

# **The Trager® Approach**

**Level I Mentastics and Table Work Protocol - Part 1  
Navajeevana Rehabilitation Center - Tangalle, Sri Lanka**

**24, 25 - March - 2007**

**7,8 - April 2007**

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*in Memory of Betty Fuller*

**ed Class Time Table – Flow may vary depending on group dynamic and class size.**

**e**

- m - 9:15am - Movement Exploration of Mentastics®
- m - 9:45am - meet, introduction, history, theory – discuss expectations
- m - 10:30 am - session demonstration; principles/technique discussion
- m - 12:30 am - demonstration and practice principles/techniques – Front of Body (Neck, Legs, Arms, Belly Chest)
- m - 1:45pm - Lunch
- m - 2:00pm - Mentastics®
- m - 3:45pm - demonstration and practice – Finish Front of Body - Demonstration of Back of Body
- m - 4:45pm - practice Back of Legs Review and Q & A
- m - 5:00pm - Q & A and Day One closure

**o**

- m - 9:45am - Movement Exploration of Mentastics®
- m - 10;15am - check in - Q & A
- m - 10:45 am - demonstration of shoulders, mid and low back protocol
- m - 12:30 am - demonstration and practice principles/techniques – Shoulders/back of body
- m - 1:45pm - Lunch
- n - Mentastics® and demonstration/review of session protocol
- n - Full Trade with partners
- n - Full Trade with partners
- n - Review and Q & A
- n - Finish

## What is Trager®?

Trager is not massage

Trager is a movement or mind body education and integration system that uses touch and language to facilitate the release of dysfunctional muscle holding patterns that manifest as functional limitation or pain.

Trager is a two part system of awareness training and refining life movement skill utilizing table works and Mentastics Self Care movements, playful tai chi like exercises and others to access a bodymind state to make them available to a source of awareness greater than myself thus enhance self expression...

Trager emphasized that it is important to make every move mean something

Trager long time meditator - TM state same as Hook Up but in the latter he was fully engaged with another....

Trager asked himself, “who are you when you go to the table to touch your client?”

## **e Words of Dr. Trager**

**se see attached handout.**

## **mentastics -**

The principle behind the mentastics is to break out of our socialized movement patterns into free exploration of the movement possibilities available to you.

Moving mindfully, patiently and joyfully, exploring what could be lighter, freer, and less effortful, you'll deepen your self awareness and can re-access the feeling states experienced during the table-work sessions to relax and release cumulated muscle tension.

Most often this type of movement exploration is unconventional and perhaps associated with childhood play or visualization. Yet this is exactly wherein lies the magic.

# fantastics

es:

- Part Specific
- Principle Specific
- Emotion, mindset, gesture.... glamorous - often times by assuming a different role we can move differently, much like actors taking on the characteristics of the character they're playing. see how exploring different roles can affect your gate, and general body awareness.
- Repetition (staying with it) patience - allow your body to acclimate to the movement/gesture...give it time to connect with your inquiry and let go
- Large movement to small – contexting - as you explore these movements in private, move to reducing their range while increasing your awareness that you can incorporate them into your daily movements
- Modeling and Mirroring while broadcasting – instructing patient in movement exploration - creating a feeling language and language of movement

## Some Additional Suggestions before you begin...

Below is a list of possible movement exercises for various parts of the body, yet remember that by creating a new feeling of lightness and freedom in one part of the body, other parts can be influenced. All you have to do is reach your mind and the effect will be global/systemic in nature.

As you explore what your body wants stay in a state of inquiry:

- what is lighter? what is freer? and freer than that...and so on...

- don't judge what you are experiencing, just observe

- stay within your comfort zone of movement

- pause often to feel the changes that have taken place.

These pauses are as important as the movements themselves, for they create a space for processing the neural repatterning and learning.

**Additional comments:**

mind is constantly influenced by your movement or lack of movement. – Rog

be through your own movement and quality of that movement, self awareness  
presence that you connect with your client/patient.

our self awareness increases you can maintain lightness and comfort as while  
and begin enjoying what you're doing and bring a deep peace to your patient

## Antastics for Hips and Low Back

ting weight in the feet - can you feel the transfer of the weight from foot to foot  
is 90%-10%, 80%-20%, 70%-30%...and so on. (gradation)

s of different size - to initiate movement in the gluteals, hamstrings, hips and lo  
, imagine having tails of different sizes....

example - A small dog's tail which moves rapidly, side to side... or sway with a  
lizard's tail which makes a slower gesture but increases the range of motion

king water off your toes - this exercise sends a wave through the upper leg and  
the lower back. by incorporating this movement into your walk, it is possible to  
nuously release the hips, gluteals and low back .

