

CRASH COURSE CONTACT

Small Steps into
the Wonderful World
of Contact Improvisation



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2nd Edition - May 15, 2026

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*Gravity free space
Any crazy position
Land without harm*

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CHAPTER 1

About

So, what is this book about, and where is its emphasis? How is it any different from the other books already written on this topic? Who am I, the person who has written it, and my background?

Most importantly, what is Contact Improvisation? What is its definition, if it even can be defined, and why wouldn't it? At least, what is its essence, its core, its soul?

Book

“Alles was gelernt werden kann, ist nicht wert gelehrt zu werden.” – My older brother

This quote translates from German **[1]** into something like: “Everything that can be learned, is not worth being taught.” Teach yourself as much as possible, and only seek the guidance of a teacher for that which can't be found in books.

And why the name “Crash Course Contact”, you might wonder. A mere obsession with the holy trinity? Is it simply a fun idea without further meaning, or is there something more behind it? It may be entirely practical as it rolls off the tongue with ease.

It was also the title of the very first CI workshop I gave. A beginner's crash course, targeting people new to CI. To crash-land, like the pilot of Scrooge McDuck (or Dagobert Duck, as he is known in German). Not to land gently, but with a bump, yet surviving it. To embody a crazy attitude, the joy and playfulness of children. Less serious. Daring to fail, daring to fall, to land with a crash. Without injuries, of course.

Story of Origin

Let us first examine where the motivation to write such a book originates. What was the original intention and purpose to write it? In short: what is its history?

¹The lexicographic, and especially phonetic, difference in German between learning (*lernen*) and teaching (*lehren*) is extremely small, which makes translating a saying using both to another language less useful.

The Need for Sharing

It all started with my need to share, and that I was often told I talk too much, that I take up too much space. This human need to share, to be seen, to be heard; sometimes overwhelming, for myself and others alike. An accumulation of insights requiring some form of ventilation; a form of catharsis? As a rather introverted person, I have few people around me to truly talk to, and so writing became a form of therapy. It is said that talking to a pet, a teddy bear, or writing in a diary can be just as much a relief as speaking with a therapist, a priest, or a trusted friend or family member. To release something from within and manifest it in physical reality; to give it shape and space. This urge for artistic expression of the self, of the soul, through writing, talking, or as we do it in Contact Improvisation (or CI, for short): through movement, a free-form expression.

The Need for Note-Taking

The initial spark started with the sole purpose of taking personal notes of my own thoughts and experiences. I was also encouraged by teachers to do so, and so I did. After each class, workshop, festival, or private practice, I took notes. I shared these notes with the other participants after each workshop and received some genuinely positive feedback about how useful they were. From there, the project simply grew. Maybe dozens of workshops and hundreds of classes, this book being partially a compendium of all of them. Over many years, collecting from those (and many other) sources, a structure would emerge, and that's how this book got its shape.

Sometimes, when I was bicycling², I would let my mind wander freely. I love contemplating this way, as it reminds me of the nature of CI itself. An explorative journey, not knowing yet where it will end up. Sometimes it is a dead-end, leading somewhere uncomfortable, without any sense of progress; how frustrating. Sometimes it leads to a wonderful surprise, and I find myself thinking: "How did I end up here? It is so fascinating." A sudden insight may strike when the mind is left free, without a destination, but with a clear direction.

Frequently Asked Questions

I noticed that beginners repeatedly raised the same questions. Whether directed to me personally or voiced in the larger group, the same concerns would surface, again and again. "Teaching-time" is too precious to spend playing question-and-answer over matters that are self-evident. Obvious, as in things that can be taught to oneself by looking it up, by reading. So, please read this book, and then ask the questions left unanswered, as those are the interesting ones to invest into.

Its Uniqueness

In business, a company must find its "Unique Selling Proposition" to distinguish itself in the market. A dozen books on CI already exist, so how does this one differ? Why do we need yet another, and how can it justify its existence?

A Practical Handbook

Looking at the other books about CI, it seemed to me there was something missing.

