Video produced by
Laurie Simons

Variations
for Infants through Seniors

Demonstrated by Anne Green Gilbert

and students
at Creative Dance Center
Seattle WA

*DVD Chapters**

1. **Introduction with Anne Green Gilbert**

2. **BrainDance with Rhymes for ages 2 1/2 to 5**
   Demonstrated by Parent/Child class ages 2-4

3. **BrainDance Standing for ages 6 to Adults - Short Version**
   Demonstrated by school children ages 10-12
   Music for Creative Dance by Eric Chapelle, Vol. II #21

4. **BrainDance Sitting in Chairs for ages 6 to Adults**
   Slower version demonstrated by older adults
   Music for Creative Dance by Eric Chapelle, Vol. III #17-19

5. **BrainDance Lying Down for ages 8 to Adults**
   Adapted from Bartenieff Fundamentals
   Demonstrated by dance students ages 8-10
   Music for Creative Dance by Eric Chapelle, Vol. IV #17

6. **BrainDance Traveling and/or with a Partner for ages 6 to Adult**
   Demonstrated by adults
   Music for Creative Dance by Eric Chapelle, Vol. II #21

Bonus Section:

7. **BrainDance with Rhymes for ages Walking to 2 1/2**
   Demonstrated by Parent/Toddler class ages walking - 2

8. **BrainDance Standing for ages 6 to Adults - Integrating Concepts**
   Longer version integrating the dance concept of Energy
   Demonstrated by dance students ages 12-15
   Music for Creative Dance by Eric Chapelle, Vol. I #15

9. **BrainDance Standing for ages 6 to Adults - Variations**
   Several variations integrating different concepts
   Demonstrated by adults

*To view table of contents and navigate through chapters, choose "menu" on your DVD controller.

Background Information on the BrainDance:

Developed by Anne Green Gilbert, the **BrainDance** is a series of exercises based on eight developmental movement patterns that healthy human beings naturally move through in the first year of life. Research has shown that these patterns are crucial to the wiring of our central nervous system. As babies, we did these movements on the floor. However, cycling through these patterns at any age, daily or weekly while sitting or standing, has been found to be beneficial in reorganizing our central nervous system. Repeating these patterns over time may help us fill in any missing gaps in our neurological development due to birth trauma, illness, environment, head injury or not enough "tummy time" as a baby.

This "dance" is an excellent full body and brain warm-up for children and adults in all settings. The BrainDance may be used as a warm-up for any physical or cognitive activity; before tests, performances, and presentations; after sitting for long periods of time; as a break during computer work and TV watching; and to increase energy and reduce stress. It is a centering body/brain exercise for brain reorganization, oxygenation, and recuperation.

How the Patterns Developed

The baby does his or her own BrainDance very naturally in the first twelve months of life if put on a smooth, non-carpeted surface on his or her tummy. Carpets and blankets may inhibit developmental movement. Baby moves most successfully when dressed in a "onesie".

* Baby's first **breath** starts the wires growing from the brain cells.
* **Tactile** stimulation begins with the first touch of skin on skin and is essential for promoting appropriate behavior and emotional and social intelligence.
* In the first two months of life the baby will reach into space in order to connect with her environment and curl back into the womb position, demonstrating the **core-distal** pattern.
* At two months the baby has better head control and will lift and turn the head in both directions continuing the **head-tail** pattern begun at birth.
* Discovering the **upper and lower body halves** comes next as the baby pushes with the arms and hands and then with feet and knees.
* Between five and seven months, the baby reaches with one **side of the body**, moving the left half of the body as one unit and then the right half. As the baby crawls on her belly and also pushes to sit up, she will develop horizontal eye tracking.
* Between seven and nine months, baby pushes herself up onto hands and knees and begins a **cross-lateral** reach from the upper body. Vertical eye tracking is part of the growth triggered by creeping on hands and knees. The convergence of horizontal and vertical eye tracking is essential for reading. From one year onward cross-lateral patterns appear in walking, running, and eventually skipping.
* The **vestibular** system begins developing in utero and continues to be very active through the first fifteen months as baby rolls, crawls, creeps, sits up, and walks. The vestibular system analyzes movements through the whole body, helps us know where we are in space, and links up to all forms of sensory information. This very important system is used when we read, hear, speak, touch, balance, and move. Every movement stimulates the vestibular system which stimulates the brain.