Imagine walking and with each step your flicking water off of your feet. Just a  
gentle toss of the toes and allow the foot (and leg) to extend and fall naturally  
the ground; in essence feel the weight of the leg as it lengthens from the hip  
socket with each step.

es of the feet are rounded (like a rocking chairs) – heel to toe rather than pour  
foot – creating lightness

## **Exercises for Neck, Shoulders, Arms and Hands:**

Draw circles - imagine drawing shapes with your chin or nose. explore circular or  
from movement patterns to discover what range of movements are possible and  
use the occipital triangle. Writing your name, drawing a picture

W/ shoulder toss - flipping scapula forward and back

Draw a picture or write your name with your shoulder to access the possibility of  
rotation in the shoulder girdle

W/ toss/drop - tossing a handful of feathers and allowing the arm to drop and co  
illness on its own...feel the reverberation throughout the arm and hand

Slides across shoulder blades

Feel the weight of each finger, each joint, each bone

Standing in knee deep water - hand touches the water

### **Exercises for the Hands**

Helicopters – small to big movements, slow to fast

Wiggle the forearms/ dangle the hand from thumb and fingers

## **andom explorations can be effective as well:**

ou move, perhaps to some music, ask these questions periodically to deepen conscious awareness and connection with your physical experience.

stions:

What movement does your body want now / How does your body want to move?

How does your breath change when you change your movement?

Where do you feel your weight as you move?

Is there a common focus within your body regardless of the movement?

What happens when you pause?

What changes when you start to move again?

## le Work Principles

Inquiry: what is softer, freer, lighter, how could it be? What here is soft...? What could be softer than that? Explore the ease that exists. Asking client...what could be more supportive, how is this rhythm? Emphasize the positive.

Weight: What can weight tell you?

Rocking ( jiggling water balloon)

- Movement from feet and core, with soft, slightly bent knees
- establishing a soothing rhythm induces a hypnogogic state of mind for patient

Compression (integrity of the balloon) - allow weight to sink into your client rather than using your strength or arms

Elongation – shirt or rope example...use of own weight, not pulling with arm strength but taking out slack and leaning with weight

Sculpting – dry hands – With genuine interest, really connect with the part you are working on. See the whole person not just a disembodied arm or leg. Allow your touch to convey peace, softness, lightness, ease

Recall – It felt like hmmm.....Invite your clients to recall their experience of session and the feeling of relaxation, ease and peace.

Listening to the tissue, Intuiting, and softening vs. efforting and trying force change

Presence - would it be all right if I were just present with the client/patient -  
Pausing - allow the client's mind to process the experience, assimilate/integ

## **Movement Protocol:**

Feedback contract: have your patient let you know when something is comfortable : Let them know that their subjective experience is valued.

Provide the most pleasurable movement experience possible.

Centering - Don't use your client to get centered and focused - check in with yourself first - don't start until you are ready.

Body awareness...my body part their body part - you may feel what they are feeling

Respect their peaks and valleys

Respectance for all of them - remember that your attitude affects their experience

Make every move mean something.

Every touch as a message of peace, relaxation, acceptance and possibility.

Remember to pause for yourself and your patient to check in with yourself and  
leave time for them to integrate the movement and new feelings. Remember that  
this is a dialogue.

Don't "talk" too much with your hands without a pause and giving the body an  
opportunity to give its response. This will feed your next moment.

Most importantly, have fun. - see reverence

Sequence:

Neck

g or standing at the head, begin with shoulders:

Sculpt collar bones..what are you feeling? Suggest openness, expansiveness  
Softly receiving ..listening to it...gifting ...these shoulders....nothing more  
Slide out to shoulders...transfer 1-2# s to them ...spread through hands...do  
you feel elasticity..? Observe how the head and neck move as you gently  
compress shoulders

Center of neck....weight in feet or sits bones if sitting on the table....2-3

Scoop up the neck, shifting weight, lean back ...how far down do you feel the  
connection Allow the head to rock freely in the hands.

ntly turn head to one side and sculpt (swan neck) Suggest length with your ha  
w your breath to expand your ribcage to add length to your traction

- Head roll - (we'll add this later) - hand as ramp

- Closure: trace forehead with thumbs suggesting ease

s/Feet:

- Sculpt from above the hip to suggest the length of the leg - shift your weight  
your feet as you travel towards their feet

top under knee and weigh, feel the quality of the tissue in the thigh

gh the heel - (don't lift from heel if knee hyperextends)

rotation from heel

side hand on outside of ankle: imagine a long door knob

te back and forth to free up hip rotators and jiggle thigh muscles

n back to add traction

n between legs facing out

ce foot on your leg and begin shifting weight and rocking the leg

g heel of hand to ball of foot and apply gentle pressure

what movement is happening between your hands at the ankle

erve how a new movement pattern is introduced into the patients body.

on the outside of the leg facing away from patient; place foot on inside leg

lore with curiosity and playfulness, how this foot and toes move, washing

ks

ly pressure to the ball of the foot and flex to initiate movement throughout the  
re body

o to the outside of the table and begin rocking the leg to release the hip  
ators.

t your weight to keep your own legs comfortable and to move up and down th  
ght the leg, lean back to apply traction and pause.

some mentastics for yourself before starting next leg

## y and chest (arm)

In this area we combine principles of compression, traction, rocking and weight to provide a sense of undifferentiated softness and fluidity in the belly and ribcage. This movement also impacts the superficial and deep muscle of the spine.