They seemed very artistic, employing rich metaphorical and imaginary language; beautiful poetry. About dreams, paintings, sounds, clouds, perls and birds. Nourishment for the heart, in-

²I live in the Netherlands, so bicycling is a major part of ones live here, so there is plenty of time for mind wandering.

spiration for the soul, connection to the universe; a state of constant dream, floating in the sky. Aesthetically pleasing, a pleasure for the eye, like gazing at a magnificent abstract painting.

For me personally though, a bit too poetic. . . I have a need for practical content, for substantial meaning, for literal use of language³.

This book, therefore, emphasizes a more structured approach to the technicalities, the rules and principles. Something an engineering mind can more easily relate to; one that prefers to systematize things. A more practical, clear, direct, down-to-earth way of writing about CI. Something more tangible that can be applied immediately in your next session. A top-down approach of the mind understanding, and the body executing the concrete, the specific. To keep the balance, to complement, as the artistic dance world seems to be too much yin, thus to nourish the yang.

Furthermore, I felt the need to make the implicit norms and rules in a delicate, social context such as created during a CI event, explicit. This would allow people reading this book to safely navigate through the space without bumping and crossing one or the other boundary, without crash-landing, neither physically nor psychologically/socially.

Target Group

Whether you consider yourself a beginner or advanced practitioner, I am certain that you'll find something of value here. Being interested in getting more acquainted with the theoretical background – next to your regular practice in the studio – of this fine art is the only prerequisite.

You don't need to be a professional dancer, or want to become one, far from it. I even deliberately try to avoid using the expression of "dancing CI" as much as possible. Yes, the origin of the founders of CI was in (post-modern) dance, but it's not dance, never really (entirely) was. Yes, many people who are still doing CI have a background in (professional) dance. Yet, the essence of CI is not to dance, but to research movement and how physics plays a role there. It's not only misleading and limiting to think CI is a dance, but preventing us from getting what CI is really all about. This book is thus more for you if you are interested in movement, body mechanics, and physics. If you are curious to explore natural laws, in stillness, without music, without looking pretty but being curious to research. And a bit of psychology and philosophy.

Credits

This book is written based only partially on my own experiences, thoughts, and observations. Another source of inspiration came from my teachers and fellow peers, whom I encountered personally. And yet another part from people I never met directly, but whose resources (videos, books, and online material) I read and viewed extensively.

Much of the knowledge written down here is just a way of **passing through** what I have been taught. Much of it is based on interviews with people I admire and consider competent, teachers/masters and students alike. All the books I read, all the (YouTube) videos I watched, all the classes, workshops and festivals I participated. And of course input I gained from other forms, whether it be martial arts, dance, sports, somatic practices, . . .

Credits also go to the **community** in general. Everything that was said in classes and workshops by other people during sharing circles. Basically "from the people, for the people". I hereby want to return that favor, to give back what has been inspired. Whereas an idea can't be stolen (neither can a Hollywood movie), it can only be copied, or even better: multiplied.

³How can you speak from the heart, when it is an organ to pump blood through your vessels, and the vocal cord's responsibility is to produce sound?!

CHAPTER 2

History

So how did it all start, and who were the people involved? Let's dive a bit into the who-is-who, and how it was (not) setup in terms of institutions and organizations. What were the influential people and systems back then? Especially, was and is it a dance form, and how does it relate to martial arts? What kind of styles do exist today, what kind of approaches and branches? By knowing its origin, and how the way CI is done currently, it will allow you to understand the differences in a more nuanced way.¹

“To know who you are today, I need to know your past, and maybe even can predict your future.” – Unknown

This applies not only to individuals, but to humanity as a whole as well, and to localized phenomena like the art of CI itself. By knowing its origins, we can prevent from diverting too far from its essence, and reach a more profound understanding of why things are the way they are. And also as an act of honor, paying our respect to the founding fathers and mothers, for their efforts and that they have enabled us to do today. To create a tradition, something our society these days so much lacks and yet is so much in need of – even though it might not be aware of it.

