

Energy in motion Advanced holistic strategies for power, effort, precision in classical & contemporary dance



Enra – Pleiades 2014

Clare Guss-West, B.Hum M.A.
The Dance & Creative Wellness Foundation





HUMAN KINETICS

About Today's Webinar

Today's webinar is brought to you by Human Kinetics

We're scheduled to last for 1 hour and it will be recorded and made available for download and playback.

You will receive an email containing a link to the recording when it is available.

All microphones and phone lines are muted so we ask that you submit questions by typing them into the question box located in the lower right corner of your screen and click "send."

We'll collect any questions sent throughout the presentation for Clare and she will answer as many as possible during the Q&A segment at the end.

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About Today's Presenter

Clare Guss-West MA – Specialises in bringing holistic strategies to professional dance training and artistic performance.

Clare teaches an '*holistic*' approach to training for professional dancers, teachers and ballet masters.

Clare delivers this work for major schools and organisations across the world including The Royal Ballet, Houston Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, Opéra de Paris-Opéra Universite.

She developed '*dancing longevity*' and '*Danse Senior*' teacher training.

She is the co-founder of the European Dance & Creative Wellness' Foundation.

Clare aims to bring awareness to the potential role of dance in innovative preventative health and wellness solutions.



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Energy in motion

three foundations of holistic movement



Alignment &
Posture



Energy &
Breath



Intention &
Focus



the Alpha brain wave



the Alpha brain wave

Often referred to as a 'peak performance' state of mind

Alpha waves flood the left hemisphere of professional athletes and performers just prior to achieving a winning performance

Those who fail to make a winning move show predominant **beta brainwaves** (thinking) drowning their left-hemisphere.

Energy in motion

Peak Performance - automatic economic deployment of oxygen and energy and efficient engagement of muscles groups

Relaxes body & clears the mind, lowering heart rate & pulse and results in **increase in stamina**

Lowers levels of **stress & anxiety** promoting emotional stability

Heightens learning ability more information - **less effort**

Increases creativity due to suppressed Beta activity

Boosts the immune system due to lowered levels of Adrenalin and Cortisol

Increases the neurotransmitter serotonin body's **natural anti-depressant**

the Alpha brain wave

- Systematic **coordinated breathing**
- **External attentional focus**
- **Use of imaginary and visualization**
- Somatic practices – Yoga, T'ai chi, Chi Kung
- Meditation, Mindfulness

the Alpha brain wave

'over thinking' (beta brainwaves) undermines performance and is the enemy of movement, promoting a global movement dysfunction !

Energy in motion



Energy & Breath



Energy in motion

Where the mind will go . . .

Blood and energy will follow

Energy in motion

three foundations of holistic movement



Intention &
Focus



Energy &
Breath



Alignment &
Posture



Energy in motion

three foundations of holistic movement



Intention &
Focus



Energy in motion

attentional focus

recent research and ancient TCM movement practices concur that:

balance, force production, consistency, speed, precision & learning are enhanced by the use of a specific focus

an **'external'** attentional focus

(a focus on the movement effect)

whether 'real' or 'imaginary'

Energy in motion

attentional focus

research on the effects of attentional focus has consistently demonstrated that motor performance and learning are enhanced by

an 'external' focus (on the effect of the movement)

relative to

an 'internal' focus (on control of the body movements or part movement)

INTERNAL FOCUS Concentration on *body parts & body movements*



“Lengthen the legs & lift out of the hips”



“Bend your knees more”



“Concentrate on the movement of your diaphragm”



“Focus on the hand movement”

EXTERNAL FOCUS

Concentration on *effect of movements* (e.g., the fan, the floor, the sound, the skis)



“Press the floor away”

Or

“Reach down into the rock
& up to the rain”



“Put pressure on the skis”



“Concentrate on the quality
of the sound”



“Focus on the circling
movement of the fan”

Constrained action hypothesis – *Choking Effect*

- Trying to consciously control one's movements (**internal focus**) constrains the motor system by interfering with automatic control processes.
- Focusing on the movement effect (**external focus**) promotes the utilization of automatic control processes.

attentional focus

An **'external'** attentional focus enhances performance at any skills level

beginner to professional, senior, through injury, stroke rehabilitation and other pathologies.

