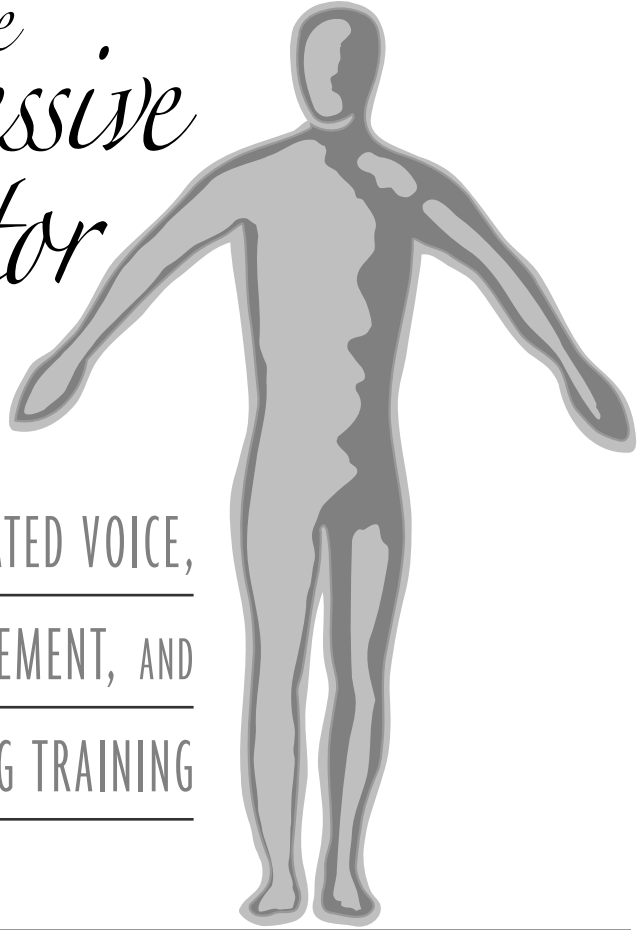


The Expressive Actor



INTEGRATED VOICE,

MOVEMENT, AND

ACTING TRAINING

M I C H A E L L U G E R I N G

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LOUIS KAVOURAS

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Prologue

Goals, Context, and Perspective

This book has several goals:

1. To present an integrated method of voice, movement, and acting training
2. To emphasize the important role the body plays in the expression of feeling
3. To develop a practical technical vocabulary that objectively describes the physical life of thought and feeling in the voice and the body
4. To present a repeatable method of daily preparation that can be practiced without the assistance of others to keep the actor's voice and body supple, expressive, and ready for the rigorous demands of rehearsal and performance

With few exceptions, acting, voice, and movement training are currently treated as separate disciplines, taught by separate teachers, written about in separate books, and addressed separately in rehearsal and performance. Typically, the diligent acting student travels from voice class to movement class to acting class, often with no formal instruction in how these seemingly isolated disciplines work together. But a detailed examination of individual parts does not always render a clear view of the working whole. Imagine learning to ride a bicycle one part at a time—practicing peddling one day, balance the next, followed by a day of steering. Just as the line of a mountain range can only be understood by moving away from it and standing too close to a painting can distort its full effect (Best 1974), an isolated study of voice, movement, and acting often fails to render a comprehensive understanding of the whole.

An integrated method of acting, voice, and movement training requires a thoughtful reexamination of the manner in which we think about the acting process and ourselves. Western thinking has

traditionally asserted that the body is something other than the self. The mind is viewed as boundless, creative, eternal, and often brilliant; it is the seat and center of the self. The body, on the other hand, is viewed as limited, temporal, dull—and sometimes dirty, bad, or even stupid. Thinking of our body as simply an object, a vessel, a physical container that holds or houses a person, devalues the importance of our body and encourages us to disassociate ourselves from our physical experience. The psychologist James I. Kepner (1993) asserts that “when we make our body . . . an ‘it’ instead of an ‘I’ we make ourselves less than we are.”

