healing space of freedom for the receiver.

Movement
Movement is all pervasive. This universe expands and contracts in a vast in and out breathing. Its galaxies swirl about their axes. The planets revolve around the sun. Mother Earth rotates about her axis as her oceans and atmosphere flow in unending currents. The earth body is in constant flux as the tectonic plates slide and shift above deeper molten currents. This dance of the macrocosm is mirrored in the microcosm in the inconceivably rapid motion of molecules, atoms and subatomic particles. All the seemingly inanimate structures of nature move.

Every sentient creature experiences movement, even those of the plant kingdom rooted in the ground. We human beings with our nerves, muscles, bones and joints are most certainly designed to move. Movement is so fundamental to our existence that we take it for granted until an injury or illness immobilizes us. It is the major underlying assumption in our daily lives.

Movement is more to us than survival, however; it is our pleasure, exhilaration and joy as we play and engage in sports. Even the passive experience of movement is thrilling as we sail, hang glide, ride in roller coasters and sports cars. We enjoy the speed and power, feel the wind rush by, the past sloughs off, and are alive in the moment. This renewal and refreshment is even more pronounced in dancing, with its added dimension of self-expression. The creativity, release of bound energies, and spontaneity of dance qualify it as healing.

Yet, movement has an even more profound function than pleasure or healing: it is essential to the normal neurological development of both humans and animals. From infancy on we progress through developmental stages of movement which parallel the evolutionary ascent of the species. These begin with the "fish" undulation of the spine and culminate in a mammalian cross-crawl, whereby we continue to integrate the right and left brain halves on into adult life in such activities as walking, running and swimming.

Movement gives us a presence we can surrender to, as when an infant lets sleep come over it as its crib is rocked. Just as we nestle into the security of the ongoing rhythm of our breath, of night and day, and of the
seasons, so creating a rhythmic and cyclic movement environment in aquatic bodywork offers a secure nest, something we can trust, something we can enter into.

A cycle is movement within a repeating pattern of relative stability. The major elements of human existence, such as work, relationship and health, follow cycles. Likewise, the rounded, water-like movements of Healing Dance are cyclic. These are waves, spirals, circles and figure eight's. These movements are sacred, *experiential spatial mandalas*. Executed with awareness, as a sacrament, they can be a teaching in themselves. Thus, they are also self-extinguishing. As a cycle repeats, the receiver takes it in, uses it in some way, and becomes ripe to move on to new experience. The giver senses this and allows the next thing to happen. As we move in tune with our partner, we might ask ourselves, "What is partner to experience now? What is to come?"

**Position**

Position is a place to linger, a pause on a journey. Position is a snapshot in time, a temporary resting place. A physical position may appear to our limited senses to be still, but our expanded awareness registers the movement of the cosmos in which we are all passengers. The earth, solar system and galaxy each spiral through the universe: our position in space is ever changing. The body’s internal processes are likewise never still, even when asleep, nor does the psyche ever pause from its constant activity in other dimensions. Stillness is illusion; *Reality is movement.*

In aquatic bodywork, as in the “big picture”, positions move. We could think of positions as staging points for movements, giving us different leverages to move the receiver. Unique to our work in the water are movements which integrate stability and change, whereby part of the body is securely anchored in nurturing contact with the giver while the rest waves and stretches. The contact with the receiver via the hands, arms, chest, neck, head, and legs defines each position and contributes to its particular emotional flavor. The positions of the Healing Dance range from minimal touch and intrusion of the practitioner’s presence to full body embraces that envelop the receiver in touch.

All positions may be considered as *sanctuaries*, glowing with heart, devotion, a refuge from the turbulence of the world, a safe harbor imbued with the protective maternal qualities. The positions in which we feel comfortable as giver or receiver provide a measure of our capacity to give and receive loving nurture. The practitioner who only briefly
embraces and holds his receivers or the receiver who cannot enjoy the comforting closeness may each be able to learn something from their preferences and dislikes.

**Transition**

Life transitions are one of the trickiest areas of experience to flow through. They entail realization of the necessity to change, trust in the unknown, release of the old, reaching toward the new, and finally establishing a new balance and stability. There is uncertainty and risk inherent in transitions, but they are necessary in order to advance. Transitions have so much to teach us. A successfully accomplished transition is so exhilarating, a victory! In the symbolism of the I-Ching, we cross the Great Water and are forever changed. In aquatic bodywork as in life, transitions are probably the most difficult part of technique and at the same time the key to mastery. In the water, transitions relinquish one position for the next. The hands must let go. The hands and holding are symbolic of manipulation and control. As in climbing a ladder, we must release each rung to attain the next, we must lift our foot away and find the next rung. Fear of change distorts movement, either inhibiting it or rushing it. Rather than a leisurely walk in the park, the transition becomes a hastening through a dark alley, hand on the mace. One student freezes, fumbles or goes blank, the other tosses the head or dunks it. Early life transitions seem to have an effect on students’ “transition styles”. The divorcing of parents, the death of close ones, moving to another country or school, all happening when we hadn’t the resources to cope can leave their impact. How regretfully easy it is for a child to experience change as loss.

An examination of beliefs about life transitions can be useful to the student experiencing difficulties with them in the water. Graceful transitions come with the belief that they **belong** to the flow and are not cruel accidents to be avoided. On the level of technique, we must learn them as separate moves outside the repeating movement cycles, but in our minds we need to **re-integrate** them back into the flow. Here are some tips:

1. Imagine your partner is asleep and you wish not to awaken her.
2. Some transitions require directness and speed; others are best performed slowly. Know which are which.
3. The body stays afloat when pulled by the head.
4. The body rolls most easily when it is aligned around its longitudinal axis.
5. Catching a leg or stepping in must be done at exactly the right moment in the movement flow.
6. Our own body mechanics of turning, traveling, sinking and rising must be exactly timed to the spatial behavior of partner.
7. As in life, faith in self, vision of the goal, and courage are helpful to cultivate.
8. “It’s easy,” makes a good mantram.
Lightness, Weightlessness, and Sensitivity

Buoyancy is water’s gift to humankind and to all water-loving creatures. With buoyancy, aquatic bodywork becomes possible; we are able to easily support a person in our arms for extended periods. Receivers sense this ease and feel light, sometimes remembering times in their childhood and infancy when they were held and carried.

In Chi Kung, when we let ourselves be heavy and allow our weight to sink down, we feel lighter; a paradox, certainly. Lao tzu puts it this way: “The heavy is the source of the light.” Similarly, in the water, our sensitivity to the receiver’s weight allows her to feel her own lightness. At the beginning of a session as we assess proportions, flexibility and mass, we can also ask ourselves, “Where’s the weight?” The weight in each person’s physique is naturally unique as determined by the overall specific gravity and by the varying specific gravities of its parts. Then, as we continue with curiosity, wondering, “What could be lighter, freer, softer?” we become more receptive and respectful of these qualities, preserving them and permitting them to expand. When lightness is allowed to expand it becomes weightlessness. Most amazingly, weightlessness plus movement equals flying!

Like the pause between breaths in yogic breathing in which ecstasy can be experienced, the sensation of weightlessness in movements in water is "out of time". It has an indescribable sweetness we long to savor again and again. With practice, we are able to create and extend these timeless moments. Where are they in the flow of movement? At the end of rotations and swings, on the upswing of waves, spirals and figure eight’s. After receiving an impulse from the giver, the receiver’s body follows through or “responds”, completing the movement. Integral to our approach is giving time for this to happen. We watch the body and wait. The experience of weightlessness is obviously easier to access for floaters than for sinkers. For a sinker, it will be in the descending phase of the wave movement, for instance, that we find the freedom and the lightness, the ‘free fall’.

