

BE PAIN FREE

NINE SECRETS TO HEALING
THROUGH MOVEMENT



by Joe Pinella

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INTRODUCTION

“When we take responsibility for our own health and healing....
Miracles Happen!”

Since the beginning of time, humans have used certain kinds of movement as an integral part of their healthcare. In various cultures this has taken the form of such ancient healing arts as Tai Chi, Chi Gong, yoga, and ceremonial dance. For our wise ancestors, there was no separation between movement, spirituality, and health. In fact, Chi Gong, the basis of acupuncture, is one of the three pillars of Chinese medicine.

When you use the correct movements, you stimulate the automatic systems of your body, generating a natural healing response that can eliminate pain and stiffness, help minimize the need for joint replacement, increase energy and create positive emotional and physical changes throughout your entire body.

Too many of us have forgotten or never knew that natural wisdom. Especially in the modern western world, many of us have given the responsibility for healing to "experts," from medical doctors to Internet gurus, when; in fact, the greatest expert on healing is the innate intelligence of your own body. With the right kind of guidance... and the right kind of physical movement... your body's intelligence can heal you better than anyone or anything. It can achieve true healing by addressing the *cause* of pain or limitation, instead of just masking the symptoms.

THE HEALING MOVEMENTS SYSTEM

I'm not saying that modern medicine doesn't have its place. When I broke my neck and back in a catastrophic car accident, Western medicine saved my life against great odds. I have enormous gratitude and respect for my doctors' skills and ability. However, when it came to true healing, Western medicine and physical therapy were unable to help. All the experts told me I would be disabled for life, which was something that I refused to accept.

As a young man, I had studied the ancient Chinese healing arts of Chi Gong and Tai Chi Kung. After my accident I thought of those healing movements and wondered if they would offer me a way to my own recovery. My instinct was correct. As I turned to this ancient form of self-healing, I gradually recovered my ability to walk, to take care of myself, and to relieve the unremitting pain that had been a constant part of my life since the accident.

Years later, after having fully recovered, pain-free and with full range of motion, I set out to help others by creating my **Healing Movements System**. I went back to the fundamental principles of the ancient movement-oriented health techniques. I took the best elements of each, and then put them into a format that is easy to do no matter what your age or skill level.

REGAIN HEALTH... NATURALLY!

My **Healing Movements System** consists of breathing exercises, and slow, gentle movements coordinated with breath and visualization. These healing exercises are similar to the individual movements used in Chinese physical therapy, and have been proven over the years to help loosen stiff joints and relieve pain.

In working with my program, you can start out sitting or standing—or even start as I did during the first several months after my accident—by just visualizing the movements. This process stimulates and promotes the body's own pain relief mechanisms. When you make the movements a regular part of your life, they can work wonders for sore, stiff joints, helping to relieve the pain associated with injury, inactivity, arthritis, and more.

NINE STEPS FOR PROMOTING HEALTH THROUGH MOVEMENT

My **Healing Movements System** does not look at all like a typical western exercise program. That is because it is based on ancient mind-body healing techniques, not on glamorous body building exercise, or extreme workouts, which can greatly increase pain and disability over time - and serve virtually no purpose in healing.

The **Healing Movements System** seems less strenuous than Western exercise, but ironically gives more health benefits, cardiovascular fitness, lung capacity, muscle strength, toning and firming, than overly vigorous western exercise does. It is based on nine principles that are inter-woven throughout each movement. They are:

1. MOVE WITH AWARENESS

As you move, be conscious of how each movement feels. Consider movement as a meditation.

2. BREATHE INTENTIONALLY

All healing takes place when we are relaxed. Breath work is the simplest way to turn off the stress response and relax the nervous system.

3. MOVE IN SLOW MOTION

Slow motion allows you to bypass bad movement habits. You cannot change a habit without slowing down.

4. NO PAIN MEANS MORE GAIN!

Moving without pain is the goal, and the means of achieving it! Pain during exercise only causes more pain; it never generates healing.

5. THE ENERGY CONNECTION

We are energy beings, and Healing Movements exercises are energy exercises.

6. MOVE IN CIRCLES AND SPIRALS

The full range of motion around most of the major joints is a circle. Move them in their full range of motion to avoid repetitive stress injury.

7. BALANCE YOUR BODY

Strive for right side/left side balance and balanced muscle and tendon strength around each joint.

8. GROW STRONG AND FLEXIBLE “SILK”

“Silk” is a Chinese martial arts term for connective tissue, or fascia. Building strong and flexible fascia reduces pain and stiffness.

