





Motif & 16 Ways of Manipulation

A motif is a single movement or a short movement phrase.

Sixteen Ways to Manipulate a Motif :

1. **Repetition.** Repeat exactly the same.
2. **Retrograde.** Perform it backward. Start at the end and follow it back through space-like a movie run backward.
3. **Inversion:** upside-down ( becomes ) or lateral ( becomes ).
4. **Size:** condense/expand.
5. **Tempo:** fast/slow/stop.
6. **Rhythm.** Vary the rhythm but not the tempo. The variety and pattern of the beats should be altered, not the speed or the length of time it takes to accomplish.
7. **Quality.** Vary the movement quality. Example: Try the same movement quivery, drifting, with erratic tension, etc.
8. **Instrumentation.** Perform the movement with a different body part; try several different parts of the body. Let another performer do it. Have a whole group do it.
9. **Force.** Vary the amount of force you use in producing the movement.
- 10 **Background.** Change the design of the rest of the body from its original position and repeat the motif. Let the rest of the body be doing something while the motif is going on. Sit instead of stand. Try perhaps twisting all the rest of you into a knot while still performing the regular motif. Add another person (maybe having them wrap around you). Add to or change the set, the lighting.
11. **Staging.** Perform it at a different place on the stage and/or with a different facing to the audience, sideways or on a diagonal.

12. **Embellishment (ornamentation).** The movement itself can have the embellishment (e.g., little loops or jiggles occurring along the path of the movement); or a part of the body can be embellished as it is involved in the movement (as the arm moves, wiggle the fingers or make a fist); or try embellishing both the body and the path of movement at the same time.

13. **Change of Planes/Levels.**

14. **Additive/Incorporative.** **Additive:** While doing the original motif, simultaneously execute any kind of jump, turn, or locomotor pattern (triplet, run, slide). **Incorporative:** Make the original motif into a jump, turn, or locomotor pattern. Although this can be tough or impossible with some motifs, approach it with a sense of "how can x [original motif] be jumped, turned, moved from place to place?" A series of chasses would be an example of the way an arc could be realized as a locomotor pattern.

15. **Fragmentation.** Use only a part of the motif, any part. Use it as an entity in itself. Use it to attend to a detail, a part worth isolating that might otherwise be overlooked. Or use several parts of it, but not the whole thing—such as the beginning third, a tiny piece halfway through, and the very, very end.

16. **Combination.** Combine any of the above so that they happen at the same time. This lets you combine affinities (faster with smaller) or antagonists (faster with larger) for choreographic interest and technical challenge. Fragmentation is particularly effective when combined with others. You may combine three or four manipulations at the same time (fragmentation/inversion/embellishment, or inversion/retrograde/ slower/different background). Variety and complexity grows as you combine more and more manipulations.