

While movement is a standard element of actor training, ideas about what that means vary. Many theatre paradigms over the ages have incorporated physical elements, from Stanislavsky's assumption that his acting students also studied gymnastics and fencing (although he also included a movement teacher), to Michael Chekhov's delving into Eurythmy, but these sometimes feel more like an added PE credit than actor training. For performer-specific movement training, I address several categories over the course of a curriculum.

Foundational body awareness (and possible correction) is the first realm. I approach this through several lenses: Feldenkrais-style somatic training in listening to your own body, basic experiments with tension and release as an expressive binary language, motion capture analysis, Lecoq's Neutral Mask sequence, and the ideas we have about an actor's neutral from Margolis Method and other sources. These are all things that develop performers themselves, enhance ease, avoid unintentional body language signals, and improve presence.

The neutral mask segment of Lecoq training makes all our idiosyncratic habits painfully obvious, through an impossible task of portraying the truly universal human conditions, without allowing character, backstory, or motivation. That unit can be eye-opening, and frustrating for some, given the explicit mandate that we not model things for students to imitate. It celebrates failures in pursuit of the unreachable, and so often one part of that lesson is just learning to let go of the need to intellectually understand and control everything at all times, to just try without knowing yet what success will look like. It also demands a vulnerability, an empathetic response to many forms of outside stimuli, which can help actor connection and being 'in the moment' just as much as Meisner or other work might.

Lecoq then segues into physical theatre genres, including mask, mime, and devised physical theatre, to which I've added units like motion capture and puppetry. Besides being a market niche in itself, these styles also help actors break habits and build physical expressivity.

A third realm is physical approaches to acting, sometimes oversimplified as an 'outside-in' approach. I've developed what I call 'physical subtext', combining psychophysical tools of Chekhov, Laban, and Margolis to empower actors with specific ways to translate narrative into playable, expressive actions. This is a healthy, consistent approach to expressive performance that also builds growth as artists, demanding metaphorical truths that lie underneath any analytical ideas of objectives, tactics, and responses.

Stage combat sometimes also falls under movement, and is certainly a strength of mine that I enjoy sharing, whether that's pratfalls and physical partnering skills or moments of actual violence between characters. Those need to be portrayed in a way that's safe, compelling, and supports the production stylistically and dramaturgically. I start with the SAFD curriculum, but go beyond that standardized material and into opportunities these heightened moments provide for exploring physical power, interpersonal dynamics, and emotional extremes.

I strive to blend the best aspects of my own liberal arts education and professional training and experience, to balance academic, physical, and creative excellence. Understanding without creativity and execution produces academic content at best. Ability without understanding or creativity will never reach its full potential. Imagination without understanding or ability is just daydreams. Movement provides a way into all three of these, to create holistic artists.