Beyond merely noting how much weight is present is gentleness. Handle the person as if she were as fragile as an infant, wide open to every incoming impression. Indeed, those parts of our psyche corresponding to our level of development in infancy and childhood are so sensitive. When treated with sensitivity a response in kind is evoked: our sensitivity resonates her sensitivity. Love calls forth the desire to be loved, the need for love. Love is the Great Opener, the Healer. We closed in its absence and open again in its presence by feeling the hurt that caused the original pain.
A loving manner is one that gives time for stillness, time for the receiver to feel herself, to be at peace. Nothing is forced or rushed. Forcing implies that there is something wrong that must be changed. Rushing devalues the moment, saying something else is more important than right now. Offer acceptance instead. Communicate through your touch and presence that the receiver is beautiful, loved, and okay as she is. Feel this to be true for yourself. Isn't this the message we have been waiting to hear, to receive all these years? Isn't this what we have striven after with all our achieving? We can give it to ourselves.

A loving manner can be playful, suggesting that there may be a lighter and freer way to reside in a too serious body. Give the opportunity to choose that way, rather than forcing through resistance. Resistance is something that is relinquished from within by choice. You, as the giver, can open a door, but it is up to the receiver to walk through it. The giver focuses attention and creates awareness in the receiver who then may choose to let go and surrender. This is why stretches are done slowly and gently, giving time for awareness and choice. This is why moves in general are done slowly. An exception might be the client who is already open and turns to aquatic bodywork for sheer pleasure and exhilaration. In this case, fear has already been released and the surrender to power and to flow can be freely experienced. We are all so different: where we stand on our paths and what is most beneficial for us on a given day is in continual flux.
Rhythm

Rhythm in space is created in three ways:
1) by alternating movements that reverse directions;
2) by repetition of movement shapes;
3) by sustaining a common interval between unlike movements.

We are able to generate rhythms because we are rhythmic beings. Like African music, our bodies are polyrhythmic, with heart beat, respiratory rate, energy flows, brain waves and other cycles playing in counterpoint to each other. Equally is the outer world we live in a world of rhythms and therefore it is natural that we align with rhythm, trust it and surrender to it. The bodymind is constantly enveloped in an ongoing rhythmic environment or “rhythmscape”, which activates its attunement to form and pattern in space. Movement is more elegant than any verbal induction, speaking directly, wordlessly to the nervous system and tissues. Just as the ears pick up sound, the inner ear labyrinth mechanism and the proprioceptors distributed throughout the body are the brain’s antennae for movement and rhythm. Just as the ear scans noise for pleasing sounds and patterns, leading our awareness to switch into a mode of aesthetic enjoyment when music plays, our bodies attune to the appreciation of spatial rhythms and an openness to their effects when dancing or being „danced“, as is the case in Healing Dance. Rather like how the deaf experience the vibration of music tactiley, we switch to a “touch minded” state in Healing Dance, in contrast to a predominantly “eye minded” and “ear minded” mode of existence on land.

At the outset of a session the practitioner working in the Healing Dance style establishes a rhythmic field. Through her intention she attains a state of mind in which she embodies rhythm in her breathing and movement. This rhythmic field induces a subjective sense of time, dividing time, imposing patterns on time in a world of virtual time that lifts us out of our everyday life. Indeed, Healing Dance could be understood as silent music, consisting of rhythmic impulses of pressure, touch and movement played upon the proprioceptors, including the vestibular apparatus of the inner ear.

The practitioner sings a song in movement to her partner. Just as in listening to music, the Law of Entrainment becomes operative and internal biological rhythms shift, which in turn precipitate changes in consciousness. Like great dance music, let your rhythmic field be so compelling, a receiver must entrain. Rhythm encourages and magnetizes
back into motion those parts of us that have slowed down or ceased to move; energies locked in isolated cycles are reintegrated into the overall flow.

A practitioner of aquatic bodywork could see herself as a “water shaman”, inducing trance states not through the use of drums, but through the rhythms of her own body. Her body is her first instrument and the receiver’s body is next entrained in the silent beat of her rhythm. Just as a drum will have one or more places where the tone produced is especially good, bodies also have “sweet spots” from where movement can best be generated. Where could they be?

A session as a season of experience. Our responsibility as practitioners is not to fix or change anyone, but to hold a compassionate space in which awareness may expand. We are conscious of the impact of rhythm and able to modulate its use. For any given move and receiver, there is an ideal rhythmic range. I call this the rhythm of awareness, or stillness within movement. The source of the stillness is the giver’s own centeredness which guides him to meet his partner with respect. There is space for new awarenesses to surface when the receiver is not reacting to the stress of sensory overload. A receiver moved in her rhythm of awareness is able to feel the reverberations of the movement in body and soul. If we are not fully aligned with our client, not entering into a resonance with and sensitivity to her, it is possible we will be drawn to work in rhythms that feel right to us but are inappropriate for her. We will perhaps be in our own flow, but a flow unrelated to and not fully answering her needs. Also be sure to distinguish between rhythms the receiver’s body can move in and the rhythm her psyche requires. To find an appropriate rhythm, ask yourself, "What rhythm is this person calling for?" Posing this question creates a context for a response and a release from the receiver.

Some receivers enjoy the exhilaration of quicker rhythms, the water rushing by, the variety, and the unexpected. At the opposite pole are those who most enjoy being held in stillness, feeling the security of another body in a non-sexual, transpersonal relation. Slower rhythms sedate and allow expansion into self, inducing trance states when carefully sustained. This is powerful way of sharing. Only in slower rhythms is the timeless, exquisite moment of weightlessness at the end of waves, swings, and rotations possible. A rhythm is too slow, however, when it "dies", when it loses forward momentum and the receiver is more conscious of the mover than of her own body and grace. A rhythm is too fast when it induces fear or when the body is not given time to follow through luxuriously to sense its weightlessness, length and softness. If a person is fully relaxed, her body behaves like trailing strands of seaweed,
continuing on with the original impetus from a move until, with a gentle "snapping of the whip" effect, it reverses directions with us. If our rhythm doesn't allow time for this follow through, the receiver can feel rushed, uncomfortable and manipulated.

Quicker rhythms are associated with yang energy; slower rhythms with yin. The yin power of sensitivity, gentleness and love does not force or overwhelm as does the yang. Rather, it invites us to open. It is the antidote to an imbalanced lifestyle. The rhythm of today's world with its haste and lack of time to digest and assimilate experience tends to confuse our innate sense of pacing and comfort. Modern life offers struggle, stress, excitement and stimulation, rather than contentment, relaxation, peace and space. Essential to the yin nature of aquatic bodywork are pauses for stillness providing rest from movement. The nervous system needs these for assimilating, so as not to overload with sensation. They offer a chance to collect oneself and to feel. During the pauses, movement does not cease altogether; it subsides externally but continues on subtly as the pulsing of blood and breath and as emotion and thought. Our very cells take advantage of the absence of stress to release internalized shock in a process referred to as cellular breathing. This is movement within stillness.
Breath

The breath is integral to aquatic bodywork. Indeed, aquatic bodywork could be considered a breath therapy, inducing breath-generated states of consciousness. The support and heat of body temperature water slow down the metabolism, reduce the need for oxygen, and produce a shallow breath, sometimes even, in conjunction with the dive reflex, stopping the breath completely. This sets the stage for trance states in which personal truth emerges. On the other pole, the client is breathing deeply and catharting. Emotional energies circulate more freely, especially when the diaphragm and abdomen are massaged and loosened. The discipline of body psychology sees the diaphragm as dividing the torso in two, blocking, when tight, the emotional energies stored in the abdomen from rising up into expression. Healing Dance features several close embraces and hara massaging moves.

