

BENEFITS OF BRAINDANCE IN STUDIOS AND SCHOOLS

BRAINDANCE PATTERN	MIND/BODY BENEFIT	REFLEXES INVOLVED	DANCE SKILLS/TECHNIQUE	SCHOOL PARTICIPATION
<p>Breath: Exhale through the mouth as if gently blowing out a candle. Take deep breaths in through the nose, filling the belly, diaphragm, and lungs with air. Repeat 4-5 times or more.</p>	<p>Oneness: Increases flow of oxygen to the brain and cells - oxygen is brain food. Brings awareness of importance of breath for ease and flow of movement. Reduces stress and enlivens brain and body.</p>	<p>Moro: implicated in “first breath of life;” facilitates breathing; regulator for emotional development and control.</p>	<p>All movements and rhythms are based on breath. Graceful movement rides on the flow of breath.</p>	<p>Breath energizes our body, and nourishes our brain. Breath is the foundation for all learning and emotional stability.</p>
<p>Tactile: With your hands, squeeze strongly each arm and leg and the torso, back, head (whole body). Then tap lightly, slap sharply, brush smoothly whole body. Explore other forms of touch such as scratching, patting, rubbing, etc.</p>	<p>Sensing: A variety of touch leads to bonding, sensory processing, proprioception (knowing where the body is in space), and appropriate behavior. Tension masks sensation - tight muscles can't feel.</p>	<p>Palmar - grasps objects and brings them to mouth.</p> <p>Grasp - holds on for protection.</p>	<p>Exhibiting appropriate touch when dancing with others. Skillfully manipulating props. Articulate hands.</p>	<p>Refined sense of touch enables us to be comfortable in our own space, and with closeness to others, allowing us to access our environment. We can open and close backpacks, work zippers, lunch trays and balls. Functional hands help us grow - picture the 1st grader on the monkey bars, and learning to hold the pencil. Picture a 6th grader with 3-ring binders, writing essays, and playing musical instruments.</p>
<p>Core-Distal: Curl into core as you engage core muscles. Then move from the center out, through and beyond the fingers, toes, head, and tail (distal ends), keeping core engaged (like a starfish). Try movement involving the whole body that grows and shrinks, stretches and curls in big "X"s and little "o"s, symmetrically and asymmetrically.</p>	<p>Twoness: Reaching out with distal ends connects us to the world beyond ourselves (interpersonal intelligence) and creates full body extension, establishing our kinesphere. Curling back to the core returns us to our own self (intrapersonal intelligence) and creates an awareness of core support for correct alignment and a sense of aliveness.</p>	<p>Moro extension: puts one in fight, flight or activate mode.</p> <p>Moro flexion: puts one in withdraw, protect or calm mode.</p> <p>Integration of this reflex (extension and flexion) creates emotional stability and physical balance.</p>	<p>Exhibiting good balance. Fully extending and flexing arms, legs, and spine. Displaying appropriate emotional responses.</p>	<p>Core strength allows for participation in all parts of a school day, from climbing the steps on the bus, playing at recess, and even the skill of sitting upright in a desk. A working core lets a student concentrate on the teacher, and inadequate core often looks like ‘the wiggles’ or slumped and poor posture.</p>
<p>Head-Tail: Gently bend, twist, and stretch the spine from head to tail (coccyx) in different directions and pathways. Keeping the knees slightly bent helps release the pelvis. Wiggle, undulate, and shake spine gently. Circle and swing the head and hips. Explore yoga positions such as cat-cow, downward facing dog, sphinx, and child pose.</p>	<p>Lively Spine: Being aware of the interactive relationship between the head and tail leads to a full use of both ends of our spine for propelling us through space with ease, both on and off balance. Release of the head and tail creates an open path for our central nervous system to fully function. Strengthens back, neck, and shoulder muscles. One’s attitude may be viewed by observing relationship of head and tail: depressed, rigid, playful, aggressive, flirtatious, ashamed, etc.</p>	<p>Tonic Labyrinthine Reflex (TLR): stimulates proprioception, balance, muscle tone.</p> <p>Spinal Galant: helps baby twist out of birth canal and enables baby to hear and feel sound vibrations in the womb.</p>	<p>Going on and off balance with ease. Fully using the spine for épaulement, inversions, successive, sequential, and simultaneous movements.</p>	<p>Spinal movement supplies needed nourishment to the spine and brain in the cerebral spinal fluid. Spinal movement allows us to twist, bend and turn, and supports eye contact and social growth. If this is an area of challenge, we may see a child not watch where they are going, and accidentally crash into another. Or have an inward slumped posture, missing instruction or social cues.</p>

