



The Magic of Muscle Dancing

By

Carol Gottesman

Abstract

I introduced the Muscle Dance to psychiatric patients and nursing students as a yoga style exercise. The results included decreased anxiety, improved energy, mental clarity, balance and coordination. In this presentation, participants will have the opportunity to experience these benefits by participating in a group Muscle Dance. They will learn how to add a research component by using a before and after assessment. They will also experiment with other balancing techniques and evaluate results. The Muscle Dance has many applications in everyday life. We will discuss various other ways to use the Muscle Dance, including using it as a method to advertise and recruit TFH students and clients.

Between 1980 and 1987 I taught the Touch for Health Muscle Dance to psychiatric students and patients on an 18 bed Psychiatric Unit at Trumbull Memorial Hospital. The Muscle Dance consists of the fourteen muscle tests, beginning with the starting position of the muscle test and moving the arms or legs through the range of motion of each muscle test. This movement through each range of motion stimulates the energy flow to that muscle and allows the client to feel each muscle work. This also stimulates the flow of energy through the particular meridian pathway that energizes each muscle, thus bringing about a balancing effect.

I started by leading the participants through each position, three times, as a yoga style movement allowing the arms or legs to slowly float through the range of motion. I asked them to tune in to the muscles they were using and be aware of where they felt tension or tingling in their body. I reassured them that at first they may not feel tension or tingling in the particular muscle being worked, but as the exercises were done daily, they would become more attuned to their bodies.

Consistently I found by the end of a week both students and patients were feeling more of the muscles during these movements. Patients consistently stated, "I feel energized." Students observed that patients appeared more relaxed and were more expressive as evidenced by tone of voice and facial expressions. Their coordination and balance seemed improved. They communicated more spontaneously and appeared more alert in activities that followed. They seemed to focus more on reality and had improved mental clarity. When they asked for diagrams of the exercises so they could continue to do them at home, I knew they were feeling the benefits. The students also stated they felt more energized, focused and relaxed. They felt it helped prevent burnout symptoms of exhaustion from mental and emotional strain.

Based on these findings, I feel the Muscle Dance can be applied in many settings. I would like to test this hypothesis by taking the participants in this presentation through the Muscle Dance and eliciting their feedback regarding the results they experience. One way we will evaluate the results is by assessing our level of anxiety, energy, mental clarity, coordination and balance, before and after the Muscle Dance.

Another way of evaluating the results is to become attuned to our bodies' messages. We can do this by tuning into each muscle we are monitoring and asking ourselves the following questions. Does the muscle move easily through the range of motion? Is there pain in the area of the muscle or anywhere else in our body? Are we compensating by recruiting other muscles? Are we breathing or holding our breath? Are we controlling the move-

ment or allowing it to flow? Do we feel tingling, tickling, warmth or any other sensation, which would tell us that the muscle is activated, meaning energy is flowing? Finally, based on these assessments, determine if the muscle is switched on or off.

Just doing the Muscle Dance activates the energy flow to the meridians and muscles, which may bring about a balance. The Muscle Dance can also be used as a self-assessment tool to determine which muscles need further work. I have found when people are unable to feel a particular muscle working, have difficulty positioning the muscle and taking it through the appropriate range of motion, they are also switched off when the muscle is tested. Therefore, the Muscle Dance can serve as a modified testing process. Additional Touch for Health techniques can be used for balancing; then re-assessment may be done using the Muscle Dance. If the muscle now moves more smoothly, without pain or compensation, a correction has been made. The Muscle Dance can be used to determine if other techniques such as Reiki, Healing Touch, etc. have a balancing effect.

The Muscle Dance can also be used to teach beginning Touch for Health students the muscle tests. I do this the first morning of my Touch for Health 1 classes to give students an immediate hands-on experience of feeling the energy flow through their muscles. In addition to learning the muscle test movements, they begin to be able to determine whether a muscle is switched on or off.

I combine this with a group goal balance. The goal is: that the students are calm and centered; everything happens easily and effortlessly in learning TFH techniques; they retain and recall the information; TFH becomes an integral part of their lives and they have fun. If someone is switched off during the Muscle Dance, I test the effected muscle and do the correction with the whole group touching one another, in order to achieve a surrogate, group balance for the goal.

The Muscle Dance with a group balance can be used in demonstrations designed to recruit students and clients. I have used the Muscle Dance in presentations with groups of various sizes, including corporate clients such as Progressive Insurance Company.

In this presentation, participants will have the opportunity to balance their energy through a group Muscle Dance. They will learn how to add a research component with a before and after assessment. They will also experiment with other balancing techniques and evaluate results. These techniques can be applied in everyday life.

The Magic of Muscle Dancing: Research and Implementation

Carol Gottesman M.Ed., RN, C, HNC, Certified TFH Instructor, Certified Assoc. Pranic Healer