

CATHERINE HABASQUE

THE POWER OF ELEGANCE

(FOUNDATIONS)



7 principles
to transform how
your body moves and feels



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THE SECRET TO A SLIMMER, ELEGANT YOU

We've all had those moments—standing in front of a mirror, adjusting our clothes, wondering how to look a little more refined, a little more poised, maybe even a little slimmer ... What if I told you that the key to achieving this transformation isn't found in a diet, a workout, or a new outfit, but in something far simpler? A powerful intention that shapes how the world sees you—and how you see yourself:

THE WAY YOU MOVE, STAND, AND INSTANTLY CREATE A LONGER, LEANER YOU.

As a ballet dancer, I spent years refining the art of movement. Not just for aesthetics, but for fluidity, economy of effort, and presence. I learned that posture isn't just about standing up straight—it's about harmony between strength and ease, about unlocking the body's natural grace by releasing its tensions... and what I discovered in the process, by observing myself and others, is that when you move with elegance, you don't just look poised—you look effortlessly slimmer.

But elegance is more than just movement. It extends beyond the body—it shapes presence, influence, and even success.

I don't think that in all the books about success, its reasons and its paths, any of them mentions elegance ... and yet ... Imagine some of our most well-known actors or politicians, without this “coolness” in their gait or their way of wearing a shirt ... maybe their destiny would have been different. While not the only determinant that shapes destinies, elegance has the power to counterbalance shortcomings and capture the attention of others. It possesses the ability to harmonize with other strengths. Some people are born with it in their cradle, and that is an undeniable advantage, but elegance can be lost just as much as it can be created, through deliberate movement, gait, wit and perhaps a certain distance from oneself...

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Photo: Raynald Najrosky



WHY ELEGANCE?

This book is about the Power of Elegance—how it shapes the way the world sees you and how you see yourself. It is also about freedom—freedom from unnecessary tension, freedom from pain, and freedom from the belief that you must change your body to feel beautiful.

Through the simple yet powerful techniques in these pages, you'll learn:

- How small adjustments in posture create an instantly slimmer silhouette.
- The unspoken language of elegance and how to embody it effortlessly.
- Ballet-inspired unique techniques and secrets that not only make you look graceful, but feel great.
- Why elegance is a superpower—one that enhances both presence and well-being.

This is not a book about restriction. It is a book about expansion—expanding your confidence, your comfort in your own body, and the way you express yourself in the world.

And the best part? It takes just one minute to start seeing the change. Let's begin.



ELEGANCE & ITS HIDDEN SUPER POWER

Posture is more than just standing tall; it is a silent force, saving your back and supporting you on your way to a pain-free life. It is the transformative power of alignment and articulation, and I want to share with you how I discovered it.

In 2007, while still touring the world as a Principal Dancer, I faced a life-changing challenge. I found myself in a situation where a back issue made even the simplest movements seem impossible, walking, sitting, even sleeping ... Medical professionals advised me to stop dancing, but I chose a different path – one of resilience and perseverance. Today, I am still dancing, and if you visit me on social media @catherine_habasque or on my website, you will witness how much articulating my back has become an integral part of my personal style as a dancer.

What I aim to teach you is the culmination of years of research on my own body. It is a method that encompasses the most effective moves for achieving a healthy, pain-free, and sculpted physique. You will not only learn how to create space within your body and address any back or posture concerns, but also gain a profound sense of control over your emotions. Elegance of movement is more than just physical grace; it cultivates an elevated state of mind. By integrating elegance into your daily life, you will experience a profound shift in your thoughts, your mood, and your reactions to life's challenges.



AN ESTHETIC OF ELEGANCE

I still remember the first impression I had of the woman who would become my first ballet teacher and the person who shaped my passion...

Tall, elegant, dark short hair wrapped in a turban, Florence de la Villegeorges spoke in a dry, precise manner—imposing for an 11-year-old. But by my second class, when I decided I would become a ballet dancer, I believe I had already fallen in love—not just with the movement, but with the challenge. A challenge I instinctively understood was not about adding, but about discovering the core.