Without question, actor training has been influenced by this biased view of the body. As a result, contemporary actors tend to think their way into the characters they play and often ignore and neglect their bodies. They analyze the script, concentrate, remember, day-dream, and fantasize—all mental activities—in a quest for vivid and authentic human feeling. They use their intellect to create subtext, inner monologues, and character biographies. Above all, they attempt to *believe* in everything their characters do and say. It is important to recognize that *believing* something to be true is virtually synonymous with *thinking* something to be true. As Phillip B. Zarelli (1995) rightly points out, “believing is devoid of any reference to the body; there is no assertion that believing needs to be embodied.” The contemporary actor often creates emotion and character through an act of sheer mental determination and willpower.

There are numerous benefits to these and other mental methods of preparation. However, an overemphasis on the intellect has led a generation of actors to neglect the important role that the voice and body play in the expression of thought and feeling. All too often vocal and physical training is given second-class status. Mental methods of preparation are viewed as all-important, organic, authentic, and honest, while physical methods of preparation are viewed as supplemental, peripheral, inorganic, and even nonemotional. Our appreciation of voice and body training is often limited to technical niceties such as the importance of standing up straight, breathing properly, resonating well, and speaking clearly. Many wrongly assume that voice and body training is to the actor what learning to type might be to the writer. The physical properties of the voice and body, though important, are rarely viewed as rich psychological resources.

Integrated methods of voice, movement, and acting training cannot thrive in such a discriminatory environment. The mind and the

body need to be accepted as equal partners in the creative process, and for that to happen we need to acknowledge that feeling is not merely an isolated mental event but also a rich physical experience. Stanislavski (Moore 1960), the famous Russian master acting teacher, said, “The first fact is that the elements of the human soul and the particles of the human body are indivisible.” Richard Schechner (1973, 132), an innovative contemporary theatre practitioner, goes so far as to state it this way:

All performance work begins and ends with the body. When I talk of spirit or mind or feelings or psyche, I mean dimensions of the body. The body is an organism of endless adaptability. A knee can think, a finger can laugh, a belly cry, a brain walk, a buttock listen. All the body’s sensory, intellectual and emotional functions can be performed by many organs. Changes in mood are reflected in changes in chemistry, blood pressure, breathing, pulse, vascular dilation, sweating, and so on; and many so-called involuntary activities can be trained and consciously controlled.

When the actor learns to move correctly, the internal and the external, the psychological and physical, the mind and the body, are engaged simultaneously. When a sophisticated level of integration is achieved, physical flexibility and dexterity are linked directly to emotional flexibility and dexterity. When the body learns efficient and coordinated ways of *moving* and *sounding*, it simultaneously learns efficient and coordinated ways of *thinking* and *feeling*. The best actors have varied and flexible bodies capable of a myriad of physical adjustments that never stifle or inhibit feeling but rather serve to inform feeling, shape it, and direct it. It is possible to reach a level of flexibility and expressiveness of such quality that every physical action is simultaneously an emotional one. In time, the body comes to be viewed as a rich psychological playground—a malleable physical medium through which thought and feeling are experienced and organized.

The body is the means by which concrete physical experience is directly felt and immediately sensed; it exists in the real, material world, not as a mental concept, idea, or notion. Consequently, the language of the body is specific, concrete, objective, and above all practical. This allows us to develop a technical vocabulary that accurately describes our physical experience. One of the reasons actor training has lagged behind dance and music training is that it has failed to develop a codified technical vocabulary that describes the

physical properties of the actor's craft. Actors are in desperate need of a series of technical terms that describe the physical process of acting. These specialized terms would be as useful to the actor as *tempo* and *meter*, *plié* and *leap*, are to the musician and the dancer.