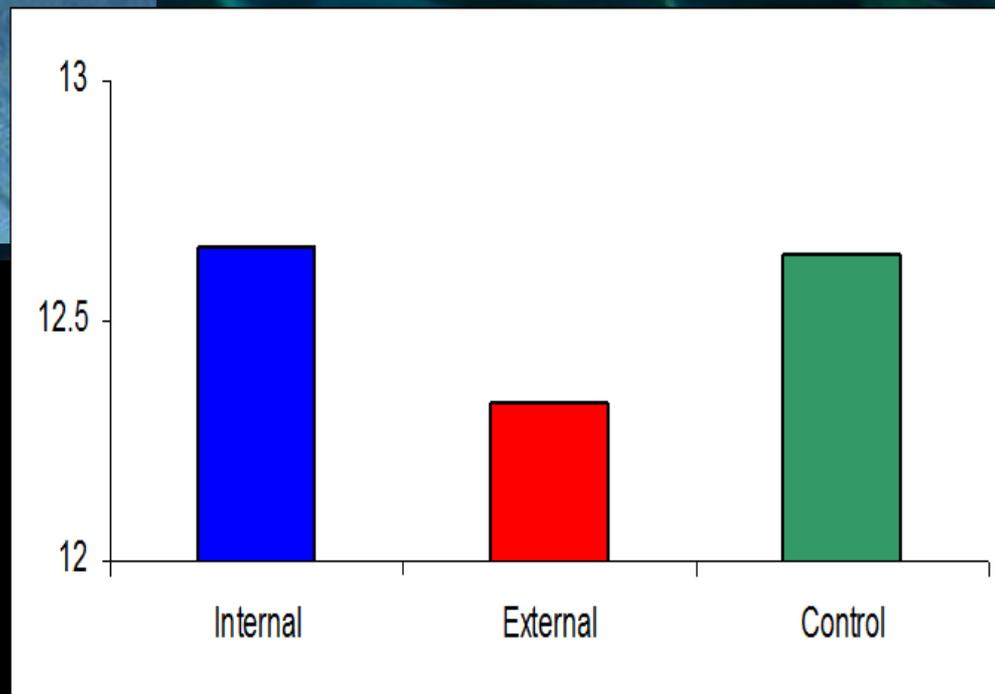
An **'external'** attentional focus provokes immediate physiological and neurological benefits, promoting the global well being of the dancer.

attentional focus

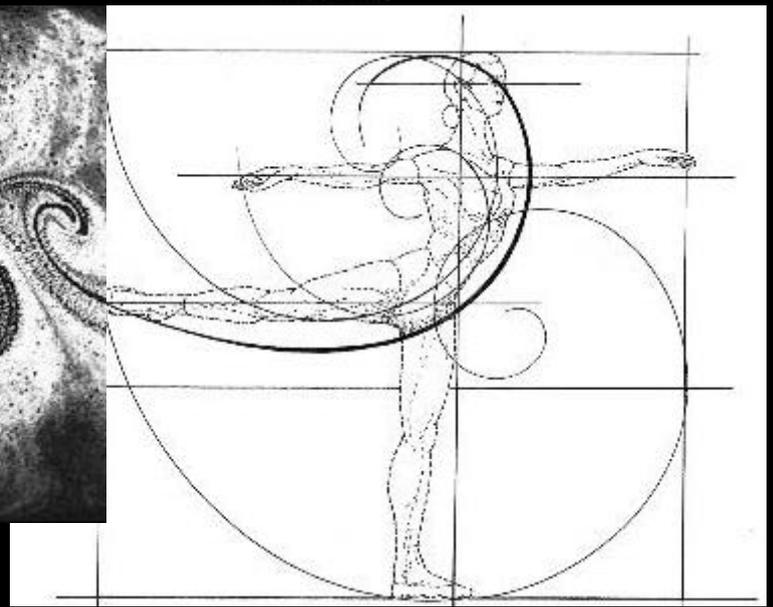
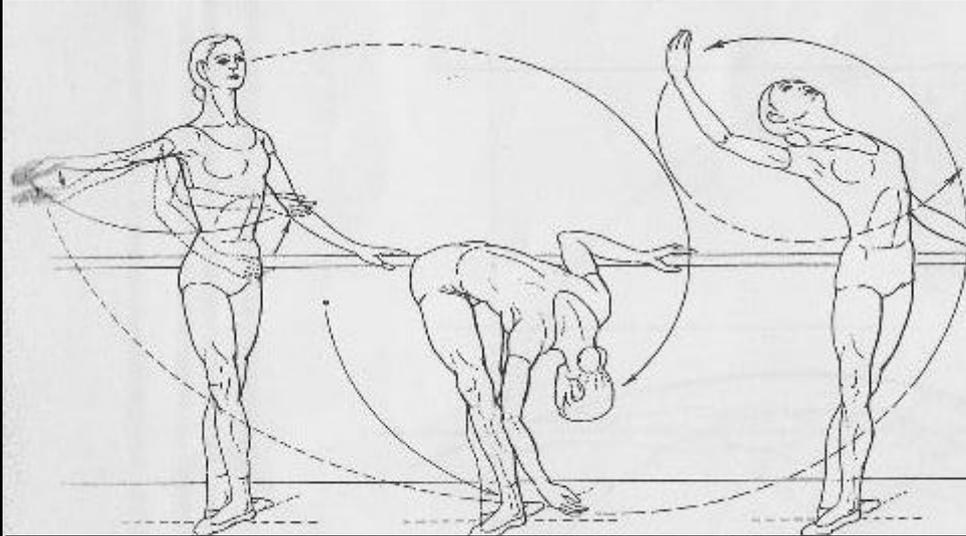


