

Whirl Like a Dervish

By Arabella

Maybe you whirled when you were a child, just because it felt good, or because you liked the dizzy sensation once you stopped. But is it possible to whirl for a long time - say more than ten minutes - without suffering vertigo? And is it really possible to experience elation? The answer to both questions is yes!

Start with a warm-up exercise. Close your eyes, and with arms at your side, turn slowly in whichever direction feels more natural. When you feel comfortable, try rotating your head. Do this for a minute or so, then try it in the other direction. Now you're ready to try whirling.

If turning clockwise felt more natural, then stretch your right arm in front of your body, with your hand outstretched and roughly in front of your heart. Extend your left arm up toward heaven. Fix your gaze on your front hand, and begin turning slowly. This concept of focusing the gaze on a stationary object is similar to the idea of gazing at the horizon if you have motion-sickness. Now you can whirl as long as it pleases you. If you should start to feel a bit dizzy, just slow down. To come out of the whirl, slow down gradually, then spend a few quiet moments either standing still, or sitting or lying on the floor.

Experiment! You may find it easier to pivot on the heel rather than the ball of the foot. Try rotating your head as before, perhaps in the same direction as you're spinning, perhaps not. You can also try reversing your gaze from your hand, or even closing your eyes. But be careful! Traditionally, turning clockwise has an outward-flowing feeling, a sensation of "yang", while counter-clockwise spinning has a "yin" flavor, one of inward-channeling. It's helpful to use music;

this will aid in regulating your turning. Something that's dreamy and/or new-age, that builds up gradually, would work well.

As you practice whirling, perhaps you will experience ecstasy, as I have on occasion.... I was in such a wonderful place that I was able to move my head or arms in whatever manner pleased me, with no adverse effects. The music ended all too quickly! If you're looking for a similar experience, why not give this... a whirl?