A technical vocabulary is the foundation for technical exercises. A practical and reliable working vocabulary makes it possible to create a series of flexible and repeatable exercises designed to strengthen, develop, and maintain the actor's instrument. The most effective of these are solo exercises (like the the musician's musical scales and the dancer's ballet barre) that allow the actor to practice daily without the assistance of others. Whether we like it or not, the most reliable practice method for all artists is a solitary activity in which they diligently, committedly, and painstakingly perfect their craft in isolation. Unfortunately, many acting exercises require a partner, a script, and sometimes even a director or a teacher. This more than any other factor has limited the actor's technique. When developing the actor's instrument depends on outside assistance, the actor practices less frequently. The result is limited growth and arrested development. If acting technique is ever to garner the respect of music and dance training, it will be as a method of solitary daily practice.

Finally, actor training that meets the demands of the new century requires a postmodern understanding of technique. The actor's physical, vocal, and psychological training must be integrated. Progressive methods of actor training place voice/body and thought/feeling on equal footing, with no aspect of the human person given pride of place. The next wave of actor training requires a unified method of training the *total actor* that is too comprehensive to be labeled as either psychological or physical, internal or external, in which the content of acting, voice, and movement classes mixes, mingles, overlaps, and ideally becomes indistinguishable. The actor will not study the parts—voice, movement, acting—but a single integrated discipline—*expression itself*. In the not-too-distant future, acting teachers, voice teachers, movement teachers, and their students will work as a team, sharing a common vocabulary, a similar method of training, and a common set of exercises. I mean this book as a step in this right direction.

Acknowledgments

When I first began developing this work, I had no intentions of writing a book and now find myself somewhat remiss in remembering all the various resources and references that shaped my thinking and influenced my exploration. Consequently, the business of acknowledging my indebtedness to others is somewhat difficult.

I am indebted to many great philosophers, scholars, scientists, teachers, students, actors, and other theatre artists. I have included a substantial bibliography at the end of the book for anyone interested in retracing at least part of my journey. In places in the text, I mention the names of authors and/or the title of books that have contributed to my thinking. However, I fear my obligation to others who are not referenced directly is often greater than might be gathered from the few references in the text.

In an attempt to create a working manual for the actor rather than an academic document, I have regretfully forgone footnotes all together. They proved too cumbersome and academic for the actor in the studio.

With respect to indebtedness, I am most respectful of the enduring legacy of Stanislavski, in particular his *Method of Physical Action*, which shaped and influenced my discussion of *expressive action* presented here. I am equally indebted to Jerzy Grotowski, Michael Chekhov, Richard Schechner, to the aesthetic philosophy of F. S. C. Northrop, Susanne K. Langer, John Dewey, David Best as well as the psychological writings of Edward W. L. Smith, James I. Kepner, and Stanley Keleman.

With respect to practical experience, my initial voice and body training with master teacher Kristin Linklater was invaluable and profound. Her influence and wisdom will be readily evident to students familiar with her work. Additionally, the time I spent at the Alexander Training Institute in Santa Monica, California remains a great resource. Invariably, I am reminded by others of the similarities between the physical method of training presented here and the movement vocabulary of Rudolf Laban. Though my practical and

academic links to his work are minimal, I am flattered to be held in such great company.

Most importantly, I must acknowledge the work of Erick Hawkins and the *Erick Hawkins Dance Company*. The voice and body exercises presented in this book are adaptations of many of the physical exercises, which comprise the *Erick Hawkins Dance Technique*. Erick Hawkins was a master dancer, choreographer, and teacher. After a serious injury to his knee, he began to question the strenuous muscular approach to movement present in classical ballet and the popular modern dance technique espoused by his first wife Martha Graham. Working in his studio with his newly formed company, he began to develop a natural approach to movement that worked in harmony with the biomechanics of the human body. The *Erick Hawkins Dance Technique* is characterized by free-flowing movement patterns, economy, ease, and efficiency. Though I never met the late Erick Hawkins, I am deeply indebted to the *Erick Hawkins Dance Company* for their patience and graciousness during the time I studied with them in New York City; in particular, I wish to thank Louis Kavouras, company member and principle dancer, without whose guidance and direction this book would not have been possible.

