

MOVEMENT EXPLORATIONS

FROM HEAD TO TOES

Before you begin a movement exploration have a blanket to keep warm with, and any cushions, pillows or props that are necessary for your personal comfort while in the movement exploration.

Begin each exploration with a mental and physical scan of your body, paying special attention to the area in which the movement will take place. However, movements as an exploration are not limited or isolated, so if you use the scan as a reference, you will increase your ability to understand what the intention of the lesson was, and how to effectively apply this to your life in a moment to moment basis.

At the end of the movement exploration be sure to do a scan of your body and have a walk around the room. Allow some time to integrate this exploration before leaving.

Some questions you can ask yourself during an exploration are:

- *How do you physically feel?*
- *Is your quality of mind different in any way?*
- *Is your head freer in space to move?*
- *Is your breath independent to your activity?*
- *Where are your eyes looking on the horizon?*
- *Is your jaw clenched- what is holding your jaw up?*

All directions given are with respect to your own body - not the room, for example, when lying on your back, "down" is towards your feet, not through the floor.

Head

1. Yawning: open your mouth wide and yawn, once you have yawned, see if it is possible to have a continuous yawn. Let the tears roll and let your body move and twist all over the floor.
2. Kissing the ceiling and smiling: reach with your lips towards the ceiling or towards your *imagined* lover strapped to the ceiling and kiss him/her and then smile as large as you can showing all your teeth and move from kissing to smiling. See if you can do this continuously and smoothly.

3. Rolling your head left and right: notice if you are sliding your head or rolling - what is the difference in the two ways of moving? Bring attention to your chin and notice what direction your chin is moving. After some time, move your eyes in the opposite direction to your head and then finish the exploration with your eyes and head rolling together.

Mouth

1. Curl the middle part of your upper lip upward without using your jaw or holding your tongue. Rest. Curl the middle part of your lower lip downward without using your jaw or holding your tongue. Is there a movement that begins to happen in the belly?
2. With your mouth closed, lips softly touching, teeth softly apart enough so you can touch your cheek with your tongue. Bring your tongue to the right corner of your lips - go a little further. Press and release with your tongue feeling the texture, depth, elasticity of the inner part of your cheek. Move your tongue a little above, a little below and little to the right and a little to left. Place your attention in each spot for an extended period of time exploring by pressing and releasing and slowly move onto the next position until you have completed the cross pattern - do the same with the left side of your mouth.
3. Gently press and release your upper front teeth from behind with your tongue, move from the middle to the right and then back - one tooth at a time. Then do the lower teeth starting in the middle and going to the right and back again to the middle. Now, using your tongue, touch the front of your teeth, starting with the upper teeth on the *right* side and then lower teeth. Repeat this with the *left* side of your mouth...Sense and feel without visual imagery, feeling the texture, the hardness, the density, temperature etc...
4. Using your tongue, gently press and release the upper part of your mouth, moving from the front to the back. Feel the different densities, where there are harder and softer textures, moving slowly.

Eyes

1. Close your eyes. Notice where you are looking from; *in the back, middle or front of your eyes?* And in which direction?
2. Slowly move your *right* eye only from the beginning place to the bridge of your nose slowly and back a number of times. Rest. Move your eye to the right and imagine you can look out your right ear a number of times. Rest. Do the same for up /down, then make a circle clockwise and counter clockwise. Rest.
3. Do all of these previous movements with the *left* eye but only imagine the movement. Is the quality of sensing any different in the *left* eye then the *right* eye? Where are you looking from in your eyeballs? Try looking from the front and try looking from the backside of your eyeballs (with

eyes closed still!). What is the most efficient way to use your eyes? Is it different for different activities?

Shoulders and Arms

1. Lying on your back, bring your arms to shoulder height resting on the floor and make soft fists with your hands. Roll your fists down towards your feet a number of times, rest. Roll your fists up towards your head a number of times, rest. Combine the up and down, rest. How could the movement become easier and larger without involving strain? Bend your legs and bring your feet to standing, arms out to shoulder height with soft fists. Roll your fists down and then up a number of times, include in the movement when rolling down the lifting of your head, and include when rolling up the lifting of your pelvis. Does this make the movement larger without strain? Repeat the above movement but reverse the lifting i.e. roll your fists downward to your feet but lift your pelvis. Then go back to the beginning of this sequence to reference if the movement has become clearer, easier? Do the above sequence in sitting with the soles of your feet together. And do the above movement sequence kneeling on one knee and standing on the other foot.

