

THE PROCEDURES

by

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illustrated

by

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THE PROCEDURES.

Dart first began this kind of program a few years before the age of 50 and has continued intermittently over the past 30 years. My own experience during but a fifth of this period of time, has yet been beneficial in the most unexpected directions.

The following exercises are not exercises as normally understood. Do not perform them vigorously--in certain cases they are not to be 'performed' at all. Though muscular work is being done by the body in response to gravity, some are infact non-exercises. The mind too is passively involved, except in understanding and directing the assumption of the suggested positions. What is perceived in the way of aches and pains, disturbing or other emotional experiences, should be noted down. This will enable you later to retrace in tranquillity the path of progress.

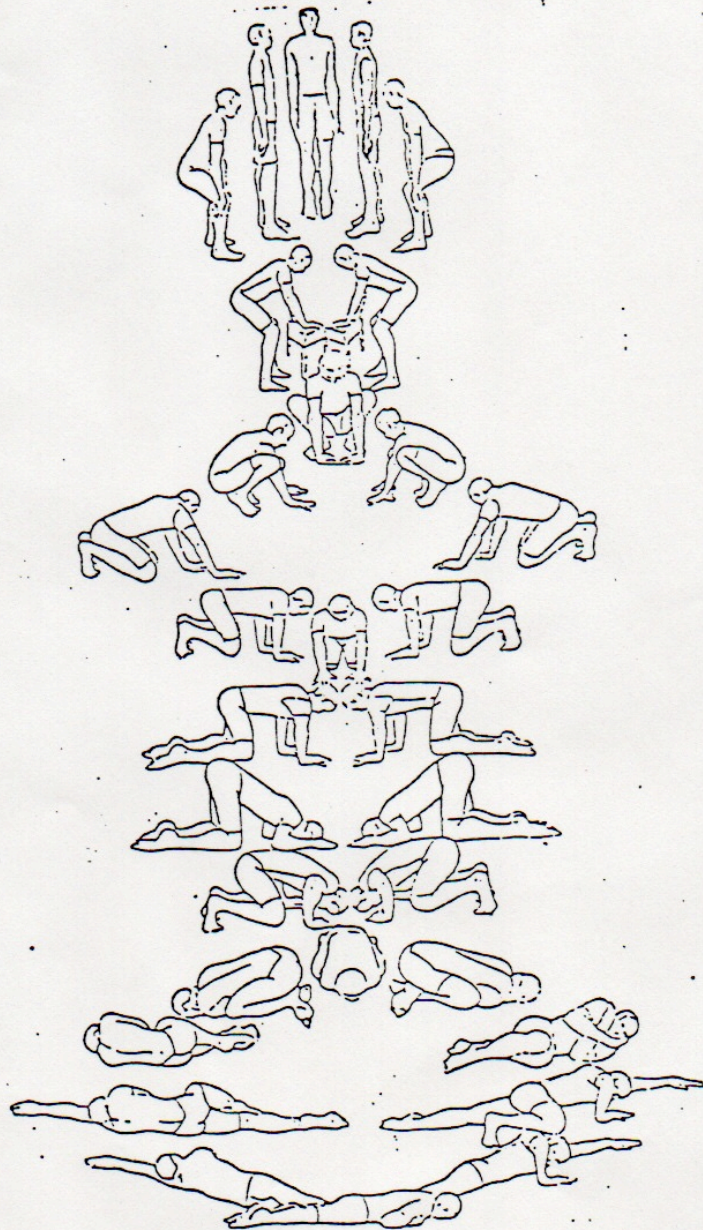
General considerations:

The conditions under which you explore your bodily mobility should be as favorable as you can devise.

