

NUTS WARM UP LIBRARY.

by Flip Nichol

Welcome one and all. This is simply a small document divided into categories to give actors & directors several warm up options when working on a production.

The categories are as follows:

1. Energy/Fun.
2. Physical.
3. Vocal.
4. Character.
5. Concentration.

In order to be fully prepared for any performance or even rehearsal some options from each category ensure a well-rounded warm up. While it may only seem a small part of the process warm up exercises all have aims which focus upon specific things – eg imagination, team building, lung capacity. When choosing your warm up, think about the reason for doing it & you'll get more out of it. Explaining this to the actor will also direct them in what they should be concentrating on.

ENERGY/FUN.

Fruit

A circle is formed with one person standing in the middle. Every person in the circle (except for the person in the middle) chooses a fruit (only up to two syllables). Examples include peach, pear, plum, apple, orange, berry, melon, kiwi etc. Once they have chosen a fruit the position they are standing in becomes that fruit.

The person in the middle starts calling out different fruit names. Their purpose is to get somebody out so that they will be replaced in the middle. There are two ways to get out:

- If the person in the middle calls out a fruit 3 times in quick succession (eg “peach peach peach”) the person who is standing in the peach position needs to say “peach” once before the person in the middle has said it all 3 times. If they don’t they become the person in the middle and the person who got them out will go and stand in the peach position.
- If the person in the middle calls out a fruit once (eg “apple”) the person in the apple position DOES NOT say anything. If they do, they are then in the middle and the person who got them out replaces them in the apple position.

It’s pretty simple after that. As people grow in confidence the game goes quicker. It is a good idea to avoid complicated fruits (especially at first) as it tends to slow it down, and it is very difficult to get that person out. Examples of this include paw paw, starfruit, jackfruit, cumquat etc.

Hug Tag

Pretty simple one really. Basically it’s tag, and when you hug someone that is ‘bar’ and you can’t be tagged. However if you’ve been hugging someone for too long the person who’s in can count down from 5. By the time they’ve finished counting the huggers need to separate.

Only two people to a hug. The main objective is not just to run away, but also to save other people who are being targeted. The ‘can’t tip the butcher back’ rule also applies, so the person who was previously in can always help to save others.

Zombie Tag.

Variation on tag where someone's "in", but has to choose one person to go after and cannot change until s/he's out or safe. If you are the target the only way to protect yourself is by calling out someone else's name. If they are out already or are the Zombie then you're out. You cannot run, the aim is to think quick and remain cool under pressure.

Bang

Everyone stands in a circle. One person starts by picking a person at random and calling their name. That person ducks and the people on either side of them 'shoot' and say "bang" at each other. The person who called the name decides who said bang first, or if the person in the middle ducked in time not to get shot. The person who is out sits down (still in the circle) and picks a person and calls their name.

Everytime somebody gets out they sit down and call the next name (of someone still standing up in the circle). You are out if you a) don't duck in time when your name is called out, b)if you are one of the shooters and said 'bang' last or c) if you misfire ie. Call bang when your name wasn't called and you weren't standing on either side of somebody else whose name was called.

When two people 'bang' at each other the person who decides who is out is the same person that called the name (unless it is obvious who is out). If two people 'bang' at the same time a redraw may be called and a new name (or the same one) can be called.

Once there are only two people left in the circle they have a shoot off. They both come to the centre of the circle and stand back to back. The last person who was out then counts to 10. At each number the two people take a step away from each other. Once 10 is reached, or if the person counting says 'bang' or 'draw' before they've finished counting to ten, the two people turn around and 'shoot' at each other. The winner is the one who 'shoots' first.

Pony

Everyone stands in a circle. One person is in the middle of the circle as the pony. While the chant is being sung they 'gallop' around inside the circle.

The chant is:

“There they go riding that pony,
There they go, big, fat pony.
There they go riding that pony –
This is how they do it”

At this point the pony picks a person at random and during the next bit of the chant dances with them.