Photo Laurence Chaperon



Elegance in ballet, and in life, is not about learning to be graceful. Grace is not something you add. It is about revealing the real you, hidden under the unnecessary. Like Michelangelo said about one of his sculptures: "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free." ...

That's what a dancer spends their career—and often their life—doing: removing what hides the grace, searching for the purity of a movement where tension is reduced to the minimum necessary to create the result.

Isn't that everything we seek in life? Using the minimum leverage for the maximum effect. Try applying it in your daily life—the intelligent simplicity that unlocks more power than excess ever could. The two hours of deep concentration that give you better results—and more time—than six hours of distracted effort.

But let's return to movement for the moment...



THE 7 SECRETS
to an Elegant, Sculpted,
& Pain-Free You

SECRET 1

THE GOLDEN THREAD

This is probably a secret you wish you had known as a child—when your grandmother or mother would tell you to “Stand straight!”... maybe even accompanying their words with a gentle tap on your back... Wouldn't it have been so much easier if, instead, they had spoken to your imagination? Imagine a Golden Thread pulling the top of your head toward the sky. Not only does this thread help you stand tall, but it also allows your entire body to relax, as if gently suspended from it. Feel your neck soften, your shoulders drop, your chest open, and your hips release all unnecessary tension... Wonderful. Keep this feeling with you throughout the day, and return to it regularly.

THE IMAGE FOR THE DAY

Imagine your neck starting in the middle of your back and pull up from there

Stay with this image the whole day and come back to it regularly

DANCERS SECRET

Young dancers used to be taught to walk—then run—with a book balanced on their head. The only way to keep it from falling was to pull up so much that the head became completely independent from the rest of the body's effort.

Walking—and running—with grace is one of the hardest things a dancer has to master.

Photo Laurence Chaperon



SECRET 2

THE WRAP



Photo Marcia Duarte

DANCERS SECRET

The corset of a tutu, because it closes so tightly at the back, has this same effect. And while it may not be the most comfortable garment, it gives you an unparalleled maintien, making you worthy of the diadem on your head...

After working on hanging from this beautiful Golden Thread, you should feel a greater sense of freedom in your upper body, and we can move to the next step:

Let's open what is now relaxed by envisioning your upper body wrapped in a long scarf flowing behind you...

Feel the wind gently opening your shoulders, expanding your chest, and even softening your face. It widens your eyes, relaxes your neck, and elongates it.

Don't forget to breathe out at the same time, ensuring your ribs remain closed widthwise while your back muscles engage to free your chest and lungs, granting them newfound liberty.

THE IMAGE OF THE DAY

Imagine you are wearing a cape whose weight opens your shoulders... under this cape and around your neck, diamonds you want everyone to see...

Stay with this image the whole day and come back to it regularly

SECRET 3

THE FLOOR

Unless you have superpowers or a mastery of meditation, all your positions—whether sitting or standing—rely on your connection to the floor... But have you ever thought about using it consciously? Most of us don't, even though pushing against it can be just as effective for your posture as the sensation of being pulled by the Golden Thread. Ballet dancers know this well; they use the floor constantly, especially for jumps and pointe work, both of which require a deep awareness of where you come from (the floor) to where you want to go (in the air or on the tip of your toes). So, use the floor as a friend—a foundation you can push against to stand taller and walk straighter. If you ever have to give a speech and find yourself with nothing to rely on, remember the floor—the silent support that is always there for you.

THE IMAGE OF THE DAY

When you walk, feel the floor, articulate your feet and push up from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head

Stay with this image the whole day and come back to it regularly

DANCERS SECRET

The floor is a constant conversation among ballet dancers; too hard, and it can cause injuries like stress fractures and exhaust the legs, which must push against a surface that neither rebounds nor cushions the landing. Too slippery, and it makes every step dangerous—especially for the tiny surface of a pointe shoe... (And in this case, nothing works like Coca-Cola to solve the problem—the sugar in it makes the floor sticky again.)