1. Choose a draught-free floor with a firm but soft covering (rug, carpet or large towel).
2. Wear suitable clothing--the necessary minimum.
3. Practice daily (as frequently as desired) for short periods. Moderation is the byword. It is better to stop while interest remains than to continue compulsively when fatigue or boredom have set in.
4. Do not expect remarkable changes immediatly. Though they may occur, a small, regular improvement over a long period is a real reward.
5. BREATHING: If in any position you discover a tendency to hold the breath, exhale gently but audibly (in a whispered AAAH, a hiss, or a whistle) through the mouth, or through the nostrils, then close the lips and allow the air to return through the nose.

1 a.

1a



THE BASIC POSITION:

In order to explore your bodily mobility, start from these basic named positions. You will move in step-wise progression from positions of absolute security and stability to those requiring some degree of skill in balancing in which we feel ourselves at first to be less secure. Each of these basic positions, (the semi-supine, the fully supine, the fully prone and the crouch), when maintained for 10 or 15 minutes without strain, brings about a gradual alteration in the balance of the muscles, whether flexed or extended by that position. By drawing our attention to the parts of each bone doing the weight-bearing, each position familiarises us with each part in a way which is, or should be, devoid of fear. (Fear of falling is instinctive: each of these basic positions is completely secure--with the body in intimate contact with the ground there is nowhere to fall).

Begin in the semi-supine position. In it you can read a magazine article or enjoy a record. Extend the legs, slide the book from under your head and from the fully supine roll slowly over into the prone position. Five minutes in this posture can be followed by five in the crouch, which can be smoothly attained by placing the hands close to the shoulders (in prone) and using head and hands to move the tail backwards over the knees.

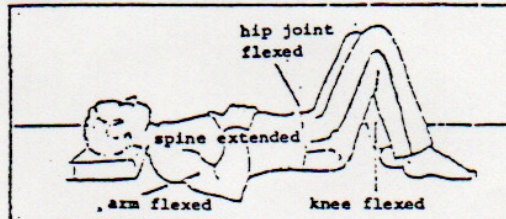
Familiarise yourself with each of these positions, separately and consecutively. Make a daily (preferably mid-day) habit of having a half-hour spent in resting your body, using the time in intelligent self-observation, noting what happens if you rest and move some piece or other of yourself. The following chapters will then reveal their true significance.

Note: To stand up after lying in the supine or semi-supine position, first roll over into the prone position, then slowly rise up, beginning on the hands and knees (see the anti-gravity progression). Page 5,1)

THE BASIC POSITIONS

THIS A suitable height

NOT \*



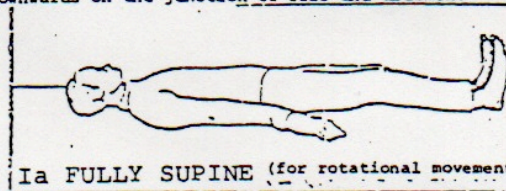
Too few books, the head falls back, the lower back leaves the floor.

I SEMI SUPINE

Lie on the back, the feet drawn up towards the tail as closely as possible without strain. Rest the head on a pile of books to maintain a normal curvature of the neck. The hands rest palm downwards on the junction of ribs and abdomen.

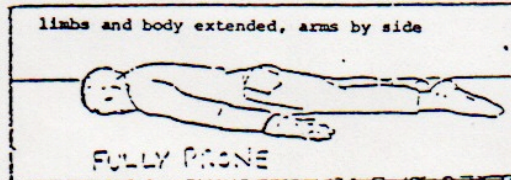


Too many books. The larynx is depressed.



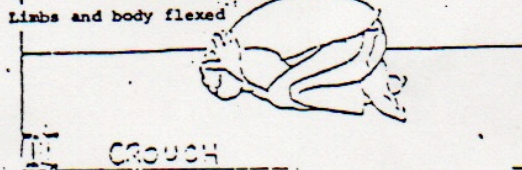
Ia FULLY SUPINE (for rotational movement)

Start in Semi-supine, remove books and align feet along the floor to straighten legs. The abdominal muscles should not tighten unduly if the weight of the leg is supported by the floor.



