

Awareness Through Movement

Fall Term: Sep 13 to Dec 5

with Diane Lade

Wednesday 7 - 8 pm

“Use It or Lose It” series

Thursday 5:30 - 6:45 pm

or Friday 10:45am - Noon

Intelligent Core

Saturday 10:30 - 11:30am

Shoulder Recovery

Saturday 12:00 - 2pm

Details & Registration:

www.greenspiritresources.com/schedule

Use It or Lose It!

by Diane Lade

I can hear the occasional moan and creaking of joints around here as another summer slips away, along with another bit of muscle mass. It is tempting to let the body ‘take care of itself’, but I find it doesn’t do such a great job when left entirely on its own. A mostly sedentary life does not offer the most basic variety of movement that the body and brain need to stay supple and lively.

How can we maintain bone density, functional strength, mobility and balance as we advance in our sedentary way?

Why Use It? And How We Lose It

The body depends upon movement to keep many functions alive. Digestion is stimulated; breathing/oxygenation is optimized. Alzheimer research now shows that movement is one of the most effective ways to keep the brain and nervous system alive and well. Our nervous system is astoundingly sensitive and complex – designed for a larger range of possibilities of expression than any of us generally use. When we cease to use any particular pattern, for example, reaching overhead, we can gradually lose the ability to do so, and the disability (in this case, to lengthen the spine and engage the back to lift the arms) spreads to other activities, causing loss of other abilities. Frozen shoulder can be one result of a gradual immobilization of the chest and spine.

Movements Lost

Working with an older population gives me an appreciation for things we take for granted which are very often lost somewhere along the way, without noticing how or when they disappear. I am surprised to know how many folks can no longer bend to take care of their own feet, cut their toenails. I observe that disappearance of the ability to roll over is soon followed by the inability to walk – a serious blow to one’s independence. Balance may have been poor for a



long while beforehand. Walking exclusively on flat surfaces deadens the liveliness of the ankles and response-ability for balance. Living longer means it's a more important investment than ever before, to keep this body in good working order as best we can. Maybe we are not doomed to give up the activities we love so soon, nor to be unable to get up out of a chair eventually.

Try This One!

Brazilian researchers used getting up and down from the floor as criteria to measure general health and life expectancy. The highest level of health corresponded with the ability to rise from the floor without using any hands on the floor! Have you tried that recently?

Strong Bones – Maintaining Bone Density

by Diane Lade

A Feldenkrais approach to living with (or preventing) osteoporosis considers how we organize to direct force through the bones, more or less skillfully. One factor in loss of bone density comes from our inefficient patterns of movement. In poor posture or 'acture' (posture in action) we ask our muscles to do work that our bones ought to do to support us. When we discover more efficient skeletal use, then the bones receive the compressive forces they need to stimulate growth and stay strong. A very dramatic illustration of this occurs with loss of bone density in space travellers, where the bones are not receiving the compression they absolutely must have.

Most of my clients with osteoporosis also show kyphosis – a rounding of the upper back, usually accompanied by loss of ability to lengthen and extend the spine. It's a sign of the musculature having taken over work of bone, and (my favorite theme) usually, inefficient use of the extensors in general.

Feldenkrais Method differs from traditional exercise in strengthening bone. I've had clients who are given various exercises, or practices from the doctor like "pound your heels when you walk!" Besides hurting the heels, when a person engages in these activities from their usual organization, they strengthen the pattern of misuse and inefficiency, and some of the benefit may or may not transmit to the bones.

Using the Extensor Train

A basic ingredient in finding a new way where force will be efficiently transmitted thru bone, is learning to find and use the 'extensor train', or the power of

The second level allowed the use of one hand, and the third level needed two hands. It can be fun to recover these abilities in the context of play in an ATM (Awareness Through Movement) class.