Hands

1. Lie on your back or on your side. Move your hand by bringing your fingers to your thumb and your thumb to your fingers in a simultaneous way. Use both hands. Continue to do this with your hands and notice if you can introduce another movement somewhere else in your body without stopping or holding the movement of your hands in that process. Begin to roll your head left and right. Notice how you time the movement - change the timing. Roll your *left* leg right and left, notice how you time the movement. So, now you have your *left* leg, head and both hands all moving at different timings/speeds all together. Bring in the *right* foot - notice if you're holding or doing something with your breathing, eyes or jaw - can you let these three places be soft?

Ribs

1. Sitting with your legs crossed in front of you, bring your *right* ear to your *right* shoulder, then your chin to your chest, then your *left* ear to your *left* shoulder making a half of a circle on the horizontal plane with your head. Now roll your head in a full circle. Rest. Imagine you have some glue that attaches your *right* arm to your head. Roll your head as previously with your arm attached. Rest your *right* arm and then switch the glue to your *left* arm and head and make the full circle. Rest. Now glue both of your arms to your head and roll your head in a full circle. Reference the movement by rolling your head in a full circle without your arms attached - what is it like now?

Spine/Vertebrae

1. Lie on your back. Notice the contact you have to the floor and the particular way in which your spine and vertebrae are in contact and not in contact with the floor. Slowly bend your legs, notice how this changed the position of your spine and the contact with the floor. Interlace your fingers behind your head. In a microscopic way, centimeter by centimeter, slowly lift your head, moving one vertebra at a time. Rest. Lift your bum one vertebrae at a time. Rest. Move back and forth lifting from your head or your bum increasing the lifting little by little, as is natural, without effort or strain. Rest and lie on your back. Is there more or less contact with the floor?

Pelvis

1. Lie on your back or do this sitting with legs crossed or with legs bent and feet on the floor. Imagine there is a clock on the floor and your bum is on it. Move from 12 to 1 and back again a number of times. Increase by one hour in each direction such as 11 to 2, then 10 to 3 etc. little by little. Sense and feel if your clock is square or some strange shape or is it truly a circular clock?

Legs

1. Lie on your front-side with your forehead resting on your hands. Bend your legs having your knees and feet in line with your hips. Slowly bring your *right* foot to contact the *left* and slide the *right* foot down the *left* leg, moving both legs towards the left. Do the same for the right side. Repeat the above sequence with your head turned to the left and then with your head turned to the right. Is it easier for you to go in one direction than the other? Reference these movements by doing it again with your forehead on your hands. Is it clearer to you now? Come to standing, what is it like to stand?

Feet

1. Sitting with soles of feet together, roll onto your back and again to sitting. Rest. Interlace your toes and do the rolling. Rest. Change the interlacing of your toes and roll to your back and to sitting.
2. Sitting or standing: Press and release each toe in turn, inside edge of foot, heel, outside edge of foot, middle of foot etc.
3. Lie on your back with your arms along your sides. Imagine you have a string from each finger on your right hand to each toe on your right foot - become a puppet master with your toes. Lift your index finger and with it your first toe, move left and right, do this with each toe and finger. Switch to your left side. Can you isolate the movement to just one toe and finger?

Whole Body

Lie on your back, making a movement that is so small that no one can see that you are moving, possibly in between movement and non-movement...

Each in its turn, lift your:

- Head
- Shoulder (*separate left and right sides and then together*)
- Whole Arm (*separate left and right sides and then together*)
- Ribs (*separate left and right sides and then together*)
- Lower back (*separate left and right sides and then together*)
- Pelvis (*separate left and right sides and then together*)
- Thigh (*separate left and right sides and then together*)
- Lower leg (*separate left and right sides and then together*)
- Foot (*separate left and right feet and then together*)
- Whole leg (*separate left and right sides and then together*)
- Your whole body (imagine)

And then press your whole body into the floor. What is your experience of support, contact and touch now? Could you feel where the initiating of the movement was coming from?

Some basic ideas and principles behind Movement Explorations

Look for ease of movement - there is no right way to move and there is no one way to move that is correct. There is optimal movement, but optimal is highly dependant on each person's present physical and mental organization and also dependant on the intended action. These movement explorations are intended as an exploration!

Also look for where the feelings of pressure sensations are, the spaces, the directions of movement, breathing, eyes, struggle, ease, initiation, completion, support, timing, organization, orientation, etc...

These are all key aspects for developing moment to moment mindfulness and for the understanding of how your body moves and functions.

(This was written and arranged by Jamie van Dam 09/01/2007 based on teachings from the Feldenkrais Method and Lama Mark Webber. Thank you to Lama Mark Webber and Rafael Hoekstra for encouragement, suggestions and edits.)