

## Contraction-Expansion

In your physical body, substances from the world of matter are gathered together into a sacred and complex material matrix, enabling you to fulfill your destiny on the earth. This body, with all the wisdom it contains, is a microcosmic field embodied in the macrocosm of the entire physical-spiritual world. The source of the substance of your body, however, is not the physical world, but rather the macrocosmic world of archetypes and the will of the creator, the world of spirit and the dimension of the stars. Our entire body is permeable to the forces of the macrocosm.

The forces of the universe live as seed forces in your heart, waiting to be awakened and spread from your heart back into the world. The universe has given itself into human beings. We can complete the cycle when we give the world back to itself, newborn through human activity.

With the contraction-expansion sequence, we practice the polarities of heaven and earth within ourselves. The experience of this alignment will energize your body and reduce stress and tension, as you learn how you are held and nourished by the matrix of the universe.



Begin your eurythmy practice by clearing your mind of distractions, and becoming fully present. Fill your whole body with the sense of light. You might like to begin with a nice, full-body stretch, loosening the muscles and tendons in your arms, erasing your tension. When you're ready, put your feet together. Become quiet, focused and centered, and take a deep breath. Align your body so your center of gravity is in your solar plexus, and your heart is open.



Now, keeping your hands before your heart, imagine a spiritual seed resting there, nesting in the core of your being. You hold it safe, protected inside you, wrapped in casings and sheathes of protection, safe from harm. Bend your head, but only very slightly, so you can listen to your heart with your inner ear. There's no need to close your eyes. Keep them open, but only gently so, introspectively. (Remember, you are more *present* when your eyes are open than when they are closed. Our eurythmy practice is always done with the eyes open.) Feel the power of spirit potency inside of you.

Seeds rest in the earth throughout the cold months of winter, but when spring comes, the ground becomes warm and the hard casings of the seeds soften and dissolve. Imagine springtime stirring in your own heart, and how it would make your seed grow. Movement begins to stir inside you, as you respond to the inward call of life and love and warmth from the sun. Imagine how the seed-force inside you begins to swell, sprout and grow.

Let your arms begin to lift away from your chest, weightlessly. Begin with your upper arms, feeling the expansion begin there. Let your first movements be as tender as the first tiny leaves that grow out of the seed. Your upper arms lift further away from your chest, and your elbows gracefully unfurl. The stem of your plant grows upward, and you grow straighter. Your arms unfold more and more, lifted towards light, until they begin to feel like the chalice of a great flower, expanded widely into space,





through the upper arms, across the elbows and the wrists, all the way out to your fingertips. Pass even beyond your fingers, up to the light of the sun. The seed from your heart grows out beyond you, drawn into the light of the universe. Open yourself completely to the macrocosm, and let your arms drink in that light which is your sustenance. Open yourself to the universe, giving away light and color. Keep looking straight ahead, with open gaze, *feeling* the light around you, even around the back of your head.

When autumn comes, life returns to the seed. Imagine now that your petals drop away behind you, and your leaves

begin to fall. Fold your arms inward, back towards your chest. Start from the fingertips, and continue to the lower arms, elbows, upper arms. As you do so, draw star-energy and sun-energy into yourself.

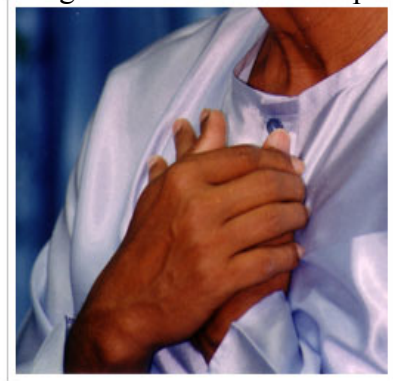
As your seed becomes once more quite small and intimate, lay it once again into the intimate space of your heart. Lay your hands gently there, one on top of the other, and bow your head very slightly, keeping your eyes open, but introspective. Be at peace, quiet in your heart.

Your first experience was slow and thoughtful.

Try it a second time, with a bit more fluidity.

Move into the interior of your own heart, and awaken to the power that is the seed inside you. Don't think about it from your head: feel it from inside yourself, and let it lift your arms and unfold into space as a force of unfolding life, spreading out from your heart.

This time remember that the growing seed also sends roots downwards.



As the life force grows and grows, let it unfold as a globe of bountiful spiritual energy. Expanding upwards and downwards, forwards and backwards, in all directions, grow to the widths of the world, and touch the expanses everywhere, through your fingertips and your toes, through all the edges of your energy field. And here is a beautiful miracle. You will feel that you won't lose yourself in the infinite expanse, because that is a home for you. Let yourself touch stars, and find yourself in the strength and inspiration in the widths of the universe.

When the expansion reaches the furthest distances, it begins to fade. Once again, the forces of the universe draw inwards, and contract themselves into a seed. Spirit seeks to find itself again in the seed, in your heart. From right and left, forwards and backwards, from your fingertips and from your toes, spirit becomes small and lays itself into the seed in your heart, as you place your hands before your heart chakra and move into the interior of your deepest self.

With this exercise we are experiencing the alternation of microcosm and macrocosm, earth and heaven, inside and outside. This interplay, which manifests in all the rhythms of the heart and breath, is constantly pulsing

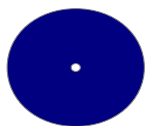
between the inside and the outside world.



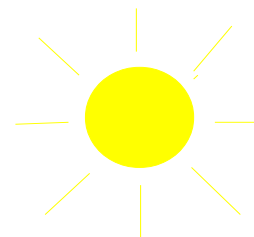
Now you can begin to deepen this experience by becoming aware of it as a very natural and organic process. You will experience that it can't be too slow, nor too fast. If it is too slow, it becomes too studious and abstract, and if it is too fast, it will contribute to stress and hyperactivity. Move gently now through the contraction and expansion, back and forth.