II FULLY PRONE

Lie face downwards on the floor. A large book (telephone directory) or slim cushion may be placed under the chest if this is found to ease the strain on the head and neck. The legs extended, feet relaxed, arms by the sides with the backs of the hands on the floor.



III CROUCH

The body rests on the knees, elbows and head. The arms cross the chest and fingers intertwine around the neck. The ankles cross under the tail.

THE BASIC MOVEMENTS:

Starting from the basic positions make the smallest possible movements which gradually expand until what begins as a movement of the eye, becomes a movement of the whole body.

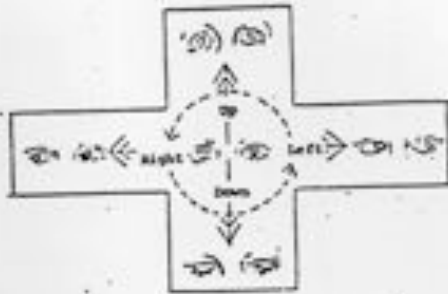
A. Partial Movements:

From each one of the basic positions explore the following according to your inclination and the time available.

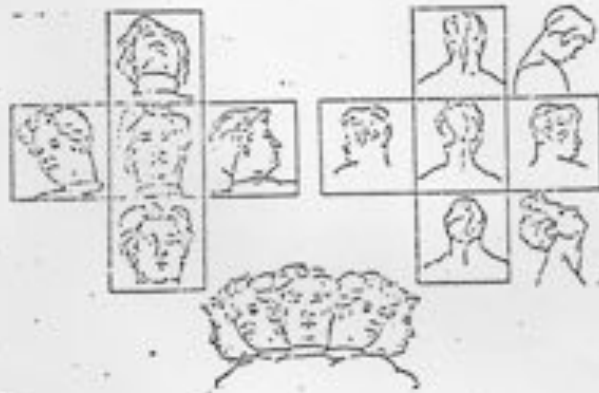
1. Eye movements: Keep the head still but explore the field of vision closing one eye, then the other, then with both open. Look up, down left and right, then rotate the eyes in one direction then the other.  
Note: in the prone position, though the eyes may see simultaneously, each eye has its own field of vision and vision is not stereoscopic.
2. Head movements: Move the head on the neck in all directions, using the eyes to explore all corners of the room (vision may then be stereoscopic). Notice the effect of occluding one eye with the hand (or a shield). Movement of the head in the direction of the closed eye is then facilitated.
3. Arm movements: Keep the hand in contact with the floor and investigate all the possible movements of the fingers, wrist, forearm and whole arm.
4. Leg movements: Keep the foot (heel, toes or side of foot) in contact with the ground. The left foot may move along the right leg and vice versa. The increased sensory inflow from the passive limb assists smooth movement. Explore limb movements first singly, then in combination (both arms, both legs, left arm and left leg, left arm and right leg and so on). The eyes and head may track the hand or foot.

1.

3a.



2.



3

4

4.



5.

THE BASIC MOVEMENTS:

B. Total Movements:

These are divided into two categories. Horizontal movements (along the floor) by rotation, creeping and crawling, and vertical movements (against gravity). The importance of rotational movements cannot be over-emphasized. Crawling (on the belly) and creeping (on all fours) have been extensively dealt with in the writings of Delacato to which you should refer if these movements have been elided from your experience.

1. Rotational movements: Practise these in both directions, to the left and to the right. In particular, experiment in turning to the side which seems the least natural to you. When rolling over move as slowly as possible, pause when the body is poised ready to fall by its own weight, and note any tendency to strain or hold the breath, which should then be exhaled as suggested.

- i. Fully supine to prone.
- ii. Prone to fully supine.

