



The Structural Metaphor

An Introduction to
Structural Bodywork
by
Edward W. Maupin, Ph.D.

IPSB
1989



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Dedication

*My father is a classical pianist
who no longer plays composed music,
but improvises in the Spirit.*

*My mother is a teacher of nursing,
specifically the nursing of children.*

*In my early years
I heard great beauty come through my father's hands,
and I felt my mother's love of the soul of the child.*

*It seems inevitable
that I should have come to work with my hands
on the body/soul.*

*May beauty and love
pass through my hands
as it does through theirs
into the lives of those with whom I work.*

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Introduction

In 1967, while a resident at Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, I met Dr. Ida Rolf. At that time she was coming to Esalen during the summer and practicing her method of body work, called "Structural Integration," in a massage room in the baths. I no longer remember what prompted me, but I made an appointment with her and began the process of "Rolfing." She had come originally to work with Fritz Perls, the originator of Gestalt Therapy. He had been helped so significantly that he became her ardent supporter, almost child-like in his admiration of her. When I arrived, she informed me that I must commit myself to ten sessions. I agreed to her terms, though I'm not sure whether I even understood that the work was intended to improve my balance and posture.

I had begun meditating several years before, using a Zen Buddhist technique of observing, following my breath. In the innocence of my youth, the meditation had pitched me into a very high state which I would now characterize as a beginner's enlightenment. I was able to observe my consciousness from a very detached, aware perspective, without fear or distraction. It formed the fundamental direction of my later career. Among other things during those wonderful three months, I discovered my body. As an intellectual I knew, of course, that I had a body, but I wasn't particularly conversant with it. Now I became aware of my body as an on-going response process, quite intelligently participating in here-and-now reality. This body response was holistic, organic, and very Real when compared with my usual mental processes. I dis-

covered (1) that my thoughts are themselves derived from an anterior feeling process which I could now observe in my body, (2) that my body is always responding appropriately to the world it thinks it lives in, and (3) that the quality of my conscious process is conditioned upon the location within my body in which I am centered at the time. I also knew, although I could not explain how I knew, that this observer, remaining in the here-and-now, is eternal - whatever that meant. It was a remarkable vacation from fear.

In the subsequent nine years I finished graduate school, worked at UCLA as a psychologist, and moved to Esalen as a Residential Fellow. I wanted to recapture my enlightenment experience, and I was particularly interested in body approaches, which seemed to me to be the key. After I got to Esalen I worked with a variety of methods, including the movement improvisation work of Mary Whitehouse, sensory awareness classes with Charlotte Selver, breathing work with Magda Proskauer, Bioenergetics with Alexander Lowen and Stanley Keleman, and so on. For some reason, Ida Rolf's work was especially striking to me. Somewhere around my fourth session with her I felt that the work was in touch with my body in ways which were similar to the original meditation experience. I asked her to train me. Several months later when I had forgotten all about my request, she wrote me a letter saying I could participate in a class she was going to teach, provided I read certain things and wrote a paper showing I had mastered certain information. She

added at the end of her letter, "This work will change your life." I can honestly say that she was right.

I completed that training in mid-1968, the seventh person to be trained in her classes (she had taught several apprentices before she began the classes), and began practicing immediately. My first ten clients were the members of Esalen's Third Residential Program, of which I was the director. These brave and unwary students had never heard of Rolfing. Certainly my work was very painful in those first, uncertain days. I am grateful that they kept coming for sessions and, in fact, asked for more.

As of this writing, I have practiced this method of body therapy for twenty years. I have adhered rather closely to the structural principles Ida Rolf taught. In fact, I have always considered myself to be a rather orthodox Rolfer. This book is an attempt to formulate my present understanding of the basic principles of structural body work which were originally passed to me.

* * *

In one respect, however, I feel I have developed something slightly different from my teacher. This is in the understanding of movement. I do not mean to disparage her model of movement. She speaks of lift and lightness in the integrated body, and she understood that gravity gives energy to the well-organized body. But she was not a dancer. In practice she applied a rather static conception in which the body is seen as a stack of blocky segments, their centers of gravity to be lined up one on top of the other. It is an adequate model for most

people we encounter, and I applied it in my own work for about eight years. Then I met a remarkable dancer/teacher named Oscar Aguado (now Michael Nebedon), who thoroughly refreshed my sense of movement and balance. He gave me a new view of what I was attempting to bring about in my clients. An adaptation of his model, which he called expansional balance, is presented here.

Expansional balance works with various internal extensions in such a way that the body is felt as expanding in all directions rather than resting, one segment upon another. As the legs extend down, the proper alignment of the sacrum allows the spine to extend up - a bipolar expansion we call the vertical polarity. The arms are also extending to the sides in a polarized internal expansion, the horizontal polarity, which removes the load of the shoulder girdle from the neck and allows the head to float upwards.

The differences are subtle, perhaps not even very important with many of our clients. But in the case of highly-evolved bodies, such as first-rate dancers or very effective athletes, the differences are profound. For example, Ida Rolf could never accept the turn-out of the legs used by ballet dancers. She felt turn-out was simply a distortion-producing error. She saw the undeniable damage caused by excessive use of turn-out. However, turn-out is necessary to achieve the leaps, the high aerial capacity which dance requires. Expansional balance, with its understanding of pelvic extension, reconciles the two positions. Dancers can turn out and leap without incurring this Rolfer's disap-

proval, so long as they can return to the parallel organization of the legs. 11

* * *

This manual, then, is an attempt to clarify the principles of body work specifically aimed at the reorganization of physical structure. In the course of years of practice, I became aware that body work could accomplish a variety of goals:

1. Structural Organization
2. Emotional Release
3. Clarification of Consciousness
4. Sensory Awareness
5. Physical Healing
6. Organization of Energy
7. Therapeutic Intimacy

All of these results came about, sometimes, with some people, as effects of my structural work. In fact, any of these goals might be appropriate to pursue with certain clients. And the same touch I was using to accomplish structural change might produce any of these results. (The converse is also true, that any one of these goals, including structural organization, can be approached with a variety of different types of touch.) This wealth of possibilities can be confusing. If one touch, intended to change structure, can produce many different results, and if many different types of touch can produce the same result, then what are the specific principles of structural work?

These principles are the ones which Ida Rolf emphasized in my training. They are discussed more fully in Chapter I.

1. The Primacy of Gravity.
2. Geometry: the Relationship of the Skeleton to Space.
3. The Role of Fascia in Shaping the Body.
4. The Use of Movement to Reorganize Fascia.

These same principles are today being used by the many methods of structural organization which are offshoots of Ida Rolf's method. They may be expected to be primary in Heller Work, Aston Patterning, and the generic brand of structural organization we teach at the Institute of Psycho-Structural Balancing (IPSB) in San Diego.

When I consult my own sense of what is most central to this work I come up with the skeleton, the geometry of its movement, and the fascial network which creates the entire form. These are the three most persistent images in this book. Once they are clear, the body worker will use many different strokes or even types of touch to bring about structural change. Although I have described my procedures in many instances, this is not a stroke-book. Readers who are looking for a step-by-step how-to-do-it manual will be disappointed. However, if the bodyworker has a clear concept of the skeleton - how it underlies the very flesh he is touching - and can superimpose a geometric concept of how it is supposed to move, he will be able to bring about structural improvement using the principle of reorganization by movement.

* * *

This book is, of course, no substitute for Ida Rolf's own book, *Rolfing: the Integration of Human Structures*, (Santa Monica, CA: Dennis Landman, Publishers, 1977). That great lady put down more than 40 years of accumulated wisdom about the body there. Many of her specific insights about particular balances, structures, and muscles are not reproduced here. On

the other hand, a reader would be hard put to know, from her book, just what to do. She even concealed the order of work in her ten sessions. The reasons for her secrecy are perhaps no longer relevant, since the information has long been available elsewhere. It is my hope that I can assist in making this marvelous information available to a world of clients which surely needs it.

Chapter 1

Four Principles of Structural Bodywork

The founders of the present-day schools of body work were often extremely exclusive and possessive about their methods. It was as if, having dedicated tremendous energy to the realization of a personal insight, each felt that he or she was in possession of the only true approach. They often disparaged each other's work and mostly refused to acknowledge common elements between them.

But a later generation of us who learned from these originals has usually taken a different position. It seems apparent that the body can be approached in a variety of ways, and each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. We have tended to be more eclectic, to include more. The human body is infinite, a key to the vast dimensions of human consciousness. Now, in the 1980's, we have been exposed to ancient techniques and mystery schools which see the body as a matrix for evolution of consciousness. And most people being trained as body workers today have had prior experience with more than one technique.

Eclecticism, the ability to draw on a broad range of viewpoints and methods, is appropriate and desirable. But diversity can also mean confusion. An organizational scheme for comparing methods is needed so that a body worker can move easily from one to another and still specify what he or she is doing. In teaching at the Institute for Psycho-Structural Balancing I have found it is

useful to describe any method of body work in terms of three dimensions: Touch, Movement, and Imagery.

Touch may refer to anything from no touch at all (e.g. stroking the aura), through light stroking, to the deepest possible pressure. Movement varies from immobility, through rubbing, jiggling or pressing, to structural work in which the client is asked to do the moving along geometric lines. But the most important of these dimensions is Image, for it contains the entire reason for doing what you are doing. Image determines how you are going to approach the body, what you expect to perceive there, and what you think you are doing to it. With this scheme, then, it is possible to specify the major images which distinguish a particular method of body work.

Structural body work has its own specific set of distinguishing images which sets it apart from other kinds of work. These images were Ida Rolf's initial discovery. They deal with: a. the human skeleton, b. concepts of geometry, beginning with the most basic fact of gravity, pressing us against the earth, and the nature of three dimensional space resulting from that orientation of gravity; c. concepts of movement - how the skeleton is designed to move in space; and d. ideas of how the body is shaped to support habitual movement. These images can be introduced in terms of four principles which seem to form the basis of Ida Rolf's method.<>

The Four Principles of Structural Bodywork

1. The Primacy of Gravity

It is part of the elegance of Ida Rolf's vision that gravity is placed at the center of the system. Other methods focus on energy or the release of emotions, *et cetera*, but these are difficult to see, and there is considerable room for subjectivity in making inferences about them. But Ida treated the body first of all as a *physical* object in a gravitational field, and let the emotional releases take place as a secondary result.

