

Feeling Exercise 3 - Ideokinesis Empty Suit of Clothes

Lie down on the floor, a bench or a bed. And take a moment to let the floor or bed support you.

Bend your knees in a way that it does not take any muscles to keep them upright. Your skeletal system can keep itself in position without use of the muscles.

So let your legs fall into your hip sockets.

Now, think about a suit of clothes. Create it in your mind, it can be anything you want. Maybe the most beautiful suit you can imagine, maybe the ugliest or weirdest, as long it is unusual and not boring. The image should be outrageous, unusual.

Really create this suit or pair of clothes in all detail in your mind. There should be a coat or jacket and the clothes should have long sleeves and long trouser legs, so no mini-skirts.

Now imagine yourself as this suit of clothes. As an empty suit of clothes. So you are the suit of clothes, you do not wear it. You are the clothes in this moment.

Think of the back of the suit of clothes spreading out on the floor.

When the image reaches its end point, you can dismiss the image, but do not dampen the effect that it causes. In other words, whatever experience or insight it gives you, let that keep happening, but do not freeze the image in your mind. You can let your mind rest and then start the image over.

The next thing that you are going to imagine is that the pants of the clothes are over a hanger. So your pants are hanging over a hanger, where usually the creases of your knees would be. So it should feel as though your legs are pulling up a little at the back of the knees. Because right there, the pants are hanging over a hanger.

Then you are going to think of the front of the clothing settling against the back. The front of the clothing is settling against the back evenly on either side, left and right. At the pelvis, at the ribs, at the shoulders, the clavicles.

Then, with the arms as 'sleeves' of the clothing, you think the insides of the sleeves coming together. You can do both arms at the same time. So the front of the sleeves is settling against the back of the sleeves.

Do the same with your legs.

Usually when you flex your leg when you are wearing clothing, there is a crease at the hip joint. Imagine this crease getting deeper.

Then I want you to think of a belt buckle at the navel, and it is going to sink into the floor.

Another image you can use instead of the buckle is a little pebble that sinks through the navel into the floor, very much like a pebble going through water in a fish bowl.

Next, think of the back of the clothing spreading out on the floor. So the clothing is very wrinkled and we are going to smooth out the wrinkles down the back of the coat.

Imagine the back of the clothing spreading out on the floor. Really smooth out all the wrinkles down the back of the coat. Really smooth them out on the floor.

Then smooth out the fabric across the back of the pelvis.

Smooth out the wrinkles from the centre (spine) to the outsides.

You can think of the spreading out of the garment as a viscous liquid: honey, sirup or oil. You may say to yourself 'it is cloth, not honey', that is the point. The image should not be literal. It needs to be unusual to grab the intention of the nervous system. Which is you! If the process is boring to you, this is because you have created it that way. So make it interesting.

For the cervical area, the neck, we also have wrinkles. We use the image that the neck part is the collar of a shirt that is under the coat. The collar is potentially very long, but it is so wrinkled that it is shrivelled inside the coat. We are going to smooth these wrinkles up towards the skull. So that lengthens the collar upwards.

Next we are going to think of the shoulders as shoulder pads. And they are widening away from the neck, sliding down the arms, all the way to the fingertips.

Then, we think of the head as a red balloon, or choose any colour you want. The first thing you want to think about the balloon is that it is becoming rounder. So the head is not really round, but you want to think of it as becoming round. That helps to organize good muscle patterns around the face and the skull, the top and the back of the head. Then think of the head as a balloon that is becoming not only rounder but also emptier. Particularly between the ears.

And finally, the balloon expands. It expands in all directions and especially between the ears.

Stay lying on the floor like this for a while and feel what the exercise changed.

(Compiled from workshop instructions and explanations in Ideokinesis – A Creative Approach to Human Movement and Body Alignment, 2006, p. 62–69.)