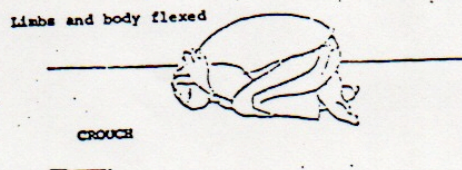
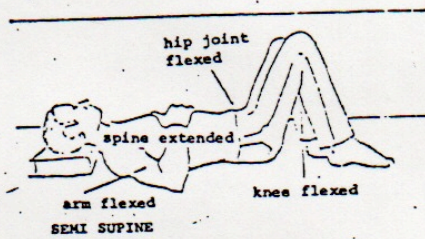
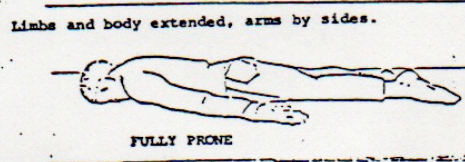
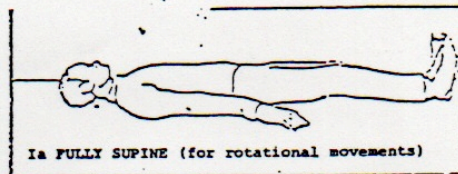
These movements may be led by the head, an arm or leg.

- iii. From semi-supine to crouch.

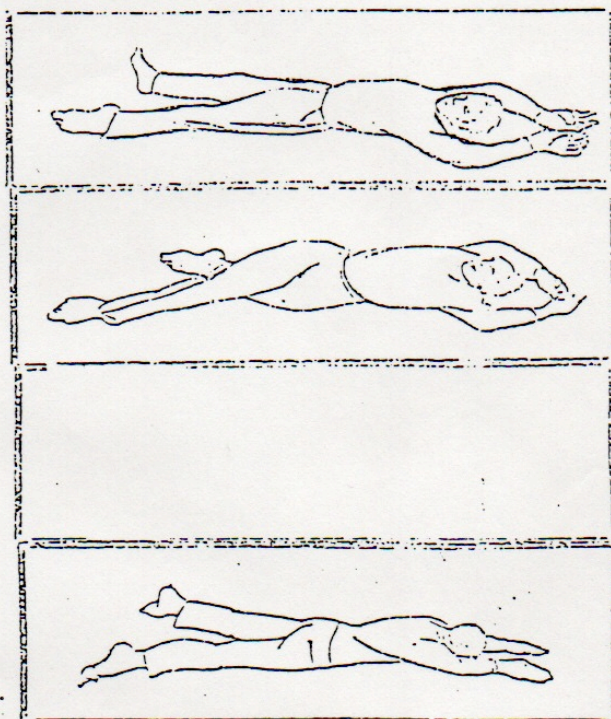
- IV. Crouch to semi-supine. Rolling over from this position can be done in a number of ways. Remember to do it as slowly as possible. Notice the difference between the moment of fall when the eyes are open and when they are closed.



4 a.

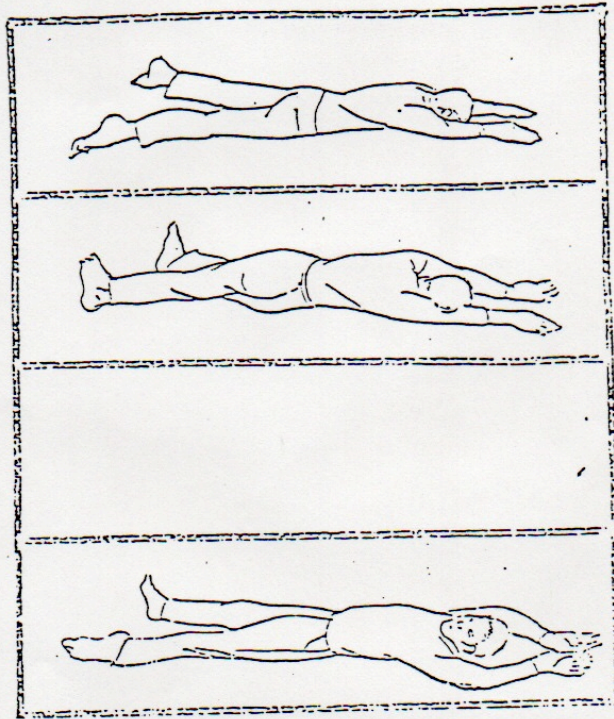


4(1)