<> Every physical creature is subject to the effects of gravity throughout life. It is the one unrelenting stimulus to which we must relate. The skeleton has evolved primarily in response to the various demands placed upon it by different systems of dealing with gravity (that is, a quadrupedal skeleton differs from a biped's in ways which are predictable on the basis of their different relations to the ground). Gravity determines what is physically efficient or inefficient. When the human body is inefficiently organized, effort is required to resist the effects of gravity. Eventually gravity wins, and the tragically bent bodies of some elderly people are the results. When the structure is efficiently organized, the flow of gravity can be a source of energy.

2. Geometry: The Relation of the Skeleton to Space

The skeleton is a structural framework enabling the body to move in

space. In each creature, the skeleton is precisely designed to permit geometrically accurate movement. There are differences, especially deriving from whether the creature is a quadruped walking on land, a monkey swinging in the branches of trees, or a human walking upright. But in each case, the skeleton is quite precisely arranged to support movement which is adapted to geometric space.

This means that, if we can understand the geometric concepts underlying the structure of the skeleton, we can analyze distortions in the people we work with and thus understand what must be reorganized. For example, in looking at someone's legs, we refer to the bisecting planes of the legs. If the hinges of hip, knee and ankle are lined up on a single plane, then it has tremendous internal security and balance.

When the leg is not balanced across this bisecting plane, when the hinges are not working on a single plane, then the feeling of security and balance is lost. It becomes appropriate to speak of "random" or "chaotic" or "disorganized" physical structure. As will be seen in the chapter on psychology, disorganization on the physical plane shows up as insecurity and confusion on the psychological level. It is no abstract matter.

Throughout this book we will be referring to a small number of geometric concepts:

1. The Vertical Polarity
2. The Horizontal Polarity
3. The Bisecting Planes of the Legs (and other sagittal planes)
4. The Side Planes (and other coronal planes)

5. Transverse Planes at:
 - a. The Pelvis
 - b. The Diaphragm
 - c. The Shoulder Girdle
 - d. Various other places

3. The Role of Fascia in Shaping the Body

Most anatomy books do not emphasize fascia. Muscles and bones seem much easier to recognize. They are the evident figure, while the fascia are in the background. However, the connective tissue system, including the fascia is the all-pervasive *prima materia* of the body. Each muscle and each muscle fiber is enveloped in fascia. In response to habitual movement, fascia alter in length and flexibility to support that movement. If the movement deviates from the optimal geometry of the skeleton in space, then the fascial system slowly binds the skeleton to a shape which supports that movement. Thus

function alters structure. The energy of movement becomes reflected in form, which parallels Einstein's formulation: $e=mc^2$.

4. The Use of Movement to Reorganize the Body.

Since disorganized movement creates deviated structure, then the reverse should also be true. If the body is induced to move in a way which is geometrically correct, then the fascial tissues will alter to support this better movement. Thus the skeletal structure can be altered to approach the optimal organization for which it was created. Ida Rolf said (approximately) "Hold structures where they are supposed to be and induce movement." This is the basic principle of change.

These are the four principles which define structural body work. In subsequent chapters we will be studying geometric concepts of movement, fascia, and an approach to touch.

Chapter 2

Fascia

"Our goal is to establish a new point of view, a new way for a man to understand himself...The core of this new understanding is a different and more specific appreciation of the role played by the connective tissues, especially the fasciae, as a very significant working system of the physiological man." (Rolf, 1977, p. 37)

"What you imagine is what you touch"
- Maupin.

Ida Rolf's understanding of the central importance of the fascial system in shaping the body amounts to a Copernican shift in viewing physical structure. Muscles and bones are so much more apparent that anatomists have tended to dismiss the fascia with a few paragraphs and then speak of it again only in reference to muscular structures.

From this new standpoint the connective tissue system can be seen as the prima materia of the body. In the embryo the third layer of cells, the mesoderm, is destined to evolve into the entire system of muscles, connective tissues and bones. This matrix of collagen substance differentiates into white fibrous tissue bundles, called tendons, ligaments, or aponeuroses, where tensile strength is required. The same substance develops into cartilage with the addition of chondroitin sulphate. Where bone is to develop, calcium phosphate and other mineral salts are laid down in the matrix.

Most important for our purposes is the ubiquitous network of fascia which forms casings of colorless, translucent sheets around virtually every functional unit of the body. Each muscle is a

complex mixture of muscle fibers and their surrounding sheaths of fascia. Each muscle is enveloped in its own fascial envelope which permits adjacent muscles to slide across one another with movement. At the superficial level, the entire outer form of the body is encased in an especially flexible envelope of fascia, the superficial fascia, just below the skin. This external layer is very important in organizing the body and in maintaining tone. Chronic tension or scarring which reduces its flexibility at any point will be reflected in changes all through the structure, much as if a balloon, pinched in one place, reflects the shortening in changes throughout its surface.

The deeper fascia, "a dense, tough, bluish white fibrous tissue devoid of fat, surrounds each muscle in a fascial sheath continuous with that of neighboring muscles, with the perimysium round individual muscle bundles and with the fine endomysium round individual muscle fibres. The deep fascia, well-marked in the thigh and leg as a tubular investment, affords additional attachment to muscles and passes between muscle groups as definite septa attached to bony ridges and prominences. The fascial beds transmit vessels and nerves and also determine the course of effused fluids which may trek considerable distances from their sources to the regions where they 'point' superficially. It facilitates the gliding of adjacent structures freely upon each other..."¹

Let's step back from this language to generate an image. Picture the deep fascia as a pervasive network of ropes and guywires and sheets of fabric to which adjacent muscles attach, and which are anchored to the significant

protruberances of the skeleton. Through it everything is ultimately attached to everything else. Minor alterations in any portion of the network affect the distribution of tension throughout. Long lines of fascia work together. For example, shortening in a long muscle in the thigh will pull in long lines down the fascial sheets and affect muscular alignment below the knee and into the foot. This network has various layers of depth, rather like an onion. Since the body as a whole must relate effectively to gravity, and since the distribution of tension in the fibers of this network is responsible for shaping the body's way of handling gravity, the system is wholistic indeed.

In addition to this thick, strappy network, there is a finer webbing of clear fascia around every muscle fiber which supports, positions and tones all muscular tissue down to the cellular level. And a recent paper by Oshman² summarizing research on fascia actually extends this network through smaller and smaller fibers down to the individual cells - virtually all cells - across cell membranes to connect with structures within the cells, and on into the cell nuclei. Truly ubiquitous!

And then all of this is wrapped in an external sheath, the superficial fascia, completely enclosing the body beneath the skin layer in an elastic network which supports and tones the structures it surrounds.

The system is inherently unitary, transcending specific areas and binding them into a whole. Jan Sultan discusses this as "fascial continuity:"

"Our understanding is greatly enhanced by the recognition of fascial conti-

nity. the connective tissues, collectively, are the medium of transmission of kinetic energy across segments; they are a system unto themselves that also have the roles of maintaining position and structural relationships, and that the visceral organs, contractile elements of the locomotor system, bones and neural tissues are all packed in; and invested by, various kinds of connective tissues. Taken as a whole system, the connective tissues resemble nothing so much as a 3-D body stocking or union suit with a "place" for everything in it.

"The fascial continuity implies that there are no truly local effects or events in the system. When this idea of continuity is coupled with a working knowledge of musculo-fascial anatomy it gives the practitioner an eye for the interrelatedness of the elements in the system."³

The entire system is also serving as a pump, distributing the fluids which bath individual cells, and intimately involved in water metabolism. To organize the fascial system is thereby to alter the flow of fluids and therefore the delivery of nutrients to cells throughout the body.

The deep fascia can thicken and lose flexibility in response to chronic tension in muscles. Where this tension is caused by unbalanced use of the skeletal system, the thickening in the fascial system will harden to support the customary movement much like a splint is wrapped around a weakened limb. Since the system is wholistic, and since a host of minor injuries may unbalance the skeletal system, this progressive distortion is the on-going adaptation to multiple causes. Scar tissue tends to be shorter and less flexible than the original fascia, so surgery or other traumata also alter the balance of the network. Fevers, chemicals and hormones can alter the collagen substance, causing

muscles to be come glued together and unable to slide across each other in order to work independently.

Ida Rolf's solution to disorganization of the fascial system was to "hold structures where they are supposed to be and induce movement." By putting the body through appropriate movement, the system can be brought to proper organization, layer by layer, as the movement (and the structures held) influences structures closer and closer to the skeleton. The external sheath, the superficial fascia, can be organized first, and then deeper and deeper fascial sheets become available for organization.

I must confess that, as a fledgling Rolfer, I did not entirely believe I was working on fascia. It seemed sufficient to imagine bones and muscles. What changed my mind was the observation that, when change occurred, I could feel a slow wave of letting go where I applied pressure. This did not feel like the sudden relaxation of a muscle. Rather, it is as if a semi-elastic sheet becomes fluid for a brief moment. To the client, these moments of fluidity often feel as if sensation were being referred through internal corridors of the body. Clearly something deep is shifting, and not only muscle is involved.