“Front to front to front my pony” (both people facing each other)
“Back to back to back my pony” (both people back to back)
“Side to side to side my pony” (both people jiggle to the side)
“This is how they do it”

At this point the pony and the person they were dancing with either swap positions, or both join the circle. If they both join the circle they both 'gallop' around and choose a person to jiggle with. This keeps happening until everyone ends up galloping and singing at the same time.

Boppety Bop Bop Bop Bop!

All players in a circle, one player in the middle. The player in the middle closes his eyes, holds right hand pointing in front of him, and spins around. When done spinning, open your eyes and say, as fast as you can “Boppety Bop Bop Bop Bop”.

The player you're pointing to, and his 2 neighbors, need to build an elephant in less than the time the middle player needs to say “Boppety Bop Bop Bop Bop”. An elephant consists of a trunk, made by the middle player, by holding your nose with one hand, and extending your other arm through the arm that holds the hand that holds the nose (does this make any sense?). The neighboring players each form a big ear, using both arms. Don't forget to attach the ears to the elephant's head.

Any player that cannot get his/her part done by the time the middle player does “Boppety Bop Bop Bop Bop” becomes 'it' and takes place in the middle of the circle.

Energy 1-10

Everyone in a big circle, squatting down. We will count 1 to 10, all together, moving up, with increasing energy level. 1 is hardly audible, 10 is as loud as possible, everyone standing straight, hands reaching up.

It's important to watch each other, to ensure we're all at the same energy level. Also make sure that the increase in energy is nicely gradual.

Big Booty

Everyone in a circle. One player is Big Booty. The others, going clockwise, are numbered: 1, 2, 3 and so on. Now Big Booty establishes a 4-beat rhythm, saying Big Booty, Big Booty, Big Booty (followed by a rest) - repeat this until everyone got the rhythm. The game then goes as follows: Big Booty passes the buck to someone else, saying Big Booty to 7 (say) (this takes 2 beats, one for saying 'Big Booty' and one for saying 'to 7'). Number 7 then passes in 2 beats to, say number 2, saying '7 to 2'. It then continues until someone makes a mistake: if and when that happens everyone says (in 2 beats) 'Oh Shit', after which we repeat Big Booty Big Booty Big Booty (+ rest on 4th beat), twice. After that, the player that made the mistake becomes Big Booty, and everyone's number changes. New Big Booty starts the game again

Zip Zap Boing

Needs at least 4 players

Stand in a circle. Passing a clap around. As you clap you say zip if it is going to the person on your left or right, if you're sending it to anyone else, you zap.

You can't pass it back to the person you got it from.

You must clap in the direction you're passing it and make eye contact with the person you're sending it to.

You can also reflect it back by saying boing, and raising your arms as if holding something in front of your shoulders or face.

You cannot boing a boing - ie if someone boings you, you must zip or zap to someone else.

You may only boing twice per round (this is to stop people who would otherwise continually boing and not properly engage)

If someone makes a mistake or hesitates they step out of the circle, and the person to the right of the person who just got out, starts a new round. The group should count to 3, if the person fails to start after 3 seconds, they are also out.

People who are out should not think of it is downtime, but rather continue to focus on the game, and make sure they make the group aware of anyone else who should be out.

When someone gets out in these sorts of games, the tendency is for them to draw attention to themselves and say how crap they are and everyone laughs and the game stops. Alternatively, you can encourage players to keep the focus on the game, step out calmly and continue the game.

When this works, it's a great experience and everyone, even those out, remain warm and focused for the duration of the game.

This parallels with performance - if there is a stuff up, you shouldn't draw attention to yourself or the stuff up, but rather if everyone on stage continues to focus on the scene at hand and keeping it going, then they are more likely to successfully recover.

Advanced rules:

(this is a great mental warm up)

When the circle gets down to 3, the person to the right of the person who just got out, turns to one of the other two players and plays paper, scissors, rock.

The winner of paper scissors rock (we'll call them person a) then says "Hucha mucha hoy", and on the word hoy, the two point their finger in one of 4 directions (up, down, left, right)

If they are both pointing in the same direction, then person a wins, and the other is out, you then repeat with the last 2 to find an overall winner.

Otherwise the two players go back to paper scissors rock and so on until one of them wins.