**From the seed in your heart, expand out into the widths of the world  
 From the widths of the world, contract back into the seed in your heart.  
 From the seed in your heart, feel yourself grow into the widths of the world. Touch the stars!  
 From the widths of the world, come back into the seed of your heart and feel yourself within yourself.  
 From the center of your heart, grow out to the widths of the world, through your upper arms, elbows, lower arms, wrists, hands, fingers, beyond.  
 From the widths of the world, return back, through your hands, lower arms, bending your elbows, your upper arms back into your heart, and feel the light in your own heart.**

Now again open your field and let this light stream out through your arms and your hands and beyond your fingers, and merge your personal energy with the star energy. Move in and out, as you move to the lines of this verse by Rudolf Steiner.



<b>Contract:</b>	<b>“Within my heart</b>
<b>Expand:</b>	<b>Shines the light of the sun.</b>
<b>Contract:</b>	<b>Within my soul</b>
<b>Expand:</b>	<b>Weaves the warmth of the world.</b>
<b>Contract:</b>	<b>I will breathe</b>
<b>Expand:</b>	<b>The light of the sun,</b>
<b>Contract:</b>	<b>I will feel</b>
<b>Expand:</b>	<b>The warmth of the world.</b>
<b>Contract:</b>	<b>Light of the sun, pour into me.</b>
<b>Drop your arms</b>	<b>Warmth of the world, flow through me.”</b>



With the last line, drop your arms gently to your sides, and feel how you can stand tall, with light in your head, gold in your heart, strength in your legs. Let the light from this movement glow around you.

Now let the arms rest for awhile, and practice threefold walking. Stand tall, with the light around your head, and the gold in your heart. Feel your legs, and how they allow you to be in dynamic conversation with the weight of the earth. Consciously lift your foot from the floor, rolling from the heel through the arch to the toe. Balanced, carry your foot from behind your standing leg, next to it, in front of it. Place your foot, beginning with the toe, then the arch and the heel. Step with the other foot, and begin to develop a comfortable tempo. Take four steps forwards, if you have room for it, and four steps back. For each step, feel the energy rise—peak—fall, and fade till it disappears and rise again in the other foot. Remember that your feet follow your heart, and not the other way around. Your feet are here to carry your heart to the places that it needs to go in the world.

Now return to your home position and center yourself once again in your heart. Allow the sun-power of your heart to ray out, sun-like, to the space that you fill. Lift your arms wide, like great wings, feeling yourself extending to your fingertips, and then beyond you, to the widths of the room.

Simultaneously, allow the sun rays to flow downwards to your feet, and feel your toes as filled with light as your arms.

This time, as you contract your light to your center, walk forwards four steps, using the practice of fluid threefold walking. It needn't be too slow. Integrate the energy in your arms with the energy of your legs, so that at the end of four steps your arms have come to your resting position of your heart.



Now, shift your attention to the root of your wings in your shoulder blades, and unfold your arms as you practiced before, across the shoulders, upper arms, elbows, lower arms, hands, fingertips and beyond, as you walk backwards four steps. Integrate the energy and timing of your arms with your feet, as you walk backwards four steps, so you arrive back in your home position with hugely outstretched wings. Touch the stars, feel your widely expanded life body.

Now, gather all your forces to yourself again, as you walk forward four steps, contracting your energy body, and going deeper and deeper within.

And then expand as you walk backwards to your home position, four steps.

As you walk forward again, let your stepping be sensitive, and tender.

And as you walk backwards, let it be expansive and bold.

You can practice this sequence with more and fewer steps, learning to play with the coordination of your energy body and time. That will be something we'll use a lot in future lessons.

Finally, when you're ready, you can practice with this verse again.

**Within my heart** *(as you close and go forward with four steps)*  
**Shines the light of the sun.** *(as you open and go back four steps)*  
**Within my soul** *(as you close and go forward with four steps)*  
**Weaves the warmth of the world.** *(as you open and go back four steps)*  
**I will breathe** *(as you close and go forward with four steps)*  
**The light of the sun,** *(as you open and go back four steps)*  
**I will feel** *(as you close and go forward with four steps)*  
**The warmth of the world.** *(as you open and go back four steps)*  
**Light of the sun, pour into me.** *(as you close and go forward with four steps)*  
**Warmth of the world, flow through me.** *(as you open and go back four steps,)*

With the last movement, drop your arms gently to your sides, and feel how you can stand tall, with light in your head, gold in your heart, strength in your legs. Let the light from this movement glow all around you.

Practice this verse several times. Hear it inside, with your inner ear, but don't speak it as you move. Keep deepening your feeling, so you can turn off your computer and your recording. I suggest that you write the verse down, so you can learn it, and you won't need the recording at all. As I said in our earlier tape, our practice in eurythmy is to come to a place of complete silence, to come to a place of peace that is so rare in our time.

Then, your practice can become authentic, as you hear only the resonance of your own heart and mind with the deep peace of the universe around you.

Your practice is complete for today. Quietly, place your feet together and fold your arms before your chest. Breathe quietly, for about 30-60 seconds. Let the fruits of this exercise settle into you, as place the seal of blessing on your practice.

#### *The Journal Box*

*Journal on your experience with contraction and expansion. How did it feel to connect yourself to the seed and the stars?*

*Were you more attracted to the contraction or the expansion?*

*How did you find the balance?*

*Did you learn to feel the contraction and expansion without looking at them with your eyes, but simply by learning to feel your body more intensely?*

*How is your understanding of yourself as a spirit being on the earth evolving?*

*Feel free to expand our online community by sharing your experiences on the community page at [eurythmyonline.com](http://eurythmyonline.com).*