

Reversing Aging and Pain Through the Principals of Well Organized Movement

By Anat Baniel

The passage of years is an inescapable reality. We all dread the discomfort and pain that we believe lies ahead. Already beginning in the early years of adulthood, many suffer from a variety of tensions, aches and pains in the back, neck, joints and more. Both with aging and with pain, the most obvious change is in the quality and availability of movement. One begins to move slower and with greater caution. Stiffness, reduced power, and decreased fluidity and coordination of movement are the norm.

All these symptoms can be reversed by changing the way and quality with which we move. Any movement is either performed in a way that is harmonious with the structure of our body, or in a way that is poorly organized. Poorly organized movement, over time, will lead to injury, pain and aging.

Here are some of the elements that insure harmonious well-organized movement:

- 1. Minimum Effort:** Any movement you do has a trajectory - a path of minimum effort. There is no way to know in advance what that path is. However, our body and brain work in such a way that it lets us know. When we move in the path of minimum effort, or close to it, the movement feels pleasurable and easy to do. When we do not, it feels difficult, or painful. Movements done with minimum effort will support healthy muscles and joints. Excessive force in movement will create injury, pain and limitation. (Link to demo lessons on video)
- 2. Reversibility of Movement:** When you move your arm, for instance, at any moment you should be able to change the direction, speed and power with which you move it. Any movement that is truly a voluntary movement has this quality of reversibility. Reversibility means having real control of your movements and being able to do what you intend and want to do in a way that works well for you. Again, when we move this way, we experience pleasure, ease, power and strength. (Link to demo lessons on video)
- 3. Whole body participation:** With any movement that we do, we should include our whole body. Some parts will move, others will not. There always needs to be awareness and representation of the whole body. When we try to move with only one part of ourselves, the movement becomes hard to do, is done poorly and, over time, will create injury and pain. (Link to demo lessons on video)
- 4. Proportional Distribution of Effort:** The effort put into any movement should be proportionally distributed throughout the body. The big muscles should do a bigger share of the work while the smaller ones should do less. That is when movement becomes fluid and elegant, like the movement of a cat.

Any exercise, fitness program, or sports activity needs to incorporate these four elements into its teaching and practice. We have a brain that can form new patterns of movement, feeling, thought, and action *at any age*. That means that we can improve the *way* we move and the *quality* of our movements throughout life, and reap the enormous benefits that come with it. Some of those benefits are: life long flexibility, strength, speed, comfort and ease in movement, and the ability to acquire new movement skills and improvement existing ones at any age. We become more creative, handle stress better, have fewer accidents, pains and aches and experience vitality and well-being. We no longer have to accept the traditional model of aging and pain.

For more information you may log on to www.banielfeldenkraismethod.com and www.anatbanielmethod.com