Breathing in rhythm with the receiver at the beginning of a session brings you both into the present in a state of greater awareness. There is a tendency for the breathing to synchronize, which can energetically attune you to each other. To the degree to which you achieve this resonance, your intuition in relation to your partner will be unerring. Following partner’s breath also demonstrates that you are sensitive to her and will deepen her trust in you. As the giver, your mode of breathing forms a part of the rhythmic field within which the session takes place. Deep belly breathing requires somewhat more exertion in water than on land because hydrostatic pressure is greater than air pressure, offering tangibly more resistance to diaphragm and intercostals, the muscles which increase the internal volume of the thorax. Having the intention at the outset of a session to breathe deeply will serve you well and prevent or delay an oxygen debt from developing. Full, audible breaths also model a state of connectedness with the body for the receiver to entrain with. Sighing and humming quietly on the exhalation soothe receivers, generally. So, be a relaxed, breathing sharer; your movement will remain organic and flowing.

In the ideal we would breathe through the nose only. However, in moves requiring exertion, breathing through the nose and mouth brings in enough air. During the still pauses for assimilation, you may rest and catch up on your breath, just as a dancer on-stage finds moments to breathe and gather strength before continuing. Another useful technique is to take a deep breath, followed by a sighing release with a conscious letting go and sinking down of your body in the water. I call this “finding zero”. The lower you sink in the water, the less effort you expend. Overexerted muscles can then let go more easily as the demands made upon them are reduced.
Presence

This list of questions I adapted with permission from James Stewart, a teacher of Sensory Repatterning at IPSB, The International Professional School of Bodywork in San Diego, CA. I like them for the comprehensive criteria they provide to evaluate the giver’s quality of presence.

1) Can I relax and trust you?
2) Are you really paying attention to me?
3) Do you seem to be noticing my responses and reactions?
4) Do you ask me about my comfort and experience?
5) Am I warm and cozy feeling?
6) Do I feel safe and private in the pool?
7) Do I feel permission to turn my head now and then to keep my neck from tiring?
8) Do I feel free to let you know what is happening with me, how I am doing, if I need something, if something is not quite right?
9) Am I comfortable with your use of words during the session? Are your words effective?
10) Can you BE WITH ME when I express feelings?
11) Do you respect me? Do I feel I can be myself? Do I feel accepted as I am?
12) Are you getting acquainted with me? Are you aware that I am responding to the work differently than anyone else would?
13) Do you seem afraid of me? Too Careful?
14) Are you imposing personal opinions and value judgements on me? Disapproving?
15) Am I being met?
16) Are you fee-ee-eling me? Are you feeling? Do I feel felt?
17) Are you taking yourself too seriously? Are you trying too hard? Are you “doing a job on me”? Are you self-involved? Are you drifting?
18) Do you know what your intentions are, what you mean to accomplish with each move, what those moves are for?
19) Am I feeling my body moving rather than you moving my body?
20) Are you contacting my nervous system? Are you influencing my mind to let go, become aware, experience feeling states, rather than “going after my muscles”?
21) Are you using the movements as a way of eliciting, conveying, suggesting, inviting and allowing response?
22) Is it the manner in which you do the moves rather than the moves themselves which effects me?
Healing Dance®I 2014

Matador Pick-up (right side)

Relating and Mirroring

1 Waves (right side)
First Position
Trance Waves (the Cross)
Carmen Miranda (Horse)
Hip Waves (Geisha, Godzilla)
Freeing the Arm (Geisha)
Free Float
Heart Wave Supine (Godzilla)
Heart Wave Away (Godzilla)
Hara Hug (Warrior)
Head Hug (Horse)
Head Wave (Geisha)

2 Seaweed (left side)
Under Head
Hara Hold (Horse)
Warrior 8 (Warrior to Warrior, add-3 steps back)
Hip Sweep (Warrior to Warrior)
Accordion (Warrior)
T³ (Geisha Circle)

Repeat Waves and Seaweed on second side

3 Releases (right side)
First Position
1)Accordion Release (Horse-Warrior) (release legs) → Hip Wave (Godzilla)
2)Pegasus (Horse) → (Warrior) → (Godzilla), (release leg, take Far Leg)

4 Macarena (right side)
First Position
Pendulum (Warrior, foot foot steps)
Macarena (3 Steps-Surge-Warrior, then Warrior to Warrior)
Power Accordion (Horse)
The Launch (Horse)
T³ (Geisha Circle)

Repeat Releases and Macarena on second side.

5 Fluidity (right side)
First Position
The Fan (release hand-leg-leg) (Horse to Warrior to Geisha Circle) → Hip Wave (Godzilla)
The Launch → The Vortex (Horse to Front Crab)
Head Wave (Geisha)
Head 8 (Geisha 8)
Shoehorn into Matador (Front Crab)

Repeat Fluidity on left side., finishing as below, instead of Shoehorn into Matador

Swing In (Warrior)
Listen to My Heart Beat (Horse)

6 Grounding at the Wall: (left side)
Hip Circles, Docking the Back, Grounding the Legs, 2 Head Polarities, Head Traction, Shoulder Massage, Arm Massage, Arm Opening, Self Embrace/Hands on Heart
The Material in Detail

Matador Pick-up

Face to Face
Thank you Marcello Roque from Brazil for daring to apply the Matador here.

- From supporting under partner's palms while standing face to face, open your right arm to the side and step into the space that creates, still supporting both palms in yours.
- Hook your inside leg behind partner's left calf, like a judo trip.
- With your inside (left) arm, release the hand and without delay reach under partner's arm to bring the "horns of the bull" to the occiput. Rutherford Hayes offers that a contact with our shoulder against partner's side is reassuring. The thumb and forefinger form the horns; the thumb is on the near side of the occiput.
- Overgrip the wrist now and for the purpose of beginning a session, the Matador need not have the speed and synergistic counter-traction of arm and neck it would normally feature. The tempo should be just quick enough to keep the legs near the surface to ensure that the back doesn't hyperextend. The usual full 360° revolution is also not necessary; a half turn is more appropriate.