Actually Ida Rolf did not base her theory of change on fascia alone: she postulated a "ground substance" in which the fascial fibers are embedded. This medium can be either fluid or solid like gelatine. Mechanical pressure adds energy which causes the ground substance to become fluid. This is consistent with what is known about colloidal substances in physics. It is this change in the ground substance which we feel

as release in the fascial network. This additional theory was necessary to account for the fact that the changes she observed in her work were more rapid than the fascial fibers were actually capable of. The intimate relationship between fascia and water metabolism made some such ground substance likely. The article by Oshman¹ on connective tissue supports this idea of a ground substance. There is evidence that fascial fibers vary considerably in their characteristics according to how wet the surrounding substance is. Oshman also adds that the fascial fibers are essentially crystalline in structure. Crystals generate electrical impulses when subjected to pressure, a process known as piezoelectrical activity. This could perhaps be the basis for the experience of "energy flow" by clients undergoing body work.

What is the Pain?

Ida Rolf used to insist that she was not causing pain, but finding it. Most clients come to the realization that the bodyworker is taking the pain out, not putting it in. But what is this pain? (Of course I am speaking of a very specific kind of pain. There are pains which signal actual physical damage, such as the sharp, hot pain of fascia being torn, which are entirely different phenomena.)

We know that areas of chronic tension are sore, and we know that this is not simply muscular soreness, because the load of chronic tension is transferred to the fascial system. What is happening in the fascial network? What does it look like on a cellular level? The client permits the pressure of the hands to

come in; the pain dissipates; the area is no longer sore. Something has changed in the fascial network. Some kind of contraction has released. We know it was not a muscular contraction, because the release was slower than a muscular release.

The early Rolfers used mechanical imagery for what they were doing to the fascia: stretching, separating. I no longer believe that the process is a mechanical one. I am convinced that it is the client's own awareness which enables him to release something on a semi-conscious level. In other words, the sore condensation of the fascial tis-

sue is not purely a mechanical phenomenon. Consciousness is somehow condensed there, and the release is a renewal of consciousness in the body.

This curious relationship between the the pain, the fascia, and awareness is a promising area for research.

¹ Lockhart, H.D., Hamilton, G.F., and Fyfe, F. W. *Anatomy of the Human Body*. Philadelphia: J.B.Lippencott Company, 1971, p. 152.

² Oshman, James L. "The Connective Tissue and Myofascial Systems." Unpub. manuscript, the Aspen Research Institute, 1430 LeRoy Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708, 1981

³ Sultan, Jan. "In and around the Pelvis," Massage Therapy Journal, Spring, 1988.

The 5 by 5 System of Bodywork

5 Steps of Touch

Touch
Press
Move
Sculpt
Client Moves

5 Levels of the Body

Skin and Fat
External Fascia
extrinsic Muscles
Intrinsic Muscles
Bone

The 5 by 5 System is an awareness device. Simply by remaining aware of what aspect(s) of touch one is using and which level of the body one is working on, it becomes possible to work in a receptive manner, allowing technique to evolve as an improvisation in response to what one is perceiving of the client's body.

Chapter 3

On Touch

Touch is infinite. I remember a workshop with Charlotte Selver, who worked with exquisite sensory awareness experiments. One afternoon she had all of us pair up and sit, one facing the other's back. "When you are ready to be present in your hands," she said, "place them on your partner's shoulders, neck, head, or wherever you are drawn to touch. Do not do anything. Just touch." It is a wonderful exercise. Generation after generation of students in our school are amazed at what they experience - deep sense of energy, subtle communication, healing, the hands being drawn to significant areas, and so on - all from simple touch, without much pressure, and with no attempt to do anything to the partner's body.

I have found that I can touch a part of the body with my hands, quite gently, and simply maintain a focused concentration on the "being" of the part I am touching. No thoughts, no intentions to accomplish anything, just focus on the sheer existence of the creature. The results are often astonishing — profound alterations in feeling throughout the body, jerks and starts as if a deep level of the being were being contacted and mobilized, and a sense of profound intimacy and recognition. This touch is so non-actional I am almost embarrassed to use it with my clients for fear they will think I am not doing anything. Yet it is so powerful that the limits of what it can accomplish have never been charted.

Knowing that such mysteries exist, I have been reluctant to identify structural work with any particular mode of touch.

Instead, I will describe a system of touch, a "strategy of entry," which I call "The 5 by 5 System" and which enables the bodyworker to approach the body and its organization very flexibly and sensitively. But first, we can review a few principles:

Change is brought about by awareness

Before we embark on the examination of technique, it might be well to ask "What causes change?" Since deep tissue work including structural organization often involves considerable pressure, it might be tempting to think that mechanical pressure causes change. But I don't think so. I think the client's own awareness does it. Fritz Perls, after decades of observing shifts in the human psyche, offered this maxim: "Put your awareness into what is happening, and the next gestalt (configuration) will come about." Another of his maxims is related to this: "Don't push the river; it flows by itself."

I think the same principle is at work in virtually any type of bodywork. This is not to say that the therapist's hands do nothing. Circulatory massage makes improvement in circulation; passive joint movement brings about deep release at the level of joints;

structural work makes changes in fascia. But in the gap between the stroke and the result there is an active response in the body of the client, and this response has something to do with awareness. In the case of structural work, there may be quite a bit of mechanical pressure. If we work carefully with the client, s/he accepts the initial sensation and continues to release. The sensation spreads as interior networks of fascia are affected. The client is letting go on deep levels, and this letting-go is based on a new awareness that release is possible where the client had no control before. If the client resists the initial sensation and does not take it in, the degree of change is much less.

But what about pain? Doesn't that imply that the mechanical pressure is so intense as to be the overriding factor producing the reorganization of fascia?

There is a story about a man who sold a mule. He assured the buyer that the mule was very cooperative and did not need to be beaten. But when the buyer failed to get the mule to move, the seller came back, hit the mule on the head with a large stick, and whispered in its ear, whereupon the mule moved at last. The buyer asked the seller about his earlier assertion that the mule did not need to be beaten. The seller said "Oh, he's very cooperative, and you don't have to beat him, but you do have to get his attention."

When we dig into painful areas, we are in places where awareness is absent. The pain is sometimes necessary to get the proper attention so that the reorganization can take place.

It is also true that an area may hold an emotional charge, a fear and

resistance of the feeling involved. The client remains tense, and the bodyworker's pressure is felt as pain. The task then is to support the client to accept and release to the pain until the underlying emotion or feeling can be experienced. Often traumatic memories may emerge.

The principle that awareness causes change opens the possibility, though, that many different types of touch may bring about the same result. Where we early students of Ida Rolf caused excruciating pain in our attempts to duplicate her results, the same results may be brought about with far more subtle means. If I conceive that the main tool for affecting the structural system is the client's own awareness, then I can draw on a whole range of methods for calling that attention.

We are much more telepathic than we think we are.

Again and again I have noticed when working on a client that my own process of becoming aware is accompanied by indications that the client is becoming aware. For example, I am working on some part of the body which refuses to yield. I become aware that some pattern of resisting is present. Then I allow myself to feel just the feeling of that resistance. As soon as that quality of feeling crystallizes as a pattern (gestalt) for me, the client often releases. My own awareness enables my client to become aware.

Touching to know rather than to do something.

Since it is awareness that brings about change, and since we are all quite telepathic, then my knowing has something to do with my client's becoming aware. When I back off from needing to have any particular effect, then I need only "know"—be aware—of what is under my hands. In actual fact, I find that this is the most powerful work I can do. My clients report much more happening to them at much deeper levels when my only motive is to know.

[In lovemaking the principle might be restated as "Touch to Know, Not to Stimulate." This replaces "rub-a-dub" sexuality with the real thing. If much stimulation is required, then maybe the moment, the person, or the motive is wrong. In both sex and bodywork, the focus is shifted to awareness rather than action. Anything can happen, and what happens can come from a deeper level.]

Technique Comes From Perception.

Thus receptivity is all. Ida Rolf said "Let the body tell you what it wants." The days of the hard-working bodyworker grinding away on the long-suffering client are over. If I can focus my attention on what is actually at hand—what I am touching—then my technique comes as a movement improvisation in response to what I am touching.

All the strokes I have learned are stored someplace. What is important is

the body I am touching and what it seems to be asking for.

However, there is one place I am extremely active. This is in the metaphorical images I am applying. In the case of structural bodywork, I am applying images of movement and balance. I am actively seeking a clear pelvic extension from the top of the sacrum, for example.

When I am working more psychologically, then my existential images of life and freedom become important. If I were an accupuncturist using imagery of energy, I would work with those images. I am definitely imposing my images in the work I do, but the actual hands-on technique grows out of my awareness of the physical/existential creature I am touching.

The 5-by-5 System: a Strategy for Approaching Structural Bodywork

This brings us to the system of touch I use for structural bodywork. (It is also useful for many other types of work, since only the last step, having the client move, is specific to structural organization).

Five Steps of Touch

Students being introduced to structural organization tend to be overly awed by the depth of the work, which they assume requires inordinate amounts of pressure to be effective. Also, having the client move along geo-

metric lines is the essential means for organizing structure, but it is by no means the only technique used: there is much preliminary work before the crucial moves can be made at the critical depth. I realized that I was touching my clients with varying degrees of pressure combined with a gentle rocking of the bones (which I learned from my partner, James Stewart, a student of Milton Trager). This exploratory strategy accounted for much more of my time than anything else I was doing. I also needed to distinguish muscle-sculpting, or the kind of "cleaning" of congested fascial tissue used in Arica's system of "*chua k'a*," from the specifically structural use of the client's own movement. Later, when I began using the scheme to understand what I was doing in my own bodywork sessions, it

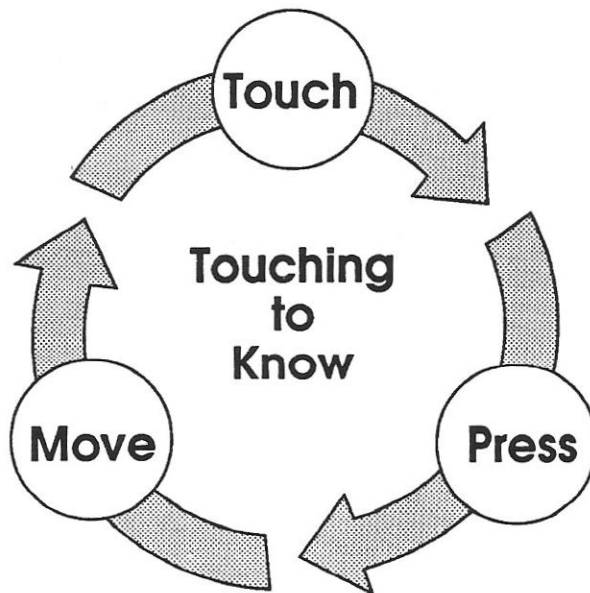
proved very useful. I find now that I am able to work far more consciously and effectively if I can observe what I am doing in terms of this scheme.