SECRET 4

THE SLOW MOTION

You are not sure whether your movements or your walk, your sitting or standing, are as elegant as you would wish? Slow down... slow down to the point of slow motion. Slow motion is, even for dancers, a true challenge for concentration, balance, strength, and so many other things. However, it reveals all unforeseen details and unnecessary tensions, forcing the core to compensate for those superficial muscles we tend to overuse... engaging the core allows us to release all tensions we don't need and rediscover the ease and harmony that creates real elegance.

THE IMAGE OF THE DAY

Try to become aware of each movement, each muscles, whether the ones of your body or your face... during the day slow down and observe yourself

Stay with this image the whole day and come back to it regularly

DANCERS SECRET

If people fail to notice the strength required in ballet because smiles hide it, that's how a slim dancer can lift a partner almost as heavy as he is... because both of them know how to use their core.



Photo Pablo Wunsch Blanco

A position never really stops. You never sit completely still or "freeze" - as we say in Dance. No one does. There is a constant motion in our bodies, sometimes imperceptible but always present, like a slow motion happening despite us, and that we should be aware of because, as we know... the devil is in the details. Therefore, there is nothing better than slowing down from time to time to become aware of the extra space you can create in your spine to walk better, in your hips to sit freer, and in your face to reclaim your natural expression relieved from the tensions of the day ... and to achieve this, build your core, your center, deep inside. I am not talking about the six-pack, which is often superficial and doesn't necessarily indicate true strength. Real strength comes from much deeper, from engaging the deep abdominals as well as the back muscles.

... and remember, your core will protect your back, saving you from many of the issues that come with time. So slow down and observe yourself ... do you see it? Great. Keep going.

SECRET 5

ARTICULATING

If I were most people's shoulder articulation, I would feel insulted... How many of us lift our shoulders instead of articulating them, creating unnecessary and exhausting tension where there should be none?

Have you ever seen an animal lift its shoulders? Perhaps a cat—very consciously—when angry... but human beings do it all the time. And the same thing occurs with many of our articulations. By doing so, we contract the muscles around them, creating tension, limiting our range of movement, and... aging prematurely.

There is a saying that tells us we are as old as our arteries; I would say the same applies to our articulations. A person whose movements are free and articulated not only feels younger but also looks younger to everyone. The perception of someone who is stiff has the opposite effect.

And because articulation is a sign of youth, keep—or start—stretching! Stretching allows the body to breathe and tensions to dissipate.

THE IMAGE OF THE DAY

The same way you are getting used to observe your muscles, start being aware of your articulations; the knees when you walk, the hips when you sit, the shoulders...

Stay with this image the whole day and come back to it regularly

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DANCERS SECRET

Before a class to prepare the body, or after a challenging rehearsal or performance, dancers stretch every part of their body, one at a time, eliminating the tensions created by excessive movement or effort. Stretching aids recovery by, once more, creating the necessary space between the joints and within the muscles, allowing them to breathe.



SECRET 6

THE TREE & ITS BRANCHES



DANCERS SECRET

Dancers always try to broaden their back and "take the space" (a dancers' expression) from the center to the outside. And if they feel even the slightest tension, they think about moving as if they were dancing—keeping the core strong to free the limbs.

Now that we've worked on relieving tension in the body—by pulling up, opening the upper body, pushing against the floor, being aware of the details, and articulating—we can begin to add feelings that will support our journey to elegance.

My first ballet teacher used to say that in dance, the arms are the branches of a tree, moving effortlessly in the wind. But of course, this is only possible if the trunk—the core—is strong: able to resist severe weather, to bend and return to its place unhurt, aware that it can bend without breaking...

So, in your daily life, try to think of yourself as a tree, with your arms as branches—your arms starting in the middle of your back, between the shoulder blades, meeting the base of your neck, which is pulled up by the golden thread.

THE SHORT CUT

Whenever you feel a tension, move!

