

Sustainable Performance 2017-2018

Playing better with less effort / Rike Hesselink, physiotherapist.

Lesson 1 (2017-10-19)

In the first lesson Fie has explained about the **anatomy**. The skeleton as a solid building. A building cannot walk, but we displace ourselves in a upright position on two legs, talking with someone at the same time and looking around, grace to the muscles, tendons, nerves, blood circulation, the organs, brains...

First there is movement, noise/sound/music will follow... But the first movement of a human being is breathing.

Let's start with the beginning of life: a baby starts to cry, that's a noise! Let's watch a baby in his cradle. The baby is there, asleep. It looks quiet, no movement. But at the same time a lot of movement: it is the breathing! The chest, the back and the belly are expanded and returned to a neutral position with a moment of rest before the next breath. Breathing has a certain rhythm, like the waves of the sea or the branches of a tree in the wind. It moves, looks the same but it is never the same, it is always a bit different.

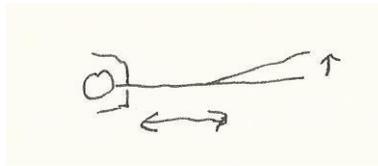
Let's feel our own breathing:

- **Stand on both legs, legs closed and try to stand absolutely still with closed eyes.** There will be always a movement forwards/backwards, left/right and circular. Be aware of your feet, ankles, knees, hips, spine, chest and the position of your head.
- **On the floor, lying prone.** We saw movement and on the floor you also feel movement of the chest and the belly against the floor. If someone put his hands on your back or on your flanks

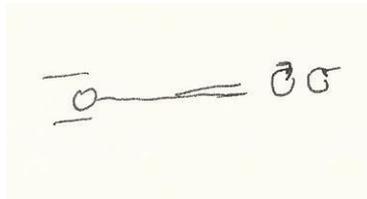
you will be more aware because of the light pressure caused by the weight of those hands.

The body is not a collection of isolated parts:

- **Connection between legs and shoulders:** lying prone, lift one straight leg a little bit (be sure that the knee is also straight!). The moment you put that leg back down, you see and feel the opposite shoulder relax too. But you didn't lift your leg with your shoulder/arm: it was the reaction to the action of your leg.



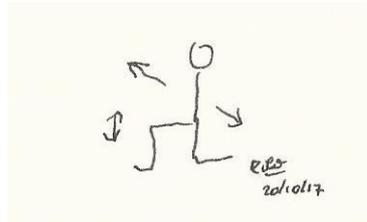
- **First movement is turning back and back...** We noticed that everyone did it in a personal way. The same way we play the same pieces differently, since we are all individuals.



Remember it takes one year before we are able to stand and walk on both legs. Later on we develop more movements like jumping, swimming and playing an instrument.

Imagine what a great job it is to balance your whole body above those little feet! You need some power and you have special postural muscles to keep that upright position. **If there is a lack of postural power your shoulders are always willing to help.** But our shoulders have another function than compensating for weak postural muscles: **arms are for moving in the air, to eat, to grasp, to touch, to hug and to handle an instrument too!**

Kneeling position: put one foot forward and find the balance between both legs, also with closed eyes. The hip joints are the pivot, the hinge. We have observed this point: not in the middle but very low. Watching the skeleton: we are often mistaken on where to find the right place of the hip joint. Not at the top of the pelvis!



How to develop a strong and mobile body, suitable for playing an instrument or singing? Playing better with less effort! In these lessons we start to develop it ourselves with theory and practice!

Assignment for the next lesson: notice how you are standing or sitting while playing. Observe your colleagues too!

Next lesson we will observe one of you playing the trumpet. Think about what is necessary to have pleasure in playing and how to play with a minimum of effort. Please compare with your own instrument.

If you have questions, please send a mail: info@rikehesselink.nl