Who's Who

To understand the history of CI, we need to become acquainted with the people who invented and shaped it. Not merely their sociocultural environment, but who they were, what ideas and goals they held. Not only those present at the moment of its invention, but also the teachers who formed them as individuals. And lastly, something characteristic of the dance world: the formation of so-called “dance companies”, groups of people working, performing, and often living together, much like a family.

¹This chapter does not contain as much information about the history of CI as it could have, as I already recorded a 3-part video presentation with a total length of about 5 hours, which can be found ...not sure; “somewhere”, I guess.

Grandparents

Analogous to the founding father and mother, the parents, it makes sense to look at their most influential figures: the teachers' teachers, the founding grandparents.

Merce Cunningham

This is what Steve Paxton had to say about him:

“Most of them modern dance choreographers were quite dramatically emotional, or (had) a romantic style... except for Merce Cunningham, who really developed the most important abstract style, and that was what I was drawn to. He wasn't dealing with the emotions. He was looking more at a kind of physics of dance, and to get to that point in the most pristine way possible, the work couldn't be dramatized.”

His name, and that of his dance company, is widely celebrated in the dance world. He was a student of Martha Graham, the renowned modern dance icon, but grew dissatisfied with her approach. It struck him as excessively emotional: *“Every moment meant something. That's nonsense, that's too rigid!”* He would *“... not work through images and ideas, but I work through the body.”*

He effectively brought **postmodern dance** into the world. It focused on oneself and one's partner, an absorption in the present moment. It was abstract and analytic, non-emotional, and non-hierarchical. He challenged and transformed the conventions of traditional modern dance. A new beginning whose precise direction he could not have remotely foreseen.

Robert Dunn

Robert “Bob” Ellis Dunn was a teacher at Cunningham's company. His composition classes (drawing on John Cage's work) proved influential for the development of CI. He brought a distinctive approach to teaching composition, one grounded in the philosophical ideas of experimental music. From his weekly workshops emerged the CI-relevant group “Judson Dance Theater”, which we will examine briefly below.

John Cage

John Cage was a colleague of Cunningham and Graham, a unique musician and one of the most influential composers in the 20th century. His work was influenced by **Zen** Buddhism, and via this inspired the development of CI in its particular direction.

He is known for his piece called 4'33" from 1952. A piece which consisted of 4.5 minutes of silence, provoking the question of what performance is.

Mary Fulkerson

She is known as the teacher and founder of the “Anatomical Release Technique”. A movement technique rooted in anatomical imagery, emphasizing softness and movement flow. The images take the form of simplified “anatomical cartoons” of functioning anatomy, as opposed to intellectual or visual anatomy. This approach was designed to foster greater sensitivity to alignment and efficient movement patterns in the body.

This approach generated considerable thought and discussion. Several figures central to the development of CI spent significant time studying with her.

With her work, many (compatible) paths are possible, and CI being one of them. Moving from the interior of one's functioning anatomy, to functioning with another.

Yvonne Rainer

I'd consider her more of an aunt, than a grandparent or parent. She was an early colleague of the founding father.

Her relevance is primarily socio-political. She shaped the implicit, non-entertainment-oriented political statement underlying the movement. Above all, there was **egalitarianism**, the conviction that we are all equal, transcending male-female distinctions, reflected in costumes that rendered everyone more alike. She played a significant role in the formation of CI-related dance groups, which we will examine later.

Others

Next to Cunningham, **Anna Halprin** was a teacher who laid the initial path of the development of CI. She introduced the idea of "theater as dance", and using improvisation as a personal development tool. Using therapeutic aspects of movement, ritual, to foster body awareness. To move the body in a "natural way", emphasizing **kinesthetic awareness**, using impulses of the body for the source of movement.

A dancer who encouraged dancers to "think-feel" was **Erick Hawkins**. To unite intellectual knowledge with sensuous experience, each complementing the other. His techniques drew on scientific principles, those of gravity and motion, as well as the natural expression of human feeling. To move efficiently according to natural laws, on the basis of physics, without unnecessary strain or stress.