The improvisational studies presented in this book have their roots in the choreography classes of Lucia Dlugoszewski, the late wife of Erick Hawkins, who served as artistic director, choreographer, and composer during the time that I studied extensively with the company.

I must also thank the Board of Directors at the *Expressive Actor*, a 501 3(c), nonprofit organization (www.expressiveactor.org) that offers national and international workshops and training intensives, which promotes the sharing of this integrated method of actor training with others.

Additionally, I must thank my colleagues at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the many fine students there who shared in the creation of this work. Finally, my editors: Lisa Barnett, Cheryl Kimball, Leigh Peake, Lynne Costa, and everyone who contributed to publication of this book at Heinemann have my deepest thanks.

Introduction

Expression and the Actor

Expression is the process of revealing in movement, sound, and words what one thinks and feels. There is an important distinction between *having* or *experiencing* a thought or feeling and *expressing* that thought or feeling. Everyone experiences thoughts and feelings that are deeply moving and to which he or she is fully committed. However, not everyone is able to reveal in movements, sounds, and words the rich content of his or her mental and emotional life. There is nothing more frustrating than having a thought or feeling and not being able to find an appropriate and effective way to express it.

Most of us would like to express ourselves better, and we genuinely admire individuals who seem to have mastered the art of doing so. Any act of expression—whether in a coffee shop, a classroom, a subway, a synagogue, a courtroom, or the back seat of a car—when executed skillfully can be said to be artful. Sometimes inspiration descends, and thoughts and feelings miraculously find their perfect and complete expression. At other times, we are not so lucky. Often we find ourselves mumbling and fumbling for an appropriate way to express ourselves. In moments of great passion, we are often at a total loss. Rarely does the caliber of our daily discourse possess the grace, skill, power, sensitivity, and ease characteristic of artful expression. As Aristotle said, “Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, in the right way—that is not easy.”

This is exactly what the actor is required to do: express the right feeling, with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way. Actors are society’s best models for the expression of life’s most complex thoughts and feelings. Most characters in dramatic literature express themselves better than the average person. Playwrights do more than merely reveal human experience; they explain it, question it, challenge it, and sometimes change it, often by empowering a character, even if for a single moment, with an almost supernatural gift of self-expression. This perfect organization of thinking, feeling, moving, sounding, and speaking is human expression at its best.

This is not to suggest that there are not examples of disorganized and incoherent expression in some of the theatre's greatest plays. Actors are often called upon to move, speak, feel, and think in less than ideal ways. Surprisingly, creating characters that express themselves in inefficient, unnatural, and clumsy ways can be more difficult than creating characters that express themselves very well. In the theater, even inefficient, unnatural, and clumsy expression must be artful. A prerequisite for expressing a thought and feeling poorly on the stage is knowing how to express that thought and feeling masterfully.

The best acting often looks so spontaneous and effortless that it is easy to assume that no training or technical skill is required. Appearances are deceiving. Great actors, like great athletes, make the most sophisticated activities look easy because they have highly developed technical skills. This type of expertise strikes at the heart of what it means to be a skilled actor. It is the great dividing line that separates the professional from the amateur. To some degree, all actors bring to rehearsal and performance a somewhat limited and habitual method of expressing themselves. Conscientious actors recognize that there are certain types of emotional, mental, physical, and verbal expression readily at their disposal, while other types of expression remain elusive and inaccessible. Even actors who can express their personal thoughts and feelings with relative ease and grace often have trouble expressing the complex thoughts and feelings of the characters they portray. Without training and technique, even the most talented actors eventually find themselves holding the short end of the stick.