Benefits of the BrainDance

Cycling through the eight patterns of the **BrainDance** provides many benefits for children and adults including the following:

Increased Blood and Oxygen Flow to the Respiratory System and Brain

Because oxygen and blood are food for the brain, deep breathing and aerobic exercise are essential for a fully functioning brain and body. Oxygenation reduces stress and brings flow and ease to all movement.

Reorganization of the Neurological System

The developmental movement patterns wire the central nervous system laying the foundation for sensory-motor development and lifelong learning. When patterns are missed or disrupted there may be missing gaps in a person's neurological development. These gaps can cause neurological dysfunction that may later appear as learning disabilities, behavior disorders, memory problems, sleep disorders, speech, balance or filtering problems, and a host of other difficulties that may disrupt the flow of normal development. Cycling through the BrainDance patterns on a daily basis may correct flaws in a person's perceptual process and reorganize the central nervous system to better develop proprioception, balance, attention, memory, eye-tracking, behavior, sensory integration, and motor skills.

Enhanced Core Support, Connectivity, and Alignment

The BrainDance reviews for us the early baby patterns that lay down structure in the neuromuscular system, influence brain development, and help us cope with the world in an embodied way. These patterns, done in an orderly progression, help us remember the parts of our visceral and muscular system that support our body structure. Each pattern underlies and supports the next pattern. When done in succession, they bring a wholeness, aliveness, and connectivity to our use of the body, which reflects an integration of body and mind. By separating the eight patterns we become more aware of each pattern. This allows us to focus on a particular pattern to ease blocked body/mind areas. The developmental patterns used in the BrainDance are the foundation for all movement activities.

Assessment of Neurological Issues

Upon observation, there may be some individuals who have trouble performing one or two patterns with ease. These individuals may appear to move in a less integrated way than their peers. This lack of integration may indicate missing gaps in the wiring of the central nervous system that may cause problems in behavior, social skills, attention, or reading. These individuals may show improvement in these areas over time by doing more work in all the patterns on a daily basis. Some individuals may also benefit from working one on one with a neurodevelopmental or vision therapist (see resource list on the back of this insert).

Deeper Understanding of the Elements of Dance Technique

Focusing on BrainDance patterns at the beginning of class helps dancers become more articulate and expressive as the developmental movement patterns are an integral part of every dance style. The first four patterns of the BrainDance are fundamental to performing any form of dance. The last four patterns dancers practice daily: pliés and port de bras (Upper-Lower), tendus and battements (Body-Side), center work (Cross-Lateral), turns and springs (Vestibular). Whether taking a Ballet, Modern, Jazz, African, or Creative Dance class, students who have warmed-up with the BrainDance are able to integrate and apply the patterns to their technical skill development. Movement intent becomes clearer as dancers embody the BrainDance patterns.

BrainDance Structure (c) Anne Green Gilbert 2000

1. **Breath**: Take a deep breath through the nose, filling the belly, diaphragm, and lungs with air then exhale through the mouth. Repeat 4-5 times.
Benefits: *increases flow of oxygen to the brain (oxygen is brain food); brings an awareness of the importance of breath for ease and flow of movement; reduces stress and enlivens brain and body.*

2. **Tactile**: With your hands, squeeze strongly each arm and leg and the torso, back, and head (whole body). Then tap lightly whole body, then slap sharply whole body, then brush smoothly whole body. Explore other forms of touch such as scratching, patting, rubbing, etc.
Benefits: *strengthens bonding; develops appropriate sense of touch; increases sensory integration.*

3. **Core-Distal:** Move from the center out, through and beyond the fingers, toes, head and tail (distal ends). Then curl back to torso while engaging core muscles. Try movement involving the whole body that grows and shrinks, stretches and curls in big "X"s and little "o"s.
Benefits: *strengthens relationship to self & others; develops full body extension and awareness of core for correct alignment.*

