



Hand on Leg Exercise Instructions

Part 1

While the students are seated, invite the students to close their eyes (or blur their gaze) and focus on their body again (in any way that is accessible, safe and realistic for them, see Part 1 of “Body and Surroundings Exercise Instructions”). Once students have turned their attention to their bodies, ask them to put one hand on their leg (other body parts can be used alternatively, but this example mentions hands and legs to simplify the explanations). Give students some time to feel the touch between the hand and the leg. Then, ask:

“Notice what dominates in your awareness: your hand touching your leg or your leg touching your hand”.

This may work performatively rather than as an enquiry, as students may become aware that feeling the hand with their leg is also an option. Often, people are used to using some body parts to touch their environment, more than others (for instance, most people tend to explore the texture of an object with their hands, rather than with the upper leg).

Now, invite students to specifically focus on the hand touching the leg. Here, options for what can be felt can help students to feel, for instance:

“Maybe your hand feels the texture of your pants.

Maybe your hand feels the temperature of your leg.

Maybe your hand feels the hardness or softness of your leg.

You can imagine what it is that you are touching when you touch your leg: skin, flesh, muscle, bone?

Maybe your hand feels some kind of movement in your leg.”

You can also invite students to become aware of how they are touching, for instance by saying:

“Notice how you use your hand when you are touching your leg. Are you moving your hand, or does it stay in the same spot? Are you softly touching your leg or are you, for instance, slightly squeezing it?”



Part 2

After you have given the students some time to feel their legs with their hands, invite the students to do the opposite: touching their hands with their legs. Again, you can help the students by giving different options as to how to attend to this touch:

“Maybe your leg feels the weight of your hand.

Maybe your leg feels the pressure of your hand. Is the pressure the same for each part of your hand?

Maybe your leg feels the temperature of your hand.

Is your leg touching your entire hand, or is there space between some parts of your hand and your leg?

Maybe your leg feels movement inside your hand.”

You can also invite students to become aware of how they are touching, for instance by saying:

“Notice how you use your leg in order to touch your hand. Does the leg remain still? Do you have to concentrate hard to use the skin or nerve endings of your leg to touch the hand? Are you using your leg muscles for this?”

Part 3

After some time, ask the students to try to do both at the same time: feeling the hand touching the leg and feeling the leg touching the hand. After you give the students some time to try this, you can ask:

“Notice what you do when you try to do this. How do you feel both at the same time?

Some people switch very quickly from one to the other.

Some people focus on the skin between the hand and the leg. Or they imagine some kind of space in between on which they can focus.

Some people imagine a circle: going from the hand to the leg, to the hip, to the torso, to the shoulder, to the arm, to the hand, to the leg, etc. Or the other way around.

Some people imagine that the hand and the leg become one body part.

There is not one right way of doing this. Notice which imagination works best for you when trying to feel both at the same time. Try to make this imagination as sharp as possible”

After giving students some time to explore this, guide them through opening their eyes again and becoming aware of the space around them.



Part 4

Discussion: invite an exchange among students about how they solved the problem. What kind of imagination helped them to focus on the hand touching the leg and the leg touching the hand at the same time. Students make notes!

Assignment: Make a drawing that visualises the imagination that helps for practicing this kind of inside-outside presence.

You can refer back to the examples they mentioned during the exercise. Students should get at least 5 minutes to do this.

Discussion: how did you draw your way of practicing attentiveness to the hand, the leg and their reciprocal touch?

It may well be that students have not found a way that worked for them yet. Sharing the drawings among students can help inspire them. They can practice this home at home and find a way that works best for them. This exercise can be found as a guided audio exercise, for students to practice individually. Teachers can use this to get a sense of how to lead this exercise or use audio in class.

Alternatively, for instance in the case of students (or teachers) who do not think in images, the exercise can also be to find a word inside-outside presence (for instance, “circle”, “shifting boundaries” or “shifting swiftly”).