Articulate, eliminate the tensions by creating space
whether with tiny movements in small space or
dancing in your flat

SECRET 7

THE MOUNTAIN & THE PANTHER

Stress is an inevitable part of life, and we all have to deal with it. However, focusing on your posture—or *maintien*, as we say in French—provides invaluable mental and physical support. It helps you navigate the day with grace and manage stress with the necessary distance, enabling you to make sound decisions.

When you need more—when you seek protection and can rely only on yourself—imagine a mountain behind you, unwavering and strong, supporting your stance. In front of you, around you, wherever you need its quiet power, envision a black panther prowling, guarding your space from any intrusion.

Is this imagination? Yes. But remember, our world is shaped by the images we create, whether consciously or unconsciously. So, craft the ones that empower and serve you.

Harness the power of your mind to build a fortress of calm and confidence. Let the mountain and the panther become your symbols of strength and protection, guiding you through life's challenges with poise and resilience. *Photo Meryem Yildirim*
Your imagination is a powerful tool—use it to create a reality where you thrive.

DANCERS SECRET

Being on stage in front of sometimes thousands of people who came for a dream of perfection is a great responsibility, a responsibility that dancers discover from a young age and that only grows when they become soloists, representing not only themselves but also their company and its other members.

That's why all dancers have their own secret world before a performance, full of habits and beliefs that no one else would understand... These rituals are the steps they take to create their dream of perfection and the armor they build around themselves to reach a state that will allow them to thrive...

THE IMAGE OF THE DAY

Whenever you feel fragile, come back to the position of the short cut, hands just under the belly button. Add it the neck starting in the middle of your back and the width of the shoulders from the trunk out.

Stay with this image the whole day and come back to it regularly.



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A SHORT PERSONAL HISTORY



And yes, being raised in Paris has undoubtedly influenced my sense of aesthetics. The city's rich cultural heritage, its timeless art and architecture, and its emphasis on beauty and elegance have all shaped my perception and appreciation of the arts. Paris, with its vibrant dance community and storied history, has instilled in me a deep reverence for artistic expression and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

As far as I can remember, elegance has been a recurring theme in my life. My parents used to say that elegance is a form of respect for others. My sister and I were always stylishly dressed, thanks to a mother with exquisite taste and a grandmother who had worked in Patou and Worth, who would spend hours sewing models for us that looked as if they were straight from Baby Dior... Coming to the table with loose hair or a single strand out of place in a ponytail meant risking an irritated look and, consequently, a general bad mood.

As a child raised in challenging circumstances, my father made a promise to himself that he would later always wear beautiful clothes and shoes—and he kept his promise. He has always been one of the most elegant men I have seen, with a charm that came from his eyes and smile but also from his way of wearing any clothes with a cool attitude and an incomparable harmony of movement.

I recall a moment as vividly as if it were yesterday: returning to Paris while living in Madrid and seeing him run elegantly across the street in front of my taxi. He was already 65, yet appeared nowhere near 50. I always knew that, besides the genes, there was something indispensable behind it all: will and discipline, hidden behind an appearance of ease...

And this will always inspire my way.

BUT...

But elegance at home didn't only mean nice clothes and good education; it meant a way of being, a philosophy of "Be the best but don't talk about it," a Buckingham Palace "Never explain, never complain" ethos, which could sometimes be hard to understand as a child. Nevertheless, I'll never be thankful enough for this education. It became the foundation of my personality and paved the way for my aesthetic. It probably also influenced my career choice. At 11 years old, I decided I would become a ballet dancer, and then elegance became a goal in my life. Body proportions, movement fluidity, and the effort hidden behind grace became my daily companions—or foes, depending on the day—the reason for my moods and the measure of my life.

I hope this will forever remain a daily goal.

Elegance is a challenge with the depth of the unreachable and the weight of daily work behind the appearance of lightness... something perfectly embodied by a British gentleman smoking a cigar in the only armchair saved from his still-burning castle, gazing calmly at the disaster. When asked about his unusual demeanor, he replied, "Why? Is a gentleman no longer allowed to smoke beside his fire?" What would we say in French? "La classe..."