And there is **Trisha Brown**, a postmodern dance student of Cunningham and member of several dance companies. She is also more like an aunt, an early CI influencer, shaping it, contributing to it.

Founding Parents

Most of the people being directly involved in the initial invention of CI came from one of three institutes (in order of relevance): Oberlin College (CI's birthplace), Bennington College, and Rochester University. Many of those people were also involved in some of the back then very active dance groups, like the Judson Dance Theater, Grand Union, and a bit later also ReUnion. Whenever using the term "Weber group", the core people who were part of the second big performance are referred to, as it took place at the John Weber Gallery in NYC.

Steve Paxton

Steve was born on 21 January 1938, grew up in Arizona in the US, and died on 20 February 2024 on his farm in Vermont, where he had been living since 1970. He was an American dancer, gymnast, and choreographer who also studied Aikido, ballet, Yoga, and Taijiquan. He received his modern dance education primarily from Cunningham, from 1961 to 1964 in New York City. Afterward, he taught at Oberlin and Bennington College, partly alongside his dance partner and lifelong companion Lisa Nelson.

He may be regarded as the father of Contact Improvisation, and co-founded the most significant CI dance groups of that era. He sought to explore and push boundaries, to forge a new practice. His interests lay in science and technology, and he even collaborated with engineers at Bell Labs.

People perceived him as a charismatic leader of an anti-traditional, anti-rational, and anti-authoritarian movement. Yet he was deeply reluctant to assume the role of a guru; an unwilling figurehead. He would refuse to take the chair at a talk, arrive late or not at all, even to his own performances. He sought to minimize his authority by qualifying his statements and pausing at it.

CHAPTER 7

Mastery

“The only statement that is absolute, is, that there are no absolute statements.” – Me

Let us move beyond the basics, sometimes even questioning what once appeared to be “the rule”. At this stage, categories such as “good” and “bad” become more relative, because perception keeps evolving. Depending on one’s development, layered truths emerge; valid at one stage, incomplete at another.

Stages

“CI levels are difficult to assess, still your CI practice should comfortable include a few things.” – Nancy Stark Smith

By differentiating proficiency into three stages, we can crystallize the essence of CI in a chronological and meaningful order¹. As usual, we have to go through all the stages; none must be skipped, there are no shortcuts. The real reward comes later, after we have done the necessary (hard) work, permeating through the superficial layers.

Beginner: The simple joy of doing it. Here we are more focused on the visible, the superficial, the technical, and more structured. We acquire movement patterns, improving the body’s reorganization, increasing efficiency, and overall awareness. Utilizing passive, soft strength, skeletal architecture instead of brute force.

Intermediate: Going more into depth, recognizing our developed (unconscious) habits; more abstract, through images, the mental, building trust. The way we think about things, to open our minds to new (path)ways.

Advanced: A more sophisticated joy unfolds; after going into wild old school and back to the fundamentals again, simplicity. Mental and emotional self awareness, where movement simply becomes a vehicle for a higher order growth. It expands to life itself; know thyself.

¹Partly inspired by <https://www.nitalittle.com/levels>

Beginner

When we are new to a language, and we still try to say something, and all we produce are just random, meaningless things. Sometimes we get lucky though, and say something of meaning, but we don't know what it is. An accident; something that will lead to a surprise for sure. When I speak French, but you speak Spanish, after some time of not being successful understanding each other, we simply switch back to the common denominator: gibberish. Using simple tone and melody, making sounds, gestures, but no exclusive words or grammar; no real lifts.

Technical

We start with the most basic, obvious, simple, external techniques. Learning the basic principles of following a point of physical contact, the RPoC. Taking (as support or for grounding) and giving weight (finely modulated pouring). Enabling flow via pathway continuation. The awareness not to unnecessarily jump, slide, or bump; without too much manipulation. Sometimes using strength though, pulling someone, but not lifting; no technique (yet). Using movement patterns like spirals and rolling.