The central premise of this book, then, is that the study of acting should begin with human expression, rather than with scripts, character, language, style, or performance. The study of expression provides the essential human perspective that is the springboard for exploring the entire acting process. Under the label of expression, all the seemingly disparate elements of the actor's craft—voice, breath, body, feeling, and language—are synthesized into a single course of study.

Deeply rooted in process, the method presented here is concerned not so much with *why* we express ourselves but *how*. Greed, enthusiasm, pride, disgust, resentment, frustration, or joy can be expressed in many ways. Yet the process with which these different thoughts and feelings are organized into meaningful forms of vocal and bodily expression is consistent and similar. Consequently, a special type of physical training can be developed that prepares the body to express thought and feeling. And when we become aware of the physical process with which we express a *single* thought and

feeling, we simultaneously become aware of the physical process with which we express *every* thought and feeling. The technique begins with a series of universal principles of expression focusing on the shared pattern or structure by which all thoughts and feelings find a physical life in the voice and body. These principles encompass specific directives for the simultaneous development of the actor's physical, vocal, and emotional instrument. They transcend any specific acting style, focusing on universal aspects of human communication present in all drama, from Shakespeare to Simon, Wycherly to Wasserstein, and Molière to Mamet.

The method presented here is *preparatory*. It does not address the important collaboration that occurs between actors and directors in connection with a script. Ideally, the integrated physical, vocal, and emotional training presented here will be augmented by practical work with the script in the classroom and the rehearsal hall and during performance. Also, detailed speech and language training, interpretation and analysis, character study, and style, while important subjects, receive only cursory treatment in these chapters. I hope to extend the ideas, concepts, and principles presented here in a second book.

About the Book

The book is organized as follows:

Prologue: a preliminary discussion of expression, technique, actor training, and art.

Part I, Principles of Expressive Action: a theoretical discussion of the universal process with which all human beings organize thought and feeling into physical forms of expression.

Part II, Principles of Voice and Body: a practical discussion of the manner in which the body, breath, and voice function in the context of human expression.

Part III, Voice and Body Exercises: a series of integrated voice and body exercises designed to develop the freedom, flexibility, dexterity, coordination, range, and power needed for dynamic and effective expression.

Part IV, Improvisation: a series of flexible improvisational studies designed to cultivate a healthy respect for impulse, spontaneity, creativity, language, and character while simultaneously

expanding and broadening your imagination and increasing expressive potential.

Epilogue: an aesthetic primer intended to question, challenge, and stimulate discussion about the nature of artful expression in the context of acting and theatre.

The separation of theory from practice is deliberate. The principles of expression and the principles of voice and body are in the front of the book; the voice and body exercises and the improvisational studies are in the back. There is a time and place to think about technique and a time to experience it in the body. The best instruction provides a daily dose of both. When I teach, I weave theory and practice together in an almost improvisatory way. It is difficult to replicate that type of synergy in a written text. As a point of departure, I suggest you first read and explore the theory in several sittings. When the principles are fully understood, you can then explore the voice and body exercises and the improvisational studies simultaneously and sequentially, at your own pace, returning frequently to the theory for guidance and direction.

With time and repetition, both the mind and body are educated. What at first seems confusing is ultimately clarified in the act of doing. It will take two or three years to master the skills presented here, and even then the exercises must be practiced regularly so that your instrument remains strong, free, supple, and expressive. Diligence and patience pave the best road to success.

Giving and Receiving

This exercise is designed to put you in touch with your natural breathing rhythm. The rhythm of the breath is relatively simple: the breath comes, the breath goes, there is a slight pause, a new breath comes and goes, as the pattern repeats. The rhythm of the breath is often compared to the rise and fall of ocean waves. Each breath, like each wave of the ocean, is punctuated with a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end. Whether the quality of your breathing is calm and serene or rough and tumultuous, whether you are at rest or at play, whether you are expressing complex thoughts or insignificant banter, deep feelings or ambivalent retorts, long sentences or short phrases, whispering or shouting—the essential rhythm of your breath is consistent and universal. There is always an inhalation followed by an exhalation. Cultivating the ability to monitor the rhythm of your breath without inhibiting its involuntary flow is an essential first step in learning to organize the physical life of the breath in your body.