PHYSICAL.

Note, with any physical warm up be careful to avoid pushing injured or problem areas. Any stretching should be done after some light physical activity to begin with, such as some of the above games.

Music.

You can simply start your actors warming themselves up by putting on some music and getting them to dance to it.

You can even go around in a circle each adding a daggy move and eventually creating a daggy dance.

Stretch Circle.

Form a circle and have one person begin with a stretch they know, & get the ensemble to repeat it. This continues on to the next person, going around the circle & hopefully working the majority of the body.

SloMo Samurai

Tell the players they are Samurai, and their right forearm is a poisoned sword. Then have them do a slow motion sword fight.

The only way to fend off a 'sword' is by blocking it with your right arm. If another player's sword touches your body on any other part than your right forearm, you die a gruesome death (also in slow motion). Good for special/bodily awareness.

Physical Sequence

1. Head rolls: Stand up right, feet shoulder width apart and gently roll the head in a circle. DO NOT collapse the neck in the back, keep the head in controlled circle. Roll left to right five times then reverse the direction.
2. Shoulder and arm circles: Stand up right, feet shoulder width apart and roll the shoulders in a circle, back to front for five times and then reverse front to back. Then bring the arms parallel to the floor and swing in circles. Begin with small circles and gradually increase the circumference until the arms have made a complete circle.
3. Arm Flex: Stand up right, feet shoulder width apart and extend the arms parallel to the ground. Turn the hands upwards so the fingers point toward the ceiling and the hands form a ninety degree angle to the wrist. Flex the fingers toward the body so there

is obvious tension and hold the arms perfectly parallel for two to three minutes. DO NOT STOP BREATHING!

After the time limit is up, drop the arms and shake out the arms and shoulders.

4. Legs: Do general stretching for the legs- nothing special here. Thighs, ham-strings, ankles etc.

5. Face: "Squinch" the face together, like a sour face, and hold. Then "open" the face- open the eyes and mouth as wide as they can go. Repeat three or four times. Next, place the tongue tip on the inside of one cheek and make thirty to forty circles with the tongue. Move to the other side and repeat, then lastly, circle the tongue around the front of the mouth.

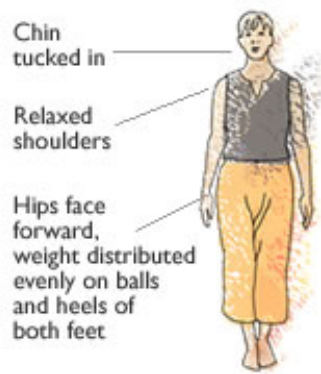
6. "Puppet": Stand upright, feet shoulder width apart and imagine that a string has been drawn out of the top of your head and is pulling you up towards the ceiling. Do not rise up on the toes or anything, just keep the feeling of being pulled and supported by the string, like a puppet. Then, the string is cut. Drop forward at the waist and let your arms and head dangle loosely. Shake the shoulders and head gently to relax and hang there for a minute or so.

Then, very slowly, raise back up - one back vertebra at a time - so that the head is the last part of the body to straighten up.

Yoga Combinations

Also helps with breathing.

Standing Postures



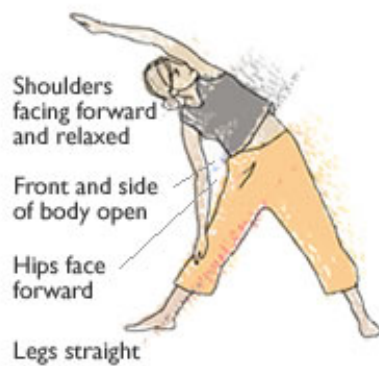
Mountain Pose

Tadasana

Benefits:

- Improves posture
- Balances the body
- Focusses the mind



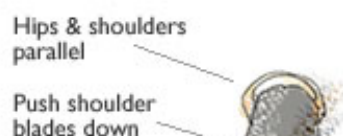


Triangle Pose

Trikonasana

Benefits:

- Tones & strengthens legs, hip and back muscles
- Improves circulation





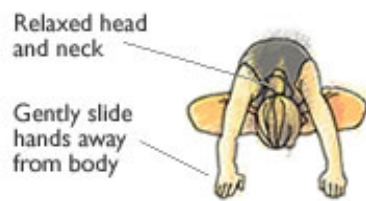
Virabhadrasana I

Benefits:

- Reduces stiffness in back and shoulders
- Strengthens legs
- Trims the hips
- Tones the abdomen

Sitting Postures



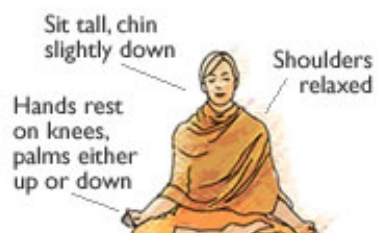


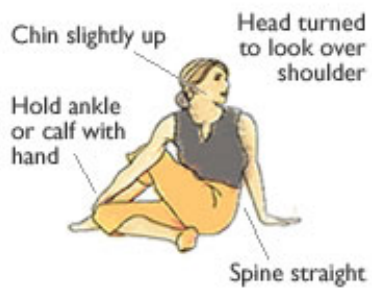
Easy Pose forward fold

Sukhasana forward fold

Benefits:

- Focusses the mind
- Opens the hips
- Lengthens the spine





Spinal Twist

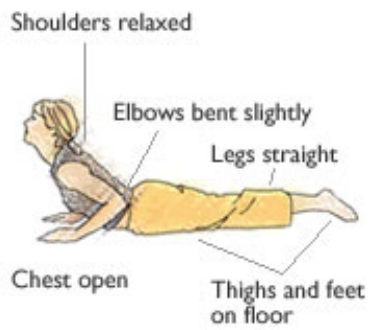
Ardha Matsyendrasana

Benefits:

- Lengthens and realigns the spine
- Aids digestion
- Improves the nervous system

Forward Bends



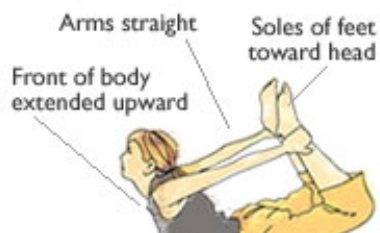


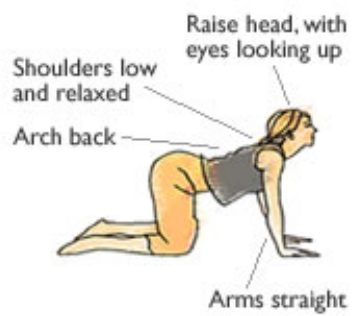
Cobra

Bhujangasana

Benefits:

- Opens the chest
- Provides good backward spinal stretch



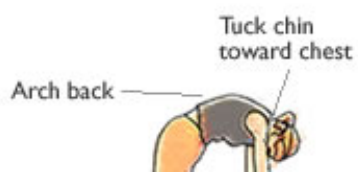


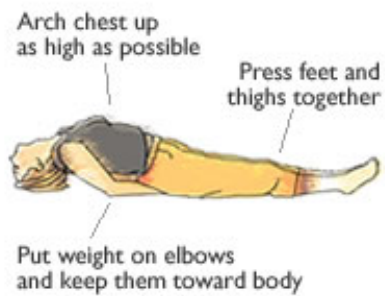
Cat Pose I

Bidalasana I

Benefits:

- Stretches the middle to upper back and shoulders
- Alleviates backaches
- Excellent for pregnant women





Fish

Matsyasana

Benefits:

- Corrects rounded shoulders
- increases lung capacity
- relieves stress and regulates moods
- Energizes the parathyroid glands and tones the pituitary

Counter pose to shoulderstand and headstand.

Inverted Postures





Shoulderstand

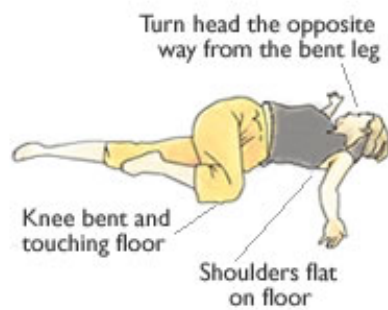
Sarvangasana

Benefits:

- Rejuvenates the body by sending fresh blood to the heart and brain
- Stretches the neck and upper spine
- Stimulates the thyroid and parathyroid glands
- Can relieve a headache

Caution: Girls below the age of 19 should not do this posture.