The major advantage of the system is that it makes receptivity very easy. The first three steps are receptive ones. I can fall back on them whenever I find myself at a loss for what to do or trying too hard. I remember to perceive and let perception come from; there.

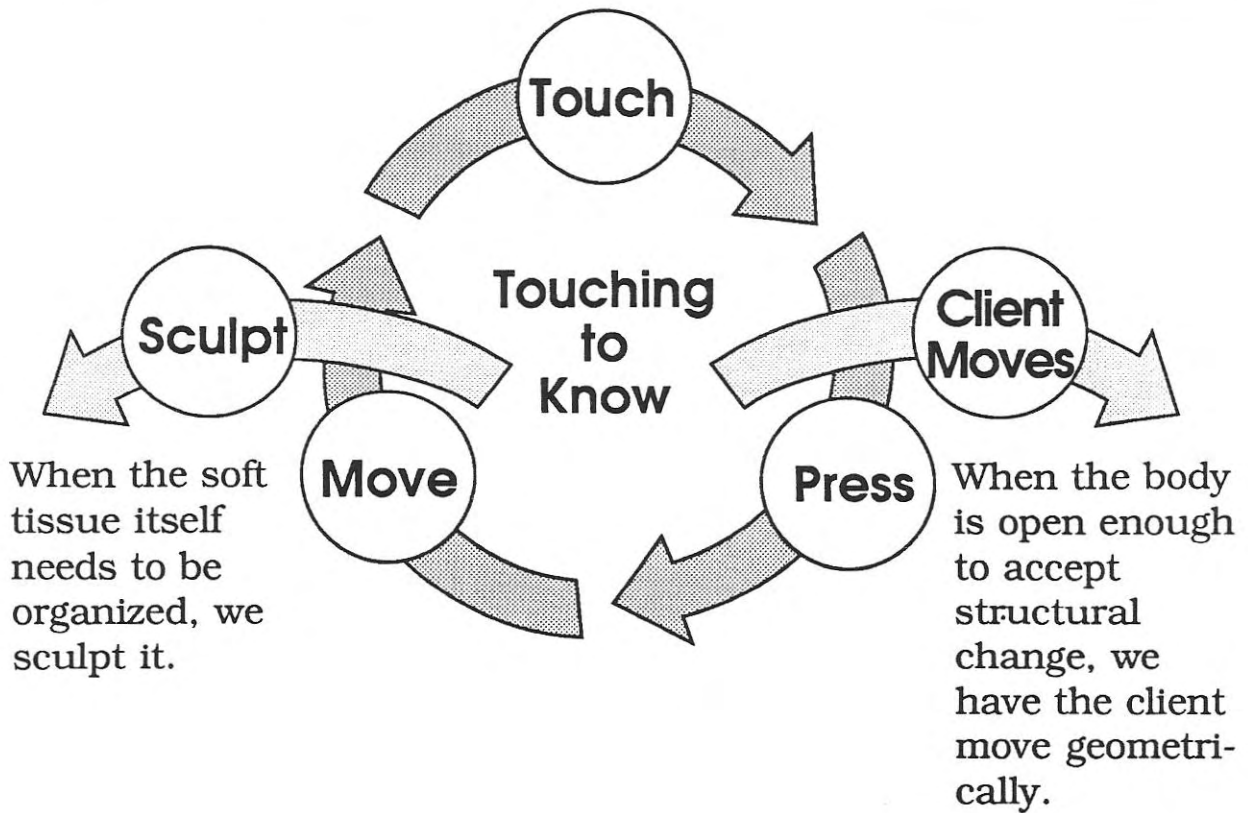
1. TOUCH. Simply touch. Feel whatever there is to be felt, including the sense of warmth or energy which may radiate inside your hand. Let the hand be empty, so that sensation can come into it. If your concentration is intense enough on simply what is, you may find that this is the most profound step of all.

2. PRESS. Pressure is added to sense more deeply below the surface. Perhaps the pressure will reveal ways in which the body is tensed. As you become aware of these tensions, the client may also become aware enough to release them.

3. MOVE. To the touch and pressure, add some type of movement. I don't mean moving the hands across the body, but moving the body itself. I make little circular movements which involve the bones. I can feel their weight, their looseness. When I feel that the bones are free to jiggle according to their own weight, I know they are free of tension. When they do not move, I know they are being held. In this way, the movement serves as a kind of flashlight into the interior spaces of the body. As I become aware, so does the client, and often this movement is sufficient to produce a



The advantage of the system is that it makes receptivity very easy. Touch-Press-Move is a receptive mode. One can always fall back on this whenever the thread of good work is lost.



deep release. This concept of movement is related to the effluent movement used in traditional osteopathy and in the Trager method. Ida Rolf used the image of a touch which "swims ahead of the hands like fish." If I use this image I get an even more subtle movement which reveals much.

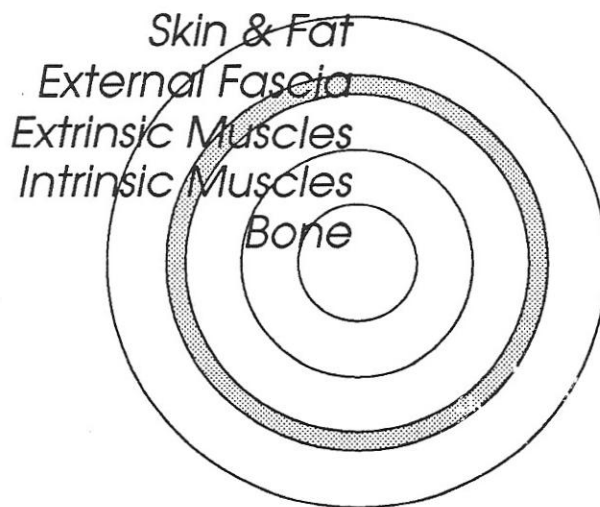
4. SCULPT. It is hard to know what to call this step, because so many different types of touch are involved. At this point we have used enough touch, pressure and movement to discern that there is some area which is sore, congested, knotted or hardened. The tissue needs to be changed. Something more is required to fix it. The chronically hard-

ened tissue close to the bone may need to be scraped free so that more circulation can occur. The sore, tense area may need to be stroked free. This is the point at which we organize small specific areas of tissue. It is the step most frequently used in Arica 'Chua k'a'. It also includes what we call "muscle sculpting" at IPSB.

5. USING THE CLIENT'S OWN MOVEMENT. This is the step which is most specific to structural organization, and it makes use of the principle of changing structure discovered by Ida Rolf: "Hold fascial structures where they are supposed to be and induce geometric movement."

Five Levels of the Body

Ida Rolf suggested that the body must be organized from the outside in, like the layers of an onion. I would like to present a concept of levels of the physical body which I have found useful in this process. Once again we are using the scheme as a device for remaining aware of what we are doing.



Five layers of the Body

1. SKIN AND FAT. This is the outermost layer of the body, and is usually experienced psychologically as the outer boundary and the interface with the world. Important distortions may be held as tension in this layer. Attitudes toward being touched, entered, intruded upon may be expressed here. Oscar Ichazo suggested that skinrolling might be used to clarify the mind. There is a close connection between the brain and the skin both embryologically (both develop from the same layer of tissue) and developmentally (the skin is richly invested with nerve endings). I find it useful to conceptualize the skin as the external surface of the brain, and to

remember that it carries many images about the inner/outer encounter.

2. EXTERNAL FASCIA. This is the fascial envelope which contains the entire musculature. The body may be shaped significantly by distortions in this layer. Much of the initial procedures of structural work, such as the breathing release, produce changes in contour by releasing the external fascia.

3. EXTRINSIC MUSCLES. These are voluntary muscles for contracting and drawing in toward the body. They are the muscles with which we "do" things. In that sense they are the yang, or active side of our movement.

4. INTRINSIC MUSCLES. The small muscles closer to the core of the body are less voluntary. These muscles have to do with maintaining our position in gravity while we engage in voluntary action. They fire more slowly, fatigue less quickly. In our experience we "let" these muscles work. In that sense they are the "yin" or receptive side of our movement activity.

5. BONE. This is the fundamental level. Even very deep bodywork may be less painful if it is experienced from the perspective of the bone level. Passive movement of the bone may give that perspective to the client.

I have found this scheme very useful in working with clients. It enables me to be aware of the level I am addressing. It also helps to understand the needs of various clients.

Different clients require work at different levels. For example, the skin/fat layer may be developed as a shield which must be addressed before deeper organization can proceed. A person who

has been physically abused as a child may have developed a chronic barrier of tension at the skin level. Skin rolling is generally appropriate with such people before deeper, more structural work can be carried out.

Or an athletic man may need to release the chronic contraction of the extrinsic muscles. For him, discovering the internal experience of his body (i.e. the intrinsic layer) can amount to a personal revelation.

Other people may feel very weak and unprotected in the extrinsic layer. A body which appears very soft may be carrying its tension deep in the intrinsic muscles. Most of the work may involve approaching this level in a non-threatening way.

The bone level is fundamental, of course. Much of the time I am interested in maintaining awareness of the bone level so as to give perspective for the work I am doing. A little passive joint

movement reminds the client of the bone level so that the work on muscle tissue makes sense rather than being merely painful.