Thinking of breathing in the context of *receiving*, *giving*, and *resting* promotes a free, effortless, rhythmic approach to managing your incoming and outgoing breath. Central to the idea of giving and receiving is recognizing that the acts of inhalation and exhalation are inextricably linked. There is not one action of breathing in and another action of breathing out but rather one integrated breathing action experienced in two phases. Inhalation and exhalation share a reciprocal and corresponding *giving* and *receiving* relationship. It is impossible to experience one without the other.

Step 1: Giving and Receiving

Lie on your back. Allow your knees to bend so that the soles of your feet are making solid contact with the floor. Your feet should be about shoulder-width apart and as close to your pelvis as possible without causing strain or discomfort. Don't let your knees collapse inward or fall outward. Allow your whole back to lengthen and widen into the floor. Allow your jaw to drop open so that your breath flows freely in and out of your mouth. Become aware of the rising and falling action of your breath. Receive a new breath—inhale. Give your breath away—exhale. Repeat the cycle. Observe the rhythm of your breath for several moments. Notice how each breath has a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end. Rest and repeat.

Step 2: Major Properties

Observe the giving and receiving action of your breath from five different perspectives—the major properties of an expressive action:

Energy: Charge/Release. Observe the energy of your body increasing and decreasing as your breath enters and leaves your body.

Orientation: Contact/Withdraw. Allow your awareness to travel outward on your outgoing breath and inward on your ingoing breath.

Size: Expand/Contract. Observe how the size of your body increases and decreases to accommodate the incoming and outgoing breath.

Progression: Center/Periphery. Allow the movement of your breath to begin in the center of your body (the middle of your belly) and travel outward to the periphery in all directions (up into your chest and down toward your pelvis).

Free Flow. Allow the breath to come and go without physical or mental interruptions.

Movement Center—Simple Weight Shifting

This exercise is designed to put you in touch with the movement center—the pelvis.

Side Roll

See Figures 10.6 and 10.7.

Step 1: Basic Exercise

1. Lie on your back with your legs and arms lengthened. Your feet should be comfortably close together and your arms resting away from your body at approximately a forty-five-degree angle.
2. Draw your left knee upward to your chest.
3. Roll your pelvis over so that you are lying on your right side. As you roll onto your right side, allow your right knee to gently cascade to the floor. Your knee will continue to slide across the floor until your pelvis, torso, and the right side of your face are resting on the floor. Your right arm remains extended out and away from your torso. Allow your left arm to passively follow the movement of your upper body, gently resting across your back at about waist level. (The rolling action should take place in this sequence: pelvis, rib cage, head, and arm.)
4. After a brief pause, reverse the rolling action, so that your body returns to its starting position.

Observe the creasing action in your thigh socket, which draws your leg upward toward your chest, and the de-creasing action in your thigh socket, which assists in rolling over onto your side. Rest. Repeat the side roll on the opposite side.

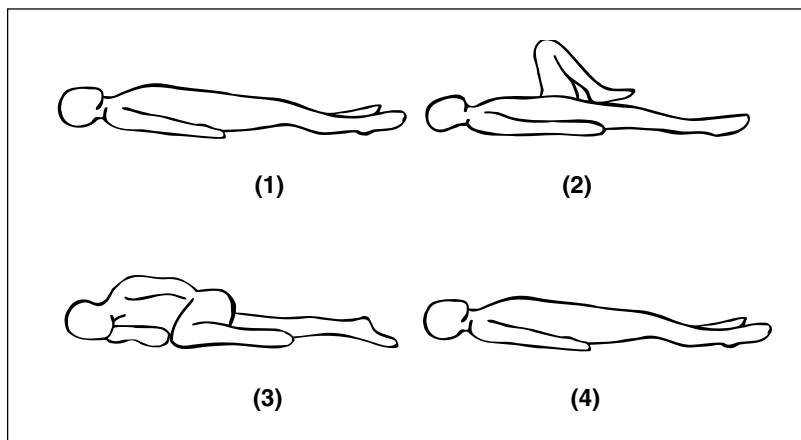


Figure 10.6 Basic Exercise: Side Roll

Cross-legged Loop

See Figures 11.6, 11.7, and 11.8.