BRAINDANCE PATTERN	MIND/BODY BENEFIT	REFLEXES INVOLVED	DANCE SKILLS/TECHNIQUE	SCHOOL PARTICIPATION
<p>Upper-Lower: Ground the lower half of body by releasing/yielding into floor with a slight knee bend. Swing, bend, stretch, and twist upper body (arms, head, spine) while varying speed, level, and direction. Ground upper half by reaching arms out into space with energy as though you were hugging the earth or keep upper body still in other shapes. Dance with lower half: try marching, bending knees, jumping, swinging legs, and other actions. Lying on stomach with legs extended, curl toes under and rest on elbows - push forward and back from lower to upper.</p>	<p>Grounding: Articulates body halves for mobility/stability, function, and expression. Develops emotional stability through connection to earth with whole body. Connects one to objects and people. Lower body contains power source for movement. Allows one to reach for goals and set boundaries.</p>	<p>Landau: finishes the TLR; increases muscle tone in head and neck and allows arms to be free to grasp and bring objects to mouth; develops near vision.</p> <p>Plantar: prepares feet and legs for crawling and walking; develops tone in the lower body.</p> <p>Symmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex (STNR): helps baby to rise up to hands and knees; helps integrate the TLR; strengthens back of neck and upper back, prepares for creeping; develops near and far eye focus.</p>	<p>Grounding lower body for expressive upper body movements (port de bras, etc). Grounding upper body for expressive lower body movements (glissades, leaps, etc.). Yielding into plié and reaching into relevé. Standing with good alignment (not supinating or pronating).</p>	<p>Upper-lower coordination can be a child's greatest source of growth, skill and joy. They can run pumping their arms and at the same time leap, catch or kick a ball. They can do jumping jacks, jump rope, and hopscotch. They can carry a lunch tray and walk up or down stairs. When development is delayed a child has to think about each part of the activity, they may appear clumsy, may become anxious, or isolated at recess.</p>
<p>Body Side: Bend, twist, stretch, and shake the left side of your body while keeping the right side stable. Then keep the left stable while moving the right side. Alternate moving right and left sides by doing a body-side walk or lunging in different directions. Do the lizard crawl on your belly or standing with arms and legs open to the sides - reach left arm and knee up then right arm and knee up like a lizard crawling up a wall. To develop horizontal eye tracking, follow thumb or hand left to right and right to left.</p>	<p>Polarities: Articulates body sides and develops side dominance. Strengthens and balances both sides of the body and brain hemispheres. Strengthens body-side stability and mobility. Helps one to clarify issues and make choices. Develops horizontal eye-tracking.</p>	<p>Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex (ATNR): helps baby twist out of birth canal; coordinates homo lateral (body-side) movements; develops horizontal eye tracking and crossing the midline.</p>	<p>Displaying strength and flexibility on both sides of the body. Easily initiating movement on both right and left sides. Displaying clear focus and peripheral vision.</p>	<p>A child with intact body side awareness will have age typical right and left side awareness. They will be less likely to reverse letters and numbers. A child with solid body side awareness will become able to cross midline. A child with difficulty here may switch hands when writing. May have difficulty with managing jackets and backpacks.</p>
<p>Cross Lateral: Do a cross-lateral dance, sitting or standing, exploring many ways of moving opposite quadrants of the body such as touching right knee to left elbow, left hand to right foot, right hand to left knee, shaking left leg and right arm, marching, skipping, etc. Crawl on belly and creep on hands and knees or do a parallel standing crawl with knees and hands in front of you. For vertical eye-tracking follow hand up and down with eyes.</p>	<p>Robust Thinking: Integrates right and left brain hemispheres. Develops complex, three dimensional dancing, thinking and problem solving. Strengthens vertical eye-tracking and binocular vision.</p>	<p>Integration: when the above reflexes are integrated (between 2 months to 3 years) cross lateral movements, robust thinking, and positive behavior are natural and easeful.</p>	<p>Performing complex, cross lateral, diagonal, and spiraling movements. Remembering movements. Using strong focus to be aware of space and others.</p>	<p>Cross-lateral activities further refine a child's ability to participate in higher levels of coordination as they can cross midline. They can write across a page with out switching hands, they can read across a page with ease and without fatigued eyes. They can play games with higher levels of coordination.</p>
<p>Vestibular: This pattern may also be done at the beginning of the BrainDance. Choose a movement that takes you off balance and makes you slightly dizzy. (Slight dizziness followed by stabilization, stimulates and strengthens the balance system.) Vary the movements you do each week. Swing upper body forward and backward and side-to-side. Tip, sway, roll, and rock in different directions and on various levels. Spin 10-15 seconds one direction, breathe and rest 15 seconds, then spin 10-15 seconds the other direction. The stillness after spinning strengthens the balance system.</p>	<p>First Sense: First sense to develop in utero. Moving off balance develops our balance (vestibular) system, providing us with necessary information about motion and gravity. Stimulating the vestibular system strengthens eye tracking, hearing, proprioception, balance, and coordination.</p>	<p>Moro and TLR: develops balance, eye tracking, and proprioception.</p>	<p>Safely and intentionally performing on and off balance movements such as spinning, tipping, falling, rising, inversions as well as off the floor movements such as leaping, jumping, skipping, and hopping.</p>	<p>Balance skills support all movement and learning, whether seated or standing. Intact balance also supports us in accidental bumps, and varied terrain, like wood chips, sand, muddy grass. People with compromised balance systems should do this pattern seated.</p>

RESOURCES:

Anne Green Gilbert, *Brain-Compatible Dance Education*. NDA/AAHPERD 2006 and 2018
Peggy Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Body Integration through Bartenieff Fundamentals*. London: Routledge, 2002.
Stephanie Johnson, Sage Education and Therapy, www.sageeducationcenter.com
Janet Oliver, *Reflex Basics for Learning and Development*, www.planforlearning.com
Mary Neifert OTR/L, author of *School Participation* information 2014