crawl swimming (16 m)

internal focus: pulling the hands
external focus: pushing the water
control:



Energy in motion



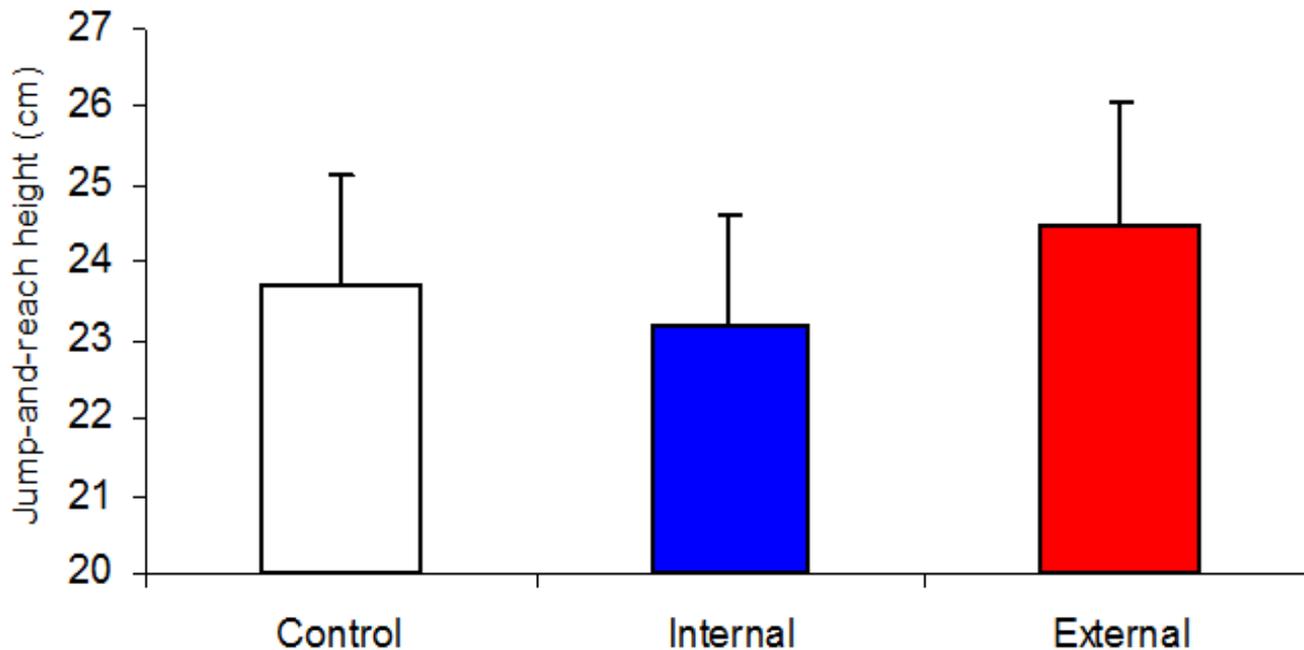
Jump & Reach – Jump Height and Force

Maximum force production:
Jump as high as possible

Internal focus: the fingers

External focus: the device

Control:



Wulf, G., & Dufek, J.S. (2009). Increased jump height with an external attentional focus is due to augmented force production. *Journal of Motor Behavior*, 41, 401-409.

Research Conclusions

An **external** focus of attention results in

more effective

Balance

Precision

Power - force production

Speed

An **external** focus of attention also result in ...

more *efficient* movement patterns

Fluidity

Minimum muscular activity

Reduced fatigue and therefore injury

Greater stamina as a result of

lower heart rate, reduced oxygen consumption, etc.

Energy in motion

attentional focus

an **external** focus of attention result in ...

improved movement *quality*

increased movement *automaticity meaning . . .*

Free cognitive reserve – improved multi-tasking

Enhanced stress management – consistent performance under stressful conditions

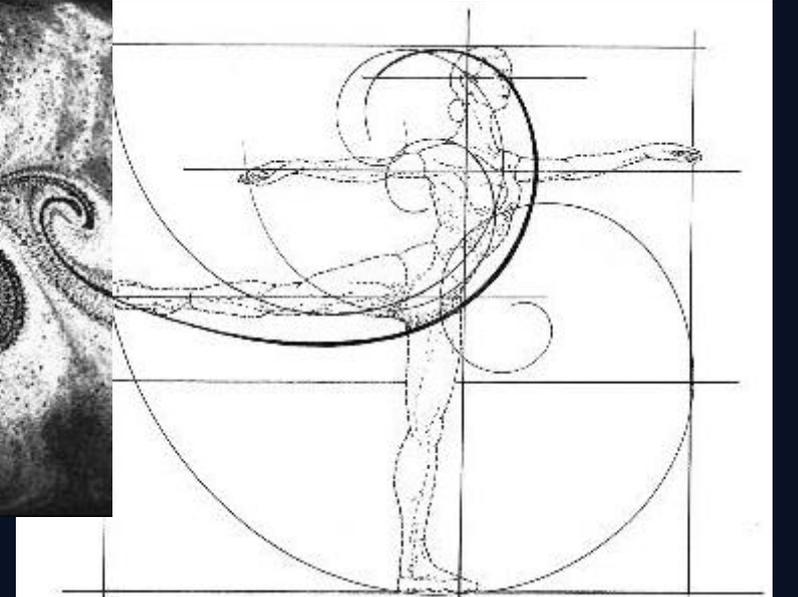
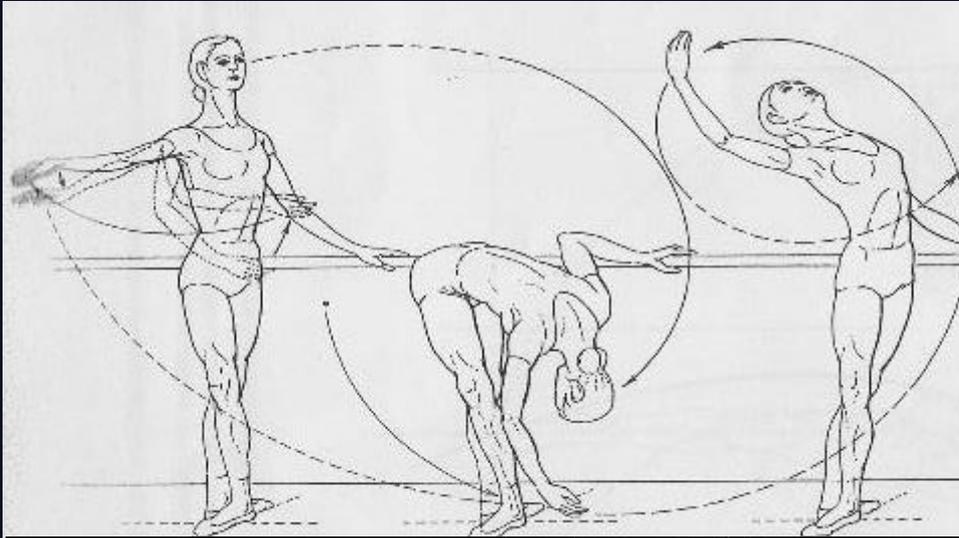
Energy in motion

