

# Stretch Teacher Training (TT) Workshop

## Guide Program

This program provides an indicative guide of sessions across the five-day Stretch Teacher Training workshop. Precise timings for and lengths of breaks will be determined on a workshop by workshop basis.

### DAY I

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 8:45–9:00   | Registration, name-tags, receipts etc.  |
| 9:00–10:45  | Introduction, outline of workshop, Stretch Therapy (ST) principles,<br>Session 1: first full ST class: 'Daily V' spinal movements, plus two |
| 10:45–11:00 | Morning tea   |
| 11:00–12:30 | Session 2: 'Daily V' exercises in detail (flexion/extension)  |
| 12:30–14:00 | <i>Lunch; students to use final 30' for book revision</i>   |
| 14:00–15:00 | Session 3: Lateral flexion, standing and variations   |
| 15:00–15:15 | Afternoon tea   |
| 15:15–16:45 | Session 4: floor rotation and hip exercises; chair variations, first neck exercises   |
| 16:45–17:30 | Debrief/recap of Day I  |

### DAY II

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 9:00–10:45  | Session 5: second full ST class: spine mobilization, feet, ankles, lower leg, intro. to hamstrings, hip flexor |
| 10:45–11:00 | Morning tea  |
| 11:00–12:30 | Session 6: feet, ankle, calf exercises in detail   |
| 12:30–14:00 | <i>Lunch; students to use final 30' for book revision</i>  |
| 14:00–15:15 | Session 7: floor hip flexor, and variations, in detail   |
| 15:15–15:30 | Afternoon tea  |
| 15:30–16:30 | Session 8: floor bent-leg hamstring intro.   |
| 16:30–17:30 | Debrief/recap of Day II and Stage I  |

### DAY III

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 9:00–10:45  | Session 9: third full ST class: shoulders and upper back  |
| 10:45–11:00 | Morning tea   |
| 11:00–12:30 | Session 10: shoulder exercises: internal and external rotator cuff, flexion, extension, combination chest, biceps, and pec. minor |
| 12:30–14:00 | <i>Lunch; students to use final 30' to plan a demonstration of a solo exercise</i>  |
| 14:00–15:30 | Session 11: small group teaching session*; individuals present example solo stretch   |
| 15:30–15:45 | Afternoon tea   |
| 15:45–17:00 | Session 12: hip flexors; quads; upper back extension over supports, wall variations   |
| 17:00–17:30 | Debrief/recap of Day III  |

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### DAY IV

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 9:00–10:45  | Session 13: fourth full ST class: hip abduction, internal rotation, hip flexors and quadriceps |
| 10:45–11:00 | Morning tea  |
| 11:00–12:30 | Session 14: supported legs apart exercises in detail   |
| 12:30–14:00 | Lunch; students to use final 30' to plan a demonstration of a partner exercise                 |
| 14:00–15:30 | Session 15: small group teaching session*; individuals present example partner stretch         |
| 15:30–15:45 | Afternoon tea  |
| 15:45–16:30 | Session 16: designing sequences and classes, whole-group exercise**                            |
| 16:30–17:00 | Session 17: additional <i>piriformis</i> exercises   |
| 17:00–17:30 | Relaxation/meditation session  |

### DAY V

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 9:00–10:45  | Session 18: fifth full ST class: the whole body and remaining neck exercises   |
| 10:45–11:00 | Morning tea  |
| 11:00–12:30 | Session 19: combination shoulder exercises                                     |
| 12:30–14:00 | Lunch  |
| 14:00–15:30 | Session 20: The <i>Unnumbered Lesson</i> , including wrists, fingers and hands |
| 15:30–15:45 | Afternoon tea  |
| 15:45–17:00 | Session 21: debrief/recap of Days IV and V and revision from all five days     |
| 17:00–17:30 | Course wrap-up   |

\* Small group teaching session: the whole group will break into small groups and present a solo exercise (session 11) and a partner exercise (session 15) to the group. Each small group will be supervised by a senior instructor, and the group will critique each participant's presentation. The composition of small groups will change session 11 to session 15. Kit will oversee all groups.

\*\* Designing a class plan: following session 16 (Day IV, 15:45–16:30), each participant will be required to devise a class plan (precise instructions to be provided during session 16), to be emailed to Kit Laughlin and Linda Winterton within two weeks of the conclusion of the workshop. Both Linda and Kit will provide feedback, via email, following the workshop.

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## Stretch Therapy teaching PRINCIPLES

### Two constraints

- i) is it safe?
- ii) is it effective?

