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# **The Human Body User Manual**

## **Physical Health**

**A rEvolutionary Wellness  
Guide to Body Mechanics**

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*The human body does not come with instructions attached. Looking at the evolutionary challenges and strategies that shaped it provides an unparalleled insight into the mechanisms it relies on for development and maintenance. Much of the dysfunction we face today is not inevitable, but due to lack of understanding of these mechanisms.*

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*Recent improved understanding of our origins suggests that modern humans are built exceptionally well for endurance running. This contradicts some of our established perceptions about what the body is and isn't good for, and gives us a new and extremely helpful way to reconsider how we treat it.*

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*it goes awry in very predictable ways (not just based on age, genetics, or luck) gives us a much better way to evaluate and prevent dysfunctions.*

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*Core strength is not just about abdominal muscles, but the coordination of several muscle groups, including the hips and upper back, to maintain alignment of the entire torso, to balance the head, to provide resistance for the limbs to work against when exerting force, and to prevent impact with each step.*
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*Humans are built to be especially good at running, and, done properly, it does not involve damaging impacts, but is our most effective activity for promoting whole-body coordination and core strength. Shoe interference with alignment and foot sensitivity inhibits the built-in processes that achieve this, promoting core weakness, and thereby contributing to most musculoskeletal dysfunction.*

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*Osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, and bone spurs are all encouraged by imbalanced loading forces on bones and on muscular attachment sites. Cartilage does in fact regrow when given the opportunity, and all three conditions benefit from rebalancing soft tissues to maintain spatial relationships among joints and to eliminate excess tension at attachment sites.*
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*We blame computers and technology for our posture and try to stay “conscious” of it. But cues like “sit up straight,” “relax your shoulders,” and “engage your core” don’t automatically translate to re-learning the underlying patterns that encourage these compensations. Good training makes better posture automatic.*
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*Neck and shoulder tension, headaches and migraines, cervical disc issues, rotator cuff problems, shoulder impingements, and even thoracic outlet and carpal tunnel syndromes are contributed to by poor alignment and core weakness.*
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*Spinal arthritis and stenosis, degenerative/compressed/bulging/herniated discs, muscular pain and tension, sciatica, and sacroiliac dysfunction are not signs of “normal” wear and tear, but rather failure of muscles to keep the spine, head, shoulders, and pelvis both mobile and aligned in a way that effectively distributes forces and reduces horizontal deviation, mitigating the effects of gravity.*
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*Arthritis, bursitis, and piriformis syndrome result from imbalanced use of the muscles in the hips. Retraining movement, especially in walking and running and hip strengthening exercises, has the potential to reverse all of these. Hip replacements do not address the underlying movement habit, so even if you get a joint replacement, retraining must occur in order for it to be effective.*
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*The knee often suffers from imbalanced forces and rotational torque as it works to coordinate between the hip and ankle. Imbalanced hip muscle development and heel elevation are the top two contributors which encourage arthritis, patella problems, and supporting structure problems, including vulnerability of the meniscus and anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) to tears.*

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<i>Flat feet, high arches, bunions, neuromas, over pronation, excessive supination, heel spurs, calluses, hammertoes, and (usually) even ingrown toenails are neither genetic nor permanent. They are also based on how the feet, like marionettes, are controlled and supported by the core, hip, and leg muscles above. Plantar fasciitis and Achilles tendinitis also result from specific overuse and imbalances.</i>	
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<i>Most “sports injuries” don’t require being an athlete: many people performing repetitive activities develop the same injuries due to engaging in similar patterns of overuse in entirely different contexts. Not listening to the body’s signals and emphasizing performance over health often lead to these types of injuries.</i>	
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<i>Real preventative medicine is about fully understanding how problems develop, accepting accountability and responsibility, and working with the body instead of against it. The body’s corrective powers are tremendous when it is used properly.</i>	
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<i>To get results, you must accept and embrace the degree to which your actions shape your body; learn about your body and what it needs from you; evaluate your existing imbalances and make a plan to correct them; and implement the right kinds of activities and exercises that will prevent or correct dysfunction.</i>	
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<i>Feet are the most underappreciated part of the body when it comes to alignment, balance, and core strength. We try to impose outside restraints or supports on them, when the only road to long-term correction is through internal changes. If you can’t see what your feet show or listen to the input they provide, you miss a critical part of the puzzle in restoring your body’s function.</i>	
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<i>It is not common for doctors to provide feedback to patients that includes a full assessment of their strengths or ranges of motion, or explanation of how these relate to their conditions. A physical therapist is more likely to be able to provide this. On your own, there are some extremely common patterns in the modern world that you can look for, and several helpful postural indicators.</i>	

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*Changes in habit and structure take time to develop and time to undo. Patterns are self-reinforcing, so the further you shift toward good habits, the faster you can progress and the easier it is to maintain. Be aware that your body may have developed many surprising limitations based on old patterns and unconscious compensations. Getting help from qualified professionals is highly recommended.*

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*For improving movement habits in basic activities of daily life, it may be helpful to investigate a method of postural restoration or alignment instruction that makes sense for you. Several current options including the Gokhale method, Alexander technique, Egoscue method, and Well Aligned program are discussed.*

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*Few people consciously consider how they move when walking and running. These daily weight bearing activities can actually be done in many ways, using movement patterns that either strengthen our core and alignment or damage the body. It is extremely important to encourage better form in these activities.*

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*“Exercise” must be carefully defined: doing the wrong kinds will worsen your symptoms! It's critical to choose exercises and methods (such as machines vs. free weights) that correct your imbalances, rather than exacerbate them. See this section to help you determine which ones will help, rather than hinder, you!*

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*The aged sensei is known for maintaining strength, flexibility, and coordination into old age. The combination of barefoot training and emphasis of core strength through many challenging and diverse movement patterns is highly beneficial to longevity for those who are physically ready. Several varieties and levels of difficulty are addressed to help you choose what will help you the most.*

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*Nutrition is extremely important in rebuilding the body. Adjunct therapies such as massage, acupuncture, chiropractic, meditation, and others have a wide variety of physical, mental, and physiological effects that complement and enhance the results of your physical retraining and can help you to restore your body to full, pain-free function!*

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Thank you so much for your interest in this project! I hope this sneak peek makes you as excited about the finished version as I am!

If you didn't reserve your copy yet, don't forget that you can still go back and do so now for just \$15 by supporting this project in advance! You can also get more copies to forward to others you know who could really benefit from this information, or, if you are incredibly psyched, there are a limited number of higher level rewards that include early access, some time to chat with me for one-on-one Q&A, or up to an entire Day of Wellness (see details on the campaign page)!

I wish you empowerment and success in the effort to work with your body, rather than against it, to achieve lifelong, pain-free activity and health!

Sincerely,



Stephanie Welch