The 5 by 5 system is an awareness device

A good concept is like a crystal—might I say a jewel?—which refracts light in certain predictable ways. I can say that, once I began being aware of my own work in terms of this 5 by 5 system, my work became considerably more sensitive and more effective.

It is simply an awareness device: all that is required is to keep conscious of what one is doing and what one is doing it to. Then technique becomes a response to what one is perceiving; the receptivity of touch-press-move can always be found, and work takes on new dimension. All I need do is "Touch to Know" and leave the driving to.....

The Empty Hand ☺

A good image for receptive strength. One way to feel receptive is to feel "empty", to make a space for something to enter. At the simplest level, this "something" is the feeling of the client's body.



When strength is applied, it should come from the soft weight of the bodyworker's body transmitted through the hand — weight like a sandbag. When the hands begin to harden and the arms tremble, stop doing so much.

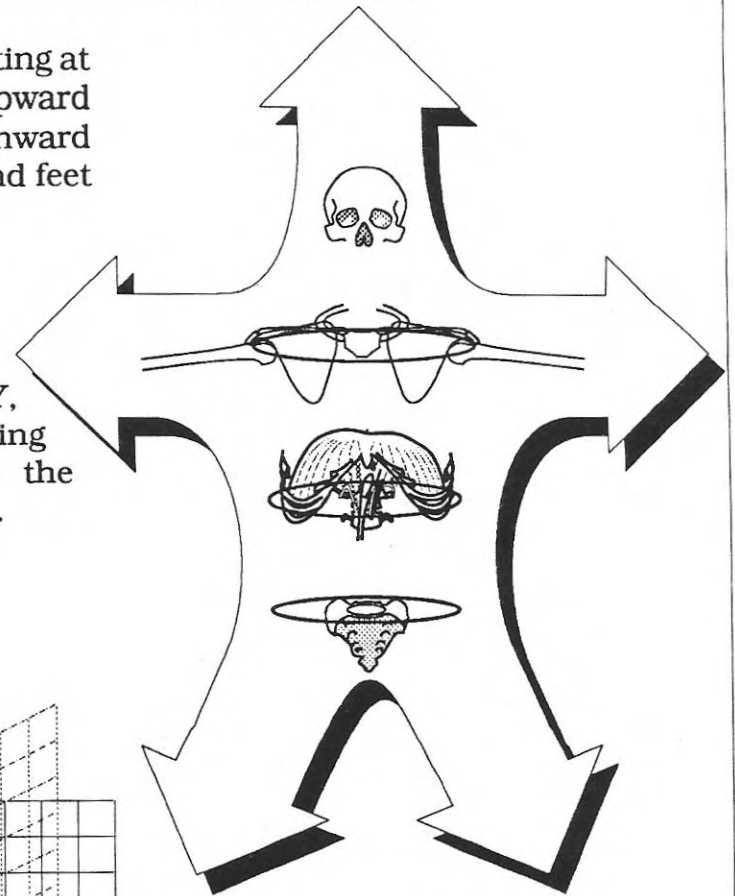
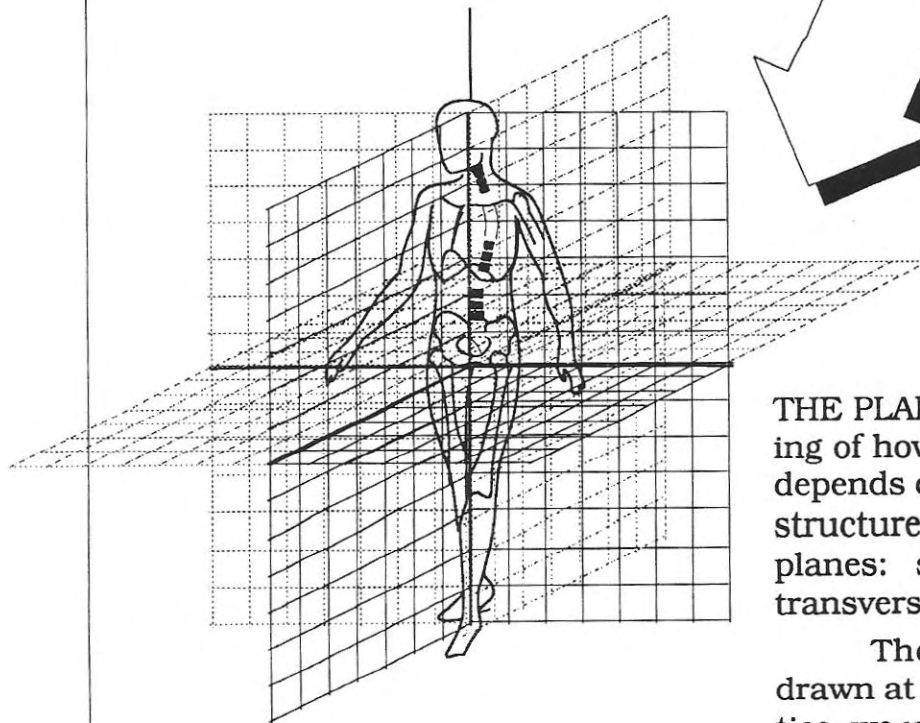
GET EMPTY. FALL BACK ON "TOUCH", "PRESS", & "MOVE"

"When strength is not enough, get smart.." -- MARTIAL ARTS ADAGE.

The Human Body may be seen as Polarities and Planes

A VERTICAL POLARITY, separating at the sacrum, which must pass upward through three rings and downward through the pelvis with head and feet at either end, open.

AN HORIZONTAL POLARITY, separating at the spine, passing through the shoulders into the elbows, out through the hands.



THE PLANES: Our understanding of how to open the polarities depends on analyzing the body's structure in terms of geometric planes: sagittal, coronal, and transverse.

These planes may be drawn at any point, but, in practice, we use a few which are particularly important.

Chapter 4

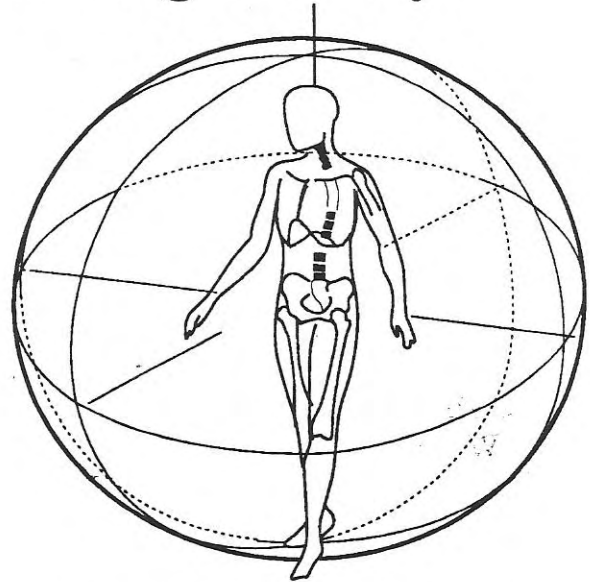
The Polarities and the Planes: understanding movement and structure in terms of geometry.

We have seen that the basic principle of structural bodywork involves getting the body to move correctly in geometric space. This means we must specify some model of movement we are going to use in this work. The actual model I use is rather simple. It involves two dynamic polarities, and three sets of geometric planes.

Whereas Ida Rolf based her work on the model of segments of the body resting vertically upon one another, I have followed Oscar Aguado in using a model of expansional balance.

"EXPANSIONAL BALANCE is the free extension of the skeletal frame to all directions in space. A human being is in this state when the force which he creates to lift himself in the field of gravity is equally distributed through the whole of the body, producing one equal tensional field of force. This one equal tensional field expands the body omnidirectionally in space and is the result of the balanced polarization of two forces, one vertical and the other horizontal." Oscar Aguado

Thus we begin with a basic distinction between contraction and expansion. The well-balanced body is characterized by expansion: a tensional field which expands the body omnidirectionally, and which is the result of the balanced polarization of a vertical and a horizontal force.



Ida Rolf also spoke of the "core" and the "sleeve" of the body. The goal of her bodywork was designed to bring these two levels into balance. As part of this, she made a major distinction between the extrinsic and intrinsic muscles of the body. Basically, the extrinsic muscles are the voluntary ones we control directly and use to do whatever we intend to do. The intrinsic muscles are mostly involved in maintaining our position in gravity so that we don't fall over when we do it. The extrinsic muscles primarily contract and shorten. The intrinsic musculature is mainly pushing against gravity or expanding.

The core and sleeve are not entirely the same as the intrinsic and extrinsic layers of musculature, however. When a

well-balanced body is moving from the core, the center of balance is not in the muscles of the spine, but in front of the spine. This is entirely consistent with Agudo's concept.

Contraction is the general result of voluntary action, as can be seen from the muscle-builder who has created a musculature which is so contracted—"muscle-bound"—that it interferes with full movement. But contraction may be the result of many additional factors. Negative emotions such as chronic anger or fear produce contraction. William Blake writes: "Damn braces, bless relaxes." We tighten in response to psychological trauma—which means any life experience we cannot allow ourselves to experience fully. We also pick up such ways of handling life from imitating significant people, especially our parents. Finally, injuries, even quite minor ones, may cause large areas of the body to tense in the effort to adapt the balance of the entire body to the new problem. This "compensation" builds up generalized contraction all across the body and evolves an overall pattern which is the person's characteristic system of coping with gravity.

In undertaking structural bodywork with someone, our most basic consideration is to enable the body to expand, to release contractions. This is an internal extension: it cannot be created simply with stretches, because stretches generally fail to engage the internal opening of the joints. We want the body to be able to expand to its natural limits, rather than being artificially limited by the contraction of the outer sleeve.

