

Leaping for Health and Beauty

What American Women Most Need to Learn Is to "Get Off the Ground" Both in Mood and Fact, Says Mrs. Marion Morgan, the Los Angeles Instructor in Physical Culture, Who Trained the Morgan Dancers



A Group of the Morgan Girls Practicing Their Health and Beauty Leaps on the Beach.

By Mrs. Marion Morgan

WHILE the American woman has become keenly intelligent and well informed upon the subject of physical culture, there is on her part a satisfied ignorance as to the wonders that can be wrought by the leap.

A people who reached the farthest heights of attainment in health and beauty, who were distinguished at once for their great strength and for the exquisiteness of their features, coloring and subtle grace, the Greeks, two thousand years ago knew the value of the leap, and practiced it.

In the friezes of ancient Greece you will see lithe, long-limbed maidens springing into the air, disdainful of the ground, limbs spread like wings, bodies poised with the apparent weightlessness of a bird. While you may not have noticed these postures, you are familiar with the result, that the term Greek maiden is a synonym for grace. No greater beauty of line has ever been achieved than that exemplified by the Greek maiden in the dance.

The perfection of that dance and the perfection of the figures that lent themselves so well to the noble lines of the Greek drapery figures and drapery being parallel, would not have been possible without the leap.

American women walk from two to five miles a day. They dance too much. They ride golf and tennis. But if you ask them if they practice the leap, or to give the meaning more common clothing, if they "jump," they will look puzzled, then indignant. Of course, they don't jump, at least not since they jumped rope during their long-sleeved apron and pistol stage. And they straighten their shoulders and compose their features in such rigid lines that you are by these tokens informed that

you have offended, or at all events have been misunderstood.

Nevertheless to American women I say, with all the earnestness in me, "Get off the ground." Physically and psychologically you live too near the ground. The American woman when she has passed the twenty-fifth milestone and often before, is too heavy in gait, in body, in deportment. Mentally and physically she needs higher gearing. This higher gearing the leap accomplishes. Leaping will quicken the heart beat, bring back the blood to the surface and so equalize the circulation.

The leap, like dancing, the languages, were better learned while young. The younger the better. But it is never impossible. If the middle-aged woman will learn to leap she will find her step growing lighter, her eyes brighter, her complexion clearer, her spirits gayer. The leap will place farther back among the shadows of dreaded things the spectre of growing old.

That it is regarded as unusual and difficult is shown by the applause that greets the leap when it occurs in a dance. It is like a singer's high note, like a piano forte player's grand flourish. When I began training my six pupils, who have since been and are now touring the country, to show audiences what can be done for a woman's body and character through physical culture, I saw the same look of misgiving across their faces that always comes to those unaccustomed to the word leap and the idea it represents. My suggestion was received with more warmth when I spoke of springing into the air. That is comprehensible. That does not contain any slightest hint of departure from feminine characteristics. The ordinary idea is that to leap is boyish, while to spring into the air is girlish and girlishly natural.

To make quite clear to my girl charges that there was nothing "unlady-like" in such a demonstration, I asked them if they had ever been so happy that they wanted to jump with joy. Every one's right hand went up. Every young face was a smile. I asked them if they had ever watched a kitten at play and seen it spring into the air from very joy of life. Again there were tokens of recognition of a truth. "Imagine that you have heard some great, good news," I continued. "What would you be inclined to do? What did you do when you were children and heard that the circus was coming to town or that you were going to a picnic?"

They laughed in recognition. Then I unrolled a huge copy of a Greek frieze, whereon Greek maidens were exulting at news of a victory for their country. All were jumping up and down, were springing into the air, were leaping. After that it was easy to teach my girls, who afterward became the Morgan Dancers, to leap.

"Exult in something that delights you," I said. If the girls do not feel pleased, if it were a dismal morning, all adriezie, or if some cloud had obscured the sunshine of girlish spirits, I had only to say, "Then remember something that did please you, and express your pleasure at that."

What these girls have done other girls can do. Women, too. There is no better place than the beach to perform those feats of leaping. I advise every bather

to jump before going in or after coming out of the water. The sand is a far better place for the exercises than the water, because the air offers practically no resistance, while the water offers a great deal.

Try to leap upright and you will be surprised at the resistance of inadequacy of the unaccustomed muscles. But persist. Prepare the mind by saying to yourself, "Rejoice!" Then, one arm extended straight upward, the other at your side, spring as high into the air as you can. If you tumble over, face forward or backward in the sand, no harm is done. But leap several times, until you are warned by fatigue that you have jumped enough. When you have practiced three or four leaps a day for a fortnight the body will begin to be obedient. It will form a vertical line. This will give you poise and lengthen and strengthen the longitudinal muscles.

A running jump is of great value in the development of strength of the unused muscles about the waist-line. Run a half dozen steps, then, flinging your arms high above your head, jump into the air. This is an excellent heart stimulant. Taken thus in the open, it excels any Spring or other season tonic.

The high run, with one arm extended in front, the other at the back, then alternating, is a most valuable exercise for the digestive tract.