Relating and Mirroring

First Position
Beginnings are key: our opening impulse determines a chain of possibilities. The spirit in which an action is initiated sets a wheel in motion. Lao-tzu asks, "Can you remain unmoving until the right action arises by itself?". In another verse he tells us, "The unmoved is the source of all movement." Stillness, then is the starting point of a session. Partner can more easily feel herself when she is still. Sense her weight; notice the difference between the weight of the head and the weight of the hips. We attune to partner’s breath and the universal energies and wait. Rather than beginning the session, we allow the session to begin of itself out of the experience of unity. This is relating, perfectly poised and connected to all the living elements present in the moment. Above all feel partner’s essence; she feels you feeling her. The principle of relating supercedes any set movement such as the Water Breath Dance. Should the breath of partner create a movement, we follow that; should other movements arise we mirror them. Mirror her body by allowing adequate time and space for all movements to complete, by getting out of the way, and by supporting and
extending the movements. Other verbs that come to mind are encourage, celebrate, amplify, and smile upon. Movements need not correspond exactly to the breath, that is, rising and falling with each inhale and exhale. Have instead, a freer relation, a harmony with the breath. Incipient movements of the receiver, when mirrored, encourage her to continue, to expand into their "spell". Mirroring opens up a free space of self-expression for the receiver. It is the "yes" from life that affirms self-expression. When we support under the occiput and sacrum we can earn our partner's trust by sensing and following her subtlest movements in all directions. Theri Thomas reminds us to soften our body with a breath release in order to feel these movements rather than the tonus in our own muscles. We may also set impulses. Subtler levels of sensing inspire us to move and dance in a full body response to our partner's essence. Sensitively preserve partner's sense of being as you continue into more structured movements. Partner feels you feeling her; don't forget her. (For more ideas, see page 16, Suggestions for Beginning a Session.)

1 Waves

First Position

Trance Waves This is an indicator move of partner's flexibility and degree of surrender. It sends messages to the legs, telling them how they may sway independently, in counterpoint to the torso. It shows the torso how it may flex laterally. Think of it as an exploration of the range of motion more than as a stretch. It is a sequential articulation of the spine providing a progression from hip joints up to the thoracic intervertebral joints, giving equal attention to both sides of the trunk. The Trance Waves prepare partner to experience the same movement on her side in the following Hip Waves. They create the illusion of space in giving flow and freedom in quite a small area of the pool. Above all, done at the outset of a session, they initiate the trance state in which the self-healing capacity of the body-mind is liberated.

- Wave partner away from you and toward you on the surface using three arm placements. Begin with your forearm under the hips, then under the waist for a greater degree of freedom and a different focus of articulation of the spine. Finally, for even more freedom in the spine, generate this wave from an embrace under the ribcage.

- Produce the movement with your entire body. Inhale stepping sideways onto the head foot and a quarter turn around into Warrior Stance. Your leg opens to the side from the hip and then the rest of the body "catches up" as it turns to align into the Warrior Stance. Be tractioning the head, pushing partner away with your upper arm and chest. Then exhale and fall/step backwards onto the foot foot, gathering her in with the back of your hand.
Think, "touch and go" as the foot slides back to center under you then steps out into the next Warrior. Let your arms "express" your body as it alternately pushes and leans back. Use more body and less arm, so to speak. Repeating this pattern, you orient toward the four sides of a square, actually tracing a Byzantine cross with your body mechanics.

- Strive to keep the body completely supine, rolling neither toward nor away from you. However, when the legs tend to sink, aim the waves under the lower back and ribcage on ascending angles, directing the stretch to the lateral trunk and safeguarding the lower back.

**Carmen Miranda**

- Follow this progression: move your own hips through a slow figure eight, holding partner against you.
- Then open up a little space between your bodies and speed up, tractioning the head in the headward loop and the hips in the footward loop.
- Then convert the movement into a toward and away direction, releasing the far shoulder to turn your palm face down in the water and “balance the ball” on the broad surface of your wrist extensor muscles, letting the head roll low in the water. Play with the hips with more of a dynamic "Trager" sense of release, rocking them toward and away, rolling them toward and away, and finally circling them out of the water. This movement at the pelvis will translate into the legs and up the spine into the neck and head.
- Finally, allowing your own hips to get a little crazy, you may see a heightened quality of release in those of your partner. Watch the face, head and neck the entire time! Maintain the head deep enough in the water to be able to partake of the waves. It will roll side to side like Stevie Wonder in his groove.

**Hip Waves (Geisha and Godzilla)** These constitute the departure point of Healing Dance from Watsu, embodying a different way to relate to partner and the body. The waves that put the body into lateral flexion are now submerged, fuller and deeper; an evocative developmental movement, the extension-- flexion waves, are introduced.

- Palm the roundedness of the far shoulder and the near hip, thumbs on top. This grip gives excellent leverage and control of the torso.
- Roll partner onto her side facing you with the cheek resting on your upper arm. Orient partner at a 45° angle to the water's surface. Inika reminds us to check to see that the ear is not uncomfortably flapped shut against your arm.
• Travel backwards in a circle around the pool with "Geisha steps", sitting down low in the water, falling backwards for speed and ease of execution. Keep partner’s back to the outside of the circle. Wave partner up and down, guiding from the shoulder and hip with soft hands. Play her between your hands for control. You may need to actively push down the shoulder of buoyant persons, while sinkers need to be lifted up from the hip. Over floating the legs interferes with their movement in this wave.

• When lifting the hip toward the surface in this Hip Wave on the vertical plane, lift it up and away from you on a diagonal. This will exert a traction through the spine and into the neck, even.

• Next switch to a sideways wave in this same position. The body is not truly horizontal: it will angle slightly downward from head to feet if the legs are properly floated and your rate of travel is adequate. This makes it easier to maintain the neck and head in alignment with the rest of the spine. Do this from your whole body by taking large steps diagonally backwards, "Godzilla" steps, one step per half wave. When traveling in a circle, the step with the head foot to the outside is a true Godzilla Step; the step with your foot foot is long and more straight behind you rather than on the diagonal.

• In this sideways Hip Wave on the horizontal plane, lead with elbow traction in the flexion or back rounded phase. In the arch phase lengthen the hip away from you and lean back. These two refinements of technique maintain traction through the spine.

• In both variants, keep the legs off the bottom and the nostrils away from the water line, which will be at the cheek. Watch the water line at the face more than anything else while learning these waves. Keep your hands and arms soft and relaxed, feeling an imaginary diagonal line between them to give you a better sense of what partner’s body is doing. Billy Crystal's character, Fernando, might say, "Darling, it's got to look like a wave before it feels like a wave." Go easy into the arches to avoid a whiplash in the spine.

• Hold partner out away from you for a more spacious sense. Match your rhythm to your partner's body; her unique movement qualities determine the tempo. Match your rhythm to partner’s breath if this is a ‘usable’ rhythm—not too fast and not too slow.

• Of the three waves--Hip, Heart Toward and Heart Away-- the giver is lowest in the water in this Hip Wave.

**Freeing the Arm**

• Keep your head hand on partner's shoulder as you Geisha walk backwards. You will be tractioning the head with your head elbow and with the back of
your foot hand “shoehorn” partner's near arm in front of you and then reach under it to grasp the upper arm. Pull it toward you to help slide the head to your upper arm and roll partner supine. Continue to walk backwards in the big circle around the pool. Your foot hand goes between the shoulder blades; your head hand rests on the heart with male receivers. You have created a heart sandwich.

- With some female receivers (gentlemen especially take note), reach across the body to take the far hand with your foot hand. Hold it under the hypothenar emminence in order to be able to spread out the fingers on the heart. Your head hand now rests on the receiver’s hand on the heart. This not only avoids inappropriate intimacy for some receivers, but imparts a sense of self-nurturing that is supported by your hand.
- Another option to the hand on the heart is to place your hand on the far shoulder.

**Heart Wave Supine**  A sort of universal staging position for wave movement in which the playful opening of the heart/chest may continue.

