

# Beyond Body Language International Symposium

*We are very pleased to have Janet's permission to print the following presentation made by her at this symposium, which was part of the Global Laban 2008 Celebration and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies, New York. November 15, 2008.*

## Laban/Bartenieff- based Exercise Program to Improve Physical Function and Quality of Life Measures for People with Parkinson's

**Presented by Janet Hamburg**

The movements in *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's* (the DVD) are based on the principles developed by movement theorist Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) and his protégé Irmgard Bartenieff (1900-1981). Laban had a holistic theory of movement that acknowledged a relationship between stability and mobility, exertion and recuperation, the body and the mind. The four major components of Laban Movement Analysis are the dynamics of the movement; the space in which the movement occurs; the shape that the body and its parts form during motion; and the body and its internal pathways of coordination. *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's* incorporates principles of Laban Movement Analysis in 24 seated-exercises designed to improve diaphragmatic breathing, flexibility, postural alignment, spatial awareness, dynamic movement and vocal range.

The *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's* exercises require coordinating movements of the upper and lower body and right and left sides. The movements are varied in tempo, spatial direction, dynamic qualities, complexity of phrasing, and according to which body parts are most active. This variation is intentional because it provides recuperation.

The exercises have descriptive titles such as: Swivel and Slouch, Wring and Punch, Finger Talking, Heel Push and Walking Weight Shifts. The exercises include varying dynamic qualities and they encourage active attention to the space around the body. Several of the exercises cross the body's midline and require spinal rotation.

Traditional exercise programs almost never acknowledge the expressive or emotional content of movement. This discourages the connection between mind and body. From a Laban point of view, denying the emotional content of movement is limiting. There is a benefit to movement other than strength and flexibility training: Movement allows us to feel whole. Each exercise in *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's* incorporates what Laban called Effort dynamics. Laban and Bartenieff believed that all movement is both

functional and expressive. Movement expresses the mood of the mover. For example, you can wring a towel (a functional movement). Or, you can wring thin air as though to say, "I want to wring your neck!" (an expressive movement). As I lead people through the exercises in *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's* such as Wring and Punch, I encourage them to speak along with me and to move with feeling.

A physical therapist, Bartenieff developed a series of basic movements, which she viewed as the building blocks of all coordinated movement. Bartenieff Fundamentals<sup>sm</sup> emphasize where movements initiate in the body and other body-level connections. Essentially, Bartenieff Fundamentals<sup>sm</sup> are movement sequences designed to train or retrain the physical and expressive capacities of an individual and restore and maintain health by balancing tensions. Each of the 24 short exercises in the *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's* program incorporates Bartenieff's principles.

In a 10-week study, participants followed the Laban/Bartenieff-based *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's* seated exercise program weekly in class and twice each week at home using a DVD or videotape, and showed statistically significant improvements in several measures. These included the "Up & Go" test to measure how quickly someone can rise from a chair, walk three meters, turn around, walk back to the chair and sit down; range of trunk rotation; and the Unified Parkinson Disease Rating Scale's activities of daily living. Participants also saw improvements in the Beck Anxiety Inventory, range of motion of both arms and the Parkinson's Disease Quality of Life measures -- activities of daily living, mobility, emotional well-being, stigma and bodily discomfort subscales.

**The study, *Improvements in Daily Functioning and Walking Ability with the Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's Exercise Program: A Pilot Study*, were presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Movement Disorder Society Congress Chicago. Co-researcher's were Alicia Ann Clair and Kelly Lyons, University of Kansas.**

## Information on *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's*, from the Parkinson's Disease Foundation

*Parkinson's Disease - New Approach To Exercise For Parkinson's Patients, from Applesforhealth.com*  
Volume 9, Issue 47- July 23, 2008.

"The Parkinson's Disease Foundation (PDF), a leading national presence in the field of Parkinson's disease research, education, and public information, has launched an innovative, seated exercise program designed specifically for Parkinson's patients, *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's*.

*Motivating Moves*, which is available in video, DVD and PAL formats, consists of 24 seated exercises that target common Parkinson's symptoms by emphasizing diaphragmatic breathing, spatial awareness, flexibility, sense of balance, vocal range and facial expressivity.

The importance of exercise for the Parkinson's patient has long been recognized as essential to disease management and improved quality of life. *Motivating Moves* has been welcomed by the medical community.

"Exercise is critical to the overall care of a patient with Parkinson's," said Dr. Lucien Coté, Neurology and Parkinson's Specialist at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City. "This video meets the needs of a

Parkinson's patient because it concentrates on stretching and balance.

It also provides extremely helpful tips on mobility. The video is upbeat and inspiring as well as educational. Janet Hamburg's expertise and excellent teaching skills put this video at the top of the class." Based on the movement theories of Rudolf Laban, the exercises are led by Janet Hamburg, nationally known movement specialist, Registered Movement Therapist and professor of dance at the University of Kansas.

The music is by Juilliard composer and pianist Robert Abramson. Participants are guided through three sections: "How to Do Motivating Moves" (45 minutes); "The Exercise Class" (36 minutes) and "Practical Tips for Daily Living" (4 minutes).

The program provides an uplifting and enjoyable exercise routine in which a patient may engage alone, with a caregiver or in a group setting. To order a copy of *Motivating Moves for People with Parkinson's*, contact the Parkinson's Disease Foundation at (800) 457-6676 or visit the website at [www.pdf.org](http://www.pdf.org)



**Photograph: Larry Levenson**

The DVD can also be ordered through Janet Hamburg, Professor Dance, Associate of the Gerontology Center The University of Kansas, Department of Music and Dance.  
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