synthesizing multi-dimensional,
multi-sensory demands



Energy in motion

the dancer's language: a multi-dimensional, multi-sensory language based on imagery, proprioception, mapping



'a dancer-centric journey'



'a dancer-centric journey'

split focus - fragmentation
- information overload



Energy in motion

swimmers

Internal focus

Pulling fast, fast arms, keep kicking
Hip rotation
Spinning my arms
Tempo, keeping head down
Arm speed
Elbow high, Catch up
Catch at front, pull hands back
Kicking faster

control group:
what did you focus on?

External focus

Getting to the other side
Nothing
Speed
Going fast
Tempo and pulling lots of water
Opponent
Swimming hard underwater

Balance in 5th

- Connection from balls of feet up inside leg **zipping up** through pelvic floor and abdominals, plus **pulling down** of lats and some kind of meeting in between. Finally, head position. Feel like I'm simultaneously 'up & out', and 'up & in'.
- **Squeeze** your butt / push down

Balance in Arabesque

- I imagine dancing on a big stage and dancing with a lovely partner or doing the balance on the top of the Tour Eiffel, focus on stretching my knees, **proper** placement, soft arms.. **I usually hope for a great balance**
- Divide the body in 2 half.(spine in the middle and both side) to be able to get a **correct alignment** of the arabesque. Supporting leg is **growing** through and also into the floor. (like in Yoga) Working leg is lengthened away from the hip joint. Arms and neck are relaxed and placed.
- Think of the hips **very square**, knees pulled up, pushing into the ground, abdos and perineum held, stretch the extremities (hands, head, foot), the focus far away above the arm, the foot turned out

Pirouette en dehors

- Divide the body in 2 half.(spine in the middle and both side) to be able to get **a correct** and balanced alignment of the pirouette position. Supporting leg is **powerfully growing** through and also into the floor. (like in Yoga)Working leg knee are **calmly but powerfully placed** into the position and both are coordinated together. Well worked back with **right alignment** of the arm. Head are well aligned the line with spine. Relaxed neck to be able to use the head.
- **avoiding the standing foot** turning en dedans before the pirouette **(I am not a big turner, though)**
- **Go up and turn, isometric contraction** of stabilizer muscles in order to **resist centrifugal force**

Grand Jeté

- The Preparation! the action of going down before up , turned out and then the push off of the rear leg to pop the height and projection forward and to ensure maximum split. But preparation before, going up then forward with upper body **not too far ahead of oneself** as you propel up.
- **jump over a puddle - suspension - soar and glide with pelvic initiation** at top of jump
- **Expanding** energy like an explosion.
- **Being thrown from the floor out a window!**

'a dancer-centric journey'

OPTIMAL tools for a global, interdisciplinary approach

Optimizing Performance Through

Intrinsic Motivation & Attention for Learning

Gabriele Wulf & Rebecca Lewthwaite
Dept Kinesiology & Nutrition Science
University of Nevada, LV
Rancho Las Amigos Rehabilitation Center, CA
University of S. California, CA

a global, holistic approach promoting the autonomy of the artist

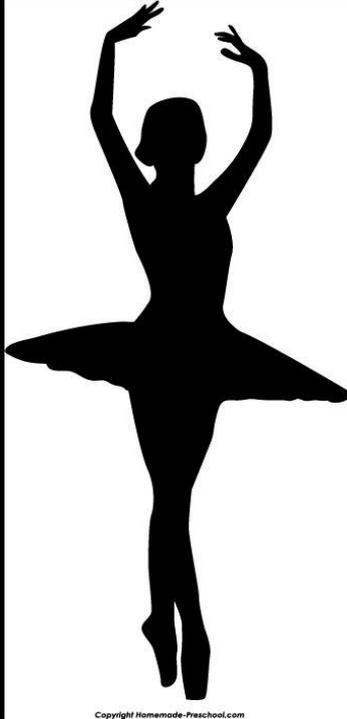
adapting focus - attentional focus

flexing vocabulary - filtering information

autonomy - language - choices

attentional focus and dance practice

internal



“straighten the legs and lift out of the hips”

external



“Press the floor away”