Lying Down Spinal Twist

Reclining postures

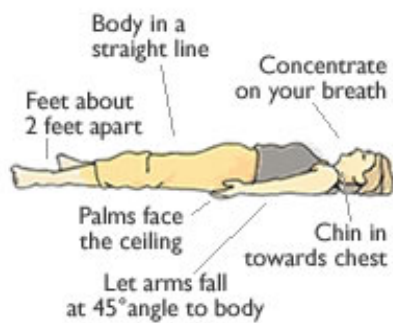
Jathara Parivartanasana

Benefits:

- Strengthens abdominal muscles and legs
- Tones the spine
- Eases back pain

Head & neck
relaxed

Knees pulled
close into chest



Corpse Pose

Savasana

It is important to end every yoga session with at least 10 minutes of relaxation in the corpse pose. Learning how to relax both the body and the mind deepens the benefits



VOCAL.

Always start with facial warmups and breathing exercises.

Tongue & Lip Warm-Ups

Say very fast

ta, ta, ta, ta

da, da, da, da

bah, bah, bah, bah

ma, ma, ma, ma,

Tongue Twisters

- Babbling Baby Bobby
- Ki-ki, the cuckoo, cuts capers
- Don didn't do the difficult dangerous deeds
- Few folks find the fine flavor
- Jim, Jill, Jane and Johnny jammed jollily
- Little Lillian lets lazy lizards lie along the lily pads
- Nine nice nieces never noticed nine nice nieces noticing nine nice nieces
- Popular people, people popular places
- Suzy Sampson is surrounded by her sousaphone
- Sheila shall surely show her shining seashore shells
- Little Teddy Tucker toots his tooter toute suite
- Thick thistles throbbled in Thelma Thimble's thumb
- Mrs Puddy Wuddy has a square cut punt, not a punt cut square but a square cut punt. It was round in the middle and square at the front, Mrs. Puddy Wuddy has a square cut punt
- Eunice you eunuch, you know you need unique New York but does unique New York need you?
- Amidst the mists and coldest frosts, with stoutest wrists and loudest boasts, he thrusts his fists against the post and still insists he sees the ghost.
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. Did Peter Piper pick a peck of pickled peppers? If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?
- A flea and a fly flew up in a flue. Said the flea, "Let us fly!" Said the fly, "Let us flee!" So they flew through a flaw in the flue.
- Which witch wished which wicked wish?
- While we were walking, we were watching window washers wash Washington's windows with warm washing water.

Several more can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8136/tonguetwisters.html>, or by simply doing a google search.

Hum/Ahhh.

Stand upright so air has an unobstructed path and inhale. Exhale the breath on a gentle "hummm." It is not a musical note, it is a comfortable hum in the lower voice range. After the breath is expelled, comfortably - don't squeeze it out, repeat the process moving up the pitch range. When the highest pitch it reached, with it still being comfortable and not forced, end with a sweeping hum from the lower range to the top and back down.

The next part is to begin with the hum in the lower pitch range, but after the breath is half way out, open the mouth fully and end the exhale on an "AHHHH" sound, continuing the same pitch. As with the hum, continue to work up the pitch range with the "Hummm to AHHHH" and end with a sweeping "Ahhh" covering the lower pitch range to the higher range and end back in the lower range. Support the "Ahhh" with the diaphragm so it resonates from the gut, not the throat and never force the "Ahhh" so it strains the voice box. This is a warm up, not a performance!

La-ah, Low-oh:

This warm up does involve musical notes. Pick a note that is in a comfortable lower range and sing "La-ah, Low-oh" raising a half step on the "ah" and "oh" for eight notes. When the eighth note is reached, proceed down the same scale lowering a half step on the "ah" and "oh." Then begin again a half step higher. Proceed as high as comfortable.