- Arm - sculpt, weight and elongate to connect to trapezius and head. "hello head" - play with the softness of the hand as you did with the foot
- swing upper arm from hand to suggest freedom in the shoulder, feel the weight of their arm as it moves
- inside hand supports back of humerus and outside hand comes under scapula - take a wider stance to support yourself and with an open and upright chest shift your weight and explore how the scapula moves - provide a feeling of separateness between the scapula and upper ribs

- place a soft hand on the belly to connect with patient feel their breath in the rise and fall of the belly, gather up the tissue from the sides (taking out the slack) and begin rocking from your feet to introduce a rock into their body
- move up to the rib and keep the rhythm of the rock by moving from your feet

When the tissue slips from your hands, gather once again continuing to provide a feel while rocking....remember to stay aware of your own movement, comfort and alignment

## Older and rib compression - Pin Wheel

- these are compressions/turns – swings arm from point in sternum –
  - what is important is the bounce back ( of the compression) to initiate an expansive breathing aspect
- follow the shape of the rib movement
  - upper ribs compress down
  - middle ribs compress down and in
  - lower ribs compress towards the center of the body diagonally
- place palm of hand on shoulder
- outside hand on lower ribs
- take out slack
- from a wide stance for support and with soft knees begin shifting your weight in your feet and bouncing the rib cage with soft full hands
- allow the rib cage to rebound into your hands - hmmm what is underneath this structure - organs etc....
- keep their rhythm in your feet
  - Sternum compression
    - move inside hand from shoulder to sternum and compress spirally, keeping the bounce - how fluid can the ribs feel?
  - Pectoral stretch
- Place one hand on lower ribs one hand on ball of shoulder
- take out the slack and sink weight into your hands - don't use strength of arms to suggest length and expansiveness to the upper chest

at this on the other side of the body starting with the arm and shoulder and finishing with the feet.  
Note that the rhythmic movement introduces a hypnogogic state (integral part of session 1).  
uses, continuous movement

## Work of Leg

sculpt and weigh the leg - outside hand on the ankle and inside hand on instep of foot

lean back with weight as you gently lift the leg (mostly with outside hand)

move out to the side of the leg with leg bent to 90 degrees while shifting your weight

release the weight of the foot allowing it to move freely - explore the bones of the ankle

keeping the rhythm move hand to heel and support lower portion of ankle and raise foot

tips - keep your face soft and jaw loose

while keeping the rhythm, play with the softness of the gastrocnemius and soleus

turn leg to the table - suggest length with traction and sculpt to close with the leg

repeat other side

# Shoulder Girdle

low arm to hang off the table keep it supported at mid bicep - allow for room for you to sit  
hip on table

lift the arm - feel the weight in your feet

move to your own rhythm and sway the arm - catch the arm with inside hand

while shifting weight gently toss the arm along side the body to simulate a free drop of weight

with a light grip or pull the arm/hand - feel its weight and the bounce back from the gentle toss

move arm down in figure four position - feel the weight of the elbow and observe scapula

move arm back down

lie on table with upper arm draped over inside leg

compress the tricep and deltoid - feel the liquid quality of the relaxed tissue - observe how the

weight travels through the shoulder girdle - imagine the superficial muscles of the arm and

move over the rib cage

place the hands under the shoulder joint and bounce with full fingers

move out and allow arm to hang

repeat arm swing and catch and toss, place in figure four position

place inside hand under bicep and outside hand under shoulder - feel the weight - lifting from

lie on back, with open chest, shift weight, bounce gently and rotate to explore range of motion of

shoulder and scapula - return arm to dangling position

## Low Back/ Closure

Body to face towards the opposite feet in a diagonal position - typically your feet will be at the head of the table with your inside leg and pelvis against the table and the outside leg in front (wide stance)

Lean forward and place outside hand on trochanter, inside hand on iliac crest - allow weight to sink in and take out the slack - begin to shift weight in feet to give motion to the leg and hip

Following the rhythm in the rocking pelvis, step around hand and come to side of table, stepping into the table

Place hands onto inside of gluteals near the sacrum and toss away, keeping the rhythm, and allow the weight of the pelvis to return to center before tossing again

Following the rhythm in your own body, step up and move hands to mid back rocking the pelvis from the superficial lower and mid back muscles - gather the tissue with hands and keep the rhythm going to establish a hypnagogic rhythm.

Slowly bring the rocking to a close

Anchor the feeling experience by suggestion Recall - "You can remember this feeling the way you want. All you have to do is ask...How did it feel?...it felt like...hmmmm...let the feeling return"

## **sure/ Anchoring Recall:**

uggestions for practicing recall:

before bed - recalling the sessions - what felt relaxing

immediately after waking up

any

t presence – not enough can be said for the therapeutic benefit of being  
pletely present with your client; listening fully to their body story and history wi  
plete acceptance for what is. Often times providing this experience to the pati  
ough for them to release the first layer of psychological armor