‘real’ proprioceptive **external**
focus (external proximal)



‘imaginary’ **external**
focus (external distal)

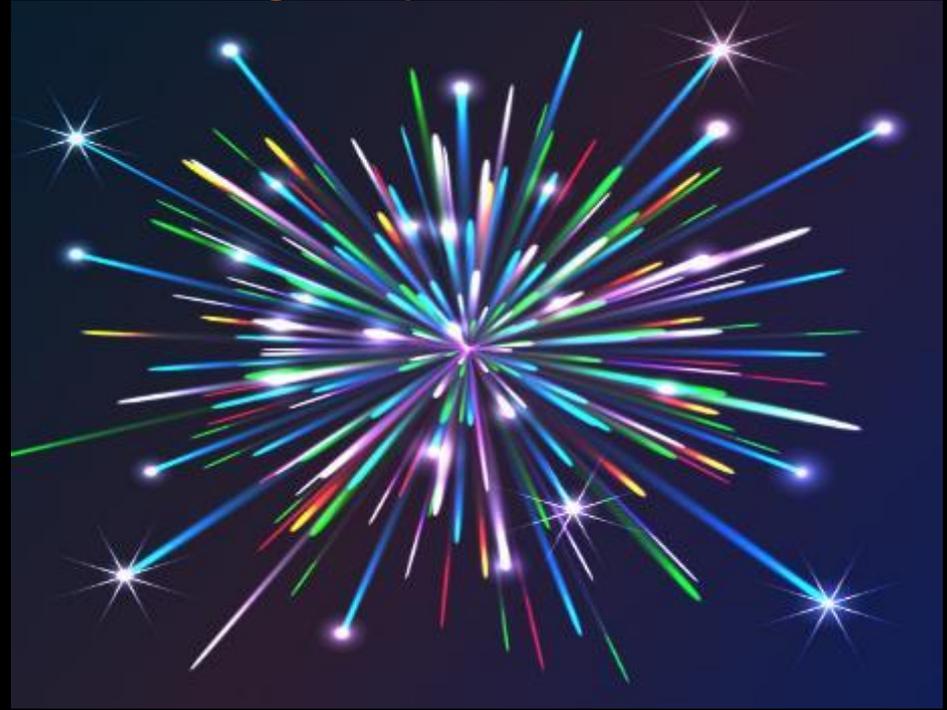


external focus in dance

'real' proprioceptive **external**
focus (external proximal)



Use of imaginary and visualization

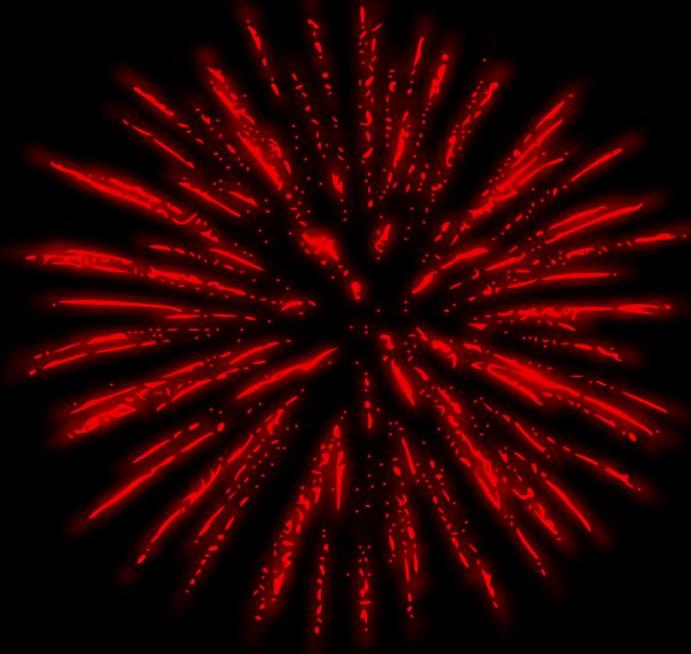


'imaginary' **external**
focus (external distal)