- Stabilize partner's head and neck between the hand on her heart and the submerged support of your upper arm. Your forearm and upper arm form a right angle to each other and you stand off to the side of partner's head rather than above her head. (We call this the **Best in Show Position**, like how a trainer walks by the side of his prize hound in a dog show.) Keep the head deep in the water during the ensuing waves, ears submerged. Think of the arm as only an auxiliary support to that provided by the water. The shoulder of your head arm remains submerged.
- The movement option practiced in this training is the sideways wave with Godzilla steps. Create the half wave to the outside of the circle by leading with your elbow. This is the primary leverage; the underneath hand helps as well. Create the half wave toward the center of the circle using more your hand between the shoulder blades to swing the body across.
- If partner is wearing leg floats you will be able to leave your other hand on the back behind the heart. If the legs are sinking, shift this hand down to the sacrum and travel more quickly.

**Heart Wave Away**  A good wave: lots of freedom for partner, good neck support, and easy to do. The opening of the heart area continues with partner in a "father" position, rolled away.

- In the rhythm of the Heart Wave Supine undulating sideways, roll partner 45º away from you and continue with Godzilla steps. The body will be on a
descending angle, the feet lower than the head. Therefore maintain the
crown slightly higher than the chin so that the head and neck align with the
rest of the spine. You will need to lift your elbow to do this. The head is not
floating in the water; rather it is stably supported on your forearm.

• A technical refinement is to put counter-traction into your heart sandwich
grip to shape the movement: in the arch phase intend your hand on the back
a bit hipward and your hand on the heart a bit headward. In the round phase
intend your hand on the back a bit headward and your hand on the heart a bit
hipward. Another name for this is “fascial traction”.

• This is a very comfortable position for the receiver. She is held away from
you and her arms are free in front of her. Press sensitively into any kyphosis
on the upper back, as it may be an indication of underlying emotional issues.
As with the Heart Wave Supine, keep your hands as soft as possible, getting
the impetus for the movement from your body. A long step behind will
elongs the spine and protects the back in extension in the arch phase.

• You may easily get into these waves at any time by starting from Free Float
Position with the head supported in the crook of your elbow: simply lay your
hand on partner's chest and roll her away from you.

• In relation to the coming Heart Wave Toward, the head is positioned farther
out onto the arm, on the forearm rather than in the elbow crook. (Your goal
is to maintain the head and neck in alignment with the rest of the spine.) You
may stand quite high out of the water in this move.

**Hara Hug**  The Hara Hug is the first of the ‘positional sanctuaries’ of
Healing Dance. It features a comforting contact of the receiver’s back against
our belly, rocking within the stillness, as we did in the womb. With the hand on
the navel you create a navel radiating movement in the trunk, arms and legs,
one of the primal developmental movements.

• To transition from the Heart Wave Away into Hara Hug, sink down and
guide partner's back to your heart. Release your hand from the back and
reach under the near arm to palm the navel. Remain facing the outside of the
circle in Warrior Stance. Partner is not completely on her side, as this would
cause the near shoulder to drop forward. Angle the body slightly up to keep
the chest open. Kathrin George of Germany suggests we turn the palm of our
head hand face down, so that the head is supported on the flat surface of the
wrist flexor muscles rather than on the lateral border of the radius as would
occur with the hand still on the heart. Stretch your elbow sideways to
traction the neck, so that your support is under the mastoid process. Theri
Thomas reminds us to let the muscles of the forearm be like pillows rather
than hard as marble.
• Finding that your arm is supporting under the neck instead of the head (!), Inika has the solution: just open the head arm until it is straight, then extend your shoulder headwards and bend your elbow out under the head in an embracing gesture.

• The other hand has three possible placements: under the hip in the case of sinking legs, under the waist (for pregnant bellies) and on the hara, naturally. In the later placement, don't press on the bladder or stomach; stay on the navel. Use the foot arm to control the body's orientation, preventing the upper body from rolling too far forward.

• Stand in absolute stillness initially to find the breath with your hara hand. Then feel free to rock gently side to side, footwards on the outbreath, headwards on the inbreath. In the rock footwards, lengthen your elbow out away from you to impart a C curve to the neck and head. Inika likes to use a slow, almost still Hara Hug at the end of sessions.

• By the way, you may easily enter Hara Hug from Free Float by supporting the head in your elbow and reaching under the near arm to the hara to roll partner away from you

**Head Hug** I use this all the time. It's a delicious, classic, "security plus freedom" move with a lot of bodywork going on, the first of many holds that approach the psyche through touching the face. The inclining in of partner’s head toward your chest is supportive of the infantile reflex of turning the head toward the nipple to nurse.

• From the preceding Hara Hug, release the hara and reposition it on the sacrum to guide partner to a surface supine position. Slide your other hand from the heart up to support under the head in the “Monkey Frisbee Grip”. Your elbow will be out of the water and your thumb on the far side of the head separate from the fingers (like a monkey torn between scratching its armpit and tossing a Frisbee).

• Rotate partner's cheek in toward the side of your chest under your armpit and press it there, also imparting a slight C curve rounding to the neck and head. Be sure it is the cheek and not the temple, as the feeling is quite different, more personal with the cheek in contact. For women who may be uncomfortable leaning their client's cheek against their breast, they may stand up higher so that the ribs only come into contact with partner's face. Another alternative would be to place partner’s ear against your side without turning the head toward you.
• In this position, alternate between massaging the neck and creating a countertraction between the sacrum and occiput. Massage the back of the neck, posterior to the transverse processes of the cervical vertebrae, All the while wave your partner side to side by rotating your own hips in the Horse Stance. Finish with a few breaths in stillness, shifting the head to your heart.

• You needn't travel in this move, though you may if you wish. This would create more traction and “friendly” turbulence.

**Head Wave**  This is the surface wave that imparts the most freedom to the spine, completing a progression that traveled upward from the hips

• Stand above the head with both hands cradling under the head like a bowl, tilting it slightly forwards. Step backwards with weaving Geisha steps, constantly tractioning to impart a small sideways wave. The fingers are mostly uninvolved, it is the palms that attach like suction cups to the back and sides of the head to pull it along. This is a long, slow wave, giving time for the body to follow through. Your arms remain extended in front of you. Good thing you remembered to put floats on your sinker's legs.

• Instead of merely translating the head across from side to side like an Indian dancer would, lead the movement from the top of partner’s head.

• In deep water, when not able to maintain sufficient speed to keep the legs safely near the surface, bring one hand down to support the lower back while the other tractions the head.

• As you round a corner to change directions, do so with the receiver's back rounded rather than arched, and facing in toward you. This would be a 180° turn. With the ultra-buoyant who tend to remain supine, ease the inside shoulder down with one hand or lift the head slightly out of the water to facilitate a comfortable turn for the receiver.

• A sweet variation has you placing one hand on partner's cheek and the other guiding the Head Wave from beneath the occiput. The hand on the cheek nurtures and encourages partner to turn her head to that side, helpful when initiating a direction change or a Whirlpool.

2 **Seaweed**

**Under Head**

**Hara Hold**  A subsiding in the flow of movement to balance all that head waving and whirlpooling. Think of this as a positional sanctuary.
• Stand in a deep Horse Stance. With the easiest hand to reach the hara, reaching either above or below partner’s arm, rest one of her hands on the belly and yours over it. Rock in a small figure eight, an “eightlet”. Think of this as a positional sanctuary rather than as a move.

