

Your Body is Your Instrument (2nd edition)

This exercise could be done to music, working on moving on the beat, but doesn't need to be. Not having a beat dictate the pace may allow more freedom to experiment with the size and timing of movements.

Musicians play instruments such as trumpets, guitars and pianos, but all we need to make a dance is our own body. Musicians often warm up by playing scales, moving from low to high, and then back to low notes. We are going to warm up our bodies from bottom to top and back down.

Start with the feet. What are some of the ways you can warm up your feet?
Walking, marching in place, balancing on one foot and drawing with the other foot in the air.

Then the knees.
Bend and stretch them, called a plie. Open and close them.

Then the hips.
Lean left, lean right. Push the pelvis forward, backward. Make circles.

The rib cage can do similar moves to the hips-
Going left to right, front and back.

Then the shoulders-
Lift one shoulder, lift the other. Switch, switch switch.
Lift them both together.

And what if the movement goes down the arms?
Reaching side to side. Stretch the fingers open to jazz hands –open and close into fists.

Next, the head.
Look left, look right. Go back and forth.
Look up, look down, shift between.
Then, make a full circle of the head.

Now, as you work your way down from head to feet experiment with the size and energy of the movements.

What if we only move an inch? What if we move very slowly and smoothly? How does it feel different if we perform the movement quickly?