ROTATION: 1) FULLY SUPINE TO PRONE

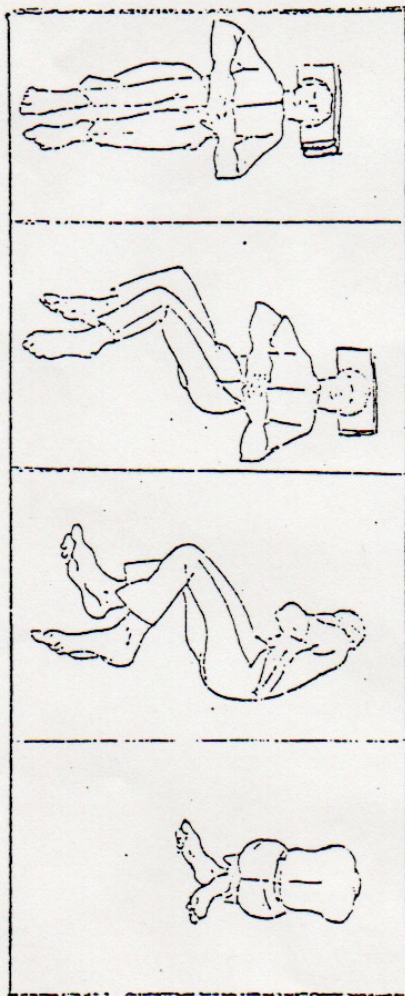
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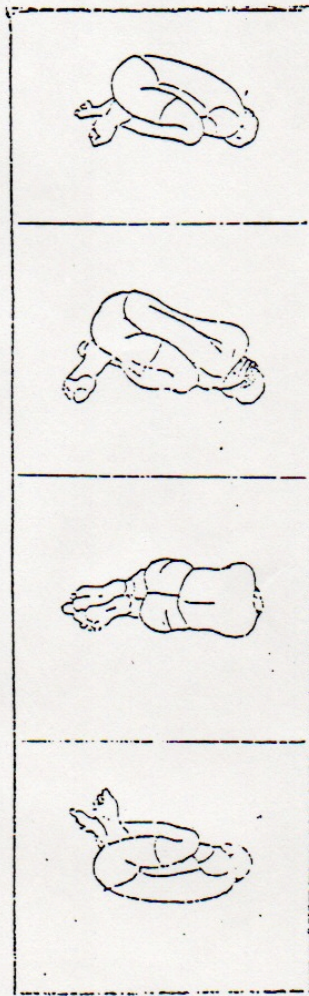
2) PRONE TO FULLY SUPINE

9.

4(iii)



4(iv)