Meta-Technical

Acquired qualities such as relaxation, grounding, balance, stability, and a healthy amount of predictability. Well adjusted speed and (minimum) effort according to the state, the situation and partner. Divert incoming weight without breaking the flow; improvising fluently in physical contact.

Accepting responsibility of one's own safety; physically and psychologically. Clear in communication: hearing and setting boundaries (and enforcing them if necessary); being consent educated. To be emotionally clear and present.

Intermediate

Starting to go beyond technique, more focus on the principles, the attitude, and its improvised, spontaneous nature. A deeper understanding that the material is physical and also mental. Skill is measured by principle adherence (the basics, the foundation), not shiny lifts (while lacking any regard to the core principles).

Often lacking fine listening ability required to detect sudden changes and adapt to those. Going faster than our ability to pay attention. Always respect what your body can do according to your level, age, and constitution.

Being in this phase, we usually engage in more dangerous behavior. We know the pathways and the tricks, the form and the looks, but we don't know what we don't know. To hyperfocus on superficial techniques, and the lack of profound skill with essence, with substance, with soul; where does it come from? Maybe your educational system, our values as a society as a whole: faster, stronger, harder, longer, wider. We are being taught that way, and passing it on as teachers, a perpeduum; deeply embedded in us.

Technical

Having the ability to pass weight through tissue and bones to the floor without the need to "muscle it". A precision with weight, on and through the partner's body. Shifting it anywhere onto any surfaces (bodies, floors, objects) with precise control. To know where weight can be given; and where it can't. Feeling the floor beneath the partner's feet.

Easy to maintain flow, ease with pathways to/from the floor, alone and together. Moving without sound, like a big cat, elegant, fast, strong, powerful, soft, gentle; a silent killer. Moving expansively and colorfully; feeling little mass, like cotton candy. Moving through spherical space, without looking. Occupying it, having spatial awareness, and engaging in peripheral vision combined with proprioception.

Being comfortable with inversions (being upside down), and fluent with falling safely from many levels; projecting smoothly into the floor. Falling together with another person without thinking about it. Moving with disorientation and continue the physical conversation. Using hands as landing gear, and the weight of the head.

Also refusing weight, lift, touch; get out of the way, discard what is unwelcome. Having the capacity for the unresolved, the awkward. Also adding uncommon, unconventional spices: manipulation of the head, counter-balancing, and similar.

Meta-Technical

Playing with architecture, like drawing, researching with curiosity. Going slowly and take the time to find possibilities in a specific structure. Listening through touch, following the point of contact; sensitivity Having established a jedi skill: body perception, trust in one's proprioception, awareness of where one is in space. Occasionally being mischievous and playful; spontaneity, surprise.

No longer seeking out "preferred partners" but being more indifferent; easygoing, seeking "challenges". Being equally comfortable contact with the back as well as the front side of the torso. Being comfortable with solos and also able to engage in a trio. Showing capacities to move co-creatively. Being a good communicator.

Advanced

Mastery is elegance, minimum effort, gentleness. Moving with as few movements as possible; just a single, curved line. Moving also with as little effort as possible (minimum is not equals zero); energy-efficiency.

The ability of going fast, wild, and crazy, while maintaining the core principles, the basics. Being able to work with anything there is; no readjustment needed, there are no mistakes.

A good contact improviser knows the rules, and is able to break them at will. Breaking pathways; grab with hands; manipulation (with hands or even legs) of the head, neck, center, or knees. Pushing or directing the other like a conductor, even the leg or the head; more like "giving impulses". Staying with gentle invitations, but having enough listening skills to know whether forced actions are welcome, and even possible.

Technical

"Survivability is a major criterion." – Steve Paxton

The ability to fall in any direction. Putting oneself off-center, not knowing where it will lead to next. Becoming adrenalized and sensitive to lower brain reflexes. Within a split of a second decisions are made about falling, breaking falls, and taking other physical risks. Entering spherical space by having the head not vertically; seeing and moving into the backspace. The ability to save yourself when falling from height. Bravely improvising, being out of control.

