

Feldenkrais- Ausbildung

— BEWEGLICHKEIT FÜR GEIST UND KÖRPER —

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Sitting Pretty: How to Sit Dynamically

Mark Reese, Ph.D., Certified Feldenkrais® Trainer, was one of the world's foremost authorities on the Feldenkrais Method®. Adding to a broad, interdisciplinary background including philosophy, biology, theater, and music, Mark earned his Master's and Ph.D. in Psychology. He was a graduate from the first U.S. Feldenkrais® training program and studied with Moshé Feldenkrais from 1975 - 1984 in San Francisco, Amherst and Tel-Aviv.

Mark has trained practitioners in more than 30 Feldenkrais® Professional Training Programs in such locations as San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Detroit, New York, Sidney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Rome, Milan, Munich, and Toronto. He has also given advanced training workshops for practitioners throughout the world and has taught at both the Esalen and Omega Institutes. Mark has published extensively on the Feldenkrais Method® and related health issues, and was co-author of Relaxercise: The Easy New Way to Health and Fitness. He has also appeared often television and radio.

Unfortunately Mark passed away in May 2006.

"Sitting down on the job" is supposed to mean taking it easy. But for the millions who sit at their jobs all day long, sitting can be hard work, a strain on both mind and body. In addition, in our sedentary society recreation may mean even more of the same—sitting while watching TV or movies. Back, neck and shoulder pain are among the many complaints stemming from prolonged sitting. The most commonly prescribed solutions to these problems are regular exercise and a good chair. However, these remedies ignore the most important factor for sitting comfort: how one sits, that is, the postural and movement efficiency maintained while seated.

Our Feldenkrais classes, and lessons taught in the Relaxercise book and tape series, teach the art of dynamic, stress-free sitting. The lessons are easy and fun to do, and the principles can be readily applied.

The first principle of "dynamic" sitting is that sitting is an activity, full of movement and life. Consequently, good posture doesn't mean being planted in a fixed, upright position, but sitting in a way that allows free movement in any direction. You can check whether you are sitting dynamically by examining your ability to move. Without altering your posture:

1) Can you turn to the right and left? Only erect posture permits the spine to rotate freely to the right and left.

2) Can you breath freely into both your chest and abdomen? In dynamic sitting the chest hangs from the spine in such a way that breathing is effortless, and the abdominal muscles are relaxed so that the diaphragm and the abdomen can move freely.

If your sitting satisfies these requirements, then it certainly fulfills the second principle of dynamic sitting: your skeleton, and not your musculature, should do the primary work of holding you upright. Skeletal support allows your entire musculature to be free of tension. In order to check whether you are properly relying on your skeleton, observe:

1) Are both feet flat on the floor? The leg muscles must be relaxed, and the bones of the legs—from the thighs down to the feet should help to create stability and hence relaxation in the upper body.2) Are you sitting evenly on both buttocks? Sitting assymmetrically on one hip is the cause of much strain. With the weight of the body carried over both sit bones, the back doesn't have to work as hard.

3) Is your lower back rounded or slightly arched? Contrary to common belief, the flattest lower back is not the healthiest. A slightly arched lower back offers better support and reduces pressure on the discs.

4) Are you leaning back in your chair or sitting forward in your seat? Most people slump when leaning back (partly due to the poor construction of chairs), causing muscular stiffness and strain on discs and ligaments. While sitting forward you rely on your spine and back muscles to support you. This strengthens your back muscles and minimizes disc pressure. If you must lean back, place a pillow behind the small of your back so that a healthy arch is maintained.

In our increasingly information and service-oriented economy, most people are likely to remain "sitting down on the job." For anyone who does sit for long periods of time, learning to sit dynamically should be a high priority for good health and well-being.