Step 1: Basic Exercise

This exercise uses the same basic looping action explored in the previous exercise but in a cross-legged position. Your body's weight is distributed evenly over your pelvis. Your knees are bent and your ankles are crossed one on top of the other—right over left or left over

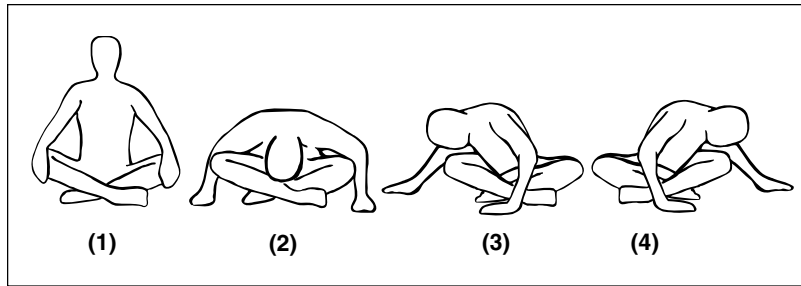


Figure 11.6 Basic Exercise: Cross-Legged Loop

		LOOP DOWN	LOOP UP	LOOP DOWN	LOOP UP	LOOP DOWN	LOOP UP
3 LOOPS	CENTER	*EE	*	EE	*	EE	*
3 LOOPS	RIGHT	AH	*	AH	*	AH	*
3 LOOPS	LEFT	OO	*	OO	*	OO	*
3 LOOPS	CENTER	EE	*	AH	*	OO	*

* = receive a new breath

Figure 11.7 Falling on EE AH OO

right. Your legs rest easily in the thigh socket. Your pelvis and spine are vertical and upright. Your rib cage and your head balance evenly and comfortably over your pelvis. Encourage the sensation of your whole torso lengthening and widening.

Step 2: Release—Sound Falls from the Body

Repeat the basic exercise. Allow a forward *ee* (as in *me*), an open *ah* (as in *ma*), and a full *oo* (as in *moo*) to fall from your body while looping, as illustrated in Figure 11.7.

Step 3: Charge—Body Carries the Sound

Repeat the basic exercise. Allow a forward *ee* (as in *me*), an open *ah* (as in *ma*), and a full *oo* (as in *moo*) to be carried by your body while looping, as illustrated in Figure 11.8. [The pitch selected for Steps 2 and 3 should be near the center of your vocal range—comfortably in your middle voice. (You should sense the possibility of notes above and below your starting pitch.) The sensation of your body carrying the sound should accompany the actively sustained vowel sounds. (When looping on the forward *ee*, enjoy a free play of vibration in your head and face. Allow the sound to fall directly into the front of your mouth onto your hard palate, teeth, and lips. When looping on the open *ah*, enjoy a sense of expanse in your mouth and throat. When looping on the full *oo*, enjoy the depth and weight of the sound vibrating in your chest.)]

Step 4: Working with Pitch

Steps 2 and 3 may now be explored on various pitches in your vocal range. The progression of the musical scale is the same as in the previous exercise.