Having evolved from centered to polycentric. With poly-centricism, many relatable places in your own body are offering multiple points of engagement. Body parts (limbs and head) start to move autonomously, like an octopus. Any body part is ready, any moment, initiate any direction,

Glossary

Aikido A Japanese internal martial art using incoming force in an effective way to redirect by circular motions; known for joint locks, throws, and rolls. [12](#)

backspace Literally the space behind you; space we rarely occupy as we humans usually operate what's in front of us. Think of back-bends, falling backward, or simply walking backward. [169](#), [185](#)

big body A socially constructed, emergent entity which is created through -unconscious- group dynamics in the room, to which we want to train a heightened awareness to. [27](#), [84](#), [86](#), [92](#), [108](#), [146](#), [169](#)

body-surfing Rolling over another person while being on the floor. [93](#)

butterfly touch Giving so little weight, that there is no center connection established, thus no "contact". [92](#)

center of gravity Literally the physical center of mass, somewhere in your lower belly area. Useful when trying to stay grounded and basing your partner during a lift to make yourself stable. [92](#), [131](#), [183](#)

center of leviathan An idea of becoming light, pulling from your sternum. Useful when being lifted in order to make yourself light. [92](#), [183](#)

chicken wing A safe way to cheat oneself during lifts on top of a partner by squeezing the upper arm/arm pit; analogous to munchingpelvis. [87](#), [140](#), [171](#), [197](#)

crab A more sharp, edgy way of movement quality, with stiff limbs and rather high tension. The opposite of the octopus quality. [93](#), [143](#)

dead fish Usually referring to arms which are disengaged and hanging around passively like a... dead fish. [93](#), [112](#), [169](#)

egalitarianism The idea that we are all equal, and should have equal rights in society, political, social, and economical. [27](#), [33](#)

- Gaga** A dance form which has no rigid structure but teaches a fluid full body movement approach. [78](#)
- good gorilla** Having a hollow back and the head above the ass as the base during a lift; part of our local jargon. [93](#), [183](#)
- grazing** To quickly say hello to people during walking by light touch, usually with the back of the arm; like a cow on a grass field. [92](#)
- grounding** A relaxed state, feeling the weight dropping and finding more stability and balance; similar to rooting. [95](#)
- guardian angel** Someone who safeguards another person, getting sure there will be no injuries and intervening if necessary; also known as a spotter. [141](#)
- haptic** Relating to or based on the sense of touch; usually feedback in technology via vibrations, forces, or motions. [313](#)
- helmet** Having your arms around your head for safety reasons, to protect it; especially when on the floor and several legs are around you. [140](#)
- inertia** The “lazyness” of an object directly proportional to its mass, not changing its current movement unless acted upon. [327](#)
- jam** A social event where a group of (local) people regularly come together to practice freely; with or without live music. [43](#), [92](#), [259](#)
- jedi skill** The unconscious processing of spatial information of position and movement around you to navigate through space with ease and safety. [111](#), [141](#), [159](#), [185](#), [187](#), [192](#), [210](#), [320](#)
- kinesphere** The personal space around us within reaching possibilities of our limbs without taking a step. [92](#), [146](#), [163](#), [164](#), [171](#), [315](#)
- kinesthesia** The awareness of position and movement of our body. [25](#), [319](#)
- kinesthetic awareness** The sensation of movement occurring in the muscles and joints. [33](#), [76](#), [86](#), [144](#), [319](#)
- lab** An event format similar to a class but facilitated for researching together an open question.. [92](#), [202](#)
- landing gear** When being lifted, flying, our hands and feet required to land safely, thus not being grabbed by the base for safety reasons. [141](#)
- little elephant** Making an audible sound when walking or landing which is considered a sign of bad technique. [93](#), [270](#)
- momentum** The amount an object is moving with a certain velocity in a certain direction, thus a vector, directly proportional to its mass. [327](#)
- negative space** The empty space which is not occupied by a body which can be moved through, similar to kinesphere. [48](#), [69](#), [70](#), [92](#), [171](#), [220](#)

