

# JUST DO IT!

When I first started dancing the 5Rhythms there wasn't anyone doing weekly classes anywhere in Europe. This meant that if I wanted to dance I had to get it together for myself, which taught me something.

Dancing on your own may well be less exciting and high energy than going to a class (though not always, so keep an open mind). However, when you take 100% responsibility for your experience, without anyone else to distract you, you begin to acquire a certain quality of connection with the rhythms maps and the spirit of the work that you could never get from going to classes and workshops. That's priceless.

The other massive plus point of solo practice is that you can design your session to accurately suit your state of being and your next steps. More on that in a moment, but first: resistance.....

Over the years I've heard many students describe their blocks around practising at home, but then say that once they tried it, it's been incredibly rewarding for them. Below are some of the obstacles that may come up, hopefully dealt with.

**Time:** no need to make it long. Two hours often feels about right for a class with a bunch of other people, but home alone you can get through something useful in a few minutes. Literally. Ten minutes at the start of the day, or when you get home from work, can change your whole day around. Give it half an hour and you will likely have had quite a deep experience.

You may feel **self-conscious** in a new way with the combination of being alone and being at home, where you're used to acting 'normal' :-). Go through it — it will get easier, just like it probably did in the first class you went to. Open your mind to practise in ways that are out of the box. Maybe your practice one day is simply curled up on the floor for 5 minutes staying present with your body, breath, and feelings. Maybe you do body-parts and that's all. Maybe only one or two of the rhythms rather than all five. Yes, it is OK to do that! You can do anything! Be experimental.

You may feel **scared** to practise at home alone; afraid that it will be too intense and you won't be able to handle what comes up if you're by yourself. Do you have someone you can see for support like a therapist or healer? How about the first few times you try dancing at home, you set up a session for later that day, or the next day, to work through anything that came up.

Also though, I invite you to **start gently:** don't aim for intense at first. Try moving slow, keeping your focus as very physical rather than going for any strong emotional thing. Try a short session first. Ten minutes movement first thing in the morning can still change your day, but is unlikely to catapult you into overwhelm. Test the waters, then as you get more confident you can go deeper.



**Music:** you don't need it! Moving without music is such a multi-layered learning experience, fruitful in so many ways, that I would strongly recommend this becomes part of your palette of possibilities. Let the clear space presented by the absence of music affect your movement — no need to attempt to move the way you do with music, or the way you did last week. Listen inside, and go with how your body feels like moving now, given the silence.

***If you do decide to use music: experiment! Put tracks on that you like, and feel into your body's response, then maybe label that track with the rhythm or rhythms it evokes in you, and you can refer back to it in the future by searching for the name of that rhythm, and you can start to create playlists on a laptop or phone that will take you through the rhythms using your favourite tracks. No need to get hung up on getting it 'right'. Be experimental. [More ideas here.](#)***

Like everything, it takes practice, but practice works and you might find that next time you go to a class you have an extra mysterious something to tap into that wasn't there before.

But the best thing of all I've saved for last, and that's related to the second way of practising the rhythms. (If you don't know what the five ways of practice are, see the article "5 Ways to Dance".) You get to take a cool look at yourself, decide what exactly you need to work on or play with, and then create a session that's perfectly designed for you in that moment. It's a great process, one that you can get better and better at over time, through which you'll learn loads. I can't recommend it highly enough.

Don't just go blindly through the rhythms like a sheep! Unless that's what you decide would best suit you of course. Sometimes it's just the ticket; do the practice, back to basics style. But beyond that, there are all sorts of incredible avenues and landscapes to investigate that would be much more difficult in a class:

- Is there a part of your body that's troubling you, or you can sense needs some attention? Maybe you're in physical pain, in which case [have a look at this](#). Maybe you've noticed that you often go unconscious of your legs and feet and you want to devote a whole session to them. Or maybe your chest is full of bursting energy and you decide to give it the reigns for ten minutes just to see what would happen.
- What are you feeling emotionally? Would it be good to pay direct attention to that? For example if you're scared about something how about writing down exactly what you're scared of as specifically as possible and then dancing through that using all the rhythms, with the intention of finding your courage and power as you transition into Lyrical and Stillness?
- Have you got difficult relationship stuff going on with someone? Why not dance through some of the feelings and thoughts you have about that. You could go through the initial layer of up-front feelings and then begin to access all the things you'd like to say to them, and do so *while you keep moving*. To find the movements that go with the strongest phrases. Find a particularly strong one and repeat it with a physical repetition over and over again until you feel like it's done. Find an object in the room to represent them maybe. This kind of thing is almost impossible in a regular class, but brilliantly possible in solo work.

- Have you done other workshops where you learnt stuff you'd like to practice? Cycles, Mirrors etc?
- Create a ceremony for yourself, where you light a candle, write down an intention for the session, openly pray for help with your intention and then dance through it?

The thing about home practice is that because there's no instruction and no group-vibe influencing you, you are much freer to go down unusual pathways, to break out of whatever movement patterns you've evolved, to use your voice in disturbing ways, to rip your clothes off or just forget about the rhythms altogether and follow your dance. It's amazing how easy it is to develop habits that then restrict us, and home practice is a great space to try new stuff. Then when you go back to your local class you can take that newfound freedom there and it becomes an offering to the collective.

[Gabrielle's books](#) have some good ideas for home practice too — highly recommended reading anyway if you're more than a casual surfer within the 5Rhythms world.

Have fun, go deep, and be creative!

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