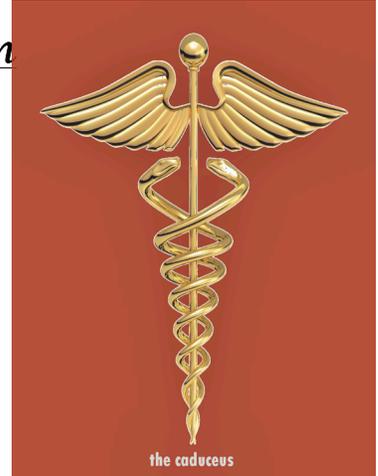


*The Staff of Mercury Rod Exercise*  
*Grace and confidence*  
*For Adults and Children*  
*Part 1: For Adults*



This elegant exercise requires and develops a great sense of skill, agility and grace.

Before learning the exercise with the rod, practice this sequence as a prelude.

Lift your right arm straight above your head. Lower it in a wide graceful sweep to the side and then down and next to your leg, and then lift it up again in front of your body by drawing a big, elegant backwards letter “S” in the space, from below upwards.

When you can do that beautifully, learn to do the opposite movement with your left arm. Raise it straight above your head. Lower it in the big sweep to the side and then next to your leg, bring it in front of you and raise it up with the normal forward-facing “S”, drawing it from below upward.

When both hands can do the “S” alone, learn to do both arms together simultaneously. Lift them both above the head, spread them and lower them wide to both sides, then draw the two “S’s” weaving upwards in complementary mirror forms. Practice this again and again, until your movement becomes beautiful and graceful.

Now take a rod in your hands. Hold the rod high above your head. Release the rod with your left arm, and do the movement you have just practiced with your right arm. Now, however, feel the rod as an extension of your arm and draw the form even larger than you did before, pointing the rod out into the space around you, below you, and above you.

When your right arm can do this well, switch arms, and do the mirror image with the left arm.

Now you are ready to use both arms at the same time. Hold the rod above your head. Release the rod with your left arm, and do the movement you have just perfected with your right arm, and at the same time mirror it with your left arm, feeling the grace and elegance of symmetry. When both arms are above your head, take hold of the rod with the left arm, and lead the movement on the left side, while the right arm mirrors it. Repeat this movement again and again, developing a feeling of extending yourself with beauty and power into space.

When you have mastered this movement, you can make it more beautiful by adding a movement with the legs as well. Keeping your back straight at all times, step forward with the right leg and bend the knee as you move the right side of the curve with your arm. Step back when you lift the arms above your head, and then change legs as you move the left side of the figure with your arm. Continue several times with each arm, feeling your whole body entering into this elegant movement, your arms wide and full like the wings of a huge bird.

Although this doesn’t belong to the first set of primary exercises, it is perhaps the most comprehensive one, integrating all the skills you have developed to date. Feel free to add it to your daily routine!

*2. Addendum for working with Children*

This is an exquisite exercise for your teenage children! I recommend saving this one until the last of the exercises that you teach to your children, because of the focus and elegance it requires. When you finally do incorporate it, you can teach it to them as if they are adults, with the same imaginations and challenges that I have written above. For by the time they are ready to do this exercise, they are ready to be fully conscious in what they are doing!

*The Journal Box*

*Things to watch as your children learn the Staff of Mercury exercise. Could they create the S with each hand? Could they create the staff of Mercury symmetrically? Or were they children still struggling with right-left challenges! (If so, keep working on it! This will help them to overcome their blind spots.)*

*What did the rod add to their experience of using your arms: could they penetrate further into space with a feeling a grandeur and mastery?*

*Could they create elegant, dynamic and graceful movements?*

*How does this compare and contrast to the seven-fold rod exercise?*

*Can they begin to reflect with you on what each of the exercises is challenging them on and helping them to develop?*