

Free  
EBOOK

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO  
LIVING A LIFE THAT IS

Pain-Free,  
Potent & *Alive*

IREneLYON

# ARE YOU LOOKING FOR PAIN-FREE MOVEMENT THAT LASTS?

It starts with finding good posture!

“Shoulders back. Chest out. Belly tight. Stand straight.”

We've all heard these words before. In my days as an exercise and fitness trainer, I use to cue my clients with such words to get them into better posture. At the time, I thought this was what finding good posture was all about.

Then, in 2001, I got hurt.

Like, broken body parts and multiple surgeries kind of hurt. After the acute stages of healing were finished and I was rehabilitating, I realized that all those cues and various exercises that I use to teach my clients to find better posture weren't working on my own body. Sure, I was “recovered” and strong, but I was also stiff and riddled with muscle tension. One day, while doing a good old-fashioned hamstring stretch (you know, the type where you put your foot on an elevated surface and bend over it), my hamstring tore! Ouch!



At that point, I knew something was seriously wrong, and something was seriously missing in my skill set as an exercise and rehabilitation specialist.

I was doing everything I thought to be correct, everything that I was taught in my exercise science education, but I still wasn't pain-free.

So, I began to ask questions like:

***Did they not teach us the correct stuff, or [insert big pause] am I just missing a very big piece?***

Turns out I had learned some really good foundations about human biology, physiology, and human mechanics, but I had never really learned what it takes to teach a person, let alone myself, how to find true human function. Not to mention how to restore this function when it breaks down.

Back then, what I was teaching and what I was using to help myself personally was either the newest fad (e.g., core strength, body-ball exercises, balance tools, etc.), what the originators of fitness and exercise rehabilitation came out with eons ago (warm-ups based on static stretching of muscles, strengthening the weak areas of the body, and stretching out the tight areas, etc.), or based in a type of mechanical rightness that would only benefit a robot or a mechanical engineer.

The status quo for exercise, body rehabilitation, and most branches of medicine is such that the human being is treated more like a machine with its associated parts as opposed to a living organic system that must learn how to interact with its ever-changing world. The better trainers, therapists, and doctors will assess with a bit more functionality in mind, but they too often miss some major pieces when it comes to truly restoring full human function.

### **You may be wondering, then, what *are* the most important pieces?**

Keep reading and I'll tell you.



*(By the way, you don't need to be injured or recovering from a physical injury to benefit from this mini-guide and its lessons and exercises. By learning about finding good posture and becoming pain-free, you'll give yourself the best type of prevention that exists!)*

Enjoy the videos, exercises, and, most importantly, starting on a path that will help you become pain-free.

**Irene Lyon, MSC.**

### **In this ebook:**

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## Part 1

# WHAT IF YOU ALWAYS LIVED YOUR LIFE SLIGHTLY OFF BALANCE?



**Listen to this five-minute introduction** to find out what happens when your posture is always slightly off.

<http://www.irenelyon.com/mp3/Introduction-to-Potent-Posture.mp3>



**Then, take ten minutes to do this exercise** so you can begin to have better posture. <http://www.irenelyon.com/mp3/Beginning-Body-Scan-for-Potent-Posture.mp3>

Now, imagine what it would be like to have this kind of posture in ALL your activities.

Here are some examples of what can happen:

- Less chance of injury during your daily routines, pastimes, and hobbies.
- More strength and energy in your exercise and fitness regimen.
- Maintaining independence into your older years.
- Better force through your bones, meaning better bone density.

## Part 2

# WHAT WOULD A BABY DO?

Remember the example I used in the five-minute introduction, of an infant learning how to walk?

I want you to time travel back to when you were an infant. Let's say around 6-12 months old.

I know you may not remember what it was like, so to refresh your memory, watch this video of Baby Liv and get a look at new life discovering movement for the first time. Then, come on back and continue...



When you were a baby, do you think you were thinking about keeping your shoulders back or activating that core to keep your spine strong? How about as you got older and you spent all those days and weekends playing with friends,

building forts, bicycling up and down the neighborhood streets; did you need to stretch for thirty minutes every day, or go for weekly massages or chiropractic adjustments, to keep everything ticking along nicely?



You probably are nodding and saying

*“Um, nope”* right now.

Yes?

So what do you think happened since then?

## Here are some ideas I’d love for you to consider:

Rules. Society. Injury. Habits. Sitting. Less activity. Trauma. School. More rules.

So much has happened from that tender time of infancy, childhood, and early adolescence. Back then, our movement through the world wasn’t riddled with muscle aches and pains, body stiffness, chronic tension, and, most importantly, rules that don’t consider the hardwiring and innate capacity for efficient and dynamic movement that is built into our bodies from the beginning.

