

Subject: Life Simplified Newsletter #022004

LIFE SIMPLIFIED

For busy women who crave balance in LIFE / HOME / HEALTH / SPIRIT #022004

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GRUV52 Alert #8! Organize Your Body with Alexander Technique

"Your job is to do nothing," Certified Alexander Teacher, Dana Ben-Yehuda gently instructed me as I sat on a simple stool in her studio. "You are working too hard." Great, I've always wanted a job in which I do nothing! But wait, I don't know how to do nothing. So I just sat, thinking to myself "do nothing" while she gently guided my spine, neck and head into a balance point that only a trained Alexander Technique teacher senses can find.

I visited Dana to experience Alexander Technique out of pure curiosity and part of my personal pledge to continue to challenge my mind and body. And, let me tell you, doing nothing is hard work. I found myself thinking A LOT, which is the natural thing to do when one is retraining the body to replace old (or bad) habits with new and improved ones. One becomes acutely aware of movement, actions and reactions that were before unconscious.

Alexander Technique is the practice of restoring your body's original poise and improving overall functioning. Anyone and everyone can benefit from practicing Alexander Technique, especially those who have a profession with particular physical demands (actors, performers, musicians and athletes) and those who suffer from chronic pain.

According to an article on the AmSAT web site, "clinical studies have shown that the Technique improves breathing capacity and posture, modifies stress responses and is, for those who suffer from chronic pain, the preferred method for long-term pain relief."

I am neither a performer nor an athlete, other than engaging in regular fitness activities, but I have bad habits and I can feel the tension in my neck, shoulders and hips. Dana noted the tightness in my hips immediately while observing my movement and posture as

I walked back and forth (self consciously) across her studio floor. Later she tells me that I can "use less effort" when I walk.

My lesson with Dana lasted about 50 minutes, and afterwards I felt lighter and a little taller. But, I had that what-do-I-do-now feeling. I was no longer sure how to walk or sit or move at all. Am I doing it right? Am I doing it wrong? Dana tells me that this is the natural response and exactly the right questions when one is learning new habits. "You will retrain your mind to think through your body. You will use less effort when you move," she said. " That's why, it's so important to continue to practice, preferably with a trained teacher, until your mind and body are fully retrained."

"It takes time to retrain the thought process to undo specific problems," she tells me. Just as with taking music lessons, taking a single lesson will not train you in becoming a musician. But participating in a few regular lessons enables new habits to set in and soon you will "know" how to proceed.

Send specific questions to Dana Ben-Yehuda, Certified Alexander Teacher:

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RESOURCES:

For more information:

The American Society for Alexander Technique:

<http://www.alexandertech.ws>
<http://www.alexandertechnicstudio.org>