

# THE ROM DANCE



A Range of Motion Exercise and Relaxation Program

***The ROM Dance Range of Motion Exercise and Relaxation Program*** is a unique exercise and relaxation training program for people with pain and other physical limitations. “ROM” stands for Range-Of-Motion exercises which help keep the joints flexible. These movements, recommended by doctors and therapists, are combined with basic principles of T’ai-Chi Ch’uan, an ancient Chinese exercise for health and longevity.

T’ai-Chi Ch’uan trains the practitioner to be calm while alert, both strong and flexible, and to relax in the midst of stress. These elements are applied to the ROM Dance, teaching the participant to relax despite pain, to move gently and slowly in order to maintain the ability to move, and to develop sensitivity to subtle changes in the body. Through regular practice, this slow, fluid dance can enhance mental focus, body awareness and imagination.

The ROM Dance, which takes about seven minutes to complete, can be performed both sitting and standing. It incorporates movement in all ranges for the large joints, and includes a special exercise routine for the small joints of the hands. The ROM Dance can help people with a variety of conditions maintain joint range and cope with stress and pain. It can also be used as a the warm up and cool down phases of more extensive exercise programs.

***Precautions and Contraindications*** include the following:

1. The ROM Dance is not a substitute for medically recommended exercise therapy unless approved or modified by a physician or therapist.
2. People with severe neck problems or hip replacements should check with their doctors before attempting these movements.
3. Avoid straining or forcing any movements; modify them when necessary.
4. Use proper body mechanics when standing and sitting.

## ***Summary***

Because the movements of ROM Dance are gentle and take only a few minutes a day to perform, nearly everyone, including individuals in wheelchairs, can do them. It may improve flexibility and mobility while promoting a general sense of relaxation, in a safe, slow and gentle manner. The ROM Dance won’t change the disease process, but it may help reduce pain and limitations.

## THE ROM DANCE PRINCIPLES

*The ROM Dance Principles* reflect the mind/body principles of T'ai-Chi Ch'uan and are as follows:

### **Attention to the Present**

Awareness of what is happening here and now.

*Notice the fact that you are breathing – Feel into your hands – what are they touching? Look around you – listen – smell.*

*Life happens in the present moment*

### **Diaphragmatic Breathing**

Natural – like animals and children breathe.

*Breathe in – your belly seems to fill up – breathe out – it seems to empty.*

### **Postural Alignment**

Head erect, spine comfortably aligned, shoulders hang relaxed.

*“Check in” with your whole body. Release any tension and allow your bones to hang relaxed.*

### **Awareness of Movement**

Focus on feeling changes within the body during exercise.

*Pay attention to how your body parts feel as you move*

### **Slow Movement**

Simply move more slowly than normal

*This can enhance your awareness of movement and is also strengthening.*

### **Relaxed Movement**

Avoid forcing or straining - absolutely no unnecessary tension

*When relaxed, your hands may feel heavy or warm*

### **Imagination**

Can evoke the feeling of warmth, soothing, nurturing, healing

*Your body responds to every thought, feeling and mental image.*

*The ROM Dance was created in 1981 by Diane Harlowe MS, an occupational therapist and researcher, and Tricia Yu MA, a T'ai-Chi instructor and health educator, at St. Mary's Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin.*

## The ROM Dance in Sunlight

1. I am sitting on my chair  
at a quiet beach.  
The sun is shining brightly.
2. Warm waves lap at my feet  
as they dangle in the water.
3. I move my feet together
4. and scoop the warm water
5. over my shoulders
6. and scoop the warm water
7. over my face
8. then scoop the warm water over my head
9. covering me  
with a warm waterfall.
10. I move my feet apart
11. and using arms and legs  
stand up.
12. I kick ripples in the water  
with one foot and then the other.
13. I make ripples in front of me  
with one foot and then the other.
14. I mark spots in the sand  
beneath the water  
with toe and heel  
and with the other.
15. Stepping into deeper water  
I feel the sun  
Warm my head and neck
16. and feel the sun  
warm my shoulders.
17. I stretch back
18. feeling good  
in the warmth of the sun.
19. I gather the sun's warmth  
over my shoulders
20. and it feels good.
21. I gather the sun's warmth  
to my head
22. and it feels good.
23. I gather the sun's warmth  
down over me
24. bathing me  
in a shining light.
25. My hands feel warm
26. and a sunbeam  
shines between them
27. then shines back to the sun.
28. I step back and using arms and legs  
sit down on my chair at the beach
29. and dangle my feet in the water.
30. Someone comes to my beach  
who will be a friend.
31. Our greetings are as formal as a bow.
32. At first our talk is distant
33. And we speak of many things.
34. As we get closer
35. We share our private thoughts
36. and emotions.
37. Soon we connect as friends.
38. We give support
39. and receive support
40. Although we go our separate ways
41. we know that somehow  
in some way
42. we will be together.

*Written by Diane Harlowe and Patricia Yu*

## The ROM Dance in Moonlight

1. I am sitting on my chair  
at a quiet beach.  
The sun sets over the water.
2. Warm waves lap at my feet  
as the rising moon brightens the sky.
3. I move my feet together
4. and scoop the warm water
5. over my shoulders
6. and scoop the warm water
7. over my face
8. then scoop the warm water over my head
9. covering me  
with a warm waterfall.
10. I move my feet apart
11. and using arms and legs  
stand up.
12. I kick ripples in the water  
with one foot and then the other.
13. I make ripples in front of me  
with one foot and then the other.
14. I mark spots in the sand  
beneath the water  
with toe and heel  
and with the other.
15. Stepping into deeper water  
I feel relaxed by the moonlight  
on my head and neck
16. and feel relaxed by the moonlight  
on my shoulders.
17. I stretch back
18. feeling good  
in the tranquil light.
19. I gather the moon's light  
over my shoulders
20. and it feels good.
21. I gather the moon's light  
to my head
22. and it feels good.
23. I draw a moonbeam  
down over me
24. surrounding me in a shimmering light.
25. My hands begins to feel
26. as if a moonbeam shines  
between them
27. then shines back to the heavens above.
28. I step back  
and using arms and legs  
sit down on my chair at the beach
29. and dangle my feet in the water.
30. Someone comes to my beach  
who will be a friend.
31. Our greetings are as formal as a bow.
32. At first our talk is distant
33. And we speak of many things.
34. As we get closer
35. We share our private thoughts
36. and emotions.
37. Soon we connect as friends.
38. We give support
39. and receive support
40. Although we go our separate ways
41. we know that somehow  
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