## The good news is that you CAN get this freedom of movement back!

Seriously, you can!

I know you can because I did. That is what happened after I tore that hamstring muscle I wrote about earlier.



Before you move on, make sure you have listened to the **five-minute introduction** and completed the **ten-minute exercise** on finding better posture.

<http://www.irenelyon.com/Imp3/Introduction-to-Potent-Posture.mp3>

<http://www.irenelyon.com/Imp3/Beginning-Body-Scan-for-Potent-Posture.mp3>

By completing these first two steps you’ll have a better idea about your own posture and how simple and subtle changes can really ease up body tensions and put you on a pain-free path.

## Part 3

# THE PRINCIPLES OF MOVEMENT THAT SAVED MY MOVEMENT

When I realized I needed to re-think and re-learn my skills as an exercise specialist, not to mention figure out my own imbalances and the pains that went with them, I came across these five principles that truly saved my movement—and me!

### 1. How to sense my body when I'm awake and moving through my world

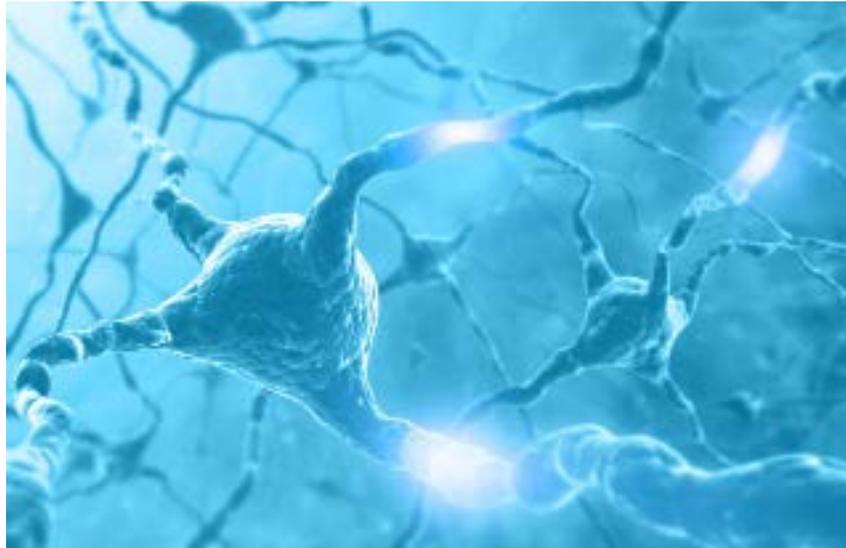
That meant that instead of just plowing through my day with zero body awareness and no clue where and when I might be doing things that were causing unnecessary strain—like clenching my jaw whenever I chopped vegetables, or stopping my breath every time I got up from a chair or sat down—I began to notice when my body was working too hard.

This principle was critical to master so that my bigger actions and more intentional physical activities like working out or going for a hike had ease and lightness to them.

### 2. How pausing before a movement opens up a whole new world of possibility

The art of intention and noticing how I might execute a movement before I actually did it was key. This practice opened new pathways of movement that I never would have considered. It also helped slow me down and heighten my experiences a hundredfold! By pausing and using my intention, I was able to tap into more areas of my brain and form more connections—the scientists call this

“neuroplasticity”—which not only changed and improved my movement, but also how I take on other non-movement-based endeavours in my life.



The act of pausing and using intention is unique to humans, and it can begin to shift deeply held habits. Don't underestimate its power because of its simplicity.

### 3. How to move in relationship to the surface I am on and find support from it

Remember Baby Liv?

If you skipped the video, make sure to watch her cuteness and teachings.

A video player interface showing a baby crawling on a wooden floor. The text "Baby Liv" is overlaid on the right side of the video. The video player includes a play button, a progress bar, and a URL: <http://vimeo.com/13598879>.

video

02:21 100% HD

<http://vimeo.com/13598879>

When infants move, they aren't thinking about what muscles to contract and when. They move in relationship to what they sense under their bodies as well as motivation to get from point A to point B. They also take the time to explore their body movement and find the easiest path.

When you can better sense the support from the environment under you (e.g., the seat of a chair, the floor, etc.), you can better take advantage of this concept. If I bring it back to the example of the baby, if you rest her on a very soft bed it is much harder for her to move, but if you rest her on a firmer floor or carpet, you'll be amazed at her ability to find her environment and begin moving.

Therefore when I can better sense the surface under me, such as the chair under my butt, and sense how I can move from that surface and use its support to move from,

then the next piece can fall into place.....