### Three 'elements'

- 1) Contract-Relax (C-R)
- 2) Partial poses
- 3) Partner poses

## 1) Contract-Relax (C-R)

At its most basic:

- i) move limb into a GENTLE stretch position, hold 10–30 seconds, ensure breathing deeply and at normal rhythm
- ii) **Contract** (push or pull in OPPOSITE direction to the stretch), without allowing limb to move (so need resistance), for a slow count of 5 (approximately 6–10 seconds)  
(NB: when partner resisting, best to count DOWN from 5 to 1)
- iii) breathe IN, and **during** the next breath OUT, re-stretch (the **Relax** part)—hold for 15 seconds to 1 minute, or at least five slow breaths in and out or working too hard

### A. Length of each phase?

- EXPERIMENT and FEEL!!
- depends on the size and length of the muscle(s) involved, and how tight the person is in that muscle

### B. How hard to contract?

- initially, err on the side of caution because:
  - i) want to avoid over-stressing muscles
  - ii) do not want to involve unnecessary stabilization muscles
  - iii) if going slowly and gently, can 'listen' to the body's responses, and modify the demand
- trying to locate the muscle the stretch is designed to target, but not overwhelm with sensory feed-back from other parts of the body as more muscles get involved to stabilise
- later (when more experienced), increase the effort in the contraction by:
  - i) using more force, or
  - ii) holding contraction phase longer (while increasing the force slowly)
- depends on the size & length of the muscle:
  - \* smaller/shorter = shorter & less forceful

\* larger/longer = longer & more forceful

### **C. How many C-R iterations?**

- if very tight, do 2–3 C-Rs (>3 doesn't appear to give any additional benefits)

### **D. Benefits of C–R approach**

- muscles involved become stronger at the point in the range of movement where they are usually weak, by the use of the isometric (muscles exerting effort without movement) contraction
- doing work in the extended position increases awareness (*proprioception*) of the stretching sensation—widening the window between stretching and injuring—and distinguishes between a stretch sensation and a pain sensation
- flexibility improves, by the stretch reflex being deactivated momentarily

ST uses three reflexes:

- i) Post Isometric contraction Reflex (PCIR)
- ii) Reciprocal Inhibition Reflex (RIR)
- iii) One we have tentatively named the **Apprehension Reflex** (AR); see 4<sup>th</sup> edition *Overcome neck & back pain*, 2006, pp. 32ff).

## **2) Partial Poses**

- 'functional units of flexibility', reduction of a multi-joint movement into smaller parts, first around a single joint, then build to more complex movements (e.g. forward bend)
- identify tight muscle(s) in the chain of movement, plus learn essential anatomy of each part
- practice 'whole' pose, for
  - a) any holistic benefits, and
  - b) to mimic most closely the functional demands of the complex movements
  - c) to mimic most closely the functional demands of the complex movements
- good confidence booster

## **3) Partner-assisted poses**

- in contraction phase, partner can provide the resistance so *stretchee* (the one being stretched!) can pay more attention to the sensations in the desired muscle
- stretchee
  - i) doesn't have to 'do the work' of holding a final (difficult) position
  - ii) can concentrate on form, relaxation of the muscles being stretched, and breathing

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- support of partner often leads to holding the stretch longer
- feedback from partner acts as a 'second eye' to check form—class becomes self-correcting in time
- safety
  - \* the stretchee must always be in control of the end position, as far as possible (e.g. #44 *Partner shoulder depress*)
  - \* ensure you give adequate instructions about position and role of the partner
  - \* encourage communication and sensitivity

### **CHECKLIST (in full below, please also refer to S&F, 1999, pp. 20–21)**

#### **TIMINGS** (sequence of instruction)

- cautions
- anatomy—functional
- - i) how to get into the stretch
  - ii) C-R(s)
  - iii) how to get out of the stretch
- counter movements ('counter pose' in Yoga)
- breathing
- how much information to give (how many '**cues**')
- your position in relation to the students
- partner's position
- communication
  - i) verbal
  - ii) physical (i.e. demonstration, tactile)
- L/R asymmetries
- proportional restrictions
- use of props

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## **SESSION 16:                    Selecting & ordering stretches/designing a class**

- level of students (injuries?)
- the room
- selecting/ordering stretches
  - \* always do solo versions first—exceptions?
  - \* major muscle groups first, then smaller ones
  - \* can it be broken down to partial poses?
  - \* use of Contract-Relax (C-R) (reducing proprioceptive feedback)
  - \* use of supports, props (lessening the 'apprehension' reflex)
  - \* requires undue levels of explanation/demonstration (too complex)
  - \* does it require a partner?
- order of stretches—easiest to more difficult
- use of warm-ups?
- how many stretches in a given session?
- how many partner stretches in a given session?

## **SESSION 20:                    The Unnumbered Lesson**

- Exploration of the positions between forwards, sideways, rotation and backwards movements of the torso.
- Integration of stretches, through assessment of:
  - i) the shape of the body, and
  - ii) what the attempt to make these shapes feels like
- "perform a mental and physical inventory" (p. 139)  
"provide a check list to assess your progress" (p. 139)
- "return our focus to the whole body movements" to see "where you feel the effects (the stress) of such movements" (p.140)
- "because we will be stretching while moving from one position to another, we will be stressing the muscles and connective tissue through many ranges of movement that conventional stretching leaves untouched" (p. 140)