4. **Head-Tail**: Bend and stretch the spine from head to tail (coccyx) in different directions and pathways. Keeping the knees slightly bent helps to release the pelvis. Twist, wiggle, and shake spine gently. Circle head and hips. Try yoga positions such as cat-cow and downward dog.
Benefits: *increases spine flexibility and neck and shoulder strength; helps one move through space with ease; creates an open path for central nervous system to function fully.*

5. **Upper-Lower**: Ground the lower half of body by pressing legs 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 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.
Benefits: *articulates body halves for mobility/stability, function, and expression; develops emotional stability through connection to earth with whole body.*

6. **Body-Side**: Bend, twist, stretch, shake, etc. the left side of your body while keeping the right side stabile (still and grounded). Then keep the left stabile 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 left knee up then right arm and right knee up like a lizard crawling up a wall. To develop horizontal eye tracking, follow thumb left to right and right to left.
Benefits: *articulates body sides; strengthens and balances both sides of the body and brain hemispheres; develops horizontal eye-tracking (necessary for reading) and side dominance.*

7. **Cross-Lateral**: Do a cross-lateral dance, sitting or standing, finding as many ways of moving cross-laterally as possible such as touching right knee to left elbow, left hand to right foot, right hand to left knee, left hand to right hip, 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. ***Benefits:*** *integrates brain hemispheres; strengthens vertical eye-tracking; develops complex, three dimensional dancing and thinking.*

8. **Vestibular**: This pattern may also be done at the beginning of the BrainDance. Choose a movement that takes you off balance and makes you dizzy. 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 levels. Spin 15 seconds one direction, breathe and rest 15 seconds, then spin 15 seconds the other direction. The stillness after spinning strengthens the balance system. People with compromised balance systems should do this pattern seated. ***Benefits:*** *develops spatial awareness, balance, and coordination; strengthens the system that controls the five senses.*

BrainDance Variations

adapted from *Brain-Compatible Dance Education* (2006)* by Anne Green Gilbert

Whatever variation of the BrainDance you perform, move through the patterns in the order performed in the first year of life: Breath through Cross-Lateral. The Vestibular pattern is usually done after Cross-Lateral but as a variation may begin the BrainDance. Each pattern lays the foundation for the next pattern. Be intentional about using the first four patterns as you move through the last four patterns (i.e. concious breathing throughout).

CHANGE LEVELS: Lying, Sitting, Standing
Perform the BrainDance lying and/or sitting on the floor. Include yoga positions or familiar floor exercises. The lying down variation is most successful when done on a smooth, non-carpeted surface. Try the first four patterns sitting on the floor and the last four standing. Do the BrainDance sitting in a chair to discover new movements or if you have difficulty standing.

CHANGE PLACE: Dance in Place and/or Traveling Through Space
Perform all the patterns traveling through the space instead of standing in one place, or alternate moving in place and traveling. Moving through space will lead to many new ways of dancing and new discoveries such as the difference between a body-side walk and a cross-lateral walk.

CHANGE RELATIONSHIPS: Leader/Follower, Pairs/Groups
Copy or echo the movements of a peer or family member while facing each other (mirroring) or following behind (shadowing). Besides pairs, try this in trios, quartets, small, and large groups. Choose one leader for the whole BrainDance, change leadership with each pattern or repeat a pattern several times with different leaders. This variation leads to the discovery of new movements for each pattern.

VARY ACCOMPANIMENT: Word Cues, Rhymes, Songs, Tempo, Dynamics
Brain-Compatible Dance Education (2006)* contains many rhymes and songs to use with the BrainDance for ages 0-6. *BrainDance Music CD** includes spoken rhymes for young children as well as a variety of narrated and instrumental pieces for all ages. *Music for Creative Dance CDs Volumes I-IV** contain a wide variety of instrumental pieces in varying tempo and meters. Explore your own musical choices. Experiment with lively music for an energetic BrainDance and slower music for a calming BrainDance. The BrainDance may also be performed without musical accompaniment.

