

Coordination of the Flexor Muscles and of the Extensors

Teaching resource for Feldenkrais Practitioners

#	Start position	Movement instruction	Hints and comments	Possible mistakes
1	Lie on back Legs stretched out Feet apart	→ Bend your knees → Cross your legs, place right over left		
1.1		→ Drop both knees towards floor to the right	Legs supported by left foot only Weight of right leg helps drop	
1.2		→ Breath in as knees return to middle → Breath out as knees sink down	Try both ways in one breathing cycle Observe the movements of the pelvis: The left side will rise a little from the floor; the spine will be pulled by the pelvis, and in turn will pull on the chest until the left shoulder blade will tend to rise off the ground "The movement of the spine is also felt in the movement of the head (of which the back is resting on the ground). As the knees sink down the chin will approach closer to the breastbone, and when the knees return to the middle, the head will lie as before."	⊗ Breathing too deep, too heavily
2	Lie on back Legs stretched out comfortably		"On which side of your pelvis has the change been greater ... one side its contact with the floor feels more complete. Which side is it?"	

3	Lie on back Feet apart	→ Draw up knees → Bring knees together, apart, until you feel knees are poised over feet	"Repeat until you can clearly feel when the knees are directly over the feet, in the position in which no muscular effort is required to prevent them from either leaning against each other or falling apart."	
3.1		→ Raise arms towards ceiling → Palms together	Your shoulder girdle and arms form a triangle	
3.2		→ Lift RIGHT shoulder from floor → Let triangle drop to the left as you breath out → Bring triangle back to center as you breath in	Lift as if someone would lift the right arm for you Observe movement of head (does it lift too? does it stay planted on the floor?)	⊗ Bending of elbows ⊗ Not keeping palms together
4	Lie on the back Legs stretched out Feet apart		Which shoulder is resting more firmly on the floor?	
4.1		→ Cross right leg over left leg → Let legs sink towards RIGHT	Do they drop lower than before or not?	
5	Repeat 1-4 on left side		Observe sinking of knees dearly, so then you can notice changes due to the shoulder-arm-triangle movement "The greater scope of the movement is due to the relaxation of the muscles between the ribs, which permits the spinal vertebrae to turn more freely."	

6	On back Right knee crossed over left	→ Let knees sink towards right → Interlace fingers → Place hands behind head → Raise head, help with hands	Let elbows approach towards each other	
6.1	Rest (keep constraints)		Let head and elbows rest on floor	
6.2		→ Breath out when raising head → Breath in when back to start		⊗ Lift head to one side instead of in the center
6.3	Rest (on back, legs spread out)		Observe which part of the trunk has sunk down to the floor most completely	
7	Repeat 6 on left side		Interlace fingers in non-habitual way	
8	Lie on your back Knees bent (poised over feet) Fingers interlaced behind head	→ Raise your head while breathing out		
8.1	Rest on back		Notice changes in vertebrae at small of your back and hip. Maybe they are close to the floor like never before	
9	Lie on back Knees bent Right hand on left shoulder blade, below armpit Left hand on right shoulder blade, below armpit	→ Rock your trunk left and right	Feet well apart Rock only upper part of body	⊗ Feet too close together ⊗ Hands resting on shoulders instead of on shoulder blades ⊗ Also rolling the pelvis
9.1		→ Change over arms → Rock your trunk left and right		

9.2		→ Hug shoulders as before → Keep head fixed forwards → Rock your trunk left and right	Keep eyes fixed on spot on ceiling (or just straight forward)	
9.3		→ Rock your trunk left and right together with head	Observe the improvement in the rolling movement now that you have separated the movements of the head and shoulders	
9.4		→ Rock your trunk left and right with head and eyes in opposite directions		
9.5		→ Change over arms → Rock your trunk left and right with head and eyes in opposite directions		
9.6		→ Rock your trunk left and right with head and eyes together	The movement is now even easier, more continuous and larger	
10	Lie still		Observe proximity to floor, changes in spine, after you get up walk for a few steps, "observe the way you are now carrying your head, as well as your breathing and the feeling in your shoulders. You will see that your whole body is more upright without any intentional effort."	

Sentences in quotes approx. from the book "Awareness through Movement" by Moshe Feldenkrais