

1. **Exhausted or catatonic.** The Jellyfish. There is no tension in the body at all. Begin in a complete state of relaxation. If you have to move or speak, it is a real effort. See what happens when you try to speak.
2. **Laid back** – the “Californian” (soap opera). Many people live at this level of tension. Everything you say is cool, relaxed, probably lacking in credibility. The casual throw-away line – “I think I’ll go to bed now”.
3. **Neutral or the “Economic”** (contemporary dance). It is what it is. There is nothing more, nothing less. The right amount. No past or future. You are totally present and aware. It is the state of tension before something happens. Think of a cat sitting comfortably on a wall, ready to leap up if a bird comes near. You move with no story behind your movement.
4. **Alert or Curious (farce).** Look at things. Sit down. Stand up. Indecision. Think M. Hulot (Jacques Tati) or Mr Bean. Levels 1 – 4 are our everyday states.
5. **Suspense or the Reactive** (19th century melodrama). Is there a bomb in the room? The crisis is about to happen. All the tension is in the body, concentrated between the eyes. An inbreath. There’s a delay to your reaction. The body reacts. John Cleese.
6. **Passionate (opera).** There is a bomb in the room. The tension has exploded out of the body. Anger, fear, hilarity, despair. It’s difficult to control. You walk into a room and there is a lion sitting there. There is a snake in the shower.
7. **Tragic** (end of King Lear when Lear is holding Cordelia in his arms). The bomb is about to go off! Body can’t move. Petrified. The body is solid tension.

<https://dramaresource.com/seven-levels-of-tension/>