• The head options are dry-docked or deep water, cheek to cheek or without contact. If your shoulders are not so wide, tilt the occiput into the side of your neck to keep the head from rolling off your shoulder.

**Warrior 8**  This move provides more stroking touch to the trunk and develops the previous lateral flexion waves through the trunk into quite a strong stretch.

• With either foot step back into a Warrior Stance. Pull the side of the ribcage (on the same side as the foot that is behind) toward you and with your other hand push the opposite hip bone down toward the feet in a countertraction. Sweep partner across in front of you in stance, pivoting from a Warrior Stance to the other Warrior Stance. This is done by first transferring your weight straight back onto the back foot then pivoting on it, maintaining your knee over the ball of the foot while doing so. Put your new front heel down as you face in the new direction and adjust your back foot so it is behind your hip rather than crossed behind you. Stabilize your balance in the other Warrior. Repeat.

• The two sweeps are not the same. The sweep across that begins with the head foot back is easier than the other, with the foot foot back on starting. When the foot foot is back we need to lean in toward the sweep to keep on balance.

• Now develop the figure by taking three steps backwards after the sweep across in front to begin to create a figure 8 shape when repeated on both sides. In the final stage, with the intention of imparting a “sense of eight” to the receiver, do only about two thirds of the sweep across before beginning to step back wards in a curve. This will round out the movement into a true eight. This move flexes the torso to either side to stretch the waist, intercostal and latissimus muscles. Stay a while in each stretching curve. Keep partner's body absolutely supine, level with the surface of the water.

• Add in massage as you like, sliding up the stretched side while kneading into the shortened side. Another option is to go under the shoulder blade with the thumb

**Hip Sweep**  The alternative to ramming the feet into the wall, in which hydrodynamic force brings the knees within reach. Sanctuary, symbolic movement and stretch occur in the progression of moves. Surrenda Kuut of
Holland notices that the folded together position of the body provides a soothing contrast to the open body waves that precede it.

- With the head on the right shoulder (for example), do a quick Hip Sweep to the right (the head side), your left hand guiding from partner’s left hip, and reaching from underneath, capture both knees in your left arm. This will be a pivot from Warrior to Warrior Stance. Quickly "toss" the right knee to your right hand (in the water!). Take the force for the Hip Sweep from your legs primarily.

- Alexis Lee figured out a Hip Sweep variation for short-armed practitioners and/or long-legged clients: Do the Sweep from Warrior to Warrior, but capture only the near leg (the one deepest). Keep the leg as you palm the head and pass it across in front of you to your other shoulder. Then do the Sweep on this side to capture the other leg. You now have both legs, mission accomplished. Or, hey, go ahead and ram the feet into wall and hold onto the thigh floats.

- Allow the head to slide down slightly onto your chest to safeguard partner's neck from hyperextension. Some receivers may be more comfortable with their head centered on your chest.

**Accordion**

- Turning into a Warrior Stance with the head foot behind, transfer your weight forward and open the knees away from you. When they noticeably float to the surface you know an inbreath has occurred. Next, guide partner's knees down toward her hips and rock backwards. This will bring her back into a safe, full contact with your front. Fold both knees to the chest, all on her out breath. Gently open the position and rock forwards on the in breath.

- The position of the legs may feel too intimate for some women. Offer the moves sensitively and be careful your partner in a public pool is not facing in a direction that could be embarrassing for her.

- Reach over, instead of under, the arms of very tall or long-necked receivers to allow them to sink low in the water on your chest. Try to keep the mouth out of the water.

**$T^3$** The name of this transition derives from the description of the move: “traction, turn and tuck”. It brings you into 1st Position.

- From the above position with the head tractioned by the Hand Mirror and the other hand on the sacrum, begin turning in a Geisha circle. Use the hand on the sacrum to roll partner in toward you. After establishing the turning momentum, grasp the near arm just below the elbow and traction it in the
direction of the feet. Still tractioning, guiding it downward toward the pool bottom and finally around behind your back into First Position. Dip your foot shoulder low in the water to enable you to come completely under the near knee.

3 Releases

Flying, lightness, nothingness--a brief flash from another dimension that surprises and delights the nervous system, that shows what is possible, that extends the pole between security and freedom.

First Position

Accordion (release legs) → Hip Wave

• Hold partner in the Accordion rolled in toward you, her cheek resting on your upper arm. Preset your head hand on the far shoulder. Imagine a straight line stretching out from the sides of your body dividing the space around you into a front and back zone. Transfer your weight alternately onto the head foot and foot foot as you fold and open the body. Set up with at least two Accordions. The third time, as you transfer your weight headward, pivot 90° in the direction of the head into Warrior Stance and release both legs out onto this imaginary line, partner on her side. Release her gently, without shock.

• Lean back and transfer your weight onto the foot foot to create the first arching Hip Wave and reposition your hand under the hip. This first wave backing up will be in rhythmic continuity with the rounding of the release. Continue with Godzilla steps backwards in Hip Waves. Preserve the lightness of the release as you continue into the Hip Waves.

Pegasus We study this wave first in Horse Stance, then open it up to Warrior, then finally travel it with Godzilla Steps.

• Out of the preceding Hip Waves overgrip the near leg and bend it toward the chest. This allows you to shift your head hand to the assist position between the shoulder blades. Do Pegasus in Horse Stance. Flex the knee all the way to the chest rotating toward the head, then rotating toward the feet, open the knee away and arch the back with palm pressure in the assist position. Let the body be opened 45° on the arch, like in the Heart Waves. In the round phase set up a countertraction in your hands by pushing the femur into the hip socket versus pulling your hand on the back upward away from the hips. Makes a difference…

• Open the move up, rotating 180° from Warrior to Warrior.
• Next travel backwards in a circle with Godzilla steps doing Pegasus. Travel in the direction that orients partner's back to the outside of the circle. Let your legs do most of the work for a more dynamic and spacious Pegasus.

4 Macarena

**Free Float**

**Far Leg Pendulum**

• From the previous Pegasus, release the near leg and come under the far knee with the back of your wrist. Start with a Far Leg Pendulum, supporting the head in your elbow. Begin with your foot foot back in the Warrior Stance to make space for the hips to swing in toward you. As you swing partner forward, step forward on the foot foot. As you swing partner in step back on the foot foot. Your head foot remains rooted on the pool bottom. This footwork has the head foot back on the outswing to facilitate its first step into the Round's footwork. If you drop down at the height of the outswing, partner will float up to the surface on her side.

**Macarena** These are large, sustained waves. Partner feels like how we might imagine a good-sized tuna fish would feel in our arms.

• In the suspension of the outswing, release the legs and turning in the direction of the head, go into a rounding with the Hand Mirror traction. Using an undergrip with your foot hand, support at the assist position on the middle of the back behind the heart (fingers pointing toward the head). Walk three steps around in a tight circle (the Front Crab): open, crossed in front, open to stance and surge, finishing in a Warrior Stance. Ladies, be careful not to support partner too high out of the water on top of your chest where he becomes heavy. If appropriate, embrace partner's chest to yours in the rounding.

• Now reverse directions after allowing sufficient time for a suspension. Change the head hand now to the assist position. Still with an undergrip, shift the back of the hand at the assist position to the sacrum and pull it toward you and around toward the feet for lumbar traction. Pivot 180° from the Warrior Stance the rounding movement finished in, into the other Warrior. This will produce a powerful arch that still provides support for the lower back, directing the arch to the upper back and front of the pelvis. Separate the hands from each other for a lengthening of the stretch.