USE PROPS: Scarves, Plastic, Stretchybands, etc.
Props add a visual and tactile dimension to the basic BrainDance. Dancers might work with two small scarves (or squares of plastic) of different colors. The movement of the scarves helps illustrate each pattern. Held in both hands they help the upper body dance more fully. Standing on each scarf (or each tucked into a shoe or sock), one focuses on moving the lower body. Hold and stand on the scarves with left arm and leg and move the right side fully. Hold and stand on scarves with opposite arm and leg for cross-lateral patterns to be fully visualized and felt. Foam sticks, stretchybands, body socks, and therapy balls are other fun props with which to experiment.

VARY EMOTIONS: Happy, Sad, Angry, Scared, etc.
Performing each pattern with a different emotional intent (or doing several patterns with the same emotion) adds variety, and often humor, to the BrainDance!

INTEGRATE DANCE CONCEPTS: Place, Size, Level, etc.
Refer to the following page for dance concepts and tips on integration.

** available for purchase at www.creativedance.org*

15 DANCE CONCEPTS

to integrate into the BrainDance (one at a time)

(adapted from Rudolf Laban)

Place	Self space, general space
Size	Big (far reach), small (near reach)
Level	High, middle, low
Direction	Forward, backward, right , left, up, down
Pathway	Curved, straight, zigzag
Focus	Single focus, multi-focus
Speed	Fast, medium, slow
Rhythm	Pulse, pattern, grouping, breath
Energy	Sharp (sudden), smooth (sustained)
Weight	Strong, light
Flow	Free, bound
Balance	Off balance, on balance
Parts	head, neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, elbows, hands, fingers, trunk, spine, sternum, legs, knees, ankles, feet, toes, heels, pelvis, hips, etc.
Relation-ships	under, over, around, through, above, below, beside, between, in, out, together, apart, on, off, near, far, in front, behind, mirror, shadow
Shapes	curved, straight, angular, twisted, symmetrical, asymmetrical

Integrating Concepts

After you feel comfortable doing the basic BrainDance, it is beneficial to integrate dance concepts into the BrainDance. The chart at left defines 15 dance concepts. The BrainDance becomes more interesting and challenging when concepts are integrated. This conceptual exploration of the BrainDance patterns deepens an understanding of body mechanics, making movement intent clearer and technique stronger.

Example: The concept of Energy - sharp and smooth- is used below to demonstrate concept integration:

Include both elements in each pattern: *Breath - sharp and smooth, Tactile - sharp and smooth...*

Alternate elements for each pattern: *Breath - sharp, Tactile - smooth, Core-Distal - sharp...*

First 4 patterns one element *(sharp)*, second 4 patterns opposite element *(smooth)*

"Ride the Wave": *Breath - sharp to smooth, Tactile - smooth to sharp, Core-Distal - sharp to smooth...*

Integrating the concepts into the BrainDance helps us discover more movement possibilities within each pattern. New movements create new pathways in our brain. A fully functioning body creates a fully functioning brain.

For additional information on BrainDance variations and integrating concepts please refer to the book *Brain-Compatible Dance Education (2006)* by Anne Green Gilbert, available at www.creativedance.org

Helpful Hints for BrainDancing

* Do all eight patterns, at least once a day, in the developmental order from Breath to Vestibular. (Vestibular may also be performed at the beginning of the BrainDance.)

* Spend 5-20 minutes moving through the patterns. Do shorter BrainDances with higher energy for a more aerobic exercise, increasing the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain.

* BrainDance is a structure. Any movement appropriate to each pattern is beneficial. View all sections on this DVD for ideas.

* Start the day or class with the BrainDance to focus and energize the brain and body. Do before tests or presentations and during long periods of sitting to de-stress and re-energize.

* Select different patterns throughout the day to do as quick movement moments or transitions between subjects or rooms.

* Variation is important. The brain enjoys novelty and challenge. See "BrainDance Variations" on the previous pages of this insert for ideas.

