

Slow walking

Performance

10 minutes

You will need:

A chair for each person

A gentle piece of music
(*Ashun Daje Mori* by Ljiljana
Buttler works well)

An audio device

A big open space to work in

Large groups



Calming
Meditative
Focusing

This activity is a sequence of breathing, walking, thinking and being, culminating in a final statement of assertion. You can do it daily, creating a regular time when participants can clear their heads and find focus.

To prepare:

In the space where you are working you will need to arrange a line of chairs across the back of one wall and clear all bags, coats and extraneous items away.

To begin:

Invite the participants to take their seats, feet placed parallel firmly on the floor, palms on their laps and sitting up straight with their eyes closed.

As they close their eyes, you can begin playing the music quietly in the background.

Invite the group to become aware of their breathing – to feel it go in and out and to be aware of that and nothing else. Invite them to remember that they are sitting on a chair, that their feet on the floor are parallel and they are breathing in and out. *Nothing else, nothing more.*

Then:

Ask the group to imagine there are two lines traveling from their toes to their heels. As they think of these lines, tell them to let all the thoughts disappear from their heads, let any tension disappear from their body and just to concentrate on the lines travelling from their toes to their heels, their heels to their knees, their knees to their hips and then meeting at their coccyx. *Breathe.*

Let the group sit for a while aware of their breathing, letting go of any tension in their body and any thoughts in their head. Explain that in a moment you want them to open their eyes.

When they open their eyes, they should imagine their eyes are windows and that they are looking out of them from the place behind the eyes, which is connected to a line running through their body from the coccyx to the top of the head. Just look across the room to the opposite wall. *Don't stare, just look, looking from that place behind your eyes.*

Next:

Invite the group to slowly stand up and take a single step away from the chair. *Just stand.* Their feet parallel, the imaginary line still travelling from toe to heel, heel to knee, knee to hips, hips to coccyx and then up through the belly, the solar plexus, the heart, the throat, behind the eyes and to the top of the head.

Credit:

The Performance Ensemble.
Developed in partnership with
Leeds Older People's Forum.





Now the group can very slowly start walking forward, staying aware of their breathing. Once everyone is walking, ask them to stop and remember the seat where they were sitting. They should imagine they are back sitting on their chair – just standing still and imagining the chair behind them.

Very slowly invite them to turn around and face the chair. *Do it with sincerity, don't embellish.* They move their eyes first, then the head and then the rest of your body. They move their feet round to face the chair as they turn. They look at the chair and think – 'Yes. I want to return to my chair'. Slowly they walk back to their chair. But ... at the last minute, they stop. They've changed their mind and decided they don't want to sit there anymore; they want to walk toward the opposite wall again.

Next:

Again, invite the group to turn slowly and start moving forward again. Step by step. Every step is important. Encourage them not to embellish or interpret what they are doing; just to walk slowly toward the other wall. As they reach a place close to the wall, a place where they believe they have walked far enough, they stop. Their feet are parallel, bottom tucked under, shoulders down and chest open.

Remind the group about the line running through their body while they are looking at the wall in front of them. Tell them not to stare, just to look. Then, as if by a miracle, their right hand starts to move, by itself, slowly traveling upwards. They watch it moving, amazed by its movement. It continues to rise past their chest, past their shoulder towards the ceiling. They look away from it and it descends again to their side. Encourage them not to perform this or interpret what is happening – it is just happening by itself. They look towards the wall. They say the words 'I wish' or 'I remember' out loud and then they continue that thought in their own head.

What they wish for or what they remember is private to them. Nobody else will hear it.

To finish:

Allow the group a moment to think about what they have wished for or remembered. Then invite them to stretch and move on to the next activity if you are doing this as part of a workshop, or thank them for taking part if you are doing the activity on its own.