• Repeat the round and arch a few times, shifting the neck traction hand first into the arching and the sacrum protecting hand first in the rounding.
**Power Accordion**  This is a variation of the Healing Dance version of Watsu’s Accordion. It is used when we want to offer a strong stretch to the back.

- As with a normal Healing Dance Accordion, we maternally incline partner in toward us from our grip under the knees. Partner’s cheek rests on our upper arm. Instead of leaving the head hand on the far shoulder we are going to place it on the back between the shoulder blades. To get to this position turn the palm of your head hand away from you so that the thumb is just medial to the far shoulder blade. Then, using the leverage provided by your thumb contact on the back, roll your hand to bring the palm over the spine, between the shoulder blades.
- Now, when you transfer your weight headwards on the outbreath, you will be able to make a compression between your hand on the back and your forearm that is on the backs of the thighs, bringing the thighs very close to the chest. The head and neck are completely uninvolved and will be safe, no matter how strong a stretch you give.
- For an even more powerful stretch, try the **Wall Accordion**. Go to the wall and place the back of your hand that is between the shoulder blades against the wall. Lean your body weight into the wall as you fold partner together with the added resistance of the wall.

## 5 Fluidity

**First Position**

**The Fan (hand - leg - leg) → Hip Wave**  This is the simplest of sequential releases and can be done with anyone.

- In the Accordion, reach under both knees to capture the far wrist. Hug partner close to you and rock sideways, accentuating the coming contrast into lightness and freedom.
- Turn in a complete circle in the direction of the feet, beginning first with a pivot from Horse to Warrior, followed by a Geisha Circle. Allow sufficient time between each release for the augmenting degree of freedom to be savored. First, pull the wrist and offer the head into the water in your elbow crook. Continue pivoting into Warrior and release the wrist. Next, as you Geisha Circle around release the far leg, speeding up a bit to maintain a steady turning speed as the leg catches the water resistance. Finally release the near leg. Proceed immediately into neck traction walking backwards, putting off taking the hip. Transition into a Hip Wave, preserving that delicate lightness created by the releases.
The Launch → Vortex

- **The Launch** is now called for, after rolling partner face up. It involves a push out and away at a 45° angle as you take a step backwards. These two actions dramatically widen the distance between your two bodies and effectively clear the near arm from behind your back. Your shoulder hand supinates and palms the head while the fingers of your hip hand trail up the near arm to overgrip the wrist. You are falling backwards around the head to the other side in the meantime. Your shoulder levers from under partner’s shoulder and your upper arm and forearm create a ‘V’ that supports her upper back, creating a 45° tilt away from you. Your head hand shifts from its supinated support to a pronated ‘horns of the bull’ on the occipital bone. Your thumb will be on the near side of the head.

- Take three large steps in an arc (the Front Crab), stepping open, crossed in front, and open, into a wide stance, enabling an acceleration through a pivot. Avoid overstretches partner’s far arm (the one you overgrip at the wrist) by keeping it abducted out away from partner’s head. Get the main turning force from the leverage under the back, rather than pulling the far wrist.

- After the acceleration of the Vortex peaks, release the far arm and fall above the head, tractioning it. This is the transition into the Head Wave.

**Head Wave**  This is the surface wave that imparts the most freedom to the spine, completing a progression that traveled upward from the hips. It is fully described at the end of the Wave Section.

**Head 8**

- The grip on the head alternates with each loop of the eight. In the first loop one hand holds the head in the Monkey Frisbee Grip while the other rests across the forehead. The elbow of the Monkey Frisbee arm is out of the water and leads with traction around the loop; in the second loop this hand closes the thumb next to the other fingers to make the John the Baptist Grip across the back of the head while the hand on the forehead rotates 180 degrees. In relation to the hand on the back of the head, think, “Elbow out (of the water), thumb out; elbow in (the water), thumb in.” Guide the body's orientation from the head gently, giving time for it to "comply" before initiating a Whirlpool. Be careful not to exaggerate the neck flexion in the Whirlpool.

- Lead the movement with your outside elbow tractioning around out of the water, lifting the crown slightly out of the water.
• Bring the body into a straight line out of the Whirlpool. Add a second Whirlpool in the opposite direction to create the 8. Be sure to first turn the head, then give the body time to roll into alignment with the head before powering into the Whirlpool. Imagine a rather elongated 8 on account of the time in middle given to aligning the body in a straight line and waiting for the body to roll in the direction of the head. Be standing up by the time partner’s body rolls in toward the head so that you can fall backwards with Geisha steps into the loop of the eight. This gives effortless speed and exhilaration to the figure.

• The last time you pull partner into a straight line, hold the head in your right hand and reach over your right arm with your left arm and under partner’s right arm to shoehorn partner’s right arm in front of you. Go immediately into the Matador and then into First Position with the head in your left arm.

**Free Float**

**Swing in**  How to get from Free Float to 1st Position without seeming to do a transition.

• Hold the head in one hand with the John the Baptist hold and undergrip the far leg. Partner's near arm hangs away from her side as you do Pendulum Swing with the far leg.

• Maneuver your hips around the near hand to come between the arm and the torso. You may want to bend the knee to the chest and pass partner towards her head to more easily get in between the arm and side.

**First Position**

**Listen to My Heart Beat**

• If partner has long hair now is the time to get your head hand “outside” of the hair, holding the head in your hand. Then sink lower in the water and guide her cheek against your chest.

• Next, free your hand from partner's hair, by flexing your wrist and trailing your fingers out. Pinion her head against your chest with your forearm. Italian healing Dance student Corrado Alvaro Fusto had the ingenious and simple idea of raising the “head thigh” here to support the back and make this transition much easier.

• Rock gently on your axis, keeping your foot arm straight, the hand under the near knee. We want to maintain the relationship between partner’s neck and head. The more yin inclined may want to drop into a spacious head-on-heart stillness. In any case, it is a positional sanctuary.
• Finally let the head slide into the crook of your elbow and lay the head out in the water as you do Far Leg Rotation in the direction of the feet. This will hook the occiput on your arm and give more control over the head.

• This could be the moment to do the **Flying Fish Float Release**. Reach down and undo the leg floats. They are still on the legs. Now start turning with neck traction. Take the 'far head' in your hip hand, the 'near head in your head hand while still turning. Travel backward and slowly roll partner 360°. On a clear day the floats detach from the legs and leap out of the water like two flying fish, untouched by human hands, and drift discreetly to the side of the pool (on a clear day).

6 **Grounding at the Wall**

**First Position**

**Hip Circles**  A good move with which to close a session, just before placing partner against the wall.

• These circles are done from the folded up Accordion position in which a traction to the neck brings the back vertical, so partner "sits".

• Make sure you lift the elbow of the tractioning arm to keep the stretch symmetrical (the head not inclined in toward you). Feel some weight to know that a traction is occurring and actually suspend the entire body from the occiput. Only the mouth need be out of the water; no need to hoist the body high.

• Primarily, circle your own hips to generate the movement. (Dislexically put, "You're wanna gonna hircle the cips.") Beyond that, use a combination of leverage from the arm under the knees, the buoyant force, and follow through in order to circle partner's hips in front of you. Minimize the degree to which the hips come front out of the vertical. Think of a cone of movement that circles the hips behind the head, even.