Lip Buzz:

Press the lips together, but relaxed, not pinched tight. Blow out so the breath causes the lips to vibrate on a pitch. Proceed up in pitch, and end with a sweeping low to high to low buzz. You will know this has been done properly if your nose and lips vibrate to the point of being ticklish!

Projection:

Correct breathing involves the diaphragm expanding when breath is inhaled and compressing when exhaling. To train proper breathing form, expel a loud, sharp "HUH!" The lower stomach region should quickly collapse to support the sound, and NOT the throat.

"1, 1-2-1, 1-2-3-2-1..."

Going up and down the scale with the numbers one to eight.

You start in unison doing it once starting from 1, then reverse from 8. Then you can do rounds. Depending on how many people, you can have up to 4 or 5 groups at a time.

You can also put them into 2 groups, then one group starts from 1, and another group starts at the top end of the scale at 8, both starting at the same time.

To make it a notch harder, replace 3 with a clap, eg "1, 1-2-1, 1-2-clap-2-1..." and so on.

Or instead do, do-re-do, do-re-mi-re-do, do-re-mi-fa-mi-re-do etc.. until do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do-ti-la-so-fa-mi-re-do then do, do-ti-do, do-ti-la-ti-do etc...

Breathing and Vocal/Projection Control.

Give a note which is comfortable for everyone to sing. With the correct posture (legs apart shoulder width, knees not locked and slightly bent, back straight but not tense, shoulders back), the leader guides the group by starting softly and then working your way louder. The group has to aim is synchronisation (team effort), and control over their vocal production with dynamics.

The key is not to suddenly go loud and suddenly go soft (which is where focus and control is needed greatly), and not to lose pitch either.

Note: Vocal warmups should always start with smaller intervals and then work your way up. Eg, a single note, then groups of 3 or 5, and then an octave. Never start a vocal warmup with the whole scale (like the 1-2-1 one).

Do Ron Ron

Actors sing a song about a subject, given by an actor, on the tune of Do Ron Ron. EG – I met him on a Thursday and his name was Phil.

A do ron ron ron, Do do ron ron.

He had his own sleazy supply of pills - etc.

Hot Spot

All players in a circle. One player steps into the circle and starts singing a known song. As soon as this player shows any signs of stopping (because she doesn't know the lines any more, gets tired or embarrassed) another player needs to step in and take over (singing a different song).

Harmonics.

Sit in a circle with eyes closed. Someone starts humming a note, then have it brought out into the different vowel sounds – A, E, I, O & U. Repeat this over again going up and down the register. The group doesn't have to be in harmony, it's about projection, opening the mouth and breathing. The group will come to it's own stop, try and maintain the calm/connection/concentration established through the exercise.

CHARACTER.

Fast Food Laban

Laban was a movement theorist, and this exercise is based on (a simplified form of some of) his ideas. Take 3 categories:

- Timing: Sudden or Sustained
- Weight: Heavy or Light
- Space: Direct or Indirect

Then try and make characters that behave/speak following combinations of the 3 categories:

- punching : sudden / heavy / direct
- slashing : sudden / heavy / indirect
- wringing : sustained / heavy / indirect
- stroking : sustained / light / indirect
- dabbing : sudden / light / direct
- smoothing : sustained / light / direct

- pushing : sustained / heavy / direct

Variations

You can introduce this in a fairly simple way, by asking the players to move about the room, according to directions or orientations:

- be a 'horizontal' or 'vertical' person
- be downward, or upward
- be light or heavy

Then experiment with these: be suddenly light (bird taking off from a tree) or continuously light (be a cloud).

You can do this using different kinds of music. What direction / weight / movement does a certain song or theme inspire?

Then try to experiment with characters: who or what would be vertical person be (a general?). What/how would be continuously light person be (stoned?). Suddenly light (flirty?).

Day in the Life of . . .

Students discuss various occupations, then each student selects a job. Scatter the class as much as possible, and remind them that they must work in isolation from others whose reality will not be theirs. The students begin the reality of their character's world at midnight, Thursday. For a minute or so, each student plays the character's reality (e.g., a night nurse checking patients, a teacher marking papers, a lawyer sleeping). Move on at two-hour increments until midnight, Friday. Following the exercise, discuss how the character is more than the occupation.

