
Walking with Ease

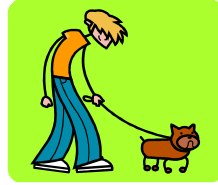
Examples of Walking

Watching my young grandchildren move, I know I must have had a walk like theirs – full-bodied and spirited, carefree, smiling with the pleasure of movement. What happened?

I suppose the start of the transformation came in early grade school when I carried a load of books in my arms for several blocks. My chest was scrunched, my shoulders hunched, my torso stiff, my head forward and down. I nearly forgot my hips, legs and feet. This was my new walk that stayed with me through the years of carrying all kinds of stuff, including more books, then babies and work bags. This was the walk I used even when my arms were free. Though I learned how to jog, do yoga and dance, my trudging walk still stayed with me.

In the spring of 2005 and again this past spring, I stopped by the massage conference booth of Josef Dellagrotte. Both times I received a brief demonstration of a different way of walking. The first time made a difference in my breathing. The second time, I understood how much more there was to learn. Josef was actually giving a course in walking two weeks later in Boston. I couldn't get there fast enough. It was a wise decision.

I love my new walk, which is very much like my early child's walk. I walk this way every time I take a step, whether it's a minute's journey or an hour's. My body just naturally wants to move this way because it feels so good. My spine is refreshed, my neck and hips are looser, my abdomen is tighter, my breathing fuller, and I smile more as I walk. I'm very pleased and relieved.



Drooping head, shoulders, and back --
The dog walks better!



Head forward, back bent --
Ouch!



Head up, spine straight,
back foot active --
Happy face!

The best walkers I found in the clip art catalog were the dog and the reindeer. Imagine that!

Although I'm going to give you the main points of walking well, it can be confusing to keep them in mind when walking. Josef used gentle, small, Feldenkrais-based movements to introduce different patterns that were kind to my body. They seemed easy yet they were remarkably effective in helping me catch on to the walking. It is so helpful to have a patient teacher.

Main Points

- **Hips** actively shift forward and backward, not side to side. This motion helps propel the legs forward efficiently and also helps to send a spiral movement up through the spine all the way to the head.
- **Head** stays tall and **eyes** look forward.
- **Shoulders** are relaxed and shift forward and backward. This helps to propel the arms.
- **Elbows** are slightly or halfway bent and move backward and forward, staying in the side plane of the body, not crossing in front. The elbows move farther in back of the torso than in front of it.
- The **back foot** bends so the ball of the foot and the toes can give a push forward.

This walking pattern can be used for any pace of walking, including aerobic fast walking, a happy alternative to jogging. Websites that you might want to check are:

www.byregion.net/articles-healers/Walking_Right.html

www.walkinghealthy.com

www.dellagrotte-somatic.com

As I've said, it is good to have someone who will work with you, helping your soft tissue to "get" the movements. I would love to be that person. You can use a portion of your hour's massage session or you can choose a session devoted entirely to learning how to walk well.

Walking Session: \$45.00
Good until Jan 1, 2007



Holding a Grandbaby

Here she is in my arms, a warm, nuzzling package that I hold close to me. She is precious, this little one, just beginning her life. I feel her grow and change right in my arms. Her potential is enormous.

I notice my body and shiver with dislike at its sags and bags and what appears to be its much, much smaller future. I'm scared and worried when I think about the end stages of life.

I think I love this baby because of her newness and her potential. Yet she knows nothing of the future. She lives completely in the present. She is content in my arms. I study her. She is teaching me something very important about being here. I realize that it's not her future that I love – it's her presence. The weight of my years begins to lift from me. I am here now, just as she is. I thank her.

Massage Present

You are not a baby anymore but you can still have the experience of being held, of being touched with kindness and presence, of being cared for, of being accepted just as you are, of being listened to, of being seen for the precious being that you are, and of having your aches and pains addressed. Among the times when you can expect to have this experience is during a massage.

Massage is a special time just for you.

\$10 off your next full massage
Good until Jan. 1, 2007

The fear of becoming old is born of the recognition that one is not living now the life that one wishes. It is equivalent to a sense of abusing the present.

Susan

Sontag

There is nothing stronger in the world than tenderness.

Han Suyin



The Bones of the Body

The body is made up of different systems. In massage school I had to learn bones and muscles and massage techniques that mostly involved the muscular, circulatory, and nervous systems. In advanced studies courses, I enlarged my consideration of other systems: lymph, fascial, and craniosacral.

I had not thought much about the skeletal system beyond knowing the major grooves and bumps where muscles, tendons, ligaments and nerves attach or pass through. Thanks to a first level course this summer in a modality called Zero Balancing, I have a growing respect for the life that is sustained in bones. I learned some intriguing techniques that have shifted my perspective about the body once again.

We are complex beings. The wonder is that our systems manage to work in concert with each other so that we can think, move, laugh, grow as individuals and we can connect with other individuals.

Speaking About...

I enjoy speaking to groups. Often I speak free of charge. Some of the presentations are brief (10 minutes) and others longer (30 to 60 minutes). Group sizes run from small to large. My aim is to be lively, humorous, and informative.

Topics have included:

- ◆ Massage Therapy Information
- ◆ Stress Management
- ◆ Posture and Alignment
- ◆ Humor
- ◆ Movement
- ◆ Improvization

I've spoken to nurses, teachers, students, senior citizens, parents, physicians, therapists, employees.

Do you know a group that would be interested? It would be a pleasure to speak to them.

Touch Your Face

Sit or stand quietly. Close your eyes. Slowly and gently touch your face with your fingertips. Explore the bone structure around your eyes, your cheeks, your nose, your teeth, your jaw, your forehead, your temples. With fingers resting on your cheeks, gently stretch the tissue up and out toward your ears. Shift your hands to different locations. Keep your touch soft.

Everything changes,
even that which supposes
itself to be unalterable.

All we can do
is look after the
precious matters
which are our heritage,
and wait, and hope.

Keri Hulme, The Bone People



“What is a human being?”

“A human being is a sack
invented by water so that the
water can walk around.”

--Author unknown

Live in each season as it passes;
breathe the air, drink the drink,
taste the fruit, and resign
yourself to the influences of
each.

--

Henry David Thoreau
Blessed is the influence
of one true, loving soul
upon another.

--George Eliot

Things take time. Things of
value take more time.

--Marv Hiles

There is more to life than
increasing its speed.

--Gandhi

Listening does not require a
response.

We put ourselves under a strain
when we believe a response is
necessary and the effort gets in
the way of hearing.

Listening is effortless.

To listen is to be relaxed and
quiet.

It happens in a silent mind.

--Darlene Stewart

Teaching

Nor Hosp

Specials: Thai