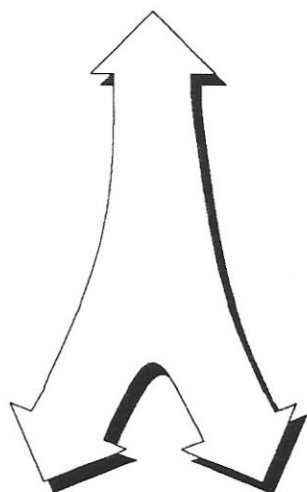
More precisely, the extrinsic layer must be released to come into a balance with the intrinsic muscles. Then voluntary action takes place with the body, especially the spine, extended. If you have ever had a second wind experience while running, you have experienced a sample of this balance. The initial running has stressed and fatigued the exterior muscles until they release and allow the intrinsic muscles to expand and come into play. Then you have the delicious experience of the "running which runs itself." It is a characteristic of the intrinsic muscles that we experience them as non-effortful.

This expansional balance has been compared with Buckminster Fuller's concept of "tensegrity" in which the expansional forces of a structure are in balance with the limiting forces—for example the air inside a balloon is in balance with the limiting force of the membrane of the balloon. Fuller applied the principle in his design of the geodesic dome.

The Polarities

In order to understand the overall expansion of the body we imagine that the expansion takes place across two dimensions, vertical and horizontal. Furthermore, these dimensions are dynamic polarities in the sense that they imply mutual expansion in two directions. "The standing up is a function of the standing down."

The vertical polarity is, of course, our upright posture. The horizontal polarity refers to the arms and shoulder girdle.



The Vertical Polarity

When the polarities are open, the expansion of the body is experienced as internal extension. Oscar Aguado had his movement students feel for "tubes" running through the joints in order to feel for the proper alignment in which the polarized extensions could take place. It then became clear, for instance, that the internal extension of the shoulders could not take place if the arms were held too



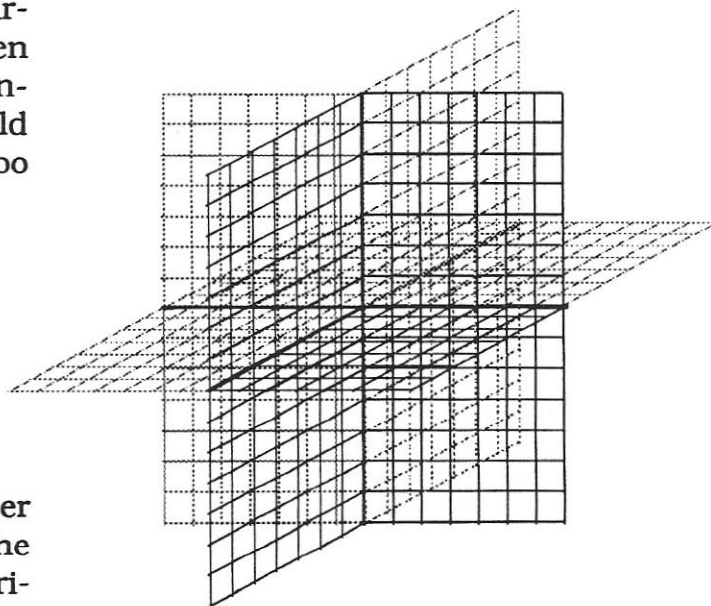
The Horizontal Polarity

far behind the body. Actually, the closer one is to a full internal extension of the body, the more unitary is the experience. Aguado once said that in the fully open expansional balance, every joint is in proper relationship to every other joint. A minute shift at any joint then requires adjustment at every other joint.

...and the Planes

In order to understand this internal alignment, it is useful to look at the body in terms of various planes. If we look at someone's back and imagine a sagittal plane running through the midline, we can see clearly where the spine departs from symmetry between the two sides. We organize legs by means of their vertical bisecting planes. Planes enable us to analyze the balances taking place within the body.

Although, obviously, we may draw planes in any of the three dimensions at any point in the body where it will be helpful, in practice we use certain planes particularly often:

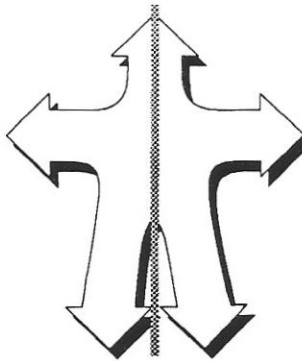


The body is analyzed in terms of planes in three dimensions

1. Sagittal Planes

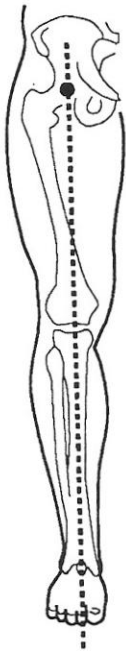
Sagittal planes are, of course, vertical planes running front-to-back. They may be drawn at any point, but in practice we use two major planes.

a. The Central Sagittal Plane



The midline of the body enables us to see the balance between the two lateral sides.

b. The Bisecting Planes of the Legs



These planes of the legs are probably the most useful of all. A secure leg has all of its joints hinging on the same plane. The same plane should bisect the center of the hip socket, knee, ankle, and divide the foot into medial and lateral halves. Where we observe deviations from the plane, we can infer imbalances in the connective tissues around the joints.

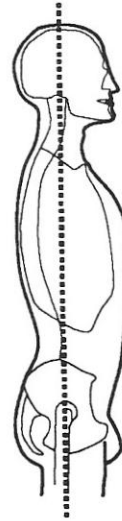
We also observe whether the planes of the two legs are used in parallel, for this has ramifications in the organization of the pelvis.

2. Coronal Planes

Vertical planes running side-to-side.

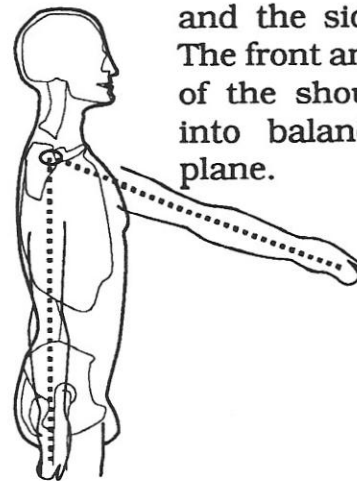
a. The Side Plane of the Torso.

Defining a plane passing vertically through the hip socket enables us to see clearly how the core of the body is balancing in gravity. Whether the centers of gravity of the major segments are in line along this plane determines the ease of the relationship with gravity and the clarity of the inner sense of the body.



b. The Bisecting Plane of the Arms.

It is useful to organize the arms on the side plane, with the elbow hinge moving straight out to the side. This creates an alignment of the shoulder socket, the elbow and the side of the hand. The front and back muscles of the shoulder can come into balance across that plane.

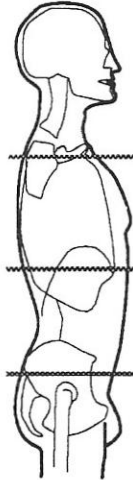


Of course, the shoulder is designed to permit very free movement of the arm in all

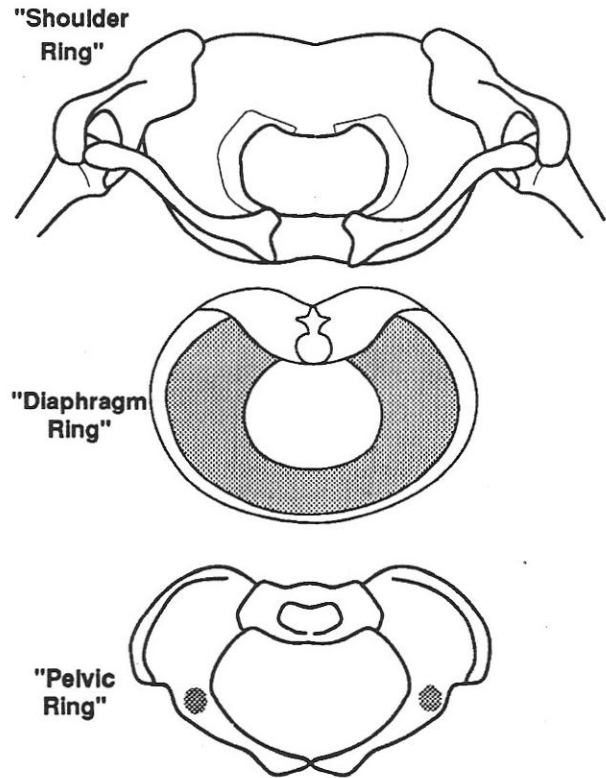
3. Transverse Planes.

Horizontal planes bisecting the body at various levels.

- a. **The Ring of the Shoulders**
- b. **The Ring of the Diaphragm**
- c. **The Ring of the Pelvis**



These planes are extremely useful for understanding events within the torso. If we see each of these major areas in cross-section, we can understand imbalances which may be taking place. There are also important relationships between these areas. For example, the relationship between the ring of the pelvis and the ring of the diaphragm determines the strength of the lower and middle spine. The diaphragm serves as the foundation for the shoulders if the relationship between them is well organized.



The rings of the torso:
 We can imagine cross-sections of the torso at major points. This enables us to understand the intricate balances taking place within each level.

Movement

This model of movement was strongly influenced by some workshops led by Oscar Aguado in 1976. Up to that time I had used Ida Rolf's model of "stacked blocks" as exemplified by the blocky-boy trade mark used by Rolfers.

Oscar worked meticulously with us until we could discriminate internal extension at each joint in the body. These extensions were like "tubes" running through the joints when prop-

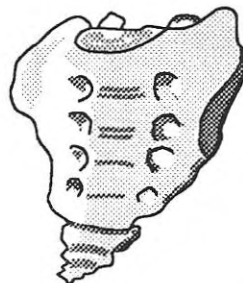
erly aligned. Gradually we became aware of a more unified extension which involved many joints, perhaps the entire body.

In this chapter I am using much of the imagery Oscar Aguado was using at that time. No doubt his work has evolved further since then, and he is almost certainly using different images now. However, this is my version of what I learned.