		LOOP DOWN	LOOP UP	LOOP DOWN	LOOP UP	LOOP DOWN	LOOP UP
3 LOOPS	CENTER	*EE					
3 LOOPS	RIGHT	*AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH					
3 LOOPS	LEFT	*OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO)OOOOOOOO					
3 LOOPS	CENTER	* EEEEEEEEEEE + AAAAAAHHHHH + OOOOOOOOOOO					

* = receive a new breath

Figure 11.8 Carrying EE AH OO

Sequencing

A *sequence* is a series of expressive actions played one right after another with a brief rest or pause between each action. Begin by moving from one end of the rehearsal studio to the other in a relatively straight line, subdividing this across-the-floor movement into a series of segments or phrases. For example, take five steps forward. Rest. Now take three steps forward. Rest. Now take eight steps forward. Rest.

Step 1: Prompt

Travel across the floor again in the 5-3-8 step pattern above, remembering to rest in between each of the three phrases. Select a different physical property of an expressive action to explore during each of the three phrases. For example, on the *first five-step phrase*, explore *slow*. On the *second three-step phrase*, explore *indirect*. On the *third eight-step phrase*, explore *heavy*. Repeat several times. Allow the movement in each of the three phrases to develop into a playable expressive action.

SLOW	INDIRECT	HEAVY
5 STEPS (REST)	3 STEPS (REST)	8 STEPS (REST)

Steps 2–6 (as listed on pages 155–156)

Repeat each step while traveling across the floor in the 5-3-8 step pattern. The phrase need not have any logical order that tells a story or makes intellectual sense.

Step 7: Repetition

Select a new group of physical properties to explore, varying the number of steps in each of the phrases.

Segueing

Segue is a musical term meaning to continue without interruption or pause (pronounced: seg-way). Play a series of expressive actions one right after another *without* resting or pausing between them but rather connecting them to form a single phrase containing multiple actions that have a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end.

Step 1: Prompt

Select five verbs from the list in the appendix (*to oppose*, *to thrust*, *to haggle*, *to babble*, and *to pounce*, for example). Allow the physical exploration of these five verbs selected to develop into five playable expressive actions.

Steps 2–6 (as listed on pages 155–156)

Repeat each step for each of the five actions you selected.

Step 7: Segue

Now segue from one action to the next without pausing in between, creating one unified longer phrase that has a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end:

1ST ACTION	2ND ACTION	3RD ACTION	4TH ACTION	5TH ACTION
TO OPPOSE +	TO THRUST +	TO HAGGLE +	TO BABBLE +	TO PONCE

This phrase need not have a logical order that tells a story or makes intellectual sense.

Step 8: Repetition

Repeat with other groups of verbs selected from the list in the appendix.

Working with Dialogue I (Verbs)

Explore expressive action and language while working with a short scene.

Step 1

Select a verb from the verb list in the appendix for each phrase in the scene.

Step 2

Memorize the scene and explore it while playing the expressive actions you selected. Here's one example among many possibilities:

- A: You don't have to explain anything. (*to block*)
 B: No, listen, I need to . . . (*to drag up*)
 A: Nor should you feel the need to explain anything. (*to gnaw*)
 B: We are okay, right? (*to glaze over*)
 A: Of course, we're okay. (*to hammer*)
 B: I'm just not used to dealing with this. (*to fumble*)
 A: No one is. (*to wonder*)
 B: This is terrible. What have I done? (*to agonize*)
 A: You really have screwed this one up. (*to promise*)
 B: I will not accept it. I will not, I cannot, I won't! (*to lash out*)
 A: What are you going to do about it, after the fact? (*to stand your ground*)
 B: I will celebrate anyway. (*to boast*)
 A: You can't be serious. (*to burn*)
 (Shultz 2006)

Working with Dialogue II (Physical Properties)

Explore the physical properties of an expressive action while working with a short scene.

Step 1

Select a physical property of an expressive action for each phrase in the scene.

Step 2

Memorize the scene. Explore it while playing the physical property you selected. Here is one example among many possibilities:

- A: Where have you been? (*sharp*)
 B: Oh, you know me. Around. (*periphery*)
 A: I can't believe that you're serious. (*direct*)