The leaping should be done singly at first. Afterward groups may form and the jumping be done in unison, under a leader's commands. The running group enjoys the added zest of competition, which is always an incentive to do one's best.

The seashore is a good spot also for the exercise known in the gymnasium as working at the bars, but is in most instances stretching. My girls found at Atlantic City, among the rough girders of the pier, strong timbers from which they swung their weight back and forth by their hands, rhythmically as the pendulum of a clock. The sideward swing exercises develop long, supple waist muscles, a slender hip line, a straight back and full chest.

That is another exercise in which women of this country are singularly inept, and which is one reason why they do not grow taller. American women would acquire a much stately height if, from their childhood, their longitudinal muscles were stretched by swinging from cross bars, branches of trees or lintels of doors.

It is a very good symptom of national growth that dancing is indulged in at the beach at the seashore. There is no better time for dancing than the day, while the sun is shining, no better place than the beach, where the bodies are unimpeded by too much clothing. It is a natural expression of a natural joy in life, and under right spirited chaperonage should be encouraged. If bathers would indulge in leaping, running, swinging and dancing on the beach, instead of passively looking on or taking quiet sun baths they would derive far more benefit. The bathers who chill quickly should exercise in these sports for fifteen minutes preceding the ocean bath.

Leaping, running, swinging, dancing, especially out of doors, are a return to the spirit of old Greece. By so much as Americans encourage this spirit, espe-



Photo - © BY F-C BAYES.

Miss Gertrude Hoffman, the Famous Dancer, Practicing the Running Leaps That Add Height and Give Grace.

cially in their young, but not limiting its exercise to them, they will develop a more beautiful race, a race of gymnasts, of strong men and women who are both strong and graceful. Moreover, they will rear a race that is without the brand of neurasthenia, that is of moral and bodily courage, and that will not perish from the earth until the earth itself is lost amid a wreck of worlds.

The person on a long vacation at the seashore would develop the flabby, unused muscles, characteristic of inactive city life, into strong rounded muscles possessing the tone of supple elasticity and contractibility.

The more time I devote to the upbuilding of fine, strong bodies and corresponding character, the more I believe in governing exercises by the spirit of play. No one can give his best efforts to his or her work in the world unless a healthy balance be maintained between work and play. "Happiness in the highest sense" is the motto I have instilled in my girls.

If I were speaking a farewell word to American women I would repeat and emphasize the word "leap." American girls would practice leaping if they would grow taller and be far more graceful.

Next to leaping the most valuable exercise is rolling. Everybody should roll about on the ground for at least an hour a day. Preferably on the grass, but it will still give good results if practised on the floor of one's room.

Look at the horses, cats, dogs and other animals. See how they enjoy rolling. That proves how valuable is the desire for this exercise.

While leaping gives grace, strength, elasticity and balance, rolling is indispensable for stimulating the circulation, working the vital organs functions, and maintaining general health.

Leap That Develops the Body Along Straight Lines

The Running Jump That Gives Elasticity to the Muscles.



One of Mrs. Morgan's Girls Practicing the Leap That Strengthens and Stimulates the Heart.

Why Disease Is Cured Only by Strangling or Starving the Germs

By H. R. Snyder, M. D.
An eminent physician recently stated that he could cover the entire surface of the earth five feet deep with diphtheria or typhoid germs in less than a year's time if he could find enough food for them in cultural media.

Germs propagate in geometrical ratio and the most common disease germs double in number about every fifteen minutes. Their increase is checked only by strangulation in disinfectant media or by removing the matter on which they feed.

The specific germ or mold that causes the common boil is a good example of this propagation. It can be said roughly that ten million bacteria are required to start a boil. These ten million, packed closely together, could be held on the point of an ordinary sewing needle. If they are able to work through a microscopic break in the skin, as for instance at the root of a hair, and the disease-resisting elements of the blood are too weak to strangle them, the boil starts.

In fifteen minutes the ten million germs become twenty million, in fifteen minutes more the twenty million become forty million, then eighty million, and so on till in the course of a week the figures necessary to express the number propagated would require several miles

of paper. And yet not even this theoretical number packed together would occupy a space greater than the size of a plum.

In making a culture of the blood of a diphtheria patient, the growth of the numbers and volume of the germ colony in a test tube will increase indefinitely as long as the conditions of moisture, air and food are right. The instant these are changed the growth ceases.

The germs of human disease thrive best at body temperature in partially sealed test tubes containing sticky human blood or extractions from animal blood and tissue. Exposure to intense heat, fresh air, sunlight or immersion in any one of a score of mineral solutions checks the growth and kills the disease germs most common in human beings.

A whole, clean skin exposed to the sunlight whenever possible is a first essential to avoiding disease. A second step is keeping the system up to its maximum tone in disease-resistance by proper diet and exercise. A third, is the faithful disinfecting of all wounds and cuts, preferably by cleansing with peroxide and painting with iodine.

If these directions are followed, disease germs will find only starvation grounds and will not thrive. If they succeed in entering the system through the mouth or broken skin they will be promptly strangled and thrown out by the disease-resisting corpuscles of the blood.