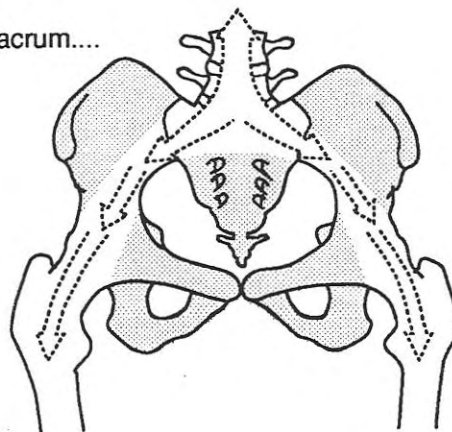
The Vertical Polarity

The vertical polarity begins with the top of the sacrum. The sacrum is the dividing point between spine and legs. The lumbar spine rests on the table provided by the top of the sacrum. The legs may be thought to begin at the top of the sacrum. The pelvis is then seen as the first segment of the legs, and a universal joint for connecting the sacrum with the hips.

In order to establish the vertical as a polarity, it is necessary to isolate the top of the sacrum, and to develop the pelvic extension. Pelvic extension seems very subtle and difficult if the legs are being contracted and drawn into the pelvis. However, when we begin understanding pelvic extension, there is considerable change in the body.



The Sacrum....

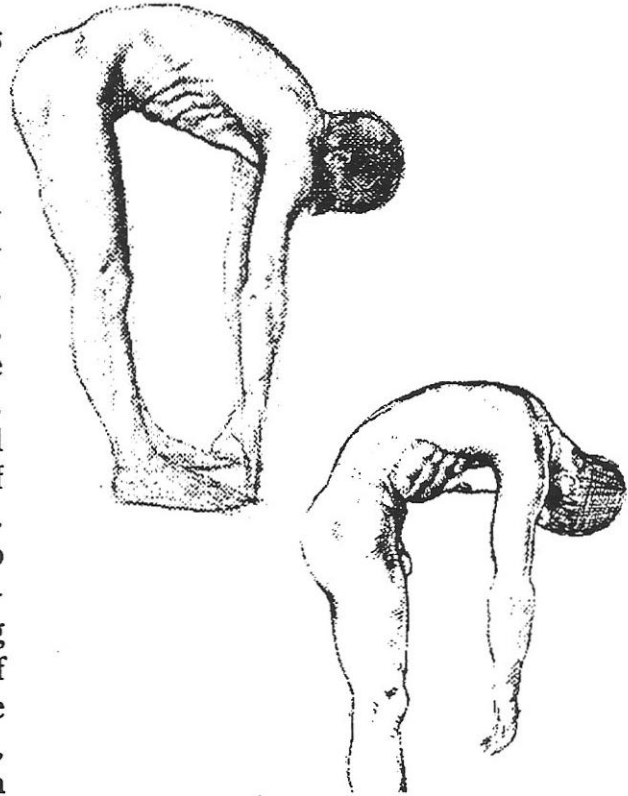


is the center of the Vertical Polarity. It is the origin of the pelvic extension, the beginning of the legs, and the table upon which the lumbar spine rests.

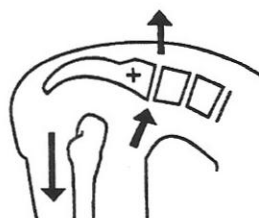
Part I: Establishing Sacrum as the Center of the Vertical Polarity.

a. The Flamingo.

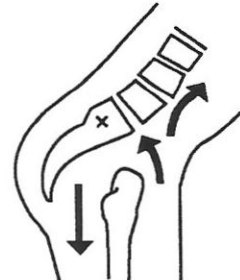
This is an adaptation of the movement used in Arica Psychocalisthenics™. Beginning in a deep bow, feet parallel, knees straight but not stiff, the person pushes into the feet while bringing the top of the sacrum back. This establishes a polarity, a mutual separation between feet and the front of the spine at the sacro-lumbar junction. Then the separation can be "walked" up the front of the spine, so that the erection of the spine is essentially being created by the downward extension of the feet. The standing down and the standing up are the same, so to speak, and no additional effort is required in the spinal erectors to remain upright.



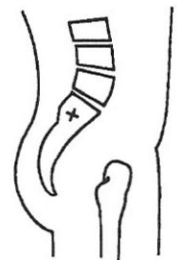
The Flamingo



"Push down into your feet and bring the top of your sacrum back"

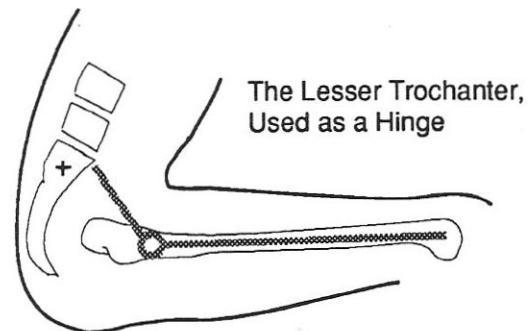


"Walk the polarity up the front of your spine"



b. Using the Lesser Trochanter as a Hinge.

Another way to refine the pelvic extension is to lie on the floor with knees up. The Lesser Trochanter is used as a hinge point, with the inner knee and Top-of-Sacrum used as the wings of the hinge. The knees are sent out from the Sacrum by opening the hinge. The spine remains behind, or, with further thrust into the knees, may be lifted like a chain.



The Lesser Trochanter, Used as a Hinge

c. Moving with the Ring of the Pelvis kept Horizontal

At this point it becomes useful to imagine the ring of the pelvis, of which the top of the sacrum is a part. Learning to move with this ring horizontal forces the sacrum to become the un-moving center. The torso rests on top of the pelvis, the lumbar spine rests on the sacrum top as if it were a table. The legs may be imagined to begin at the sacrum. Suddenly the movement adjustments are made in the small muscles attaching the legs to the pelvis. Using the legs in *plié* is especially useful. Virtually all of Tai Chi Chuan may be practiced beneficially with this image.

Care must be taken to keep from leaning back. Often people arch the back so that, in this position, the ribcage is carried behind the pelvis. This confuses the coordination we are seeking with this exercise.

d. *Plié* in Second Position, emphasizing the Bisecting Planes

This is an amazingly powerful exercise. Someone with enough sensitivity to imagine the bisecting planes can repair minor deviations in their own legs, including some knee injuries and flattened arches.

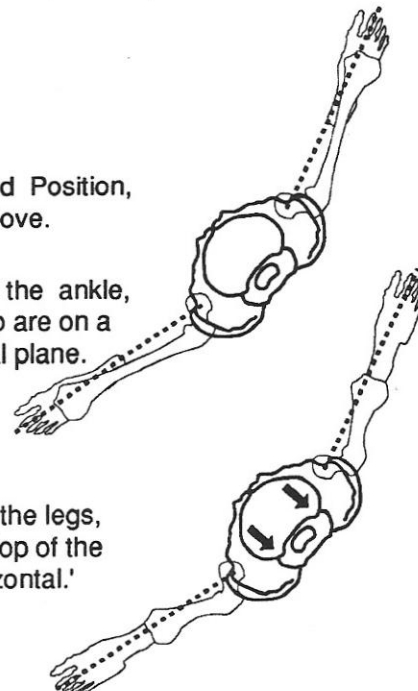
It is essential to turn out with the thighs, rather than with the feet. If the feet are forced into a wider angle than the knees, certain ankle and foot problems result which are typical of dancers.

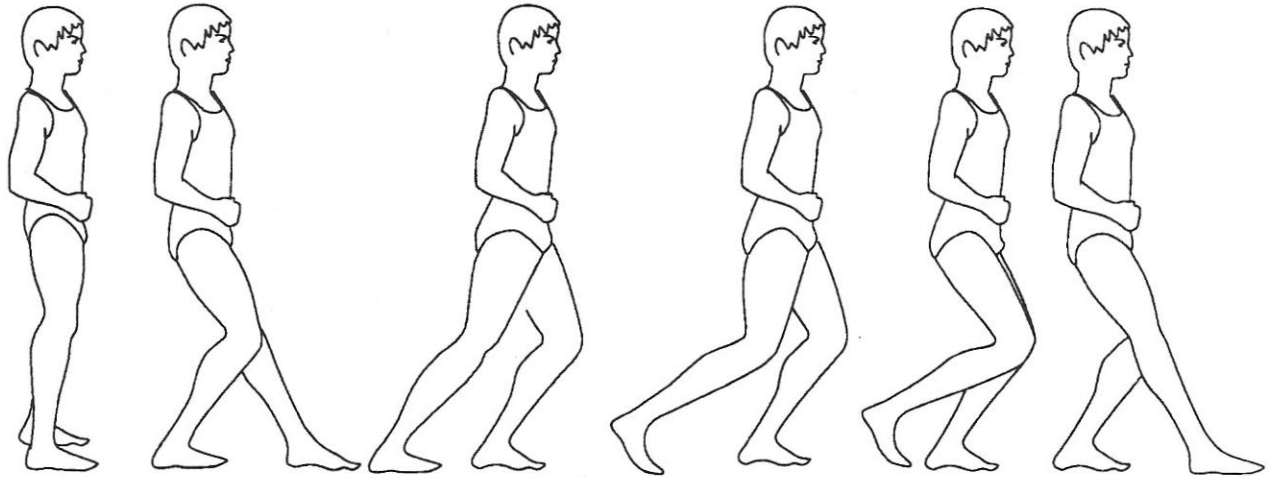
The crucial point in this exercise is at the moment of straightening the legs from *plié*. The top of the sacrum is kept "flat" and a stretch is felt through the bowl of the pelvis and the inner thighs.

Plié in Second Position,
seen from above.

a. make sure the ankle,
knee, and hip are on a
single vertical plane.

b. straighten the legs,
keeping the top of the
sacrum 'horizontal.'