A Fun Way to Use It

Feldenkrais lessons provide an elegant and pleasurable way to meet our body's and brain's need for stimulation. We can maintain and improve our ability to organize well to push, pull, bend, lift, reach, get up and down from the floor or a chair, stand and walk, in a non-competitive, self-paced environment. Pleasure and play are important elements in learning. Please don't wait til you lose it! Come and play, and learn to use it well now!

the back of ourselves, vs. a common mistake of using the flexors (the muscles of the front) for many of our activities, like getting up and down from a chair. This is exemplified by the difficulty one sees particularly as we get older, of getting up out a soft couch! Our sedentary lifestyle really fosters and allows us to get away with a less-than-optimal way of acting, as we aren't required for our survival to be ready to move quickly.

The bones can really suffer from the lack of stimulation. Once this principle is understood, then classes can help to keep organizing the self towards being able to feel and practice this new way of using self. We need to discover how we interfere with good function, and feel in an experiential way, the sensations of bones lining up, and muscles being used in a completely different sequence.

Two Ways to Study and Play

The two ways of working are in group 'Awareness through Movement' lessons and Functional Integration (private lessons). Lessons are gentle, appropriate for any level of ability, and give a clear sense of how to work towards the organization that supports stronger bones and more confident movement.

I find that in order to really change lifetime patterns, both are useful: private lessons are like personal coaching that direct you towards exactly your own 'blind spots', and the classes help to change the fundamental patterns that interfere with implementing the new ways in your daily life.

Change isn't easy, but it can be playful! It's a study and a practice – and we merit the effort. Awaken the possibility of moving through life as we get older, with as much ease and confidence in the body, as we can muster!

Energy Healing

by Arnie Lade

As many of you know, I have been involved with healing for 40 years. But most of you don't know how it all began. The story begins in 1975 when I was involved with a meditation group in Vancouver where I heard about a new healing method called Polarity Therapy. At the time I was working in the Post Office as a letter carrier. One of the fellows in my meditation group suggested that we take a weekend course with a Polarity practitioner from Seattle. Polarity Therapy is an eclectic system that is based on energy and how we can use it for healing and health. Dr. Randolph Stone, the founder of the system, integrated many tools and techniques from his own healing background (Naturopathy, Osteopathy and Chiropractic) with the many older systems that he studied, especially Chinese medicine and Ayurveda.

I was simply amazed by my experience in that first class, especially the power of gentle touch and the direct experience of feeling energy in and through my hands as we worked with each other. Right away, after the workshop, I started using what I had learned with friends and family. It was one of those aha moments. I was hooked, and inspired to study more polarity and other healing arts. I soon left my job, moved to Toronto, and began Massage Therapy studies.

I loved the whole hands-on approach that Polarity Therapy offered, as well as the energy exercises and diet that are incorporated into the treatment strategy. In a few years time I became a Polarity teacher and taught classes and workshops in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including here in Victoria. Diane and I had a lot of fun teaching a number of workshops combining energy work, movement and massage in those early years. Our workshops were well received in the community, at a time when any form of holistic healing was considered suspect by a large segment of the public.

My experience in Polarity Therapy was a great foundation for all the other disciplines that I have learned along the way in my healing journey. The energy work grounded me, and was a natural fit with the acupuncture model of Chinese medicine that I use today, as well as the various hands-on practices that I employ in my practice (such as the craniosacral and visceral work). Today, of course, I have my own perspective of energy work and a unique synthesis of techniques that I have woven together as a practitioner. I have outlined my approach in my book *Energetic Healing: Embracing the Life Force*.

If you are interested in learning energy healing I heartily invite you to attend Part 1 of my workshop series this fall and winter. I am really inspired to share with you my understanding of and experience with energy healing from my 40 years of practice. I hope you can join, if you are interested. It'll be a powerful experience and perhaps one that will lead you into unknown territories of learning and wellness.

ENERGY HEALING I - NOV 15-16

Saturday and Sunday, 9 am - 5 pm / \$225

Energy, our Life Force, is the hidden link that binds body, mind and spirit together. In this workshop Arnie will demystify energy healing and make it real for you! We will explore chakras, meridians, polarity principles and more. Come and learn powerful hands-on energy techniques, energy exercises, and practical skills for yourself or to use with others (whether family, friends or clients). Call to register 250-519-1030 or email arnielade@shaw.ca



Check out this fellow who never left the playground. He has some fabulous ideas!

See you down at Dallas Road for some log-walking!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhoPIR27qJo