

Determine Your Movement Preferences

VOCABULARY

choreology
 dance study
 improvise
 Labanotation

Move It!

Freely **improvise** (move without planning) a series of movements. Have a partner observe and describe what kind of movements you used most often. Perhaps in order to clarify these observations, have this partner show you the moves you created.

Curtain Up

How many of your movement behaviors are inherited, and how many are learned? Some of the ways in which you move are due to your inherited skeletal structure. Environment and experiences also affect the way you move. Also consider climate. People from colder climates tend to move more quickly than people from hot climates. Steamy, tropical climates tend to encourage slower movement. Movement patterns are built over time. The ways you react to your surroundings and imitate how you see other people move build these movement patterns. The movement patterns may eventually become movement preferences. Although your job as a dancer is to increase your range of motion and expressive abilities, you will always have a personal preference for particular movements. Following are some possible ways movement preferences could influence the dance style or form that you most enjoy doing:

- If you have a good stretch, as well as strength in your legs and lower back, then while improvising, you might notice that you prefer using your leg extensions over using torso movements.
- If you like percussive movements, perhaps you should try tap, steppin', flamenco, or Irish dancing (hard shoe).
- If you are good at doing many isolations at the same time, then Middle Eastern dance and some jazz styles might be appropriate for you.
- If you prefer using a still, erect torso, then ballet, Cambodian, and many Western European historical court dances could be ideal for you.
- If you enjoy using the torso and don't mind being upside down, then modern dance, aerial dance, and break dancing may be a good fit for you.
- If you enjoy studying traditions and codified movements that have a long historical background, try ballet, classical Indian, Balinese, Western court dances, and Native American tribal dances.



How did personal movement preferences influence these dancers to study these two very different dance forms?

Take the Stage

To discover how you prefer to move, explore different movements done in different ways:

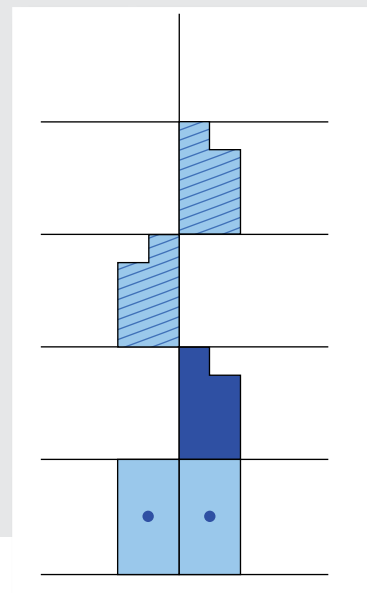
1. With a partner or the class, use the handout on the web resource to brainstorm movements that fall under each of the following descriptive categories: powerful, delicate, sudden, timeless, focused, unfocused or multi-focused, controlled, and uncontrolled. For example, some movements that can be considered powerful are hit, slap, kick, punch, press, smash, slash, pound, and haul.
2. Spend time improvising or exploring each of the words under each category. After improvising, make notes about what you did.

SPOTLIGHT

Rudolf Laban

Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) was a dancer, choreographer, dance advocate, and dance and movement theorist. One of the founders of European modern dance, he collaborated with great dancers such as Mary Wigman (1886-1973) and Kurt Jooss (1901-1979). Laban's biggest contributions to the field, however, were his development of **choreology** (the discipline of dance analysis) and the creation of a system of dance notation, now known as **Labanotation**. Today some dance companies hire people trained in Labanotation to notate (record in dance writing) a dance or reconstruct a dance from a Labanotation score.

Labanotation example of the triplet:
Step forward on right foot in demi-plié, step forward on left foot on relevé, step forward on right foot on relevé.



3. On your notes, place a check mark next to each of the movements that you most like to do or are comfortable doing. Look for any patterns in your preferences.
4. Write a short description of how you prefer to move. Use what you learned in this activity and in this lesson's Move It! to help you analyze your movement preferences. Be sure to think about your whole body.

Take a Bow

When you choreograph a piece for yourself (when you will be the primary dancer), you will probably use the movements you most like and look best doing.

1. Create a **dance study** based on your movement preferences that you discovered in this lesson's Take the Stage. You may use the movements that you improvised in this lesson in addition to other movements. If possible, have this dance video-recorded.
2. Create a second dance study based on the movements that you did not choose in this lesson as your preferences. You may add other related movements. If possible, have this dance video-recorded.
3. Write a short essay or journal entry that not only compares these two dance studies but also describes the ways you like to move best (that is, your movement preferences). If any of your discoveries were surprising to you, write about this new information as well.

DID YOU KNOW?

Georgian Dancers

A culture sometimes dictates how its people move. In Georgian traditional dancing, the male dancers compete with bold movement that requires strength, agility, and incredible elevation. In contrast, women's movements are reserved, with small and light steps.