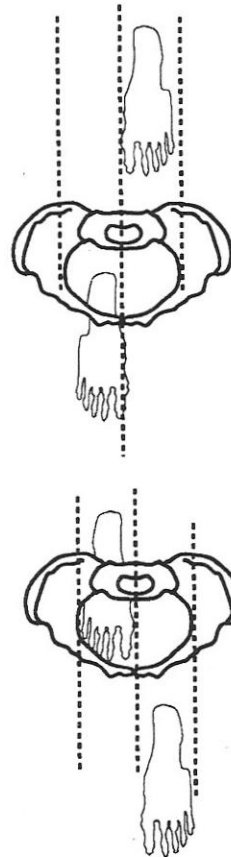
The Dragon Walk

e. Dragon Walk.

Another Arica™ exercise, this walk with knees bent and feet parallel and close together enables the leg planes to return to parallel position. After the previous exercise, the result is a deepened pelvis.

Here the parallel planes are emphasized further by working the feet close together, "on either side of an invisible line." This cants the planes, brings the knees into contact, and further exercises the small muscles which attach legs to pelvis.

Once again it is essential to keep the torso stacked directly on top of the ring of the pelvis, to let the lumbar spine rest on the top of the sacrum. Any leaning back introduces tension and imbalance.



Dragon Walk, seen from above.

Any of the T'ai Chi Chuan movements can be practiced with the ring of the pelvis horizontal.

f. Other exercises.

Once the top of the sacrum is isolated with the flamingo exercise, the vertical polarity thus created may be developed with several of the other exercises in the Arica Psychocalisthenics™. Doing the

"Side Reach, Crouch" with an emphasis on extending into the feet from the Sacrum is a marvelous exercise, as are "Picking Grapes", "Ax I and II", and even "Udiyama."

Part II: Organizing the Ring of the Diaphragm

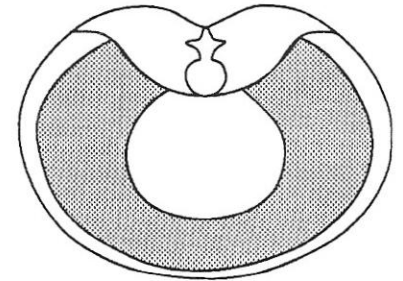
The vertical polarity must then pass through the ring of the diaphragm. Since the shoulder girdle only functions properly upon the foundation of the diaphragm, it is an essential step. This is an extremely complex area, since the basic breathing movement occurs here as well as elements of arm and leg movement. If the ring is centered on top of the ring of the pelvis, then the central point of balance passes through the center of the ring. Most people, however, push this ring forward, which forces the central point of balance back into the spine.

Very subtle movement work is required here. The Flamingo may be used with emphasis on the ring of the diaphragm. (This is actually closer to the original instructions for the exercise.) Mariele Moore suggests the image of the Thoraco-Lumbar Junction as a joint like an elbow. Small bows at that point in a seated position sometimes work.

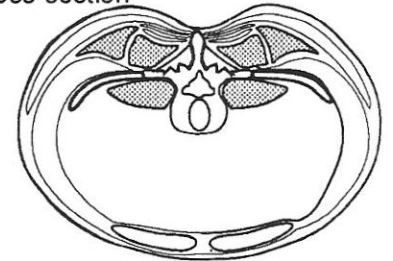
Psychocalisthenics™ provides an excellent way of working with the diaphragm ring. The following discussion presumes the reader to have moderate acquaintance with the system.

a. The entire lumbar series, from picking grapes through udiyama offer an excellent opportunity to clarify the relationship between pelvis and diaphragm (as well as between pelvis and ground).

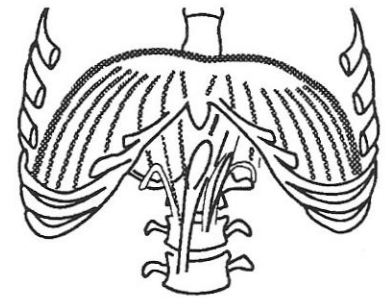
b. Integration breath and other arm movement stabilize the diaphragm area if the spine is kept steady and the movement is carried out with the arms and shoulders..



The diaphragm in cross-section



The torso in cross-section at the third lumbar vertebra



The Diaphragm

Part III: Shoulder Girdle and the Horizontal Polarity.

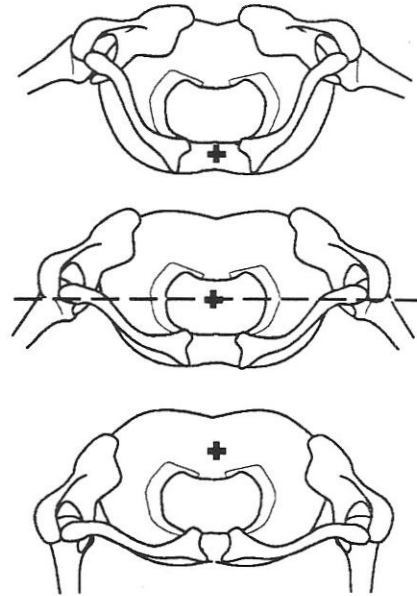
The Vertical Polarity must next pass through the Shoulder Girdle. If we look at this area as another ring, the Shoulder Ring, we can examine how it balances to permit the vertical polarity. The ring includes the scapula and clavicle, the top two ribs and the first thoracic vertebra. The shoulder socket is also included, and it is obvious that the arms are crucial to the balance of the body at this level. The vertical polarity must pass through this level, and it can only pass through in a fully dynamic way if the ring is balanced.

The ring can only be balanced if the arms are used in a way which permits internal extension through the joints - shoulders, elbows wrists, and out through the finger tips.

Oscar Aguado spent much time in organizing the horizontal polarity. In fact I was amazed to find that he worked here in the very beginning, rather than starting at the pelvis, feet, or head like most bodyworkers.

First, the shoulders must find a balance between front and back across the side plane. This requires the security of the diaphragm placed back over the pelvis. The figure at this side shows the shoulders in three positions. Only when the shoulders are balanced between front and back across the side plane does the balance (:) pass through the central area, through which the vertical polarity must go.

Further work with the arms emphasizes finding the alignment of joints in the arms so that the internal "tubes" of extension might be found.



The Shoulder Girdle in various positions. As the shoulders are moved forward or back on the ribcage the center of gravity is shifted in the upper chest.

Below: the open position of the head and neck permits an inner feeling of extension out through the top of the head.

The arm series of Psychocalisthenics™ is an excellent form in which to apply these images. We establish a sense of extension from the spine through the shoulder girdle into the elbows. This requires a balance of the shoulder joint which is well-provided by the shoulder circles. If the elbows are not locked, then the sense of internal extension may pass through through the wrists and out the finger tips. Arm circles, wrist circles, and windmill assist in finding this interior alignment. A greater sense of the chest cavity as a whole develops out of these movements.

Part IV: Releasing the Head to go Up.

In order to complete the polarity, the head must feel as if a tube extended out beyond the crown of the head. And it must feel effortless, as if it were "allowed" to go up. The Alexander Technique uses the image "neck free to let the head go forward and up," which expresses it perfectly, though it might take months of sessions to eliminate effort patterns.

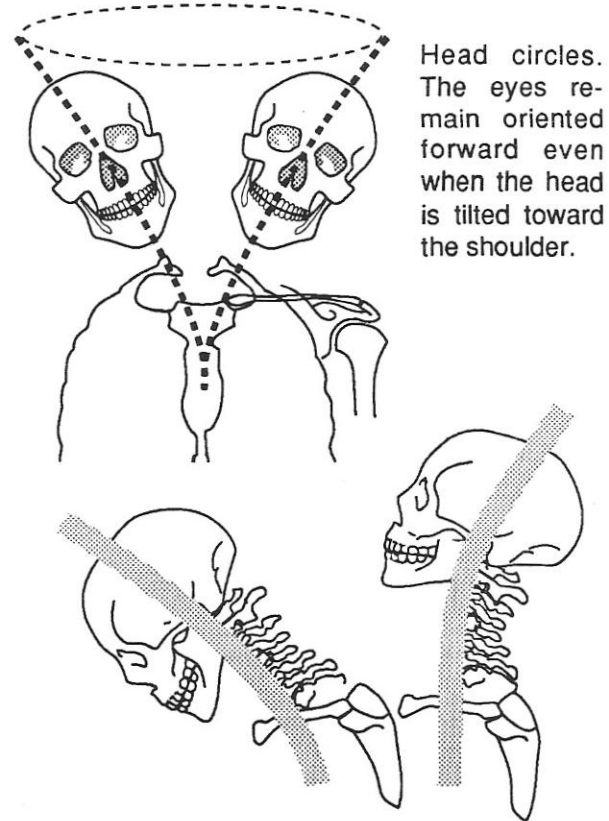
In movement we work mainly to release the head. This is accomplished in three ways:

1. by remembering to maintain an awareness out through the crown of the head.
2. by releasing effort to maintain any position in the head and neck, and
3. by releasing the shoulder girdle out to the side so that the arms do not constitute a burden on the neck.

Once again, the neck series of Psychocalisthenics may be used to establish this imagery in the body. We begin by turning the elbows out so that they hinge on the side plane. This stretches and balances the shoulder girdle across the plane so that movements of the head and neck are geometrically related to the shoulders.

In head circles, the head does not rotate from; side to side, but remains oriented to the front even when the ear is leaning toward the shoulder. The neck is not allowed to "break," (i.e. compress against the sides of the tube,) but a sense of core is maintained from the middle chest out through the crown of the head.

The side-to-side exercise is performed as a rotation around a central axis.



Head circles. The eyes remain oriented forward even when the head is tilted toward the shoulder.

Head circles, seen from the side. The vertical polarity is maintained out through the top of the head by getting the arch from deep in the chest.

Below: the sense of inner polarity is broken by compression in the upper neck. (See discussion of "head circles" and "high lung breath" exercises)

Chin circles work with the balance of the front and back of the spine.

The high lung breath maintains an internal sense of the side plane (twisted by the position) all the way down into the upper chest. The head is turned to the side, looking out the side plane, but without "breaking" in the neck.

