

Physical Theatre Workshops

Challenging students to move, think and act in new, unconventional and exciting ways

Why and How

The school workshops present an opportunity for students to engage creatively with professional theatre artists in a safe environment. Through participation in structured and improvisational exercises, students will learn to think imaginatively, laterally and on their feet.

By working with the limitations of their own bodies, students will learn how to adapt themselves to situations outside their comfort zones. In turn this will encourage them to be intuitive with their bodies and sensitive towards other members of the group. They will learn to react both rationally and instinctively with their bodies and voices, developing a complex appreciation of the way that their group interacts.

Outcomes of the workshops vary according to students' expectations, needs and previous experience, but in general the workshops offer these opportunities:

- To develop acrobatic and physical theatre skills
- To develop trust and a heightened awareness of ones own ideas, instincts and physicality.
- To work collaboratively in a creative and constructive framework
- To gain insight into creativity and physicality in theatre
- To engage in analysis and discussion of subjectivity and objectivity, form and content, aesthetics, personal taste, engaging and disengaging moments.

Who

Anyone can enjoy and benefit from a workshop with Legs on the Wall.. You don't need previous training or experience. You don't need to be an acrobat. You don't even need to be able to touch your toes! The program has three broad levels of experience or difficulty, but within that structure we will devise a workshop to suit students' age group, interest and specific needs.

The program levels are as follows:

Introductory	e.g. Junior High School (Years 7 – 10) or General Public
Intermediate	e.g. Senior High School (Years 11 – 12)
Advanced	e.g. Tertiary Theatre/Performance/Dance students or emerging artists
Train-the-Trainer	Tailored to suit drama/dance teachers who wish to incorporate physical theatre elements in their own teaching practice.

What happens in a Physical Theatre workshop?

The structure and content will depend to some extent on the group and on the duration of the workshop, but most workshops will cover the elements listed below.

1. INTRODUCTION AND WARM UP

15 – 20 mins

Basic principles of physical safety, spatial awareness, and working within ones own limits. Students will also be led through gentle stretching and strengthening techniques.

2. MOVING IN SPACE

15 – 45 mins

This will consist of an exploration of locomotion and timing. By making subtle changes in direction, levels and rhythm, an awareness of focus and physical presence will be achieved. Tension, chorus and physical risk taking will also be considered as tools for creating group scenes.

3. PARTNERING and/or BASIC ACROBATIC SKILLS

15 mins – 1 hr

Students will be led through a selection of counterbalance, basic acrobatics and contact improvisation skills. This unit aims at achieving tangible skills that can be used to generate future material.

4. DEVISING PERFORMANCE

15 mins – 1 hr

In small groups, students are asked to devise a short performance that utilises their acquired physical awareness, skills and focus. Tutors will observe the groups at work and assist them in recognising good ideas and the commitment required to give ideas a chance. They will also offer solutions to groups who get stuck in the process. The group will be encouraged to experiment with an emphasis on actions rather than intellect.

5. PERFORMANCES AND DISCUSSION

20 mins – 1 hr

Each group shows their performance. During the 'showing', focus, the commitment to work and the acceptance and exploitation of mistakes are encouraged. The tutors will lead a discussion and analysis of the performance, asking the observing audience to be actively engaged. The interesting and predictable elements, the potential of the piece, the meaning, and the actual performance skill of the group will all be considered.

6. CONCLUSION AND COOL DOWN

10 – 20 mins

Students will discuss new ideas and attempt to apply them to their understanding of theatre.

Workshop Options

Workshops can be tailored to the time constraints of the school timetable or as in depth and intensive as the group requires. Listed below is a basic outline of how a class is structured according to the time available. The structures are flexible, and as with most workshops units, are adapted to the needs and skills of each group.

2 hour Workshop

15 mins	Warm up
15	Moving in space
30	Partnering and basic acrobatics
30	Introduction to devising performance
30	Performances, discussion and conclusion

3 hour Workshop

15 mins	Warm up
20	Moving in space
45	Partnering and basic acrobatics
30	Devising performance in small groups
20	Performance and discussion
30	Devising performance # 2
20	Performances, discussion and conclusion

Full day Intensive Workshop

20 mins	Warm up
20	Moving in space
20	Partnering
30	Basic acrobatics
30	Devising performance
30	Analysis and discussion
1 hour	Lunch
30 mins	Introduction to moving text (group re warm up)
30	Moving text solo
30	Show to small group
30	Moving text in small groups
30	Performance and discussion
30	Advance chosen pieces using feedback from discussion
10	Conclusion

(Total of 6 – 7 hours with breaks)

2 day Intensive Workshop

An extension of the full day intensive, with advanced skill development and the opportunity to work further on the material devised on Day 1 by taking into account the analysis and discussion from that day. Day 2 also allows for students to bring in production elements such as music, costume or props. Devising from image is also introduced.



Workshop Requirements

Space

An open space, approximately 2m squared per person. The school gym or hall is suitable although a smaller venue is often preferable due to the more intimate nature of this work and the acoustics.

Numbers

Ratio of one tutor for a maximum of 25 students. Quality is enhanced with a smaller ratio although we recommend no fewer than 10 students.

Ages

The workshops are suitable for students of High School age and above.

Teacher presence

We have found that the focus on the work is greater with the teacher of the group present, especially for junior levels.

Mats

Gym mats are preferred but not essential. The skills taught will depend on the students' fitness and experience in a range of activities such as dance, gymnastics, circus, or sports as well as the environment available for the workshops.

CD player

A music system that allows the tutors to play music without leaving the workshop space is required.

A Journal

Students are asked to bring some kind of journal or paper and a pen to record activities.

Clothing

Students are asked to wear clothing that is unrestrictive clothes and footwear that allow for maximum movement

Costs as of September 2011

1 x 2 hour workshop	\$390
2 x 2 hour workshop	\$660
1 x 3 hour workshop	\$485
Full day intensive	\$750
Two-day intensive	\$1350

All prices are exclusive of GST. Costs are based on groups with a minimum of 10 and maximum of 25 students participating. Groups of more than 25 students will require two tutors. There is also a travel fee calculated at kms travelled x \$0.74.

Please contact Legs on the Wall on **02 9560 9479** or email admin@legsonthewall.com.au for more information or to book a workshop.