• Let the movement be subtle, so it has more to do with lightness and nurturing. A figure eight here can be delightful, too.

**Docking the Back**

• Once the back makes gentle contact, press the far shoulder back with your upper hand, with your arm under the knees, press the hips more firmly in the wall.
**Grounding the Legs**

- Position the far foot on the bottom and ground the far thigh, leaning on it with your foot hand above partner’s knee. Feel the floor through your pressure. Do the same with the near leg. See that the stance is wide and symmetrical for good balance.

**Head Polarities**

- Gain control of the head by shoulder-nudging the head into your hand, then taking the neck. Hold the head between your hands, first administering an occipital-forehead polarity, then one between the left and right temples.
- You may continue to support partner in the chair, or step in front of her if that would be more comfortable.
- Remain at least three breath cycles in each polarity or until the pulses you feel in your palms synchronize.

**Head Traction**

- From this point, you may step in front of partner and traction the head up with both hands while pressing your forearms into the lung points on the chest.
- Make sure you cup around the ears and lengthen the back of the neck, to give a gentle C curve to the neck and head.

**Arm Massage**

- Work from the shoulders out to the hands, using the squeezing Shiatsu technique.
- As you squeeze and release, impart a light circular movement to the arms.

**Arm Opening**

- Reach under the hands and with the thumb to the middle of the palm open the arms out 45 degrees to the side. This is not a stretch. It is only meant to stimulate an inbreath.
- Release the hands and allow them to float back in front of the shoulders.
Self Embrace/Hands on Heart

- Cross your arms and take partner's wrists. As you uncross your arms, guide the hands to partner's sides so that partner hugs herself. Press your hands over hers and remain. Release and finish the session.

- The other alternative is to take one hand and brush open the palm with your hand to sensitize it before placing it over the heart. Then brush open the other palm and place that hand over the first.

- Then place both your hands over partner's hands and circle gently without sliding the hands on the chest, only circling your pressure. Release and finish the session.
Water Class Evaluation

Class, Date and Location:
In filling out this form, we ask you to be as honest as possible. As you rely on us to help and instruct you in learning the art of Aquatic Bodywork, we rely on your feedback to help us learn the art of teaching. It is in this spirit that we ask you to fill out this form.

Course Content: Did this course meet your expectations? In what way?
Please rate (circle one): Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

What did you find most valuable for your personal and professional growth?

Was the material presented in a clear and interesting manner?

Were the land classes relevant and interesting?

What teaching techniques worked best for you?

Did the schedule meet your needs?

Any suggestions for the location or logistics to better support you in your learning?

Please continue on the back
Were the instructors and assistants knowledgeable, effective and supportive and is there anything you could say to help them teach more effectively?

Principal Instructor
Please rate (circle one): Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

Assistants:
Please rate each assistant: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, or Poor

If we were to do this again, how would you have us do it differently?

Is there anyone you would recommend this course to?

Would you attend other courses at this location?

What courses are you interested in?

Additional comments:

May we list you as a student on the Healing Dance web page?

Name ____________________________________________________________

Profession: ______________________________________________________
Healing Dance I Quiz

1) Name the movement that the Wave section is based on.
   a) figure eight
   b) circle
   c) The Heimlich

2) What part of the body do you hold in the Hara Hug?
   α) the hair
   β) the float
   χ) the noseclip

3) What part of the body do you hold in the Hara Hold?
   a) Duzint Mater
   b) Vaugeness Nerve
   c) Gluteus Biceps

4) What shape is the movement in the Figure 8?
   α) triangular
   β) square
   χ) hexagonal

5) What direction is the body facing in Heart Wave Away?
   α) East
   β) Mecca
   χ) Detroit

6) What instrument is the Accordion named after?
   a) Trombone
   b) Harp
   c) Harmonica

7) What figure from Spanish bullfighting is the Matador named after?
   α) Toreador
   β) Picador
8) From what movie does the name "Godzilla" come from?
α) Winnie the Pooh  
β) Sense and Sensibility  
γ) When Harry Met Sally

9) What move is named after a Japanese hostess?
α) Carmen Miranda  
β) Mermaid 8  
γ) The Gargoyle
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Matador Pickup
(1st Position, head in right arm)

Relating and Mirroring
Being, grounding, centering, opening, connecting, breathing with, waiting, sensing, feeling, allowing, following, supporting, getting out of the way, extending, affirming, encouraging, playing, experimenting!
## Waves (head in right arm)

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<td>FF ♥</td>
<td>Navel Waist Hip</td>
<td><strong>Hara Hug</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkey Frisbee Massage</td>
<td>Back ↔</td>
<td><strong>Head Hug</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradle Grip</td>
<td>Cradle Grip</td>
<td><strong>Head Wave</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W ≈</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H ≈</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Seaweed (left side)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seaweed</th>
<th>Hara Hold</th>
<th>Hara Hold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hara</td>
<td>Sacrum</td>
<td>H ≈</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip ↔ Ribs</td>
<td>Ribs ↔ Hip</td>
<td>W to W 123 ∞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rib-cage</td>
<td>Near Hip</td>
<td>W ↔ W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Knee</td>
<td>Under Knee</td>
<td>W ↔ W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM</td>
<td>Near Arm</td>
<td>g ●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Repeat Waves and Seaweed on second side)
### 3 Releases (right side)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Far Shoulder</th>
<th>Under Knees / Near Hip</th>
<th>Accordion → Hip Wave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Assist</td>
<td>Near Leg OG</td>
<td>Pegasus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| H/W/G                       | H W G●                 |
## 4 Macarena (right side)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>UG Far Leg</td>
<td>W/steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Pendulum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>RR Assist Sacrum</td>
<td>fC Surge W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Power Accordion</td>
<td>H ↔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Near Hip</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>T3 to o.s.</td>
<td>g●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Tucks near Arm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Repeat Releases and Macarena on left side)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Far Shoulder</th>
<th>UG Knees</th>
<th>The Fan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Far Shoulder</td>
<td>Near Hip</td>
<td>Hip Wave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Far Shoulder</td>
<td>Near Hip</td>
<td>The Launch → Vortex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradle Grip</td>
<td>Cradle Grip</td>
<td>Head Wave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkey Frisbee</td>
<td>John the Baptist</td>
<td>Head 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horns of the Bull</td>
<td>Near Wrist</td>
<td>Shoehorn into Matador</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Repeat Fluidity on left side, finishing as below, instead of Shoehorn into Matador)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John t. Baptist</th>
<th>UG FL</th>
<th>Swing In</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head to Chest</td>
<td>UG Far Leg</td>
<td>Listen to my heart beat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

W

H ≈
## 6 Grounding at the Wall (left side)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st ↑</th>
<th>UG Knees</th>
<th><strong>Hip Circles</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>UG Knees</td>
<td><strong>Docking the Back</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Far/Near Thigh</td>
<td><strong>Grounding the Legs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occiput/Temple</td>
<td>Forehead/Temple</td>
<td><strong>Head Polarities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head ↑</td>
<td>Head ↑</td>
<td><strong>Head Traction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm</td>
<td>Arm</td>
<td><strong>Arm Massage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumb in Palm</td>
<td>Thumb in Palm</td>
<td><strong>Arm Opening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand</td>
<td>Hand</td>
<td><strong>Self Embrace/Hands on Heart</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥</td>
<td>♥</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>