- octopus** A fluid, soft movement quality; opposite of crab. [93](#), [94](#), [140](#), [143](#), [150](#)
- oldschool CI** A style of doing CI which resembles more the initial years of its development: more explorative, more explosive, edgy, risky, raw, alive. [13](#)
- oomph** The preferred quality of contact between two bodies which is characterized by properly sharing weight. [95](#)
- over-dancer** Usually called “flyer” in other disciplines: The person who is being lifted, or rolling on top. [92](#), [124](#)
- peripheral vision** The things you can “indirectly” see on the edge of your visual field; a skill which can be trained to improve perception of movement in that area; the opposite of central vision. [141](#)
- postmodern dance** A dance movement starting in the 1960s, breaking with modern dance, with a less emotional and more abstract-functional approach. [32](#), [35](#)
- proprioception** The ability to sense one’s own body position without looking. [25](#), [318](#)
- remote control** Part of an exercise where putting one’s hand on the partner’s body (usually the sacrum) to steer his movement. [92](#)
- round-robin** A structured group practice, with some people moving in the middle, while the others witnessing on the side, and changing roles on will. [262](#)
- rover** A third person moving around a duet, waiting to take a turn; similar to satellite. [92](#)
- RPoC** Rolling Point of Contact. An essential part of CI where physical contact between people is maintained continuously, without sliding or jumping of that point. [133](#), [156](#), [172](#), [174](#), [180](#), [181](#)
- satellite** A third person orbiting around a duet like a moon, connected over distance; similar to rover. [92](#)
- score** An abstract task, a quality, or focus topic, to be implemented in a movement session; common in the dance world. [92](#)
- skinesphere** The space beneath the skin, as opposed to the kinesphere, referring to the inward focus involved in somatic preparations. [92](#), [314](#)
- small dance** Tiny, unconscious body reactions and movements to maintain balance and stand upright; a practice like standing meditation commonly done in CI as a warm-up. [37](#), [83](#), [92](#), [109](#), [110](#), [122](#), [147](#), [171](#), [175](#), [217](#)
- smart feet** Basically like our primate ancestors, using our feet just as we would use our hands; versatile, mobile, and sensitive. [121](#), [133](#), [170](#), [216](#), [270](#)
- somatic movement** Or short somatics, are exercises that focus on internal body awareness and how they feel, rather how they look like, enhancing the body-mind connection. [18](#)
- spherical space** Perceiving space not as a flat 2D plane in which we usually move, but rather like a continuous sphere, removing the horizon. [25](#), [92](#), [134](#), [135](#), [169](#)

srolling A composite-technique of sliding and rolling, usually applied when rolling upwards on the back of a partner while in banana shape. [93](#)

tactile perception To sense and interpret information through touch to identify object properties; sits conceptually on top of sensing. [95](#), [313](#)

Taijiquan Often referred to as Taiji or Taichi, is a Chinese internal martial art based on the philosophy of Daoism, emphasizing softness overcoming hardness, and being aligned with nature. [12](#)

tensegrity Tensional integrity, a structural principle (structural integrity through compression and tension) and in medicine the shift from the (static) idea of body structure as bones and active muscles, towards (the more dynamic) idea of a network of soft connective tissue as the protagonist of movement. [107](#)

the box Basically the torso, the whole upper body and everything between shoulders and hips, with which most of the contact and sharing weight is engaged. [121](#), [129](#), [134](#), [173](#), [307](#)

under-dancer Synonym for “base” in other disciplines; the person who is lifting another person or being rolled over. [92](#), [124](#)

vector A quantity with magnitude and direction, visualized as an arrow with a certain length and used for things like force, velocity, or displacement. [327](#)

Zen Zen is a Japanese form of Buddhism, which is more of a descriptive, than a prescriptive system, which emphasis experience over intellectual comprehension of reality.. [32](#), [222](#)