Photo James McMenamin

NOW IT'S ALL YOURS...

Elegance is not something you chase—it is something you embody. With just a few small adjustments, you can reshape your body, stand taller, move with ease, and radiate confidence.

You now hold the secrets of instant elegance, and with them, the ability to transform not just how the world sees you, but how you see yourself. Every movement, every posture, every moment of presence is an opportunity to refine your silhouette, unlock your natural grace, and feel effortlessly poised.

It doesn't take months of training or drastic lifestyle changes. It takes just a minute. A moment of awareness. A shift in alignment. A simple choice to move with elegance.

Let this be your new foundation—one that stays with you wherever you go, shaping the way you walk, sit, and stand, not just today, but for a lifetime. Because elegance is not a fleeting illusion. It is a presence. A way of being that also shapes your mental state and your life. And now, it is yours.

Photo Laurence Chaperon



A PERSONAL NOTE FROM ME

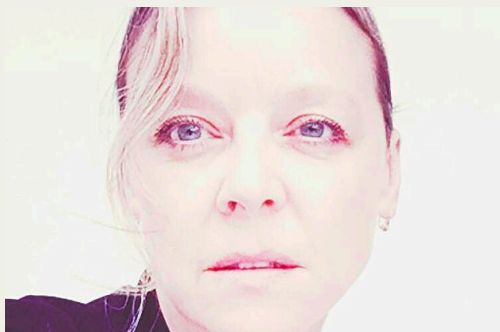


Photo Laurence Chaperon

I thoroughly enjoyed this moment with you and hope you did as well. These are not lessons, but rather shared reflections on myself and what I aim to achieve. Talking to you helped me clarify these thoughts, and for that, I thank you.

Besides the mindset that I try to apply, I, as a dancer, obviously train on a daily basis. I have shared some of the exercises I use for myself and my people in my online course, *The Power of Elegance*. These exercises are structured to follow the different chapters of this book, along with examples of daily and weekly plans you can easily integrate into your routine. The course is designed to help you cultivate both physical and mental discipline, enhancing your journey toward elegance and excellence. You can find it here: <https://dfw-ch.com/events/catherine-habasque-page/>, and you can follow and contact me on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. I will always be happy to answer your questions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



