

REFLEXOLOGY:

Give your hands a hand!

It's Showtime and you're looking for that extra motivation and surge of power! You want those endorphins now!! You only have 5 minutes before you hit the stage. "Reflexology", you say "But I'm in full costume and my feet are not exactly available. Now what?" Dancers give yourselves a HAND! Pick one. You have a pair. One acts as the working hand and the other as the receiving hand. Then switch and just like dance class reverse the action.

Grab a thumb and reflex that master gland known as the pituitary (Fig. 1). The pituitary reflex is found in the centre pad of the thumb. Press your working thumb into the receiving thumb, and then move just a little higher to stimulate the brain (Fig. 5). Tap all fingers together and then rub the hands vigorously front and back to stimulate energy. Now "land mark" or find the adrenal gland reflex found in the palm of the hand, and give it a couple of knuckle presses (Fig. 2). This is always good for a boost of adrenaline! Holding a little tension in the neck? Thumb walk the neck shoulder ridge by holding palm face up; work back and forth from the baby finger to index finger on the fatty pad of the hand just below the base of the fingers (Fig.4). Using tiny inch worm moves, spine walk up and down the thumb from the heel of the hand to the tip of the thumb. Now interlock your fingers (Fig. 3), as if to pray for a perfect performance and apply pressure to the base of the fingers in a pulsing motion. I like to call it the "finger frappe!" There you did it! Relaxed the neck, got a shot of adrenaline, released those great feeling endorphins, got a jolt of motivation and your ON!

Like dance, hand and foot reflexology is an art. By applying pressure and palpitations to specific points, the whole body can benefit. The aim is to stimulate reflexes and acu-points precisely. The central nervous system then responds by sending out impulses to organs, glands, and muscles. Each person's hand is individual and unique, just like the foot. Analysis of the hand allows energy levels to be accessed and gives us some insight into the person's emotional, mental and physical make up.

Partner Work

Reflexology partnered with a dancers training will improve the functions of the heart, lungs, and blood vessels. By working your own lungs through the hands and feet, your cardiovascular system will be working at its peak. The vital energy created improves mental alertness and re-enforces confidence. Remember to warm up as mentioned in my article in Dance Canada Quarterly's summer issue.

Simple self reflexology techniques for our feet and hands can brake up deposits of toxic wastes such as lactic acid, and uric acid crystals. We can increase blood flow by warming the feet and hands.

Keeping the tempo

Reflexology helps to adjust the bodies tone and overall tension level. When "reflexed" properly the tone will reset itself to a lower operating tempo which means less wear and tear on the body's systems.

Dancers must listen to their bodies and take care of their equipment. So the next time you hear "don't strain the fingers, more feeling through the fingertips, soften your thumb, don't brake the wrist"....your teacher will be referring to Hands, the emotional messengers of Dance. Wow, give them some applause!

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FIGURE 1:
 The pituitary reflex, pulse press thumb several times with light pressure, then rub out. Reflexing this master gland helps to center our focus and control emotions



FIGURE 2:
 The adrenal reflex, pulse press with knuckle to release adrenaline for a power serge



FIGURE 3:
 Quick jabs with pressure to the base of the fingers for neck release



FIGURE 4:
 Thumb walk with inch worm moves across the nick shoulder ridge from the baby finger to the first finger



FIGURE 5:
 Stimulate brain to release endorphins start with thumb and then all fingers