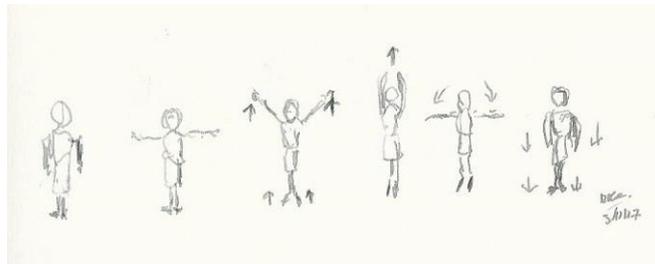


Sustainable Performance 2017-2018

Playing better with less effort / Rike Hesselink, physiotherapist.

Lesson 3 (2017-11-16)

We start this lesson with a **warming up** to focus body and mind. We have already done this exercise before: Moving your arms and keeping the balance on your feet while you are standing.



Close your eyes or follow your hands going up to make it a bit more difficult: your ankle joints will be awake. Take your time for each part of this movement by counting slowly. Don't forget to rest at the end.

This movement originates from a German method. The name of this exercise is: 'IK STA', 'It is me, I am standing upright'. It really gives you a sense of being there and having a space around yourself to do the things you want to do, such as playing music.

To experience that all joints in our body are actively moving together, we will repeat this experiment: hand a ball with some weight (an orange will also do) from your left to your right hand. Start with the right hand, hold the ball with your palm up; turn in a little circle forward and then back to the centre of your body. While turning, the palm of your hand is going downward, preparing the moment of giving the ball to your left hand. That left hand is waiting for the ball with the palm up. You repeat this movement. You can close your eyes while doing this and expand the movement a bit. Notice you feel the same turning movement under your feet: your weight is shifting from

the middle of your feet to the outside, back again tot the inner side of your feet and returning to the middle. All the important joints have to join the movements of your hands and arms: your hips, knees, ankles and the joints in your feet. While doing this, especially with closed eyes, it gives you a focus on the activity of your whole body. This teaches you that while you are playing your instrument, your whole body is playing too.

Have a look on this youtube film about making a viola da gamba:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzNnNp9WY-E>

After 7.5 minutes you see a nice example of how movement flows though the whole body of that craftsman, from feet to hands and from hands to feet. That flowing is our aim while playing: it looks simple and easy but it takes a lot of time to accomplish.

Theme of this lesson: sitting on a chair.

What is sitting? It is like standing but with a 90-degree angle in your hip joints. If you repeat the experience with giving that little ball from one hand to the other one, you feel the weight shifting on your buttocks too. If not... where do you block the movement? Probably your hips!

Try to localize your hip joint! Look at the skeleton! It lies deep behind the middle of your groin. But you can feel the bone of your thigh when you lay on one side. You feel the bony protrusion with your hand and you are surely aware of the other bony protrusion on the floor. Maybe that hurts a bit. Move the upper leg a bit backwards while lifting it: you feel the weight of your leg and also the pivot point in the lower part of the pelvis. You can feel the turning movement under your hand.

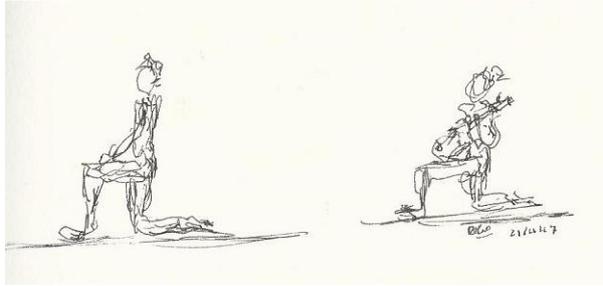
What are the movements of the hip joints? As we are sitting a lot, some muscles get shortened. We did the experiment where someone is lifting your relaxed legs when you are on the floor with closed eyes. You have to tell when the angle of 45° is reached and later the 90°. Most of us cannot accurately feel this. The real position is not the same as where we think our moved leg is. The other way around is even more interesting! When you think you are reaching the floor but you don't feel the floor yet, you get the impression you go into the floor, and are moving your leg extremely backwards.

Sit on a chair: feel the bones of the pelvis! Hands could help to feel.

Movements on the chair:

- Raise your hand or point with your hand to the ceiling. It makes a difference! Be aware of your lower back.
- Point with your hand forwards to one side. Feel the weight shifting to one of the buttocks in the same direction you are moving your arm, but the other buttock remains on the chair
- Can you lift one buttock? What is happening with the shoulders? And with your legs?
- Turn or make a rotation. What is your spine doing? Stretch one arm forward and make a wide movement around you and follow it with your eyes. What is happening when you don't follow the movement with your eyes or look to the opposite side...
- Bend forward and come back up to stand while humming as we have done before.

We observed the guitar player sitting on a chair and later she was on the floor in the knee-position. That position triggers her to balance her hip joints and trunk and use her legs too. While doing that her arms are more independent to play.



Note: when you are wearing a pair of trousers that is too tight, you get out of breath quicker or your shoulders will start giving signs of protest.

We finished with the exercise of the warming up and alternated it with the pli  from the first lesson.

The centre of gravity of our body has to go down. It can take a while before this becomes a natural habit because our acquired daily habits are disrupting. We often have to repeat the same movements in different postures. Finally we aim to play as easily as the movements of the instrument maker look to us.

Questions? Mail to: info@rikehesselink.nl