

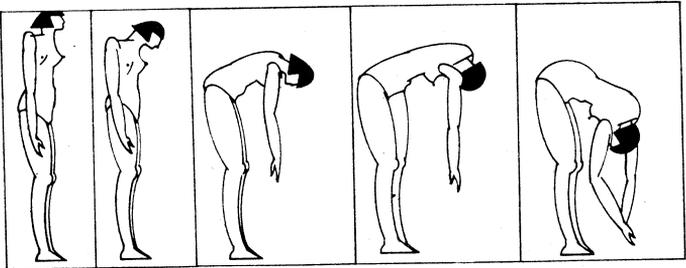
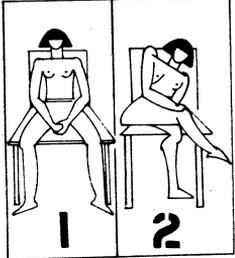
# To get rid of tension, anxiety and relax yourself... dance therapy

At the first sign of a clenched jaw, the onset of headache, do you know what to do? If you do, you know about dance therapy. If you don't, you should because everyone suffers from tension and anxiety. They're anti-beautifiers, causing, among other things, poor posture and fatigue. Dance therapy, which analyzes body movement as it relates to anxiety, can do for you what all the muscle-relaxants in the world can't—relax you by getting to the source of that anxiety, not just its symptoms. The symptoms—clenching and aching—are actually emotional barometers, physical responses that tell you mentally, you're tense. . . . Dance therapy, which sometimes has little to do with dance, is related to psychology and is based on a philosophy of less body inhibition. According to dance therapist Lenni Serlin, who has studied psychology, dance therapy, and Gestalt theory, its aim is to develop sensory awareness through minimal movement—i.e., you may do nothing more than learn to breathe in one session, walk in another. **The goal: to liberate the body, free untapped energy sources, and arrive at a personal rhythm that feels totally comfortable and relaxed.** Classes are private, or in scheduled one-day group workshops. For more, contact Lenni Serlin, 338 West 88 St., (212) 799-7140. . . . *Below, a series of Lenni's detensing exercises; do until you feel relaxed.*

## TENSION TIP-OFFS

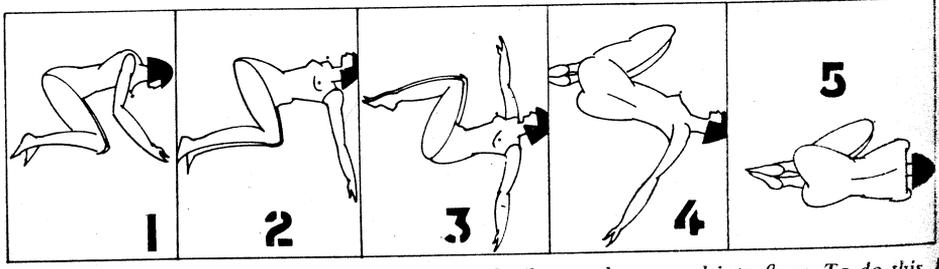
- A change in breathing is often the first sign. Breaths become short, shallow. When you're very tense, you tend to hold your breath.
- "Gripping"—a clenched jaw, a tight fist, hunched or raised shoulders—literally a physical holding together of yourself.
- Aching or stiffness—it's the result of gripping over a period of time. Most susceptible: head, neck, upper back, and shoulder muscles.
- If you feel warm or begin to perspire, it's because nerves are working nonstop, generating heat.
- Exhaustion, if you haven't done anything strenuous, could be due to anxiety. Emotional fatigue is, in fact, more tiring than physical work. The reasons: poor breathing, perspiration, muscle tension, and lack of sleep that rob your body of energy.
- Smokers are generally more anxiety-prone than nonsmokers. If you begin to smoke more than usual, take notice—you're tenser.

Sit in a chair (1), back straight, hands in lap, feet firmly on floor (for balance and stability). Sit well into chair so it helps support you. In any other position (2), you can still do this exercise, but it will take longer to relax. Take a slow breath in—feel lungs fill with air; slowly exhale. Repeat, letting body sink into chair at the points where it supports you. Keep breathing evenly. Aim for total chair support, so muscles can completely relax.



Stand in position, far left, hips over feet for balance. Letting arms hang, slowly roll over, bending head, then neck, shoulders, back. Remember to breathe. Roll as far as you can; rest briefly. Slowly come up—concentrate on feeling each vertebra straighten up.

Lie on floor as illustrated (1). Bring right arm up and slowly lower it to the floor, other side (2). Keeping shoulders pressed firmly to floor, raise legs together and slowly rotate to other side (3). Note: as legs come up, small of back must be pressed into floor. To do this, knees above hips as you rotate legs. If you let knees down, back arches and you are straining rather than stretching muscles. Bring left arm up over head and place on top of right arm (4). You should now be on the opposite side starting position (5). Repeat from side to side.



## 6 WAYS TO FEEL MORE RELAXED

- Breathe properly. When you're tense, take small, slow, even breaths that fill lungs horizontally. Never take fast, deep, vertical breaths. Too much oxygen, too fast, will make you dizzy.
- Stand up straight. Poor posture means muscles must work to support you. They tense up, tire easily.
- Exercise regularly. Everyone needs a physical-release valve for tension.
- Take a respite. Thirty minutes of doing nothing each day is not a time-waster—it's an unwinder. If you do something, do something relaxing—i.e., take a warm bath, a short walk, read.
- Break old habits. The smallest change in your daily routine—a new way of walking to work, a new hairstyle—can be the most revitalizing thing you do for yourself all day.
- Be aware of environment—important to mood. Harsh lighting, or noise, for instance, contribute to tension. To deter-leave—take a short walk. get breath of air. You will feel bet-