Variation 1

Describe a specific character, and decide on a significant event in that person's day. As a group, improvise a full day in the character's life. Incorporate the variety of characters and occurrences before and after the significant event.

Hot Seat.

Have the actor sit in a chair as their character. Have the rest of the ensemble ask him/her questions about anything, doesn't even need to relate to the events of the play. This

gets the actor into the immediate mindset of his/her character as well as forces them to create a background and think quickly.

Visualisation.

Get your cast to lay down & close their eyes (unless they cannot concentrate like this). Then ask them to picture their character, as if they are standing in front of them. Ask them to think about what they are wearing, starting at their shoes. Then proceed to go up in items of clothing eg, socks/stockings, underwear, pants/skirt, jacket, jewelry, hair style etc. Continue to ask questions about each piece of clothing – where it was bought/received, who were they with, how much was it, do you like it, why did you put it on today etc. Ask them to give some special meaning to one of the items of clothing/jewelry/accessory – create a background for it.

Finally ask them to put it all together, picture this character, now a person, whole. Remind them that THEY have just given the character life, and to hold on to all they've created for him/her.

If an actor is particularly finding his/her character very intense, or hard to step out of when the run is done do this exercise then at the end say that this character is as separate as you see them now. You are never the character, and that while we draw upon our own experiences/emotions we are using them to act THROUGH the character. It's like slipping into a jacket, while on stage we wear our character and it's just as important to remove him/her when all is said and done.

Memory Work.

Just like ourselves our characters need to have memories and backgrounds and the earlier this begins in the rehearsal process the better.

A simple way of doing it is giving you actors a pen and paper and asking them to get into the mindset of their character (possibly most beneficial after doing something like the Hot Seat). Then get them to write a memory of their character – you can be detailed and ask for something like their latest/earliest birthday memory, it can directly involve the events/other characters in the play or be totally separate. Usually it's best to give them some direction – eg if love is the main theme of the play then ask them to create the characters first romantic/physical experience.

Animal Model.

Ask your actors to think about what animal their character would most likely resemble based on their character traits, reactions to events in the play etc. They can either write down what traits this animal/character shares or/& begin to bring this physicality into

their character. This can be done by going to neutral, then getting the actors to walk around while thinking about this animal then slowing, physically morphing into it going slowly from 1 – 10.

Character Lists.

Ask your actors to comprise a list of character qualities. These qualities can range from religious beliefs, how much he/she/family earns, what he/she believes in most, physical portrait including eye colour, weight, height etc.

Ask your actors to create a list of questions he/she would like answered about their characters. They can be both central &/or arbitrary to the events of the play. The point of these are to continue to get your actors thinking, creating and researching their characters.

CONCENTRATION.

Several of the fun/energy games also work as concentration games, yet this aim needs to be enforced at the outset.

TwentyOne.

Gather your actors in a group, focus on the centre of the circle and ask them to count from 1 to 21 together. If two people speak at the same time the group must start again.

Yes.

Again, get your actors in a circle. Ask them to exchange acceptance, which basically means one person starts with the Yes, they look for someone's eye contact and once this person realizes, he/she acknowledges and accepts this with a "Yes". Person A then walks to Person B's spot while Person B tries to find someone else to exchange with. This tests concentration, listening and team work.

To make it harder you can then eliminate the "Yes", and then further eliminate the nodding.

Hands.

All players in a circle, down on the floor. Cross arms, and then put hands flat on the ground. Each hand in turn pats/slaps the ground, in order. To change direction a person taps twice. Hands that miss, are too slow or flinch are eliminated.

Word at a time Story.

Gather into a circle, looking at the ground. Count aloud to 3, look up across to another actor. If he/she is looking back they scream and the group looks again to the ground and repeats the process, looking at different people each time until no one screams. Someone then starts the story with their word. You then go around the circle with each person adding a word. Once it has gone around twice the person before the person who started it has to end it.