ROTATION: 3) SEMI-SUPINE TO CROUCH

4) CROUCH TO SEMI-SUPINE

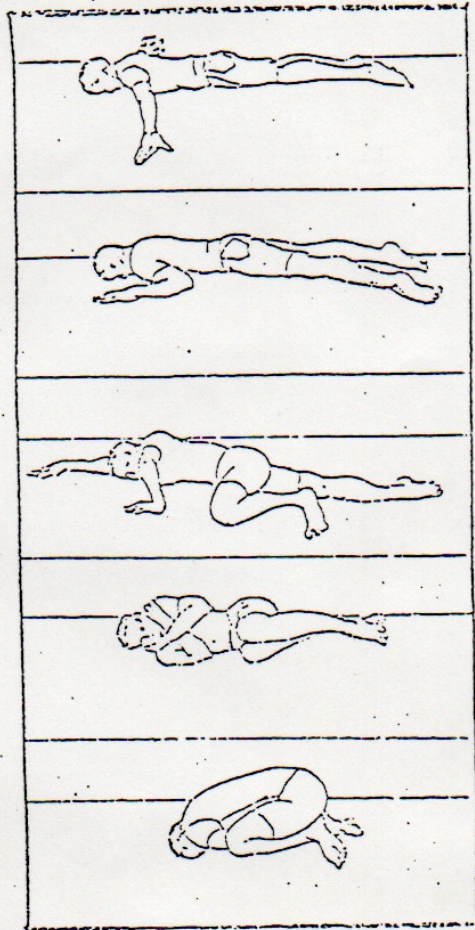
THE BASIC MOVEMENTS:

B. Total Movements:

2. Anti-gravity movements: These movements begin on the floor and progress by degrees into upright position (and ultimately, the leap, when all contact with the earth is removed).
  - i. Fully prone to crouch.
  - ii. Crouch to (a) heel haunch.  
(b) squat.
  - iii. Creeping position from heel haunch.
  - iv. Squat from creeping.
  - v. Clambering (squat with knuckles or palms on chair).
  - vi. Semi-upright. Tail or head against corner.
  - vii. Fully upright.
  - viii. On toes.
  - ix. On toes on one leg.

NOTE: (viii) and (ix) may be practised with head in contact with the wall. The ultimate test of poise is to achieve the one legged stand on tiptoe, with the eyes closed, and then to hop confidently. A true leap in the dark is the step without which nothing new can be learnt.

5(1)



ANTI GRAVITY:

1) FULLY PRONE TO 2) CROUCH

5(i) to (vii)

Anti-Gravity movements:

These are movements which begin on the floor and progress by degrees into the upright position.



i) Fully prone to crouch.



ii) Crouch by movement of the tail over the feet.

to (a) heel haunch



or (b) squat.

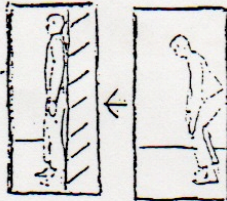


iii) Creeping position from heel haunch.

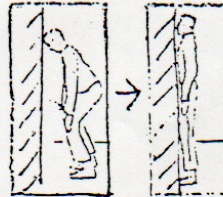


iv) Squat from creeping.

Clambering (squat with knuckles on chair).



vi) Semi-upright, tail against corner.



vii) Fully upright.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS:

Some of the rotational movements carried out on the floor may be practised with advantage in the vertical plane, e.g.: Make contact with the head against the wall. Turn the body as far as possible until it becomes necessary to turn the head again. You will have spun full circle. When you work in contact with the wall, it represents a change of  $90^{\circ}$  in the body relationship to the gravitation field, as compared with a similar movement made on the floor. A further change ( $180^{\circ}$ ) can be made as follows.

Head Stand:

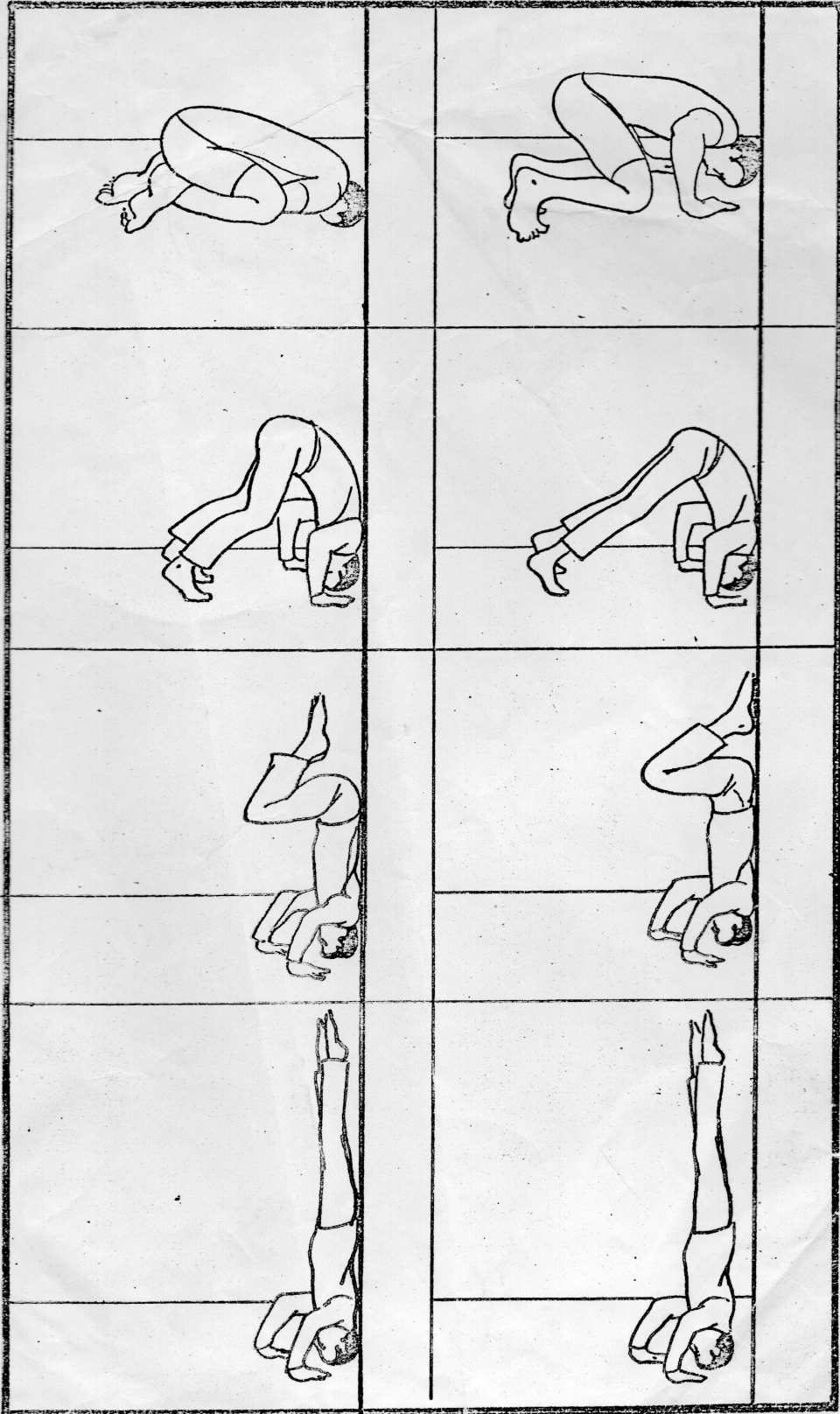
Do not attempt this if it causes any discomfort and do not maintain it for any length of time. The neck was not intended to bear the full weight of the body and this posture is only beneficial when the weight is pulling away from the head at all times (see X illustration 5).

1. Crouch with head close to the wall.
2. Uncross legs and arms, turn toes to the ground, place arms near shoulders.
3. Straighten legs to raise tail.
4. Bring feet (and back) as close to wall as possible.
5. Flex legs and straighten to send tail against wall. Flex legs in head-stand position.
6. Straighten legs against wall.

When this can be accomplished without strain and breath-holding, attempt the head-stand free of the wall remembering that at no time must there be pressure on the head and neck.

These are but a few of the potential directions in which the student of poise may experiment. When each is part of a progressive sequence with a familiar beginning, you will find you can accomplish with ease and confidence, movements hitherto seemingly impossible. What is possible is limited only by the imagination of your mind and the flexibility of your body, both of which cannot fail to benefit by repetition of the experiences outlined above.





HEAD STAND