9. KEEP ON MOVING

Movement helps heal your body. Inactivity damages your body. Keep moving! Now let's take a closer look at each of these nine simple principles and get a better idea of how you can put them to work to engage your own body in the healing process:

1. MOVE WITH AWARENESS:

Another way of putting this principle is “Engage your mind in the process of moving.” Engaging your mind and spirit is the most important part of healing. In fact, your brain is the most powerful influence in your own healing. All Healing Movement exercises should be done with full attention and sensory awareness. As you move, try to be aware of where your body is in space, and where the different parts of your body are in relation to each other.

Really pay attention to what you are doing and don't allow the movements to become routine or rote. Each of the exercises is designed to make your brain figure out the right way to move correctly. In order to change and improve the way you move, you need to “FEEL” what you are doing.

“If you can't feel it, you can't heal it.”

HEALING MOVEMENTS INSIGHT: VISUALIZATION WORKS!

An important way to engage your brain is to use visualization. Scientific studies have proven that visualizing muscle-strengthening exercises will actually strengthen those muscles. When you are trying to do a movement that is a little beyond your current ability, visualize that you are doing it correctly as you are moving. Don't look in a mirror while you are visualizing! You don't want to receive negative feedback. Your mind doesn't differentiate between its internal image of the way you are moving and what you are actually doing. In time, your body will start moving the way your imagination directs it to move.

2. BREATHE INTENTIONALLY

Intentional breathing is the foundation for control over your nervous system, which in turn controls your muscles, your mood and the stress response. Healing Movement exercises coordinate the breath with specific rhythmic body motions. For example, the system includes shaking exercises, which help clear out the lungs and expand lung capacity, and dynamic stretching exercises coordinated with the breath.

Specific breathing exercises aid in the circulation of fluids in your body. These fluids, including lymphatic fluid, are a part of your immune system, and are circulated by the rhythmic expansion and contraction of muscles in your body. These natural fluids aid in healing, bringing critical elements of the immune system in contact with areas that need it. Rhythmic motion coupled with deep breathing also helps blood circulation without unduly stressing the heart. As a bonus, these exercises help regulate blood pressure too!

TRY THIS (LYING DOWN): MINGLING FIRE AND WATER:

“Mingling Fire and Water” is a breathing exercise / meditation which consists of a deep abdominal breath followed by a reverse breath.

A deep abdominal breath means expanding your belly as you breathe in. To practice this put one hand on your belly as you breathe in. Your hand should move outwards. Gently squeeze your belly to exhale.

A reverse breathing is done by pulling your belly inward as you breathe in- the reverse of a deep abdominal breath. Practice this by putting one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Feel your belly contract while your chest expands. This exercise strengthens the diaphragm, which is a muscle. Reverse breathing pulls the diaphragm upward, which also massages the lungs and heart.

Now, slowly alternate a deep abdominal breath with a reverse breath. Continue this for several repetitions. Notice how the deep abdominal breath energizes you while the reverse breath relaxes you. This is a balancing meditation.

3. MOVE IN SLOW MOTION

Slow motion exercise stimulates healing in several ways. First, slowing down forces your brain to become more active and get involved in the whole healing process. You simply cannot move in your usual ways when you are concentrating on moving as slowly as possible.

Second, moving in slow motion also forces the body to use more muscles in any given motion. For example, when you rapidly swing your arm around in a circle, you are using only the major muscles in your arm and shoulder. Gravity and momentum are doing a great deal of the work of moving the arm. In contrast, when you make that same big circle very slowly, a different set of muscles must come into play to hold your arm in position at each point in the circle.

TRY IT OUT!

Stand with both arms at your sides. First rapidly swing one arm around in a big circle. Feel how gravity pulls your arm down and most of your muscles are relaxed. You are using only about seven or eight muscles to do this! Next: Very slowly bring one arm up in the front with your palm facing up. Slowly continue moving your arm upward until it is overhead. When it reaches the top of the arc, rotate your arm so that the palm is facing away from your body. Slowly, slowly continue the circular motion until your arm is back at your side. Feel how much more difficult this is. You just used 22 - 23 muscles to do this!

Every body movement requires an ideal sequence of muscles firing to accomplish that motion. As we get older we all have accumulated numerous 'dents and dings' to the tissues in our bodies. With each injury, no matter how minor, your body finds a way to move that minimizes pain by protecting the injured muscle, joint or connective tissue. However, this protective way of moving uses a different sequence of muscles than the ideal ones, in order to bypass the injured area. This is called a compensation pattern. Compensation patterns can lead to further injury or restriction.