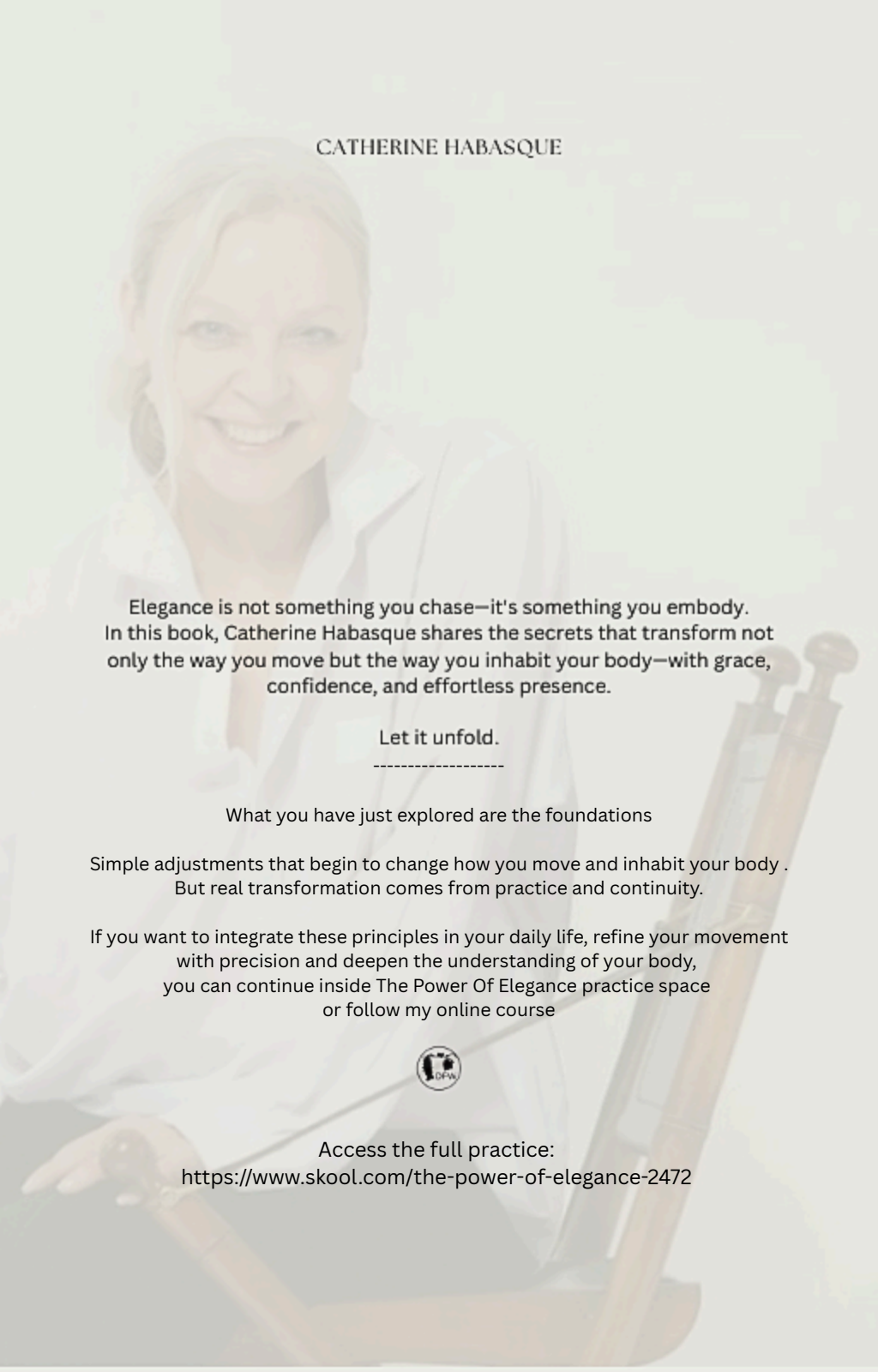
Catherine Habasque

Catherine Habasque is an international Principal Dancer who has performed on some of the most prestigious stages worldwide, including Paris Opera, Lincoln Center NY, Staatsoper Berlin, Bunka Kaikan Tokyo, Sidney, Bellas Artes Mexico , Herode atticus Athenes, Teatro de la Fenice... to name a few. Throughout her career, she has refined the art of movement, presence, and elegance—not just for the stage, but as a way of being.

Years of performing at the highest level have given her an intimate understanding of how posture, alignment, and fluidity shape the way we move through life. She has experienced firsthand how even the smallest adjustments in posture, tension, and energy can transform not only a dancer's presence on stage but also how an individual inhabits their own body.

Beyond the stage, Catherine has worked with performers, professionals, and movement enthusiasts, sharing the secrets of elegance, effortless grace, and the power of presence. In this book, she brings together her insights from a lifetime in dance, offering a unique perspective on how to embody elegance and confidence in everyday life.

Her approach is not about performance—it is about learning to inhabit movement with ease, strength, and refinement, proving that sometimes, a single adjustment can change everything.



CATHERINE HABASQUE

Elegance is not something you chase—it's something you embody.
In this book, Catherine Habasque shares the secrets that transform not
only the way you move but the way you inhabit your body—with grace,
confidence, and effortless presence.

Let it unfold.

What you have just explored are the foundations

Simple adjustments that begin to change how you move and inhabit your body .
But real transformation comes from practice and continuity.

If you want to integrate these principles in your daily life, refine your movement
with precision and deepen the understanding of your body,
you can continue inside The Power Of Elegance practice space
or follow my online course



Access the full practice:
<https://www.skool.com/the-power-of-elegance-2472>