Energy in motion

Use of imaginary and visualization

Distance Effect



Attentional focus and dance practice

Examples of real **external** attentional foci

the floor, (the roof, the walls etc)

the music

a partner – other dancer/s

the sound of the movement

the effect of displacing the surrounding air

the flow of the breath/oxygen

the interpretation or story line

Attentional focus and dance practice

Examples of imaginary **external** attentional foci

the 3D shape in space

the flow of energy through and beyond

the extension of line out like a laser

reaching beyond towards an imaginary object

the effect of displacing imaginary water

tactile sensations – a field of grass, honey, mud

. . .

Energy in motion

- Conscious coordinated breathing
- External attentional focus
- Use of imaginary and visualization
- Other somatic practices

a global, holistic approach promoting the autonomy of the artist

adapting focus - attentional focus

flexing vocabulary - filtering information

autonomy - language - choices

Energy in motion

as teachers there is a huge creative opportunity to . . .

to reinvent feedback & cueing with conscious focus adjustments

to integrate holistic, OPTIMAL strategies

to develop a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to intention & focus

that support the dancer in the global demands of the discipline – powerful, efficient movement at the service of an external artistic intention.

DANCEWORKS

'ENERGY IN MOTION'

Classical Ballet Workshop with Clare Guss-West

*Transform your
technique
in a day*

Look effortless

Secure balance

Increase speed

Enhance pirouettes

Boost jump height

This training is for experienced, intermediate/advanced dancers and teachers of classical, contemporary, modern and jazz dance. RAD External CPD compatible.

Wed 7th February '18 10:00-17:00 Price: £65 | 16+

(£3 booking fee applies if booked online)

(Red card members £60 must be purchased with DW reception)





Clare Guss-West, B.Hum M.A.

The Dance & Creative Wellness Foundation

clare@danceandcreativewellness.com



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Any Questions?

We will now try and answer as many as possible in the time remaining.

Feel free to keep sending in your questions

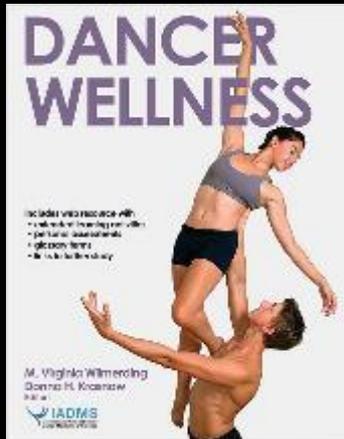
Any that remain unanswered will be forwarded to Clare and she'll try and reply in due course.

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Recommended reading



Dancer Wellness - Created by the International Association for Dance Medicine & Science, *Dancer Wellness* offers guidance on the foundations, mental components, and physical aspects of dancer wellness.

This title will help you understand concepts and strategies to develop as dancers and to create your own dancer wellness plan.



Safe Dance Practice - This title bridges the gap between research and application for dancers and dance educators at all levels.

The book presents integrated guidelines and principles that will maximize physical and mental well-being without compromising creativity and expression.

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What's coming up?

We have some great webinars coming up

Player Led Nutrition for the Developing Athlete - Ben Coomber

Date: Wednesday 14th February 2018

Time: 15.00 GMT

Exercise Training in Youth: What do we know? - Dr Melitta McNarry

Date: Wednesday 21st February 2018

Time: 15.00 GMT

Should we reframe how we think about physical activity and sedentary behaviour measurement? – Dr Paul Kelly

Date: Wednesday 28th February 2018

Time: 15.00 GMT



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Thanks for joining us

Thank you to everyone for joining us today and thanks to Clare for the great presentation.

Please take a few moments when your webinar window closes to complete a short survey on today's webinar – we appreciate your feedback as it helps us continually improve our webinars.

We will email everyone a link to the recording of today's presentation, so you can view it yourself or pass it along to friends or colleagues.

Thank you again for your participation, enjoy the rest of your day.

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