A protective movement sequence is also less efficient than your pre-injury movement sequence. It can actually put a strain on other body areas, leading to chronic pain. Even after the initial injury has apparently healed, your body holds on to this protective movement sequence. In time, it becomes an unconscious habit, your default way of making that movement:

Since they are unconscious, compensation patterns cannot be overcome with regular exercise. When you exercise rapidly or at your normal pace, you only reinforce your compensation patterns. But moving slowly and deliberately with awareness makes it impossible to continue your compensation patterns. Slow motion allows you to use and thereby strengthen the muscles that were bypassed after an injury.

INSIGHT: SLOW MOTION HELPS YOU BE AWARE:

When you exercise in slow motion you are much less likely to hurt yourself! You will be aware of what your limits are before you go beyond them. If you exercise rapidly, on the other hand, or even at "normal" speed, you can exceed your current range of motion before you know it, causing further damage to muscles, tendons and joints.

4. NO PAIN MEANS *MORE*GAIN!

Some popular fitness programs tell you that the harder you work, and the more soreness you feel later, the more benefit you are getting. The truth is that if you exercise to the point of pain, you are setting yourself up for more pain and stiffness, including the miseries of arthritis and other degenerative conditions.

When you exercise hard, you tear down muscle fiber. As with any injury, the muscle tissue is replaced, but now contains micro-scars. This micro scarring shows up later in life as pain, limitation and muscle stiffness. Moving moderately, on the other hand, rebuilds muscle the way babies build muscle. Gently stress the muscle, then rest. The muscle responds by growing new muscle fibers to accommodate the new demands put upon it. To heal without further damage, you must always work within your current limits, and you must work gently to relieve pain.

HELPFUL HINT: USE A TECHNIQUE CALLED DYNAMIC STRETCH AND PAUSE:

When you are making a movement that brings you to close to the limit of your (pain-free) range of motion, pause there for just a split second, and then relax. This gives your brain the signal that this movement is "safe" and will not hurt you. A lot of pain during movement is actually just a warning signal from your brain not to go any further!

TRY THIS: MOVE INTO THE SOFTNESS

Here's a little exercise called "Moving into the Softness" to see how gentle movement can increase your range of motion better than forceful movement.

Sit upright in a straight-backed chair, feet flat on the ground. With your eyes open, and face forward, turn your head to one side as if you're looking over your shoulder. Turn it as far as you can go without pain. Feel the strain in your neck. Note a spot on the wall that marks how far you have turned.

Now, bring your head back to neutral. Close your eyes and take a gentle deep breath in. Exhale and turn again to that side as you "move into the softness," which means to relax into the movement. Now open your eyes and notice how much farther to that side you can see.

INSIGHT: CONTROL NOT EXERTION

Healing Movement emphasizes control of a movement rather than exertion. Activities that stress exertion are usually very inefficient-using everything you've got to achieve a movement. Beginners or people already in pain can easily get hurt this way. A controlled movement uses only the right muscles in the right sequence. This is what differentiates an expert from a beginner in any sport or program. An expert has movements that are very efficient. They can relax the unnecessary muscles and gain more power from the necessary ones!

'No Pain, No Gain' means No Brain! Joe Pinella

5. THE ENERGY CONNECTION

The **Healing Movement System** is based on principles of Chi Gong or “energy work” which are the same principles as acupuncture uses. Energy, bioelectrical impulses, travels along discrete pathways, or meridians. In energy medicine, pain and dysfunction are thought to occur when this energy does not move freely along its normal pathway. Acupuncture uses needles to move energy on ‘meridians’, and free up blocked energy: we use specific movements to do the same thing.

INSIGHT: PAIN IS BLOCKED ENERGY

The source of pain is not always what we think. Often, pain that is felt in one part of the body may actually be the result of an injury (or energy blockage) in another part of the body. Pain can radiate, change and move. When we work on healing the body as a whole, with the principles of energy medicine, we can resolve issues we might be unaware of that contribute to pain.

6. MOVE IN CIRCLES AND SPIRALS

The full range of motion of most of the major joints is a circle. To use all the muscles and tendons around a joint, you must work that joint in a circular or spiral fashion.

Each joint is surrounded by its own combination of muscles and connective tissue. When all the small muscles attached to a joint are strong, the joint has its own natural support system - like internal guide wires or a brace. Strengthening all the little support muscles also provides stability and an optimal range of motion to the joint.

In contrast, when you work out in a linear fashion, as you do with machines or free weights, you work mainly the large muscles. The critically important small support muscles are neglected. Most Western exercise strengthens major muscles at the expense of small support muscles.