* Remapping the brain involves time and repetition. Allow students (or oneself) to improve at their own rate. Give feedback and cues to the class as a whole. When appropriate, refer special needs students to a neurodevelopmental movement or vision therapist (see resource list on the back of this insert).

* Hints for specific age groups and special needs:

  Babies: Place baby alternately on back and stomach and gently move baby through patterns as you sing songs or chant rhymes for accompaniment.

  Toddlers: Sit toddler between your (or caregiver's) legs on the floor. Assist toddler with the patterns by manipulating appropriate body parts as necessary. Use nursery rhymes as accompaniment.

  Elders: Those with balance issues should do the BrainDance in a chair or wheelchair. For vestibular pattern, gently sway or rock body side to side and forward and backward, or swing the head gently side to side and around in easy circles. Elders can hold onto the arms or seat of the chair or an assistant's hands while doing this pattern.

  Special Needs: Assist as needed. Experiment with floor, standing, and chair BrainDances as well as other variations above. Concentrate on earlier patterns including vestibular pattern as well as crawling and creeping. Ages 6 and above should wear knee pads when creeping on hands and knees. Some people do well copying BrainDances on the DVD.

FEEDBACK

"I apply the BrainDance in theme and variations with young adults in all of my dance classes and theater classes...both theory and studio technique classes. I am amazed at how the concepts present in the BrainDance transfer to everything in the dance and theater curriculum where I work." *M.L.S., University of North Texas*

"All of my students do the BrainDance. I have taught it to most of the staff. Sometimes during my prep I stop by various classrooms and give them a BrainDance break. At first teachers thought this would just rile kids up, but they soon realized how well it works." *S.J., Movement Teacher*

"My sons and I danced with your DVD last night and they loved it! First thing this morning, my 3 year old asked to dance again." *J. G., Utah*

"We start every class with BrainDance and I teach more in the remaining 24-25 minutes than I ever have in 30. Many of the general ed teachers use it as well. They know that the kids behave better and learn more after it." *R.T., Music Specialist, Kalamazoo, MI*

"I am using the BrainDance with my Down syndrome adult dancers in my Tennessee Arts Commission residency. They love the movements and are beginning to remember and verbalize the work." *A.S., Dance Educator*

The BrainDance
"makes me feel awake"
"I feel open""tingly""excited"
"calm""I feel ready to learn"
"my brain feels alive"
Students from a K-6 residency, Pocatello, ID

"I want to tell you what an EXTRAORDINARY DIFFERENCE the BrainDance and the concepts have made in our teaching. We are seeing results in the first few weeks of school as opposed to the first few months. Teaching is actually easier." *M.L., Dance Educator, Chardon, OH*

"I can't say enough good things about using the BrainDance in my classroom. I have shared it with our staff, parents at curriculum night, and friends and family." *M.G., 1st Grade Teacher, Everett, WA*

Resources:

Books

Brain-Compatible Dance Education. Anne Green Gilbert. Reston, VA: NDA/AAHPERD, 2006.*

Creative Dance for All Ages. Anne Green Gilbert. Reston, VA: NDA/AAHPERD, 1992.*

Teaching the 3 R's Through Movement. Anne Green Gilbert. NDEO, 1977.*

Making Connections: Total Body Integration through Bartenieff Fundamentals. Peggy Hackney. NY: Routledge, 2002.

Kids Learn from the Inside Out. Shirley Randolph, Margot Heiniger, 1994.

CDs/DVDs

Teaching Creative Dance. DVD by Anne Green Gilbert*
BrainDance Music. CD by Eric Chappelle.*
Music for Creative Dance Vol. I-IV. CDs by Eric Chappelle. www.aventurinemusic.com

*available for purchase from the store at www.creativedance.org

Websites

Tummy time: www.pathwaysawareness.org
Baby's movement development: www.amazingbabies.com
Vision Therapy: www.visiontherapy.org
Neurodevelopmental Therapy: www.developmentalmovement.org

For additional information and resources, and to order books, CD's, and DVDs, please visit www.creativedance.org.