

New Therapies to help the Mind/Body Connection

By Star Edwards

A whole host of new modalities are emerging due to the exploration of mind and body connections. Discoveries of tapping on meridian points on the body are shown to center our mind, relax the body, and remove negative thoughts stored in our mind and body. Our bodies have electromagnetic currents that flow from one point to another, like direct current rather than alternating current. How can this help us with performance anxiety? These simple tapping methods can realign these currents, front to back, side-to-side, and top to bottom. These methods work with children and adults!

Try these exercises whenever you are stressed! They help reconnect your neural network in your brain when under stress.

1. **Brain Buttons:** One hand is placed over the navel; the other hand rubs on each side on the top of the sternum (with the thumb + #2, #3 fingers).
2. **Over-Energy Correction;** Cross the left ankle over the right + place the left hand on the right knee, and then the right hand on the left knee.
3. **Centering:** Tap several times with the #2 + #3 fingers under the nose and above the lips.
4. **Collarbone Breathing Exercise:** Place the right hand under the collarbone where it meets the sternum. With the #2, #3 fingers of the left hand, tap five times on the back of the right hand between the #4 finger and pinky close to the knuckles. Breathe deeply in +out. Then switch hands.

For more information on how these therapies can help in performance go to these web sites:

Active Imagination

This type of exercise is incredibly profound in its ability to stimulate the nerves and muscles just by using our imagination. Recently on a 60 minutes TV show, a doctor was training a veteran, who lost his arm in the Iraq war, how to use a mechanical prosthetic device. The end of his stump still has nerve endings. He was instructed to imagine moving his fingers. With practice, he can move his fingers using his mind/ imagination technique. The implications of this are staggering! Another example is when Olympic skiers, who found themselves injured before the big competition, were wired up with electrodes to their leg muscles while they imagined skiing down the slopes. What the doctors found is that even though they were sitting comfortably in an office, *their muscles were firing "as if they were skiing."*

The imagination is much more powerful than we imagined! My student, Ann, was doing an active imagination practice for playing a wedding. This was her first time and after going through the whole performance, (starting with getting ready at home, packing the harp, dressing etc.) she realized she could not wear the dress she picked out because it was too short! Active imagination gets us in touch with the ability to visualize and walk through a scenario on an energetic level first!

The next performance you have, sit in a chair and actively imagine the whole thing - from start to finish; what you will

wear, what car you'll take to get there (with a full tank of gas!), bringing all your equipment, cell phone. Imagine the things you will notice about the stage area, who is there to help set up, and who is doing sound check. Include where you will keep your purse, case. Imagine who will come to the performance, who will sit in the front row. Imagine how good it will be to see your supporters come out to hear you play. Imagine seeing your fingers on the harp strings as you hear the song in your head. Imagine a wonderful performance - knowing as you do this exercise that your muscles will comply. You are training your mind and body on a deep energetic level and you are very successful!

Yogic Breathing Technique

This is a technique that is 100% effective to calm + focus the body!!! I swear by it!!! This technique is called *Alternative Nostril Breathing*, yet it has many names. Use this when your heart/mind is racing! This is how it works:

1. Close left nostril with the left #2 finger. Breathe in
2. Before you breathe out, close right nostril with the right #2 finger + breathe out of left nostril
3. Breathe in left nostril while right nostril is still closed, *before you breathe out*, take off right #2 finger, and place left #2 finger on left nostril and breathe out through the *right nostril*. Repeat this sequence for 3 to 5 minutes.... you will be incredibly calm!!!

All these techniques can be used for performance anxiety. These methods are elastic and useful in every day life. Any time you need to settle down, focus, be calm, be in charge and confident, these skills come in handy. Go forth, perform, enjoy!

All information reprinted from *Celtic Harp Tips Book* by Star Edwards. Published by Enoch Productions. www.starharp.com



Star Edwards is well known for her eclectic harp styles, whether playing solo or ensemble. In 1983 she founded the Colorado Folk Harp Society. Star has authored nine books and three CDs. Her latest project is arranging ensemble scores for harp, cello, violin and flute from the movie, BraveHeart. Star teaches Celtic harp at Swallow Hill Music School in Denver and can be found playing at the Brown Palace Hotel and therapeutic music to hospice and critically ill patients at local hospitals.