TRY THIS: HIP ROTATIONS

Hold onto the back of a sturdy chair or your kitchen counter. Stand on one leg, extend the other leg, with the toes pulled up. Slowly rotate the other leg in a circle. First rotate in one direction, then the other. Feel how *all* the muscles in the leg you are standing on have to fire in a circular motion around the leg to keep you upright.

INSIGHT: CIRCULAR MOVEMENT LUBRICATES YOUR JOINTS

A bonus to moving the joints in a gentle circular movement is lubrication of the joint. Each joint is encased in a sac of lubricant called synovial fluid. When this sac dries up, due to pain, injury, or lack of use, it causes pain. Circular rotation around the joint very slightly irritates that joint. The body's response is to lubricate the joint with synovial fluid, allowing the joint to move more easily and relieving even the pain from arthritis.

“Motion is lotion”

7. STRIVE FOR BALANCE

Left/Right Side Balance- When one side of the body is much weaker than the other, the dominant side cannot perform as well, and injuries tend to occur. Working the non-dominant side helps restore balance and prevent injury.

Muscle Balance Around Each Joint: When the muscles and connective tissue involved in moving a joint are weak... or if the muscles are unbalanced... the joint is too mobile. This causes damage to the joint, chronic inflammation, and destruction of the joint cartilage.

To protect and stabilize your joints, you must first correct the muscle imbalances and strengthen the connective tissue around your joints. The slow and gentle Joint Rotations in my Healing Movements System are designed specifically to do just that.

8. GROW STRONG AND FLEXIBLE “SILK”

In the Chinese martial arts, there is an expression: “Reeling in the Silk.” This “silk’ is like an invisible body suit just under the skin that connects every bone, every muscle, every organ and every fiber of your entire body. Western medicine calls this silken bodysuit *fascia*. The Healing Movement System works on the fascia, the connective tissue, in the body.

Many people do not know what fascia is, or its importance in fitness and healing. If you have ever cooked a piece of chicken, you have seen the slippery film that covers the meat and the kind that is attached to the bone. This is fascia or connective tissue. We have this too. In fact, a slippery coating of fascia surrounds each of our muscles, allowing the muscles to glide smoothly past each other.

Having a strong and coordinated system of connective tissue is critical to protecting your joints and many other functions. You may be surprised to learn that most exercise-related injuries are actually related to your fascia, not muscle or bone.

Damaged fascia is also behind a lot of age-related aches and pains. When it is damaged, underused or even when you sleep, your fascia can start to stick together. If it is not exercised appropriately, you get stiff, your range of motion gets smaller and smaller, and it hurts!

Fascia is a continuous sheet of tissue in the body, like a silk body suit under our skin. Damage to fascia in one part of the body can cause limitation and pain far away from where the actual problem is.

HELPFUL HINT: HYDRATE WHILE MOVING

Keep a bottle of pure water with you when you exercise. The expansion and contraction of your muscles helps distribute the water throughout the whole body.

INSIGHT: EMOTIONAL HEALING TOO!

When we are injured or inactive for a long time, the injury is “stored” in the fascia in the form of adhesions, tears and kinks. Even emotional trauma can be stored in fascia. The Healing Movements System strengthens fascia and works out the “kinks”. Healing Movements gently stretches your fascia to help it regain it's original smooth shape. Both physical and emotional injuries will smooth out!

9. KEEP MOVING!

The human body is designed for movement. Joyful, supple movement! The Healing Movements System is designed not only to help you heal pain and injuries, but also to help you maintain healthy movement throughout your lifetime. Don't make the common mistake of using healing movement only until your pain is relieved, and then go back to sedentary ways—or back to harmful activities that cause injury.

HELPFUL HINT: CREATE YOUR OWN RITUAL

Make healing movement part of your life! Think of it as a moving meditation. Creating a ritual may help. Schedule a regular time and place to do your exercise. One of my students does healing movements every afternoon when she has finished work, followed by a slow, controlled walking meditation. She reports that this routine leaves her energized and relaxed at the same time. Try a routine like this yourself, or something similar that better fits your own lifestyle. Delight in the ability to move the remarkable body you were given!

CONCLUSION



A healthy, pain-free lifestyle includes regular exercise, good nutrition, proper hydration, stress relief and knowing that your body can heal itself. If you have the desire, determination and dedication to make your own life healthy and pain free, then follow my Healing Movements System on a regular basis for vibrant good health and a better quality of life!

Health and Happiness!

Joe Pinella - Healing Movements System (800) 939-7394

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Joe Pinella - Healing Movements System - Free Recorded Message (800) 939-7394