#### 4. How to execute movement that is proportionally distributed through my skeleton, and therefore muscles, giving lightness to my movements

This took practice, but by learning to be aware of how my skeleton moves through space, as well as adding the first three steps of sensing my body, pausing before a movement, and becoming fully aware of the surface I move from, a lot of good stuff started to happen in my body as well as in my life.

My movements started to be more fluid and easier because I had better distribution of muscular effort across my entire body.

**The concepts of counterbalance and reversibility helped me find this final piece.**

For example, in the Baby Liv video (at the 2 minutes and 40 seconds time point), when she was rolling back and forth slowly in a twisting motion, she was gently finding counterbalance between her upper body and lower body and she was doing it in such a way that she was reversing the movement.

## A REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE OF REVERSIBILITY AND COUNTERBALANCE



*A non-baby example to describe reversibility and counterbalance is if you imagine two people playing on a teeter-totter. At the beginning you start out slowly. The more you play, the more skilled you become at navigating smaller distances. You don't have to go all the way to the ground to go back up. When two people can go up and down smoothly and can stop midway and resume the movement, all without banging into the ground, counterbalance and reversibility is making this happen.*

Once my body figured out counterbalance and reversibility, my muscles started working the way they were supposed to work. My body wasn't straining unnecessarily when I exercised or walked up stairs. Even doing computer work got easier!

In a nutshell, my muscles and skeleton were working together.

*I began using my big muscles for the big lifting, my small muscles for the smaller lifting, and my skeleton was actually in my awareness when it came to my movement.*

*I learned to use them all in synchrony, and do it in relationship to the surface I am on.*

**These principles of movement build upon one another. You actually can't have one without the others, but when you learn to apply them, your movement will become light, easy, wonderful, and, most importantly, PAIN-FREE!**

## Here's one extra bonus principle

### 5. How to be curious and playful with my movements

I was taught in school (as I'm sure you were too) to follow instructions, but I finally realized I needed to stop being so serious about getting it right and just experiment to find what works.

Here's the thing: I'm quite certain that when I was an infant learning how to roll over and how to walk, I wasn't reading an instruction manual for cues on when to contract my muscles and when to relax them. I just had to sense and feel it. I had to practice and keep doing it until it was effortless. I had to find the most efficient way to get from point A to point B.

I find it interesting that all it took was returning back to this natural and innate intelligence of my body to fix all my body problems. I don't think it is a fluke. It's just what was there. Waiting to be discovered. Again.

**You've got this intelligence inside your body too!**



## Part 4

# TO END (OR MAYBE TO BEGIN....)

### Is this just for the injured?

Absolutely not!

Prevention is nice to talk about, but the practice of it rarely happens, especially when it comes to learning how to move efficiently through our world.

I tell my story from my injured point of view, and I'm just as guilty as the next person.

To put it simply and bluntly:

**IN OUR SOCIETY WE OFTEN NEED TO HAVE A PAIN POINT BEFORE WE THINK ABOUT HELPING OUT OUR BODY.**

We consider how few vegetables we are eating or how poorly we take care of our stress levels only after the biopsy comes back positive. We start thinking about watching our words when our partner threatens to leave us. We go to the gym when we notice a few extra pounds packing on. We treat ourselves to that relaxing massage when we realize we actually need a whole month off!

This is the way it *has* been.

Our movement, our posture, our functional ability, our health, is something we take for granted—until it fails us.

This story is old. So old!

**But please don't wait until something fails you.**

Learn now. Make a change now.

Create a body savings account and build your capacity for potent and dynamic posture and movement before you get that back strain or hamstring pull (like I did!).

I believe if more of us re-learn this natural intelligence, as described in the five principles that saved my movement and shown in the Baby Liv video, things would really begin to shift in our relationship with the world.

**“THE MOTOR ACT IS THE CRADLE OF THE MIND.”**

Charles Sherrington, winner of 1932 Nobel Prize in Physiology

What if our movement, our posture, our function, and all our “motor acts” were executed pain-free, with potency, efficiency, and ease?

Imagine how that would translate in the mind? After all, in order to execute our posture and movement in a pain-free and efficient way, we must shift and change our mind, the way we think, and the way we act.

I'm convinced that as a result a lot more kindness, and less disability and disease, not to mention more efficient productivity and creativity, would flourish.

Naturally.



Let's get started, shall we?

I've got the perfect starter course for you that I'm super proud of. The 21 Day Nervous System Tune-Up blends my most important video trainings and foundational exercises. Start your tune-up today and kick-start your healing pathways into high gear so you can get on the path to becoming pain-free, potent and alive.

**SIGN-UP AND START  
YOUR TUNE-UP TODAY.**

[www.irenelyon.com/tuneup](http://www.irenelyon.com/tuneup)